SLA INDUSTRIES

2ND EDITION

NIGHTFALL GAMES

23rd August, 1988 – Biggar, Scotland.

Crantham staggered into his study, straight towards his drinks cabinet. He swung the glass-panelled doors open and with a trembling hand reached for the bottle of whisky. He was coughing still, dust and cement particles spinning in his lungs.

The whole building had come down, all in one go; it was the only reason he'd been able to slip past the soldiers and drive home. But he couldn't stay long – just enough time to collect his essentials and the money and passport, secreted behind that photo on the wall and then he'd be gone, off to Paraguay, to San Antonio.

The army would call at his first office, searching for him, for answers. They didn't know about this one, the proper one. The one that contained all the most pertinent discoveries accrued during more than five years of Foundation research. The rest had been destroyed, along with all the test subjects.

He clumsily tipped the bottle heavily on the rim of the glass, spilling whisky on the back of his hand. He hissed and fumbled to screw the lid back on. His eye caught the name on the label and after a moment's recognition he let out a shrill laugh that sounded foreign and frightening to his ears.

"Henri."

The quiet, soft voice made Crantham spin in its direction, instantly letting go of the glass. He did not hear it shatter.

The figure was sat in his armchair, face hidden in shadow. He wore a suit that was the fashion seventy years previous, but looked as though it was finished just yesterday.

"What have you done, Henri?" The figure spoke. His tone was sad and hollow.

Crantham felt his way into an adjacent chair, unable to take his eyes off The Elder.

"You come to me now, finally, after all these years." Crantham whispered. He was already on the verge of tears.

"You made that necessary, Henri. You have broken the rules which we must all follow. Now, I must do the same."

Crantham looked down.

"Why didn't you come sooner? Why didn't you stop me? You … could have saved them."

"So could have you. Henri, it is not our place to intervene with what we have created. That is our law."

Crantham looked up again, furious.

"I just want to know why?"

"Why?"

"I want to know! I want to know why you called on me and then you denied me! I was just a child, but I never forgot. I never wanted to forget! I … just wanted to be one of you."

The tears were beyond his control.

The Elder watched the man weep before him. Years of confusion, frustration and denial, forever held in check, spilled out from him. Henri had never looked so old, or as young as he did at this moment.

"*Doctor Crantham*, no Builder would be one by choice. It is a bleak, thankless chore, a burden. It is the task of a silent caretaker, for all time. It is all joy and creation in the first chapter, but after? When death comes and the door's unlocked? It is the duty of a select, unlucky few.

I spared you that. You were meant to forget, as all the others do."

"But still you won't tell me why? Why did you choose Gideon; that miserable, wretched old man? Or Tibor; that murderer! Why wasn't I chosen?"

The Elder considered this for a time.

"You weren't chosen because I feared you would become a far worse monster than Tibor. More joyous than Gideon. You did not become the monster, though; you did create it, however. You created the Red King. And that is why I come to you now."

"I'm sorry."

"It is too late for that now, Henri. Too late for myself, also. You may fly south and I may flee back to my forest, but The Red King will return, in time. We are dead men."

"What can we do?"

"Our part in this cycle is over. It falls to those within to find the answer."

The Elder leant forward and peered at Crantham with white, featureless eyes.

"It starts, or ends, now."

SLA INDUSTRIES

2ND EDITION

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Victoria Braithwaite, Jamie Cross, David Emmett, Jon Hodgson, John Houston, Richard Howkins, Stephen Manklow, Gordon Parton, Kim Rapson, Tony Sephton, Steve Turner, Andrew Waller

And our playtesters:

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We would also like to thank all the Kickstarter backers for their support and additional proofreading.

Created in Adobe InDesign on an Apple iMac i-9990 using Waverly and Adobe Caslon type.

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TERMINOLOGY

The World of Progress

The World of Progress is a series of star systems owned and controlled by SLA Industries. Within this vast, sprawling corporate universe, anything can be bought and sold, from military armaments to fast food, pharmaceuticals to biogenetics, televised media to high fashion, but it must fall under the overarching SLA brand. Anything produced, or even suggested without SLA's corporate branding is considered treason; corporate crime, which may be punishable by death.

SLA Industries hires Operatives - trained specialists who investigate these subversive acts, destroy rival companies and enforce the will of Mr. Slayer.

Mr. Slayer

Mr Slayer is the head of SLA Industries. For 900 years he has been pivotal in the success and dominance of every star system in the World of Progress. He inspires fear and loyalty in equal measure. He serves as an ideal for some of the most corrupt, self-serving and career driven people in his domain, but Slayer remains an enigma. Despite being the most well-known figure within the World of Progress, only a handful of individuals know who or what he is, the reason behind his name and his facial disfigurement. Those who have even the slightest inkling of his true origins have good reason to fear him all the more.

The Great Enemy

In the World of Progress there have always been whispers of The Great Enemy, but few could easily define precisely what it was. There were rumours of a planet out on the fringes of the SLA universe which imprisoned an ancient terror and if it were ever set free, the entire World of Progress would be destroyed.

SLA Industries has countless enemies, but its true nemesis is a being simply referred to as 'Bitterness' - the supposed ruler of White Earth. In the present day, a White Earth influenced cult terrorises Mort City, crafting blood magic once thought impossible in SLA owned space.

The Shi'An Blood Cult is representative of The Great Enemy on planet Mort.

SLA has been forced to create an entire Department, 'Stigmartyr', to defend the company and its citizens against the threat of the Bitterness, White Earth and the cult they inspire.

Mort

The planet Mort is the seat of SLA Industries' power and home of its Head Office. Centuries of industrial pollution and environmental neglect has ravaged the planet, leaving it beset with endless toxic rains and poisonous, grey landscapes. Spread across the surface of Mort are a series of city states, each dedicated to the service of SLA, but the most notorious is Mort City itself. At its highest artificial peak sits the gargantuan Head Office building. Beneath, an entire class system trickles down, from the most wealthy in opulent Uptown, all the way down to the subterranean slums of Downtown, where the unemployed masses are trapped in their squalid apartments with nothing but an endless stream of SLA brand televised media to keep them company.

The Whistling Bridge Protocol

SLA Industries, and the World of Progress it inhabits, is being attacked on all sides from enemies it had promised extinct or claimed had never existed at all. Yet, in 903sd, these ancient enemies returned and sought revenge. Within Mort City itself the Shi'An Cult, directly influenced and led by White Earth, is gaining traction among the Downtown populace.

SLA has always secretly feared that a day may come when its secrets may be uncovered and certain uncomfortable truths would be brought to light and so, during the Formation of SLA Industries, a protocol was put in place to reestablish order and safeguard against certain destruction. Its codename was Whistling Bridge and it has been met with an equal share of praise and dread.

The Whistling Bridge Protocol's edicts have only been read by the top Departmental Heads at SLA Industries and they know the directives set forth will reshape the World of Progress. Two sides are emerging, for and against the Protocol and the changes it will invoke.

Now, as the Shi'An cult expands its sphere of influence, Conflict Races, who were thought long dead, invade the SLA universe and with the recent acknowledgement of Dream Entities materialising in the World of Progress, the Whistling Bridge draws ever closer to execution.

THE OPP

SLA Industries has had unprecedented success over the centuries. One does not amass such wealth and accomplishment without forging a few enemies along the way. SLA Industries has so many, in fact, that it has been forced to categorise its opponents into four distinct groups.

CORPORATE

The recurrent threat to SLA has always come from those with ambition, drive and recklessness. Those who want to imitate SLA Industries, whilst also tearing it down. These are the corporate enemies and terrorist organisations. They create competing products and attempt to destabilise SLA's power structure.

These companies invariably rise and fall; destroyed by the company's loyal and efficient SLA Operatives, but two main forces endured throughout the centuries: DarkNight and Thresher.

Smaller entrepreneurs are referred to as Soft Companies and continually try to undercut SLA with rival sodas, pharmaceuticals, fast food and cheap weaponry. They reap potentially lucrative rewards, but probably at considerable cost.

"Look, it's pretty simple really: SLA will come down hard on you for creating your poxy little indie brand, okay? Don't matter what it is: they'll kill you whether it's competitor power armour or tinned beans. Right?

Never ever try to take the cash from SLA's pocket. It's like signing your own Extermination Warrant.

Gotta say, these rival Scrummy Cakes are pretty nice though. Pity this here is the last one in existence."

'Big Ted', Human Operative, SCL 7,
squad 'Destroy All Carrien'

CONFLICT

SLA has long claimed that the ancient Conflict Races were extinct; defeated and forgotten nine hundred years ago. Now these lost species are creeping back into the World of Progress from the lawless region known as Conflict Space, determined to enact vengeance on the company that betrayed them and stole their worlds.

They are a little known threat on Mort, but on the War Worlds these various Conflict Races are destroying SLA's armies. It is not surprising as these aliens were bred for nothing but war and death.

Some Conflict Aliens have reached Mort however and landed in SLA's industrial No-Go Zone, where they plot, watch and wait.

"I've had a few run ins with the Conflict Aliens and they've got that same dead eyed look that the Dream Entities have. They have hatred in their gaze, but it's like, I dunno … not their hatred? They rage, they fight and murder, but something else is pulling the strings."

Ross Ackerley Reed, Human Operative,
SCL 8a, squad 'Perfect Gallows'

O S I T I O N

These range from those who seek revenge for past wrongs and those who hate by their very natures, to those who wish to destroy SLA's corporate system and rival companies who simply desire to supplant it.

C U L T

The streets of Downtown breed madness and despair. The marginalised citizens will turn to any messiah figure that offers hope; real or imagined. As such, religious cults of all denominations are rife in the slums. For centuries SLA was content to let these people stagnate in their own delusion; they were barely a threat.

This has all changed with the emergence of the Shi'An Cult, with its strong ties to White Earth and genuine spiritual powers. No other force has been capable of attracting so many of the downtrodden and disturbed. The numbers of converted Downtown citizens steadily rises.

The cult seeks worship, bedlam and blood.

> *"SLA has had its time. That time is over. We must end them all, spill their blood and usher in a new age of violence and liberation. We are Shi'An."*
>
> Elliot Raik, High Priest of South Sewers

C O L L A T E R A L

These are the enemies spawned from the universe SLA has created; by-products of their corporate greed, neglect and corruption. Without the wholesale exploitation of SLA Industries, creatures like the Carrien, Cannibals and, more recently, the Dream Entities, simply would not exist.

SLA Industries created much of the threats now known as Collateral, initially to serve the company. They proved uncontainable and broke free into lower recesses of Downtown and the ruins of the Cannibal Sectors. Disturbed inventions like the Manchines and Scavs now pose a serious threat to life on Mort.

> *"Oh yeah, I'm aware of the new terms that Threat Analysis is using to group our enemies. But seriously, Collateral? Collateral!? I mean this is totally disinge-,… disenjanu-, … totally not honest, right? I mean how do you just class the whole of Cannibal Sector 1 as just collateral?*
>
> *I tell you; last week when Shiver Private Bridges was getting his guts chewed out of his body by a Cannibal Termagant he wasn't crying 'ooh, help, someone come and get this Collateral off of me."*
>
> Shiver Pvt. 1st Class Cara Killoran , Bridgehead Echo Beach

"Look, all I ever wanted to be was a SLA Operative. That daydream is not exceptional in any way; everyone wants to be a SLA Op. You know why? Because SLA Ops are the only people who don't get shat on in the World of Progress. Except they do. All the time.

And that's what working for SLA is like. Accepting certain truths. Facing inconvenient realities. You don't know this going in, but you certainly know it on your way out. But hey, maybe I'm being a little unfair. It's not about accepting the truth, because once you know the truth you'll wish you didn't. What working for SLA is really about is accepting the lie.

What is the lie? The lie is that there's just one lie. There are too many to count. The company is built on lies. The lie that SLA controls everything. The lie that working for SLA will solve your problems. The lie that you are serving the public. The lie that there are no hidden truths.

If you decide to work for SLA accept this: you are going to do what you're told. You are going to kill good and bad people. You are going to discover things about the company and yourself, that will mess you up.

You are going to feed the lie."

Garren Mayfield, Human Operative, SCL 4b, squad Milk and Two Milgrams

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this, the SLA Industries roleplaying game 2nd Edition core rulebook. Within this tome you will find everything you need to play the SLA Industries roleplay game.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

At its most basic premise, a roleplaying game, or RPG, is a tabletop game within which players assume the roles of different characters in a fictional setting. These characters are represented by a range of statistics and rulesets unique to each. The story's progression and action is resolved through discussion and the use of dice. One person is the GM, or Games Master and it is their job to lead the storytelling. In many respects, the GM is the director of a movie and the players are the improv actors.

ABOUT SLA INDUSTRIES

SLA Industries (pronounced "Slay Industries") was first published in Scotland in 1993. The game is a horror noir science-fiction set in a dystopian reality in which the majority of the known universe is either owned or indirectly controlled by the eponymous corporation SLA Industries. The game incorporates many adult themes with tropes from the cyberpunk, gothic horror and conspiracy genres. SLA Industries is considered one of the first and best examples of the Splatterpunk genre in RPGs.

SLA Industries, the company is a huge corporate entity that rules over not only Mort City, but the entire planet and the expanding universe. Mr Slayer, the owner of SLA Industries, aptly refers to this as 'The World of Progress'.

The World of Progress is a science-fiction image of the 1980s, where the fax machine spews out information alongside green-screen computers and vat-grown biogenetic monsters. Exotic aliens compete with humans for work in an overgrown city that plunges deep underground. Mort, the planet on which the game is set, is the capital of the World of Progress, a dark miserable place where it never stops raining. The players are projected into a world that feels tense, dangerous and claustrophobic. When you play SLA Industries, you never know what's around the next corner and never know which facts are truths and which are lies.

PLAYING SLA INDUSTRIES

Players in SLA Industries take on the role of Operatives, the highly-trained and well-equipped freelancers that serve as the company's agents, investigators and enforcers. Operatives perform tasks for both a pay packet and the promise of an increase in their security clearance level (SCL), as both provide them access to an increased standard of living, better equipment, progression up the corporate ladder and sponsorship opportunities. Most of all though, they strive for the one thing that everyone in the media-driven World of Progress wants: Notoriety.

A SLA Operative always has a job to do. It is not always a glamorous one; a typical assignment (known as a BPN) may consist of anything from exterminating giant rats or carnivorous pigs in a sewer, to securing and retrieving an ancient artefact of the Ebonite species.

Characters progress along within the campaign, gaining credits, security clearance and infamy. They can spend their hard-earned credits on better equipment, stronger armour, more deadly weapons, powerful combat drugs or something a little bit different, like a down-payment on a Life After Death account, ensuring that even death can't stop them.

Each of the nine different species offers its own play style, each armed with unique species abilities, from the studious Neophron to the drug-addled Frother, from the brutish Stormer to the quick-witted Wraithen, from the versatile Human to the honour-bound Shaktar. Pick the species that suits you best and bring them to life.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO PLAY

Apart from this book you will need a set of 6 ten-sided dice (often called d10s for short) per player. One of these dice needs to be a different colour to the rest. A few pens and pencils should also be available to the players. Other items that may be very useful include a GM Screen, which protects the GM's notes and dice rolling from the players.

Many players also like to use miniatures and pre-drawn maps, especially in combat situations, or specially designed RPG websites and chat rooms. Given that games can take a few hours, if you are hosting you may want to consider getting in some drinks or snacks (or getting the players to bring them) too.

This edition of SLA Industries

SLA Industries 2nd Edition features an entirely new d10-based rules system, built from the ground up and designed to offer a streamlined and cinematic gaming experience. Ratings Points are a new mechanic for 2nd Ed, earned from facetime in front of the camera, or through bravery, extreme success and spectacular failure. These points enable players to perform cinematic feats that defy the norm and impress audiences. When things don't quite work out, there is the new Luck mechanism that allows players to alter or re-roll dice results. Both Ratings Points and Luck are a finite resource, however and should not be used frivolously.

We are very lucky to still have the original creative team at the core of this RPG. Brief stories, character quotes and other in-game content from them bring The World of Progress to life.

SLA Industries 2nd Edition is crammed full of colour art, presenting one of the best visualised worlds in the RPG arena and the most visually stunning representation of The World of Progress to date.

Preparing to play the Game

The first step to playing a game of SLA Industries is creating player characters. This is fully explained in the Character Creation chapter. Many players really enjoy doing this and will often create more than one. Alternatively you can get hold of the Quick Start which can be downloaded as a PDF or bought from any number of outlets (ask your FLGS or favourite internet shop, or check out our website: www.nightfall.games). While the characters are being created the GM needs to plan out their campaign. Again the Quick Start is a great place to start, but one of the real joys for GMs and players alike, is the creation process of forming your own campaign. Within this book are all sorts of ideas and stories from which the GM can weave a multifaceted world of adventure for the players to investigate.

Important: When playing a roleplaying game, especially one with adult themes, it is critical that all the players are comfortable, or at least comfortable with being made to feel uncomfortable, with the situations their characters will find themselves in. Please check with your fellow players before you expose them to anything likely to upset them. This is especially important when playing with players that you do not know or know well.

SLA Industries is an adult game, it is recommended that players are at least 15 years old.

Playing the Game

Once you have created your characters and the GM has planned out the story, all players should make sure their fellows are happy with any planned strong or unpleasant themes. Everyone gets set for the game by gathering around the table, with their dice, pens, character sheets, snacks, etc.. The GM normally sets the scene and each of the players introduce their characters to each other. Often people like to put on accents or act out their characters in great depth, but you don't need to. As the story progresses the GM will direct the story and enable the players to do what they want: investigate, fight and converse etc..

Glossary of Gaming Terms

The following abbreviations are used throughout the book.

PC:	Player Character. A character controlled by a player.
NPC:	Non-Player Character. A character controlled by the Games Master to be interacted with by the PCs. This could be anything from a street ganger, high-ranking corporate or even a shopkeeper.
GM:	Games Master. The arbitrator and storyteller whose job it is to control the world around the player characters.

What do you need to know?

Below is a very brief description of the key characters, organisations and terms seen in the World of Progress. Know this, know SLA.

Mr Slayer	The boss of SLA Industries.
Intruder	Mr Slayer's right hand man and primary enforcer.
Bitterness	The ruler of White Earth; the great enemy of SLA Industries.
Cloak Division	SLA's protectors of truth, created to control information leaks.
Naga 7	Archivists and researchers of dangerous truths; serves as advisors for SLA propaganda.
Shivers	The SLA sanctioned police force.
SLA Operatives	Troubleshooters for SLA's problems. You, the players.
Props	Local mercenaries for hire.
Shi'An Cult	Largest growing religion in the World of Progress; a direct threat to SLA Industries.
Conflict Aliens	The ancient long-forgotten enemies of SLA Industries, now returning to the World of Progress to seek revenge.
Oppressor Powers	The larger companies that actively seek the downfall of SLA Industries, like DarkNight and Thresher.
Soft Companies	Small-time startups or subversive entrepreneurs trying to break into the market.
BPN	Blueprint News files, the main way SLA Operatives pick up jobs.
SCL	Security Clearance Level, the lower the better.
Credits/Uni	Credits are a currency used internally by SLA Industries while Unis (universal currency) are the public currency. There are ten Unis to a credit, but only Unis appear as coins and notes.

HISTORY

"We destroyed the Conflict Races.
We created the World of Progress.
We overcome all adversity.
We write our history.
We make fantasy a reality.
We are SLA Industries."
Intruder's War Diaries, 585sd.

The company known as SLA Industries exists within the World of Progress but permeates every part of it. SLA Industries has conquered the majority of it and is preparing to absorb the rest.

To put such an indelible mark on such a vast region of space has taken centuries; there is no escape from its influence nor its presence. The food one eats and cars one drives are produced and sold by SLA Industries, whether you like it or not.

Every person living in the World of Progress has strong feelings about the company that rules over them. There is hate, anger and love, but what binds all is fear. There has been little over the nine centuries to challenge SLA's authority and its dominance is all most people have ever known.

In order to live and survive in the World of Progress one must accept that SLA Industries is an evil company, which in turn has created an evil universe and the company is now the only power capable of keeping it all under control.

The reality is hidden under a veneer of glitz and glamour but what truly lies at the core of the World of Progress is a tyrannical regime that is gradually coming apart at the seams.

What follows in an exploration of the nine centuries of SLA Industries' growth and dominance. It is a long catalogue of perceived victories built on corruption, betrayal and countless lost lives. It also charts the company's numerous failures and oversights, so often attributed to SLA's capitalist core ideologies and its complete and utter lack of empathy.

Nine centuries of war and lies, nine centuries of poverty and wealth, nine centuries of expansion and oppression. Upon unswerving ruthlessness, SLA Industries has built its foundations and set forth from there.

THE CONFLICT ERA - PRE SD

Conflict Races

Long before SLA Industries created the World of Progress. the macrocosm it inhabits was called The Known Universe. It spread across countless solar systems, with each being loosely governed by a supreme force. Threat Analysis has detailed accounts of almost all these ancient powers. In nearly every case, the Conflict Races were indisputably merciless, without a shred of consideration for any external species beyond its own.

"They were the precursors to the Suppressor Powers, the governing forces within the Known Universe. They desired war, blood and violence yet in many respects they weren't so different to us. They simply wanted more, unceasingly wanting of everything and whilst we offered the 3Ps Contract, the Conflict Races chose a more blunt and uncompromising approach: they simply offered death."

Intruder's War Diaries, 760sd

Five primary species rose to prominence.

The Grosh - Also known as the Root Dogs, these were bio-engineers who were content to ravage any life system and bend its genetic code to the will of the Grosh. The Root Dogs built vast, animalistic armies known as The Herd. The Grosh were feared above all others.

The Momics - The Momics were the slave masters of the Ebonite species. They drained the Ebonites of their Flux and feasted on their flesh. Largely an indolent and apathetic species who chose to spend most of their existence in a state of meditation, or torpor. They would nonetheless burst into furious activity if challenged or more importantly, when their primary food source was appropriated.

The Thallasians - They were the original creators of the specialist combat armour found on their home world of Thallas. In temperament the Thallasian were similar to the Krell, revelling in violence and warfare, but strains of their species were focused on crafting superior weapons and armour.

The Herracleum - A deeply religious plant-like species who sought to conquer worlds and cultivate the surface of enemy planets, replacing whole ecosystems with their own verdant culture and natural mysticism.

The Krell - The Krell were an especially brutal, militaristic species, entirely led by the Krella; the female of the species. The male counterparts had been degraded over centuries into rabid and increasingly psychotic monsters. The genetic degradation was a by-product of the Grosh's aim to alter the Krell's genetic code to allow incredible rates of regeneration.

Endless war

The Known Universe was caught in a relentless cycle of war. SLA Industries' historical documents are scant on the details of how and why these interplanetary disputes continued to rage century after century and why no diplomatic agreement could ever be reached.

The various Conflict Races were forever trying to gain supremacy over each other and most spent considerable time and finance improving and upgrading their weaponry and

technology. The Krell at one time entered a brief alliance with the Grosh to increase the ferocity of their infantry and grant them the capacity for regeneration, but this bond quickly fell apart when the species' leaders, the Krella, discovered the genetic work, along with the gift of fast regeneration and neurotoxin in the saliva, had turned their soldiers into near uncontrollable, slavering monsters. One can only assume that the Grosh scientists fully intended this and inevitably lead to further decades of brutal strife and destruction between them. Such betrayals were common amongst the great warring species of that time period.

"In order to understand why the Conflict Era endured for so long you have to take into account the species involved at the highest end. You have to consider the personalities, the cultures that bred the likes of the Krell, the Thallasians and then try to put them in the same metaphoric space; war was inevitable, but more importantly it was actively sought.

The Conflict Races were shaped purely for warfare, they had no desire to explore or fulfil anything they perceived as a lesser ambition. They were what history required of them and only when SLA Industries arrived in the Known Universe were the Conflict Races obligated to serve another purpose."

Professor Jonathan E W Lisberg,
Naga 7 Historian (2nd Head)

Intruder

An important figure during the Conflict Era was Slayer's right hand man - Intruder. He operated chiefly as an assassin; sent out to destroy SLA's political rivals, the nickname 'Clockwork Killer' suggesting he was simply a weapon utilised by the company, but his duties were surprisingly far reaching. He helped to liberate the Ebonites from their Momic overlords and during the years he fought the Conflict Aliens, he contributed his experiences to the Stormer project.

First and foremost though, he was the shadow who slipped silently into military outposts and royal palaces to eliminate the opposition. He was chosen for the role because of his skills in butchery and knowledge of anatomy and that he was master of a collection of powers unknown to anyone else in the Known Universe during the Conflict Era, something similar yet separate to the Ebb. Reports back to the enemies of SLA listed him as 'Kilneck' and that he was seemingly indestructible.

"No, I am unsurprised you have been unable to find a member of the Kilneck in SLA owned space, well, aside from Intruder himself. Within the deep spirals of Conflict Space, however? A different matter entirely, but do not press me any further on the matter."

Mattifet Ketaptor, The Neophron Empress

As far as anyone knew he was a species of one, as many of the Conflict Powers searched in vain to track down other Kilneck. In the 900 years of SLA's rule there has never been a reported instance of another Kilneck individual in the entire World of Progress, leading to potential theories of his nature. Either Intruder is concealing his true origins. Are there no other Kilneck; have there ever been or has he destroyed all others of his kind?

The Big Picture

Five years prior to the Standard Date (sd.), SLA Industries emerged in the Known Universe, acting primarily as a high-quality arms dealer for any side with the money to spend.

SLA Industries made everything from firearms to power armour to military grade vehicles; even custom armaments tailored towards specific requirements. What made SLA stand out especially was its capacities in the field of biogenetics.

The most popular products available from SLA Industries was the biogen soldiers, known commonly as the Stormers. The first variant available in the Conflict Era market was the Malice. A 9 foot tall, muscular monstrosity that had a winning combination of strength, speed and savagery.

Countless Conflict Races bought into the Stormer Program, so that they could bolster their ranks with Malice Stormers, but also, in the case of the Grosh and Thalassians, to study and dissect the creation, hoping to recreate the Malice for their own purposes, but their efforts proved fruitless.

Not all of the species bought into SLA's products and remained their enemies from the very start, particularly the Krell and Momics, with whom SLA fought bitterly. The Krell even served as a rudimentary inspiration for the Stormers.

Ultimately, SLA betrayed the Conflict Races and they fell victim to Mr Slayer's secret strategy known simply as 'The Big Picture'.

Over the years, SLA set about spinning a series of rumours that outlined the company's future plans and also its inherent weaknesses. The aim was to prompt a direct attack on SLA and therefore the company's base of operations, the planet - Jeth.

These rumours ranged from hidden new weapon stashes, power minerals found exclusively on Jeth, an experimental drug that would apparently change the landscape of the Known Universe and even a colony of fabled Kilneck living out in the dense jungle regions. It was almost entirely lies, specific triggers that would spur the Conflict Powers into action and drive them to focus direct attacks on SLA throughout the Known Universe.

> *"The company didn't just enter the Known Universe to sell you guys a bunch of weapons and monsters. That Slayer guy is here looking for something and I suspect it's there on Jeth. I have contacts who believe it's a mineral deposit; something used in the creation of Stormers but I've also heard mention of some kind of 'portal'. It's all hearsay and speculation to most Conflict Powers but I know more than most. Look, see this here? This drug phial - I believe it was created by SLA Industries, but it isn't on sale yet. It may never be on sale.*
>
> *I'm telling you, Legatus, because we're old friends. And SLA hasn't given me a pay rise in 7 months. The company comes off as tough, but they're weak, they're nothing. You and your kind could have it all. If you have the guts to reach out and take it."*
>
> SLA Salesman John Smith, addressing a potential client, Conflict Era

They would of course be conducting their military assaults with Stormers and therein lay the Big Picture.

The Stormers instantaneously turned on their new masters before they could ever reach Jeth, slaughtering countless Conflict Aliens. SLA produced technology, which had been bought wholesale by their enemies, like missile guidance systems and other state of the art ordnance, shut down at the commencement of the Big Picture. The mass destruction that followed would not be that of SLA Industries, it would represent the end of the Conflict Powers and the era of which they reigned.

The last great battle of the Conflict Era was waged on Mort City's Central Outskirts, in which the ancient Momic masters, known as The Haunted, used a primitive form of reality folding to launch their final attack at the heart of SLA. Two hundred Momic faced down four thousand Malice Stormers and in the resulting bloodbath, SLA proved victorious.

The battle culminated in the surviving Haunted burning their remaining flux, creating a vast orb of blinding light. This strange flux anomaly has endured on the surface of Mort, indestructible, mysterious and restless ever since, it came to be known as the White.

After initial investigation, it was largely left alone, until an Ebon pupil of SLA Industries, Durer, entered it. What later emerged was a monstrosity, a strange mix of Ebon and Momic. This represented the birth of the Necanthropes - an entirely new strain of Ebonite, which would come to rule over them in a similar manner to the Momics who had come before.

Only two major Conflict Races actively sided with SLA Industries prior to the Big Picture; the Wraithen and the Shaktars and as the company was reshaped they found gainful employment and protection. The Ebonites, the people previously subservient to the Momics were also liberated and brought into the fold.

Other species fell somewhere in the middle of the supposed victory conditions. The Neophrons, for example, took no part in any of the conflicts and purposefully avoided any negotiations with SLA Industries. They recognised the change that was coming and quietly returned to their home system in Conflict Space. It would take many centuries for the Neophron and other equally less aggressive species to return to the World of Progress, but when they did they returned as allies, rather than challengers, to the company's reign.

What remained of the Conflict Aliens fled into deep space, SLA Industries was victorious and its employees rejoiced. They hoped it would be the dawning of a new era and they were right. Mostly. Everything was set to progress, but not necessarily to everyone's advantage.

The Formation Era - 0-100SD

The Storm

The dust had settled. Slayer had ended the Conflict Era and won. The history books would say that the Conflict Races were all but extinct, but in truth many survivors had fled into true emptiness and past a blank world upon which Slayer had imprisoned his darkest secret.

There was a person who had a great stake in all things, but was to be denied, even in death and beyond.

This 'silent partner' was a young man and within the freshly defined confines of the SLA Universe he could not be destroyed. He had already died once. He could, however, be forgotten.

Back before SLA Industries was even conceived, a pact was made to confine this controversial individual, to rob him of potential and ensure that he could not impact on the affairs of the company, nor the plans for what would become the World of Progress. Upon arrival he was deposited on a desolate remote planet in the Known Universe. This planet had no name and the vast majority of its landmass was desert and besides its enigmatic prisoner, the only other inhabitants were the things he feared the most.

"Tyde, I have spent many years conditioning Brent Walker's brain to respond to certain stimuli and to comply with demands. Some of my patients require simple encouragement and mild praise in order to produce, Brent however tends towards obstinacy, he requires fear and discipline, to work.

Brent suffers from a condition called Pithecophobia, which is an innate fear of primates. A chimpanzee was purchased and installed at The Foundation. This is the disciplinary tool we will use in Brent's reeducation. An hour trapped in a room with that creature is guaranteed to make him compliant with the Foundation expectations of him.

By now Brent would rather kill a family member than spend five additional minutes in a confined space with our pet.

The time is coming, Tyde, when he will transfer; that is unavoidable and the only means of containing him is to place him among the denizens that fill him with the greatest dread.

You cannot kill Brent Walker, but you can suppress him. You will do this by driving him irrevocably insane."

Catalogue/Naga 7 documentation *redacted*

On the first anniversary of the World of Progress, Slayer felt the storm raging across that distant world. Whilst corporates and Departmental Heads laughed, patted each other's backs and sipped staggeringly expensive champagne, Slayer could feel the fury building in the furthest reaches of his domain. He could smell the burning sands and matted fur and then, he could feel the presence, searching. Like a blind man probing for a lost object.

It was the first time Slayer felt the searing pain in his chest. It faded, but never left him completely.

Construction of Mort City 1-56sd

Throughout the course of the Conflict Era, SLA Industries had been little more than a weapons and technology manufacturer, but after the Big Picture a whole new picture began to form. This was a business plan that would cover all aspects of life and commerce. SLA was going to take over governments, star systems and buy out and rebrand every conceivable item in the Known Universe over a century-long mission.

This was the groundwork of what SLA Industries would be right up until the present day and historical records define the period as The Formation. What was once the Known Universe would be rebranded the World of Progress. This period in SLA's history is some of the bloodiest; worse even than the close of the Conflict Era.

The Known Universe was not quite prepared for such a hostile and grand takeover. SLA was met with some resistance, except this was not the brutal Conflict Races standing up against the company; it was just the ordinary folk who knew that this saviour was going to erase their identity and freedoms, in their entirety. If the Conflict Races could be taken down so easily, the citizens of the fading Known Universe would pose little threat to SLA. Within a generation of the end of The Formation, historical events of resistance where buried and forgotten.

As SLA entered its greatest years of economic wealth, there was no question, the company was now all consuming. SLA owned and ruled every facet of life and that was the new normal.

At the beginning of the Formation, the planet Jeth was the epicentre of the new World of Progress. Over the previous 25 years, SLA had already set up bases across the planet, but after the enemy species had fled into what would be known as Conflict Space (the title of the vast untamed regions beyond SLA controlled space), SLA would focus much of its efforts on building the Capital City-state on the planet and they weren't prepared to let the indigenous Jethians stand in their way.

SLA Industries maintained a chilly relationship with the Jethians. The company swiftly set about ravaging the planet of its resources as it built its first primary city - Mort.

SLA had little to no regard for any treaties signed that would protect the Jethian's natural habitats and when the council of Jeth tried to prevent the construction of nuclear reactors so close to their sacred colonies, the delegates sent to protest the issue simply disappeared. All that could be done was to quietly close their borders to the industrial giant and strive to protect whatever still remained of their culture and tradition.

Progress was as inevitable as the rapid climate change and string of natural disasters. The planet Jeth soon became synonymous with its main city, the headquarters of SLA Industries. The planet Jeth became the planet Mort, like so many other things in the World of Progress, the name Jeth was lost to the aeons of time, to be forgotten by all but a few scholars and librarians.

Mandrake

Another of SLA Industries most promising Ebonite pupils - Mandrake, boarded the Ebb Foldship Yung and charted its course for Conflict Space in 2sd. It was classed as an exploratory mission, but in truth it was a further inspection of the departed Conflict Aliens. Mandrake was to report back in 5 years and relay his findings to Head Office, but once the Yung passed beyond the boundaries of SLA owned space, at the Gates of Herodotus, the Foldship was believed lost or destroyed.

It would however return in nine hundred years, only then it would be carrying Mandrake's descendants and their Momic slavers.

"We strike out into the unknown, looking for answers to questions we haven't even asked and we are anticipating answers we don't even want.

We do this to find out what lies beyond; know that we do it for Progress."

Mandrake, Foldship Yung departure, 2sd

The Whistling Bridge Protocol

SLA Industries was fully aware of all the dreadful things it had done in order to rise victorious and perhaps also knew of the evils to come. The company had already begun limiting

information going forward and erasing what had come to pass. Despite these efforts, it could not wipe the Conflict Races from its history, nor the power that was growing on White Earth, from reality. Their presence would always remain, in some shape or form. White Earth was left to fester and all survivors of the previous conflicts had fled into the lawless Conflict Space. They were all gone, for now at least, but ignoring the possibility of retaliation, even centuries in the future, was imprudent. SLA Industries' field of influence now encompassed the Known Universe. Their old adversaries had fled to deep space.

Two plans were set in motion. Aethermen, under the employ of Naga 7 Division were sent into Conflict Space to watch, evaluate and report back findings, then secondly, a set of orders, based on the likelihood of future reprisals, were drawn up. This agreement would come to be known as the Whistling Bridge Protocol. In 5sd, it was simply a first draft of proposals, but every 50 years up until the present day the Protocol has been revised and reassessed, based on the changes and advancements of the World of Progress.

Mort Earns Its Name

SLA didn't waste any time in stripping Jeth of its natural resources. It drew oil, mined for minerals and cut down vast forests and jungle for lumber. It set up countless factories and production plants in the Gartto Tundra. This region was arguably the first Jethian region to fall to the avarice of SLA. The company stained the skies with toxic fumes and black smoke, forever damaging the upper atmosphere.

In the centuries that followed, the Gartto Tundra transformed into a polluted wasteland, its original Jethian title would be forgotten and it would simply be known as the No-Go Zone.

The pillaging was planet-wide and within six years, SLA Industries had bled the planet dry; all botanical life on the planet had been utilised until nothing remained. Jeth's natural fauna suffered a similar fate with only a meagre list of the most aggressive and adaptive species left alive. Mort would come to consider them as nothing more than mere vermin.

Mort's First Police Force

It was exciting times for the company and countless workers flocked to Mort from across the new World of Progress to find work in the fast expanding empire. With all the hopes and dreams of corporate life came the inevitable consequences. Crime was rife in the streets of Mort City and the company was struggling to deal with the lawlessness, so, with the help of one of SLA's more resourceful Operatives - Jonathan Bellwood, the first legitimate police patrols arrived in Mort City. These were the men and women in green - the Shivers.

From 58sd, up to the present day, the Shiver Units are easily the most common sight in Mort City, spawning generations of recruits to patrol the dangerous streets. They are divided by loyalty to the company and corruption bred from the overbearing capitalistic society of Mort.

"I am Mort's most violent Shiver."
Jackson Clyde, Shiver Unit

The Jethians Transformed

If Mort was going to be the main base of SLA Industries' operations it was going to require power and lots of it. The company set about bringing nuclear power stations to the globe. What had once been lush jungle regions were quickly wiped away by industrialism. It was at this time that the company reencountered the Jethians. They were far from happy that the company had invaded their world, stripped away their forests and jungles and begun bulldozing their sacred temples.

The Jethians, not an especially warlike species, could only offer a weak form of resistance against the encroachment of SLA. They chose prayer over resistance. The entire Jethian population refused to fight and worse, refused to integrate within the growing company, instead, they flocked to the protection of their equatorial city and temples to beg their therianthropic gods for salvation. Their pleas were never answered; their deities had seen wisdom and fled into Conflict Space.

The Fission Belt, a gargantuan ring of nuclear reactors encompassing Mort's equatorial line erupted to life in 80sd. The Belt's positioning was strategic, far enough away from Mort City to mitigate radiation spill, but close enough to power Mort City and the new emerging city states across the entire globe.

In 87sd, just one year after the last nuclear reactors were completed, a catastrophic meltdown occurred. A lethal gulf stream of radioactive winds encircled the planet. SLA secretly hoped that this 'unfortunate accident' would finally kill off the Jethians, but their fate turned out to be much, much worse.

Now ravaged by lethal doses of radiation and yet still left alive, the Jethians fled their crumbling ancestral homes and crawled northwards, mutating, distorting and eventually transforming into a broken and animalistic species. Their past forgotten, the newly shaped species was driven by little more than hunger and the instinct to survive.

The people of Mort City would come to know them as the Carrien. The first horrific sightings of these beings filtered back through to Head Office in early 88sd. They thought it was merely a small band of mutants that could quickly be wiped from the face of Mort. Instead, the Carrien scourge would endure and still be plaguing the sewers of Downtown and the debris of the Cannibal Sector for another eight centuries.

Expansion Era - 101-200sd

The next century is recorded as the Expansion Era, although this term is focused primarily on the growth of Mort City, its neighbouring City-States and the industrialisation of the No-Go Zone. Across the World of Progress, the outlook was less rosy and it was in this the second century that the whole concept of 'Corporate Warfare' was born. During the Expansion Era, SLA Industries encountered the first true rivals to its power base. SLA may have been the victor, but its position in the World of Progress would clearly be challenged from this era onwards.

Rising Population

The Central Outskirts continued to grow. At first, civilians longing to get out from the gloom of Suburbia flocked to the area, causing a drastic swell of inhabitants. As the years ticked by, more and more off-worlders arrived, setting up home and sharing their resources with SLA Industries. Of course, SLA welcomed the vast majority of these species, new employees for the company, new skill sets and new allies, but as space got tighter, policing the Outskirts became a challenge. The Shivers tasked with thejob in the Central Outskirts now numbered into tens of thousands. They drastically outnumbered Operatives and despite being poorly armed, were tasked with maintaining order in every corner of this sprawling landscape. Despite being great in number, the sheer size of the population meant that to keep it in check, far less security could remain on the perimeter fence to keep an eye on the encroaching Carrien threat.

The Evolution Of Vermin

In 103sd, a depleted Shiver force manning the perimeter fence along the Red Stretch reported sightings of a new threat. While the fence had only ever done a mediocre job of keeping out the Carrien, this new foe had simply crushed the fence entirely and brutally murdered entire squads of Shivers keeping watch. Leading huge packs of Carrien through the perimeter was what soon came to be known as a Greater Carrien, a hulking giant standing in excess of 9 ft tall, sporting antlers and a muscular frame that was as stoic as a Stormer. The Greater Carrien struck fear into all those that saw it, an enemy the likes of which most Shivers had never seen.

This would be the first of many sightings of Greater Carrien, each leading packs of ravenous scavengers into the Central Outskirts, before eventually disappearing down into the sewers where they began to make homes, carving out great underground halls from the subterranean passageways. The arrival of the Greater Carrien marked an evolutionary step in

the Carrien species and the first dreadful sign that they were here to stay.

The Age of Terrorism

A mercenary force identifying themselves as DarkNight were encountered by a Nitro Legion battalion in 123sd on a remote planet called Horatio. This mercenary force was well equipped and seemingly well financed. In the years that followed, the threat of DarkNight followed the company back to Mort, with a rising number of terrorist attacks taking place on public spaces and key SLA buildings.

As the years ticked by, the frequency of these attacks increased, as did DarkNight's numbers. With the regularity and severity of the attacks growing, SLA Industries had to accept that a very legitimate enemy had arrived on Mort, one determined to hurt the company and incite anarchy among the population of Mort City. DarkNight were the polar opposite of the Carrien, their agents used weapons and armour that challenged the equipment used by SLA Operatives and they thought like the company; true tacticians, not feral savages. SLA could not simply throw Shivers at this threat; it required brains and patience.

Very quickly, DN-branded weapons started appearing on the black market, putting military-grade firearms into the hands of civilians. This bold move, challenging SLA on their own biggest enterprise, rapidly earned DarkNight the newly fashioned term of a 'rival company' in the arms race, though anyone who had encountered their brutality on the streets of Downtown knew the truth - this was organised crime at its highest level.

The Lure of The Ebb

Though the Ebonite species had been considered an ally to SLA Industries since the Conflict Era and their liberation from the Momics, their numbers on Mort had remained relatively few compared to other species. Intruder had kept company with those Ebonites of standing and urged them to call out to their kin still living on far off worlds.

Word of The White had already reached Haxxan - the distant system of Ebonite homeworlds and little persuasion was needed. Ebonites boarded Foldships and made the long haul, bringing with them knowledge and artefacts beyond Naga 7's wildest dreams. Mort would become the new home to the Ebonites as thousands and thousands of new arrivals were welcomed into the arms of the company, hitting the streets as Operatives and drastically increasing the space travel capabilities of SLA Industries. This influx accelerated the company's understanding of a great many things, bringing about new levels of innovation and technology.

The Ebonite species was here to stay and over the years that followed they would become a major force in the company's hierarchy, under the leadership and control of the Necanthrope, Preceptor Teeth.

THE BOOM TIME - 200-299SD

The Boom Time is SLA Industries' most cherished era; it was when everything was going right - a period of unrivalled prosperity, for a privileged few. It has a style of architecture, dress sense and music characteristic to this time period that is elegant, luxurious and classical.

Free Enterprise

The birth of Rival Companies during the Expansion Era, the challengers to SLA, only increased during the Boom Time. As SLA grew more affluent, the greater the desire to carve out an independent corner of the marketplace grew in others. Whilst many competitors were focused on manufacturing competitor goods, the most common of which being weapons, their product range would in turn become their main form of defence when SLA came to challenge them in both retail and battle.

Other rivals were hiring out their accumulated combat experience as mercenaries, or simply assumed the roles of raiders, attacking anyone they deemed an easy target.

Thresher

""This isn't a company. It's a bunch of cutthroats tear-assing around the World of Progress in big armour looking for vulnerable planets and Ion Ships to plunder. Yes, they fall under the category of Corporate Crime, but I reckon they're more like a criminal organisation, a syndicate.

Thresher armour and weaponry has never been sold by these guys directly. The only thing they're likely to offer is hail of 11 cal rounds to your face."

Dolores Sutton-Reeves, SLA Corporate, SCL 8

In 232sd, SLA Industries 127th Tech Support group arrived on the water rich Resource World of Thallahs. They discovered a massive hidden complex within a nearby mountain range. Inside they found a vast array of lost alien technology. The Conflict Era had been concluded and largely forgotten for several centuries. The 127th were unfamiliar with Thallasian technology and the considerable skills they had once had in creating powerful anti-personnel armours and superior weaponry.

They knew they had landed on a goldmine as they moved through endless rows of mint condition armour, each armed with fully stocked and loaded heavy rifles. Procedure dictated that they report their findings to Head Office, but this was the age of the entrepreneur. A new and major rival company had just appeared in the World of Progress, it was the beginning of Thresher Consortium.

What followed were years, bleeding into centuries of infighting within Thresher. Any noble efforts made in its past were dulled by endless raids and bloodshed. Nonetheless, Thresher - the band of exceedingly well equipped raiders, endured. Fighting the morally questionable good fight, yet always fearful one day their precious stocks of technology would run dry and they would never be able to reverse-engineer more.

The Boom Families

It was during the Boom Time that the World of Progress truly galvanised its Upper Class. Many already wealthy families had invested in SLA Industries during The Formation and their return on investment increased dramatically by the year 200sd, helping to delineate the title to a whole generation - The Boom Time; the extended period of economic growth.

Families like Hinton, DeFeo, Flense-Bryant and Emmershaw were 'old money'; rich enough to buy whole planets and live comfortably beyond any laws, aside from the very top rulings from Head Office. To be one of these special investors was to be

a Boom Family. There were 68 such families during the Boom Time, but it swiftly reduced to 50 as certain households fell into ruin as the Great Downturn occured at the turn of the century.

The Boom Time was also the birth of the Corporate Sector, as the World of Progress knows it today. It was dawning of Mort's great law firms and investment banking, with subsidiaries such as Hinton Moss and Rowan, Garthon Investments and Sillindrad (the Ebonite family responsible for the creation of Dark Lament), dominating Central and Uptown.

The Boom families had the best of everything, going as far as to create the best schools and universities in the World of Progress, putting their own progeny through esteemed foundations like Buxbridge, Greenwood and Napwell.

Formal Education

In 279sd SLA Industries opened the Meny Training Facility in Mald. Meny was and still is, more a city of education rather a singular building complex. It covers all aspects of Operative and high-level Employee Status Education. In 279sd, Meny was a five-building interconnecting network, covering primarily the earliest forms of SLA professions. Over the centuries it has expanded considerably, to cover newer training packages and faculties dedicated to schooling Cloak Division and Stigmartyr agents. These standalone faculties, are in reality independent universities, with their own funding and some of the best protected buildings in the World of Progress.

White Earth

The blank world used to entrap Brent Walker had never been given a name before. It and its prisoner had been placed as far away as to be forgotten forever, but in 295sd reports began to filter through to Head Office; disquieting stories of a planet on the verges of the World of Progress. The planet had found an orbit and had a name now: White Earth.

It had become one world in a small solar system orbiting the red star - Herodotus. There were disturbing tales of creatures known as 'First Born' - the primates introduced to serve as the gaolers for the singular prisoner, but there were now stories emerging of confirmed people on White Earth and a message spread across the backwater worlds - First they were nightmares and then they were clay.

The worst story finally reached Slayer's ears, a tale he had been dreading since the beginning of time; talk of an entity on White Earth simply referred to Bitterness. There were conflicting accounts regarding what exactly Bitterness was. Slayer simply nodded as he was told the stories, but did not respond. He knew exactly what Bitterness was, he had been sensing Brent Walker suffering the brutality of the First Born, year after year, until finally he had became the aggressor. With each victory, Walker reshaped White Earth and its humans. His humanity slipped away. All that now remained was a singular focus - revenge.

SLA Industries had found its true enemy and the rains came.

Naga 7 Society were asked to conduct further research of White Earth but like the Neophron before them, they feared the entity that ruled on that world, a being they could not restrain or control. By the end of the Boom Time, Naga 7 quietly disappeared from the World of Progress.

Bleak Forecast

In 295sd, SLA had finally destroyed the upper atmosphere of Mort and the rains began to fall. They would never cease. The endless downpour marked the end of the Boom Times and the advent of a much darker period.

> *"It's been over six hundred years since the end of the Boom Time and I think SLA Industries has never quite gotten over that era. It's been brutal and bloody ever since. It was the last time we felt like we had a stake in the company's future and its expansion.*
>
> *Nowadays we're just supposed to do what we're told and be happy with whatever we've got.*
>
> *Still, you can see traces of that glorious era even today. When you're in Head Office you can see it in the architecture and iconography: that's pure Boom Time. It's a time and place that SLA's desperately trying to get back to, yet never will. It's gone forever."*
>
> Angela Maybridge, Historian, Threat Analysis

The Boom Time had been wonderful for the super affluent, but in the hundred years of prosperity it had created an ever-increasing class divide. By the end of the 200s there had been a visible decline in the standard of living of the people living on lower incomes especially in the population centres on Mort, but also throughout the entire World of Progress.

Most were learning to accept hard times and whatever strife lay ahead, but others were cracking under the accumulated stress and desperation of the times they were living in. A craving for violent revolt swept through the population.

THE GREAT DOWNTURN - 300-399SD

Whatever wealth and prosperity was achieved during The Boom Time took a sharp downturn in the early years of the fourth century. Only the truly rich would remain largely unaffected by the crash of 300.

It was believed that it was the collapse of Salvation Tower which caused the financial crash but it was actually a massive rise and subsequent dip in military stocks and spending.

The economic crash was felt across Mort and throughout the World of Progress, particularly on Industrial planets.

"In the Boom Time you get all these wealthy bastards gulping down fancy pop and lighting their fat cigars from burning homeless people and all that posh nonsense. Then you get everyone underneath wanting a piece of that action, so up come all the rival companies. What do you get? More fighting, more War Worlds.

SLA's up top at the end of the last century, but now they've got to hold that position, dogs biting at their heels. More spending on ammunition, military technology and all the other shit that makes people dead.

SLA wins, again. Then it loses, big time. All the stocks and shares drop dramatically.

They say we're entering a new dark age in the World of Progress, but it's got to be pretty damn dark to match the Great Downturn."

Phylis 'Redtooth' Morley, Human Operative, SCL 7d, squad 'Boss Man's Wrath

BRUTALIC

A new Oppressor Power had grown in the World of Progress - a company and ideology known as Brutalic. The company's beliefs were born out of the violence and bloodshed endured over the 300 years of rule under SLA Industries.

They differed from DarkNight because they were not driven to right wrongs, merely embrace the dominant culture - brutality.

Brutalic drew in employees who craved ceaseless savagery. It was more than the creation of horrific weaponry, murder movies and combat drugs; it was treated as a religious practise. The belief was to throw oneself into harm and to generate harm. Brutalic would attack any outside force, be it SLA, or DarkNight or anyone that appeared to challenge their near cult-like approach to business and warfare.

"Brutalic is mostly forgotten in our historic documentations and their period of activity is commonly overshadowed by the exploits of DarkNight and Thresher. But Brutalic was a powerful adversary of SLA back in the 300s and only a handful of scholars are able to describe the rival company's philosophy in any clear fashion.

They made what some call snuff films, built weapons focused more on damage over accuracy and creating the most extreme spectacles of gore on the city streets.

They were a precursor to the Horrors recently deployed in Cannibal Sector 1, the Contract Circuit's Gore Zone and possibly even the Shi'An Cult, well, on Mort at least. I suppose you could say that they helped to shape what we watch, what we see on our SLA manufactured television sets today.

SLA clearly owes a debt to Brutalic, but the company secretly prays it doesn't see a resurgence."

Angela Maybridge, Historian, Threat Analysis

Brutalic was a force that struck SLA at the worst possible time and prevented its typically swift recovery for many years. The fourth century saw a further rise in rival companies and was forced to pump huge amounts of its capital into military applications and the troops. SLA was also shifting much of its weapon manufacturing to cheaper planets. This hit the factory workers in Mort's Central Outskirts very hard, marking the start of mass unemployment on Mort - a trend that unfortunately continues to the present date.

Industrial worlds all across SLA's reign saw loss of workforce, food shortages and were left vulnerable.

The Brutalic movement impacted these woes, as countless agents of its savage ideology attacked SLA, on the city streets and even on the war worlds, sending whole armies of suicidal madmen to tear down the company's rule.

Brutalic's funding was coming from one of the original Boom families - the House of Bechard on New Paris. It had the financial means in which to bankroll this new company and equip its agents.

"Now, what we have here is a fire-arm from the third century, created by the rival company - Brutalic. You may all know New Paris for its pretty dresses and luxury cheeses, but back then this is the sort of product you'd expect to see emerging from that world.

I see a few wry smiles in the class and yes indeed, this weapon does in fact have three barrels. It's also hard to miss the underslung chainsaw; as if it weren't scary enough.

How many of you would be comfortable taking this weapon into Lower Downtown? Show of hands, please. Hmm, yes, I'm not surprised!

This is a gun that's most likely to blow up in your hands in record time, but you have to consider the minds of the creators and the agents eager to use this weapon.

They knew full well all the risks of overheating and they used them anyway. They welcomed the risk, welcomed the carnage. Once this weapon began spitting rounds someone was going to be killed or maimed and it's a coin toss whether that be the target or the gun owner.

And so begins your education on the extreme ideology of Brutalic."

Rael Virrin, Wraithen Operative/ Tutor, Meny Training Facility

SALVATION TOWER

Central Outskirts on Mort had always been a vast region beset with unemployment, subversion and crime. The city planners chose to construct an enormous social services building in the Outskirts that would work tirelessly to improve the lives of those inhabiting these slums during the Great Downturn. The building was called Salvation Tower and it took 6 years to

complete. It was the great hope of all civilians living in Central Outskirts, but almost as soon as work was completed on Mort's second largest building, it fell, causing one of the greatest catastrophes in SLA's history.

The disaster took place on 12th November, 300sd and whilst 'The Fall of Salvation Tower' suggests the building toppled over completely, it simply sank several building stories into the ground beneath it, destroying many of the surrounding buildings and the substations which powered the region.

The result was a power blackout across the entirety of Central Outskirts. This was not merely a temporary obstruction but a shut down from which the region would never recover. The event was called the Big Black.

Once the Big Black lurched into being, what followed was city wide panic and rioting, as the frightened citizens of the crumbling Outskirts fled toward the safety of Mort City, but were forced back into the chaos.

A young SLA Operative in training - Sandi Helen Piper, was so disgusted by the refusal and neglect of responsibilities by SLA that she immediately turned traitor and led a concerted attack against the makeshift wall defences SLA had thrown up to safeguard itself.

SLA Industries realised Piper and her supporters posed a substantial threat so they switched from defensive position to offensive, unleashing an entirely new terror into the mounting conflict.

Digger's Toll

A legion of robots were deployed at the defence wall to patrol the perimeter and eliminate potential threats and incursions posed by Piper and her allies. The robotic creations displayed bizarre behaviour from the very beginning of their deployment; they had a nasty habit of removing the skin and flesh of their opponents and applying it to their own metal frames.

A 'Manchine' arrived on the defensive line in November that was unlike anything the Shivers had seen before. Initially it was known as 'AGF-14' - Anthropomorphic Giga-Frame 14, a Manchine that stood 20 feet tall and weighed in at around one tonne. It had been deployed by SLA Industries for the express purpose of hunting down and destroying the leader of the Central Outskirt rebels - Sandi Helen Piper.

AGF-14 functioned very differently from other Manchines and most Shivers were terrified of it; the robot seemed to have a mind of its own, a mind that was vicious and feral. Its name changed swiftly. Because of its weight, the Manchine would frequently sink through the surface of city streets and stalk its way around the sewer system, only to burst back up through the cement and ambush its prey - from then on it was simply known as Digger.

Digger tracked Piper down within a twenty-four-hour period but did not kill her as it was programmed. It did proceed to shadow her for a month, systematically starving her and denying her shelter or sustained rest. It also murdered anyone that may have come to her aid; she faced her inescapable death, alone.

Sandi Piper disappeared from the gaze of SLA Industries, but so too did their prized Manchine. Digger effectively completed the mission (but nobody knew for sure the exact manner of her death) then went rogue and journeyed deeper into the dead city, taking up residence and ultimately ruling over what remained of the crumbling Salvation Tower.Digger has been recognised as one of SLA's greatest enemies ever since.

The Sector Wall

It was acknowledged, within days of the The Fall, that Central Outskirts would never recover from its catastrophe and what began as a makeshift defence would mark the beginning of a fortified wall which would encircle the entirety of Mort City.

It was the birth of what became the Sector Wall - an enormous structure whose boundary runs for 352km and took 47 years to complete. Most Shivers in the present day contest this number, citing that it has never fully been completed, as it is always undergoing repair and modifications to bolster its defences.

Since its conception the Sector Wall has been policed by Shivers, with generation after generation of recruits devoting their whole careers and in many cases their lives, to surveying Cannibal Sector 1 and protecting Mort City from monsters lurking outside.

Dawn of the Cannibal

By 345sd studies of Central Outskirts concluded that the ruins were now completely devoid of human civilisation; what now was scratching out a living in the remains were utterly savage and bereft of their former propriety. The once-people had now taken to eating each other in order to survive. They were now simply to be classed as exactly what they'd become:

Cannibals, with the Central Outskirts becoming known as the cannibal sectors.

Lower Downtown Begins

SLA believed that simply creating Downtown as a quick replacement for Central Outskirts would solve its civilian population issues, but by 353sd it was clear that intense overcrowding was causing an increase in crime, disease and a limited work infrastructure that meant 78% of the people living in Downtown faced lifelong unemployment. The Great Downturn would seemingly never end. Something had to be done.

Early in 354sd, SLA Industries journeyed to the depths of Downtown and began to dig. It intended to create a whole new series of habitation levels and force the populace to embrace these tightly confined subterranean tunnels and domiciles.

"Fuck that; no way am I going into Lower Downtown. I don't care what the letter says or threats SLA makes. That place gives me the bloody creeps and we're already hearing horror stories about what's going on down there… Seriously, I think I'd rather take my chances in the cannibal sectors than go to the slums of Lower Downtown."

Arthur Lynne, (45), Civilian (Unemployed)

People were quite literally bullied into Lower Downtown and it wasn't just the civilians who were taking up residence in the region; Carrien, Mort Rats and serial killers began stalking the concrete warrens.

The Shiver Units deployed to Lower Downtown were at half the capacity of those patrolling the higher levels and after a time the Shivers actively avoided the depths and just left the civilians abandoned there to their own devices. It was the doom of desperate thousands.

Consolidation Period - 400-500sd

In the fifth century, SLA Industries began to reevaluate their company, their corporate structure and the varying subsidiaries manufacturing products for them. Administration felt the infrastructure had become too sprawling and unmanageable, so in 400sd the Consolidation Era began and whilst the majority of changes took place within the first decade, the consolidation process would continue until the beginning of 500sd.

Many of the minor subsidiaries creating biogenetic goods were brought under the banner of Karma, effectively making this singular division in charge of all aspects of biogenetic creations, from the Stormer projects to the clothes worn and the food that was consumed in the World of Progress. Karma's influence would span across countless worlds, but it would always bear the same logo and the same style of management whether it be on New Paris or on a random backwater Resource World.

The same brutal approach was implemented across all forms of manufacture with only major companies running specific forms of production. The stockholders in firms like FEN, Power Projects and BLA became exceedingly wealthy once more, harkening back to the Boom Time of the 200sd.

Some companies wished to keep their identity and tore free from SLA rule. SLA in turn deemed them 'Soft Companies' and classed them as subversives; enemies of the World of Progress. Some SLA historians class this as the definitive period of the never ending corporate war within the universe.

"It's true, DarkNight, Brutalic and Thresher existed long before the Consolidation Era, but I'd still class this as the true Corporate Wars. Other historians prefer the term the 2nd Corporate Wars; but this is all conjecture. The important aspect of this era is the birth of the micro companies, or as we now call them the Soft Companies. Tiny competing brands that did not challenge the might of SLA directly, but quietly attempted to undermine soda brands, adhesive tape manufacture and dental care products. They came at SLA with second rate produce, but were to defend it with first rate aggression."

Angela Maybridge, Historian, Threat Analysis

SLA also redesigned their company structure, grouping the entire business into various departments. The employees at Head Office would gradually find themselves belonging to a new specific Department, or in the case of Operatives they would receive their missions, now referred to as BPN Files which would be issued by the newly drafted Departments.

"BPNs are just one of these phrases that is universally used, but rarely questioned. The Blueprint News files first went into circulation on 3rd October 304sd and they weren't an actual 'blueprint', y'know, like a design, yeah? They were originally printed on light blue paper and with a dark blue ink, specific to the machines that created them at the time. And as for News, well, that's a weird one. It seems that by using the term 'news' the designated mission felt like a suggestion, rather than a direct order. Like, "did you hear the news, maybe you should investigate?"

The high ups thought the Operatives would rebel if they were told what to do, so they gave 'em the kid gloves? They had to be coaxed into working! Just a polite word for do what you're told – news. Crazy, isn't it?

A different time…

Anyway, the words and the colours stuck, but today we're under no illusions about the orders we're given."

Visage, Ebon Operative, SCL6d, squad Dusty Lavender

The Sector Rangers

100 years after the cannibal sectors came into existence, SLA Industries recognised the rapid evolution of the Cannibals and Carrien and felt it necessary to devise and conduct research patrols of the city ruins. The end result was the Sector Rangers, who would grow to be among the best trained and most efficient Operatives SLA Industries has ever created.

The Sector Rangers were founded in 407sd and the first recruits ventured into the dead city just one year later. Not everyone entering Meny was capable of becoming a Sector Ranger, nor would most want to be, especially as word spread of the Rangers' gruelling training regime and the equally miserable six month long tours of the cannibal sectors.

"I hear ya, the Sector Rangers are as tough as they come and you'd think everyone in SLA would want to be one, right? I heard that it's something like 1 in 500 that gets selected for the Fenswick Program, but I mean, look at these guys. They're

bloody dead inside. I've seen more sentience out of a Low Wave Stormer than those ghouls.

The Sector Wall Shivers created the term 'Stone Eyes' for the Rangers. These guys don't just patrol the Cannibal Sector, they become a part of it."

Anders 'Screwhead' Palmer, Human Operative,
SCL 9a, squad 'The Sparkly Cats'

From the moment the Sector Rangers were introduced to the Operative ranks, SLA recognised their value and the breadth of their capabilities. For the first hunderd years after the cannibal sectors were formed a great deal of even Cannibal Sector 1 had not been traversed nor catalogued. The Rangers resolved that.

Quickly it became clear that the Sector Rangers could travel only so far into the first sector. A finate amount of supplies could be carried in a Battle Taxi and their training, especially on how to survive off of the sectors, had proved wanting. The Rangers couldn't get far beyond the NorthWest Compact.

SLA Industries essentially went back to the drawing board with the Sector Ranger Program and in 421sd, a state of the art simulator and training centre was opened in Viddrie. Old and new recruits were educated, and put through their paces, in an artificial environment based on the Sector knowledge gathered over the prior fourteen years.

The 3Ps Contract

Offworld reports were returning to SLA with news that many of its Resource Worlds were coming under constant attack from rival companies. Before taking more extreme measures, the company sent undercover spies to these planets and conducted investigations into the growing subversion. In many cases it was corrupt officials who had entered into clandestine trading with DarkNight.

It seemed that SLA Industries was starting to lose its grip on the World of Progress, so it opted to reinstate the 3Ps Contract in an effort to establish itself as the overruling body in the World of Progress. The 3Ps Contractual Agreement was entitled after the three pillars of SLA Industries ethos: Progress, Prospects and Prosperity. It's issued to all newly discovered planets in the World of Progress and whilst progress, prospects and prosperity all sounds very encouraging, it is invariably anything but. 3Ps contracts led to totalitarian regime, horrendous Franchise Worlds and all manner of global abuses at the hands of SLA. It was and still is, a brutal, autocratic means of conquering worlds, but the 3Ps Contract also served to galvanise the modern-day World of Progress.

The contract appears optimistic until the planet's governments read through the plethora of stipulations within the contract and then witness first-hand what it means to fall beneath the control of SLA. Such worlds lose all identity and become merely an extension of SLA. Global continents no longer serve and aid each other; they become a collection of nations in name only which exist to serve the company in however it demands. They can always refuse, but the consequences of denial will be severe.

SLA Industries does not invade worlds, although the 3Ps Contract effectively strong arms a new planet with clauses it cannot possibly accept. Nonetheless, the choice is theirs: either allow SLA to essentially take over the running of your world, or refuse and accept the potential ramifications.

Third Eye News airs 'Progress Control' - an hourly news channel covering universal politics, current affairs and interplanetary statuses. There, new worlds under offer are heavily publicised. The citizens of the World of Progress watch the news, every hour on the hour and so too does SLA's corporate rivals.

By showcasing a vulnerable planet on Progress Control it is announcing to the World of Progress that it is defenceless and ripe for the taking. DarkNight, Thresher and shoals of aggressive Soft Companies are always angling to conquer and convert a new society to their cause, force their product range upon them.

SLA is fully aware of this and will utilise the looming threat of imminent invasion: if the planet's governments do not acquiesce to SLA's demands, they will exit and abandon them to certain attack by any number of rivals, who will likely be even more savage in their negotiations than SLA.

Almost all planets and star systems in the World of Progress were snared and defeated by SLA in such a manner. Some planets tried to retaliate against SLA, but considering the company could deftly defeat so many powerful enemies during the Conflict Era, such resistance is most likely futile.

Many planets simply roll over and let SLA monopolise them. Thousands of worlds gradually let go over the centuries and took to producing whatever the company told them. SLA would protect them, but not from poor decision making.

"When the Conflict Aliens fled I think everyone thought it was the dawning of a brighter future, but I think it was just more of the same. Maybe it was worse, because what we got instead was the worst fate imaginable; to live on and on after crushing defeat. I was a soldier in the Conflict Era and I thought it'd be the end of me. Now I'm seeing out my final years working 18 hour shifts stitching these zips into short pants. I'll die face down in denim.

Thank you, SLA."

Janice Scobie, (48) Factory Worker,
Franchise World 'Dig 4'

THE NEW WAVE - 500-599SD

Expanding Range

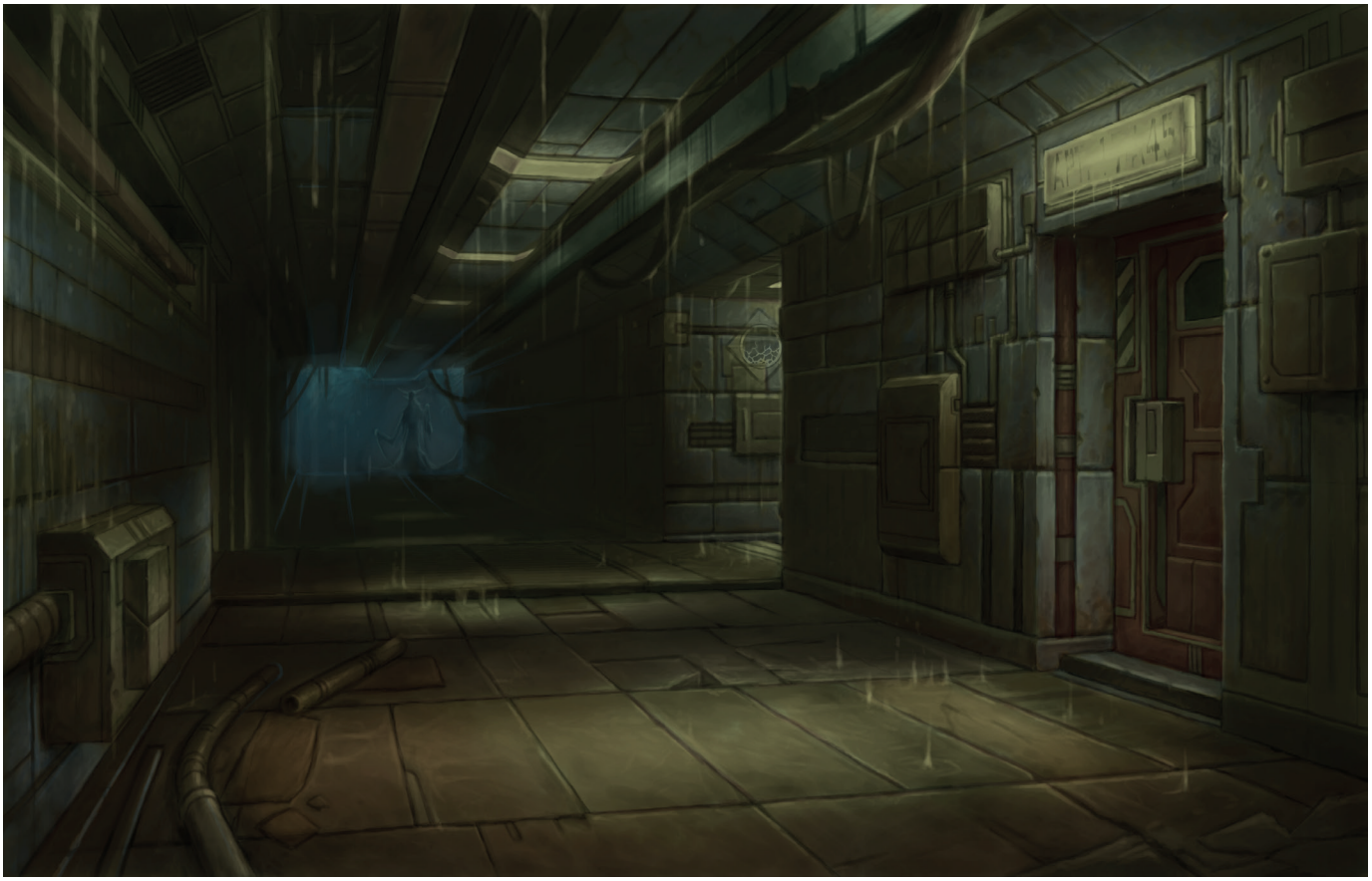
SLA Industries, ever intent on progress, looked to further advances in the development of armour, weaponry and new studies in fusion technology. For the next hundred years began what would later be known as 'The New Wave', with the World of Progress enjoying a wide scale manufacturing boom.

The New Wave produced classic products which are still available in the present day: Crackshot and Dogeybone armour and time-honoured weapons like the KPS Mangler AS and the FEN 30-30 'True Shot' Sniper Rifle.

Elsewhere, it looked far more gloomy and towards the close of the highly productive century, darker days were to follow.

Age of Nightmares

At the beginning of 582sd Cannibal Sector 1 was suddenly beset by two solid days of black rain. The majority of the denizens in the Sector took cover and waited for the strange



deluge to subside, but those who were struck by the downpour were plagued by horrific visions unlike anything typically conjured by the region.

By the end of the 48 hour period the black rains ceased and relative normality returned to the Sector. The Shiver stationed on the Wall believed it was simply the result of pollution in Mort's skies, but in the months that followed a new form of horror settled in the ruins, marking the beginning of the Age of Nightmares.

Shivers reports spoke of 'living shadows' which were flitting about the NorthWest Compact. These shades targeted all the species living in the Sector, ravaging their minds and tasting their fears. In time, the amorphous black shapes would materialise in physical forms, based on the accumulated horrors of the Cannibal Sectors.

They were the first reported Dream Entities on Mort. In subsequent years these beings would evolve into ever more advanced and complex shapes and gradually slip through the Sector Walls and into the deep recesses of Mort City.

Lower Downtown Complete

By late 590sd work had been completed on Lower Downtown. A further 12 civilian levels had been added but problems had begun to crop up even before the new citizens entered. A large number of the workforce had fallen ill and suffered from crippling anxiety during the long period of construction. Workers had encountered extreme feelings of claustrophobia and made claims of abnormal occurrences.

They had found strange, eccentric civilians already living in the occupancies that had been completed just moments before. Some workers even catalogued histrionic reports of sky views from certain windows; an impossibility in such subterranean depths.

Mort City planners simply put this down to overworked staff suffering from exhaustion and hallucinations brought on by chemicals in the tunnel air. In time they would recalibrate the air ducts, but in the meantime civilians were quickly housed in the eerie, echoey apartment blocks of Lower Downtown.

THE CONSTRUCT - 600-699SD

Fifteen years after the completion of Lower Downtown, Shiver patrols had already dropped down to almost zero. The people in those recesses had begun to lose their humanity and were displaying peculiar behaviour.

As if this weren't alarming enough, the last Shiver reports sent back to SLA from the base level of the region claimed that there were indications that there were more civilian levels appearing beneath. The transit elevators now had numbers that descended to even deeper levels.

Only one Shiver patrol ventured below base level and never returned. After that no Shiver team would enter the unexplored streets again.

In 605sd, Tr'K V'rrTK, a well experienced and resourceful Shaktarian SLA Operative, agreed to explore the fabled levels and return with a detailed summary of findings.

Tr'K re-emerged on Inner Downtown base level three weeks later, dishevelled, armour battered and rambling incoherently. It took a further four weeks to obtain anything of value from his frenzied account - he claimed that it was full of impossible creatures that had constructed their own version of reality and that the place predated Lower Downtown. As far as he could tell, the levels descended indefinitely.

SLA took very little stock in the Shaktar's declarations, but resolved to dispatch some of its best Aethermen into the unknown levels.

"Report to Catalogue Backlog,

I cannot attest to the number of civilian levels descending into the infinite. But after 10 days of almost continual descent I had not reached the basin. I can only surmise that it goes down a good deal further.

It is my opinion that this region has in essence created itself and to classify it as civilian domiciles would be highly inaccurate: it is merely a construct.

It is my opinion that SLA Industries should quarantine this controversial region and cap information access. I'm not one to ignore potential threats but I'm at a loss as to what should be done. There are no people, not that I'm aware of and very few will ever venture this deep. It simply exists, but hasn't taken a malevolent stance. Not yet anyway.

Leave the Deep Construct be for now, but never, ever, forget that it exists down here."

Aetherman Montague, 6th Head

Chaos Reigns

Downtown had always been an unruly and violent section of Mort society, but the mounting pressure of subterranean living and the influence of the Deep Construct beneath finally took its toll on Lower Downtown. It is safe to say things never quite settled in Lower Downtown; it was a region that was troubled from its inception. Countless civilians were thrust upon the recesses and were simply expected to adjust to the cramped, squalid apartments and perpetual gloom. As months turned into years, the Lower Downtowners grew more isolated, strange and eventually aggressive.

"It's bad down there. I mean, really bad. Not many Shiver Patrols drop to Level seven, the folks there will actively attack the APCs. But it's worse than that… I guess the best way to describe them is just fucked in the brain.

I was on a patrol on Level eight and I saw a guy stood out on the street butt naked except for one boot, munching on a dead, raw rat. Nobody's batting an eyelid.

That was Level eight, so I'm scared to think how bad it might have gotten on Level nine. As for Level eighteen. Fuck that!."

Shiver Patrolman Dillon, 616sd

On October 31st, 617sd things finally came to a head in Lower Downtown. Reports were coming through that a Shiver Patrol had been taken down by a 'violent and extremely disturbed group of individuals' numbering around 35. An hour later a Shiver Precinct was ransacked by over 60 individuals.

This night went down in Mort City's history as 'The Six Seventeen Bloodbath'. Many compared it to the Big Black and the Fall of Salvation Tower, but in this instance, there was no incitement recorded; just the inevitable tipping point for the escalating problems in Lower Downtown.

The crazies had no terms or demands of SLA. No motive. They'd just gone insane and the madness was contagious. Ops were sent in within a matter of hours and by then the mob had exceeded 200. They found the aftermath of a mass blood orgy, decapitated Shiver heads on iron poles and numerous apartment buildings burning out of control.

It took a further 12 hours for the sanctioned SLA Ops to quell the disturbance, killing 150 civilians and forcing the survivors into the bottom two levels of Lower Downtown. SLA was forcibly locking the gates on the two deepest levels and then effectively washing its hands of the rest. It took just 27 years for Lower Downtown to go from 'a vision of future prosperity' to yet another 'blight on the surface of Mort.'

The Omaja

In 630sd the very first of the long forgotten Conflict Races returned to the World of Progress, but not as vengeful enemies; the Omaja were now refugees. They reappeared in their original Baal Star System, having fled decimation at the hands of the Root Dogs. SLA reluctantly welcomed them back, but forced them to serve within the labour force in the Baal mineral mines. Having suffered such terrible losses in Conflict Space, the Omaja took to this work without question and performed their arduous task diligently, yet as a species they were nonetheless plagued by bigotry and the constant threat of violence.

"I hate these little fuckers. I've lost three work shifts to the compliant little monkeys; all because they work double time and earn half pay. It's a conspiracy I tell ya, them apes and the bosses; robbing honest humans of honest pay. I tried telling one of them Omajans to piss off back to Conflict Space where they belong and the shithead bit my hand! Look at it! This means more time off and it's all their fucking fault!"

Excavator 'Chip' Chester Miles, Whittler & Nash Mining Company, Project 7, Baal System – 631sd

Having spent so much time in the mines, the Omaja earned the cruel nickname 'Trenchers' aand as a species that was always quick to temper, fights inevitably broke out. Once again the Omaja were forced out and pressured to work on the remote backwater worlds on the fringes of SLA owned space, where they have remained up until the The Changes in 900sd.

The Shadow Decade

Back in Cannibal Sector 1, the inhabitants on both sides of the Wall suffered the longest recorded period of heavy rain and storms in the region, stretching from 679sd to late 689sd.

It was during this miserably protracted period that the Carrien and Cannibals endured devastating famine. Thousands died. The only species unaffected in the sectors were the Dream Entities, who simply thrived on the widespread terror and anguish.

It was during the Shadow Decade that the earliest Dream Entity Masters materialised in the Sector and set about enslaving and moulding their own species.

"I've read in our history books that these rains signify things to come. When the downpour rivals anything previously recorded and it intensifies, seemingly without end.

Something will emerge again though, I have no doubt. Do not be scared now, the time to worry is when the rain eases and the horror finally shows its face."

Shiver Sgt. Godley, Sector Wall, 684sd

MEDIA ERA - 700-799SD

It was during the Media Era that the citizens of the World of Progress began to see the many faces of SLA with greater clarity. Through the lens of a television cathode ray tube they would witness the company's greatest success, as heroic SLA Operatives struck down the agents of DarkNight, but they would also see for the first time the ruins of Cannibal Sectors in all their lurid glory.

The viewers at home ate it up and loved every good and bad minute of it. Within hours, the Media Era had the unemployed masses in its thrall and its grasp never waivered.

The Children of Scarogg

A frightening new species appeared in Cannibal Sector 1 that didn't just threaten SLA Industries but every other opposing species eking out an existence in the ruins.

They were known as the Scavs; great hulking monstrosities overladen in scrap armour and tattered trench coats, each with its face concealed behind a gas mask. Throughout the varying regions of the Cannibal Sector, the Scavs wheezed and killed and plundered. They proved to be not only deadly combatants, but also expert engineers and mechanics. Almost everything carried and wielded by the Scavs was by their own design.

The terrible secret behind the mysterious Scavs is that they are yet another failed experiment by SLA Industries. In 706sd, Doctor Arild Scarogg was stationed in the No-Go Zone and charged with completing 'The Vodyanoy Project', in which he would create a force of super soldiers for SLA Industries. SLA suspected that Scarogg's creations might rival the Stormers and at a fraction of the cost, but the development was highly controversial, as it was based on Shaktar DNA as its framework.

By 708sd SLA Head Office had lost all contact with the Doctor and found no trace of the Vodyanoy in his secret compound.

The horrid 'Children of Scarogg' would return several years later in the form of the Scavs, only this time rather than be in thrall of the company as had been the want, they would attack SLA directly.

Mort Expands

SLA had opted to keep much of its exploration a secret. They did not want to encourage a wave of intrepid explorers journeying out into the uncharted provinces of Mort unless they were in charge. There had always been other continents and other city-states, but their function and service to SLA was far narrower. They were much less populated or significant than the thriving capital city of Mort. Research teams were covertly sent out to analyse and document the largely forgotten continents of planet Mort. These research teams claimed to the foreign authorities they were merely performing radiation and health level checks on the population bases. In reality, they were more

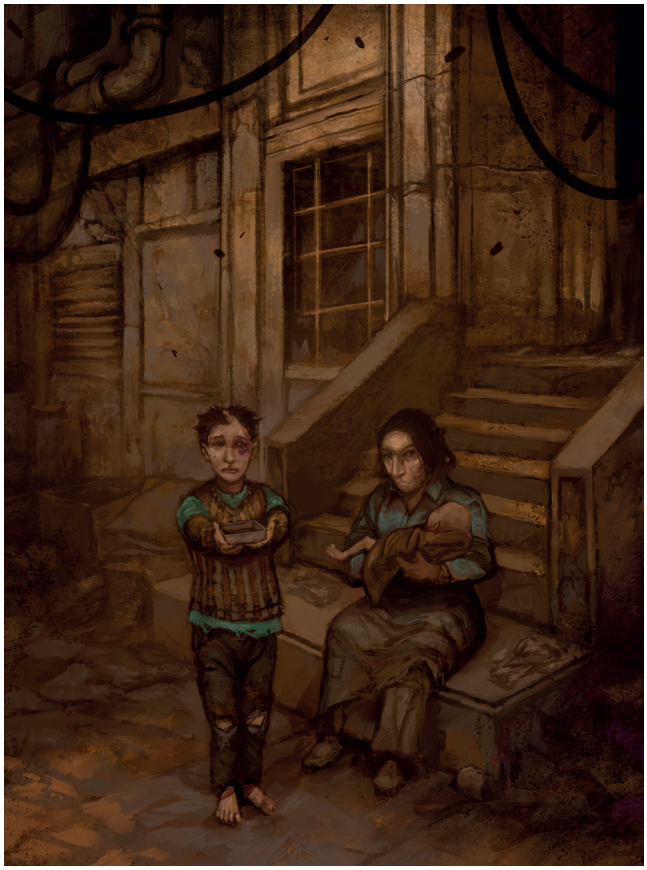
concerned with studying their loyalty and what resources could be readdressed in these nations. SLA did not always have to venture off planet to use and abuse a potential revenue stream.

In most cases, the research teams returned with promising findings, but typically the level of radiation still being emitted by the Fission Belt prevented much utilisation for a few more centuries. Further north there were, however, safer and lucrative opportunities, particularly in the country of Skend. The industries born out of Skend had made inroads into high end automotive development and manufacture, as well as several other decidedly specialised product lines, such as tweed, cigars and mineral water.

Ex-War Criminals

As highly sought after Skendish cars began appearing in Uptown, something far less pleasurable was also arriving in the Cannibal Sectors at the exact same time. Military veterans were returning from the War Worlds, they had fought insurmountable odds, secured innumerable victories for SLA Industries and finally earned their homecoming.

There was no fanfare, nor reward for their honourable service to the company. SLA did make a tragic error in allowing these soldiers to retain their military grade weaponry and armour as a meagre way of saying thanks. Unable to adjust to Mort City and the fast paced consumer lifestyle so encouraged by SLA, these decorated military personnel descended into the depths of Downtown and the Cannibal Sector ruins to start the war anew. Their troubled minds seeing enemies in the denizens of their new homes. They were no longer the celebrated heroes of the World of Progress, they were now traitors and subversives



who were just as likely to gun down Operatives as they were Carrien and DarkNight Agents. From this point on they would be classified as 'Ex-War Criminals.'

The Great Hunter's Moon

In 779sd, SLA Industries saw a huge influx of young Shaktars enlisting as Operatives in the company. It was attributed to what the Shaktarian species referred to as the 'Great Hunter's Moon'; an exceptionally rare lunar conjunction that only occurred every 1200 years.

It was seen as highly fortuitous and a blessing from the four Shaktarian Gods of Virtue. The Great Hunter's Moon encouraged many young Shaktars to forgo family life on their homeworlds and journey to Mort in search of noble causes, glory and adventure. Most settled in Mort City and never returned home, those born since are referred to as Hunter's Children and of Hunter Families.

Televised Reality

SLA had seen credible evidence that crime and rebellion was at its lowest due to the rise in TV viewing. More channels, choices and opportunities in that entertainment form meant more loyalty and far less subversion. SLA told the masses it could be trusted; they believed it. SLA promised the World of Progress it would take every opportunity and means necessary to protect and safeguard its people and for the most part it had succeeded in doing that, or so they believed. The only authentic rivals were DarkNight and Thresher and SLA had these enemies under control.

The Contract Circuit was easily the most popular network on TV throughout the World of Progress. SLA trained specialist Operatives to fight in a televised gladiatorial arena; firstly challenging one another and then eventually rival companies whom brought their own branded fighters to the challenge.

These heroes of the airwaves were called Contract Killers.

> *"Tune into the Contract Circuit at 8 for the big showdown! Reigning champion Slice n Dice will be facing off against the DarkNight contender Sickle Moon! Why not stick around for some of the other bouts airing at nine: the Giddy Gals will be fighting freshly imported Sector 2 Carrien Rams and we may be lucky to see a few special guests sprinkled throughout! Tune in or miss out! The choice is always yours. Only on Fight TV!"*
>
> Contract Circuit advert, Fight TV, circa 911sd

The Era of Progress - 800-899sd

The Era of Progress was the very height of SLA Industries successes, it was a hundred cycles in which many new high-end concepts would be sampled and run, although much would fall by the wayside in favour of time honoured traditions. It would culminate in the 900th year celebration of SLA Industries and its World of Progress. It would also mark the birth of a cult, which in time would go on to be its greatest enemy.

History in the Making

On October 31st, Mort's national holiday, 845sd the entire population tuned to Third Eye News and sat glued to their television sets to watch Cannibal Sector 1's first televised broadcast. Until that moment the vast ruins and its terrifying inhabitants had been the exclusive experience of the Sector Rangers, Wall Shivers and the occasional SLA Operative squad. Only the briefest glimpses of CS1 had been seen by the general populace, but now, finally, they would get unprecedented exploration of the region. Awe, wonderment and terror permeated the airwaves.

It meant that CS1 would get a great deal more attention than it had gotten for hundreds of years, but not just from the average citizen; company rivals like DarkNight saw the enormous potential in such lawless desolation and in late 845sd terror cells infiltrated the Sector.

The Bullet Tax

In 847sd SLA Industries implemented Bullet Tax for the first time throughout the entire World of Progress. It was introduced in an effort to drive Operatives to favour melee weapons, which proved more popular for TV ratings. The taxation did not have the desired effect, however, as SLA Ops still stocked up on ammunition hourly. Bullet Tax did prove popular with the Corporate Sector though, lining employee's pockets with revenue every year since implementation.

DeLyon City

In the far south of CS1 is DeLyon City - a once expensive and uncommonly picturesque section of Central Outskirts. DeLyon has always been regarded as a DarkNight hangout even before the Big Black and many Sector Ranger and Operatives squads have had run-ins with the rival company over the centuries since. By 850sd however it had become apparent that DarkNight was

dominating the old city and had constructed a series of fortified outposts among the now crumbling bourgeoisie architecture.

SLA sent in Operative teams, assisted by Sector Rangers in an attempt to break up the DarkNight power structure, but each and every time, the SLA force was destroyed or repelled. DarkNight was very much in its element in DeLyon City and much of its boundaries are rigged with all manner of booby trapa and explosive devices. One simply cannot charge into the DN-held territory without expecting to lose a limb on the way. DeLyon City is pivotal in DarkNight's chain of command.

Wind Up Toys

Tek Trex Inc. came into existence during the Chrome Era around 880sd, when cybernetics and more specifically robotics were popular in the World of Progress. It was initially regarded as an Oppressor Power, but SLA media had overestimated the company's output and power level. It specialised in small automated drones, which were used in raids and support equipment to other Soft Companies.

Tek Trex was more of a hit on television than a hit in battle. TV viewers loved to watch Operatives fighting scores of these little drones. Unfortunately, by the ninth century SLA had begun to eliminate some of its smaller, but persistent enemies and it was Threat Analysis who elected to wipe out the rival company.

This decision received criticism; even from SLA Operatives themselves, who saw value and potential in such a photogenic and inoffensive company. SLA dug its heels in on this issue however and a series of Hunter Sheets were issued to kill off Trex's engineers. The company's staff were effectively wiped out by 901sd, but the secondary objective to capture Tek Trex's manufacturing schematics was not completely achieved.

The Lost Scrolls

In Lower Downtown, a Human civilian - Elliot Raik had spent years studying everything related to White Earth, the legends of Shi'An and offering highly complex blood sacrifices to Bitterness. It was the first time the call was answered.

Elliot has been on SLA Industries radar for many years and the department devoted solely to the research and defence against White Earth considered Raik one of the greatest threats to the World of Progress. He had followers in the hundreds and similar numbers of murder victims.

Unseen by SLA, the first true incarnation of the Shi'An Cult was germinating in Downtown. The power to utilise blood magic was bestowed to Raik in the form of the Lost Scrolls – the last vestiges of Shi'An herself and the spells she'd created.

The gifting of such power would change everything, but as before, Elliot chose to be patient and quiet. He would let the cult remain largely dormant and slowly generate a structure and hierarchy. The Shi'An cult would not be simply a dull subversive for SLA Industries to snuff out on a whim; it would be the Great Enemy. The time for Shi'An to unveil its true face was still more than a decade away.

Halloween Jack

In late 895sd, Shiver Patrols were reporting a spate of murders occurring throughout District 5 of Inner Downtown. Homicide was and is, a frequent occurrence in Mort City, but

the individual committing the killings was more distinctive than most, with his obscure orange helmet and garish outfit. The serial killer - Halloween Jack, was also highly proficient in combat and seemingly unstoppable. The Shivers had tried to eliminate Halloween Jack and had lost countless troops to the 'mad man with the chainaxe' and when he proved too much for them, Operatives were sent in to challenge him. They fared no better.

The legend of Halloween Jack grew exponentially over the subsequent years, as the body count mounted and his TV ratings increased. Everything about the murderer remains, to this day, a mystery - the reasoning for his outfit, the apparent motive for all the bloodshed, who he serves, even who it is hiding behind the mask. Halloween Jack has never uttered a word, not even when bullets riddled his body. Attempts have been made to reach out and communicate with the enigmatic character, but it has only ever resulted in more deaths.

In the present year, Halloween Jack is widely regarded as public enemy number one. Since his first appearance he has had a HunterSheet issued for his extermination, with the highest bounty ever recorded, sitting at one million Creds.

"Yeah, the 'all time high' HunterSheet. Halloween Jack. Pretty exceptional, huh? You know what's also exceptional? That no Op Squad ever steps up, despite the cool one mill on offer. Now why do you reckon that is?"

Maxwell Nowlan, 34, Downtown Civilian (Unemployed)

Rust Alley

For close to a decade Mort City saw a fad for cybernetic augmentation. People were turning away from biogenetic enhancements in favour of robotics. The media mockingly coined the term the 'Chrome Era', to describe the trend for fashion robotics. It only lasted from 875 - 885sd. Problems abounded with applications and accessories built during this period and many people suffered disabilities and crushing debt from cybernetic augmentation performed in the Era. Most could never recover. Many SLA OPs and high-ranking employees were made homeless by the turn of 880sd and for the next five years they were forced into an impoverished Downtown region known as Rust Alley. By 900sd no trace of them nor Chrome Era as a whole was left on Mort.

THE CHANGES - 900SD TO PRESENT

Year of Progress

900sd was an important year for SLA Industries. It was the Year of Progress, celebrating nine centuries of growth and success. It showcased new weapons and new advances in biogenetics in the form of two new Stormers and the Vevaphon. Perhaps, most important of all was the introduction of Karma's development of LaD (Life after Death) allowing Operatives and high-ranking employees the opportunity for a scientific resurrection, as long as they had the creds to spend.

It seemed that SLA, at the height of its powers could do no wrong, but it was at the turn of the new century that everything began to slip. A series of catastrophic events were taking place throughout the World of Progress, even within the company itself. These collectively would shape the new era to follow, known throughout the World of Progress as The Changes.

The Conflict Aliens Return

Some of SLA Industries' most notorious adversaries - the Krell, Grosh and the Momics all return to the World of Progress between 905 - 909sd, with more vengeful species en route from Conflict Space. The Krell headed directly for their home worlds, the Root Dogs were more focused on War Worlds and backwater planets, whilst the Momics were the only faction to burn directly for Mort and resume their battle for dominance over the Ebonite people.

Third Eye News was very selective on reporting the Conflict Aliens invading the World of Progress. The citizens of Mort remained largely unaware that the ancient threats had begun ravaging the distant planets of SLA controlled space again. As the years marched on, disquieting rumours and snippets of information gradually filtered back to Mort City. Operatives who had been assigned Green BPNs had seen the horrifying Conflict Aliens first hand and suffered the casualties. Yet still, not all hope was lost. For all the negative, there was a shred of goodness to emerge from deep within Conflict Space.

From the Farouk system, the Neophron returned to the World of Progress, but not to fight. They had had some dealings with SLA Industries prior to the Formation, but were wise enough to bow out once the company's deception became clear. Over the last nine centuries the Neophron High Elect had watched the wars rage on within Conflict Space and then bore witness as the influence of White Earth and Shi'An cult erode the numerous galaxies from within. They also watched as the instability of the whole universe spawned a separate reality of beings - The Dream Entities, or as they are known in Conflict Space - Ethereals.

The Neophron realised that what was happening in Conflict Space was soon to descend on the World of Progress and rather than leave it to its fate, the Neophron chose to risk all and return to the company who'd done so much damage, then and now.

"We have spent many days in talks with the heads of Threat Analysis, relaying as much information as possible on what dangers we face in Conflict Space and the current threats encountered in the World of Progress.

Might we suggest that SLA Industries introduce a simple list of categories which group the varied opposition? At present, your citizens are ill prepared to witness or confront these enemies, let alone clearly identify one from the other.

There is still much we must know, on both sides, so may we put forth the four recognised threats? They are Corporate, Cult, Conflict and all other concerns falling under the title of Collateral for now?"

Asenathek Sott, Spokeswoman, Neophronic Council of the High Elect

Life After Death

LaD (first referred to as 'Longevity Chain') first came to the public's attention in 903sd after the assassination of SLA Contract Killer - Delia the Destroyer. Most everyone thought that was it for Delia, but instead of being shipped to the morgue, a Karma Medic Crew arrived on the scene and carted her

away. The media began to talk of a 'revolutionary new medical procedure', called LaD (Life after Death) and seven days after Delia's supposed death, suddenly she was back on active duty.

It seemed like a miracle, although aspects of Delia's personality had been somewhat altered during the process. She was more aggressive and prone towards violence. One just had to look at photos of her before and after the work performed in the Karma labs to see the physical and psychological effects of her death and resurrection.

Overnight, the LaD Option was made available to all Ops with the creds to buy in. All that was required for initial set up was 1 single cred in their new LaD account and they were good to go and then come back again, when the time came…

Not every species in the World of Progress would join the program. Ebonites, whom react badly to biogenetics as it dulls their Ebb, took little interest in the treatment. Shaktars largely refused on religious grounds - it went directly against their belief systems and the desire to die in battle.

Most other species however jumped at the chance. LaD was no singular process - it used state of the art pharmaceuticals to maintain the patient at the threshold of life and death and could also use biogenetic enhancements to repair and even improve dead tissue. It all depended how much you were willing to spend; LaD offered a variety of procedures and augmentations for the recently deceased.

In the age of LaD, when an Operative died, the medical team had four minutes to reach the Operative and rush them back to a nearby Karma base, but in more recent times and depending on location this was unfeasible, so steps have been taken to improve the window of rescue. Still, if LaD cannot get to their patient in time, the funds in their account are transferred to a relative, even if it's just the one cred. If the account holder does not have immediate family, or privately assigned heirs, the funds are completely wiped from record.

"It seems like the be all, end all doesn't it? In theory LaD is great, but it's getting to be a different story in The Changes. If you've got a BPN going on in the depths of Lower Downtown, there's no way they'll get to you in time. The best hope you've got is checking out in Inner Downtown. They're setting up Karma bases there now, heavily guarded of course. It doesn't guarantee anything and it's getting to feel more and more of a gamble all the time. I hear rumours that they're trying to develop some kind of cranial device your squad attaches to the spinal column to extend the window.

That's the good rumour. The bad rumour I'm hearing is they can't resuscitate if you die on one of those new Orange BPNs. I don't know why, but that's pretty terrifying, right?"

Joe Mauchline, Human Operative,
SCL 7, Squad 'Scary Biscuits'

Project Red Sky

By the 9th century, SLA Industries believed it could do no wrong. Nothing was beyond its capabilities and so it turned to the problems that lay on its own doorstep on Mort. The Cannibal Sectors had been a stain on an already polluted landscape for 600 years and it was time to address the glaring issue. The citizens of Mort City had lived and died for centuries in full knowledge of the Sector's existence. It was reason enough to not venture too far and if Cannibal Sector 1 was as bad as the media constantly reported, then whatever lay beyond it must be even worse.

"I remember how SLA sold it as a crusade; some great war to win back the glory of Mort and all that other garbage they were spouting before the slaughter began in earnest. Truth is, there was some special report sent back to the company via the resident Sector Rangers. Something about plant life they'd found way out there and other less pleasant findings besides.

SLA was going out there for more than just honour."

Pvt. Joey 'The Shiver Guy'
Duncan, Bridgehead Endeavour

SLA Industries was no longer prepared, however, to sit back and let the vast stretch of ruins quietly rot in the distance. It was time to take back the Sectors. The first attempt to take back the Cannibal Sector was brutal, direct and horrendously misconceived. On 10th May, 908sd. SLA launched the Project Red Sky, in which thousands of Shiver recruits charged out in the Sector's Elmar Estate and faced certain death. They were ill equipped and ill prepared for what they were about to confront.

Red Sky resulted in a bloodbath and it is widely regarded as one of the most humiliating defeats in SLA Industries' history. The surviving Shiver troops withdrew and the plan to retake Cannibal Sector 1 was shelved for three years whilst the plan of attack was reconsidered.

The 9th Division

After the disaster of Project Red Sky, with many troops left alive, still trapped in the Cannibal Sector and the families grieving for their dead, all looked to SLA for financial and medical support, which never came. They were abandoned and left to starve and die.

Thousands of loyal Shivers died needlessly owing to cost cutting and an extremely poorly devised military campaign. The effective scapegoat for Red Sky was a SLA Corporate - Charles Sebastian Grady III, who had been in charge of much of the finances on the project, especially with regards to munition supplies. Grady opted for Greenband ball bearing ammunition, instead of the lethal Redband flechettes, which resulted in thousands of wrongly-equipped Shivers dying pointless deaths.

Grady belonged to one of the illustrious Boom Families, but with a catastrophic failure on the scale of Red Sky his inherent privilege could not save him. Charles Grady was facing a life term in Fallgate Prison, but before he could begin his sentence he was shot dead by Errol 'Jester' McManus: a Shiver turncoat and recent survivor of Project Red Sky.

McManus had gone after Grady in his 'Jester' paint job, switching Shiver Green to black and red. Enraged Shivers, incensed by SLA's neglect were inspired to turn traitor and repainted their Body Blocker in the Jester colour scheme.

It was the birth of the rebel Shiver faction - the 9th Division.

"I respect the 9th, for what it's worth. It's a rash and foolish decision though. This is not how you challenge SLA Industries, nor is it any kind of way of life: living by your wits in the depths

of the Cannibal Sector. If that place won't get you, SLA Ops will, once the Bellwood Campaign progresses far enough.

If I'm honest, I think there's as much risk of 9th recruits turning on each other, than any external threat. There's a lot of diverse ideology in there and not everyone is in it for noble reasons.

I'd be genuinely surprised if the 9th Division is still around in ten years. Five years tops if they continue to make CS1 their base of operations."

Shiver Pvt. Phoebe Chang, Bridgehead Resistunce

The Bellwood Campaign

By 910sd SLA was ready to take a second try at the Cannibal Sector. This time it would be different; Commander Cradle of Shiver Command would be at the helm and operating on the years of data put forth by Sector Rangers and generations of Wall Shivers.

It would be called the Bellwood Campaign, named after the founder of the Shiver Organisation - Jonathan Bellwood. The new plan was to attack and hold a region then build a prefab Shiver fortress, known as a Bridgehead directly in the Cannibal Sector. The first stage of the campaign took place on 10th May 910sd and marked three brutal days of conflict. This time, the Shivers and by extension, SLA were victorious, at the cost of thousands of Shiver lives.

Bridgehead Endeavour was the first outpost to take hold in the Cannibal Sector; the first ground taken for the company in 600 years. A further 16 Bridgeheads would be built in Cannibal Sector 1 over the next five years.

"We've had a few victories to be sure, but check the map and SLA's presence in the Cannibal Sector is a series of 17 dots. This place is fucking massive. It's going to take years, maybe decades to really take back these ruins. This Bellwood Campaign will go on literally after I'm dead and gone.

Actually, come to think of it, that could be tomorrow…"

Sgt. Alvin Summers, Bridgehead Wet Head

Return of Naga 7

If the Neophron represented positive change within SLA Industries, the reemergence of the shadowy Naga 7 was the opposite. In 911sd, a scholarly organisation, who had not shown its face since The Formation, once again offered its services to SLA Industries. Many within the company were taken aback by the sudden acceptance back into the company and the highly allotted position they were to hold. Naga 7's responsibilities appear broad and somewhat vague. Some have claimed the department deals exclusively in propaganda, although they have not specified where it is profiteering from said propaganda, whilst others cite their duties as more mutualistic, they are dealing with irregularities the populace must not know about.

With the exception of their rather amiable Aethermen, Naga 7 is generally unpopular in the company and in regular conflict with other important departments like Threat Analysis and Stigmartyr, where their inherent nosiness can cause considerable friction. They have also taken some very questionable liberties with regards to Mort City's Downtown districts.

Moral Right Division

In 911sd, Agnes Dowr - a high ranking member of Naga 7 succeeded in getting a bill passed that would address the 'degradation of moral values and decency in Downtown'. Agnes was granted funding to create Moral Right Division - a militarised organisation tasked with educating Downtown civilians on the virtues of morality, dignity and politeness.

At first, Operatives and Shivers alike thought it was all a big joke, but quickly discovered that MR Division was serious. Deadly serious. Moral Right was sending out Virtue Squads to enforce these policies, a group of brutish thugs, dressed in white Body Blocker, led by a Whip - a privileged young man of the upper gentry. Instead of teaching family values the Virtue Squads were simply beating down the marginalised citizens of Downtown with hammers and generally indulging in all manner of vice and illegal activity.

Four years on and Virtue Squads are still patrolling Inner Downtown, bullying the masses under the thin veneer of public decency, but they have not gained as much traction as Mrs Dowr and her prim and proper organisation would have hoped. Agnes is nonetheless undeterred and is currently petitioning for greater funding and increased powers to 'educate' the troublesome undesirables.

"Yeah, I've had run-ins with the Virtue Squads. Virtue! Hah! Cluster of assholes is what I calls em! Old Agnes has literally not one clue what these goons are up to down here. Seriously, they're worse than a bunch of Shivers with their load on and it's because the Seraphim have way more powers of authority than the guys in green. What's that old phrase about power corrupting? Oh yeah – Too Much Power Turns You Into A Total Fanny. I think that's it.

I haven't seen much of the Virtue Squads, lately, but knowing that old bag they'll be coming back with a vengeance.

There's no way Moral Right Division are giving up on this."

Mad Wee Frank, (Proprietor of Mad Wee Frank's Mad Wee Falafels), 42, Downtown Civilian

Wall Reinforcements

The Bellwood Campaign has been one of SLA's more recent successes, but there is still much work to be done in the cannibal sectors. The deployment of the lesser known Stormer variant - the 830 Gator is the latest addition to the program.

The present duties of the Gators are to patrol the perimeter of the Sector Wall which encircles Mort City, killing and eating anything that attempts to breach the boundary.

With there being so many hostile forces in the city ruins this initially appeared to be an exercise in futility, but the defensive exercise has proven successful and won the support of the Wall Shivers, who will try to make friends with the roving Gators by throwing them beer and sandwiches.

"Ah fuckin' love Gators, me."

Shiver Sergeant Christopher Chester, Sector Wall Section 350

The Shi'An Threat

By the time of The Changes the Shi'An Cult had grown in numbers and in power. Elliot Raik had studied the Lost Scrolls and by now had imparted all his wisdom to other like minded individuals: a whole religious hierarchy had developed in Downtown. Despite repeated warnings by Stigmartyr that the threat posed by the Shi'An could potentially overthrow the company. SLA continued to ignore the danger.

In 903sd, the denizens of White Earth began cropping up in the Downtown Districts. Hominids and other such horrors were being summoned onto Mort where they would indulge in acts of incredible bloodlust, terrifying Mort civilians with their fury and sheer otherness.

Raik and his followers were creating simple summoning spells that any idiot could activate (and frequently did). The goal was not to build worthy spell casters but to generate fear and create anarchy in the heart of SLA. More than a thousand unwitting Shi'An hopefuls have lost their lives bringing forth brutal Hominids and Bane Rats via blood portals into Downtown, usually ending up serving as the first victims of these outsiders.

The Shi'An are singular in their focus. The aim is not worship and devotion; it is solely driven to destroy SLA Industries and anyone or anything associated with it.

Vevaphon: The End

Heralded as the future of bioengineering, the Vevaphon from the new and up and coming company, Doppelganger, instead proved to be a misstep and something of an embarrassment for SLA Industries.

Vevaphons were lauded as the solution to deal decisively with SLA's non-conflict enemies, a flexible and reactive weapon capable of mimicry and infiltration. Instead, an error-filled bioconstruct was rushed-out that was over-engineered and incapable of the job it had been created for. They were finally fielded in the same niche as the Xeno Stormer which was deployed at the same time, but the Vevaphons turned out to be much more expensive to maintain and psychologically unstable. Many struggled to fully integrate themselves into Operative life, grappling with self identity and failing to connect with other members of their squads. Although it took longer than it should have, it was no surprise that Doppelganger was eventually closed and all Vevaphons recalled by the end of 912sd.

Chagrins Depart

The emergence of the lost Conflict Races has been a continually escalating threat in the World of Progress. At first, it was merely the backwater worlds on The Verges that armies like the Krell and Root Dogs targeted; planets that were of little resource of the company, but in more recent years the Conflict Aliens have been far more emboldened and launched considerable attacks on the War Worlds and alarmingly, they've been winning.

This has forced SLA to take more drastic measures and, as of 909sd, all manufactured Chagrins (the largest combat variant in the Stormer program) have been re-trained and shipped to War Worlds, such as Dante and Cross, to force back the invaders.

"I can't believe Head Office let the Conflict Races this far into the World of Progress! Oh yeah, sure; who cares about the Verge Worlds, eh? Yeah, well what worked for us in the Bellwood Campaign, is definitely working for the Conflict Aliens out there on the Verges. Those backwater planets might be a row of dirt balls, but they're perfect staging platforms for those weird heads.

And now we're losing our Chagrins, what the fuck? I mean, yeah, they'll put their helmets on back to front, but they can smash practically anything in the Cannibal Sectors. I bet this is down to that 'Whistling Bridge' Protocol I've been hearing about.

Mark my words, the Chagrins are just the start of big, bad changes."

Shiver Sgt. Jeffrey Palmer, Bridgehead EchoBeach

The World Of Change.

Now, in the year 915sd SLA Industries faces an inescapable World of Change. The sins of its past have finally caught with it, culminating in the present date. Only a small fraction of the company can truly be held accountable for what has come to pass; the Operatives and employees simply play a function within the machine that runs the World of Progress and the civilians overcrowding the many SLA controlled planets have no say in the company's running, nor what has come before.

Nevertheless, all will now be held accountable as the Conflict Races raid and pillage every world in their path and Great Enemy permeates every aspect of SLA Society, converting and corrupting the very lowest and equally largest cross section of the population.

SLA is now forced to make its choice; to stay the course as the evil corporation which has unfairly dominated the World of Progress for 900 years, facing almost certain destruction. Or finally, once and for all, it must face and address its countless crimes over the centuries and work towards a better future.

THE WORLD OF PROGRESS

PLANET MORT

Mort (formerly named Jeth) is the principal Industrial Planet in the World Of Progress and the main headquarters and heart of SLA Industries. The nerve centre of all corporate activity stems from Head Office, which is based in the centre of Mort City. Despite being the most valued and important planet in SLA space, Mort is an ecological mess. For many centuries the surface of the world has been barraged by toxic pollutants and radiation, devoiding it of most natural life. Nearly all native fauna and flora was wiped out years ago. The oceans are dead and many of the countries in the northern hemisphere, including much of Killainas, are barren. The majority of the population are sustained from offworld imports and massive clean-air processors. Only recently has any form of plant life re-emerged within Cannibal Sector 1 and even then it is mostly just weeds, moss and algae. Various locations, including the reserves in Traakar, the pig farms of Klawe and the Meny campus, are now teeming with life hidden under massive protective domes. This is reintroduced and genetically modified, a corruption of life and a tainted, bastardised parody of what was there before.

Whatever natural animal life that still exists on Mort is primarily vermin; diseased and savage species that can pose as much a threat to its occupants as any corporate opponent or cultist.

In spite of this, people still flock in their droves to the planet, set to carve out a place for themselves, particularly in Mort City, taking on jobs as Operatives, Shivers, Contract Killers, or are simply content to wile away their existence as unemployed citizens living on a diet of fast food and television. The mess of Mort is just what the inhabitants of the World of Progress are used to. The pollution, the violence, the failures, all are normality. In most cases, the population are mistrustful of positivity, clean air and basic hope. Mort is a bleak, wet and ugly planet, but it is home to billions of unfortunate souls who consider themselves fortunate.

When people of the World Of Progress think of the planet Mort they will only consider its principal country: Killainas and its capital city state, Mort City, but there are other continents and countries on Mort that serve the company well. Countries like the cold and mountainous Hiberia, the homeland of the Frothers. The country of Mald is best known for its training facility Meny; a vast campus where all of Mort's SLA Operatives are prepared, educated and trained before they assume their duties in Mort City.

Even within the confines of Mort City, most SLA Operatives and civilians are scarcely aware of the larger world that exists beyond their borders. Much of the world has been inaccessible to all but a few for years due to the once deadly Fission Belt encircling the planet. In recent years the Belt has dissipated to sustainable levels and once limited trade routes are opening up for the first time in centuries. More and more code Green BPNs are sending SLA Ops to perform missions and investigations in countries previously only read about, like Feland, Trakaar, Gorrod and Valott. At present, these nations are mysterious and enticing. The dissipation of the Fission Belt is also resulting in immigration into Mort City from these countries. Some feel that Mort City is being swamped with unfamiliar languages, accents and customs, while others are embracing the diversity. In recent months non-Killians have started joining the ranks of the SLA Operatives, their outlook on life, helping their fellow Operatives.

"Hello, men, I'm Rosst Van Rooyen.

Have you got a problem with my eccent, men? Look, just coz I'm a Trakaarian Contrect Hunter, you think we're all up to shady business in Eggrippina, ey boy? Listen. Let me tell you something, men. I'll cetch any exotic enimal you want and hand it over to you for very effordable rates. No trouble. End I don't let eny bleddy customs efficiel get in the way of good business relations, men."

Rosst 'Slide Ection' Van Rooyen, Contract Hunter

There are 19 city states on planet Mort with each commonly acknowledged as serving one or more specific purposes for SLA Industries. The continent of Skend and its city-state Hoddeskalle are famous for their production of high end automobiles and fine tweed, whilst Klawe's Pig Town is, as its name suggests, known for its livestock, abattoirs and meat supply. The Traakarian city state Agrippina, provides a conduit to the Contract Hunters and the meat, pelts and other assets their hunting in the reserves produces and it is also the manufacturing location of the Crawler APC. All city-states are aligned with SLA Industries, but each has its own unique internal threats and setbacks, be it attacks from rival companies or environmental hazards. Mort City is by far the largest, the most important and the most infamous.

MORT CITY

"Mort City is … Look, when I started out as an Operative, my SLA Squad couldn't be bothered to sit in Slayer's Crib for hours on end and we took our chances on a Terminal for a mission and we lucked out bad – a job that took us out into Cannibal Sector 1.

That was before the Bellwood Campaign and when you wanted to go into the ruins you just had to march out the main gates. The rain was especially bad that day and it was just starting to get dark. Y'know when everything starts getting that deep blue shade? I tell you, we weren't in the best of moods when we got to trudging across the rubble and then, like, our Ebon just stops and looks back.

I'm about to shout at her to keep moving and … then I get it. I get why she stops dead in her tracks. It was the first time I'd really seen Mort City, properly, from the outside. I mean, it's hard to explain just … the scale of it.

For the Shivers on the Wall, even they don't see it; it's just a wall of architecture shooting up behind them, but us? We got to see Mort City in its entirety.

That's how I understand why the Cannibal Clans won't attack; Mort City is about as overbearing and oppressive as you can imagine.

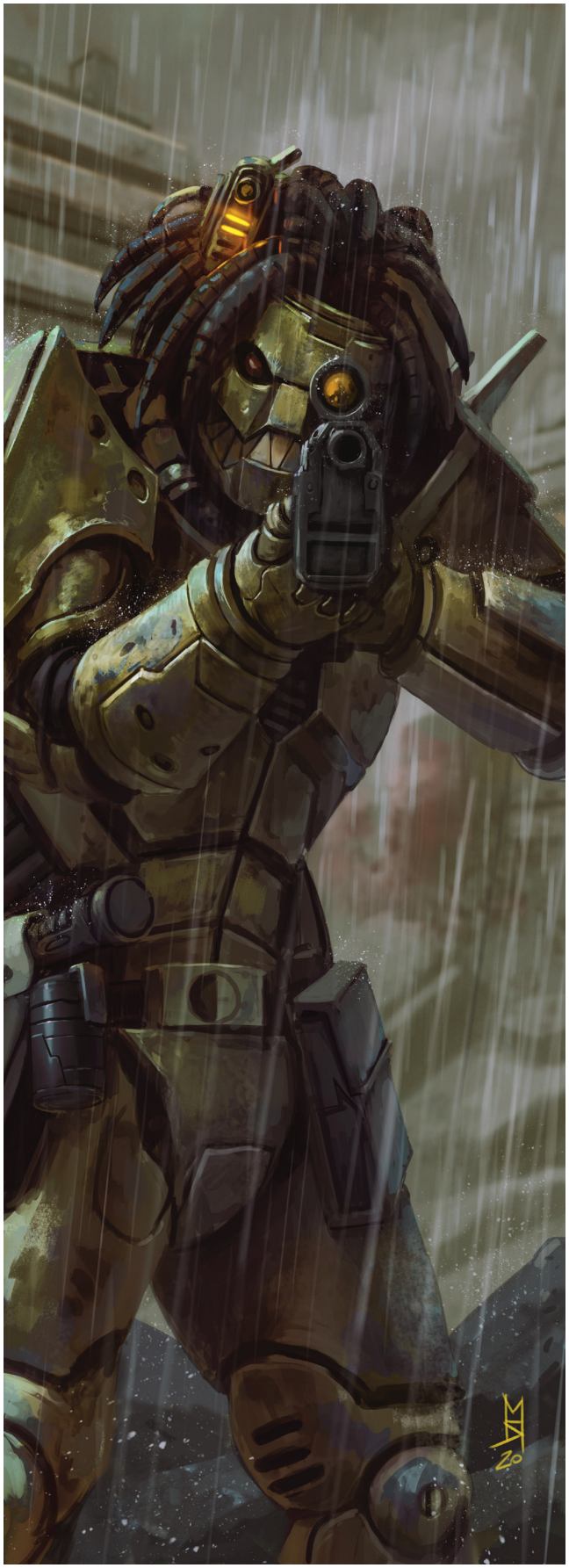
You wouldn't dare attack it."

Ralph 'Blaster Boy' Hawkins, Human Operative
SCL 6, Squad 'Milk and Two Milgrams'

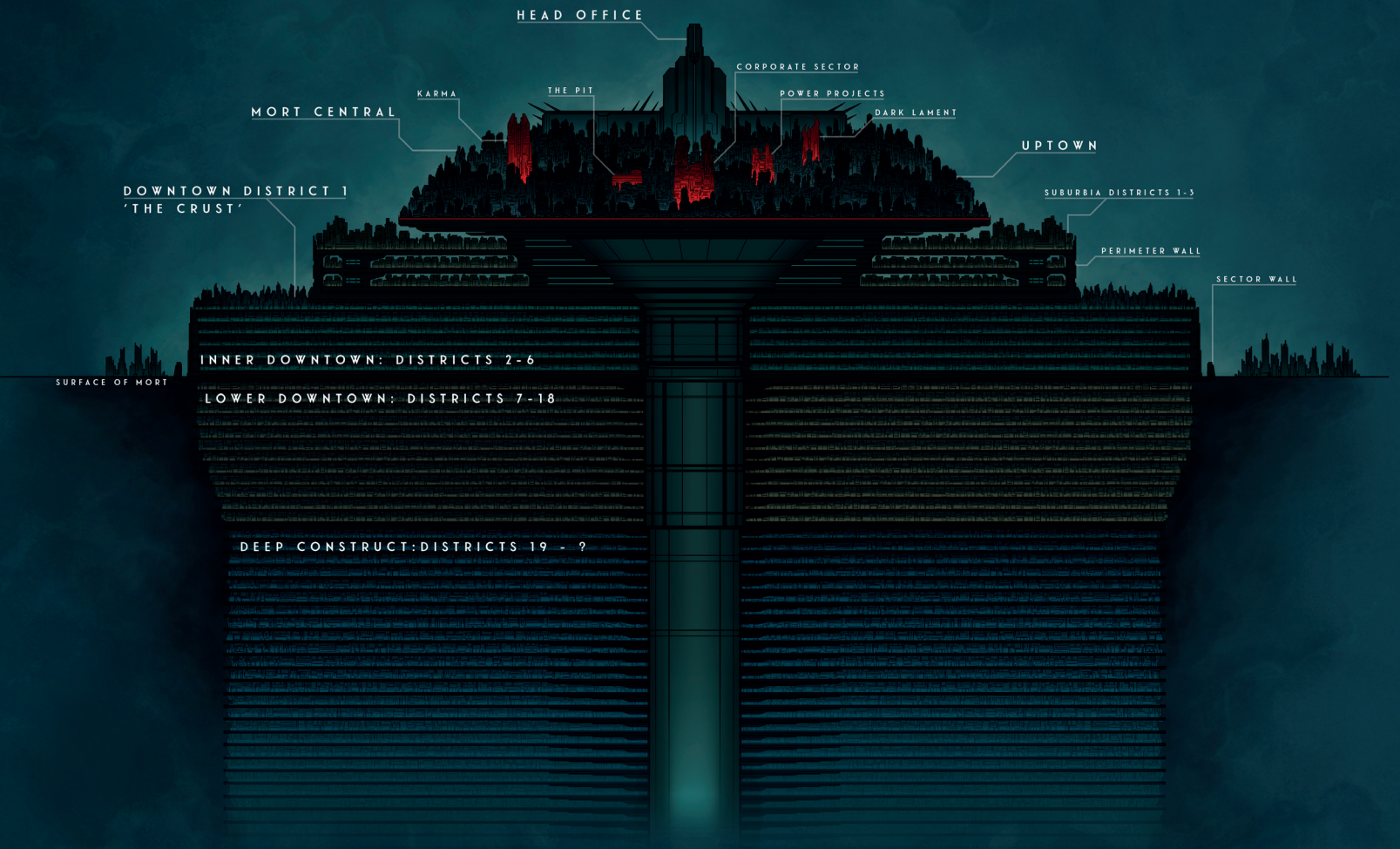
Mort City stretches up in a vaguely conical shape, reminiscent of the biggest volcano one could ever imagine, but constructed from building upon building upon building for as far as the eye can see, with Mort Central and SLA Industries Head Office acting as its peak and much of Mort City's structure below the surface of the planet. The vast majority of the city-state's citizens live well below the basal line. There they are deprived of natural light and rained upon constantly by the effluence of those above them.

Mort City is built on many layers and is a pyriform representation of the class structure that exists within SLA Industries. At the very top is the Head Office of Mr Slayer himself and below that is Central, where the elite and the departmental heads work, surrounded by untold riches and decadence. Next is the affluence of Uptown and then the bleak concrete high rises of Suburbia, which houses the majority of the overworked and underpaid employees of the company. Below Suburbia, out of sight and out of mind of those above, is the Crust and Inner Downtown, home to the millions of Mort's employed. Squalor and depravity exist in constant and equal measure below Inner Downtown in the area known as Lower Downtown. Further down, at an unknown depth, the unmapped, forgotten and barely explored Deep Construct sprawls, while outside the city, all semblance of control and humanity has disappeared, replaced with the savage ruins known as the Cannibal Sectors.

At the core of Mort City is an enormous central column, measuring up to 10km wide, which supports the city structure and houses a vast series of power cables and utilities that run endlessly throughout the metropolis. Each layer of the city is officially known as a District Level, although most citizens and employees know them simply as 'Districts' or 'Levels'. Downtown is divided into three sections: District 1, known colloquially as The Crust, Inner Downtown, which groups Districts 2-6 and Lower Downtown which contains Districts 7-18, with the largest District being approximately 12,000 sq km in size. Each Downtown District is subdivided into around 200

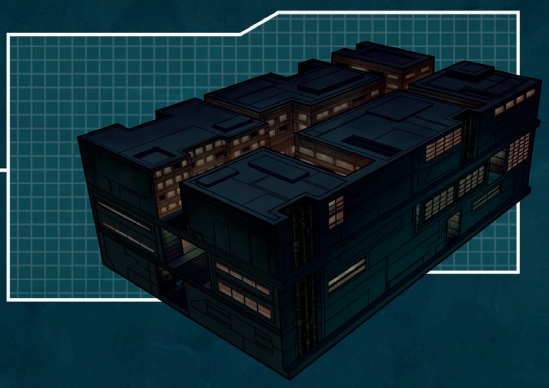


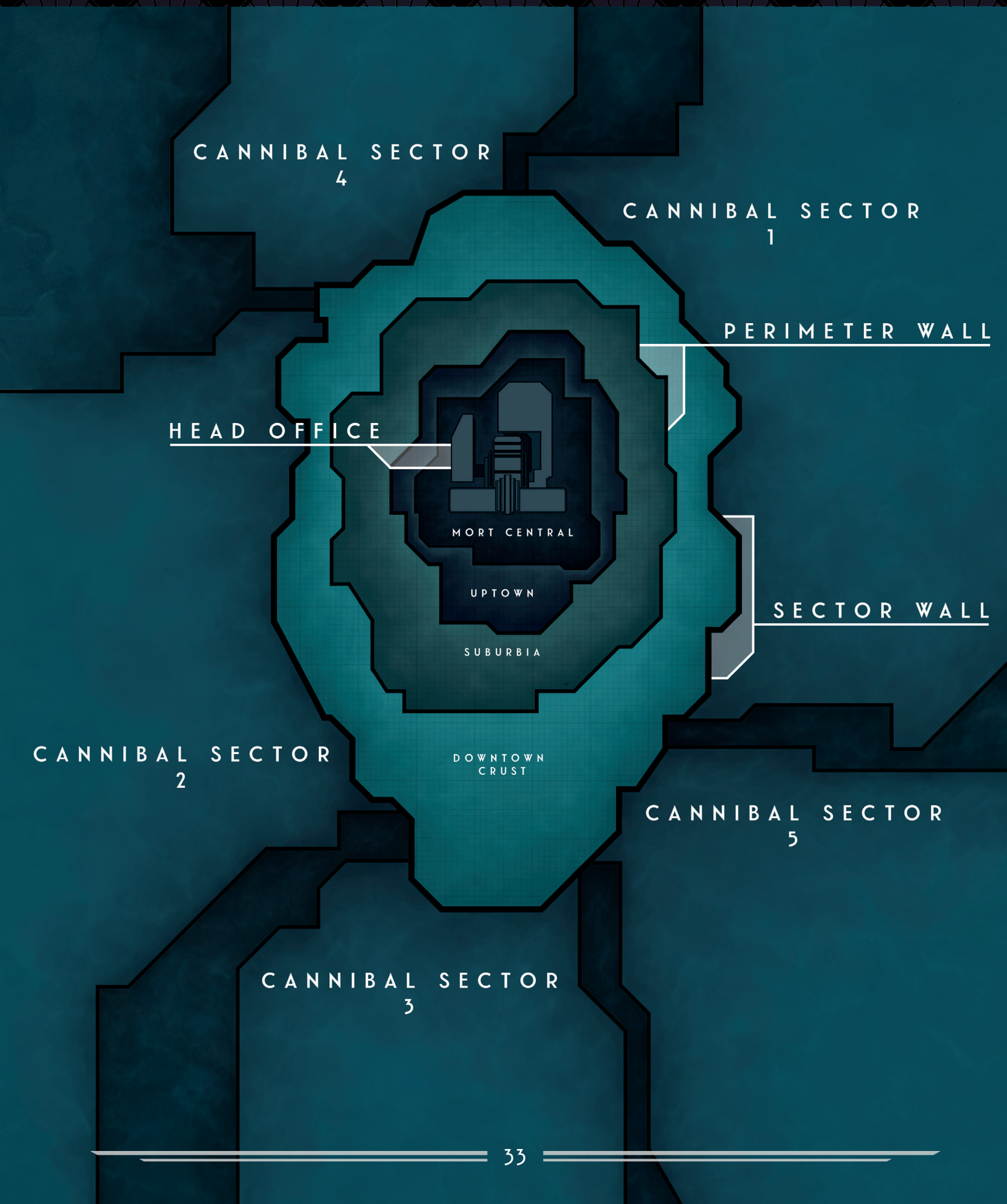
MORT CITY MAP

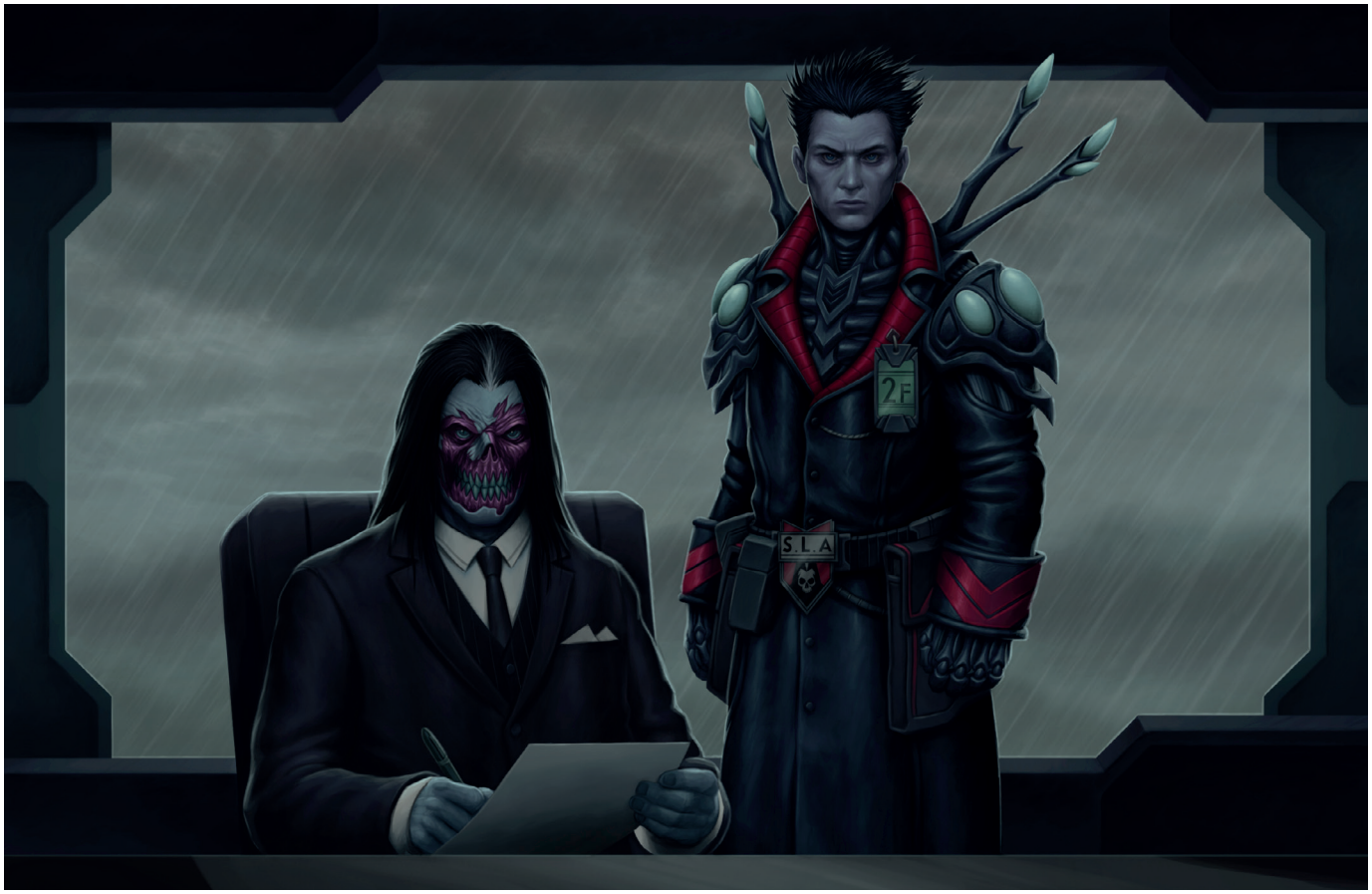


CUTAWAY OF DOWNTOWN DISTRICT LEVEL

A Downtown Sector is a self-contained unit that can be sealed off in case of flooding or fire.




CANNIBAL SECTOR 4
CANNIBAL SECTOR 1
PERIMETER WALL
HEAD OFFICE
MORT CENTRAL
UPTOWN
SECTOR WALL
SUBURBIA
CANNIBAL SECTOR 2
DOWNTOWN CRUST
CANNIBAL SECTOR 5
CANNIBAL SECTOR 3



Sectors, so when Operatives are sent to a BPN location, the area will be presented as, for example: District 3 - Sector 118, Inner Downtown. Transportation between levels is facilitated by subways, gauss trains, ramps for vehicles and vast civilian elevators, known as Shift Blocks, that ferry passengers between districts constantly. Lower Downtown is considered a potential solution to the overpopulation of the inhabited parts of the city, but scaremongering and ghost stories need to be quashed and the area prepared for habitation, both physically and via marketing campaigns, before the population can be convinced to move from their birth sectors.

Below Lower Downtown is unmapped and only recently unearthed. This sub-city region is simply known as The Deep Construct. At present, SLA Industries has no concrete details on how many Districts stretch downwards into the Deep Construct and no public plans to map it.

"Mort City; gotta love it. The deeper you go the poorer it gets, the meaner it gets, the uglier it gets. By the time you reach the base level you're in the realms of bloody fantasy and your own sanity is nowhere to be found.

By the way, it's your round."

Albert 'Gunface' Milne, Human Operative, SCL7, Squad 'Burrow Downs'

Central

Home to SLA Head Office and SLA's main subsidiaries – such as Karma, Dark Lament, Power Projects, etc. Only Mr Slayer and the Departmental Heads are allowed to live in Central. It is the most heavily defended region in the entire World of Progress. It is also home to the Corporate Sector – (represented as 3 large tower blocks).

The enormous SLA Head Office building dominates the territory and no other building comes close to it in terms of size, scale or activity.

All starting SCL 10 SLA Operatives will attend the induction centre during their inauguration into the company. It is here that they will collect their SCL and ID Card, their standard FEN 603, KIippo Lighter and funds, before heading to purchase their personalised equipment. It all seems so very exciting and most feel like they're part of some larger whole, but in reality most will likely not return to Head Office for any other reason but to wait in line at Slayer's Crib (see BPN Halls).

BPN Halls

Before a SLA Operative squad can go about earning, they must first obtain a mission from the company, or as it is officially known a BPN File (Blue Print News File). In order to apply for a BPN, the Ops usually head to a BPN Hall and wait in line.

There is an assumption that all Op sanctioned BPNs are issued in the Hall at Head Office, but the company has many centres dotted throughout Mort City. Ops learn very quickly that heading to the Main BPN Hall (also known as Slayer's

Crib) is neither the easiest nor the quickest way to get a fresh mission. Starting Operatives assume this is the place to go, so it is always crowded. It can take somewhere in the region of 4-8 hours to get an appointment with a BPN Officer and by that point you basically take whatever you are given.

"Hi boys, take a seat. Been waiting long? Good, I'm glad; it'd give you time to contemplate how badly you screwed up that Blue I gave you on Tuesday. Seriously, how do you fuck up a Blue? It's Street Maintenance! All you had to do was roll a few drunks and you clowns burned up a Food Court.

So… onwards and upwards, eh? I have three new BPNs for you to choose from. One, is another Blue. Yes, yes, yes, I know, more Street Maintenance, but it's easier this time. You just need to exterminate a rat horde over by the Crust. Open air, local wildlife and stunning vistas – you'll love it.

I have a White BPN - Investigation. Murder. It's looking like Mesha serial murder. Some freakazoid is going around slitting throats and ripping out tongues. What is today's youth coming to? Now, this gig's been passed on three times because its leads have gone ice cold, bbbbut if you can locate and take down the killer you'll get a cred boost. Time to take the Stormer scalping, eh?

And last and certainly least is a shit Green BPN… alright, alright hear me out. It's on a Backwater world called Scorch. Head Office wants you to go bust some rioter heads. Don't look at me like that, Barkovitch; you always said you wanted to travel! Don't forget to pack sunscreen and a pacifier baton. Sign here."

BPN Officer Mills, Slayer's Crib

Most experienced Operatives go into Uptown or Suburbia BPN Halls to get their missions. These places are, however, generally smaller and with a tighter range of available colours, but there are also hidden advantages. The BPN officers will offer a nominal but legal cut on the pay for a mission more tailored to the Op Squad.

The wait is also considerably less in BPN Halls that lie off the beaten path.

Those who are brave, or in a hurry, can risk their luck (and fate) on a BPN Mission Terminal, that can be found - cracked, scratched and coated with graffiti, throughout Suburbia and Downtown. The terminals will supply a BPN in a matter of seconds, based on locations and Shiver or Threat Analysis reports. The terminal will ask for the user's SCL but it rarely takes the information into consideration before it spits out a mission.

Many Ops have lost their lives to these rather haphazard computerised BPN officers; accepting missions with little to no details or warnings, that lead into abandoned tower blocks, darkened sewer pipes and Lower Downtown…

Uptown

This is regarded as the high-end retail/residential district. Only affluent families and high SCL Operatives can afford to live here. Most Ops will have spent at least some time in Uptown; either out shopping for new equipment after a successful BPN, getting bio genetic upgrades, or simply blowing off steam at The Pit.

Everything that is available in SLA's World of Progress can be purchased or experienced here.

THE PIT

"Counting the minutes until those doors slide open. Everytime I step through Deth's Door it feels like I'm home. I live for this place."

Terminal, Eban Operative, 6.4b

The Pit is one of the reasons that people want to work for SLA Industries. The employee-only nightclub is famed for its live music, vast array of different bars and for being one of the most impressive feats of construction that the city has to offer; not that anyone can really admire its beauty. The Pit is a nine-level descending skyscraper that spirals down into Uptown, with each level being smaller than the last, forming a huge upturned cone of steel and concrete. The Pit is 'the' hangout for Operatives. For many years the concept of drinking anywhere else was simply laughed at, though over the last two years, with more and more Operatives needing to move further into Downtown and employee accommodation becoming increasingly expensive, many Ops are finding that making the trip to Uptown for a beer just isn't worth the cost or hassle. That is not to say that the club isn't still packed every night; the corporate sector alone keeps the dance floors full from 20:00 to 04:30 every single day.

"You know what pisses me off… I move from SCL 10 to 8 and somehow I get to hang out in The Pit 'less'. How the fuck does that work?! Dammit, I miss that place. Good beer. GOOD beer."

Timmy Franks, Human Operative, SCL 8.7

At ground level, The Pit appears as little more than a huge concrete bunker, square and boring, with a number of turnstyles and security barriers. This heaving entranceway is known as Deth's Door, named after the original head of Security, a now elderly Shaktar who took on the nickname of 'Deth'. He retired from his role of Security Chief at the Pit in 912sd and was replaced by an Advanced Carrien called Rarg. The somewhat political move to put an Advanced Carrien on the front of house was done to smooth over their somewhat rocky introduction to Operative life, forcing more Ops to come face to face with the species on a regular basis. On a whole, the idea seems to have worked, though to avoid any conflict, Rarg has recently adopted the nickname 'Deth2' as the very suggestion of renaming the venue's entrance way to Rarg's Door just wasn't worth the fallout. Rarg leads a staff of around 1200 security personnel who work shifts up and down The Pit's many layers, made up of almost every species imaginable.

MUSIC IN THE PIT

The Pit accommodates all tastes; trendy corporates, gregarious Frothers and refined Neophron can always find something to enjoy in Mort's premiere nightclub. Most new musical styles first come to people's attention via the the loud speakers in The Pit. The most popular sounds, however, are as much a fashion and ethos as they are a musical brand. One can easily tell the particular tastes of a Pit attendee simply by the cut of their hair and clothes they're wearing.

"The Burgess Brothers are pretty popular at the moment with that single, what is it? 'It's Not My Name"? And so the popular press are still trying to nail down whether it's a Shade-Oh band, or just regular Eight-Oh with a bit of an edge. Of course, High End are trying to lay claim to it because some reviewer said that the lyrics were about Mr Slayer. Pretty crazy, huh?"

Anna Without, News Anchor - Third Eye News

EIGHT-OH

Eight-Oh is the up and coming genre sweeping the World of Progress. Its bands and hit singles are uncommonly upbeat and the fashion sense of the scene is bright and colourful, garishly so. Nobody quite seems to know how or where this sudden tonal shift in tastes came from, or the odd sensations the songs and fashion and patterns seem to stir in people. Eight-Oh has been described as a brand new genre, yet most people encountering it feel as though they have heard the music before but can't place where.

Eight-Oh is very popular in Downtown, embraced by young people who need it to offset the soul crushing bleakness and drudgery of their lives.

Eight-Oh has had a polarising effect among Operatives; fresh recruits straight out of Meny accept it as the 'new mode' and view it as their generation's style, whilst some older Operatives decry it, claiming that it has supplanted the Niner sound.

As Eight-Oh is still relatively new (despite claims that it isn't) and it is only just now breaking up into categories: pure pop, ballads and bands going to the next level with a darker edge, essentially subverting Eight-Oh.

SHADE-OH

Shade-Oh is an offshoot Eight-Oh and it leans more towards heavier processed guitars and darker synths. Much like Burb music, Shade-Oh has come under a certain amount of flack for

its lyrics. Shade-Oh covers darker themes which correspond with its sound and is often critical of SLA's politics.

Moral Right have pushed for investigations into certain Shade-Oh bands, whose lyrics they consider corruptive and in many instances downright subversive. In truth though, MR Division is more focussed on tearing down Burb bands.

"They say that Ebon music is cold, but have you listened to some of the new Shade-Oh bands? Like, Drop Shadow - they're in the charts right now and when you hear those steely sounding synths how can you not imagine Mort City? This is our town. This is our generation. This is our music."

Allison Franks, Downtown Civilian, 20, (Unemployed)

HIGH END

High End is the music of the Corporate Sector. Self affirmative songs which lean heavily towards masculine themes of winning, succeeding in business and making lots of money. As a musical style High End has proven somewhat controversial, as many believe it has cribbed off other sounds, particularly Eight-Oh and adopted it as its own; which is the very essence of Corporate mentality.

Uptown Corporates are habitually quick to claim the latest Eight-Oh chart hit as a High End song.

With High End music comes High End fashion and beliefs. Corporates in SLA are heavily influenced by expensive suits, accessories, grooming and aftershaves/perfumes. Many legitimate High End bands constantly reference such products, serving as an audio style guide for the whole Corporate Sector. More recent bands have found themselves being sponsored by clothing brands specifically to get mentioned in the lyrics.

"I landed 20,000 creds before brunch yesterday and Queen Tangerine's 'Live Fast, Die Rich' was playing on the radio when it registered in my account. Now I fucking love that band. I went out and got some of those music mags to check 'em out, 'see what else they've done. Lead guy's got a Telford Weave 3 piece, New Parisian silk Virna brand tie and going for blonde weep-back cut. Jet black's out, clearly. I'm getting my hair bleached tomorrow. Now piss off, my phone's ringing, there's cash on the line."

Corporate Vincent Anthony DeFeo, SCL8b (Hinton, Moss and Rowan)

BURB

Burb music is, as its name suggests, the sound of Suburbia. It is a popular albeit underground musical genre created by the teenage kids of SLA employees who have lived and worked deadend jobs in the suburban sectors. Burb is music for disaffected, angry youths who want for more yet are fully aware of systemic limitations imposed on them.

Burb was at the height of its popularity during the 700s but as Mort life becomes more troubled and manic in the present day, Burb music has resurfaced in a pretty big way. Naga 7 analysts have attributed the new Burb movement as a form of retaliation against MR Division's Virtue Squads and other such policies enforced by Agnes Dowr.

As such, Naga 7 has put Burb musicians under far more scrutiny for subversion than any other genre, especially since it has captured the moment back in the region it first arose - Suburbia.

NINER

Niner is the sound of 900sd, hence the name. Similar to the more recent Eight-Oh, Niner covers a wide array of musical styles but is almost completely geared towards rock and metal and clothing that favours black dyes, leather jackets and biker boots. Niner has faded slightly in popularity in the era of The Changes, but this is nonetheless the go-to genre for the likes of Eban, Stormers, Frothers and young boisterous Shaktars just starting out as Operatives.

BASHHEAD

BashHead is a subset of Niner music and fashion. BashHead is ear-shreddingly loud and intensely aggressive. Stormers and Frothers have a particular love of BashHead and whenever songs from bands like Burst Appendix, Fusion Pig and Stormer, Stormer, Stormer are up next on the Pit the dance floor immediately clears, as combat ensues. For four or five minutes fists fly, teeth shatter and head butts embrace exposed noses. LaD typically has a few medics on standby at the Pit, as there are regular fatalities connected to BashHead slam dancing in the venue.

SPECTRAL

Spectral is music produced by and primarily for Ebonites, especially for Ebons. It is best described as haunting, ethereal Electronica. Its music covers emotive themes; yet beneath a veneer of icy and austere sounds. Aside from Ebonites, Spectral is popular with moody teens who are seeking out something with a bit more depth, whilst also bordering on the inaccessible.

The current favourite sub category is Skendish Spectral, which is as chilly a sound as it gets - usually sang in native Skendish, or Ebonite language with tracks clocking in at around twenty to thirty minutes.

SHAKTARIAN FOLK

Shaktarian Folk, or in its original form - F'ttRkt K,nn,KrTT, H'r T'Rnth-K't (translated as Music of our Ancestors) is an acquired taste. Shaktarian Folk vocals are composed of extended notes created deep in the throat generating a sound unlike anything else in the World of Progress. Instrumental pieces are performed with strange tribal instruments: Shaktarian Mountain Horns, drums and harsh pipes.

"What the buggering fuck am I listening to?! Sounds like my arse after a Sewer Pork Curry - give us some fuckin' BashHeeeead!"

Black Angus MacArthur, Frother Operative, SCL 10a, Squad 'Heid The Baws'

The cost of living in Uptown is high and continuing to rise steadily. Where once many SLA Operatives could buy, or at the very least, rent a small studio apartment, the price tag now means that only rich Corporates and top ranking Operatives of SCL 5 and better can hope to obtain keys to property.

There is very little crime or subversion occurring in Uptown; it is usually just Operatives getting too drunk and causing trouble. And since the region is heavily policed by SLA Dark Finders and Stormers, dressed and armed in SLA's finest weapons and equipment, Corporate and Collateral threats are obliterated before getting within one mile of this prosperous region.

"Look if you're wanting to get a new Fen AR or a suit of Exo Armour, fine, go get it in Uptown: you're getting authentic brand product. But anything else? Go to Suburbia where's a ton of decent bars. If you want to see real corporate crime, go take a look at the prices on the wine list at Dortlich's in Uptown; you're looking at a month's earnings for a single glass of red. Avoid."

Joana Stimbler, SLA Corporate SCL 9a, Waller, Privik and Hutchinson Investments

Suburbia

'Basic' Operatives (SCLs 10-6) and SLA Employees live in Surburbia. It is the last region entirely populated and protected by SLA Industries. The look of the area is defined by its somewhat drab and oppressive architecture. SLA racks countless employees and their families into these ugly concrete slabs and most never leave them, except to attend a labour intensive job or to get inebriated.

Crime in Suburbia is usually confined to local gang activities, civil disturbances and very occasionally DarkNight acts of terrorism and soft company insurgency. It is here that the streets begin to be protected by Shiver Patrols. They are some of the best-trained soldiers, but tend to be somewhat lazy and corrupt.

There are factories throughout Suburbia, but these are typically low pollution emitting facilities. They produce munitions, power cells for armour and countless consumables.

Suburbia is famed for its distinctive architecture, but not in any favourable light. The architects at head office clearly did not have quality of life in mind when the plans were drawn up to create vast but affordable housing sectors. Nearly all the accommodation in the suburbs is grey, hulking concrete tower blocks. They are dull, ugly looking monoliths; built to last but showing their age and wear. There is scarcely an inch of wall that isn't cracked and crumbling, stained by leaking pipes or clouded in generations of graffiti.

The suicide rate and alcoholism is very high in Suburbia as SLA employees struggle with work stress, long hours and low pay.

"I reckon most Downtowners would give their back teeth to live in Suburbia, but that's probably because they've never been there. The whole place is just concrete slabs and graffiti and if you think the civi blocks are hideous just wait until you see the inside. The only thing those boxy apartments inspire you to do is get out, preferably from a tenth story window."

Ellen Barkovitch, Human Operative SCL 8a, Squad 'How do I change Title/Name?'

Perimeter Wall

This zone divides Suburbia from the Downtown Districts. The Perimeter serves much the same purpose as the considerably larger and impressive Cannibal Sector Wall, in that it was constructed to keep the undesirables out.

Downtown civilians rarely, if ever, are granted access to within the Perimeter Walls and the customs and security checks there. You must have SLA employee or Operative credentials, or be part of a credentialled family unit, to get through and while the Sector Wall is patrolled by Shivers, the Perimeter is guarded by very well trained and equipped Dark Finders, who will scrutinise all paperwork and permits with a suspicious eye.

Once you pass the Perimeter Wall on the verges of Suburbia, you are leaving the safety and security of SLA Industries and descending into the chaos and violence of Downtown.

The Crust

This represents the top layer of the civilian sections. If you are in Downtown and are able to see the sky and feel the rain on your face, you are on The Crust. Many have nicknamed the citizens living here rather mockingly as 'The Upper Crust' as it is a desirable location to inhabit, but it still comes with its own risks and hazards.

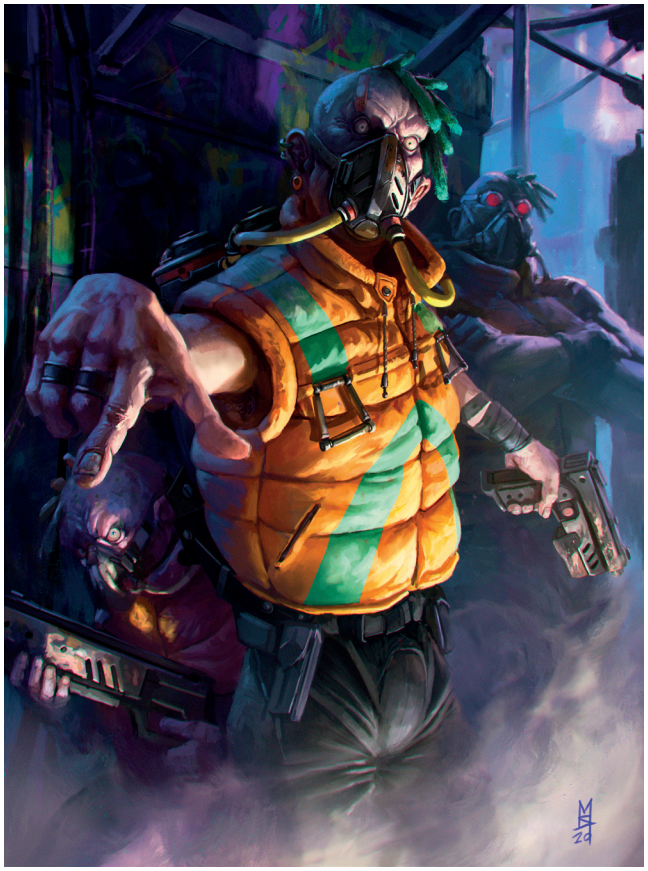
The surface of The Crust is an uneven plateau of high rise apartments and factory rooftops which circle the Perimeter Wall that fences off Suburbia and Downtown below.

The pollution levels are quite high on The Crust, as it is open and exposed to the elements. The Crust is also under constant attack from Dark Night terror cells and the abuses of Soft Company subversion. There is a high price to pay for living on Downtown's least impoverished level.

Inner Downtown

This is the most densely populated region in the whole of Mort City. Inner Downtown is a vast network of civilian apartment blocks, subways, sewer tunnels and shopping arcades. Most of the people living here are unemployed, at constant risk of death and have never seen the sky or breathed air that wasn't filtered through a rusty air duct. As you progress down the five districts of Inner Downtown, the housing gets poorer, the streets dirtier and the crimes more violent. Most civilians go from birth to incineration knowing nothing more than the square mile of the Downtown sector they were born in, never moving up or down a district, nor having any aspirations more than getting their weekly social security cheque and a slightly better TV.

The main staple of civilian life is television. It is the only chance of glimpsing a world beyond the confines of the individuals' bleak, compact apartment building. There is little else to do, so most Downtowners cash their weekly allowance from Social Security, quickly buy whatever amenities they can afford from a local store and hurry home. Once inside their cramped, gloomy apartment they will fall into a burst, worn sofa and hit the remote. In an instant their eyes are fed the glitz and glamour of everything SLA Industries has to offer: special deals on cut price toasters, fast food, fizzy sodas and affordable firearms for home protection. Their thirst for violence is also quenched in the form of the Contract Circuit, wherein celebrity killers



battle in gladiatorial arenas, with chain axes and Power Reapers, shedding blood by the gallon for a sea of baying crowds.

They will see an unfamiliar world through the lenses of a Helmet mounted cameras, as televised Op missions enter perilous sections of Downtown, to blast away Carrien and serial killers, feeding their fascination, brooding frustrations and fears.

All too often the external dangers are on their doorstep and at night they are awakened by something scratching at their front door, unseen and unknowable and so the frightened civilian sets about reinforcing his door, saving to buy a better gun, but most of all, escaping deeper into a fantasy world that 20 straight hours of television has stirred in him.

Downtown civilians have a love/hate relationship with SLA Operatives; they admire what they see of them in their viewing entertainment but in person it is all too real. It is where fear and jealousies surface and the Operative Squads carrying out the murder investigation in their building is looked upon with suspicion and scorn.

Operatives rarely display much respect towards Downtowners, they see them as expendable annoyances; an unemployed civilian killed by a stray bullet is usually at worst a slight dock in pay and almost never affects a SLA Ops SCL. Civilians in Downtown hold an even lower opinion of the Shiver Patrols, SLA's own police force. Armoured in green Body Blocker, the Shivers are a very common sight to most Downtowners and they know to avoid them. Shivers are seen as brutal and corrupt, eager to flaunt and enforce what little power and authority they have over Mort's poor via a Gauss Rifle, power baton and sense

of entitlement. Shivers typically only behave themselves when the SLA Operatives are around.

Part of the civilian resentment towards SLA is that it scarcely does its duty in protecting its populace. A great many of the threats a Downtowner faces on an hourly basis have been created by the company in one way or another. They created the Manchines and made little or no attempt to recall them when they went rogue, the Carrien are becoming omnipresent and the pigs and rats continue to plague Downtown. More recently, there is the threat of the Shi'An. A cult that was spawned by the frustrations and resentment brooding in Downtown over many centuries and yet again it is the humble civilians who bear the brunt of that aggression. Countless people are either caught up in religious massacres or are drawn into the homicidal fanaticism.

"Life is shit mate and I'm broke as fuck, but at least I've got my ciggies, a four pack of Dave beers and me telly...and I'll get my security cheque next week. I'll just watch the telly til then, s'only six days."

Jack Bolton, Inner Downtown

Accessing Lower Levels

A series of large, open elevators ferry the working population up and down the levels of Inner Downtown. At a distance these ferries look like expansive transport waiting rooms, except that they themselves are the mode of transport. SLA calls them Shift Blocks and even though they are rated for 30 people at a time they can transport up to 60 occupants and the duration between Downtown levels can take up to 20 minutes; it is slow and laborious but relatively cheap. One simply throws 2 unis into the worn and battered turnstile, takes a seat and spends the next 20 minutes staring at the weary looking passengers and the layers of built up graffiti adorning the walls of the Shift Block.

Shivers barely have a handle on the crime there and SLA Ops are stretched too thin trying to get to the enemy or situation in time to deal with it; the scale of Inner Downtown is simply too immense and we're already seeing Ops simply renting temporary digs in a specific region and taking local BPNs. SLA Industries is already looking at options to deal with this issue and I'm sure the operatives won't like what they are planning."

BPN Officer Ganwich, West Hampton BPN Hall

Jobs In Downtown

Inner Downtown's most common form of employment is retail and services. Downtown has no shortage of shops, canteens and bars and there is always a need for staff behind the counter. Some Downtown families have whole generations that enter the Shivers and work the beat their whole lives, while others go to work in the factories and spend long, low paid shifts creating all manner of produce for the company.

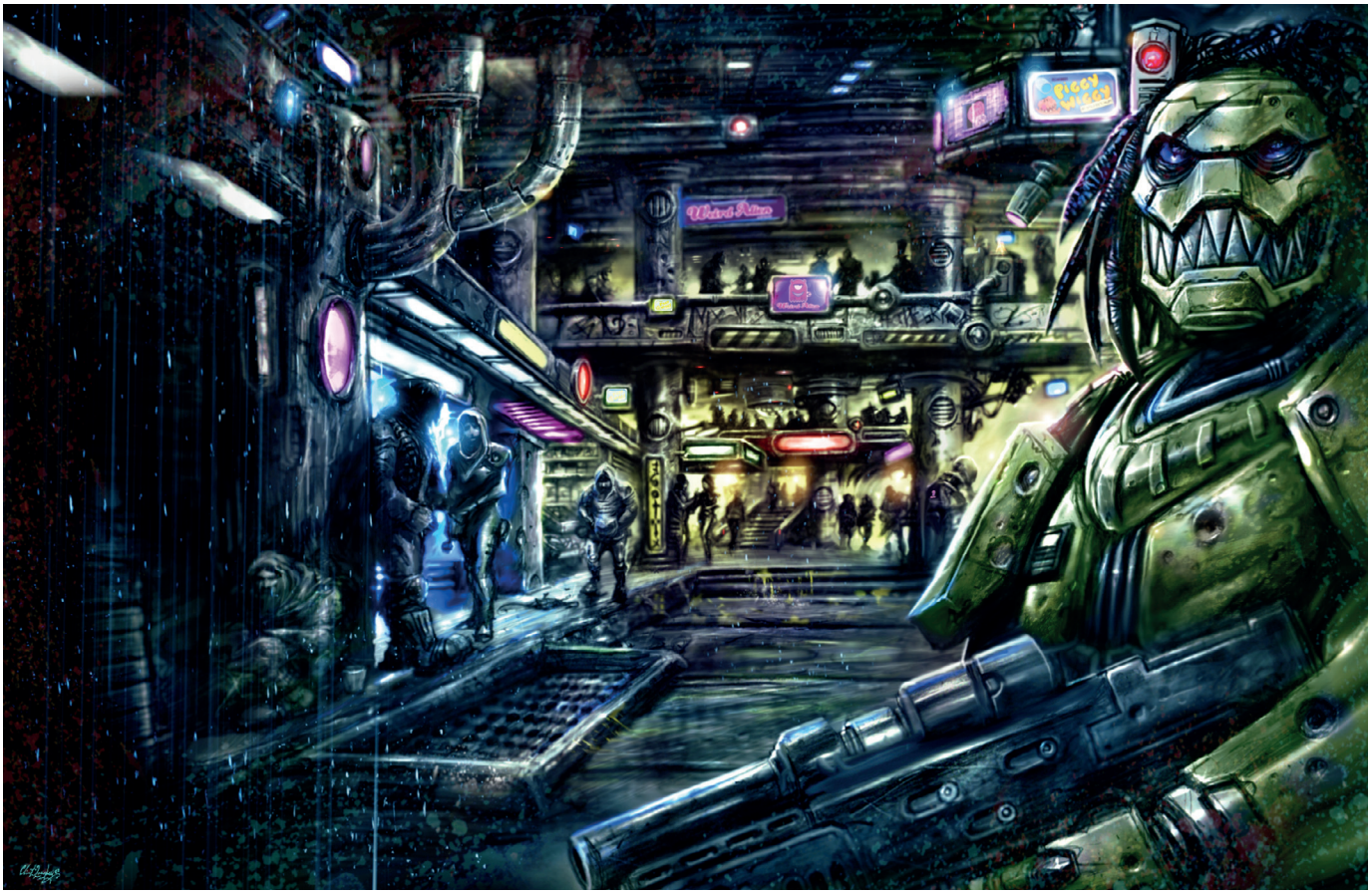
There are other less favourable careers. At a push, those who want some extra unis in their pockets can take on positions in sanitation and pipe maintenance, or opting for more dangerous work tackling Mort's vermin as full time Exterminators. The truth is precious few are genuinely happy in their chosen profession; there is little to no job satisfaction.

A great many of Mort's disaffected youth forgo all hope of employment and immediately fall in with the street gangs or become assets of the skin trade.

Lower Downtown

Owing to overcrowding in Inner Downtown, SLA Industries elected to create 12 more District Levels below District 6. Work began on what came to be known as Lower Downtown on 7th January, 355sd. District 7 would be the first of the Districts to be built underground and even as the excavation began the citizens of Inner Downtown expressed their reluctance to inhabit even the highest of these new lower levels. Today, Lower Downtown is considerably larger than Inner Downtown, yet it is far more sparsely populated. Shiver Patrols never venture more than a few levels down and in essence, have washed their hands of all its evils, as has much of the company. There is very little support structure in Lower Downtown. It bears a passing resemblance to the Cannibal Sectors in that it is isolated from normal society and whereas Cannibal Sector One was created by the sudden blackout and subsequent lockdown; Lower Downtown was more a gradual descent into neglect and insanity, taking place over hundreds of years. This is why Lower Downtown is as dangerous and as frightening as it is.

"A lot of people who haven't spent real time in Lower Downtown don't really get the place, or the attitude of the people living there. I do a lot of BPNs in Lower Downtown and I reckon the first three Districts aren't that different to Inner Downtown. The civilians are a bit more aggressive and



a lot more suspicious of outsiders. These levels are so heavily populated, but it's still comparatively normal - I mean, if you can call anything in Downtown normal that is.

No, it's when you go down below District 9 that it goes wrong. That's when the folks get downright strange, when you start getting clear evidence of the Shi'An cult and the deaths are just as easily attributed to Dream Entities as Carrien and what have you.

By that time you're pretty much in the heart of Lower Downtown and you still have, what? Nine more districts to go before you reach the basin. At around District 11 I'd say all bets are off. That's when the average citizen is simply a Dreg and as for civilisation? Forget it. Nothing down there but monsters. You're pretty much in the province of the Shi'An there; it's their world, not our's."

Jeff Gregory, Human Operative,
SCL 5, Squad 'Infiltration 4'

Lower Downtown is a threat to life in countless ways. The civilians are generally mentally disturbed and overtly hostile, some of the company's deadliest enemies are in abundance and the sheer scale of the region is bewildering to inexperienced Operatives. Many Districts levels are utterly neglected, visitors can spend hours or even days journeying through silent, gloomy tunnels, only occasionally stumbling across dweller settlements, places and people who have had little to no contact from SLA Industries in years and will just attack Operatives out of pure fear and confusion.

It is exceptionally easy to get lost travelling through Lower Downtown. The navamaps for the Districts are, by and large, out of date and the SLA communication signals are unreliable or non-existent for large areas. In order to go to any real depth in Lower Downtown, a great deal of preparation must be performed before entering and it is always advisable to take a guide (typically an Aetherman or experienced Operative) before risking your first excursion.

Many of the Cannibal Sector's inhabitants slip through into Mort City, through the Sector Wall, which has, over the years developed hairline cracks. Shivers on the wall work hard to protect the city from outside threats but since the wall extends for hundreds of miles there are many patches that are not so well patrolled. This is especially true in Cannibal Sector 2, where the wall is most neglected. As a result Carrien often access Mort City and enter into District 7 - the uppermost level of Lower Downtown. Many of the vermin are so driven by instinctual hunger that they head directly for the higher levels of the city, to feast where the population is denser and are quickly gunned down. Most however, slink into the deeper recesses of Lower Downtown, taking their place amongst the other monstrosities inhabiting the subterranean network.

Districts seven to ten provide the perfect location for the manufacture of black market products from rival companies. These districts are far enough away from the prying eyes of SLA Industries, but close enough in proximity to potential customers. SLA Industries' disinterest in the districts borders on abandonment, a perfect seclusion for anyone wishing to

operate outside of The Company's prying eyes. DarkNight weaponry and soft company products fired or consumed in Districts 1-6 typically originated from a warehouse or factory in Lower Downtown. The 9th Division, deserter Shivers from the Bellwood Campaign, have begun setting up there. In creating and then abandoning Lower Downtown, SLA Industries provided the perfect base of operation for anyone wishing to do wrong to the Company.

> *"Do you like this? I got it from one of the new companies out of Lower Downtown. It's pretty innit? The bloke who sold it to me said he'd be back next week. If I take you to him he'll give you ten percent off one of your own and we both get some free bullets. We just need to make sure the Shivers ain't watching. You wanna?'*
>
> Willhelm Waterson, quickly becoming a man to know in District 6

Lower Downtown is not even an official term created by SLA; it is something of a recent invention generated by the Shivers and civilians of Inner Downtown. It was the place you simply don't visit. A place you actively avoid. SLA Industries is realising that the reason Inner Downtown is so overcrowded is that its citizens know not to inhabit the lower levels. There are little to no amenities and there are simply too many deadly threats infesting Lower Downtown, especially the Shi'An Cult and Dream Entities.

With each descending level within Lower Downtown, the intelligence quota and social norms and capabilities of the populace degenerate. The quiet, gloom and remoteness have spawned a backward, deeply disturbed society. Operatives are familiar with aggression and prejudice from the civilians of Inner Downtown, but that found on the lower levels are a breed apart. The people that reside below are strange and worryingly abnormal. Once the Operatives are in the heart of Lower Downtown they will likely find themselves encountering the Dregs.

The Dregs are not exactly a threat faction and are barely considered Collateral, but they are becoming an increasingly common sight as greater exploration into the depths of the city occurs. Whilst the people out in Sector 1 transformed into hardy, muscular Cannibals, the abandoned citizens of Downtown degenerated into little more than pail, waif-like animals. They are not aggressive or violent and will scurry away from as little as a torch beam. They are naked, filthy and desperately thin having had to survive on cockroaches, moss and algae and the water leaking from burst pipes. The Dregs have devolved so much from what is considered normal human life, that they cannot speak and have lost the ability or want to walk upright. They awkwardly lope around on all fours. Most are rife with disease, with weak joints and very poor eyesight. Concisely, they are the worst example of SLA neglect since The Formation.

Lower Downtown is additionally, widely regarded as the hotbed of Shi'An Cult activity; most of the major Covens are based there, away from the gaze of SLA Industries. It is in the depths that the cult can perform extremely complex rituals and sacrifices en masse. Much of the cult's power and scale comes from the fact that SLA ignores and avoids the abandoned civilian levels within Lower Downtown

Ops hate BPNs based in Lower Downtown. It's a long journey down, there is minimal support, too many variables and it's a challenge just getting out alive. As such, the company has set in motion the development of a new class of SLA Operative squad – the Sweep and Clear Operative teams (shortened to SAC Op). These teams are being trained and tasked to journey into every level of Lower Downtown, to research and understand the issues present and eliminate the resident threats. The hope is that this will free up space for new accommodation and alleviate overcrowding in the upper levels. These teams are expected to work closely with Stigmartyr and the Aetherman branch of Naga 7 as needed; certain Lower Downtown residences will require it.

THE CANNIBAL SECTORS

In 300sd, the best hope for Mort's civilian population, Salvation Tower, sank into the ground, triggering a massive blackout across the Central Outskirts and rioting on such a catastrophic scale that the region never recovered. Mort City effectively closed its borders to the outskirts and on its own people. Those people would never be accepted back into the company.

In the years that followed, the place that was once called Central Outskirts descended into further chaos. Food supplies were quickly exhausted and the desperate people still trapped in the ruins began to feast on each other in order to survive. The advent of cannibalism in the Outskirts heralded the end of civilisation in the region and the dawn of something much more savage and ruthless. The abandoned populace had been forced to forgo whatever humanity they had once had. In 301sd

SLA Industries renamed the Central Outskirts to the Cannibal Sectors.

There are five Cannibal Sectors surrounding Mort City, each populated with a varied cross-section of species and fauna. Sector 1 is the most diverse, with Cannibals, Carrien, Scavs, Dream Entities and Manchines all domiciled throughout its territories. Sector 2 is slightly larger than the first sector, but is predominantly ruled by Carrien, to such an extent it is often known as the Carrien Sector. Sector 3 is known for its Ex War Criminals, Sector 4 is very polluted and overrun with Cannibal tribes while Sector 5; the smallest Sector, is plagued with horrific mutants derived from all its denizen species.

"Yeah, I know there's all this new talk of shit going on in Lower Downtown and we're starting to hear about this Deep Construct, but I'm still going to focus my attention on the Cannibal Sectors. They're still a danger, no matter how strong the Sector Wall is, or how well the Shivers are doing on the Bellwood Campaign. Those ruins out there have been a battlezone for six centuries. The inhabitants are classified as their own defined species – Cannibals. They aren't even Humans anymore; that's how much time has passed. How mad is that?

Not as mad as the fact these Cannibals even have their own religion to boot. The worship of a god called Rawhead. Huh, as if Digger himself wasn't bad enough…"

Wrek Taggin, Wraithen Operative,
SCL 7, Squad 'Dusty Lavender'

In modern times the Cannibal Sectors are still considered the most hostile and neglected stretches of terrain on Mort. They are awash with Cannibal clans, Carrien packs, Scavs, Manchines and even Dream Entities, the list of horrors inhabiting the sectors is near unending.

The Cannibal Sectors surrounding Mort City have now existed for more than six hundred years, but SLA Industries wants them back. Since the advent of the Bellwood Campaign, the primary zone, Sector 1, has gone through a massive transformation. Dotted throughout the various districts of CS1, the Shiver Organisation has fought for and held a series of forts, known as Bridgeheads. SLA Industries finally has a foothold in the lawless ruins, but the work continues and the war to overcome the region will take many more years. There is also the issue with the other four Cannibal Sectors, which, as yet, still stand unopposed. The Bellwood Campaign is succeeding in the first sector, but can SLA Industries afford the cost to regain the other 4 sectors? Additionally, the Bellwood Campaign has been successful in getting SLA Industries back into Cannibal Sector 1, but it has failed in keeping the sector's varying denizens out of Mort City. Over time, a few small clusters of most enemy factions have crept through the cracks in the Sector Wall and are beginning to make their way up through the subterranean levels of Lower Downtown into Inner Downtown and amongst the city's inhabited regions.

In the last couple of years, a perimeter line of small bridgeheads have been set up between Bridgeheads Endeavour and Distant North, forming the edge of what is now called the 'Northwest Strip', which is closed in by nothing but a wire fence. Bridgeheads between this line and the Sector wall were opened to the public and have grown to homesteads and then to townships, repurposing the old buildings of the Northwest Compact. Hole2 has been opened to allow the public to pass between these towns, though it is heavily guarded by Shivers.

SECTOR WALL

The Sector Wall is the barrier separating Cannibal Sectors 1 to 5 from Inner Downtown and Mort City. Its precursor was created initially as a cordon line to keep the citizens of Central Outskirts from the main city. Over time that has morphed into an enormous cement and steel structure that protects Mort City from the forsaken in the cannibal sectors. The Sector Wall as it is recognisable now, began construction in the height of the fighting after the collapse of Salvation Tower and took a further 47 years to complete. Owing to the sheer size and magnitude of such an edifice it is continuously repaired, reinforced, fortified and improved.

The Sector Wall has served Mort City very well over the last six centuries and whilst it cannot keep out small packs of Carrien nor stop determined Scav teams from slipping through, it has protected the city from large scale assault many times during its existence. Given the increases in small breaches and the recent successes of the Bellwood Campaign, there has been debate over the validity of the Sector Wall. As the campaign continues, the wall will become further and further from the frontline.

Shiver Patrols are now frequent in the heart of the Northwest Compact and numerous Bridgehead forts have been established meaning the wall is becoming invalid as a frontline defence. Advocates for the wall counter that Cannibal Sector 1 and its neighbouring territories cover thousands of kilometres of savage terrain and it will take many, many years for SLA to bring the inhabitants to heel. While the reclamation continues, the wall provides a formidable last line of defence and one that Mort City should be very pleased to have.

The Wall runs for 352km and is 30m in height and roughly 20m thick at the base. Its ramparts are constantly patrolled by Shivers and within the wall administration and technical staff maintain, upkeep and catalogue reports of all activity taking place beyond the city border. There are a series of gates stationed along the length of the wall via which the Shiver Patrols, Sector Rangers and on occasion, SLA Operatives can travel to and from the Cannibal Sectors, these are the most heavily protected sections of the Sector Wall.

Hole2 is widely regarded as the main entrance and exit to Sector 1 and leads to the main supply route, Fothergill Lane, connecting the Bridgeheads to the Sector Wall defences and Mort City. In the last couple of years, a new Stormer has been implemented at Sector Wall section 350, as an 'intelligent' defence against increasing Carrien incursions there. The 830 'Gator' Stormer is an improvement on a near forgotten war world Stomer pattern, known by the same name but a different number. Although they appear near identical to their forebears the 830s have a lot of subtle design features including an insatiable appetite for Carrien flesh.

"Sergeant Chester feeds our local Gator with the sandwiches his wife makes. Apparently, they're made with Piggy Wiggy, but she bought it down the market on a bulk deal. The Gator goes mad for it and is getting big. I tried feeding it straight out the tin and it wasn' interested. I'm beginning to think the Sarg's Piggy Wiggy ain't Piggy Wiggy".

Shiver Private Serentine Wilmahurd,
Sector Wall Section 350

NO-GO ZONE

The No-Go Zone is not as well explored as other regions on Mort, with SLA historically focusing its Operatives more on tackling the Cannibal Sectors and Lower Downtown. As there is barely any sustainable ecosystem existing in the No-Go Zone, most factions simply avoid it. The Zone is a vast region to the south east of Cannibal Sector 1, perpetually blasted by rain and gale force winds. It is as hostile an environment as one can imagine. The majority of this land mass is industrial machinery and pipelines, most of which have existed since the Formation.

Most of the savage species found within the Cannibal Sectors avoid the No-Go zone for two reasons: it is devoid of sustainable flora or fauna and hence food and is wracked with some of the most extreme weather conditions seen on Mort. Hammering rain, vicious storms, toxic atmosphere and deadly hail constantly beset the region, enough reason for Cannibals and Carrien to steer well clear.

Of Mort's races only the Scavs have successfully ventured that far south, simply because there are so many industrial resources to be found in the No-Go Zone. It is too enticing for the Scavs to ignore and DarkNight is also trying to carve themselves a piece of the region for the same reasons. Like most Sector inhabitants the Scavs assumed that the Zone would be entirely lifeless, but they have quickly discovered this is not the case. Carnivorous pigs and rats do not favour the NGZ, but beings far more otherworldly do.

The enemies of SLA who have successfully chosen to make their home in the No-Go Zone were not natives of Mort, instead were Conflict Aliens. The first to arrive were the Momics, who selected the irradiated tundras as their home and began converting them into Maggrot forests. Several detachments of Thallasians have landed and set up base to the north and there are rumours that Grosh scientists have created scientific outposts, not unlike those created by the Scav progenitor, Dr Arild Frode Scarogg, centuries earlier in the forbidding wilderness.

"You know it's bad when even the Dream Entities won't touch a place. The No-Go Zone really earned its name, if you know what I mean. The only reason we know the Zone is a hotbed for Conflict Aliens is because the Sector Rangers told us. It's not like the Scavs were going to divulge that information.

I doubt many SLA Ops even know the No-Go Zone even exists, let alone be able to point to it on the map. But they're gonna know, very soon. See, I reckon there's going to be a whole new version of Green BPN that's going to send them out there to fight the Conflict Races. I'm calling it the Shit Greens.

Good luck to them; they're going to need it."

Shiver Sgt. Josefina Hernandez, Bridgehead Endeavour

DEEP CONSTRUCT

"I have heard some Aetherman claiming five extra Districts and also heard others claim 8 or even 12 Districts exist down there, in varying states of completion. And look, I choose the words 'states of completion' very carefully when describing the Deep Construct. It's a difficult place to quantify and that's what makes it so bloody scary.

We don't know how big it is, how deep it goes. We don't know who exactly created it, what exactly it is, or what purpose it serves. We don't know how it affects visitors in the short or long term, physically, mentally or I guess, spiritually.

The defining characteristic of the place is that it is mystifying and the moment that fear or confusion settles on you, then the Deep Construct owns you."

Aetherman Fernsby, Naga 7 Division, 6th Head

Below the sparsely populated black tunnels of Lower Downtown, there are more street levels growing and solidifying. The existence of these phantom districts is linked directly to the darkest secrets of SLA Industries. Secrets the company has strived to silence and contain for centuries. The Deep Construct is the new term used to describe the recently discovered region. Threat Analysis finds the Deep Construct particularly alarming since it does not appear on any architecture map. It looks to be an extension of Downtown, but an extension that was never built by SLA Industries. As yet only a handful of Aethermen have ventured there and much like the forays into the Fission Belt, the expeditions must be brief or fatal.

Given its positioning below the structure of Mort City and the countless threats and hazards that lie within it, it is fortunate that very few people have ever ventured into the Deep Construct. Those that have, have put forth various accounts and descriptions of the inhabitants and the look of the streets and buildings. Some describe architecture not unlike that of the deeper districts of Lower Downtown, others have spoken of completely alien tunnels with the style of some long lost historical design, one that unsettles at the most basic of levels. It is so much more than simple blood and guts scary in the Deep Construct. One thing that is confirmed and fully recognised by everyone and every organisation, is that there are no Downtown civilians living there. All reports mention Dream Entities and unfamiliar fauna. There are not even any sightings of Shi'An cult activity there, at least not yet. It seems that the Deep Construct is the province of the Dream Entities and their own skewed perspective and bewildering way of life. The Deep Construct belongs to the Dream and we should not enter into it.

It is as yet uncertain exactly where Lower Downtown ends and the Deep Construct begins. Most who have ventured that far down claim to sense a change within themselves which suggests a passing over the threshold from one plane to another. The term 'sea change' is used by Aethermen to describe the feeling of entering into the Deep Construct.

Aethermen believe that the Deep Construct is either one large Dream Entity, or, more likely, a complex interconnection of basic Dream Entities conjuring and fortifying their own depiction of Downtown. Some of the Aethermen have likened the place to a deep sea world on the ocean floor, even going as far as to compare the local Dream Entities to the angler fish and other marine life that are found in the depths.

If a visitor were to descend far enough into the Deep Construct, oxygen would be required, along with considerable mental fortitude. This is an area completely devised by alien minds with only a rudimentary understanding of the normalcy and culture of the world above. The closest and most accurate term the Aethermen could attribute to the Deep Construct is 'maddening.'

Until recently, Platinum BPNs, issued directly by Head Office, have always been missions to White Earth, but now Platinum could equally mean exploration into and of the Deep Construct. SLA will not dispatch just anyone there, only the most experienced and hardened of Operatives will be sent into the Construct. The results so far have been unfavourable and poor. It is likely therefore, that the Whistling Bridge Protocol will result in a program not dissimilar to the Sector Rangers deployed in Cannibal Sector 1, but instead focused on Deep Construct specialists.

"Well, 'The Drop' is an ancient elevator created during the early development of Downtown. It can take its occupants to the very lowest levels of Downtown, direct from Head Office. Now, it seems, it can continue on and into the Deep Construct. A fast track to imminent danger."

Aetherman Fernsby, Naga 7 Division, 6th Head

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

"I saw a Shiver getting a knee trembler in a Shift Block once – nobody even looked up!"

Bin Weng, Civilian, Downtown Sector 4-285

Travel throughout Mort City and other major cities, comes in many guises, but walking is the most common. Public transport also features heavily, with elevators between levels, buses, trains, subways and taxis all competing with personal vehicles for footfall. For long distances, atmospheric shuttles can get you from one side of the planet to the other in under a day.

SHIFT BLOCKS

"I fucking hate hate hate being crammed in like Piggy Wiggy in Tomato Sauce next to some old helltramp that stinks of someone else's piss for what seems like an hour, just to get from level three to four, every fucking day."

Fenwick Green, Human Operative SCL 8.2, Squad 'Ham'

Shift Blocks are platforms that move large groups of people up and down through Inner Downtown. Slow, smelly and unreliable, they are constantly crowded by civilians willing to put up with being packed on a platform just to get from level to level. Slap a couple of Uni in the slot, walk through the turnstile and wait twenty minutes for the platform to arrive.

BUSES

"The serial killer Prison Shiv was a Downtown taxi driver. I'll take the bus"

Haryet Glib, Civilian, Downtown Sector 5-360

The bus system on Mort is lacking, with some sectors not even having one. You can't get from sector to sector on the buses as they are all tied to the local sector management system.

A bus will get you anywhere within the sector, albeit with a few changes, for a Uni. A bus trip across a sector can take up to two hours, if you're unlucky with connections.

THE SUBWAY

The underground train system of Mort City, the subway, is the favoured commuter system in the upper levels of Downtown, but once the workforce is done with the confined trains, it becomes a haven for bored citizens. Subways don't go up or down, so you can't get a train from one layer to another. Most subway stations have a Shift Block installed.

A subway will get you anywhere within your starting sector in up to an hour, usually less than half and anywhere within three sectors in any direction within two hours. A five Uni ticket provides unlimited travel for a whole day.

GAUSS TRAINS

The quickest way to get around Mort, short of reality folding, is by Gauss Train. With fewer stations than the subway and longer distances between them, these tubed trains are only convenient if both ends of your journey are near a station, or if you need to travel long distances or out of Mort City completely.

Gauss Trains are tubular trains, powered by magnetic propulsion in soft vacuum tubes, that travel at speeds around 1000km/h, at peak. The tubes run from Central Station to a few key locations around the city. There are approximately a hundred or so active stations. The tubes can have gentle curves, allowing trains from outside the city to terminate in Central, high above Downtown and so, provide access to the spaceport and other facilities. There is a small clearance zone in Central Station to provide security and catch those without permits to be within the Perimiter Wall. They are forced to change trains to return outside the security walls.

A local trip is two Credits and anywhere outside the city is anything from five Credits to fifty Credits.

TAXIS

"Tell Kenananotep I'm on my way. Taxi!"

Slick Marstes, Human Corporate SCL 6.2, Dept. Finance

Taxis are common above Downtown, providing SLA employees a way to get around that does not require them to mix with undesirables. Twenty credits an hour will get you anywhere you want within the Perimeter Wall. Downtown taxis are similar, only they are charged in Unis, ten an hour and they're a lot less pleasant.

PERSONAL TRANSPORT

Cars, Motorbikes, powered armour, there are many forms of transport that SLA Industries would like you to buy. The road system, when it's working, allows easy access across Mort City, with gentle ramps between the layers and plenty of roads to get anywhere you want.

You can spend as much as you want on your own personal transport.

THE WORLD OF PROGRESS

The World of Progress is a catchall term for the entirety of SLA held and owned space. It is not a singular world as its name suggests but a galaxy, housing numerous solar systems with planets which in various ways serve the company.

The combined locations, World of Progress, Herodotus System and Conflict Space, are often just referred to as 'The SLA Universe', despite how all three areas are at odds with each other.

Practically all the viable planets in the World of Progress serve some function for SLA Industries. Those that attempt to resist the company's control are ruthlessly beaten into submission, or abandoned and left vulnerable to attack by rival companies or Conflict Races.

> *"The 3 Ps Contract, ha! More like SLA Protection Racket…. You pay to get fucked."*
>
> Brinsley Quarterstaff, DarkNight Agent

The company has broken these planets into a variety of classifications that best describes their purpose.

INDUSTRIAL WORLDS

Industrial Worlds are among the most valued planets to SLA Industries.

SLA has countless worlds that produce specific consumer items, but Industrial Worlds tend to have a broader scope. Their duty is spread across a wide range of weapons manufacture, vehicles and armour development and Karma branches of bio-engineering. Naturally these complex outputs require millions of staff, so vast cities are built to support the requirements and to house the employees of SLA Industries.

With such densely populated city sprawls, there is always corporate crime and collateral threats. Companies like DarkNight will invariably target Industrial Worlds because it is far easier to spread dissension and rebellion amongst so much high pressure living and social unrest.

As a result, SLA Operatives are always integral to the protection and security of Industrial Worlds. SLA faces similar Corporate threats on all Industrial Worlds, but their positioning in the World of Progress may present different additional threats. Those close to the Verges of SLA held space are more prone to attack from Conflict Races, whilst those at the heart of SLA are likely to face opposition from the Shi'An Cult.

The largest and most important of all Industrial Worlds is of course Mort itself.

DELUXE WORLDS

Pleasure planets, or as they are officially known, Deluxe Worlds, have better standards of living and are by far the least polluted planets of the World of Progress. Most wealthy Operatives and Corporates vacation on Deluxe Worlds, but they are very expensive to enjoy, even when only staying for a few days or weeks.

One of the most famous Deluxe Worlds is New Paris, which is widely regarded as the most picturesque and well maintained in the World of Progress. It is also where much of SLA Industries' high fashions and trends are created.

But this is the SLA Universe and so there cannot be the sweet without the sour. Intruder has been known to use the beautiful veneer of Deluxe Worlds to conceal secret Black Sites (specially sanctioned torture rooms) away from the prying eyes of Head Office.

HOME WORLDS

These are planets for races that have fallen under the banner and protection of SLA. At present, Home Worlds are specifically populated by Wraithen, Shaktars and Ebonites, since these races sided with SLA during the Conflict Era; they did not lose or flee their Home Worlds and so they have kept them over the last 900 years.

Home Worlds usually exist within their kept solar systems and have a capital planet: Shaktars (K'nth), Wraithen (Polo) and Ebonites (Static).

The Neophron and the far lesser known Omaja are in negotiations to reclaim their Home Worlds in SLA Space.

RESOURCE WORLDS

Resource Worlds are SLA's best attempts to maintain viable ecosystems whilst still trying to ravage them for as much as they can withstand. Largely, they are natural environs with little more than exotic flora and fauna populating the surface. Occasionally there may be a low impact primitive species on the Resource World and SLA employees and Operatives are stationed there to keep the natives in check, as deforestation and mineral excavation takes place on an hourly basis.

SLA Industries usually dots the landscape with a series of scientific outposts in order to study and marginally preserve the environment. They have little compassion for the worlds they own, but seek to protect the Resource World as much as possible in order that it can continue to produce for the company.

Resource Worlds are often targeted by Contract Hunters in search of new exotic animals to capture and sell to the Circuit which will then fight in the arenas. The pay for alien fauna can earn a high price and many Hunters are willing to poach and break quarantine laws for such sought after prey.

LABOUR WORLDS

Much of SLA's primary manufacture takes place on Labour Worlds; planets dedicated almost entirely to a singular product: armaments being the most common. Labour Worlds typically begin life as Resource Worlds, wherein the planet is selected for its valuable minerals ore, oil and flux material etc. Over the course of centuries, these resources are mined completely and the destitute planet's surface is then converted into manufacturing plants and industrial complexes.

What happened to Mort's No-Go Zone is what happens on a global scale with Labour Worlds. The ruthless and excessive mining turns to environmental disaster, beset by storms and hurricanes.

Aside from environmental hazards, people in the World of Progress fear these places as they can commonly be used as forced labour camps for SLA convicts. Criminals and traitors who are sent to Labour Worlds to serve usually receive full life terms. Being consigned to a brutal Labour World is in essence a death sentence.

Some low-end corporates naively think they can turn a profit on these hellish worlds, but soon find out they are little better off than the broken men and women who suffer and waste away in the enormous factories and mines.

WAR WORLDS

In attempt to subvert global catastrophes SLA Industries elected to designate certain planets as War Worlds and whilst SLA and its rivals will battle on Industrial Worlds, most of the greater disputes are started, settled and started once again on the churned up surface of War Worlds, like Dante, Cross and Erebus.

Much like Labour Worlds they are ravaged over time and gradually transform in purpose when there is little left to utilise and obtain.

War Worlds tend to devolve from planets who refused the terms of SLA Industries' 3 Ps contract. They are left open to attack and suffer rather unfair consequences. SLA invariably leaves the planet for about a year whilst it is worn down by an assault for the likes of Thresher or the Krell and once a beleaguered victory emerges, SLA will return with a counter attack.

In most cases this assault is swift and conclusive; SLA wipes away its opponent and installs a 'franchise infrastructure' converting the planet into a Resource or Labour World. If this does not hold, or the opposition still proves too strong, the SLA Military will stage a full-scale attack.

The end result is a War World.

FRANCHISE WORLDS

"Good morning, Emperor Zaffin. Let me start by just saying how relieved we are that you chose to sign our contractual agreement. So good to finally force Thresher out, once and for all.

Now, under the terms of our agreement your planet and nations will be part of our Franchise Initiative and I'm certain you'll be thrilled with the plans we have for the future. Thomas, could you please bring over the product range? Thank you.

Now, as we already have several chains based here I'm sure you'll already be familiar with the Big Smile Burgers brand? It's just one of our little fast food subsidiaries but it has a well proven track record.

What we have here is the Toothy Grin Meal For One: Double Plus Big Smile with Cheese Burger, Big Win Fries and Sun Beam Soda. Just the classic range: it's what your planet's sole focus will be going forwards.

As we look at the map here of your planet we can see where the individual food groups will be manufactured. The bio beef patties – here, gherkins and other produce – here, the sauce factories along the coast – here and here in the Capital you'll

be producing the signature smiley buns. Oh and who can forget that tasty Sun Beam Soda, which will be produced … down here.

So, here are our manufacturing projections and expectations for the next 10 years. Just have a look at the documentation at your leisure. In the meantime, I think this is a great opportunity for a few press photos: Thomas, could you bring in the Toothy Grin Mascot and the photographers?

Emperor Zaffin, are you listening? Could you come and stand over here in the light and let's see your best Big Smile for the cameras! Please shake Toothy's paw and smile, thank you."

3Ps Contractual Lawyer, on the newly anointed Big Smile world (formerly Beleron)

Planets on the brink of collapse often find themselves having to bow down to SLA and become one of the notorious Franchise Worlds. As part of the Franchise Initiative, the planet loses its identity and is forced to become a global manufacturing plant for a specific subsidiary of SLA - fast foods, toy manufacture, vehicles and tinned goods are the most common. Anything that requires vast mass production usually stems from a collection of Franchise Worlds.

Rarely do world governments wilfully enter into these extremely shady, ruthless deals: SLA press-gangs the planets into these contracts by pointing out the invading forces threatening to destroy their home and how their only hope of salvation is to spend the rest of their existence producing burger ingredients, sports footwear and teddy bears.

For most it is a fate worse than death, as SLA insists a select product or brand be the Franchise World's sole focus.

People quickly grow sick of the overbearing Franchise that permeates every aspect of their lives and careers. Everywhere they look there is a factory uniform or advertising billboard for a Big Smile Burger and it is a trend that isn't ever going away.

Op Squads are often assigned to these worlds when 'Franchise Sickness' sets in and hysterical members of the beleaguered public go on homicidal rampages to rid their world of the maddening Franchise that obliterated their cultural landscape and social identity.

BACKWATER WORLDS

"When I see 'Backwater' on a BPN, I know to avoid it. Nothing good ever happens out there."

Jankman South, Human Operative SCL 9.1, Squad 'Biff'

Backwater Worlds are the planets positioned on the edges of the World of Progress, referred to as The Verges; the bank of space that runs dangerously close to the Herodotus System. These planets rarely serve any great purpose or have limited resource value to SLA Industries and are typically just left to their own devices

Backwater Worlds do tend to become a breeding ground for corporate subversion and in more extreme cases, a target for the Shi'An Cult. As a consequence, Threat Analysis will send out specially trained spies to infiltrate backwater governments, in an effort to spot and report revolution before it can take hold and take the necessary steps to quell an uprising. Sometimes SLA

Ops receive BPNs centred on these situations and are sent out to serve as back up support.

THE HERODOTUS SYSTEM

At the very edges of the World of the Progress lies the Herodotus System. Only three planets circle the burning star of Herodotus: Gesmas, Marris and White Earth. It is widely regarded as the most dangerous (and feared) system existing within the SLA Universe. Its sheer malevolence is felt by all who pass its boundaries. Despite its relative small size in comparison to the World of Progress and Conflict Space, the Herodotus System is still categorised as a separate territory as it is governed by neither side of the universe, although there are those that maintain that White Earth's influence rules over Conflict Space.

"I have ventured into Conflict Space, many, many times and each and every time I have felt the Red King's eyes on my back. Everything seems to slow down, as he scrutinises my thoughts, probing and searching.

Bitterness has always permitted me into Conflict Space and not let me or my crew fall foul of the Dark Moon Shaktars and I do not understand why.

Perhaps it is not what I take into Conflict Space that interests him, but whatever I may be bringing back."

Aetherman Elwell

CONFLICT SPACE

This is the lawless and largely unexplored region of space which exists beyond the Herodotus System. Believed to be as expansive and densely populated as the World Of Progress, it is the province of the Conflict Races, once believed extinct.

Those wishing to flee the wrath of SLA often venture into Conflict Space and take their chances in truly alien and hostile worlds. In order to reach the new frontier the traveller must first skirt the edges of Herodotus and hope to not draw too much attention. Shaktarian Ion Drive Pirates, all aligned to Bitterness and White Earth, camp out in this region, ready to snare all who veer too close to the domain of the Red King.

Many Aethermen journeyed into Conflict Space for years at a time and returned with wild and elaborate tales. SLA Industries places heavy restrictions on passage into Conflict Space. It is usually only Aethermen and Neophron Ambassadors permitted to venture that far beyond SLA's reach.

"I hail from the Farouk System and the Farouk system lies in the heart of Conflict Space. You want to know what Conflict Space is like? It is joy, it is horror, it is riches, it is curses.

It is countless worlds where the Conflict Era never ended. Species known and hated by SLA and many others never seen in the World of Progress. And the Shi'An, oh yes.

The taint of the Shi'An cult is everywhere in Conflict Space and I dare not count the loss; the uncounted worlds lost to its madness. It is why we return to SLA; to save it from such a fate.

One day soon, we must return to Conflict Space, for answers. And you must come back with us and taste and sample all that I have described.

We will pass the Gate of Herodotus and explore all that lies beyond."

Mattifet Ketaptor, The Neophron Empress

SPACE TRAVEL

The World of Progress spans thousands of star systems, many of which are inhabited and exploited by SLA Industries. Travel amongst these worlds can be achieved by four different systems of transport, although only two of them, Reality Folding and Ion Drives, are in common use.

MASS DRIVES

SLA Industries used Mass Drives to get faster-than-light travel, pushing large ships through space at high speeds to get their personnel and resources to far-off worlds within two to six months, extending the World of Progress at a rate limited only by the time their assets could spend in deep space. This system of dispersal lasted until the Shaktars were brought under SLA's protection, giving them access to the Shaktar's superior Ion Drive technology.

Older Mass Drive ships are occasionally found in use where cost is a factor and time isn't, but with the increased efficiency of Ion Drives, they are getting less and less common.

ION DRIVE

When the Shaktar joined SLA Industries, they brought with them a superior faster-than-light system. While these hulking ships are still built by Shaktars around Kn'nth, SLA-built cargo ships using Shaktar technology have been commonplace for hundreds of years.

The Ion Drive is also used in shuttles that take people and cargo from the surface of planets to the large orbiting ships and they are also used to get commercial Foldships out of the gravity wells of stars.

Once an Ion Drive ship reaches around 3% of light speed, they create wormholes that act similar to reality folding, only nowhere near as instantaneous, with travel taking around a month, a third of which is in Dk'Shnh, translated as none-space, a cloudy and colourful place between space that spacefaring Shaktar think of as a peaceful and spiritual place.

REALITY FOLDING

Mastery of the Ebb allowed short distance reality folding to evolve into inter-planetary travel, with a few caveats. Gravity and momentum are easy to deal with on a small scale with basic formulation having enough room for minor errors to be ignored, but on a large inter-planetary scale, gravity becomes far too dangerous and complicated to factor in. With commercial flight, this means that a ship would need to use conventional mass drive or ion drive to get out of range of the sun before folding, where the decreased gravitational pull of the sun no longer plays an effect on the formulae calculations. At 1G constant acceleration, this takes on average one week before folding is seamless, with a following week of deceleration after the fold.

You can get anywhere in the World of Progress in two weeks, but if you can afford it, you can do it even quicker with a qualified Ebonite pilot, as long as you don't need to keep your lunch down. Military Foldships will push their Ion Drives over 1G acceleration, especially when they are transporting Stormers who can cope with over 2G of constant acceleration and experienced Ebonite Foldship pilots can survive those extremes if they have trained their Dark Lament Pilot Deathsuits to keep them alive.

CUTTER ENGINES

"They're nice, but way too small for anything useful."

Bjern Alskoerd, Skend Logistics, Mort

The Neophrons came to the World of Progress in small ships known as Cutters. The Cutter engines were smaller than the Ion Drives used in transport ships and shuttles. Cutter engines are only effective up to a certain mass, but they are considerably quicker than Ion Drives. Cutters also have gravity dampers that allow faster speeds without discomfort.

A Neophron Cutter can be large enough for a crew of a dozen or so and can travel anywhere in between ten and twenty days, using the same wormholes as Shaktar ships, only spending a lot less time in the none-space.

Welcome to TransFlight's Mort – New Paris Luxury Cruise flight.

Get ready for an enjoyable fifteen-day cruise to New Paris.

All our voyages start with a shuttle ride from Mort Spaceport, with the lower berths boarding first and the staterooms boarding last. Boarding can take up to a day on our spacious cruise liners, so don't be late. Once aboard your ship, you will be expected to make your way to your room where your luggage will be waiting for you, but if you have forgotten anything, you will likely find it in one of the many on-board shopping zones. Please note that a few of our subsidised flights may have reduced facilities to accommodate the facilities required by military personnel or company operatives and officials.

Once everyone is settled in and the mandatory safety drills have been performed, the journey will start. It takes approximately a week to get out of the solar system to a distance where reality folding is no longer affected by the Sun's gravity and during that time, you are welcome to explore the ship and make use of the extensive facilities on offer. You are advised to get to the viewing decks as early in the journey as possible so you can see the planet Mort fill your sky. However, views of space are available throughout the voyage and even the higher speeds you reach before reality folding are not high enough to spoil the vista of the stars.

When the ship reality folds, you will be asked to take a seat, even though the risk of a gravity shift is exceedingly low these days. This is for your own safety and should only take a minute. After the alerts are over, you may resume whatever recreational activity you were enjoying prior to the fold. Please note, the swimming pools and other facilities may be closed several hours in advance of folding for your security.

The deceleration phase takes seven days to get to New Paris. You will be notified of local dates and other pertinent information in any of the localisation seminars held at regular times in the conference rooms. Laws and customs are also explained at separate induction courses for first-time visitors and courses in New Parisian are available to those travellers wanting a more authentic view of the culture and destinations the planet offers.

After fourteen and a half days, you will find yourself orbiting the beautiful planet of New Paris and will be expected to have packed in readiness for your descent to the planet's surface by local shuttle, but if you're a little tired or just want to spend a little longer on board, shuttles will be operating for an additional day and many of the bars and restaurants remain open at this time, but we do recommend that you make use of the shuttles as soon as is convenient as you would find the fine cuisine and decor planet-side much more appealing.

We hope you enjoy the journey. Stewards are available to assist you throughout the voyage; don't hesitate to ask them anything!

SPACEPORTS

Planets typically have spaceports where shuttles take you into orbit where you transfer to a Foldship or, if you're cargo, an Ion Drive ship. These starports usually double up as airports on planets with commercial airports. A spaceport will typically have a landing area, cargo areas and security systems to ensure only those allowed get to travel.

Mort City's spaceport, located inside the perimeter wall in Uptown, is one of the busiest and is not burdened with aircraft as the weather makes flight almost impossible. However, the spaceport is kept busy with constant shuttles transporting Operatives, Employees and cargo to Ion Drive ships and Foldships in geostationary orbit.

OBSERVATION STATUS

The classification of planets in the World of Progress is currently managed by Observation Status, a recent amalgam of departments coalesced from smaller departments to present a unified catalogue of planets. Their Standard Listings are designed to provide Operatives and Employees with enough information to quickly decide on off-world BPNs and other excursions.

A planet is described by Observation Status as follows:

Name: The name of the planet

System: The star system in which the planet can be found

Type: The classification of the planet from the Observation Status categories: Industrial, Deluxe, Home, Resource, Labour, War, Franchise, Backwater.

Output: What the planet provides

Size: The planet's size: Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, Huge

Population: Population according to the eleven basic Observation classifications listed below, including Kill Terrain, the designation for contested planets.

Prosperity: The wealth and social level to be expected, listed as either Poor, Normal or Rich.

Classification	Population
A	Dense with cities
B	Balanced with cities
C	Sparse with cities
D	Dense with towns
E	Balanced with towns
F	Sparse with towns
G	Dense with villages
H	Balanced with villages
I	Sparse with villages
J	No permanent residents
K	Kill Terrain

Scorch

"SLA saw potential in Bolarvo so they installed their own presidente to run the government; the inevitable tyrannical regime, so then DarkNight arrived and builds resistance armies in the foothills. The Bolarvion Freedom Fighters clashed with paramilitary style Death Squads and the bodies piled up. SLA crushed the resistance but that blood still stains the soil and Shi'An was drawn in on the scent"

Emilio Fernando Ortega, (68) Factory Worker

Scorch, or as its native people call it - Bolarvo, is a small Backwater on The Verges of the World of Progress. Scorch borders on being classified as a Resource world, as it grows a particular form of plant used in the creation of the SLA drug - Alice, but its output is currently low. Most of the planet's limited economy is built around the harvesting, partial synthesis and shipping of the derived chemical. The vast majority of Scorch's populace live in abject poverty, scraping by in shanty towns scattered throughout wide stretches of jungle terrain. These towns are extremely violent places where life is clearly deemed cheap. As if Scorch weren't dangerous enough, there are now rumours that the Shi'An cult has taken hold in the townships.

Scorch		
System	Type	Output
The Verges	Backwater	Chemicals
Size	Population	Prosperity
Small	D	Poor

Maugra Til'

"No, I have never been there, nor will I ever go. There is no honour there. The Shaktars of the Dark Moon call it home, that is enough for me to not call it at all. It doesn't exist to me and to suggest it does is to insult me and my culture beyond anything else. I know you didn't know, so I will give you a pass...Now what were you asking about? Think carefully!"

Ki'Khen'Kerthu Shaktar Operative SCL 7.1, Squad 'Ki'

Dark Moon Shaktars are either found on the Gate of Herodotus or in their own neighbouring Rott System. The black jewel in Rott is the Industrial World - Maugra Til' (pronounced Mogra Teel). The primary function of Maugra Til' is the production and repair of Ion Drive Ships. It is also homeworld to the ruling Dark Moon Clans. As with all to do with Dark Moon Shaktar culture, Maugra Til' is heavily aligned with White Earth and so it is a world mired in violence, horror and depravity. The Shaktarian race considers Maugra Til' to be the most evil location in the entire World of Progress. It is a reputation well deserved.

Maugra Til'		
System	Type	Output
Rott	Home/Industrial	Ion Drive Ships
Size	Population	Prosperity
Large	A	High

Gregori IV

"Apparently they used Low Waves here originally, but that proved too costly, they wore out too quickly. I don't know whether it's true or not, but they say they tried to make a hardier version, just for this planet. Then some bright spark fucker had a clever idea to just use us prisoners. Cheaper!"

Val Bealson, Human Ex-Operative, Deceased

To be sentenced to a Labour world is a life sentence of hard labour. Gregori IV is one of the worst labour planets in the World of Progress. Prisoners are forced to work 15 hour days with no breaks, followed by 5 hours sleep. The planet is bitterly cold and the terrain exclusively tundra, meaning that the ore and rocks are extremely difficult to quarry. Most inhabitants have lost fingers, noses and other extremities to frostbite. The air is full of ore dust, as the minerals are purified at exceedingly low yields.

Human life expectancy is approximately 4 years. Most succumb to the cold or Emphysema. The lucky may become a quick meal for the native direbears. No one has ever escaped the planet, nor is it expected they ever will.

Gregori IV		
System	Type	Output
Sirith	Labour	Ceramic Minerals
Size	Population	Prosperity
Huge	C (Prisons)	Poor

Ramdeff

"See, it's a sad old place. I run a Bertha-class transport out to Chapter every few months to get cars and I noticed it's the same guys operating the Ramdeff shuttles every time. They must live out there. Can you imagine living in a car park? I mean I practically live in a Bertha and even I think they must be mad."

Sack Maastersen, Bertha-class Ion Drive ship pilot

One of only two planets in the Chapter system has been described as a car park the size of a planet. With no permanent residents, the planet is covered in flattened geography that is covered in containers and vehicles. Originally used as an off-loading point for vehicles built on Swest, the other planet in the Chapter system, other industrial planets switched to using Ramdeff as a shipping hub for cars and other vehicles. There are a few large spaceports with a few barracks for security and logistics, but the planet has no indigenous life or resources.

Workers on Ramdeff seldom have familes and over half the living creatures are Low Wave Stormers performing menial tasks moving cars and car parts between storage and shuttles.

Ramdeff		
System	Type	Output
Chapter	Industrial	Cars
Size	Population	Prosperity
Small	J	Normal

Dante

"When you're in the SLA Military and they start talking about sending you to one of the big War Worlds, you piss yourself. When they tell you you're headed to Dante, you piss and shit yourself. Maybe puke up your lunch too. You'd be right to, as well! Dante really is the worst of the worst. You'll find everything there: DarkNight, Thresher and now there's the Conflict Aliens."

Sgt. Parker, 33rd 'Bullet Wings' Shock Armour Battalion.

Dante is the most famous and notorious War World in SLA owned space. Battles have raged on its surface for centuries, with each Oppressor power vying to dominate with a level of rage and hatred only comparable to that seen last in the Conflict Era. SLA sends the best weapons and technology to Dante to ensure victory over its rivals.

The Krell have recently carved out a formidable base on Dante, focusing their efforts on destroying DarkNight. The vast majority of SLA Chagrin Stormers have been deployed to Dante and are now ready to face down the Krell War Pigs in some of the bloodiest battles ever encountered on a War World.

Dante		
System	Type	Output
Rufus VII	War	NA
Size	Population	Prosperity
Large	K	NA

Big Smile World

"It's not called Big Smile World, it's called Beleron and no I don't want to Mega-Size...fuck off! No, just because I was born there doesn't mean I smell of fries, I'm from the Mustard...I mean...Azure Coast anyway. No, I don't wanna give ya a smile. I'm hungry. You wanna get a burger with fries? I'm paying."

Sally Bream, Human. Trainee Operative, Meny

When the Emperor of Beleron signed his world over to SLA Industries he thought he was signing a protection contract, he wasn't wrong, but unfortunately, he had not considered what the 3Ps in the 3Ps contract actually stood. Beleron also got Progress, Prospects and Prosperity. The planet has been rebranded and its populace, land and resources redeployed. The Azure Coast is now the Mustard Coast, the capital city the Pattie Precinct, each region, or in some cases country, is utilised to produce a specific aspect of the Big Smile menu, be that pickles, fries, burger buns or condiments. The planet has been rebranded at every level, the staff are expected to wear Big Smile uniforms, their Hab blocks must be painted in the designated Big Smile colours. Big Smile is not just a burger, it's life.

Big Smile World		
System	Type	Output
Shine	Franchise	Big Smile Menu
Size	Population	Prosperity
Large	B	Normal

New Paris

"There's nowhere in the World of Progress I'd rather be right now, in spite of all the cheese."

Birt Noggam, Human Corporate, Tourist

The favourite holiday destination of SLA's corporate class. The centre of culinary excellence, style, art and wine. New Paris is a planet of one city and a lot of picturesque agriculture. With a bustling nightlife and busy spaceport to go with relaxed sojourns and fine dining, there's always something to keep you busy and distracted from the looming return flight. If you're tired of New Paris, you're tired of life.

For the locals, it's just home. While there is less unemployment, this is due to a lack of social safety net outside of family. For those who can't find work and are not rich enough to support themselves, there are work placement schemes that take you offworld and put you to use elsewhere, either on an Industrial world or in SLA's Military, with almost every War World deployment having a "Paree Legion" of exiled New Parisians, trying to earn their passage home.

New Paris		
System	Type	Output
Regonne	Deluxe	Tourism/Fashion
Size	Population	Prosperity
Small	E	Rich

Dalblair II

"I came here to the Ayria system to make my fortune and retire young. I have done well and for a person of my standing, a fortune I have amassed. Problem is, with this line of work, you don't retire young you die young. I wouldn't have minded too much, but I brought my kids here too, they're all dead now, so I guess the company is getting my fortune, I hope it chokes on it"

Andrew Maller, Shift Manager, Bleaching Block 245-F

Originally a beautiful planet with a novel and fragile jungle ecosystem, Dalblair II is one of the three planets in the Ayria system that had life, each covered in over eighty percent forests. These trees are over 200m tall with a diameter of approximately 20m. The largest planet, Dalblair I, has been stripped of all resources and is now nothing more than a barren rock. Dalblair II will soon follow its fate, having been half stripped of lumber already. The factories turn the reddish brown fibres into bleached white and high end stationery, which is sold at great profit in Suburbia. Most of the workforce succumb to lung cancer within three years, brought on by constant exposure to the chemicals, inks and fibres sallowing the air.

Dalblair II		
System	Type	Output
Ayria	Resource	Stationery
Size	Population	Prosperity
Large	I	Normal

OPERATIVE HOURS

A SLA Operative is glorified as a freelancer that picks and chooses their role in the World of Progress, wearing their sponsorship deals on their pristine armour, wandering a photogenic offworld paradise, brandishing the finest composite firepower FEN has to offer. The reality is a different matter altogether, with Operatives having to take pretty much any job, from clearing sewers to tangling with a fraying reality, from breaking up an illegal cherry soda soft company to fighting alien monsters, from investigating a serial killer to risking their very soul engaging with a deadly cult, only rarely realising they are the product SLA pushes on the World of Progress.

Operatives have to make ends meet, like everyone in Mort City. They need to pay their bills, repair their armour and pay exorbitant prices for their ammunition. They need to look good, fight clean and deliver on whatever they're asked to do, just in case the cameras are watching. Please, let the cameras be watching.

While SLA Industries promises to make the lives of future Operatives better, generation after generation of the best and brightest see their efforts rewarded less and less. The company's corporates seem to skim a little bit more every financial period and yet, in spite of all this, everyone still wants to work for SLA Industries.

INDUCTION

An Operative begins their career as a graduate of Meny, the main training facility that serves as both university and military boot camp for the successful Operative. SLA Ops are usually screened for at schools, steered into different classes the moment they turn into teenagers, but some employees will put their children into Operative/Employee early-placement classes at a much younger age. Prospective Ops will typically graduate aged between eighteen and twenty four, depending on their aptitude, species and training packages. Ebonites start a year earlier and have an extra year's worth of training. Stormer 313s are also trained slightly longer, but typically start their education at birth and graduate after seven years. Shaktars and Wraithen who are fluent in Killan, the language of the World of Progress, take as long as human and Frother students, but those who are not as integrated into Mort's culture and language have an additional year of education. Some students may have to repeat years, if they are struggling, but are still deemed worthy of the effort or if their families are rich or important enough to lobby on their behalf. It is rare to see anyone repeating more than two years of the standard five.

Once Operatives graduate, they are assigned to a squad, either replacing a dead squad member, making up numbers or being assigned to a Greenhorn Squad, where everyone is a fresh recruit. Each squad has a leader, determined democratically, historically or determined in advance by SLA Industries. That leader is the point of contact whenever a squad interacts with SLA Employees or Shivers and is also the most likely to get disciplined when squads can't decide whose fault an infraction is.

Most starting characters will be members of an assigned Greenhorn Squad and must come up with a leader and squad name pretty much on the spot. If they can't come up with one in their induction, SLA will assign them a squad name and allocate a leader. Squad names need to be unique and SLA-approved, although the approval process is automated, based on uniqueness, as the company assumes any squad stupid enough to choose a daft name will change it the moment they get turned down by a sponsor.

"They put you on the spot, they do. I was bunched in with four new pals, A gobby ebby bloke, a Frother lady, a Massive Shaktar and a loud Stormer. What's your squad called? You're in charge, they said. Mankle, he's the stormer, kept saying 'smash it, hur hur' and we didn't know how to come up with anything better. So, yeah, that's how we got our name."

Meghan Pepper, Human Operative SCL10, Squad 'Smash It Hur'

Sample Squad Names

- Spider House
- Trailblazers
- Milk and two Milgrams
- Gang of four or five
- APC or bust
- Operative Living

A starting Operative will generally be able to get a single-room apartment organised in advance of their graduation. This can sometimes play a part in their squad allocation, with SLA Industries preferring to have Operatives living in the same sector of Downtown. In other cases, where the character has a "Housing, Good" or "Housing, Poor" advantage/disadvantage, they will have a clean and safe apartment in Suburbia, or a room in a shared rat pit in Downtown District 6

"The view's not much, the floor smells, the neighbours are shite and the stairs are a mess. Still, at least the TV works."

Grib Tellern, Human Operative SCL10, Squad 'Fenster'

Housing Examples

- Suburbia two room apartment. Housing, Good - 2
- Suburbia one room apartment. Housing, Good - 1
- Downtown District 1-3, two room apartment. Housing, Good - 1
- Downtown District 1-3, one room apartment.
- Downtown District 1-3, room in a shared apartment. Housing, Poor - 1
- Downtown District 4-6, one room apartment. Housing, Poor - 1
- Downtown District 4-6, room in a shared apartment. Housing, Poor - 2

All Operatives start their career in Mort City and very few of them ever leave the planet, let alone live offworld. Those who do end up living on another planet will have spent at least two years on the streets of Mort. The exception to this rule is an Operative who screws up so badly, they get given the option of serving a four year sentence in military service on one of the many War Worlds needing fresh bodies to serve. As most of them never return, this is not considered a career move.

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVELS

Very quickly, an Operative will realise that everything they are able to do, information they need and the jobs available all hinge on their security clearance level, or SCL. A regular SLA Employee will have an SCL of eleven, the lowest clearance available. Shiver Units also have an SCL of eleven, with some specialists or high-ranking officers gaining the next level, the level of starting Operatives, SCL 10.

At SCL 10, you are able to buy firearms and openly carry them anywhere. Upon graduation, an Operative gains a security clearance badge along with their FEN 603. A badge that says SCL 10 may be looked down upon by experienced operatives, but it is the opening of a lot of doors and signifies the start of new opportunities.

SCL can be increased in a few ways, but an Operative is most likely to gain more of the company's trust by earning it one step at a time, through Blueprint News Files and, or as their careers progress, Hunter Sheets. These two methods of getting jobs are the tried and trusted methods of improving an Operative's lot in life and most Operatives will do nothing but BPNs their entire careers.

Increases from BPNs are typically awarded in amounts from 0.1 to 0.4, with an Operative usually having to perform at least three BPNs flawlessly to gain a letter increase in their security clearance.

Example: Christina Foulds, a starting Operative with SCL 10 gets a 0.2 increase after a messy sewer clearance and goes from SCL 10 to SCL 10.2. Her squad mate "Pigkiller" Mortons had an SCL of 9A.8 and goes to an SCL 9B. Pigkiller gets an updated SCL badge with the change in letter, while Christina has to clean a lot more Carrien corpses from tunnels to get an updated card.

The SCL Ladder

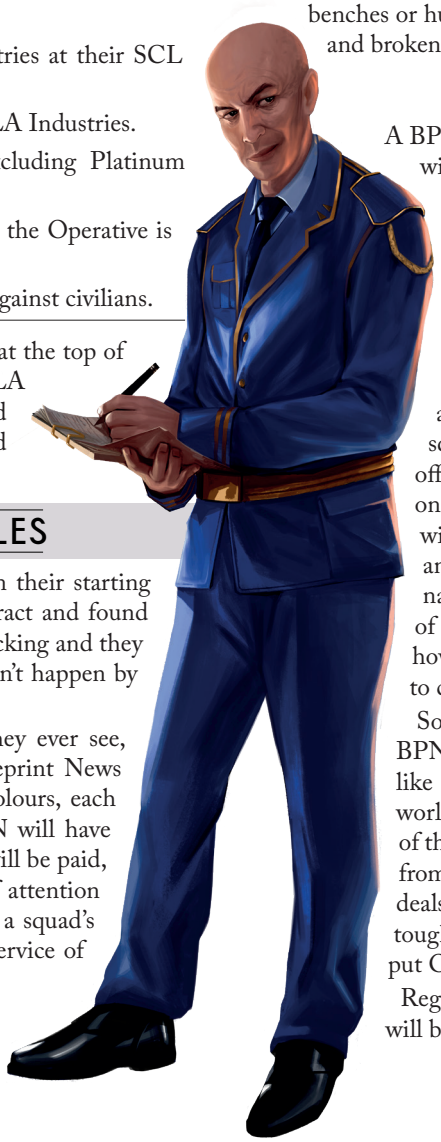
11					*(Employee)*	
10	10A				*(Operative)*	
9	9A	9B				
8	8A	8B	8C			
7	7A	7B	7C	7D		
6	6A	6B	6C	6D	6E	
5	5A	5B	5C	5D	5E	5F
4	4A	4B	4C	4D	4E	4F
3	3A	3B	3C	3D	3E	3F
2	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F
1						

Note: Civilians and SCL 11 Employees have the right to only buy CAF civilian-grade firearms. Higher SCL levels grant Operatives access to better sponsors and privileges. SCL 1 is only available to Mr Slayer.

From SCL 10, an Operative has the rights to:

- Bear arms.
- Information belonging to SLA Industries at their SCL level.
- Buy and sell stocks and shares from SLA Industries.
- Apply for Blueprint News Files (excluding Platinum BPNs).
- Control Shiver Units at a crime scene the Operative is assigned to.
- Enforce Search and Seizure warrants against civilians.

While this seems like the Operatives are at the top of the pile, they know that they answer to SLA Industries and are constantly monitored by Station Analysis, Cloak Division and Internal Affairs.



BLUEPRINT NEWS FILES

Once an Operative squad has been given their starting equipment, signed their employment contract and found out where they will be living, the clock is ticking and they have to start earning money. Progress doesn't happen by itself, after all.

Their first job and possibly every job they ever see, will come in the form of a BPN, or Blueprint News File. This docket comes in a variety of colours, each colour denoting a type of task. Each BPN will have the title of the job, the amount the squad will be paid, per squad or per operative and the type of attention they're likely to receive. Getting a BPN is a squad's first task as they start their career in the service of SLA Industries.

BPN Halls

Typically, a squad will head to Slayer's Crib, the largest BPN hall and the nearest to the induction centre at Central Station, for their first BPN. The hall is a busy building that houses bureaucracy and disappointment. If you are lucky, you will be able to register your presence at the BPN hall and get a ticket with a number on it. There are screens around the hall that show numbers and the displays will update with a new number, sometimes in sequence, but occasionally seemingly at random.

Once your number comes up, or if your squad name is called over the tannoy, - something else to watch out for - you are expected to make your way to the booth, office or desk of the BPN officer who is going to take care of you.

Smaller halls of varying quality are dotted all around Mort Central, Uptown and Suburbia, providing Operatives choice, but most will head to Slayer's Crib, meeting up with other squads and catching up on the latest scuttlebutt before getting their next job.

Slayer's Crib has a few booths with windows, but most BPN Officers have their own cramped office with a desk and an in tray, while Operatives will have to wait outside the offices on benches or huddled around small tables with form dispensers and broken pens on chains.

BPN Officers

A BPN Officer's uniform is a blue suit with gold trim, with the outfit's quality decreasing the further away the Officer's station is from Central. All of the officers at Slayer's Crib are well presented and professional, but those in more far flung spots, nearer the Perimeter Wall, might be less well-presented, much like the sorts of BPNs you can expect from them.

BPN Officers will have a stack of BPNs to allocate and will use favouritism as much as squad proficiencies to decide which jobs you get offered. An officer will expect you to take the first one offered and will have less palatable jobs in the wings if you refuse. Once you get the BPN card, and have signed the requisite forms, your squad name is entered into the ledger and all members of your squad are responsible for its completion, however only the squad leader's signature is required to commit the squad to the task.

Some BPN Officers specialise in a certain type of BPN and will have only one or two colours available, like Officer Hilgard who loves sending squads off world, or Grenfold "Bluesman" Spitani in the shadow of the Perimeter Wall, who is alleged to get kickbacks from sanitation companies for every Blue BPN he deals out. Other officers gain reputations for being tough but fair, like Officer Mills or a willingness to put Operatives in harm's way, like Officer Vlick.

Regardless which officer deals with the squad, there will be forms to fill out.

Downtown BPNs

Operatives will likely find most of their missions taking place in Inner Downtown and the types of BPNs they will receive and threats they will face runs the gamut. Nearly every collateral enemy of SLA can be found lurking here and in a short space of time the Operative Squad will encounter all of them.

"Y'know, me and the rest of the squad hasn't left Inner Downtown in well over a month. It just takes too damn long going back and forth to Central. Why not just stay here and tough it out. And sure, it means using the BPN Terminals, but if I'm entirely honest? I kinda like it? The missions are brutal, weird and totally random, but our squad's been going for a year and it's working out.

You never know what you're getting anyway, so for a laugh we just got our resident Frother to sit on the keyboard and wait to see what the dispenser gives us. MacDonald's ass has gotten us Whites, Blues, Reds and all manner of stupidity, and we just get out there and do it.

Good times…"

Mr Burnykins, Eban Operative SCL 8c,
Squad 'How do I change Title/Name?'

BPNs based in Inner Downtown invariably come from Shiver Patrol reports. Shivers are ill equipped and trained to deal with rival company agents and anything more dangerous than a gang member so they will just record their findings, pull back to a safe position and file the paperwork for a BPN. Operatives will usually find a cordon line of Shivers surrounding a troubled apartment block or open sewer drain when they arrive. The Shivers are there to secure the area for the squad's arrival and perform clean up once the SLA Ops have left.

Operatives must gain a well rounded understanding of the geography, culture and temperament of Downtown. They will find themselves driven to talk to civilians and Shivers, learn the layout commonly associated with apartment buildings and subways, so they will know where to track and locate opponents. So much of Inner Downtown is a complex network of civilian accommodation, retail districts, travel lanes and Shift Blocks and it's easy to get lost or waylaid in the throngs of civilian traffic. There is also no skyline and Operatives who are unfamiliar with the warren-like environment can find themselves turned around in a moment.

A squad that's looking for work in Inner Downtown doesn't have the luxury of a BPN Hall and has to rely on the aged network of BPN Terminals, machines that have a display screen and a keyboard for a squad to fill in their details and swipe their leader's SCL card. The machines are old enough that they still use the previous style of BPN card and unreliable enough that experienced Operatives know to write down the details of the BPN on the screen before pressing the print button, as they sometimes don't print out the docket, leaving an Operative or a squad with a job allocated to them without giving them a copy of the instructions.

The BPNs from terminals are usually local, but occasionally they will hand out an unexpected remote job or a little more than the Operatives bargained for.

DEPARTMENTS

SLA Industries, as a company, is made up of departments, each one with their own ambitions and responsibilities. Departments may contain several different companies and sub-departments, with strictly hierarchical constructions or flat control structures.

Smaller departments spring up and die off according to the needs of the company, but there are several departments that define SLA Industries. These departments can authorise and release BPN files through the BPN Halls, terminals and, in some cases, offer squads BPNs directly.

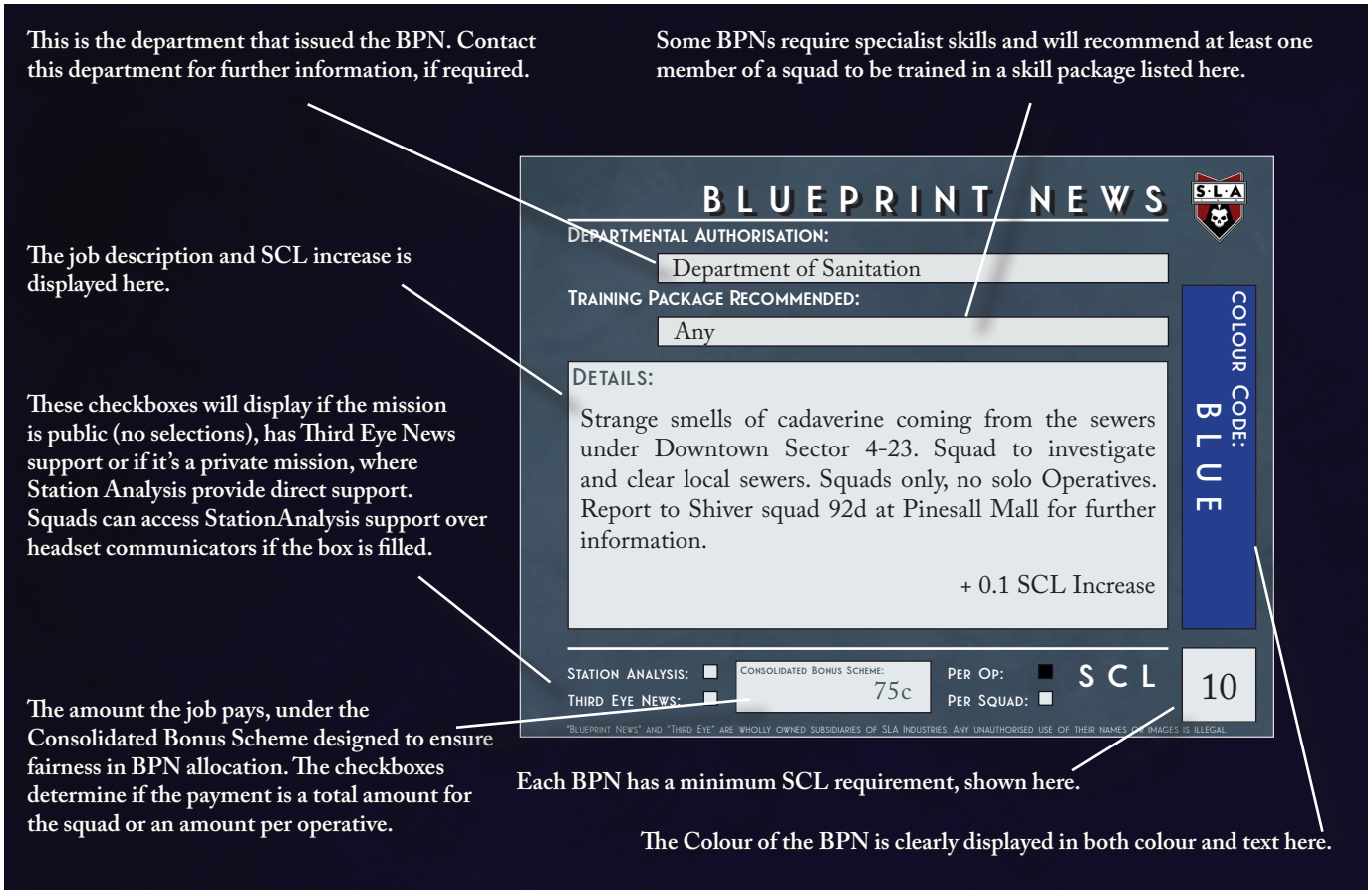
Head Office

Head Office is a term that encompasses Mr Slayer's office and the departmental heads that are invited there. If you get a seat at Mr Slayer's table, you are Head Office. Everything that SLA Industries does is decided at that table and passed down to the lower departments.

BPNs: Platinum. These BPNs are only ever directly issued from Head Office.

Cloak Division

Cloak Division exists to protect SLA Industries and the information it owns. This department works closely with Stigmartyr, Threat Analysis, Station Analysis and Internal Affairs to protect the company from inside and outside subversive threats. When the department's agents, the intimidating Dark Finders, are too busy, or a job requires a more subtle approach,



Cloak Division will issue a BPN to get Operatives to police the information leaks.

Recently, Naga 7 took an interest in Cloak Division, especially with their recent failure to contain the growing Shi'An Cult menace or suppress the information of the return of Conflict Aliens and is restructuring the department, quietly bringing it under their control.

BPNs: White, Grey, Black. Extermination warrants are also issued by Cloak Division.

Stigmarytr

Stigmartyr agents are often mistaken for Dark Finders, in spite of the gold letter S on their distinct black armour, but Mara Kessock's department was set up to look further than internal subversion and to keep an eye on all things White Earth. They are becoming more active with the recent increased influence of the Shi'An blood cult and its roots in White Earth and have started offering employment to Operatives to investigate or eliminate cult activity in Mort City. The new Orange BPN is the result of their shift in focus.

Stigmartyr likes to keep an eye on Bitterness's servants and is always open to any news of White Earth Monitors in the World of Progress.

BPNs: Orange, Grey, Black. LaD is not available to anyone currently active on an Orange BPN.

Station Analysis

The information backbone of SLA Industries is Station Analysis, a department dedicated to gathering and disseminating information throughout the company. Working closely with other departments, they maintain the catalogues that Threat Analysis collects and creates, they look after the financial records of each department, with the Department of Housing and the Department of Employment, they maintain the most complete census of civilians, employees and Operatives, on Mort and beyond.

When Station Analysis takes an interest in a BPN, when they don't want the media covering it, they will mark it accordingly and provide the active Operatives with a contact number to call on a Headset Communicator for any information the squad needs to complete the task. Station Analysis will cut through the red tape for you because, in most cases, they are the red tape.

Third Eye News

Third Eye News are, essentially, the media. They control local news through subsidiaries and reality-entertainment via planet-wide channels. They also have several twenty four hour news channels, each dedicated to a different aspect of news, including a corporate-leaning news channel, a violence and crime focused news channel and a celebrity news channel.

If Third Eye News are interested in your BPN, denoted by checking a box on the docket, they may send a news crew to follow the Operative squad or have a single reporter with a Spot Bee Drone chase them up afterwards.

BPNs: Silver, Jade, Red. Occasionally, Third Eye News will want to make the story, rather than merely report it.

Threat Analysis

A relatively new department, formed out of necessity, Threat Analysis were created to document the return of the many Conflict Species and provide Operatives and Military alike with the clearest information available. Working with Station Analysis, they have built a library of information that they make available to anyone with the right paperwork.

Often sending Operative squads off-world, Threat Analysis are all about categorising threats, with their 4Cs collation system, documenting Corporate, Cult, Conflict and Collateral menaces. However, Operatives are more likely to deal with Threat Analysis seeking information on the latest horror they have encountered.

BPNs: White, Green, Red.

Internal Affairs

Often mistaken for Cloak Division, a mistake they prefer not to correct, Internal Affairs deals with crime and corruption within the company itself, mostly insider trading and Operatives or employees defecting to rival companies, along with more mundane crimes. They use Operatives and Cloak Division for direct action, lacking an armed division.

When they require the assistance of Operatives, they will issue BPNs to engage one or more squads for a task.

BPNs: White, Grey, Yellow, Green. Internal Affairs BPNs will rarely involve media coverage.

Corporate Sector

Money, Law and Trade. The Corporate Sector manages the contracts, financing and logistics of keeping the World of Progress moving. With Corporates in most departments, the Corporate Sector is not a department as such, but a collection of small partnerships and offices that work for SLA Industries.

Sharp-suited office workers, competing for the larger slices of the pie, will hire Operatives to get them information or assets, issuing BPNs to further their careers and profits.

BPNs: Yellow. A Yellow BPN issued by a corporate partnership or firm will be titled "Corporate Sector", with the company contact in the details.

Naga 7

Formed from a secret society, Naga 7 spent part of their history outside SLA Industries, but have recently returned to the fold. They are attempting to shape the World of Progress into what they consider a better society, making the future more solid and holding the crumbling of reality at bay while investigating the reasons for its collapse.

The friendlier face of Naga 7 is the Aetherman, a stalwart defender against the insidious Dream that has started to creep into Downtown in the form of Grey Zones and Dream Entities. BPNs from this mysterious department range from archaeology hunts to assisting the Aethermen in their tasks.

BPNs: White, Yellow, Green. BPNs from Naga 7 Division are always slightly unusual, looking to uncover some truth that wants to remain hidden.

SLA Military

To extend its power and control throughout the World of Progress, SLA Industries has always relied on its military arm. SLA Military gets the best weapons and armour, unlike the urban-friendly personal arms allowed on Mort and is immensely well-funded. SLA Military occasionally requires the services of Operatives, especially in regions - anywhere but War Worlds - where the military is not allowed to operate and issues BPNs through the regular channels.

BPNs: White, Grey, Green, Silver, Black.

Other Departments

There are other departments that sanction work, like the Department of Sanitation's notorious blue BPNs, or the occasional Shiver-related BPN and odd jobs can come from any department imaginable.

BPNs: Blue, Any

Subsidiary Companies

SLA Industries owns a vast amount of companies that compete with one another for your Credit or Uni, from food and clothes to weapons and armour. While these various companies usually operate as stand-alone businesses, with shareholders, rivalries and their own unique management structures, they are effectively governed by SLA Industries who will buy out, close down or merge them as needed to keep the marketplace balanced, diverse and profitable.

THE LOVE OF MONEY

There are two linked currencies in the World of Progress, Credits (c) and Unis (u). The Credit is a virtual currency equal to ten Unis while Unis are a physical currency with coins and notes changing ownership throughout the known universe.

Civilians don't get access to Credit accounts, managed through an Operative's SCL badge, which acts as a way to keep Operative-level firepower out of the hands of civilians as SLA firearms are not sold outside the Perimiter Wall and Unis are not accepted anywhere within the enclosed keep of Suburbia and Uptown.

In Downtown, however, very few shops accept credits and Operatives have to buy Unis from dispensers or banks to purchase food. However, the black market is rife with SLA-sanctioned weapons obtained through nefarious means, as well as those made by other rival companies, most notably DarkNight.

Note: Any item that does not have a stated cost in Unis (u) is not available to the general public without attempting to obtain said item through the black market, or by taking it from the body of a dead Op. The GM is free to assign any extortionate Uni cost they deem suitable to obtain items on the black market.

The Finance Chip

The Finance Chip is a small semi-biogenetic device that is inserted into an employee or Operative's skull. It links the user's brain directly to their bank account, showing their bank balance and the time and date on a heads up display directly in the user's brain. The Finance Chip also transmits whatever the employee sees to Station Analysis to allow for quick, cardless financial transactions. Even with a 100c induction bonus and a stipend of up to 200c a month, most operatives choose not to have one fitted, especially after a few high-profile breach of privacy cases.

As its popularity wanes, the Finance Chip is starting to become a worthwhile project failed by departmental overreach.

> *"We once had an IA BPN to take out some Station Analysis creep who was patching into SummerBi's partner's Finance Chip feed and selling slugs of their intimate moments, if you know what I mean. And by that, I mean fucking, of course. Oh shit, we were supposed to keep that secret. Fuck. Don't tell anyone I told you. Wait, are you chipped?"*
>
> Grayson Beaver, Human Operative, Deceased

Note: Due to the location of the implant, Ebonite characters are not permitted to have a Finance Chip installed.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

> *"For just one credit, you can live after death."*
>
> LaD advert on the Operative Express, Mort Central

Life After Death, LaD, is an option available to any starting Operative. It's an insurance contract that ensures you will be rescued and brought back to life in the event of an untimely death. SLA Industries has invested a lot of money in you and wants you to be productive, even after death. For one Credit, an Operative can open an LaD account, ensuring that SLA will make their best effort to bring the account holder back from death. The process costs around 5,000 credits to rebuild a dead Operative to base minimum standards, but to be brought back to life the same as, or better, than when the subject died can cost upwards of 10,000c. Anyone with under 5,000c in their account will get the bare minimum service and a massive debt.

It serves an Operative well to have over five thousand credits in their account.

The LaD process involves a *pacer implant* attached to the heart and a *brainsaver implant* around the brain. If the brain implant stops getting a signal from the pacer, it secures the brain and keeps the subject alive for up to twenty minutes, long enough for an LaD recovery service to get to you anywhere within the Perimeter Wall and layers 1-3 of Inner Downtown. Any longer, the subject needs an *LaD Booster* attaching to the back of their neck. The booster is a device that injects the subject with all manner of life preserving meds and slow release oxygen. It was developed in conjunction with the Sector Rangers during the Bellwood Campaign. The booster also acts as a radio amplifier to allow LaD trustees to get a better location. A LaD Booster will add an hour to the subject's recovery time and has been demonstrated to work as far out as Cannibal Sector 1.

EMPLOYMENT

Operatives and Employees are the most commonly thought of SLA workers, but there are other types of employment that can get you a security clearance and advancement in the company.

Employee

SLA Industries employs a lot of people and half of them are referred to simply as Employees. These are the workers who operate the factories, sell food and clothes, transport goods. An Employee pulls in a wage to cover their rent in Suburbia.

Administration

Falling somewhere between Operatives and Employees in authority, Administration workers do the office jobs and bureacracy that keeps track of the company's progress. A BPN Officer would fall into this category, as would a pencil pusher.

Contract Killer

Contract Killers are the media darlings, fighting the good fight in front of a camera. They usually only have an SCL 11 and are forbidden from Operative duties, in spite of their fame and fortune on the Contract Circuit, a glorified arena where they fight each other for entertainment. Occasionally, a Contract Killer will be attached to a squad and cause them all sorts of trouble.

Contract Hunter

Part big game hunter, part bounty hunter, Contract Hunters are long-gun wielding, Crawler driving, Safari poaching hunters from Trakaar. SLA Industries uses these hunters to track down criminals that are on the run, or elusive targets that have skipped off-world. They occasionally have their own space transport to transport them throughout the World of Progress.

SLA Industries Soldier

Most SLA Military employees never make it back from War Worlds and those that do are either quiet and reclusive or return with their battles unfinished, taking to the Cannibal Sectors as Ex-War Criminals. Most Operatives will never meet an active service SLA Industries Soldier, unless they venture out to a War World on a Green BPN where they will see how much better the military equipment is than theirs.

Trustee

A Trustee is a former Operative who has been assigned to a particular SLA Industries department. When an Operative gets too valuable to galavant around Downtown, Head Office will occasionally assign them to a department where they will serve as a Trustee, working the majority of their time on departmental issues.

Sector Ranger

Early in an Operative's training, a small number of them are pulled aside and trained as Sector Rangers. If the Operative can cope with the sorts of stresses the cannibal sectors throw up, they are sent to train as a Sector Ranger instead and will end up working as explorers and researchers in the unforgiving sectors.

Corporate

Corporates work for firms and partnerships in the Corporate Sector, moving the money around and formulating contracts to keep everyone in their place. Occasionally Corporates can be Agents who get their squads the best sponsorship deals for their ten percent, or even Operatives working within the squad.

Dark Finder

Cloak Division has its own police force for Mort Central and Uptown, the Dark Finders. They wear custom Crackshot X armour in varying shades of black. Since Naga 7's interference, their appearance has shifted to a more militaristic style.

Shiver

Shivers are the Gang in Green, Mort's police force. Having taken over the duties of the disbanded Monarch law enforcement and getting sent out to fight to reclaim Cannibal Sector 1 in the Bellwood Campaign, the Shivers have a lot on their plate. Many of them resent Operatives, considering them to be overpaid preening show ponies.

THE WATCHFUL EYE

SLA Industries is a panopticon of entertainment, with the streets as its stage and Operatives as the players. Every house in Mort has a television and they don't have an off switch. The media is constantly looking for entertainment and there is little their audience enjoys more than watching Operatives dealing out justice and progress to the enemies of SLA Industries.

With the Shivers of the Bellwood Campaign stealing the screens for the last few years, it's once again the Operatives' turn to keep the unemployed in their TV-watching couches.

Television crews are always ready to tag on to a squad on the job, as long as the job looks interesting and the squad looks good. An entire industry of media, agents and sponsors is looking for the next big thing.

Corporate Agents

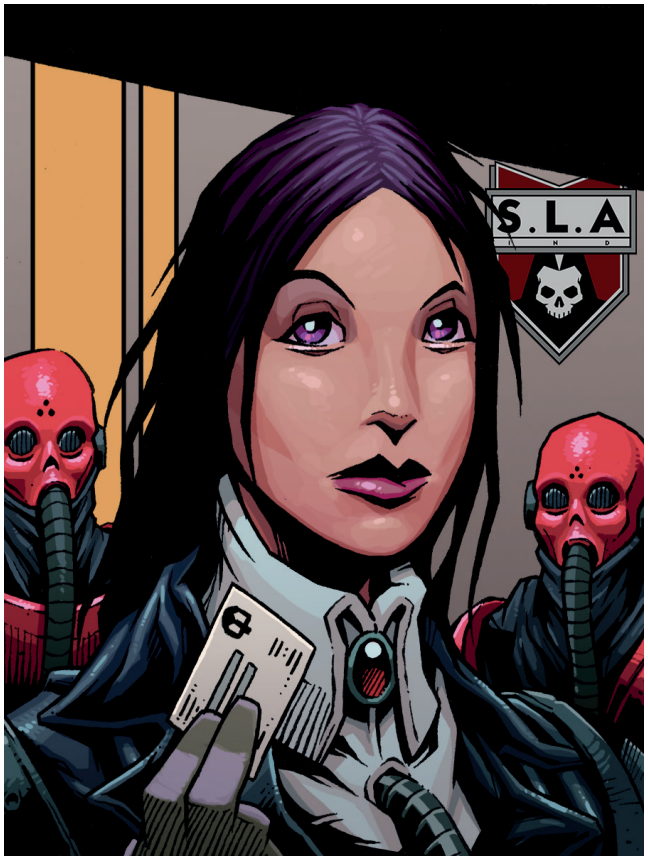
"I started out as an Operative, grinding out BPNs in a squad. It wasn't too hard to stay alive, especially with the team I was with and in return, I got them the best deals. Remember Jeff Moreau's FEN ad? I'm now a partner at Hinton, Moss and Rowan, and you know we'll fight for you. Watch the reruns."

Cherry "Cerise" Hinton, Human Corporate, SCL 3E, 'Hinton, Moss and Rowan'

An Operative wanting to get sponsorship, or any media deal, needs an agent. Corporate Agents are sometimes Operatives themselves, while others work from an office in Uptown or Mort Central. An agent will charge ten percent of what they get you, but ninety percent of the size of pie they can get you is almost always worth the deal.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship deals come in many forms, with more notoriety bringing in bigger and better sponsors. With a good agent. you can start looking for sponsors at SCL 9, but as your SCL increases, so do your opportunities.



SCL 9

Entry-level independant sponsors will get you 50c a month and the occasional freebie to be seen with. Power drinks, beers, entry-level clothing deals, a small indie sponsor will likely stay with the Operative for life.

"Dave Beer would love it if you could drink a can in front of the cameras, but only if you're not about to drive."

Unknown

SCL 8

For 100c a month, the Operative is sponsored by a commodity company, e.g. a clothing, magazine or drug company.

SCL 7

Media companies start taking an interest in the Operative, offering 150c a month for prominent placement of their logo. If the Operative suits their brand, TV channels and newspapers are probable.

SCL 6

When the major companies take an interest, Operatives can earn 200c a month for wearing a FEN or BLA logo, as well as discounted or free weapons being on the table, as long as the Operative stops using the competition's product.

SCL 5

Departments take an interest in the Operative, for 250c a month, occasionally leading to Trustee offers.

CHARACTER CREATION

In SLA Industries each player assumes the role of an Operative. These 'characters' are the personas that will represent the players as they venture into The World of Progress. Building a SLA Operative is easy to do, needing little more than a character sheet, a pencil and your imagination. The following section will walk you through character creation, getting your Operative street-ready in no time.

1. **Select a Species:** Mort's population, while mostly human, is comprised of a large number of alien species, some of whom have been welcomed to the planet in return for their cooperation and employment. SLA Industries is very good at highlighting the strengths of a species and utilising those skills to better the company's position. There are a total of nine different species to choose from, each with their own physical, mental and social limitations.
2. **Stats:** Each character possesses a number of stats that represent their core attributes and define how strong, fast, smart, sociable and lucky they are. It is upon the foundation of these stats that a character is able to take shape. Players will assign a number of points to these stats during step 2 of this process.
3. **Ratings Points:** Ratings Points are a limited resource possessed by all characters and reflect a character's sway with the ever present media in Mort City. Ratings Points also represent a character's confidence and bravado, allowing them to achieve the unachievable in the direst of circumstances. During this step, players will assign a number of ratings points to each of the three categories - Body, Brain and Bravado.
4. **Skills:** Skills work in conjunction with stats and represent the specialisations of the character. This step is broken into a few smaller steps which involve applying those skills which are inherent to a specific species, choosing a training package for the Operative and then spending a pool of points to further increase existing skills or round off a character's learning with new skills.
5. **Traits:** Some characters are fortuitous; as having friends in high places or savings squirrelled away for a rainy day. Some may even have additional physical edges, such as exceptional hearing or they may be ambidextrous. At the same time, many characters will also have aspects about them which may be considered disadvantages, such as a phobia, illness or arch enemy lurking in the shadows. These aspects are covered by Traits and players are free to apply these bonuses and penalties during step 5.
6. **Hit Points:** During step 6 of the process, characters will calculate and apply their hit points; a measure of how much physical damage they can take before being critically wounded. Hit points are affected by a character's species and their physical statistics.
7. **Movement:** Movement is simply the measure of how far and fast a character can move. During this step a character records their movement values based upon the species they have selected and how athletic the character is.
8. **Encumbrance:** Encumbrance is underpinned by the physicality of a character and is a measure of how much weight they can carry without penalty. A character with a high encumbrance value is able to carry more equipment during the game without suffering harm or exhaustion.
9. **Equipment:** During step 9 the player will record all the default starting equipment provided to the Operative following completion of their basic training. Each character will then be able to spend an amount of additional money on purchasing weapons, armour and gear of their choosing in order to get their character street-ready. SLA Industries authorises the use of a large range of armaments from a huge range of manufacturers, all available to any Operative who can afford the price tag.
10. **Finishing Touches:** The final step of the process is purely to inject some life into their Operative. During this step, the player will be able to dig into the background and history of their character, give them a name, purpose, passion and decide exactly what makes them tick. Step 10 is purely creative and is there for players to embellish as much as they please.

Once all ten steps have been followed, the character creation process is complete and the Operative will be ready to undertake their first BPN.

SELECT A SPECIES

"Who are these new guys?"
Bench Masterson, SLA Induction, Mort Central Station

The first thing a player must consider when building a character is the species that they wish to play. SLA Industries employ a large spectrum of species, both alien and more familiar, each for the different attributes they bring to the Operative role. From the fast agile Wraithen to the diplomatic Neophron, a species' characteristics, strengths and weaknesses will play a big part in defining what type of character the player creates.

In addition to the different personalities, stats and skills that come with selecting a character's species, each species also possesses unique Species Specific Abilities that set them apart. The different personalities and characteristics are discussed over the following pages.

This gauss train from Meny will be my last.

A journey I started four years ago ends today and I can't wait to start my new life as a SLA Industries Operative. I have my certificate marking me out as sanctioned for Strike and Sweep and I've been given a squad allocation. They told me eventually I get to choose my squadmates, but more often than not, Ops stay with the team they start with, which makes sense as we're all on the same side.

I hope I get to work with a Shaktar, as I knew a couple in the combat classes and they seemed cool. They kept to themselves on campus, but apparently they mix more with humans like me once they're Operatives.

The train carriage was a bit manky, but the adverts were new; the glue was still wet on some of them. The adverts were a mix of the direct and the odd. FEN and BLA were well represented, along with some weird hostels for Ops that don't like their new digs. There was even one for an APC cot and a bag for Operatives that want to live in their van. Weird, I know.

I've heard some Ops get sent straight out to the cannibal sectors, but that might have just been someone bullshitting the rookies. I hope it was a wind-up as I'm looking forward to the streets of Mort City. My youth was spent ducking in and out of the shanty shops in the shadow of the sector wall and I saw how the Shivers changed when they started getting sent out. Regular street coppers, with a 'clip round the earhole for nicking shit from stalls off you go kid don't let me catch you again coppers', turned to hundred-foot face veterans who weren't entirely there.

But you know what I'm really looking forward to? Sure, it's the SCL card, the headset communicator, the body blocker and the 603, but most of all, I'm looking forward to a Klippo of my own. Watching Merkar Aceford on the telly, shooting up a room of Carrien with the slow clicking of a Blitzer, pulling out a filtered Dead Will Dance and sparking up with his SLA Operative Klippo. The close-up on his smirking face as you could see the logo on the lighter held to his cigarette, nothing was cooler to me aged eight.

I spent years dreaming about being an Operative and I'm not going to say it was easy, but I aced a few of the early aptitude tests and put the effort in at school. I wasn't the strongest or the smartest, but I was good at learning stuff and made sure I passed the classes they told me Ops needed to pass. I've got first aid badges I earned over the holidays one year, that's how determined I was.

I mean, of course I wanted to leave home and strike out for myself and avoid becoming one of the lifeless slobs claiming dole and watching TV all day, but more than that, I wanted to be an Operative.

Getting into Meny was hard and I failed on the first application, but here I am. I've got a suit of Body Blocker and a 603 waiting for me in Mort Central, in the Operative Express arrival zone and I'm in a carriage with a couple of hundred new Ops, all shitting ourselves about our first day out of class. But I've got something to look forward to. Something that got me to where I am today.

So, yeah, I'm getting a fucking SLA Klippo.

HUMAN

"I've got this Shaktar in my squad. Nice bloke, not got a bad bone in his body but he could snap your head off if you looked at him funny. The guy always speaks his mind; no filter at all. Anyways, he says that he likes Humans, but we're all pretty boring.

When a Shaktar calls you boring what he means is you aren't special. As Humans don't have scaly red skin, or telekinetic powers, can't turn invisible and we don't grow spontaneous electric blue hair by nature. SLA hires and makes all sorts, but Humans are neither the strongest, the fastest, nor are we the biggest. I mean, there are Neophrons in the World of Progress now, so we can't even claim to be the smartest. As always, we just sit somewhere in the middle, on everything. Unspectacular in almost every regard.

And that's what the jolly red giant means by boring. What he doesn't realise is Humans far exceed every other species in the World of Progress in terms of population. Same with Operatives ratios and Shiver recruitment and SLA Military, even in Civilian quota. I'm not even talking about Mort City; that's the entire World of Progress. It's Humans, Humans, Humans. What does all this mean? Well, I don't know. Either Humanity is doing something really right, or more likely, something is very, very wrong."

Joffa 'Breezy' Metcalfe, Human Operative,
SCL 7d, Squad 'The No-Go Zoners'

Insight

You are one amongst billions of Humans living on planet Mort. Raised and abused by the streets of Inner Downtown, you have seen it all through unflinching eyes by the time you have reached the meagre age of 8. You watched a sibling be slowly eaten alive by Mort Rats, a childhood friend dragged into the notorious Skin Trade, never to be see again. You've heard the scrape of a Manchine's blade at the door to your apartment as you huddled in a corner of the living room with your sobbing father, clutching you tight. You played with your toys by your bedroom window and watched a teenage Gang Member get torn to shreds by a pack of Carrien, so you raised a plastic SLA Op figurine and fired in the direction of the feasting monsters because this is what you want to be. It's all you've ever wanted to be; an Operative recruited by SLA Industries.

It was tougher for you, being a mere human being. As a child you learned to blend in with the crowd, but now that plays against you. Still just one amongst billions. Not that it is all bad; as a human being you are highly adaptable and versatile. In training you were surrounded by fellow Humans and some were destined for the Corporate Sector, others Contract Killers or perhaps even Sector Rangers. It was almost impossible to tell from a simple glance.

Other species are destined for greatness, but the great majority fail. Stormers who believed they could take on Digger and got reduced into bloody chunks they could not possibly regenerate from, or Shaktars who were blown apart for attempting to bring the noble art of swordplay to a gun fight. And who could forget, the Ebonites reduced to gibbering wretches when their emotions entangled with the Shi'An horrors, or were consumed by the Momics.

The mighty will rise and the mighty will fall. No one is perfect; least of all a human being, but at least a Human knows what to expect when she takes to the streets of Downtown in nothing but Body Blocker armour and a shitty 603.

You are whatever you are needed to be in the moment. Caring and compassionate, cunning and ruthless, often very ruthless. The point is, few other species can tell which you'll be when you don the SCL badge and perhaps that ambiguity is your strongest suit as an Operative.

You join your new squad and suffer the usual snide comments and the shifty glances. They're already wondering how long you can possibly last, but you have all kinds of surprises in store for these clowns. They underestimate you, but give it time: you'll show them. The greatest blessing and curse bestowed on a human being is that it is capable of anything.

Background

Humans can adhere and adapt to almost any situation or setback and bounce back from whatever hardship SLA Industries can throw at them. They are regarded as the bland underdog of the World of Progress but this has only driven them to struggle, strive and fight for everything they have. They are loved and they are loathed.

The Human species has a tendency towards racism and bigotry, far more so than any other species in the World of Progress, which likely stems from its population majority on Mort and throughout the World of Progress. Even within the Shiver ranks Humans far outstrip other species by a considerable margin and more depressingly, the Moral Right's Virtue Squads' membership is entirely Human.

Alarmingly, more Humans join Cults and become serial killers than any other species in the World of Progress. The worshippers of the Shi'An in Mort City are approximately 95% Human. Threat Analysis has put considerable research and examination into this phenomenon and the initial consensus is that human beings are far more ambitious than other species and their motivations are driven by self-interest and the desire for power.

This is also very true even within the company itself. Humans are keen to take positions in Administration and the Corporate Sector, where those with low morals can accrue enormous wealth. Other species often strive for fame and glory that will be representative of their kind, especially Shaktars. Humans, however, tend to push for individualism. They are heavily invested in what SLA inspires in its employees: start with nothing and end life with the most toys.

Humans are neither greedy nor self-serving by their very natures, but it is drawn out of them far more easily than other species, especially once they join SLA Industries. The closest species to Humans in terms of personality is likely the Wraithen, who also act in their own self-interest, but Wraithen are not as malicious or treacherous as Humans: they simply want what they want.

The newly arriving Neophrons find the Human species the most fascinating. The majority of the species they encounter can usually be figured out quite quickly, but this is simply not the case with Humanity. They have encountered incredible acts of brutality and compassion in equal measure among Humans, which is both wonderful and terrifying.

Appearance

Human physiognomy is similar to that of Ebonites. There is a great amount of diversity in terms of skin tone, facial structure and musculature, which is based on genetics and planetary location. Hair and eye colour are also widely varied. A noticeable Human feature is the development of irises and pupils, which dilate and constrict in reaction to sudden changes in light.

Human skin is thin and flexible and damages easily. Humans can rapidly increase muscle mass through rigorous exercise, but will lose definition and gain weight far quicker than other species if they neglect physical activity.

The lifespan of a Human is recorded between 70-80 years, but in Mort City this is considerably less if the Human is a Civilian, owing to air pollution and malnutrition. The Human body starts to physically decline around the age of 55, although regular exercise and a healthy diet can offset the ill effects of age for a time. Most Humans employed by SLA Industries will turn to Karma biogenetic to augment their bodies and increase lifespan. Downtown civilians, lacking in such opportunities and funds, often turn to the likes of the Shi'An Cult to cheat ill health and mortality, although typically end up increasing the likelihood of injury and death.

Species Specific Abilities

Adaptable - Humans are the most adaptable species on Mort and as a result, are the most prominent as SLA Operatives. At the end of character creation, a Human character may select any two skills that they do not already possess and gain them both at rank 1. Additionally, Human characters pay 1 experience point less than the usual cost to increase their skills during downtime sessions.

Sociable - While many are not, the vast majority of Humans are naturally sociable creatures, with a natural flair for communication, particularly with other Humans. To reflect, this a Human character receives a +1 modifier to the Success Die for all Diplomacy and Persuasion rolls when dealing with other Humans.

- Life Span: 70 - 85 years
- Height/Weight: 5.2 - 6.5 ft, 10-14st
- Strengths: Versatility, broad range of skill sets.
- Weaknesses: Low impulse control, propensity for greed and self-interest.

FROTHER

"Aye, I'm fae Heberia, like aw the best Frothers. Heberia's nice and aw, wae stunning vistas and big-arsed mountains, but if yer wanting tae swing yer Power Claymore aboot, y'need tae get yerself over tae Mort City and became a bastarding SLA Op.

They've got gid drugs, natty armour and guns… aww, the guns… Aye, it's nae bad fighting fur the big company, but most ay the beer's a bit pish. But who cares about the booze when you can fire up some Ultra Violence and set aboot some Dark Night fannies wae yer sword!"

– Hector McTavish, Frother Operative,
SCL 8.3a, Squad 'Heid The Baws'

Insight

You are being forced to listen to a final lecture on the 'Dangers of Downtown', before you board the train to Mort City. You completed training, mostly and you're ready to become a respectable, upstanding SLA Operative. Technically, you're already an Op, but there's a few more boring hoops you have to jump through before you tool up – papers to sign, a round of immunisation injections to go through and of course, this mind-numbing presentation.

You herald from Heberia and sure, you miss home. You miss the bitter winds and proper strong beer; not the piss water they've been forcing you to drink in Meny. You want to get back home at some point, but mostly you're just eager to get into Mort City, buy your Op equipment and get stuck into those Downtown Carrien. The video is telling you that they're these vicious killers. That's hilarious: you're the vicious killer and in about 24 hours you hope to be teaching that very fact to the dogboys.

The starting pay ain't so great. You can't get the signature Frother HARD armour yet; too expensive. But you can at least get your hands on a flesh slicing Power Claymore; that's the ticket! Then there's all the lovely drugs – oh, the wondrous, mind altering narcotics that's already got you scratching your veins in anticipation. You've heard about mind blowing Blaze UV and that you go to a whole 'nother level on that shit, which sounds utterly awesome to you.

The man in the video is trying to put the frighteners on you about Manchines now, but you're not really paying attention to any more of this guff. You're a Frother: you weren't meant to sit still, or blend in. You weren't meant to listen.

You were meant to be a drug addled fighting machine and you fully intend to make both your Hebernian Clan and SLA Industries proud, by being the loudest, meanest, most zonked out nut-job fighting machine in the whole World of Progress.

Background

The name 'Frother' is derived from the operative's tendency to salivate and drool like a rabid dog whilst under the influence of SLA manufactured combat drugs like Rush and Ultra Violence.

The Frother is something of an oddity amongst the gallery of Operative types. They may have begun as a Human classification and served some more noble purpose. But over centuries, the Frothers have warped into the berserkers of the Operative roster, a career path they have thoroughly embraced.

Few other species will adopt the particular, somewhat suicidal, approach of the Frother. Only the people of Heberia would actively choose to assume the mantle and profession of Frother. Like Stormers they are hired purely for their brutal yet effective skills in combat, principally hand-to-hand and their heady mix of bravery and recklessness. If a SLA Op squad is entering combat, the Frother will invariably be leading the charge, regardless of the odds.

Frothers are widely acknowledged as little more than combat drug junkies, but in reality, it is a little more complicated than that. The addictive personality of the Frother permeates all aspects of his being, going far beyond straightforward drug use. If anything, the Frother is addicted to adrenaline produced by risk more than anything else. He will not hesitate to throw himself into life threatening situations, where he is grossly outnumbered, or outgunned. He will intentionally fire off all his available ammo as quickly as possible, so he has to rely on his luck and his skill with a sword. The greatest kick is always to beat the unbeatable odds; it is when the Frother feels most alive and no other buzz comes close.

Frothers never fully relax. Their perpetual motion is constantly driven by the need for more challenges, more mayhem, more fun. The moment a Frother wakes from unconsciousness it's time for a quick beer or dose to take the edge off, then it's a trip down the local bar for an all-day booze session or a metaphorical roll of the dice at a dodgy BPN Terminal which will hopefully lead to the meanest, most hazardous mission that will invariably lead to death, or another night blowing the BPN payment at The Pit. Most days end for Frothers in the form of a blackout, either from blood loss or excessive partying.

The exact evolution of the species, from Human to Frother, continues to baffle SLA Industries. For countless generations, Frother families have injected copious doses of company narcotics, until it seeped into their genetic code. Their children have dependency towards the pharmaceuticals of their parents, but instead of making them frailer, the long running culture of drug use has only made the Frother stronger and hardier.

The vast majority of Frothers employed by SLA originate from the country of Heberia, which lies to the North East of Mort City. It has a clan-built culture and owing to the rowdy nature of the Frothers, there is a lot of infighting between the numerous families. This of course breeds the hardiest stock and SLA Industries only want the best that the clans have to offer. These clans financially benefit greatly by inducting their youth into the company and around ninety percent of all families support SLA. Only clans Murdoch, Campbell, McMillan and McClung have allied with Dark Night.

Loyalist Frother clans are insistent that SLA assign any BPN missions involving the noted traitor clans to squads with at least one Frother. They regard it as a family affair and do not want to see any other species deliver justice to such traitors; it's theirs to deal with.

Appearance

Frothers are now classed as a unique species, separated from the originating Human species. Over the centuries, the physiognomy of Frothers has changed: they are taller and have muscular builds that exceeds the limits of Human anatomy. Their facial features have also altered over the generations; they have thicker brows and broad noses that set the eyes farther apart. Some may acknowledge there are some physical similarities between Frother evolution and that found amongst the Cannibal species out in the Sector, but they aren't stupid enough to say that to a Frother directly…

Frothers rarely step outside of the traditional outfits native to Heberia; weapon choices and career paths that have defined their species for so long that it is their entire culture. They all sport the familiar colourful dreadlocks, facial war paint, DNA tattoos and rough, tartan fabrics. The patterns of such tartans are highly specific and denote the particular clan that the individual Frother is a member of. Much like the Shaktar, Frothers are staunchly proud of their heritage and cultures, which must be celebrated and displayed in their national and native dress.

The favoured weapon of all Frothers is the two-handed Power Claymore. It is as common among Frothers as the trademark drugs and flowing dreadlocks. If a Frother should however rise to the higher levels of SCL they will mature and start to select hand-to-hand weapons that are tailored to their specific duties. Many of the old timers prefer expensive handcrafted one-handed vibro sabres, which they can wield with just as much skill and proficientcy as the heavy, less than subtle, Claymores.

Species Specific Abilities:

Drug Resistance - All Frother characters must take at least rank 1 in the Drug Addict trait during character creation. In addition, any drugs used by a Frother are considered to have an additional 30 minutes' duration, one additional dose is required before an Addiction Test is made and all Addiction Ratings are reduced by one.

Feel No Pain - Frothers are notoriously hardy and will continue to push forward in the face of life-threatening injury, either through sheer determination or utter disregard for their personal safety. To represent this during game play, a Frother ignores the rules and modifiers applied to them by any one wound that they have received, so for example, if a Frother has suffered three wounds, they only apply the modifiers for two of them. The player may always choose which wound to ignore.

- Life Span: 50-65 years
- Height/Weight: 6 - 6.5 feet, 18-28st
- Strengths: Strong and resilient physique. Excellent in close combat.
- Weaknesses: Reckless, thrill seeking personality which can lead to deadly outcomes for themselves and others around them. Drug usage leads to impulsive and poorly considered choices.

EBONITE

"A thousand years ago we were cattle; a slave race to the Momics. The company sent their agents to liberate us and integrate us as Operatives. We were garbed in a friction suit made from layers of glyph, allowing us to utilise the power inside us: the Ebb. It is like no other and we can either learn to control it, or let it devour us.

We traded one master for another, although at least now there is a modicum of choice. It is an important choice, in that we must decide what we are to become. Should we use our media names, be faithful enforcers of SLA's rule? Should we give in to our emotions and our darker impulses? Or darker still, let the knowledge of Formulae warp us into monsters, the Necanthropes? Are they really so different from the Momics that drank our flux and gnawed on our bones?

In order to know ourselves and choose the right path, we must strive to know about the universe we inhabit. We must set aside our differences as Ebonites, resist the dwindling Necanthropy and uncover the truth beneath."

Vilhildra 'Quicksilver' Sihilann, Ebon Operative,
SCL 6a, Squad 'Dusty Lavender'

Insight

You are far from home. It has been more than a year since you visited Static. Despite spending your childhood yearning to join SLA and become an Operative, you'd give just about anything to feel the sun's rays and breathe in the clean Static air. But like all dreams in the World of Progress, they turn to reality and now you are in the cramped, cloying interior of an APC hurtling through Suburbia.

You clench your hands into fists and try to calm your churning emotions, whilst the flux gems on your Glyph Suit sizzle quietly. The surge of feeling takes on the spinning forms of formulae in your mind - love, regret, hope and fear, culminating in what your elder sister told you of the Momics she'd encountered in Lower Downtown; that the taste of their Ebb is damp and oily and in their close proximity one can feel the flux inside being pulled in their direction. An alien presence, yet painfully familiar.

You look down and slowly draw your Ebb Flintlock and run a clean dry cloth across the barrel. You have to be strong, you have to be ready. Once through the Perimeter, the horrors will begin and you must draw upon your experience and learning to tear down the enemies who are desperate to feast upon you and the less fortunate still who will come to depend on you for help. You can do good if you remain strong and focussed.

You start to feel better and a burst of joy and exhilaration runs through you. The Flintlock in your hand begins to glisten, charged and channeled by your newfound positivity.

Let's do this.

Background

Ebonites are a species split in two, both the Ebons and Ebans (or Wasters), have the ability to wield and shape the energy force known as the Ebb. Through this power they can create destructive kinetic blasts, heal wounds, move objects telekinetically, even fold space. The ability to manipulate the Ebb is a mixture of mathematical equation and emotional drive. There is a middle ground in which the Ebb powers are formed and a species born of that Ebb can understand it.

Ebonites, as a species, are constantly searching for answers. Who they are and where do they come from? What is this universe in which they inhabit? Since the Formation they have been raised and guided by SLA Industries. What is left of their culture predates their liberation from the Momics. They do not know how closely they were related to their former overlords and what was it that the Momics had suppressed and controlled within the Ebonite species. Now the Ebonite species is complex, beset with phenomenal power and a tumult of conflicting emotions. It can be torturous to be an Ebonite, but it is the conflict that gives them strength and makes them invaluable to SLA Industries.

In order to activate Ebb abilities Ebonites must dispel Flux; the energy source within them all. Early in SLA's history Ebonites would use complex Glyphs, but in modern times this is made possible through a suit of armour called a 'DeathSuit', as it takes the form of a skeletal carapace. It is sinister, baroque looking garb that contrasts starkly with the good natured Ebons, yet utterly compliments the Ebans and their darker natures.

Ebonites grow and learn to develop their Ebb abilities, through understanding the Formulae. The greater their understanding of Formulae the more powerful the Ebon or Eban becomes. For centuries this would culminate in the Ebonite going through a terrifying metamorphosis and transforming into a Necanthrope. Since the return of the Momics, however, this important progression is rapidly vanishing from Ebonite culture. Like most people existing in the World of Progress, Ebonites do not know what their future holds. The Momics were never mentioned to generations of Ebonites and whatever was catalogued in their history vaguely described a dead, extinct species, but now the Momics have returned and no Ebb being in the World of Progress is safe. Ebonites employed within SLA Industries crave further information, but the company has divulged precious little.

Ebonites have a broad family hierarchy including both Ebons and Ebans, connected primarily by title and house. Such houses birth Ebons and Ebans seemingly randomly, despite their best efforts to direct a particular option. Families are divided into two units, one Ebon and one Eban, with Necanthropes ruling over the entire family and its affairs. Ebonites believe that the genetic strain or bloodline knows best how to raise and guide a child rather than birth parents, so if two Ebons parents, for example, have an Eban child they will be heartbroken and forced to make a choice: attempt to raise a potentially violent and unruly Eban or elect to

have the child reared by the Wasters within the family. The latter tends to be the norm. Such family matters are troublesome, leading to feuds and strife. It is typically the overseeing Necanthrope who has final say on how the child shall be raised. If the parents refuse to heed the demand of a Necanthrope they may find themselves banished from their Ebonite House.

This is often the case with Ebonite who have grown up in Downtown districts: feral children born to parents exiled by a powerful Ebonite House in the Haxan System. Such households may be tumultuous, but there is often more genuine love and compassion within, simply because the parents chose their own children over the timeworn laws of a Necanthrope Patriarch. As a result, a feral Waster in Downtown is usually born to Ebon parents and perhaps better rounded in personality than a supposed pureblood Eban from Hades.

Appearance

There are two differing forms of Ebonite: Ebons - who represent the positive aspects of the Ebb and the darker Eban variety - instantly recognisable for the black charring around their featureless eyes.

A lot can be told about the nature of an Ebonite by just looking at their outward appearance; their personality spills through in their hair and eye colour and these may even visibly brighten or darken as their mood shifts.

The Ebonite species is visually similar to Humanity, but their forms are far more malleable and shaped by the Ebb. The Deathsuit will literally bond with their physical bodies and sculpt them closer to their internal depiction of themselves. Some of the gloomier and more introspective of the Ebans grow more sinuous and skeletal within their Deathsuits, compressing internal organs and narrowing cheekbones to such an extreme degree that it does not seem physically possible, yet these drastic reformations do not seem to injure the wearer at all.

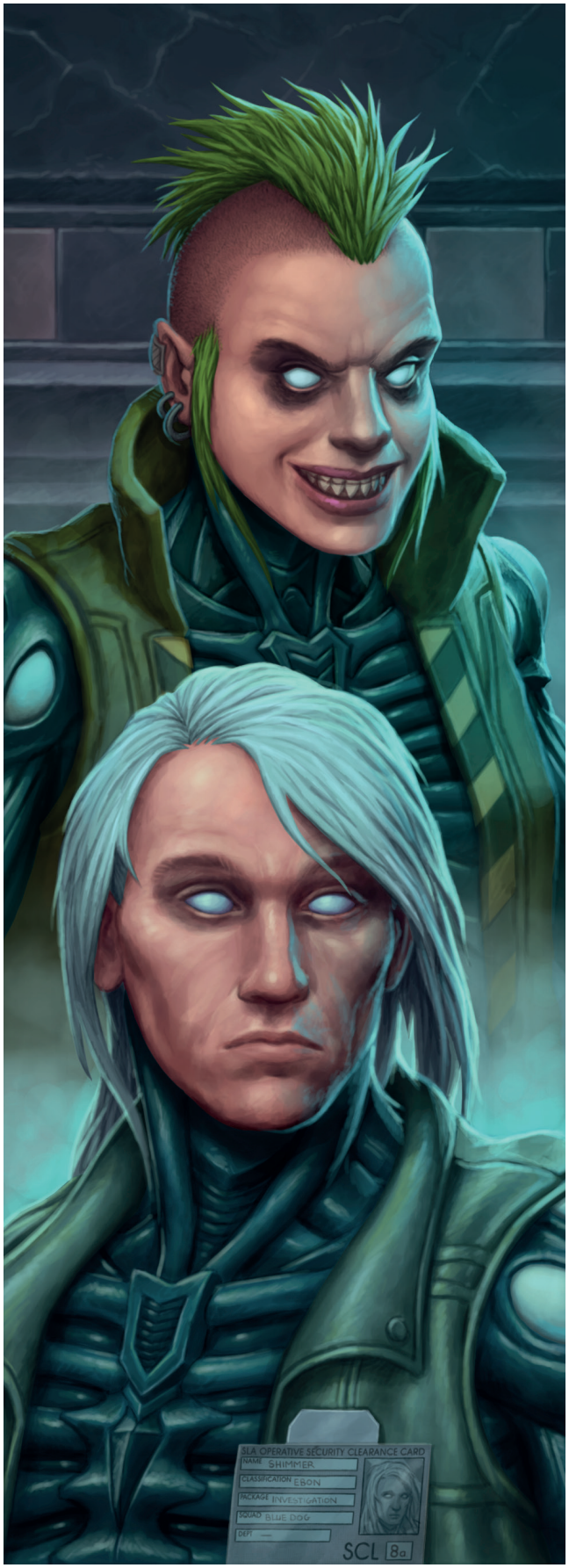
It is the utterly emotive nature of the Ebonite that shapes every part of their being, from their core personality to their entire physical form. Ebons tend towards tall, lithe unblemished forms, considered attractive by most species in the World of Progress. Ebans however have more unconventional demeanours with more angular, muscular visages that exude aggression and brutishness.

In recent years Ebonites have struggled with the terminology that defines them in the World of Progress. Ebons do not like the term 'Deathsuit' because of the morose connotations it conjures, preferring to use the unofficial title 'Glyph Suit'. Ebans, however derive absolute glee in the frightening description and love to emphasise that it is in fact armour they are wearing and that it delivers death.

Species Specific Abilities

Control of The Ebb - All Ebonites can manipulate the Ebb to perform actions that would be otherwise impossible to others. To represent this, Ebonite characters replace their LUCK stat with the FLUX stat. See "The Ebb" on page 124 for more information.

- Life Span: 100 - 200 years
- Height/Weight: 5.5 - 6 feet, 7-10st
- Strengths: Bestowed with incredible powers of the Ebb.
- Weaknesses: Difficulties with coping emotive state.



STORMER 313 'MALICE'

"I don't need to do nothing to those gang members over there, because they can't do nothing to me. Can't shoot me, can't stab me, they can't even get through my armour. Anything they do will heal in a minute and then I'll smash their faces in.

I was ordered to do that the other day and I did too. I smashed this Prop's face right fucking in. His skull just looked like a salad bowl when I'd done with him. The Wraithen I work with was proper angry because I wasn't supposed to make the Prop's brains come out his ears. So I told the Wraithen that I'd smash his face in next if he didn't shut up and walk away. Then the Wraithen wasn't angry anymore. I won that argument. 'Good at that."

'Smasher' – 313 Stormer Operative,
SCL 8, Squad 'Perfect Gallows'

Insight

As you open your eyes for the first time, you see the world through a filter of red. You are submerged in a fluid filled container, in what appears to be a vast laboratory. Bio-tanks, identical to the one that contains you, each holding a monster curled in the foetal position, stretches out in many rows. You place your clawed hand upon the glass wall and watch as countless scientists busily survey these womb-like cylinders, examining the life reading on each individual panel.

You hear a muted note and feel a series of sharp stings about your torso as the life support cabling disconnects from your body and floats away.

The red liquid protein noisily drains from the tank and then the glass panel lifts as you breathe air for the first time. You flex strong, steely muscles and stare curiously at the DNA barcode and tattoo on your inner forearm. It is black, red and white with a skull at the base and everything seems to fall into place. What you are. What you can do.

The bio-scientists take notice and proceed to flock around, making perfunctory checks. They are small and puny and you acknowledge it would be very easy to kill them by simply breaking them in two, or biting their heads off. You are not sure why you immediately ponder these choices, but the act of killing feels second nature.

The small people speak words that you seem to understand. They tell you that you are deemed complete, ready to enter the World of Progress – a 313 Stormer. A brutal enforcer of the company's will.

You feel an excess of energy and unimaginable strength coursing through you, a force that is eager to be released. The only form of release is violence, it's the language you understand best. You know you can't destroy the little scientists who scurry about, but you must find something to break soon and you hope an important person at SLA will unleash you and allow you to relieve that tension on an enemy of the company, something that screams at high volume; the music to your ears.

Background

The Stormer Project is the foundation from which much of SLA Industries was built as a company. The manufacture of the original 313 'Malice' Stormer was sold to countless Conflict Races as the very pinnacle of biogenetics. The Stormers were instantly bought en masse and performed their duties well – perhaps a little too well…

Other rival companies have tried to create their own bio-engineered organisms, with little to no success. Even when such enemies of SLA have kidnapped Karma technicians and forced them to reproduce their original product, they have been unable to match it. There is some secret component that lies at the very earliest stage of Stormer conception and it cannot be replicated outside of Karma's development facilities. The most anyone outside of Head Office refers to the process calls it 'Death Wake', but anything beyond this is pure flight of fancy, increasingly elaborate rumours and hearsay.

As the centuries pass, SLA Industries has grown evermore protective of its Stormer production, even going as far as to redact certain details regarding the 313's origins and people behind its conception. Some of the original people involved in early development quite simply disappeared.

All that is now known is what they look like and what the Stormer can do – it is ugly and exceptional at ending lives. It can regenerate, healing even severe wounds within a matter of minutes. They have enough physical strength to wield the largest, most devastating weapons SLA has ever created. They rarely tire, having to sleep just a few hours every 2 or 3 days. They have few ambitions beyond the desire for more fighting, louder music, better bigger weapons and an abundance of the finest junk food Mort has to offer. They ask no questions and have no interest in the greater complexities of life; they are SLA Industries' Operative ideal - an individual who never asks too many questions.

Disturbing as the Stormers may appear, they are such a common sight on Mort that their presence is viewed as relatively normal, that is until one is bearing down on you. What people are most afraid of is the temperament and abilities of the 313. It has been designed to fight and kill and if they are not engaged in combat for any length of time, a typical Stormer will become irritable and frustrated. This gives them the tendency to lash out aggressively, or simply instigate violent encounters to quell their urges.

Stormers lack higher Human intellect, but can nonetheless function within Mort society and perform their duties as a SLA Operative: accepting and executing BPNs, following orders and maintaining a basic understanding of the Departmental Hierarchy.

Stormers were designed solely for combat. At first, to aid and then defeat the Conflict Races and finally to protect SLA and to destroy its enemies on the War Worlds.

Op squads have something of a love/hate relationship with the 313 Stormer. When the bullets are flying they are the best ally an

Operative can have as there is little to challenge an experienced, well equipped Stormer, but placing these biogenetic creations in social situations can be problematic. They are not especially helpful during tense negotiations, nor are they particularly diplomatic. They are also impatient, so it's not uncommon for them to get surly and mean during the stuffy, protracted periods of waiting for missions in the BPN Halls.

Stormers struggle to think beyond the concept that 'might is right'; a SLA Corporate may be giving them orders but it baffles them as to why they should listen; they could just kill him in an instant. As a result, it can take some time to earn the respect of a Stormer, which is typically through acts of bravery, or patience with the Stormer's inherent limitations.

Appearance

The overall appearance of the 313 Stormer is that of an intensely muscular Humanoid, but easily the most notable feature of the beast is the large equine shaped skull and the rows of broad fangs littering its jaws. Like all Stormer variations, the 313 Malice's lips are peeled back from the teeth, giving the Stormer a perpetual grimace and the propensity to drool.

Stormer hair grows with great rapidity but only ever upon the scalp of the creature and is long, thick and shaggy. Its skin is uniformly grey/blue, or black and with an oily sheen. In order to help differentiate themselves from each other, Stormers will inject themselves with a skin pigment-altering drug called Lumo.

The Stormer creation has been called all manner of names, ranging from ugly, to utterly horrific, but clearly the camera loves it. Few other individuals in the media draw a crowd like a rampaging Stormer in full aggression mode. The 313 'Malice' Stormer is Karma's bioengineering at its very finest. No other design of Stormer has been as well received, or as a reliable in combat as the Malice.

It is the first and it is the best.

Species Specific Abilities

Regeneration (2) - Stormers are capable of regenerating themselves at a highly efficient rate, healing injuries and rebuilding damaged tissue automatically. A Malice has a Regeneration Rate of 2. Full details on Regeneration can be found in the Rules & Mechanics chapter of this book.

Physical Favourite - The cameras love a Stormer. All Stormer 313 'Malice' characters start with an additional 1 Ratings Point in the Body category. If a Malice starts any game session with 0 Ratings Points in the Body category, they immediately gain 1.

- Life Span: Indeterminate
- Height/Weight: 9 feet, 60st
- Strengths: Genetically created to fight and kill, perfect within context.
- Weaknesses: Mean and surly disposition. Low impulse control. Difficult to manage.

STORMER 711 'XENO'

"Do not be afraid of the way I look. I'm just like you, only better. Now, do you want to be killed with the MAC Knife or the Flick Scythe?"

Grandmaster Stabb, 711 Xeno, Contract Killer

INSIGHT:

You awaken. You hear a sucking sound, distant muted voices and feel thick synthetic amniotic liquid draining away from your body. You are now fully conscious and your visual array shows you everything in the room; the Karma scientists rushing around the rows upon rows of tall glass cylinders and the enormous Stormers contained in each one.

These are 313 'Malice' Stormers. Much different from you, in almost every way. You are smaller, leaner than these clumsy brutes and despite being a just a few minutes old, you know you are special; you have value. You were meant for great things.

You glance at your hands and with a split second's concentration your skin's pigment adapts to match colour on the glass, the metal ridges: interesting. You examine your claws and scratch the surface of the container with a fine groove, which pleases you as you imagine what it will do to a human eyeball.

A Karma technician is lifting the lid to your own container and reaches in to help you out, but you push his hand away; as if you of all things need any help. You exit the tank in two fluid motions and land deftly on the laboratory floor.

You glance at the gathering technicians, outstretching a hand and uttering your first word - 'towel.'

There's no time to waste. You don't have time for all the inductions and ceremonies, you want to get trained up as quickly as possible, ace your education and fast track to Operative status. You have goals to meet, places to be and enemies of SLA to kill.

BACKGROUND

For centuries, 313 'Malice' Stormers have represented the muscle and backbone of the company, but subtlety was far beyond their capabilities. SLA Industries wanted a new design that could master covert missions and assassinations, a Stormer that could slip unseen into an enemy base and eliminate a threat as quickly and quietly as possible. It was a tall order: the division which created Stormer types, Phantom Pregnancy had enjoyed enormous success in the developing large, brutal and unstoppable creatures but designing a new type that had a more advanced approach would take considerable effort and ingenuity.

The new 711 project took almost ten years to complete, as Phantom Pregnancy struggled to create a sustainable Stormer type that met the requirements SLA had set forth. Two prominent scientists in the field of Biogenetics were brought in to helm development - Dr Maxon Hagen, from the Department of Zoology came in to assist the project leader Dr Nathan Coen. The new Stormer would combine numerous strains of animal DNA - the complex goal was a new form of killing machine that would be smarter and more self-reliant than the standard Malice, be more agile, move quietly and could blend with its surroundings.

There were countless attempts to perfect the Stormer and with each misstep Maxon's position within the project strengthened. His ruthlessness and sinister cunning seemed to galvanise the monster that finally came to fruition, a monster that wasn't so very different from himself.

The final product was far from an oil painting. It was easily one of the most bizarre creations to ever emerge from the Karma Labs. It had insect-like compound eyes, a dome shaped skull, an immensely tough hide that adapted to any environment. There is a rumour that a terrified junior bioengineer nicknamed it the Xeno because of its outlandish appearance, but there is another darker tale that suggests Maxon sneaked the DNA of a known Conflict Alien Race into the mix which held to bind the competing DNA strands together, where all previous attempts had failed. This rumour has never been verified and since the Xeno's success, Dr Hagen has not received a summons from Cloak Division, so far.

As the Xeno went into full manufacture, a few personality traits began to seep through in the 711 model. Being somewhat more intelligent than the familiar 313 Malice, it developed something of an arrogant attitude that rubbed fellow Operatives the wrong way. Xenos are a unique, well-crafted example of bioengineering and not only do they know it, they are very quick to remind everyone of the fact.

Xenos were built to perform assassinations and they develop an intense love of the kill, leading some to suspect that there may be some Wraithen DNA in the mix. Xenos and Wraithen react to each other in extremis: they either bond instantly or utterly despise each other and unfortunately it tends towards the later. If there are both species in a squad they will bicker constantly and continual try to one-up each other at every opportunity.

Xenos are very much driven by status and praise. They love the SCL system put in place at SLA Industries and they are always eager to climb the ladder. This does not mean that a Xeno is focused on being squad leader, they simply want a badge that states they have a higher number than anyone else around them.

Off duty Xenos live much the same as any Op, spending their downtime in The Pit drinking and bragging about their past achievements, or browsing weapon retail stores and drooling over the newest, sexiest deadly weapon on the market.

Some Xenos do tend to 'calm down' after a few years of employment and gradually come to accept their fellow squad members as more than just opponents and underlings, which has led to the belief that there may be as much naivety in Xenos as there is arrogance. They are developed to kill for SLA and it can take time for them to understand the people around them have feelings and interior lives; that there may be more to life than just winning, killing and winning at killing.

Appearance

The Xeno model (pronounced Ze-no) supposedly gets its name from its absurdly alien appearance, particularly in the shape of the skull and the complex array of large compound eyes dotted around the upper surface, giving a wider field of vision.

Like all Stormers, the Xeno has a lipless set of jaws exposing sharp wedge-shaped teeth, which tend to be lighter and smoother than that of the 313 Malice. They have digitigrade legs which allow them to sprint at increased speed compared to plantigrades.

Xenos are not as large nor heavily built as other Stormer types, their primary design feature is stealth so they are grown with lithe, slender bodies but are nonetheless highly muscular.

Xenos have adaptive skin which allows them to blend with their surroundings. More recent, upgraded Xeno models can control the ability and decide whether or not to blend with the scenery. This feature was added when the 711 type became popular in the Contract Circuit and Xenos wanted to be seen, so they can switch their skin pigment to more garish colours in order to 'stand out'. Whichever way the Stormers wish to present themselves they prefer not to wear armour and rely on their tough leathery skin.

On a typical kill mission the Xeno approaches the target undressed and unarmoured so the Stormer has been designed with a series of organic pockets and pouches dotted around its body. More recently, many more Xenos prefer to display more of a personal identity, wearing coats and accessories, relying more heavily on their basic stealth skills and ranged attacks.

For the more traditionalist, there are ten pockets integrated onto the 711: two each on the thigh (160x210mm), lower leg (120x300mm), chest (120x120mm), abdomen (150x180mm) and one on each upper arm (110x230mm). These pockets bind with the Xeno's body when not in use.

Species Specific Abilities:

Regeneration (1) - Stormers are capable of regenerating themselves at a highly efficient rate, healing injuries and rebuilding damaged tissue automatically. A Xeno has a Regeneration Rate of 1. Full details on Regeneration can be found in the Rules & Mechanics chapter of this book.

Adaptive Skin - A Xeno has chameleon like skin that begins to blend with its surroundings as it stops moving. Any Detect rolls to spot a stationary Xeno receive a -1 modifier to the Success Die. This modifier is increased to -2 if the Xeno has been stationary for any significant length of time.

Armoured Skin - A Xeno's skin is also armoured, removing the need for them to wear other armour and keep their adaptive camouflage in play. A Xeno's armoured skin has PV 5 and Resistance equal to its Hit Points. Whenever a Xeno regenerates any Hit Points it also regenerates an equal value of Resistance. A Xeno takes great pride in their capabilities and may never wear any other armour. In addition to the protective capabilities, the skin also has a number of small pockets, allowing the Xeno to carry items such as ammo, knives and other essentials without conventional means.

- Life Span: Indeterminate
- Height/Weight: 7 feet, 11st
- Strengths: Perfectly designed for covert missions
- Weaknesses: Behavioural issues, including narcissism and arrogance

SHAKTAR

"Fight with principle. Champion the four virtues. Honour one's family. Rise to all forms of adversity, with fury and joy."

T'Rn K'nth'Rr. – Shaktar Operative, SCL 7, Squad 'Perfect Gallows'

Insight

You were born in a cold mountain fortress on the royal Shaktarian Tribe World – Kn'nth. In a matter of days you could walk and more importantly, grip and wield a weapon - it was little more than a small knife, but in your diminutive hands it was a sword, you immediately took to swinging your blade at the chitinous vermin that skittered about the grounds of the prayer temples. Before savagery and bloodlust could overtake you, your parents swept you up and immediately began your education and taught you to challenge your aggression. You were versed in the Shaktarian virtues and taught to loathe and shun the opposing vices.

Once you reached adolescence you were made to face the Exalted Challenge, an elevation to adulthood and the Warrior Cast. With ceremonial dagger in hand, you entered the pen of the brutish Shahantian Bull. To receive the blessing, you slew the beast and sliced off its primary horns: the symbol of distinction and maturity. You were then proven an adult and it was time to leave Kn'nth and sign up as an Operative at SLA Industries.

You have heard stories of Mort City and the people who live there. There are tales of corruption, treachery and dishonour. The Shaktarian Elders expect you to venture into the heart of SLA and uphold the cherished values instilled in you from birth. You will educate and you will discipline, with words and sabre.

Background

The Shaktars are an ancient Conflict Race that sided with SLA Industries before The Formation. Unlike many species from that era, they are a proud, honourable and dignified people. They strongly believe in family, friendship and tradition. Without these, a Shaktar is nothing; no weapon or martial arts training will give her strength if she has nothing to stand for. Honour and courage defines her.

Shaktars believe in challenge and that it be as brutal and uncompromising as possible. They feel that in all aspects of their lives they must be constantly testing themselves. They are a proud species who are also terrified with the concept of pride itself, because its influence can lead to far more negative connotations.

The Shaktars have built their religion around the eight separate moons that circulate their various home worlds. Like all elements of Shaktarian life, there is balance, there are four positive moons and four negative ones, also known by Shaktars as the 'dark moons'. Each moon partners with another polar opposite: *Virtue - Distortion, Vision - Dementia, Vigour - Disease and Verity (or Validity) - Doubt.*

The four Virtuous Moon Shaktars sided with SLA Industries, while the four Dark Moons inevitably sided with White Earth and so Bitterness.

Shaktars must forever acknowledge the Dark Moons and accept them, even if that is simply in bitter conflict. No virtue can exist without the coexistence of a diametric opposite. If the Shaktar is to champion anything positive then it must accept equal adversity. This is the Shaktar way. Everything is balance.

Shaktars based on Mort are every bit as staunchly religious as those found back on their tribe worlds, but they find every day a struggle, as they try to exist within the excesses of Mort City and feel that they are constantly tempted.

For all of a Shaktar's nobility and honour, they are a war-like species and they have great innate desire for combat. Fighting is something they revel in and yet also harbour a deep sense of guilt for that joy of violence. The Dark Moon Shaktars, however, completely forgo their shackles of virtues and openly indulge in brutal acts of bloodshed. They feel no guilt, only satisfaction. Dark Moon Shaktars are never employed by SLA Industries and are always in the service of White Earth. If they are encountered on Mort it is usually because they are providing muscle to the Shi'An Cult.

Shaktars face a constant struggle to avoid slipping into the territory of the Dark Moons and in certain cases these urges overwhelm them and thus they defect to the side of the enemy, forever.

As such, most Shaktar SLA Ops will try to attend counsel with a local Shaktarian priest, whom acts as a form of confessor. But even this has ties back into warfare. In many cases the Shaktar simply gains advice from the priest or priestess, but in more complex dilemmas the Shaktar must challenge the resident Empty One – this is another Shaktar who's undergoing their own inner struggle, having lost all sight of virtue and vice and cannot align with any of the eight moons. The Empty One wears a faceless black mask and armour, armed with a weapon based on the severity of the opponent's internal struggle.

The tormented Shaktar must face down the Empty One in combat and defeat it. If the Shaktar cannot best it then he must go and reassess his choices or direction.

Shaktars have even been known to approach business opportunities in much the same fashion.

Other species find this approach to faith and catharsis absurd, since all too often the quandary of the Shaktar has no basis in physical combat, but they are neglecting to fully understand the culture of Shaktars and what has worked for them over many centuries. Shaktars actively seek friendship and bond with their fellow Operatives. They respect dignity and courage above all else and bestow a clasp of veneration (or braid) to any squad mate that exemplifies these traits in battle. This oath is of high importance as it now means the Shaktar will defend and protect his friend for as long he lives.

Appearance

Of all the post-Conflict Races, the Shaktar is the closest to Human in terms of appearance. They are a large bulky species, however, sprouting to 7 or 8 feet in height with thick, muscular builds. The most notable features of a Shaktar are their instantly recognisable segmented, fleshy dreadlocks, which pour from their scalp all the way down to the lower back and the deep crimson hue of their skin. They have a typical Humanoid anatomy and whilst heavily built they do not generate sculpted 'body builder' physiques through exercise and maintain robust body types not dissimilar to that of a wrestler or butcher.

All Shaktar sport a thick prehensile tail, which will involuntarily twitch and sway when the Shaktar 's emotions are heightened by rage or stress. Some Shaktars, usually among the young members of the species, will develop a crest on their uppermost dreads prior to combat, or simply when enraged. Shaktars are not the best at concealing their emotions, these clear indicators indicate when to back away or apologise for a perceived slight.

Shaktars are bestowed with a wide variety of boney facial plates, particularly across the brow and nose. Shaktars believe the diversity in these patterns and outcroppings denote particular heritage and dynasty in their culture. These facial ridges thicken and grow as the Shaktar advances in years. The Shaktarian language is throaty and coarse, lacking the common vowels found in the Killan dialect. Nearly all Shaktars based on Mort have learned Killan, but will visually cringe when non-Shaktarian species attempt, but inevitably butcher their sacred language.

Shaktar believe in the purity of their own bodies and will not use any biogenetic enhancement or augmentation. Shaktars are a hardy species, however and they live long productive lives. They maintain a sturdy 'prime' until around the age of 120 and then their strength fades and their abilities falter. At this point in their lives they must decide whether to stay on the warrior's path until death or retire as an Shaktarian Elder and serve as counsel to a Lord of a Tribe World. Most Shaktars fear this path, as a warrior species they all wish to die in battle, rather than see themselves wither and fade of natural causes. Those who have entered their winter years take a much less extreme view, though and find new, less aggressive ways to uphold the Shaktarian Virtues.

Species Specific Abilities

Honour Bound - A Shaktar is a deeply honourable creature who lives to a warrior's code. A Shaktar may never flee if it means leaving a comrade behind. In addition, a Shaktar's COOL stat is increased by 1 (even over the species maximum) whenever they are defending an injured ally.

Prehensile Tail - Shaktars have huge heavy tails which they can manipulate. The tail aids in climbing, balance, gives an increased sense of touch and can be used to entangle opponents. To reflect this, Shaktars receive a +1 modifier to the Success Die for all Climbing rolls and opponents in hand-to-hand combat may not use Acrobatic Defence.

- Life Span: 160-180 years
- Height/Weight: 7-8 feet, 25-35st
- Strengths: Expert fighters, with a strong moral code.
- Weaknesses: A strong moral code which can be inflexible. Trusting, to a fault.

WRAITHEN

"Here, check this out. It's the very latest, top of the line BLA 833 Drop-Down sniping rifle. See there, B-L-A, they make the best weapons in the World of Progress and this is their first proper ranged weapon. I got it on preorder, so this isn't even out yet. Hardly anyone can get their hands on this level of sexiness. It's a snub nose, much like the FEN GAG, which I mastered but is now utterly rubbish, so I chucked it.

This baby though; I'll hit some Dark Night dweeb at 200 meters, right through his left eye and blow his brains clean out the back of his skull. It will be brilliant. I'll get an awesome sponsorship from that."

Virin Vrott – Wraithen Operative, SCL 6, Squad 'Dusty Lavender'

Insight

You were so glad to finally get off your icy Home World; it was just so boring. Yes, the freezing temperatures were nice and all and there was lots of fresh game but they didn't have all the cool guns and vibro weapons that were in abundance in those glossy SLA magazines. Even the smell of that shiny paper, so nice. You knew you were going to have to get grown up as fast as possible and get your butt over to Mort and become a SLA Operative.

There weren't many Humans and such on Polo and they were all on the side of SLA so you weren't allowed to hunt them: so boring. Apparently, Humans taste awesome, like, way better than the shit you get on Polo. Maybe you'd get a taste of a Dark Night Gunner when nobody is looking.

Most of all you wanted to get a decent sniping rifle and take out some enemies of SLA at seriously long range. Or just wing them and then move in for the kill. It's so exhilarating, that anticipation, that you can barely sit still in your chair. You're on your way now. You finished training - top marks and in a few short hours you'll be tooling up for your first BPN.

You look out of the window of the gauss train, as it hurtles though the Cannibal Sector. It's a hideously awful place, or so you've been told, but to your hunter's eye it looks it'll be great fun. Just so, so many exciting species to prey on, which means big creds, better equipment, nicer things.

You stare at all the other fresh recruits who'll be joining SLA right along with you. Man, they all look so clumsy, flabby and slow. It's hilarious. Yes, you've come a long way from your humble beginnings, the one surviving cub in your litter. You'd feel bad about your dead brothers and sisters if you could remember their faces, or anything else about them. But hey, they're dead and you're not. You were tougher, faster and hungrier.

That's why you made it, baby. That's why you'll be a SLA Operative and the best kind - a Wraithen SLA Op.

Background

People who are unfamiliar with the Wraithen may find them difficult to be around at first. Their unique disposition and outlook stands at odds with most other species in the World of Progress, particularly Shaktars, who in terms of personality position at direct opposite. Both species elected to join SLA during the Conflict Era but for the Wraithen it was never a difficult choice, they have always sided with the perceived winning team.

Wraithen can be as chilly as the Ice Worlds from which they originate. They lack all but the slightest form of empathy and compassion, yet they aren't especially cruel. Humans loosely compares Wraithen to cats, they seem aloof and disinterested by anything outside their sphere of interest. As a culture they have very few traditions or beliefs and barely keep a record of their own history. They can be highly materialistic, but will literally discard a relatively new piece of equipment or weapon in favour of the very latest and most popular upgrade.

Wraithen are also like this with regards to relationships. They may enter a relationship for days or months but will simply drop the connection if there is a chance of attaining someone better. Attractiveness is not as high on their list of appeal as status, wealth and opportunity. It is always whatever is in the best interests of the Wraithen that drives them on.

Wraithen struggle to understand why a Shaktar treasures an old, battered shotgun, or the memories he associates it with, nor can they fathom why a spouse would stay with a partner who is sick or has lost their job. The first instinct of the Wraithen is to drop dead weight and move on.

It is believed that a Wraithen is incapable of love, a concept set forth by standards of other species, and for the most part this is true. It tends to be however, the more time Wraithen spend around different speices for extended periods they develop new feelings and emotions, but with Wraithen it takes much longer than most. Over time, many Wraithen gradually grow to like or even admire other species. Although more cynical observers believe that it is an elaborate trick or form of mimicry, a way to further the Wraithen's own personal agenda.

Love is difficult for Wraithen but they do have a great fondness for hunting; something that ties into the earliest evolutionary stage of their species and is still salient in the present day. A Wraithen cannot resist the thrill of stalking and killing an elusive prey, whether that be live game that they prep for dinner, or an unsuspecting Dark Night agent caught in the sights of their rifle scope. They like the taste of fresh blood and raw meat, which satiates their deep primal urges, their innate 'killer instinct.'

Wraithen subscribe to the attitude of survival of the fitness and this extends into every aspect of their lives, whether it is climbing the SCL ladder, performing a challenge, or getting served first at the bar. They want to be best, first, happiest and make no apologies for it.

Appearance

The Wraithen species are a strange mix of feline and saurien and depending on what side of the Ice World's equator dictates which one they lean more visually towards.

Those Wraithen born on the northern equator have smooth, angular features whilst those born in the south have eyes set farther forward on the skull and are more chiselled in their facial anatomy. SLA records will commonly classify a Wraithen Operative as a 'Northern Wraithen' or 'Southern Wraithen'.

Northern Wraithen are most commonly found on Mort, so when the far more rare Southern sub-species are encountered other species are surprised at the physical diversity, yet Wraithen themselves barely make the distinction at all.

Wraithen have an overall humanoid physiognomy, with scarcely an ounce of fat on any part of their bodies. Their muscles are taut and sinewy, allowing for incredible reflexes and speed, far outstripping the dexterity of any species currently employed by SLA Industries.

Both types of Wraithen are coated in a layer of fur, light and smooth on a northern Wraithen, but thicker and coarser on the southern variety.

Whilst stationed on their native Ice Worlds the Wraithen's hair turns white and their eyes fade to a pale pink, but when they enter a warmer climates their fur and hair darkens to varying shades of purple and they present a mottled patterning similar to that of a leopard.

Wraithen are natural hunters and they bare sharp teeth and claws, which they are always proud to show off whenever possible.

Wraithen struggle somewhat with climates warmer than their icy home worlds, so take to wearing coolant stalks on either cheek to help regulate their body temperature. This external device soon becomes second nature to Wraithen. Those born on Mort tend to have better temperature regulation, but will still have standard coolant stalks applied once they take on roles at SLA Industries.

Wraithen have short natural lifespans compared to other species in the World of Progress, which is typically attributed to Wraithen's exceptionally high metabolism although they reach full maturity by 10 years of age. Wraithen also welcome biogenetic augmentation that may extend their lifespan.

Species Specific Abilities:

Skilled Hunter - Wraithen are natural hunters, a skill set instilled in them from birth. As such, a Wraithen is considered to have one additional Skill Dice success when making a Tracking roll.

Acute Senses - A Wraithen's heightened senses extend to their strong survival instinct, giving them an uncanny knack at detecting dangerous situations. A Wraithen adds 1 to their Initiative Bonus, making them more likely to act before others in combat.

- Life Span: 45 - 50 years
- Height/Weight: 5-6 feet, 7-8st
- Strengths: Exceptional speed and reflexes. Highly motivated.
- Weaknesses: Ruthless, self serving attitudes.

ADVANCED CARRIEN

"Everyone is funny to me. They say funny things. Call me funny names, things that are meant to hurt. But I've been cut, shot, stabbed and bitten; and that's proper pain. I got past all that; I'll get past this.

I'm a 'bone head', a 'dog boy', a 'tunnel mutt'. I've heard it all. But when you get lost in the Downtown sewers and a carnivorous pig is chewing on your nutsack, you'll be needing my help.

No one can handle Mort City like an ADV."

Krackle, ADV Carrien Operative,
SCL 9.1a, Squad 'Dusty Lavender'

Insight

You have only vague, fleeting memories of your infancy. You and your 4 sibling pups were born in a sewer pipe in Downtown. One of your litter was slain by Mort Rat, which you then killed. You then bit out the throat of your brother who was trying to steal your kill; you ate them both.

One night your mother was shot dead by an Operative, by that time you were the sole surviving pup. With the man in armour came other Humans in lab coats. One shot you with a dart gun and when you woke you were in a cage in a white, shiny Karma lab.

As time passed, you were given a series of injections. They stung bitterly but the effects soothed you. When you were able to focus you saw a Human woman smiling at you through the bars, which prevented you from chewing her tasty face off. She taught you to read, the bare basics of writing and to speak the Mort language. It was difficult and you were frustrated, but in time you got to learn more interesting skills.

The big, red, alien man educated you in the use of firearms, vibro weapons, even unarmed fighting which could allow you to drop foes much larger than yourself and leave them shuddering on the floor. Finally, they informed you that you were now an ADV Carrien and you had a job to do. So be it: you got into your heavy armour, slotted your MAC in its sheath and left the Karma lab. SLA had trained you, but not prepared you, for society, with all its complexities and discrimination.

You were assigned to an Op Squad and the insults continued for a time, but you didn't much care. You managed to break the Frother's nose when he tried to steal your Big Grin burger and when the resident Stormer punched you for mocking his dead pet Arrowhead Cockroach, you didn't fall over, so the Stormer was your best friend after that. It has been a long, difficult road to acceptance, but the squad needs you now, especially if the next BPN leads back into the sewers. The place you were born.

Background

For so many centuries the Carrien has been regarded as vermin, like Mort Rats only bigger and more vicious. There isn't much that is sympathetic or admirable about a Carrien. They want to kill and eat you. This is how the average Mort Civilian (and in truth, the average SLA Operative too) regards the average Carrien: it is a monster that means you harm, so trying to introduce 'Carrien Operatives' was always going to be met with considerable resistance.

SLA Industries has been struggling to utilise Mort's burgeoning Carrien population for a very long time. The company regards the genus as repellent yet despite its less than commendable traits, SLA cannot deny its innate powers and resilience. It is a species that survived (albeit corrupted by) nuclear radiation, then starvation and a host of differing pollutants beyond the Fission Belt. The Carrien nonetheless endures and thrives.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of Carrien are completely feral and from an early age they imprint onto the dominant Greater Carrien, or a sturdy Alpha Carrien pack leader. They are not a species that would ever actively side with SLA Industries, but that is about to change.

SLA Industries, ever searching for new employment opportunities, persevered and after countless attempts to re-educate the animalistic species, the ADV Carrien was finally created.

At first, the development team focussed on juvenile Alpha Carrien, but they could not be tamed in any useful way, so this initial intention was abandoned. The key was to capture the best specimens within the first weeks of their lives. There was nothing random about this process – the chosen Carrien packs were monitored for months, even years, to find the best, toughest young infants. The company was looking for just one in a litter of pups who would rise above the rest and then weather the early challenges in Carrien life.

When the timing was optimal a team of Karma techs would intervene and steal away the juvenile Carrien and immediately commence reconditioning it, turning it from slavering monster into a faithful, compliant employee of the company.

Initially, Karma tried to adapt the physical make-up of the Carrien by grafting a layer of skin to the familiar bare skull, but the DNA addition refused to adhere. Despite better nutrition, education and improved posture – an Advanced Carrien would always remain a Carrien.

But SLA had still achieved its objective – The ADV filled a particular niche in the Operative roster. It is a species perfectly adapted to the Downtown and Cannibal Sector environs; they have excellent resistance against disease, radiation and poison. They shrug off most injuries and do not spook easily.

ADV Carrien commence their employment at odds with the world around them. In essence, they are a bit of a blank slate. They don't yet have much preference towards food, dress sense, or musical taste and will invariably look to the squad's Neophron or Ebon on what they should wear, or even think.

Much like their kin out in the cannibal sectors, ADVs will fixate on seemly random objects, either staring at them for protracted

periods and obsessively collecting them en masse. Feral Carrien like shiny objects, but ADVs have a much wider range of obsessions, buying pieces of SLA equipment based on aesthetic quality rather than function, even going as far as to buy flux gems and ebb gear because the weird shapes and contours fascinate them. Once they find a piece of music or band they like, they will listen to select tunes on repeat, much to the annoyance of the rest of their squad.

Gradually, over time, the ADV establish their own sense of identity and worth.

SLA Industries rarely uses the full term – 'Advanced Carrien', much preferring to use the abbreviated 'ADV' in an effort to lessen the connection with the creatures perceived as SLA's enemy. It doesn't do much to alleviate the fear and hatred directed towards ADVs and most of their number are quiet, reserved and modest creatures whom rarely speak out. They do their jobs as efficiently as possible.

Appearance

The ADV bears many of the same visual characteristics of a feral Carrien – the bare, skinless canine skull, the sharp teeth and claws and bright, featureless blue eyes, deep set in the sockets. Some of the more bigoted members of SLA society cannot seen any difference at all in the appearance of an ADV Carrien compared to the wild Carrien found in Downtown or the cannibal sectors. There are however, several notable differences between the two.

ADV Carrien have far better posture compared to the feral breed, with a physiognomy closer to that of a Human. They are also far healthier and well groomed and since Carrien have fast acting metabolism, any weight they gain quickly converts into strong, lean muscle mass. Lastly, the whole demeanour of the ADV Carrien sets it apart from regular Carrien; they have true sentience. Many ADVs will attach hoods, protective caps (commonly worn under helmets) and accessories to the head region to further lessen the association to their savage cousins.

Species Specific Abilities

Familiar Breed - While a far cry from their kin, Advanced Carrien are able to communicate flawlessly with other members of the Carrien genus. To reflect this, Advanced Carrien receive a +2 modifier to the Success Die for all CHA and COOL based skill rolls when dealing directly with members of the Carrien species.

Against All Odds - The upbringing of any Carrien is far more brutal than almost any other species can imagine. The hardships and violence experienced during their early years, paired with the challenges overcome with escaping the cannibal sectors and being accepted by SLA Industries make the Advanced Carrien extremely hardy. To reflect this, Advanced Carrien are considered to have one additional Skill Die success when making a Survival roll.

- Life Span: 40 - 50 years
- Height/Weight: 6 - 6.5 feet, 20-30st
- Strengths: Perfectly adapted to Mort life. Excellent physical constitution.
- Weaknesses: Species-related stigma in Mort society. Low level understanding of social niceties and interactions.

NEOPHRON

"No, I am not a Wraithen. You may however refer to me as Neophron: we go by many names but that will suffice for the moment. Now, our friend here – he was seemingly killed with a one-handed blade, except that this particular injury was non-fatal, based on the depth of the puncture wound and limited blood loss. I hope you don't mind, but I took the liberty of obtaining a blood sample. There was a touch of discolouration around the laceration, so it seemed likely that the blade was coated in White Queen: which I found to be correct.

White Queen Lichen is only found in Cannibal Sector One, so it had to have been shipped into Mort City. I checked local Shiver reports and discovered that a squad of 9th Division defectors had been slain recently and that White Queen Lichen capsules had been listed on their private manifest.

We should look for any cult symbols or paraphernalia pertaining to the Raw Head religious order. There is another fellow in the master bedroom whom has had his left leg amputated post mortem, which I suspect is tonight's dinner for our murderer.

How can I be certain? Well, if you have full collection of the facts, in this crime, you'll discover it's elementary, my good chap."

Tarak Harakhebi – Neophron Operative,
SCL 8c, Squad 'Perfect Gallows'

Insight

You originate from the desert worlds of the Farouk solar system, far from the World of Progress in which you now reside. Mort is a diametric opposite of the blazing sun and cooling breeze of your home; it is grey, damp and miserable. Nonetheless, you are excited. It is vastly different from what you know and variety is the spice of life. You cannot wait to explore all aspects of SLA society. You are eager to meet your new squad mates and although you have been told they will be challenging, you are undeterred. This is simply not a problem; all challenge is exhilarating.

Like most of your kind, you come from considerable wealth, but here under the employment of SLA Industries you insist on starting with nothing more or less than any starting Operative. Your goal differs greatly from most people entering the company, in that you aren't driven to climb the corporate SCL ladder; wealth and status is what you left behind. Your driving force is new experiences, true altruism and using your broad range of skills and education to help others less fortunate than yourself.

You chose a training package that would place you in the most impoverished areas of Downtown, where your services can do the most good.

Having been raised in Conflict Space you are fully aware of the threat of White Earth and see now that the same cruelty and ugliness associated with that awful place amongst the civilians of Downtown. You and all other Neophron on Mort are determined to turn the tables and save the World of Progress as best you can.

Background

Neophron are a new species to emerge in the World of Progress. Many class them as a Conflict Race, as most 'fresh faces' on Mort are believed to have once been an enemy of the company, however the Neophron were never at war with SLA Industries and as far as most people know, they have always existed in Conflict Space.

Their reasoning for entering the World of Progress is to guide and educate. They know the Conflict Races and their motivations and the Shi'An Cult, which is all but destroying the planets beyond the World of Progress. The Neophron recognise White Earth as a threat beyond the current capabilities of SLA Industries and they want to help if they can.

The Neophron are under no illusion with regards to the true nature of SLA. They know of its corruption and its cruelty and its apathy towards injustice. But the Neophron still believe there is hope. They see what they believe is a civilisation on its last legs and the society that will replace it is far, far worse.

Neophron are by and large a good-natured species, whose education and research has taught them to respect and assimilate into unfamiliar civilisations and absorb their cultures and beliefs. A Neophron will be fascinated by the deep-rooted mysticism of the Shaktars, but will also try to accept and tolerate the belligerent brutishness of Frothers. They accept new traditions at face value, but if there is one thing a Neophron will not tolerate it is 'wilful ignorance'. They will forgive a Downtown Civilian who doesn't know any better, but will be incensed by a Waster bully who does.

Refined and charismatic, most, if not all, SLA species will get on with the Neophron, but if they can be faulted for anything it may be their own intellectual pride.

Neophron will go to great lengths to learn a new skill, or explore every aspect of topic and may sometimes frustrate themselves with failure, or by simply being incorrect. Neophron loathe exhibiting any form of negativity and will be ashamed with themselves if displaying irritability or shortness with friends and companions, as a result of failure.

Neophron never sit idle; they are always reading a book or data slug, learning a new instrument or chatting with the locals and sampling their native cuisine, regardless of quality or refinement. Neophron love to explore and discover new things and will grow uncomfortable if their daily life becomes routine, or mundane.

Neophron make good Op squad leaders and SLA admin will usually assign management status to the resident Neophron, who they know will opt for the most sensible course of action and calmly keep their rowdy team members focussed yet driven. They will ensure their wards have their needs met and prevent them from taking too many liberties with their elevated status.

Neophron tend to dislike fighting, as their bodies aren't especially built for it and will try to find a peaceful solution where possible. Of course, they know that Mort is a world that is steeped

in violence and thus have increased their normal combat training to fit better among a squad of Operatives.

They dislike the finality of death, as if offers no chance of redemption, so rarely will a Neophron kill a defeated or unconscious foe if they can safely be brought to justice instead.

Appearance

The majority of Neophron entering the World of Progress are tall and slender, with refined and graceful mannerisms and gestures. They acknowledge their light, delicate physical frames and never take excessively combat driven training packages, much preferring the more cerebral based careers within the company.

Neophron are avian humanoids. They do not have wings, despite have a plumage that covers all but their hands and feet, which terminate in thin, black talons. Their heads are especially bird-like and there is a wide diversity of colour and shape, particularly around the beak and eyes. They also bear unique skin patterns around the nasal region by which Neophrons can identify particular families and nationalities.

On Mort, Neophron typically dress in formal attire, whether they are employed by the corporate sector or not. These outfits are usually well made, tailored suits, waistcoats and overcoats. Neophron add their own Faroukan incline to such conservative wear, such as adding subtle golden adornments, pendants and ornately carved blue stone cuff links.

These embellishments are more pronounced when they are attending diplomatic events and they wish to display more of their own cultural identity.

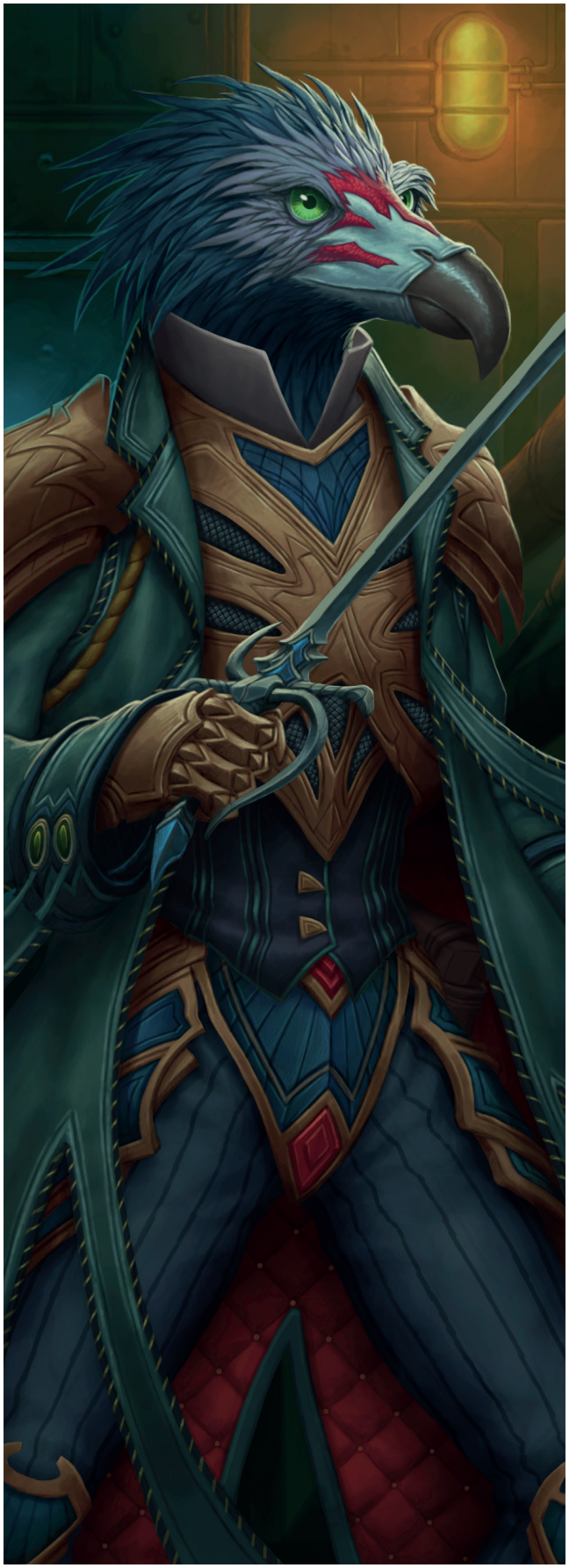
Those Neophron who do take combat classes equip themselves with gear that plays to their strengths: opting for light armour such as SilverBack suits (when funds will allow), vibro sabres and easily concealable pistols. This is done as much to convey a message to civilians and even potential enemies, that violence and bloodshed is not their primary aim.

Species Specific Abilities

Charm Offensive - The Neophron are talkers, born to a world where speech is their greatest weapon. On the streets of Mort, the Neophron's silver tongue is a vital tool in investigation and PR. A Neophron character receives a +1 modifier to the Success Die for all Diplomacy, Oratory and Persuasion rolls. This bonus is not applied when dealing with other members of the Neophron species - they are just too wise to be drawn in.

Inquisitive Mind - A Neophron's understanding of the power of words generally leads the youth of their race to focus on studies and communication techniques. By most standards, a Neophron is generally educated to a higher standard than even the Humans found on Mort. To reflect this, the Neophron has more starting racial skills (discussed later) than other races. In addition, at the end of character creation, a Neophron character may select one rank 3 KNOW or CHA-related skills on their character sheet and increase it to rank 4, ignoring the usual restrictions.

- Life Span: 120-180 years
- Height/Weight: 5.5 - 6 feet, 5-6st
- Strengths: Well suited to leadership roles and problem solving through diplomatic solutions.
- Weaknesses: Physically frail in comparison to other SLA Operative classes. Intellectually vain.



STATS

Stats represent the core capabilities of a character - how smart, strong, fast or lucky they are. The different stats that characters possess are:

Strength (STR) - A measure of how physically strong and fit the character is, as well as their capabilities in close combat. Strength can be considered a measure of overall fitness and is used when running, climbing, throwing or fighting in hand-to-hand combat.

Dexterity (DEX) - Dexterity represents a character's speed, agility and hand-eye coordination. Dexterity comes into play when considering the use of ranged weapons like pistols or rifles, as well as when hiding, sneaking or performing an acrobatic manoeuvre.

Knowledge (KNOW) - Knowledge is the core thinking power of a character, representing not only their level of education in academic subjects, but also their wit and ability to retain vital information. A character's Knowledge stat is an indication of their overall intelligence.

Concentration (CONC) - A character's Concentration stat is considered for complex tasks that require both dedication and study, as well as their ability to hone their senses in order to spot and detect threats or clues. Concentration is used for driving, a range of technical skills and identifying threats.

Charisma (CHA) - Charisma is a measure of a character's likability, communication skills and persuasive nature. The Charisma stat is used when diplomacy is needed, or when haggling, seducing or leading others.

Cool (COOL) - Cool represents a character's willpower and ability to resist the effects of fear. It is used when interrogating and torturing subjects or when survival instincts take over.

Luck (LUCK) - A character's Luck stat is a measure of just how lucky they are in the line of duty. While Operatives like to think of themselves as highly trained individuals, sometimes a little blind luck makes all the difference to the outcome. Ebonites do not have a Luck stat.

Flux (FLUX) - Only Ebonites have a Flux stat. Flux represents the Ebonite's mastery of the Ebb and represents a pool of resources that can be used to evoke powerful Ebb disciplines during the game.

STAT RANKS

Each stat has a range from 0 to 6, with 0 representing a particularly low capability in that area and 6 representing the peak of capability. Each step is referred to as a rank, e.g. rank 3 in Strength represents that a character has above average capability in that area. The ranks are as follows:

Stat Ranks	
0	Poor
1	Adequate
2	Average
3	Above Average
4	Good
5	Exceptional
6	Incredible

The maximum rank available to a character in any stat depends upon the species of that character. Each species has an initial rating for every stat, along with a species maximum which may never normally be exceeded (unless an another rule specifies otherwise).

Species Stat Limits

Stat	Human		Frother		Ebonite		Stormer 313 'Malice'		Stormer 711 'Xeno'	
	Initial	Max	Initial	Max	Initial	Max	Initial	Max	Initial	Max
STR	1	3	2	4	0	3	3	6	2	5
DEX	1	4	2	4	1	4	2	6	3	5
KNOW	2	5	1	5	1	5	0	2	0	3
CONC	1	5	1	3	2	6	0	3	1	4
CHA	1	5	0	4	1	5	0	3	0	2
COOL	1	5	1	5	1	5	3	6	2	6
LUCK / FLUX	1	6	1	3	2	6	0	2	0	2
	Shaktar		Wraithen		Advanced Carrien		Neophron			
STR	3	5	1	3	3	5	0	2		
DEX	2	5	3	6	1	5	0	3		
KNOW	1	4	1	4	0	2	2	6		
CONC	0	3	1	4	1	4	2	6		
CHA	1	3	1	4	0	3	3	6		
COOL	1	6	0	5	3	6	1	5		
LUCK / FLUX	0	3	1	4	0	3	0	3		

Note: While Operative stats range from 0 to 6, other creatures lurking within The World of Progress may break these limits. Additionally, the use of certain hardware, drugs and abilities may increase stats over the species limits temporarily during the course of the game.

STARTING STATS

All stats begin at the initial ranks as listed in the 'Species Stat Limits' table. A player must then spend 12 points on increasing their character's stats. Every point spent increases the rank of the chosen stat by 1.

Once all points are spent, the player should record the stat ranks on their character sheet.

Example: Lucy is creating a Wraithen Operative. She wishes to increase the character's DEX from 3 to 5. This will cost her two of her available twelve points.

Note: LUCK/FLUX is recorded to the right of the '/' on the character sheet. The space on the left is updated each time the character spends a point in order to keep track of how far the stat has drifted from its maximum value.

INITIATIVE BONUS

The character sheet also has a space to record a character's 'Initiative Bonus'. This value is equal to the character's DEX and CONC stats added together. This value is used during combat when determining the character's Initiative Value. As per the listed Species Specific Abilities, Wraithen character's always add 1 to their Initiative Bonus.

RATINGS POINTS

Ratings Points represent the reputation that a character has in certain areas, either through televised action, corporate sponsorship or unshakable faith in their own abilities. During the game, Ratings Points are spent to overcome great obstacles, perform cinematic feats or scrape a success from the jaws of defeat.

Each character has a number of Ratings Points in addition to their stats. Ratings Points are initially generated based upon the ranks that a character has in certain stats and fall into three categories: Body, Brain and Bravado.

Ratings Point Category	Applicable Stats
Body	Strength (STR) & Dexterity (DEX)
Brain	Knowledge (KNOW) & Concentration (CONC)
Bravado	Charisma (CHA) & Cool (COOL)

Note: LUCK/FLUX are not connected to Ratings Points.

Each Ratings Points category has a range from 0 to 6 regardless of a character's species. During character creation, a character will assign 2 Ratings Points in one category, 1 to another category and 0 in the final category. To determine which category gains which points, you should add up the stat ranks under each category and assign Ratings Points to them in order of value, with 2 points being awarded to the highest total and 0 points to the lowest.

Example: Hector is creating a Human Operative and has assigned the following stats:

STR 3, DEX 2	(Body total of 5)
KNOW 4, CONC 3	(Brain total of 7)
CHA 1, COOL 3	(Bravado total of 4)

The character would assign 2 Ratings Points to their Brain category as it has the highest combined stat total, 1 Ratings Point to their Body category and would not assign any Ratings Points to their Bravado category as it has the lowest combined stat total.

If any of the stat totals are tied, the player may decide which category receives which points, for example, considering the previous scenario, if the character had a CHA of 2 (bringing Bravado up to 5) then they would be free to allocate 1 Ratings Point to either the Body or the Bravado category, but not both.

STARTING RATINGS POINTS

In addition to the starting values, a player must spend 3 additional points on increasing their character's Ratings Points. Every point spent adds 1 Ratings Point to the chosen category, however no more than two of these points may be allocated to the same category. Once all points are spent, the player should record the Ratings Points on their character sheet.

SKILLS

Skills represent the capabilities gifted to a character through their life experience and formal training. Where stats represent the intrinsic strength and mental capabilities of a character, skills show the technical capabilities and specialist knowledge gained from an education or hands on experience with a particular task.

SKILL RANKS

Each skill has a maximum of four ranks, though only the first three are available to starting characters. If a character does not possess a certain skill, then they are considered to be 'unskilled' in that particular area. Being unskilled does not mean that a character is incapable of performing a task, but that they will find performing such actions considerably harder than those with the relevant training.

For example, being unskilled in Swim does not mean that a character can't swim, rather that they can only swim at a casual/leisurely pace and not well under pressure.

Skill Ranks	
1	Skilled
2	Experienced
3	Expert
4	Specialist

SKILLS LIST

Important: Each skill is closely connected to a specific stat. A starting character may not take a skill at a rank higher than that of the related stat, for example, a character with STR at rank 2 may not take the Throw skill at a rank higher than 2. These limitations are lifted after character creation is complete, allowing characters to increase these skills with experience points between game sessions.

STRENGTH (STR):

Climbing - This skill represents the character's training or natural ability as a climber, of both natural and man-made structures. Higher ranks in Climbing will allow the climber to traverse more dangerous surfaces, possibly without the use of dedicated climbing equipment.

Advanced Tasks: Climbing without equipment, traversing horizontal outcrops.

Melee Weapons - The art of using weapons designed for hand-to-hand combat, from knives and stabbing instruments to clubs, batons and improvised weapons. The skill covers all melee weapons with the exception of long reach polearms (see the Polearm skill).

Polearm - Polearm is the skill dedicated to longer reach melee weapons, most commonly the Flick Scythe or Chain Axe, each of which require special training to use correctly without personal injury. The skill also covers the use of improvised staffs and spears.

Shield Craft - A skill which has only been recognised for a few years, Shield Craft is a measure of a characters capability with a combat shield, such as the PP949 Breacher Shield or other similar variants. The skill allows for using the shield as a defensive tool, a makeshift weapon and training in how to move and perform actions while wielding such an item.

Support Weapons - Support Weapons covers the use of most heavy weaponry, from stationary support platforms and turret mounted vehicle weapons, to heavy, high rate of fire personnel weapons where handling the weapon's recoil is more important that its aim. The skill is also used to handle any weapon using suppressive fire.

Swimming - While safe water is a rarity in Mort, there are many areas of Lower Downtown which are almost entirely flooded by rainwater from the levels above. While far from an easy task, learning to swim in armour while stuck in a flooded sewer could save an Operative's life. Higher ranks in the skill represent the characters endurance and stamina on long swims as well as their ability to swim at a high pace.

Advanced Tasks: Swimming whilst armoured, carrying a heavy load, or while dragging or carrying another person.

Throw - Throw is used in combat for both grenades and thrown weapons, such as daggers. Outside of combat situations, the throw skill represents the characters ability to throw items accurately and over long distances.

Advanced Tasks: Throwing exceptionally heavy items over great distance, hitting particularly small target points.

Unarmed Combat - Unarmed Combat covers all disciplines of close range fighting such as martial arts, wrestling, boxing and brawling. While there are numerous different styles, the eventual result is the same - the more skilled a person is in their chosen discipline, the more damage they are able to dish out and the better they are at defending themselves in close quarters. Characters are encouraged to build their Unarmed Combat fighting style into their backstory.

DEXTERITY (DEX):

Acrobatics - This skill covers all acrobatic and gymnastic activity, both in a competition setting, but also in the line of duty, covering flips, hanging, swinging and even dodging hand-to-hand attacks. Higher levels show a proficiency in such activities that will have been honed over many years.

Advanced Tasks: Backflipping over a burning vehicle, swinging from one dangling cable to another.

Athletics - Athletics is a measure of sporting fitness and covers activities such as running and jumping, with higher ranks representing a faster more agile character. In addition to its use as a skill when undertaking athletic activity, the character's Rushing speed is increased by 1 for every two ranks they have in Athletics (round down).

Advanced Tasks: Running long distances wearing unpowered armour, jumping from great heights without injury.

Drive Motorcycle - Unlike other driving skills which are based more on the driver's concentration and mental wit, Drive Motorcycle relies far more on the riders Dexterity, especially when handling the most modern wave of fusion cycles. The skill represents a character's ability to handle a motorcycle at high speeds on the streets of Downtown.

Advanced Tasks: Handling a bike in a firefight, jumping great distances.

Forgery - Forgery is the skill of creating fake documents and IDs as well as forging signatures. Such activities require very careful and precise hand control and though forgery is highly illegal, the skill set that comes with such knowledge can be of great use to an investigator in Mort City.

Advanced Tasks: Forging a Cloak Division ID, creating believable rival company documentation.

Pistol - This skill represents a character's proficiency with handguns, revolvers and submachine guns, as well as being an indication that they have received some formal training in their use. Higher ranks in Pistol represent the characters sturdy aim and ability to hit harder moving targets.

Note: Submachine guns may use either the Pistol or Rifle skill.

Rifle - Rifle covers the use of a wide range of weapons, from assault rifles and shotguns to most submachine guns and sniper weapons. Rifle is one of the most commonly learned skills amongst Operatives and higher ranks represent a significant level of skill and training in the use of these weapons.

Note: Submachine guns may use either the Pistol or Rifle skill.

Sleight - The skill of hand dexterity, Sleight is the ability to use prestidigitation for both entertainment and to confuse or beguile others. The skill is also used for pickpocketing or anytime a character wishes to do something with their hands without being seen.

Advanced Tasks: Pickpocketing a Neophron, swapping an ID under the nose of a Dark Finder

Stealth - Stealth covers a character's ability to move quietly and undetected, from crossing areas of the urban landscape without being seen, to slipping in and out of crowded spaces. Additionally, this skill also covers a character's ability to hide and conceal their body using the terrain around them.

Advanced Tasks: Silently navigating a floor of broken glass, hiding in heavily illuminated areas.

KNOWLEDGE (KNOW):

Admin & Finance - Admin & Finance is the knowledge of correct administrative practises, filing and understanding of financial budgets and management. This includes both a character's own finances, as well as those of the squad, department, or any other business situation the character may find themselves in.

Advanced Tasks: Correctly filling in requisition forms to obtain a Reaver Cannon.

Computer - Computer provides the required knowledge to manage files, follow SLA's stringent word processing requirements for official documentation and at higher levels, be able to perform security hacks to break into encrypted files and password protected terminals.

Advanced Tasks: Hacking high security files, writing programs to automate tasks.

Education (Academic, Natural), Specify - Education is a collection of skills covering a range of learning on specific subjects. The skill represents that a character has received a formal education in some or all of the relevant fields. A character may take both Education skills if desired.

Academic: Archaeology, Architecture, History, Literacy, Mathematics, Psychology and Science

Natural: covers the subjects of Astronomy, Botany, Ecology, Geography, Physiology and Zoology

Advanced Tasks: Obtaining an insight or information that has significant impact on the current game session.

Forensics - Forensics is the skill of correctly and methodically analysing a crime scene to find subtle traces left behind by anyone who may have passed through, including fingerprints, footprints and blood spatter analysis. In addition, the skill also covers experience in pathology as well as the dissection and investigation of corpses to find additional evidence such as ingested toxicants or other causes of death.

Advanced Tasks: Locating very minute specks of blood, running a tox-screen on a Frother.

Language (Wraithen, Shaktarian, Neophron, Sign, Gristle, Biya), Specify - This skill represents that a character has either studied and practiced a foreign language, or is a native speaker of the given language. A character may take more than one Language skills. See "Language" on page 119 for more on this.

Advanced Tasks: Communicating with an angry Carrien or talking a Cannibal Butcher down from eating you.

Note: Gristle may only be taken above rank 1 by ADV.

Lore (Cult, Dream, Sector), Specify - A strong understanding of the history and writings on a specific subject are covered by the Lore skill. The knowledge learned from studying such subjects is generally a mixture of real experience and theory-crafting, taken from the journals of an Aetherman or other veteran members of the SLA ranks. Cult Lore is knowledge of Mort's many cults, including SLA's newest and darkest threat; the Shi'An blood cult. Dream Lore covers the understanding of Dream Entities and the role they play in The World of Progress. Sector Lore details the flora, fauna, meteorology and geography of the cannibal sectors. A character may take multiple Lore skills if they wish.

Advanced Tasks: Predicting what may have been summoned by a Shi'An ritual, knowing how to best appease a Cryptid.

Note: A starting character may never begin with any Lore skill at a rank higher than 2.

Medical - The required skill set to provide correct paramedical aid, including the administering of drugs, suturing wounds, diagnosing illnesses and toxicants and at a higher level of knowledge, perform medical operations and surgery.

Advanced Tasks: Diagnosing rare diseases contracted from time in the cannibal sectors, performing life saving heart surgery.

Streetwise - Streetwise represents a character's knowledge of the street, including where to find people, drugs, gangs and information. In some instances, a character's Streetwise skill may even replace other communication skills as knowing how to speak some of Mort's most obscure gang slang can create new contacts and earn a character great respect in Downtown.

Advanced Tasks: Locating illegal DarkNight weaponry, tracking down members of the Skin Trade.

Concentration (CONC):

Demolitions - This skill gives the user the knowledge to set up, operate and disarm demolitions and explosives. At higher levels the user will be able to not only disassemble explosive devices, but also repurpose the charges and create their own items. Training in demolitions should not be taken lightly as incorrect use or failure in such activity will usually lead to death. This skill does not cover the throwing of grenades (see the Throw skill).

Advanced Tasks: Disarming a DarkNight-rigged explosive device, building explosives from scratch.

Drive (Civilian, Military, Pilot), Specify - The Drive skill represents a character's training in driving or piloting a range of vehicles, from town cars to mil-spec APC's. The Drive Pilot skill also covers the use of Kilcopters and airborne dropships, though access to such vehicles is exceptionally rare. This skill does not cover the driving of motorcycles (see the Drive Motorcycle skill). A character may take multiple Drive skills if they wish.

Advanced Tasks: Piloting anything over the skies of Cannibal Sector 1, driving in combat situations under heavy fire.

Detect - Detect represents a character's ability to spot clues, threats or pretty much anything else from both an investigatory and an observational perspective. The skill acts as a measure

of the character's keenness for their surroundings and covers sight, smell, hearing and touch.

Advanced Tasks: Spotting well concealed traps, hearing an approaching vehicle during a gunfight.

Lock Pick (Manual, Electronic), Specify - The Lock Pick skill is the character's training and experience in opening sealed locks and doors. As there's a distinctive difference between traditional locks and modern electronic maglocks, the discipline is split into two separate skills. A character may take both Lock Pick skills if they wish.

Advanced Tasks: Cracking a Magna4001 TechLock, lock picking silently.

Read Lips - The act of deciphering speech without hearing it, purely through the movement of a subject's lips. Talented lip readers make for great scouts and investigators, able to obtain information from a distance without ever making their presence known to the subject.

Advanced Tasks: Reading lips in extreme weather or poor lighting.

Tactics - A trained tactician is a valued asset to any squad. The skill covers the implementation of battlefield tactics, as well as deciphering tactics used by opponents to predict their next move. Those highly trained in Tactics will be able to out smart and out flank enemy combatants before the fight begins or organise their squad for maximum battlefield efficiency.

Advanced Tasks: Outwitting Thresher combatants, predicting DarkNight movements in densely populated areas.

Technical (Electrical, Mechanical, Weapons), Specify - Technical is a skill group related to specific training in highly technical subjects. Electrical covers the repair and modification of electronic devices such as scanners and cameras, Mechanical relates to the maintenance and repair of engines, vehicles and heavy machinery and Weapons is the required knowledge to maintain, modify and quickly repair damaged firearms and armour. A character may take multiple Technical skills if they wish.

Advanced Tasks: Replacing the engine block of a Crawler APC, field repairing electronics without the right tools.

Tracking - A character skilled in Tracking is able to use the local environment to identify signs of a specific person or group of people, with the aim of tracking them through the urban landscape of Mort City or out into the wastes of CS1. Tracking includes identifying tracks, markings, specific scents and a range of other elements to form an impression of direction, pace and whereabouts of a particular individual.

Advanced Tasks: Tracking a Wraithen, tracking individuals in foul weather or darkness.

Charisma (CHA):

Diplomacy - The skill of handling and maintaining relationships between different people, species and factions. Diplomacy can be an important skill not only for managing interdepartmental relationships, but also on the streets of Downtown, where handling the delicate rivalries between different gangs and factions can make an Operative's life significantly easier.

Advanced Tasks: Resolving an honour dispute between Shaktars, bringing together rival faction leaders.

Haggle - Haggle represents a character's ability to drive a hard bargain. The skill is a measure of the character's ability to negotiate whilst also having an awareness of the relative value of the item/information/purpose of the transaction. Haggle is used for both buying and selling of such items.

Advanced Tasks: Getting a collector to part with a DN-1 Cermanic, getting a good price for your battered old 10-10 Bullyboy.

Leadership - The recognised art of leading others, both in combat situations and through arduous tasks or stressful periods. A good leader can motivate and drive others to succeed, make decisions that greatly affect the outcome and quell squabbling or conflict amongst those that follow them.

Advanced Tasks: Leading Shivers, holding your squad together in DarkNight controlled territory.

Oratory - Oratory is the skill of public speaking. The skill is used for making announcements, motivational speeches, pep talks and when delivering bad news without getting negative (or violent) reactions. Those highly skilled in Oratory often become TV reporters or a SLA media darling.

Advanced Tasks: Making a convincing media broadcast, motivating Frothers on a come down.

Persuasion - This skill represents the character's ability to sweet talk, con and manipulate their way to an outcome that best serves them. Persuasion is used to get people on-side, to convince people of a mistruth or to rally support over a

situation where people are divided. The art of persuasion can also be used to bring a potentially aggressive situation to a peaceful resolution when conventional diplomacy fails.

Advanced Tasks: Persuading Advanced Carrien to venture back into Cannibal Sector 1, talking a Shiver into doing your dirty work.

Seduction - The art of seduction is the process of deliberately enticing someone into flirtatious, romantic or sexual activity. Seduction is used to both attract a partner or lover, as well as to lead astray those who are attracted or interested in you by making them believe your intentions coincide with their own. While many people become adept at the act of seduction for pleasure and fun, a number of trained interrogators and investigators will use it as a manipulation technique aimed at extracting information from a subject.

Advanced Tasks: Seducing an irate Eban, creating a forced emotional attachment.

Cool (COOL):

Bribery - The required knowledge on how to actively influence someone's behaviour or choices by identifying and offering a suitable reward that the subject would otherwise not normally receive. Most commonly a bribe is an exchange of information for money, but someone skilled in this discipline will be able to identify a whole host of possible subjects and suitable bribes to entice them.

Advanced Tasks: Bribing a Cloak Division agent or better still, a Necanthrope.

Gambling - The skill of betting and gambling, for fun or significant financial gain. The most common betting that takes place in The World of Progress is on the outcome of Contract Circuit fights and televised events involving Contract Killers, though this skill also covers knowledge of popular games like 3-Down and the character's ability to play the odds in order to work towards a beneficial outcome.

Advanced Tasks: Beating a Shiver at 3-Down, winning big on a Contract Circuit bet.

Interrogate - Interrogate is (officially) the first port of call for Operative investigators. Before violence, before torture, SLA interrogates. The skill reflects the user's experience and demeanor in extracting information from a subject using only verbal means. The subject is usually put under extreme pressure, with their story scrutinised in an attempt to make them say the wrong thing. A good interrogator will be able to extract information and turn even the most stone cold killer into a blubbering wreck.

Advanced Tasks: Interrogating a DarkNight Commandant or a ranking employee of SLA Industries.

Intimidate - Intimidate is the process of making another person feel uneasy, uncomfortable or noticeably afraid of you. Intimidation can be physical or psychological, but a character well versed in intimidating others is able to take control of situations and force others to work for or with them. Unlike Leadership, Intimidate gains less voluntary compliance, but can also serve to shut down potential threats before they can amount to anything.

Advanced Tasks: Intimidating a Carrien or harder yet, a suited up Thresher pilot.

Survival - Survival is the required knowledge to survive without normal shelter or supplies, relying on your instincts and the environment around you. Those skilled in Survival will be able to find food, identify suitable drinking water, know how to create sufficient shelter and even make primitive tools or weapons from the items around them.

Advanced Tasks: Surviving without proper supplies in Cannibal Sector 1, creating a safe makeshift shelter in Lower Downtown.

Torture - Official training in torture techniques is handed down to Operatives from Cloak Division-sanctioned training officers and includes the use of a wide range of verbal, narcotic and physical mechanisms designed to put the subject in extreme emotional and physical stress, with the end goal of obtaining information. The validity of information obtained in such a way is always questionable and the results are often gruesome, leading to scenes that can make even the toughest Op feel sick. Operatives may turn to torture when regular interrogation techniques fail.

Advanced Tasks: Leaving lasting trauma, implanting psychological triggers.

Ebb Disciplines (CONC):

Note: Ebb disciplines are skills that are only available to Ebonite characters. While an Ebonite uses FLUX to summon the abilities associated with these disciplines, it is the character's CONC stat that is used to determine their maximum rank and is used for any applicable skill rolls. See "The Ebb" on page 124 for more information and for how to use these skills in your games.

Awareness - Awareness represents an Ebonite's connection to the Ebb, allowing them to detect other Ebb users and recently used Ebb disciplines in the vicinity. As training progresses the discipline can be used to track individuals and form specific knowledge of them, with the highest levels allowing the tracking of non-Ebb users as well.

Blast - Blast is the most destructive of the Ebb disciplines, moulding fragments of the Ebonite's emotional state into a physical form. The skill allows the Ebonite to control kinetic forces in order to direct a physical attack, either against a single target, or to create a blast that covers a wide area. The Blast skill also allows for flashes of blinding light and general illumination of the surrounding area.

Communicate - This skill allows for direct telepathic communication with people over distance, as well as the ability to plant ideas, read minds and generally control the thought patterns and behaviours of others.

Enhance - Enhance is the art of physically manipulating an Ebonite's own body to increase strength, speed or to form natural weapons such as razor sharp teeth and claws. At its highest level, Enhance allows the Ebonite to transform themselves into a feared but uncontrollable Ebb Beast for a short period of time. This discipline is often favoured by those on the more destructive Waster path.

Heal - The Heal skill allows an Ebonite to heal physical damage, wounds and illness, as well as rid the body of toxins and poison. As training in this discipline increases, the user becomes capable of healing others in rapid and effective ways. This skill is favoured heavily by those on the Ebon path.

Protect - Protect represents control over and synergy with an Ebonite's own Deathsuit - the symbiote armour worn exclusively by Ebb users. The skill allows the user to increase the protective capabilities of their Deathsuit as well as teaching it to store more Flux or act independently of its wearer.

Reality Fold - One of the most powerful and misunderstood arts of the Ebonite species. Reality Folding is the skill of moving from one location to the next in an instant. The more advanced the knowledge of the Ebonite is, the further they will be able to travel, or the greater the number of 'passengers' they may be able to take with them.

Senses - Senses represents control over a subject's primary senses, normally to remove, restore or manipulate the interpretation of that sense. With this skill an Ebonite can blind and deafen a subject, restore vision to those who have lost such senses and at higher levels, to enhance their own senses, such as the ability to see in different light spectrums.

Telekinesis - Users are able to physically move objects and people about using thought. At higher levels, subjects can be moved at speed or with significant force over a long distance.

Thermal (Blue, Red) - Thermal is an inherent skill learned by all Ebonites and is believed to be a direct extension of one's natural temperament. Blue Thermal, gifted to those who follow the Ebon path, grants the user control over cold, creating blades from ice and freezing the air around them, where as Red Thermal, understood only by Wasters is control over heat, allowing them to ignite their surroundings or targets.

SPECIES SKILLS

Each character starts with a number of species skills which reflect the base knowledge earned during a typical upbringing. These skills should be recorded on the character sheet. Each species skill begins at rank 1.

Species	Starting Species Skills
Human	Detect, Education: Academic, Streetwise, Unarmed Combat
Frother	Detect, Melee Weapons, Streetwise, Unarmed Combat
Ebonite	Detect, Education: Academic, [see "Ebonite Characters" below]
Stormer 313 'Malice'	Athletics, Intimidate, Throw, Unarmed Combat
Stomer 711 'Xeno'	Climbing, Stealth, Unarmed Combat
Shaktar	Climbing, Detect, Language: Shaktarian, Survival, Unarmed Combat
Wraithen	Athletics, Detect, Language: Wraithen, Unarmed Combat, Tracking
Advanced Carrien	Intimidate, Language: Gristle, Lore: Sector, Survival, Unarmed Combat
Neophron	Education: Academic, Education: Natural, Bribery, Diplomacy, Language: Neophron, Language: pick one, Leadership, Oratory, Persuasion

Ebonite Characters

Ebonite characters must specify which path they followed during their upbringing and early training: Ebon or Waster. Ebon's followed a traditional upbringing, focusing on self preservation and mental focus, where as a Waster's upbringing is more destructive, with a focus on using Flux in a more aggressive capacity. These differences are represented by the maximum limit that either path may obtain in any given Ebb discipline. In addition, Ebonites each have a number of starting Ebb disciplines depending on the path they have chosen. Like other skills, each of these begin at rank 1.

Starting Ebonite Skills

Ebonite Path	Starting Ebb Disciplines
Ebon	Heal, Protect, Thermal: Blue
Waster	Blast, Protect, Thermal: Red

Ebb Discipline Maximum Ranks

Ebb Discipline	Ebon	Waster
Awareness	4	3
Blast	3	4
Communicate	4	3
Enhance	2	4
Heal	4	2
Protect	4	4
Reality Fold	4	4
Senses	4	4
Telekinesis	3	4
Thermal	4	4

A note about Thermal: There are two versions of the Thermal discipline, **Thermal: Blue** and **Thermal: Red**. Once an Ebonite is set upon a path of upbringing they will be taught the Thermal discipline of their elders. Due to the limitations of the Ebb, a character trained in the use of one Thermal discipline will be entirely unable to learn or access the other, as such it should be considered that **Thermal: Blue** is unique to Ebons and **Thermal: Red** is unique to Wasters.

Training Packages

Once species skills are recorded, a player must select a training package for their character. The training package represents the path of training that the character chose to follow once they were accepted as an Operative with SLA Industries.

When one of the following training packages is selected it should be noted at the top of the character sheet and the listed skills and ranks are recorded alongside the character's species skills. Training packages provide a mix of skills at both rank 1 and 2. If a skill appears on both the species skills and training package lists, add the ranks together. Note that a skill may never be higher than the stat it relates to, so if the combined total of species and training skills values exceeds the character's relevant stat, then excess ranks are not gained.

Note: Most training packages have stat requirements that must be observed. Typically these are minimum stat requirements for the character to have been considered for that school of training. All requirements are listed alongside the following entries.

Strike & Sweep

Requirements: none

Operatives trained in the Strike & Sweep package are given a wide range of general use combat and field-ready skills. While the package title sounds somewhat glamorous, a Strike & Sweep Operative is in fact the generalist of SLA Industries. The vast majority of Ops on the streets of Mort are trained with this package as finding candidates with the more specific requirements of other packages is far harder. Strike & Sweep gives an Op basic training with a range of weapons, vehicle types and other combat ready skills.

Skills Provided:	
Athletics 1	Detect 1
Drive Civilian 1	Drive Military 1
Melee Weapons/Unarmed Combat (pick one) 1	Medical 1
Pistol 1	Rifle 1

Close Assault

Requirements: minimum of STR & DEX at rank 2

Close Assault is the training package of choice for the physical Operative who favours close combat, be it with blades, clubs or fists. The focus of training is on maximising the combat capabilities within hand-to-hand range of the enemy, as well as bolstering the physical demands of such activities. Climbing, running, athletics and stealth tactics are all taught in addition to the weapon skills needed to be a capable Close Assault Operative.

Skills Provided:	
Acrobatics 1	Athletics 2
Melee Weapons/ Polearm/Throw/Unarmed Combat (pick one) 2	Melee Weapons/Polearm/ Throw/Unarmed Combat (pick one, different to the first) 1
Climbing 1	Stealth 1

Heavy Support

Requirements: minimum of STR & DEX at rank 2

Heavy Support is a popular training package for Operatives during training. The aim of this training package is to prepare Ops for the rigours of handling and using support weapons within the confines of Mort City, as well as out in the cannibal sectors. The training includes experience with explosives, fully automatic weapons and the knowhow to maintain and repair such equipment out in the field.

Skills Provided:	
Demolitions 1	Rifle 2
Support Weapons 2	Tactics 1
Throw 1	Technical: Weapons 1

Scout

Requirements: minimum of DEX & COOL at rank 2

Scouts are trained in stealth techniques, tracking and observation, giving them a range of applications both on the streets of Mort, out in the cannibal sectors and off-world. Scouts will typically be careful planners, talented sharpshooters and expert trackers, making them valuable assets when it comes to hunting people of interest.

Skills Provided:	
Detect 1	Read Lips 1
Rifle 1	Stealth 2
Survival 1	Tracking 2

Medic

Requirements: minimum of KNOW at rank 3

Forming an Op squad without a trained medic is a risky call. The streets of Downtown are dangerous, Lower Downtown worse still, but get sent over the wall into Cannibal Sector 1 and very few Operatives will come back unscathed. The Medic package trains an Operative not only in paramedical skills, but also with a range of specialist knowledge about the anatomy and makeup of all common species. The Medic package also provides the required training to cut it as a talented forensic investigator, giving them considerable advantages over many other training packages.

Skills Provided:	
Computer 1	Detect 1
Education: Academic 1	Education: Natural 1
Forensics 2	Medical 2

Investigation & Interrogation

Requirements: minimum of KNOW & COOL at rank 2

Investigation & Interrogation is the primary package of choice for the modern non-combat Operative. The package has proven very popular since the rise of new threats on the Downtown streets and covers everything from basic forensic examination to advanced interrogation and torture techniques. Investigators often get the higher paying BPNs from departments who don't want subjects shooting before the job is done.

Skills Provided:	
Computer 1	Detect 1
Forensics 1	Interrogate 2
Streetwise 2	Torture 1

Technical

Requirements: minimum of CONC at rank 3

Technical specialists hold down a range of positions within SLA Industries, from keeping reactors and water processors running, to weapons manufacture. In the last few years, SLA have identified the need for such technical skills on the street as well, using their most experienced staff to train the first wave of Technical Operatives. The new Technical package teaches a range of mechanical, electrical and weapons tech skills, along with advanced computer training and other utility skills that are already proving to be a valuable asset to Operative squads.

Skills Provided:	
Computer 2	Detect 1
Haggle 1	Lock Pick (pick one) 1
Technical (pick one) 2	Technical (pick one, different to first) 1

Bureaucrat

Requirements: minimum of KNOW & COOL at rank 2

While the bureaucrat package is one of the company's less popular options, it has nonetheless become an extremely valuable package for the modern Operative. The Bureaucrat is often the strongest leader within a group, acting as the voice of a squad and using their communication skills to not only lead, but also manage the civilian population of Mort. Bureaucrat-trained Operatives are strong communicators, natural diplomats and

will usually file the correct paperwork without getting hassle from Corporate.

Skills Provided:	
Admin & Finance 1	Computer 1
Diplomacy 2	Haggle 1
Leadership 2	Oratory 1

OTHER STARTING SKILLS

After a character has applied their training package skills, additional skills may be chosen to round off their experience of working for SLA Industries and living in Mort City.

A player must now spend 30 points on purchasing, or improving their character's skills (and Ebb disciplines in the case of Ebonite characters). Skills have a cost equal to the rank being purchased plus one and are paid for one rank at a time. For simplicity, the following table displays the cost for purchasing or increasing skill ranks.

Skill Rank Points Cost			
Starting Rank	Target Rank		
	1	2	3
0	2	5	9
1	-	3	7
2	-	-	4

Note: a starting character may not purchase skills or Ebb disciplines at rank 4.

Example: Oscar is creating a Shaktar Operative and wishes to increase his Interrogate skill from rank 1 to rank 3. Consulting the table he can see this will cost him 7 of his 30 available points. He also chooses to add each of the three Technical skills at rank 1 each, costing 2 points each for a total of 6. Oscar now has 17 points remaining to spend on skills.

All skills should be recorded on the character sheet. For ease of reference we would suggest also noting the relevant stat alongside the skill, for example: 'Throw (STR)'. Alongside the skill ranks on the character sheet is a second column titled 'skill bonus'. The skill bonus is equal to the character's rank in the given skill, plus their rank in the related stat. For example, if a character possess the Throw skill at rank 3 and has a STR stat of 4, their skill bonus for Throw will be 7. This is the value that will be added to any skill rolls made by the character.

No points may be saved from this process, so any unspent points are lost.

"Go to school, my mum said. Fuck that, I'd rather learn to kill big shit with my sword.

What do you think they teach you at Meny, she said.

And here I fucking am."

Hamish "Hoots" Sinclair, Frother Trainee, Meny

TRAITS

Traits round a character off, adding to the roleplaying element of their personality. They also give the GM some juicy bits to play with. Each trait is worth (or costs) a number of points. Some have a variable points value, with a higher value representing a greater level of the trait. Traits with a negative points value represent negative traits, with the lowest levels representing very severe disadvantages. The cost of some traits also range from negative to positive, representing that it can be taken as either an advantage or disadvantage to the character, for example 'Vision' ranges from particularly bad vision to incredibly good eyesight. If a trait only has a single value shown then there is only one rank to it, though such traits may grant (or cost) more than a single point, for example, taking the Ambidextrous trait costs 2 points.

Players should note that any maximum ranks taken in traits must be adhered to with regards to the way that the player plays the character. Expect those large minus figures to come back to bite you! Importantly, GM's should encourage players to roleplay their traits, ensuring that these aspects play a part in defining the character's personalities.

A player starts with 0 points to spend on traits for their character, but may gain points by taking negative traits. Traits should be considered a Yin and Yang system, with positive traits only being available to those who take negative traits.

Optionally, a player may also opt to spend some of their 30 skill points to purchase traits and/or spend points earned from taking negative traits on additional skills, though such points may only ever be used to purchase skills at rank 1. A character may have no more than 3 negative traits and 3 positive traits during character creation, though more may be obtained through the course of gameplay.

Note: While there are no normal species restrictions for taking traits, all Frother characters must take at least 1 rank in the Drug Addict trait during character creation.

Important: the following list contains a number of Traits that deal with sensitive issues related to mental health. The descriptions contained in this section are intended for in-game use only and are in no way considered to be an official scientific definition. If a further look into any of these Traits is needed, we would suggest researching through official channels which are readily available via the internet.

Trait	Ranks	Points per rank
Addiction/Compulsion (specify)	3	Gain 1
Allergy (specify)	3	Gain 1
Ambidextrous	1	Cost 2
Anger	1	Gain 2
Anxiety	3 (See note)	Gain 1
Arrogant	1	Gain 1
Chicken	1	Gain 3

Trait	Ranks	Points per rank
Contact	4	Cost 1
Debt	3	Gain 1
Depression	3 (See note)	Gain 1
Drug Addict (specify)	3	Gain 1
Enemy	4	Gain 1
Exceedingly Cool	1	Cost 2
Hearing (good or poor)	2 / 2	Cost 1 / Gain 1
Housing (good or poor)	2 / 2	Cost 1 / Gain 1
Illness (specify)	3	Gain 1
Looks (attractive or unattractive)	2 / 2	Cost 1 / Gain 1
Natural Aptitude: Skill (specify)	3	Cost 1
Natural Aptitude: Stat (specify)	1	Cost 3
Pacifist	1	Gain 3
Phobia (specify)	3	Gain 1
Psychosis (specify)	3 (See note)	Gain 2
Savings	3	Cost 1
Sterile	1	Gain 1
Vision (good or poor)	2 / 2	Cost 1 / Gain 1

Note: Not all ranks in this trait are available during character creation. See the individual entries for these traits for more information.

Addiction/Compulsion - The character suffers from an addiction, or compulsion to take, consume, perform, or hunt down a particular thing. The trait does not include drugs or narcotics of any type (see the Drug Addict trait), but does cover everything from OCD-related behaviour to compulsive eating and video games addiction. The exact addiction/compulsion must be specified. For each rank a character has in this trait, they must feed their addiction/compulsion twice per day or suffer a -1 modifier to all dice on all dice rolls. There are 3 ranks in this trait, with each rank granting a point. A character may take multiple addiction/compulsion traits.

Allergy - Characters that suffers from an allergy will find themselves feeling ill in the presence of a particular allergen. Most allergy sufferers suffer with streaming eyes and nose and an itchy throat which is both distracting and highly uncomfortable. Allergies can be anything from a particular food to animal hair or aerosols. The exact allergy must be specified. Anyone coming into contact with their chosen allergen will suffer a -1 modifier to all dice on CONC related skill rolls for each rank they have in the trait until they either take medication or are free of the allergen. There are 3 ranks in this trait, with each rank granting a point. Additionally, rank 1 represents an uncommon allergen, rank 2 a commonly occuring allergen and rank 3 an allergen both common and life threatening, requiring instantly administered medication or potential death. A character may take multiple allergy traits.

Ambidextrous - The character is able to perform equally well with both left and right hands. As such the character may ignore any negative modifiers or increase in difficulty to any skill rolls due to having to use their off-hand. There is only a single rank in this trait, which costs 2 points.

Anger - The character suffers from a serious anger problem, leading to persistently violent and antisocial behaviour or spiteful outbursts. A character with Anger must prioritise attacking any combatant who has already attacked them, until that combatant is unconscious, dead or no longer a threat. If the character is attacked by multiple combatants, they are free to choose the order in which they seek to neutralise them. The character will also refuse to retreat from combat if any combatant that has attacked them is still standing, even fighting through their own squad-mates in order to finish the job. The player is expected to roleplay this heightened sense of aggression. There is only a single rank in this trait rank, which grants 2 points.

Anxiety - Anxiety is a neurosis, categorised by a feeling of worry or nervousness at certain situations, or at higher levels, about life itself. Anxious characters are always on edge and generally think of the worst possible outcome every time. Each rank in anxiety applies a -1 modifier to the dice during all Fear Tests. In addition, the character is expected to roleplay this trait accordingly. During character creation there are 2 available ranks in anxiety, with each rank granting a point. After character creation it is possible for anxiety to go as high as rank 3, at the GM's discretion, on account of traumatic experiences that feed the anxiety.

Arrogant - Arrogance is a common personality trait among the Human population of Mort and increasingly common among other species too. Arrogance is the inflated feeling of one's own importance, usually manifested by an air of snobbiness, a sense of entitlement, or the general feeling that you're just that bit better than those around you. The character suffers a -1 modifier to all dice on CHA related skill rolls when dealing with anyone that does not have an SCL higher than their own, including all non-SLA employees. The player is also expected to roleplay this trait accordingly, potentially leading to unfavourable opinions from those they meet. There is only a single rank in this trait, which grants 1 point.

Chicken - A chicken has no sense of bravery and will regularly shy away from conflict or hide behind others during stressful situations. This trait reduces the species maximum of the character's COOL stat by 2. This character will also suffer the effects of fear for 2 hours (rather than 1 hour) after removing themselves from a fearful situation. In addition, the player is expected to roleplay this trait accordingly, ensuring they are the last into an engagement and hesitant to enter scary situations. There is only a single rank in this trait, which grants 3 points. A character who is a Chicken may not also possess the Exceedingly Cool trait.

Contact - The character is considered to have a valuable contact or trusted friend that can be called on to provide information, aid the characters squad, or help solve complex problems. The chosen rank in this trait reflects the value of the contact, with rank 1 representing a street contact who may occasionally have useful information and rank 4 representing a high ranking

individual in SLA or another company/faction who can provide significant resource (usually at a price). The GM has the final say on the value that a contact can bring to the game. There are 4 ranks in this trait, with each rank costing a point. A character may take multiple contact traits.

Debt - The character owes a substantial debt to someone, either directly to SLA or to some criminal element. A character with debt is expected to pay 10% of any earnings they make for every rank they possess in the trait. Additionally, at rank 3 the character may be chased or hounded for additional repayments. A character with debt is still eligible to take the savings trait, representing that they have a surplus of cash hidden away from the eyes of those they owe money to. There are 3 ranks in this trait, with each rank granting a point.

Depression - Depression is best described as a deep feeling of gloom and unhappiness, categorised by feelings of inadequacy, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. Severe depression can dominate the mind of the sufferer bringing dark and lonely feelings on a daily basis. Each rank in depression applies a -1 modifier to the Success Die during all CHA based skill rolls. In addition, the character is expected to roleplay this trait accordingly. During character creation there are 2 available ranks in depression, with each rank granting a point. After character creation it is possible for depression to go as high as rank 3, at the GM's discretion, on account of experiences or interactions that may worsen it.

Drug Addict - The character is addicted to one or more narcotic substances, most commonly the combat or soft drugs used by SLA Operatives. The exact drug must be specified. For full rules on drug addiction, see "Drugs" on page 121 for more information. There are 3 ranks in this trait, with each rank granting a point. A character may take multiple drug addict traits.

Enemy - An enemy can be a dangerous thing to have. This trait represents a person or organisation that has a vendetta against the character. At rank 1 the enemy may be a street gang member or local Shiver where as a rank of 4 may represent a violent DarkNight agent or high ranking official. The GM has the final say on the enemy and is encouraged to work them into the story, with high rank enemies appearing at the worst possible moment. There are 4 ranks in this trait, with each rank granting a point. A character may take multiple enemy traits.

Exceedingly Cool - An exceedingly cool character is the embodiment of courage and bravery. This trait raises the species maximum of the character's COOL stat by 1, to a maximum of 6. Note that this does not raise the COOL stat's rank, only the maximum rank that may be obtained. In addition, once per game session the character may automatically succeed at a Fear Test without the need to roll. There is only a single rank in this trait, which costs 2 points. A character who is Exceedingly Cool may not also possess the Chicken trait.

Hearing (good or poor) - This trait represents a characters level of hearing, either one that is noticeably better than their species norm, or noticeably worse. Each rank in good hearing adds one additional Skill Die success to any Detect roll that is based on hearing. Each rank in poor hearing will apply a -1 modifier to the Success Die during any Detect roll that is based on hearing. There are 2 ranks in good hearing, with each rank costing a point and 2 ranks in poor hearing, with each rank granting a point. A character may not possess both good and poor hearing.

Housing (good or poor) - The housing trait is a measure of a characters living situation, representing a home which is outside of the Operative norm, from a luxury apartment in Suburbia to a particularly unsafe shared bedsit in Lower Downtown. A character with good housing will have a safe place to use as their base of operations, secure storage and a good amount of privacy. Those with bad housing will find themselves robbed, vandalised and unable to keep anything of value, or themselves, safe. There are 2 ranks in good housing, with each rank costing a point and 2 ranks in poor housing, with each rank granting a point. A character may not possess both good and poor housing.

Illness - The character suffers from an illness, which while under control, will require regular medication or treatment. The rank in the illness trait will determine the severity of the illness, with the character specifying one from the following list.

ATHSMA	RANK 1
Asthma is a condition which affects the breathing and physical capabilities of its sufferers. The character's species maximum DEX value is reduced by 1 and the character may never have more than 1 Ratings Point in the Body category. The character needs daily medication.	

Migranes	Rank 1
Migraines are severe headaches that can strike at any time (GM's discretion). When they occur the character suffers -2 CONC and DEX (down to a minimum of 0) for the duration. Medication may allow this to pass quickly.	

Diabetes	Rank 2
Diabetes is an illness related to the bodies inability to create insulin and correctly control blood sugar levels. Diabetes is usually kept under control by regularly administered medication, but even then bouts can occur if the player mismanages their diet correctly. If the character has an attack they suffer -2 STR, DEX and CONC (down to a minimum of 0) until medication is administered.	

Epilepsy	Rank 2
Epilepsy is a photosensitive illness triggered by rapidly changing or blinking light sources and can cause blackouts and uncontrollable fits. Epilepsy is usually kept under control by constant medication, but even then bouts can occur at the GM's discretion. If the character has an attack they are considered incapacitated and at the GM's mercy until the attack passes or sufficient medication is administered.	

Cancer	Rank 3
Cancer is caused by abnormal cell growth causing it to replicate uncontrollably. There is no cure for cancer, but medication and healthy lifestyle can slow the process, buying the character many years. The characters species maximum STR and DEX values are reduced by 1. Additionally, those statistics are reduced by 1 every 2 years, with this rate increasing as dramatically as the GM sees fit, based on the lifestyle choices of the character. If cancer causes either stat to drop below 0, the character is killed by the illness.	

Haemophilia	Rank 3
A genetic disorder which prevents the subject's blood from clotting should they receive any cuts or wounds. Given the prominence of violence in an Operative's life, this has become a particularly deadly illness. Any character with the bleeding condition loses 2 Hit Points every 20 minutes rather than 1. The character needs daily medication.	

The GM is free to allow any illnesses not represented in this list and should work with the player to determine the effects of that illness should medication not be used correctly. There are 3 ranks in illness, with each rank granting a point. A character may take multiple illness traits.

Looks (attractive or unattractive) - Looks is a measure of a character's physical appearance, suggesting that they are either noticeably attractive or considerably unattractive. Each rank in attractive adds one additional Skill Die success to any CHA-based skill roll that would be influenced by others being attracted to them, most commonly when using the Seduction skill. Each rank in unattractive will apply a -1 modifier to the Success Die during any CHA-based skill roll that would be influenced by the character's physical appearance. The GM has the final say on when these modifiers would apply. There are 2 ranks in attractive, with each rank costing a point and 2 ranks in unattractive, with each rank granting a point. A character may not possess both attractive and unattractive.

Natural Aptitude: Skill - The character presents a level of exceptional ability in a particular field. A character may not have a natural aptitude in any weapon or combat skill. Once per game session this trait allows a reroll on a failed skill roll using the Natural Aptitude: Skill rank instead of the character's normal rank in that skill. A character may never have a Natural Aptitude at a rank higher than the skill it relates to. A character may only have at most, a single Natural Aptitude: Skill trait.

Natural Aptitude: Stat - The character seems to surpass the normal potential of their species in one particular area. This trait raises the species maximum of a single stat by 1, to a maximum of 6. Note that this does not raise that stat's rank, only the maximum rank that may be obtained. A character may not obtain this newly increased stat rank during character creation. COOL and LUCK/FLUX may not be increased by this trait. There is only a single rank in this trait, which costs 3 points. A character may only have at most, a single Natural Aptitude: Stat trait.

Pacifist - A pacifist does not believe in violence and will actively shy away from violent situations. Wherever possible, the character will search for a peaceful resolution to any situation and will be hesitant to commit violent acts. The character will never roll for initiative in combat and instead is considered to have the lowest initiative of all combatants. Additionally, any acts of violence should be followed by feelings of guilt and internal conflict. There is only a single rank in this trait, which grants 3 points.

Phobia - A phobia is an irrational fear of a particular stimulus. Phobias can relate to literally anything, from spiders to pencils, from height to buttons. The exact phobia must be specified. Players are free to choose any phobia they like, though the GM must approve the choice to avoid players deliberately picking phobias to stimulus that they are never likely to come across. Having rank 1 in a phobia increases the Fear Rating of the current situation by 2 when the phobia's stimulus is present. The Fear Rating is increased by an additional 1 for every additional rank in the phobia trait. There are 3 ranks in phobia, with each rank granting a point. A character may take multiple phobia traits.

Psychosis - Psychosis is a severe mental illness which represents the character's view of reality and reasoning to be impaired. There are many forms of psychosis, but those acknowledged here as traits are:

Sociopathy: Categorised by a distinct lack of interest or awareness in others emotional state. A sociopath struggles to connect with others and generally shows a significant lack of empathy. A character with sociopathy requires an excellent margin of success to succeed during any CHA based skill rolls. In addition, the character will be unable to identify the emotional states of others through a Detect roll and will consider torture their go-to interrogation technique.

Delusions: The character believes in something that is not true. This could be anything from the impending attack of Conflict Aliens to them really being the deity of a lost species. The character immediately applies the Afraid or Terrified Fear result whenever their delusion is mentioned or comes to mind. The GM is the final arbiter of which effect and how regularly this comes into play.

Dissociative Identity Disorder: DID is a potentially frightening disorder whereby the subject's mind is fragmented into more than one unique personality. The sufferer may flip between these personalities when triggered, or at random intervals, suddenly acting and even sounding like an entirely different person. The GM may create an alternative personality for you, along with its own traits, beliefs, psychological and physiological attributes. At least once per gaming session, or as often as the GM decides, the player must switch character for a period of at least 10 minutes. This could entail anything from suddenly believing they are a pacifistic weakling, thinking they are a member of an entirely different species. The GM may wish to create a character sheet for this personality, ignoring all normal requirements for character creation. If the rank in DID is ever increased, the GM may increase the regularity of appearances, or create an additional personality which must also be experienced for at least 10 minutes per session.

Paranoia: The constant feeling that everyone is against you, blames you, or is out to get you. A Paranoid subject will usually think the worst, struggle to maintain relationships and be constantly on edge. A character with paranoia applies a -1 modifier to the Success Die on all CHA, COOL and CONC related skill rolls whenever the illness is affecting them. At least once per gaming session, or as often as the GM decides, the player must apply the effects of paranoia for a period of at least 10 minutes. If the character's rank in paranoia is ever increased, the effects become constant.

Schizophrenia: The character struggles to separate thoughts and feelings from external reality, resulting in them thinking they are hearing voices that tell them to do things or that they are being controlled by an unseen force. A character with schizophrenia requires an excellent margin of success to succeed during any CONC-related skill rolls. In addition, the GM may, once per session, provide the player with a piece of information which they feel they must act upon regardless of the current circumstances. The GM is free to use this idea as they best see fit.

Note: Psychosis can be confusing and life threatening, both to the sufferer and those around them and the GM should ensure this fact is known; more so than any other traits, the chosen psychosis should be roleplayed accordingly. There is only one rank in psychosis available during character creation, which grants 2 points. After character creation it is possible for a psychosis to be increased by up to another two ranks, with the GM giving extra ranks for traumatic experiences or extreme behaviours that feed the illness. Gaining an additional rank in a psychosis increases the severity of the illness, which should be portrayed through roleplaying, though the GM is free to hinder the player in any way they see fit. If a psychosis ever reaches rank 3, the character sheet must be handed to the GM and the character is considered no longer playable.

A character may take multiple psychosis traits if they wish.

Savings - The character has money saved up, either through previous earnings, inheritance or a financial windfall of some form. Each rank taken in this trait represents savings of 500c. While it may seem desirable to have a surplus of Credits, players should be aware that showing off their wealth is likely to attract unwanted attention. A character with savings is still eligible to take the debt trait, representing that they have a surplus of cash hidden away from the eyes of those they owe money to. There are 3 ranks in savings, with each rank costing a point.

Sterile - The character is sterile and unable to bear children, even with the most expensive of fertility treatments. In addition, members of the Shiver Organisation may look down or ridicule sterile characters should the fact become known. It is a requirement of the recruitment process that all Shivers be fertile and while the reasons behind this are still unknown, many Shivers see the fact as a status symbol in a world where sterility runs exceptionally high. There is only a single rank in this trait, which grants 1 point. All Stormers are naturally sterile and so may not take this trait. Any Shaktar with this trait may be outcast by their community and elders.

Vision (good or poor) - This trait is a measure of a characters sight, representing either exceptionally good, or noticeably poor eyesight. Each rank in good vision adds one additional Skill Die success to any Detect roll that is based on sight. Each rank in poor vision will apply a -1 modifier to the Success Die during any Detect roll that is based on vision. In addition, rank of 2 in poor vision requires glasses or other visual assistance. There are 2 ranks in good vision, with each rank costing a point and 2 ranks in poor vision, with each rank granting a point. A character may not possess both good and poor vision.

All traits should be recorded on your character sheet. An unspent points earned from taking traits are lost.

HIT POINTS

Hit Points are a measure of how much physical damage a character can sustain. The World of Progress is a violent landscape and Operatives, though trained to defend themselves, will often come under fire or in harm's way. A character starts with their maximum Hit Points.

Species	Hit Points
Human	14 + STR stat
Frother	15 + STR stat
Ebonite	14 + STR stat
Stormer 313 'Malice'	22 + STR stat
Stomer 711 'Xeno'	20 + STR stat
Shaktar	19 + STR stat
Wraithen	14 + STR stat
Advanced Carrien	20 + STR stat
Neophron	11 + STR stat

These may be reduced through taking damage and gained through healing, resting, or the use of drugs. A characters Hit Points are determined by their species, as shown in the table above.

Hit Points are recorded on the character sheet in the designated box, to the right of the '/'. The space on the left is updated each

time the character suffers damage in order to keep track of how far their Hit Points have drifted from their maximum value.

Example: Zack McTavish, Frother Operative, has a STR stat of 4, which is added the Frother Hit Points value of 15. His starting Hit Points will be 19.

MOVEMENT

Movement is a measure of how far a character can move on foot during a single Combat Round, as well as being a representative value of speed when compared side by side with other characters. Distance is calculated in metres, giving players a recognisable measurement to work with when visualising different scenes. A character's Closing and Rushing speeds show exactly how many metres they may move during a single Combat Round. Closing speed represents a character edging forwards as they shoot or strike, whereas a character's Rushing speed represents them running, diving or moving under the duress of a combat situation. A character's Movement speeds are determined by their species, as follows:

Species	Closing	Rushing
Human	2	5
Frother	2	5
Ebonite	2	5
Stormer 313 'Malice'	3	6
Stomer 711 'Xeno'	4	6
Shaktar	3	6
Wraithen	4	8
Advanced Carrien	4	7
Neophron	2	5

In addition, a characters Rushing speed is increased by 1 for every 2 ranks they have in the Athletics skill (round down).

ENCUMBRANCE

A character can only carry a certain amount of gear before it simply becomes too heavy. While powered armour doesn't carry a specific weight to the wearer, unpowered suits, large weapons and all manner of other items can come with considerable weight. A character is free to carry a certain amount of weight before they begin to struggle and slow down.

All items have a Weight Factor. Many items will have a Weight Factor of 0, meaning they do not weigh enough to be of any significance to the owner, though a GM should always use their judgement to ensure that players do not try to exploit the system (while a single pen carries a Weight Factor of 0, carrying 10,000 pens does not).

A character's encumbrance is equal to 8, or STR x 3, whichever is higher.

Players should be aware that if any in-game effects cause a character's STR stat to drop, their Encumbrance Value will be immediately adjusted too. Record the Encumbrance Value to the right of the '/', in the relevant box on the character sheet, using the left space to keep a tally of the total Weight Factor a character is carrying.

EQUIPMENT

A new Operative starts with a standard set of issued gear, a shared downtown apartment and 1500c (Credits) to spend on additional gear. Players are free to spend Credits as they see fit. Any unspent Credits may not be saved - they are to be used only for starting equipment.

After character creation a character is given 100c loaded to their Finance Card. An operative may upgrade from a Finance Card to a Finance Chip and receive a bonus of 100c. Ebonite characters may not have a Finance Chip. In addition, a character also receives 100u (Unis), the physical currency used on the streets of Mort.

SLA Operative starting equipment

The starting equipment of every operative is presented to them as part of their graduation ceremony. Recieving their personal FEN 603 Auto-Pistol is seen by many graduates as the moment they become an operative.

Starting Equipment	
SLA Blade	Headset Communicator
Klippo Lighter	Finance Card (or Finance Chip)
Pack of contraceptives	SLA Industries ID Card and SCL Badge
Operative organiser and admin kit	Two sets of clothes and boots/shoes
FEN 603 Auto-Pistol (plus 2 clips of standard ammo)	

Starting equipment should be recorded on the character sheet.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Character creation is concluded by investing a little time into working out the name, details, personality and background of your character. This should include what makes them tick, their gender or how they identify, their sexuality, why they came to work for SLA Industries, their personal agendas, appearance and any side storylines that may come from the high ranked traits that you may have selected for your character. There are absolutely no limits when it comes to deciding who you are, so go wild.

A synopsis of the character's background should be recorded in the space provided on the character sheet, for the GM to review during the game session.

Additionally, each starting character has an SCL (Security Clearance Level) of 10, which should be noted in the relevant box. This value will change as they complete BPNs and make a name for themselves.

Character creation is now complete. Time to hit the streets!

RULES & MECHANICS

The following section details all the rules and mechanics associated with running a game of SLA Industries. The system has been designed to provide a streamlined, cinematic gaming experience for everyone playing the game, however there is one golden rule that the GM should observe at all times: If any concept, rule, mechanic or test explained in this chapter would otherwise break the flow of the game, it should be ignored. SLA Industries is first and foremost a 'roleplaying' game and wherever possible players should roleplay their way through the streets of Mort City. The following rules simply provide a benchmark for success and failure in the line of duty.

SKILL ROLLS

The most common test made during a game is the skill roll. Skill rolls are used to determine the success (or failure) of actions being undertaken during the game; everything from filing paperwork correctly to successfully spotting a tripwire rigged to explosives can be determined by a skill roll. There are two main types of skill roll: Passive and Active.

Passive - A passive skill roll is not really a roll at all, rather it is simply a sense check of the character's capabilities versus the complexity of the task at hand. If the difficulty assigned to the test is Mundane (see "Skill Roll Difficulty and Target Numbers" below) then the task is automatically considered to be a success without the need to roll any dice. Rolls up to a difficulty of Complex may also be passed automatically as long as the character is not under duress (in combat, being interrogated etc.) and the following requirements are met:

Simple - The character has at least 1 rank in the relevant skill, or, the character's relevant stat is 3 or greater.

Challenging - The character has at least 2 ranks in the relevant skill, or, the character's relevant stat is 4 or greater.

Complex - The character has at least 3 ranks in the relevant skill, or, the character's relevant stat is 5 or greater.

A passive skill roll does not consider the margin of success and instead assumes a normal success with no remarkable outcome.

Active - An active skill roll requires the player to roll a number of dice and obtain a value, or values, equal to or higher than the target number. The number of successes will reflect the degree of the overall success or failure of the roll. All skill rolls that do not meet the aforementioned Passive criteria will require an active skill roll.

Note: SLA Industries uses 10-sided dice, referred to herein as d10. for all active skill rolls. If an example states 4d10, this means four 10-sided dice.

SKILL ROLL DIFFICULTY & TARGET NUMBERS

In addition to the type of roll, the GM must also consider how complex the task at hand is. The applicable difficulty of a task will determine the target number for the test between a range of 4 and 16. The following difficulties are used for all non-combat skill rolls:

Difficulty	Target Number
Mundane	Automatic Pass
Simple	4
Challenging	7
Complex	10
Strenuous	13
Insane	16

It is up to the GM to assign a difficulty to any skill roll that may need to be made. While the GM is free to make any task the difficulty of their choosing, the following summaries should be used as guidance:

Mundane - A mundane task is one that is performed easily, even under duress. This might include opening doors, hopping over a low wall, climbing over a table etc. These events should never require a skill roll and can be performed by all but the most injured of characters.

Simple - Simple tasks including completing documents correctly, basic computer work, light maintenance and communicating with those you are familiar with. These tasks should be considered second nature to anyone not under any level of duress.

Challenging - Such tasks require thought and while specific training is not always needed, those without the required skills may find themselves struggling. Challenging skill rolls include haggling with black market traders, interrogating rookie gang members or spotting someone lurking in a dark alley.

Complex - A complex task is one that requires specific training or an awful lot of sheer luck. Technical repairs, basic paramedical treatment, swimming long distances or communicating at the highest levels in a foreign language should all be considered Complex rolls.

Strenuous - Strenuous tests require advanced training and experience, including forming complex tactical military plans,

piloting a Kilcopter in the polluted skies over Cannibal Sector 1 or performing life saving surgery.

Insane - generally the most difficult tests receive the Insane difficulty. Sometimes a Complex or Strenuous test is increased to this level due to the amount of pressure or stress a character is under, or maybe the task at hand puts the character's life in the balance. This might include disarming a bomb with only a few seconds to spare or not giving in to the most extreme DarkNight torture techniques. Many characters may find that their stats and skills make achieving an Insane skill roll entirely impossible.

Increasing Difficulties

The GM should feel free to increase the difficulty of a roll if it makes sense for the situation at hand, such as performing non-combat tasks during a firefight or trying to do anything with your left hand if you're right handed. Difficulty increases like this can make success very difficult, as such the GM should be careful not to hinder players too much throughout game sessions.

Unskilled Characters

If a character does not possess the required skill, a skill roll may still be attempted. In this instance, the character will only consider the related stat for the purposes of any skill rolls. Depending on how technical the task at hand is, the GM should consider whether the difficulty should be increased by one step on account of the character's lack of knowledge.

MAKING ACTIVE SKILL ROLLS

There are two types of dice used during all skill rolls - the Success Die and a number of Skill Dice.

Success Die - The Success Die must be a different colour to all other dice used. We suggest using a black die for your Success Die. The Success Die represents the core result for the test being made. If the die total, after any modification is equal to or greater than the target number for this roll, then the roll is a success. If the total is less than the target number, the roll is a failure. A player will always roll one Success Die (1d10).

Skill Dice - Skill Dice must be a different colour to the Success Die and are used to determine the margin of success of any roll. At most, a player will be required to roll five Skill Dice (5d10).

Note: While we suggest using a black or white die for your Success Die and any other colour of your choosing for the Skill Dice, the colour options are entirely up to you. A number of different SLA dice packs are available from Nightfall Games for those of you who want a SLA branded option.

To perform an active skill roll, the player must roll the Success Die plus a number of Skill Dice equal to the rank they have in the relevant skill plus one. In this way, a player will roll at most 6d10 at any time, comprised of a Success Die and between one and five Skill Dice. Each die is considered independent – do not add the values together.

Example: Zack McTavish, Frother Operative, is making a Detect roll and has the Detect skill at rank 2. The player will roll a total of four dice - the Success Die and three Skill Dice.

Note: It is important to remember that each skill is tied to one of 6 stats, for example, the Detect skill is related to the Concentration (CONC) stat and the Climbing skill is related to the Strength (STR) stat. These values combined are known as a character's 'skill bonus' and are recorded on the character sheet during character creation.

After rolling the required number of dice, the player should add their applicable skill bonus to each die. If a character does not possess the required skill then they just add the related stat to each die instead.

If the total of the Success Die is equal to or greater than the target number, then the test is a success. Each Skill Die that also equals or exceeds the target number represents a higher degree of success and a bigger impact on the task being performed.

Example: Glisten, Ebon Operative is attempting to interrogate a suspect. Glisten has a COOL stat of 3 and an Interrogate skill of 2, giving her a skill bonus of 5. The GM decides that the target is a tough one to crack and sets the difficulty at Complex, giving it a target number of 10. Glisten rolls the Success Die plus 3 Skill Dice (for their rank 2 in Interrogate, plus one). She rolls a 7 on the Success Die and get 3, 5 and 8 on the Skill Dice. She now adds her Interrogate skill bonus to each die, giving totals of:

7+5 = 12 (Success Die)

3+5 = 8 (Skill Die)

5+5 = 10 (Skill Die)

8+5 = 13 (Skill Die)

The Success Die beat the target number of 10 and so the roll is successful. In addition, two of the Skill Dice also beat the target number, meaning an exceptional success. Not only does the target crack and tell the truth, but they also give up another name that would have been otherwise withheld from the players.

In the same manner as a successful roll, should the Success Die be less than the target number then the result is considered a failure, even if multiple Skill Dice succeed. Each Skill Die that is also lower than the target number represents a greater potential for serious failure. Highly skilled individuals are sometimes able to avoid failure due to their significant experience in certain areas. This is reflected by the following rule:

Success Through Experience - If four or more Skill Dice equal or exceed the target number, then the skill roll is considered a success even if the Success Die fails. In this instance no margin of success is gained and the roll is simply considered to be a success, as though only the Success Die had achieved the required result.

Margin of Success/Failure

The margin of success/failure is used as a measure of how much of an impact the current skill roll has on the task at hand. Significant success or failure can present the GM with the opportunity to progress a story, throw a spanner in the works or even award a Ratings Point.

Important: When the Success Die results in a success, only successes rolled on Skill Dice are considered, ignoring all failed Skill Dice. The same is true in reverse, when the Success Die results in a failure, only failures rolled on Skill Dice are counted, ignoring all Skill Dice successes unless there are enough to trigger the 'Success Through Experience' rule above.

Successes

Though it is possible to roll more than four Skill Dice, the margin of success only considers up to four results, ignoring any additional results. The following table details the relevant margins of success:

Number of Dice	Equal/Exceed Target Number
Success Die	Success
+1 Skill Die	Excellent Success
+2 Skill Dice	Exceptional Success
+3 Skill Dice	Incredible Success
+4 or more Skill Dice	Unbelievable Success

The GM should use this information to determine the impact that any success has on the current story and game session. For the most part these exceptional results should be used to advance the game session forward or spin the players in a new direction as a vehicle for the storytelling aspect of SLA Industries.

Excellent - An excellent success will often herald no additional benefits, though a particularly generous GM may grant some additional information, allow players to notice additional clues or provide a small discount when haggling.

Exceptional - Results of this level will stand out, revealing small details that lead to great reward, making new contacts or achieving something that would earn you some reputation.

Incredible - Incredible results may get noticed by the cameras and almost certainly by those around you. Successes of this level may save lives that hang in the balance, notice traps designed to kill other characters or allow the interrogation of even the coolest of DarkNight agents.

Unbelievable - Results of this magnitude will save lives, earn sponsorship deals and get you noticed. Unbelievable success should be rewarded accordingly, either with a Ratings Point or through information that makes a real difference to the character and their squad.

Failures

Unlike successes, margin of failure is not measured by a number of increasing tiers, instead there is only one additional possibility beyond simply failing a roll: a serious failure.

A serious failure is achieved when ALL dice being rolled result in a failure. When this happens the GM should consider the failure an opportunity to hinder the player or their squad, possibly leading to injury, negative reviews from the media or anything else which might put the character in a tough spot. Though a serious failure should usually be met with significant

hindrance, it is also a suitable opportunity for highly skilled Operatives to learn a valuable lesson. As such, the GM may choose to award a Ratings Point when any serious failure involving four or more Skill Dice occurs.

In all cases the GM is the final adjudicator of any bonus or punishment that occurs from a margin of success or serious failure, so take it easy on those Ops… or don't!

Note: Margins of success and failure function slightly differently during a combat situation. The exact differences are detailed in the "Life & Death (Combat on The Streets of Mort)" section of this chapter.

Advanced Tasks

In addition to active skill rolls, some tasks are also considered Advanced Tasks. Such tasks include anything that would require very specific training, such as stripping and repairing a fusion engine or disarming a bomb. Without any specific training such tasks are almost always destined for failure.

A skill roll should be considered an Advanced Task if the situation is particularly difficult, or if the GM deems it so. Advanced Tasks may be undertaken normally, providing the character has a relevant skill rank of 3 or higher, with difficulty being assigned as normal, typically at Complex difficulty. If the character does not possess the skill at the required rank then the task may be undertaken only at the Strenuous (or Insane) difficulty levels. In this way, many Advanced Tasks will not be possible for those without training, unless they have a significant rank in the relevant stat. An example of applicable Advanced Tasks is given alongside the description of each skill in the "Character Creation" chapter of this book.

Ebb-Related Skill Rolls

Ebonite characters have access to Ebb discipline by expanding their Flux capabilities. Ebb disciplines are effectively skills that are connected to the CONC stat and require the expenditure of FLUX points to use. There are a number of additional factors that come into play when using Ebb disciplines, all of which are discussed under "The Ebb".

LUCK

"What can I say? I'm a lucky guy!"
Sam Hainn, 'More real than Reality', Real Time Media

All non-Ebonite characters have a LUCK stat. Luck is used throughout game sessions to tip the balance on more complex tasks or those skill rolls that would otherwise be impossible to achieve. Unlike other stats, LUCK is not a static value and instead represents a number of points that can be spent during the game. The character sheet has space for two values separated by '/'; the number to the right of the slash represents the stat maximum, whereas the number to the left of the slash represents the current amount of unspent LUCK. Therefore, if the character sheet was showing 'LUCK: 3 / 4', this would represent that a character has 3 points left of their maximum of 4 LUCK.

A character may spend LUCK points during their own active skill rolls. One point of LUCK, spent after a roll has been made, allows one of the following:

- Reroll the Success Die.
- Reroll any or all of the Skill Dice.

Or alternatively:

- Multiple points of LUCK may be spent after a roll to add a +1 modifier to the Success Die, per point of LUCK spent.

Only one of the above options may be applied to a roll. Multiple points of LUCK may not be spent to reroll any die a second time.

Example: Timmy Franks, a Human Operative is trying to rally some Shivers who are about to run from an encounter with some Shi'An cultists. The GM decides that this requires a Leadership roll against a difficulty of Complex (target number 10). Franks has a Leadership skill of 1 and a CHA stat of 2. He rolls dice, giving totals of:

5+3 = 8 (Success Die)

6+3 = 9 (Skill Die)

8+3 = 10 (Skill Die)

The result is a failure, which would result in being left alone to face the cultists. Franks also has a LUCK stat of 3 and has not spent any yet this game session so decides to go ahead and spend 2 points of LUCK to alter the result on the Success Die to 10, changing the failure into an excellent success.

LUCK replenishes itself back to the stat maximum during downtime between game sessions. See "The Web of Lies" on page 219 for more information.

FEAR

The streets of Downtown are a scary place to roam. Worse still are the subterranean pathways of Lower Downtown, topped only by passing the wall into Cannibal Sector 1, where a whole new world of terror awaits. While SLA Operatives are selected for their hardy nature, not all of them have the grit needed to face the brutal monstrosities that The World of Progress has to offer.

To represent this during a game, every person, scene and situation is assigned a Fear Rating. In most cases this will be 0, representing that even the most timid of characters will not be phased, but sometimes Fear Ratings need to be considered, particularly in times of danger or stress.

As with all rules, the GM and players should not get bogged down with Fear Ratings. Players are encouraged to not think too much about them, relying on the GM to highlight elements that begin to affect the players. This allows for a much more realistic use of fear - you simply do not know something scares you until you encounter it, then the reality is all too real.

Fear Ratings

The following are examples of common Fear Ratings. The base values and modifiers shown here should be adjusted by the GM as needed to suit the situation.

Fear Rating	Examples
0	Mort Rats, Most Humans, Frothers, Ebonites, Wraithen, Neophron
1	Shaktars, Advanced Carrien, Carrien, Cannibals, violent crime scenes
2	Malice & Xeno Stormers, well feared Ops and Props, common Dream Entities, Cannibal Sector Fauna, most DarkNight and Thresher threats, walking in on a blood ritual
3	Dream Entity Effigies, extremely gory murder scenes, being alone and cornered by a pack of Carrien, a large Carnivorous Pig
4	Renowned Serial Killers, Contract Killers, Homonids, the death of a loved one, witnessing the brutality of the Skin Trade
5	Dream Entity Masters, Necanthropes
6	Halloween Jack, The Figment
7+	Digger, anything else you wish you could unsee

In addition to the base Fear Rating, a number of modifiers can increase the rating, making the impact of the effects of fear appear far greater. The following modifiers are cumulative should multiple examples apply at the same time. Common modifiers include:

Modifier	Examples
-1	In a squad, outnumbering the enemy at least 3 to 1
+1	Outnumbered at least 3 to 1, alone, in pitch black darkness, injured (lost at least 25% of Hit Points), being poisoned, being interrogated, being in Cannibal Sector 1, successful Intimidate skill roll.
+2	Badly wounded (suffered at least 2 wounds), being lost in Cannibal Sector 1
+3	Being tortured, being interrogated by Cloak Division

"Ran into Digger once. Close enough to regret it. I literally shit my balls out."

Shiver Pvt. Jimmy McMurphy, squad 'Raymonde's Raiders'

Fear Tests

During narrative play, whenever the total Fear Rating of any given circumstance becomes higher than a character's COOL stat, or at any other time that the GM deems suitable, the character is required to take a Fear Test.

During a combat situation, in order to keep the action rolling, the need for a Fear Test should be checked during the first initiative phase of the combat. After any required Fear Tests have been resolved, the need for further tests should only be made if there is a significant change to the combat situation, such as the arrival of a combatant with a higher Fear Rating or if the GM deems the events of the encounter to be truly horrific. In this way, combatants can be considered either affected or not affected by fear for the duration of the combat without needing to interrupt the action.

To make a Fear Test, a character must roll the Success Die and add their COOL to the value rolled. A Fear Test is considered successful if the total result is 10 or greater. If the roll is a success then the character has overcome the fear and may continue to act as normal. They are not required to make another Fear Test for the same threat or situation again during this game session.

If the roll is 9 or less then the character is affected by Fear until the threat has been removed or the character has been removed from the situation and at least an hour has passed. The effect of Fear is determined by the Fear Rating that forced the test. The effects listed in the following table are cumulative, so for example, if a character was affected by the Petrified result, they would also suffer the result of Afraid and Discouraged:

Fear Rating	Result	Effect
0-2	Discouraged	Subtract 1 Skill Die success from all skill rolls
3-4	Afraid	Apply a -1 modifier to all dice
5-6	Petrified	Freeze (must act last in each round of combat) or Flee - GM's discretion, also -1 COOL for the duration of the Fear effect
7+	Terrified	Apply a -3 modifier to all CHA-related skill rolls and an additional -1 COOL for the duration of the Fear effect. Optionally the GM may enforce a permanent Rank 1 Phobia trait towards the source of the fear

Players are expected to roleplay the effects of Fear, drawing on their personal experience of being afraid and ensuring their characters act accordingly, with trepidation and hesitation at the forefront. Players that do not act afraid should find themselves at the mercy of the GM who will inevitably make their characters even more terrified.

LIFE & DEATH - COMBAT ON THE STREETS OF MORT CITY

Life as an Operative is dangerous. Even the bureaucrats carry a gun and need to know how to use it. Mort is a violent place: street gangs, the Skin Trade, Carrien breaking in from the sewers and now the newest threat - incantations of the Shi'An blood cult. Sooner or later, whether they go looking for it or not, a SLA Operative is going to find themselves in a hostile situation which they will need to shoot or hack their way out of. Thankfully for the budding Operative, SLA Industries manufacture a fine range of armour, firearms and melee weapons for such an occasion.

It is very easy for players (and GMs) to be blinded by powered armour suits, FEN Power Reapers and the GASH Chain Axes. It is easy to take this gear and turn your game into a blood fest; and do not get us wrong, at times SLA is exactly that, deeply violent and gory, but at its core, combat is more likely to be represented as a fight for survival in a dark building or sewer, against an unknown enemy looking to devour your very soul. The following section describes the process of running combat scenes in SLA Industries. The system has been balanced to provide a streamlined experience with very little 'maths', while still offering enough strategic decision and luck mitigation to keep the 'crunchy gamer' occupied. Lock and load!

INITIATIVE

Before actions are selected during a Combat Round, it is also important to consider the order in which these actions are resolved. This is organised by determining Initiative.

Initiative is a measure of a combatant's reaction speed to dangerous situations and serves to determine the order in which actions are selected and performed. A combatant with a particularly high initiative will be able to analyse the scene quickly, identifying what other participants of the combat are likely to do and react to that by taking the first action. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a combatant with a low initiative will be slower to react, committing to the first decision that comes to mind and acting after others have already done so.

Initiative Bonus

A character's Initiative Bonus is equal to their DEX & CONC stats added together. This value is used during combat when determining Initiative Values and is recorded on the character sheet.

Initiative Value

When combat begins, each combatant calculates their Initiative Value by rolling 1d10 and adding their Initiative Bonus. The total value is the combatant's Initiative Value for the first Combat Round. Any ties are broken by whichever combatant has the highest rank in the Detect skill. Should there still be a draw at this point, the drawn combatants are considered to act simultaneously, selecting and resolving their actions at the same time (when this happens it is suggested that combatants write down their actions and reveal them together, though the GM is free to handle this in whatever way they best see fit).

Once Initiative is determined, all participants in the combat take turns selecting an action for the Combat Round, starting with the lowest Initiative Value. After all combatants have selected an action, these actions are performed in order starting with the highest Initiative Value.

Note: By using this method of initiative, those who are slower to react must declare their intentions first. Those more experienced or quick witted will then react to the decisions made by others, choosing their own actions based on what they now know other combatants are doing. This reflects those with a higher initiative being better able to respond to the situation at hand. Importantly, Initiative is based on a mix of DEX and CONC meaning that those with a sharp mind receive as much of a bonus as those with sharp reflexes... Initiative is not all about someone's combat prowess.

Important: Initiative Values remain in place for subsequent Combat Rounds, with combatants continuing to choose and resolve actions in the specified order until a significant change in situation arises, most commonly when a combatant is removed from the combat (is killed or flees), or a new combatant joins the fight, at which point new Initiative Values should be determined at the start of the next Combat Round. Other occurrences can also prompt the GM to request Initiative Values to be recalculated, such as the lights going out or a large explosion that may distract or shock the combatants. This process reflects the combatants adapting to the flow of the conflict and reacting suddenly to the change in situation.

Example: Two Operatives are facing off against a pair of angry Carrien. All parties roll for Initiative Values, resulting in the following totals:

Operative A - 8

Operative B - 6

Carrien A - 7

Carrien B - 6

The Combat Round begins by selecting actions in the following order: Carrien B and Operative B declare together (their results are tied and both have the Detect skill at rank 2), Carrien A, then Operative A. They will play out the Combat Round in reverse order to that in which they selected: Operative A, Carrien A and finally both Operative B and Carrien B acting simultaneously.

There are a few rules that cause characters to automatically act last, ignoring the normal Initiative order. These aspects are all discussed later throughout these rules, but where multiple characters are all instructed to act last, the following order applies:

- Characters leaving hand-to-hand combat with the Break Off action
- Characters with the pacifist trait
- Characters who are Stunned
- Characters under the influence of fear

If any rule permits a character to take an additional action during a Combat Round (such as the combat drug, Rush), that action is declared at the same time as it is performed rather than when declaring Initiative.

Initiative for groups and swarms

Sometimes the players will come up against a large number of enemies of the same type that have the same Initiative Bonus, such as a huge swarm of rats or a whole pack of Carrien. When this happens the GM should feel free to make a single initiative roll for the group of enemies rather than making a large number of separate rolls. In this way, pack mentality comes into play,

allowing a swarm to maximise their strengths and move or attack together.

COMBAT ROUNDS & ACTIONS

During regular game play it is not normally a requirement to organise the game into a rigid order of who does what first, as the fluidity of good roleplaying comes from talking that out as a group. However, when in combat, the matter of who shoots first can be the difference between life and death. To represent this, all combat situations are organised into Combat Rounds. During a single Combat Round, each combatant will take a single action from the following list:

- Movement Action (Move or Charge)
- Hand-To-Hand Action (Attack or Break Off)
- Ranged Action (Attack or Aim)
- Recover (a penalty action taken to recover from a stumble or unjam a weapon etc.)
- Calculate The Ebb (see "The Ebb" on page 128)
- Auxiliary Action (covers all non-combat activity: reload a weapon, use a Medical Kit, inject Combat Drugs, change weapon, pick up a dropped weapon etc.)

When every participant has completed an action during the Combat Round, a new Combat Round will begin, with all remaining participants selecting a new action. This process repeats until the combat ends. A single Combat Round is considered to last 3 seconds.

Failed Actions

Occasionally, after declaring an action, but before a combatant gets to act, situations may arise that prevent the chosen action from being performed; this is referred to as a 'failed action'. Examples may include: performing a Charge against an opponent who has moved out of range, targeting an opponent who has already been killed, or performing a ranged attack, but being disarmed before you get the chance to fire. In these situations, the combatant may instead perform an Auxiliary action. Alternatively, the combatant may perform a hand-to-hand attack, ranged attack or calculate the Ebb action, but will apply a -2 modifier to all dice during any skill rolls made in relation to that action. In the case of a failed Charge action, the combatant may instead make a Move action towards the intended target if they wish.

MOVEMENT

Outside of combat, players and the GM may use the relative Closing and Rushing speeds of each species to determine their relevant speed compared to each other. During combat it becomes more important to track movement more precisely, allowing players to judge the distance between themselves and their enemies, as such the stated Closing and Rushing speeds for each species represent a character's pace of movement under the duress of a combat situation. While attacking characters are able to move as a part of performing an attack, at times characters will simply want to move about at a faster pace. To represent this, there are two different movement actions that may be undertaken during combat: Move and Charge.

Move

Movement during combat is measured in short distances. While people are unlikely to be doing a great deal of walking during a firefight, short dashes to reposition, gain better cover or close the distance to the enemy are often the aspects of combat that turn the tide on the outcome of a battle.

A combatant may move up to their Rushing speed in metres as their action. This represents the combatant dashing at full pace to take cover or move in on the opposition. In addition, it is worth noting that a moving target becomes harder to hit than a stationary one. Movement up to a character's Closing speed may be performed as a part of a hand-to-hand or ranged attack, though such actions become easier if time is taken to steady a weapon rather than move.

Charge

Charging into combat is a risky, but potentially deadly manoeuvre. The movement will result in both combatants being locked in hand-to-hand combat, but with the added benefit of the charging impact. The downside to such a manoeuvre is that it can be hard to stop and maintain balance if the strike is unsuccessful.

An attack is considered a charge when a combatant starts their action at least 3m from an opponent and chooses to move up to their Rushing speed, plowing full force into their target. The charging combatant must have a line of sight to their target at the start of the action. Charging an opponent gives the potential to inflict additional damage, as explained in the "Hand-To-Hand Combat" section.

Move & Charge Actions vs Initiative

As actions are declared in reverse order, it would stand to reason that anyone who has a Charge (or Move which ends in hand-to-hand combat) declared against them by a combatant with a lower Initiative Value, could just choose to move backwards, thus moving out of the range of the incoming attacker. While this may seem like a good option for more fragile Operatives, turning a combat into a 'chase', the GM should make it clear that most enemy combatants are not easily fooled. Repeated use of combatants moving backwards to lure charging opponents whilst other squad members shoot them, or to ensure that they can never be reached by the opposition, should be punished accordingly; leading the retreating Operative into a dead-end or ambush will help them learn their lesson. Due to primetime viewers considering 'retreat' a cowardly option, combatants with a higher Initiative Value who are charged would be well advised to try and gun down the incoming attacker, counter charge them, or brace for impact. The GM's overall goal is to circumvent silly games of cat and mouse and to provide a more realistic approach to people reacting to the unfolding events of the combat.

HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

Hand-to-hand combat using fists, teeth, blades or other close-range weaponry is the benchmark of Operative capability. While gun sales are significant, the high rate of bullet tax makes firing your rifle an expensive proposition. On top of that, TV ratings logged by GoreZone, The Killing Floor and Crunch Time have all proven time and time again that melee weapons, martial arts and Stormers pulling people's arms off, are exactly what people want to see. On the streets of Mort, civilians, gang members and other unsavories will arm themselves with knives, bats, chains and all manner of other accessible weapons. For Ops, the melee weapons catalogue is far more diverse, from powered swords and fists to the feared Chain Axe. Each melee weapon has its own profile, which looks like this:

DPB Vibro Sabre			Cost: 100c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-1	4	1	1
Rules: none			

This information gives us everything we need to know about the DPB Vibro Sabre, including all the numbers needed when making an attack with the weapon:

Skill - The skill used when performing attacks with this weapon.

DMG - The amount of damage inflicted by a successful attack with this weapon. In this example, the damage inflicted is equal to the roll of 1d10, minus 1. Note: Natural weapons, such as punching, or using claws or teeth, have DMG values based on the character's STR stat rather than one determined by a die roll.

Min DMG - The minimum amount of damage that the weapon will inflict. In this example, the weapon is therefore capable of inflicting between 4 and 9 damage.

AD - The amount of Armour Damage inflicted to the targets armour. Armour Damage is discussed in greater detail under "Armour".

Weight Factor - The weight of the item.

Rules - If the weapon has any specific rules they will be noted here.

When performing a hand-to-hand attack, the combatant may move up to their Closing speed in metres before performing the attack, providing they are not already engaged in hand-to-hand combat. This allows them to close a small distance, allowing them to strike. Effectively, every combatant has an area around them equal to their Closing speed that they can attack in hand-to-hand combat without the need to take other actions.

All attacks require an Active skill roll, regardless of the user's proficiency with a weapon or combat style. The skill roll is made as normal, rolling the Success Die and one Skill Die for each rank that a character has in the applicable weapon skill plus one and adding the relevant skill bonus (or stat) to each die. However, the normal skill roll difficulties and target numbers do not apply during attack rolls, instead there is always a static

target number of 10 to which a range of modifiers may apply, thus any result of 10 or more after adjustment indicates a hit.

HAND-TO-HAND ATTACK MODIFIERS

The following modifiers are applied to all rolls to hit in hand-to-hand combat. It is possible for multiple modifiers to apply to a single roll. While most modifiers will add to or subtract from the value rolled, some instead add automatic Skill Dice successes to the number of successes rolled.

Situation	Modifier
Charging a target	-1 to Success Die and +1 Skill Die success
Target charged you, or moved more than their Closing speed this Combat Round	-1 to Success Die
Target uses Combat Defence	-1 to all dice for each skill rank allocated to defence
Target uses Acrobatic Defence	-2 to all dice for each rank of the defenders Acrobatics skill
Successfully hit the same target during the last Combat Round	+1 to Success Die
Target is performing a Break Off this Combat Round	+1 to Success Die
Attacking with a natural weapons (fists, teeth, claws etc)	+1 to Success Die
Target is suffering the Prone, Stunned or Immobile condition	+2 to Success Die

Important: Once engaged in hand-to-hand combat, a combatant may not use ranged weapons. While it may seem possible to fire a weapon at point blank range, the reality of the frenzied combat on the streets of Mort means that few combatants have the capacity to ready their weapon before having it parried away. The last opportunity to use a ranged weapon is the round in which the combatant is charged or engaged, representing them getting a final shot off at their attacker, or another target. Alternatively, the charged combatant may opt to consider their declared ranged attack as a 'failed action', following the usual rules.

Defensive Manoeuvres

The biggest potential for modifying an attacker's roll to hit comes from the defender performing a defensive manoeuvre, either using their agility to dodge, dive and flip out of harm's way, or to use their own weapon proficiency to parry or guard against the oncoming attack.

Important: The decision to perform a defensive manoeuvre must be made before the attacker rolls to hit. A defender may use either Combat Defence or Acrobatic Defence during an attack, but not both. Additionally, a combatant may only defend against a single hand-to-hand attack during each Combat Round.

Due to the availability of defensive manoeuvres during hand-to-hand attacks, anyone may opt to reserve ranks of their relevant combat skill in order to perform a Combat Defence if they expect to get hit later in the Combat Round. In the same way, a combatant who is attacked early in a Combat Round, may decide how many ranks to allocate to a Combat Defence, reserving their remaining ranks to attack with later in the round. As such, a character with a Melee Weapons skill of 3 could opt to only use two ranks during their attack, in order to save one rank to defend with later during the round.

Combat Defence - The combatant being attacked may opt to defend themselves using their current hand-to-hand weapon or fighting style. To do so, the defender may allocate any number of ranks of the chosen skill - Unarmed Combat, Melee Weapons or Polearm - according to the weapon they are currently armed with. As action takes place quickly, it is not possible for someone to decide to draw a weapon (or drop/sheath one) for the purpose of switching to a different skill, Combat Defence must be performed with whatever is in hand (or the combatant's hands themselves!). While unarmed defence may take place if the character is holding a pistol, any character holding a two-handed firearm such as a rifle or support weapon may not perform a Combat Defence. Each rank allocated in this way, applies a -1 modifier to all dice being rolled by the attacker. Any ranks allocated in this way are not available to the defender during any attack that they perform later during this Combat Round. Similarly, if the combatant has already attacked this Combat Round, only those ranks that were reserved for Combat Defence may be used in this way.

Example: Shae 'Rattle' Cross, is attacking a Downtown gang member in hand-to-hand combat. She is using her DPB Vibro Sabre, which requires the Melee Weapons skill, which Shae possesses at rank 2. Shae also has a STR of 2, meaning she will roll 4 dice (the Success Die and 3 Skill Dice) and will add 4 to the result of each one. The Gang member will have his chance to strike back later during this Combat Round, but is concerned about getting sliced up before he gets the chance. He is armed with a knife and decides to allocate both of his 2 ranks in Melee Weapons to Combat Defence, giving Shae a -2 modifier to all her dice during the roll. Shae rolls:

7+4-2 = 9 (Success Die)

4+4-2 = 6 (Skill Die)

5+4-2 = 7 (Skill Die)

8+4-2 = 10 (Skill Die)

The Success Die was a failure, with a total of 9. Thanks to the gang member's Combat Defence he was able to avoid being shredded by Shae's attack, however, when the gang member attacks this round, he will count as having a Melee Weapons skill of 0.

Acrobatic Defence - A defender may choose to use their Acrobatics skill to side step or dodge out of harm's way during hand-to-hand combat. For each rank that the defender has in the Acrobatics skill, the attacker applies a -2 modifier to all dice being rolled by the attacker. A combatant may only use Acrobatic Defence if they have not already performed an attack action during this Combat Round. If the defender has not yet acted during this Combat Round, their planned action is cancelled - they may do nothing but dodge. If the attacker's roll to hit fails, the defender may move up to their Rushing speed to represent the movement generated by the Acrobatic Defence. A combatant who has performed an Acrobatic Defence may not do so again during the following Combat Round.

Example: A local gang leader is attacking Shae 'Rattle' Cross using Unarmed Combat. The gang leader is an impressive brawler with an Unarmed Combat skill of 3 and a STR stat of 3. Shae has already acted this round by administering a dose of combat drugs, but as she has not performed an attack she may use her Acrobatic skill to defend. Deciding that diving out of the way is the safest option, Shae decides to use an Acrobatic Defence, giving the gang member a modifier of -2 for each rank she has in the Acrobatics skill, for a total of -6. The gang leader rolls:

7+6-6 = 7 (Success Die)

6+6-6 = 6 (Skill Die)

5+6-6 = 5 (Skill Die)

8+6-6 = 8 (Skill Die)

10+6-6 = 10 (Skill Die)

The Success Die was a failure, so the gang leader misses his target and Shae is allowed to move up to her Rushing speed of 5m to create a little space between her and her attacker - just enough space to give Fal'Kt'Kt'Lg, her Shaktar sidekick, a clear headshot to take him down. If Shae is attacked again during the next Combat Round she will be unable to perform an Acrobatic Defence, nor can she defend again against any other incoming attacks during this Combat Round.

Resolving Hand-To-Hand Attacks

If the roll to hit was a failure, the attacker's action ends immediately and play continues to the next combatant's action. The result of a serious failure during a hand-to-hand attack (failure on every die rolled) represents the attacker stumbling or losing grip on their weapon. To reflect this, the only action that combatant may take during the next Combat Round is the Recover action, during which they may do nothing as they compose themselves.

If the roll to hit is a success the defender has been struck by the attack and will suffer damage according to the profile of the weapon. Margin of success is used during attacks to modify the damage inflicted by the strike. For full information on how to resolve damage from a successful attack, see "Damage" on page 112 for more information.

Break Off

When combatants are locked in hand-to-hand combat they are considered to be engaged. An engaged combatant may only leave the combat if their opponent(s) are incapacitated or choose to 'Break Off', nor may they take any other action, besides attacking, Calculate the Ebb or performing a Break Off themselves. As such, engaged combatants will generally either attack their opponent or attempt to flee the combat. When a character chooses to Break Off from an engagement, the combatant is able to move up to their Rushing speed providing the movement does not move them into another hand-to-hand engagement.

Once the Break Off action is selected, the combatant will automatically move to the end of the initiative queue, acting last in this Combat Round (unless another combatant chooses to Break Off after them). If all combatants involved in a single engagement chose to Break Off then all may leave the combat freely without penalty. A character performing a Break Off may not use any defensive manoeuvres during combat this round and becomes easier to hit. Turning your back on an opponent is a dangerous prospect.

Natural Weapons

As well as the ability to punch and kick, a number of creatures possess natural weapons, such as sharp teeth or claws. Natural weapons all use the Unarmed Combat skill for the purposes of resolving attacks. Note that the use of armour may prevent natural weapons from being used; for example, wearing a helmet prevents the use of teeth and wearing armoured gauntlets prevents the use of claws. The GM gets the final say on whether natural weapons can be used. The following list presents the most common natural weapons, though the GM is free to create others as they see fit. Unlike other weapons, natural weapons have a DMG value based on the STR of the user.

Example: A Stormer chooses to attack a Juvenile Carrien with their claws. After a successful roll to hit, the Stormer inflicts damage equal to their STR-1. The Stormer has a STR of 5, meaning they will inflict 4 damage. This number is modified by the margin of success as normal.

Note: As well as punching and kicking, the following Operative species also have access to other natural weapons.

Malice Stormer, Xeno Stormer, Shaktar, Advanced Carrien - Teeth and Claws

Wraithen - Teeth

Neophron - Beak

Punch/Kick		
DMG	Min DMG	AD
STR -2	1	0
Any combatant with a STR of 5 or greater who lands a punch or kick will be capable of knocking over weaker opponents, inflicting the Prone condition. Such occurrences are down to the GM's discretion and should be done to create a sense of cinematic action.		

Teeth/Tusks/Claws		
DMG	Min DMG	AD
STR -1	2	1
Using teeth or tusks requires combatants to be extremely close, either as a result of a charge or by pressing up against an opponent.		

Beak		
DMG	Min DMG	AD
STR -1	2	0
Using a beak requires combatants to be extremely close, either as a result of a charge or by pressing up against an opponent.		

Mandibles		
DMG	Min DMG	AD
STR	2	2
A creature can use mandibles to lock onto a target. If a roll to hit is successful, they have locked on. If they choose to attack the same target during the next combat round, no roll to hit is required. A creature who has locked on with their Mandibles may not perform any defensive manoeuvres.		

RANGED COMBAT

Firefights are swift, brutal… and expensive. Since the bullet tax was implemented, drastically raising the cost of ammunition, more and more Operatives have turned to melee weapons to satisfy their needs. This has not stopped the arms companies continuing to manufacture firearms by the millions. Like melee weapons, each ranged weapon has its own profile:

FEN 603 Auto-Pistol			Cost: 200c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	3	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/1	60m	20	30c
Rules: None				

This information gives us everything we need to know about the FEN 603 Auto-Pistol, the standard issue sidearm of all SLA Operatives. The profile includes all the numbers we need when making an attack with the weapon:

Skill - The skill used when performing attacks with this weapon.

DMG - The amount of damage inflicted by a successful attack with this weapon. In this example, the damage inflicted is equal to the roll of 1d10 minus 2.

Min DMG - The minimum amount of damage that the weapon will inflict. In this example, the weapon is therefore capable of inflicting between 3 and 8 damage.

AD - The amount of Armour Damage inflicted to the targets armour. Armour Damage is discussed in greater detail under "Armour".

ROF - The rate of fire tells us how many rounds the weapon is capable of firing in a single volley. The more rounds fired, the more likely one will hit its target, but the harder the weapon becomes to handle. Where multiple fire modes are available, different numbers will be listed separated by a /. In this example, the weapon may fire 1 or 3 rounds per Combat Round. Rate of Fire is described in more detail later in this chapter.

Recoil - The recoil of a weapon is a measure of its 'kick' or how hard it is to keep steady when firing. Whenever different rates of fire are available, each will have a listed recoil, also separated by a /. In this example, the weapon has a recoil of 0 when firing 1 round and a recoil of 1 when firing 3 rounds. Higher recoil makes it harder to hit with the weapon.

Range - The maximum effective range of the weapon. A target which is further away than half of the weapon's stated range is considered to be at long range and becomes harder to hit. With the FEN 603, a target further away than 30m would be considered to be at long range.

Clip - The amount of ammunition held in a single clip/magazine. When a weapon is fired, the amount of rounds specified by the chosen ROF should be marked off. When the weapon has fired rounds equal to its clip capacity it must be reloaded.

Weight Factor - The weight of the item.

Rules - If the weapon has any specific rules they will be noted here.

Note: DMG and AD can be further modified by different ammunition types. The values stated on a profile assume regular ammunition is being used.

When performing a ranged attack, the combatant may move up to their Closing speed before performing the attack, providing they are not already engaged in hand-to-hand combat. This allows them to close a small distance before firing.

As with hand-to-hand combat, all ranged attacks require an Active skill roll, regardless of the user's proficiency with a weapon. The skill roll is made as normal, rolling the Success Die and one Skill Die for each rank that a character has in the applicable weapon skill plus one and adding the relevant skill bonus (or stat) to each die. Also like hand-to-hand combat, a static target number of 10 is also used for all skill rolls to hit, thus any result of 10 or more after adjustment indicates a hit.

Important: Regardless of a weapon's ROF, only one roll to hit is made. The implications of being hit by multiple rounds in a single volley are discussed under "Rate of Fire (ROF)".

Line of Sight and Firing Blind

In most cases, a line of sight is required to a target in order for a ranged attack to be able to be made. Providing a combatant can see a part of the target's body or armour, they are considered to have a line of sight and may perform an attack normally. When a combatant is unable to see their target, they are considered to be Firing Blind, such as when poking a gun over the top of a barricade or firing at a target which is completely concealed behind a wall.

Knowing a target's location may be sufficient if using a weapon capable of punching through a wall or barricade, though such shots may only be attempted under the GM's discretion, applying the modifiers for both heavy cover and Firing Blind.

A line of sight is not required to a target in order to throw a grenade, as explained in the "Grenades and Thrown Weapons" section on page 111.

Ranged Attack Modifiers

The following modifiers are applied to all rolls to hit in ranged combat. It is possible for multiple modifiers to apply to a single roll. While most modifiers will add to, or subtract from, the value rolled, some instead add or subtract automatic Skill Dice successes to the number of successes rolled.

Situation	Modifier
Target is in light cover	-1 to Success Die
Target is in heavy cover or is concealed	-2 to Success Die
Target moved more than their Closing speed this Combat Round	-1 to Success Die
Recoil	-1 to Success Die for each point of recoil the weapon has
Firing Blind	-1 to all dice
Dual Wielding	-2 to Success Die (same target) or -4 to Success Die (different targets)
Target is at long range (further away than half the weapon's range)	-1 Skill Die
Target is suffering the Prone, Stunned or Immobile condition	+1 to Success Die
Aiming	+1 to Success Die or +1 Skill Die success
Burst Fire	May reroll Success Die
Full-Auto	May reroll any/all dice
Suppressive Fire	+2 Skill Dice successes and may reroll any/all dice

Cover

Standing in the open in the middle of a firefight is a recipe for disaster. Instead, most combatants will take cover, at least until the capabilities of the enemy can be assessed. A combatant in cover is harder to hit, as the cover can cause the ricochet of rounds or soak up the impact of the shot before it reaches its intended target. Cover typically falls into three categories:

Light Cover - Light cover includes any items with low stopping power, but that are capable of concealing at least half of the target, or obscuring their shape sufficiently. Examples of light cover include fencing, low walls, windows and most indoor furniture. There is a modifier of -1 to the Success Die when rolling to hit a target in light cover.

Heavy Cover - Heavy cover is cover which either conceals the vast majority of a target or offers exceptionally high protective qualities, such as solid concrete walls, steel barriers and most vehicles. There is a modifier of -2 to the Success Die when rolling to hit a target in heavy cover.

Concealed - A concealed target cannot be seen, but the firer is aware of their presence, either through observation or the use of thermal optics etc. Firing at a concealed target comes with the same modifier as firing at a target in heavy cover. In addition, the target is considered to have +1 to +3 PV (depending on the material which conceals them), as specified by the GM, for the purpose of resolving this attack.

Aim

Rather than attacking, a combatant may choose to aim with a ranged weapon in order to increase the effectiveness of the eventual shot. While aiming is a no-brainer for snipers who take up position far from the action and patiently watch for the right moment, aiming is also a valid response for combatants' closer to the action. Drawing your pistol or rifle on an opponent during a standoff and taking aim can mean all the difference between a glancing blow and a killing head shot.

If a character elects to spend the Combat Round aiming they must stay stationary, with their weapon focused on an opponent. When declaring an aim, the intended target must also be declared. Aiming is possible with any weapon that requires the Pistol or Rifle skill, but not for other weapons, such as those that require the Support Weapons or Throw skills. A character may never aim with a hand-to-hand attack.

While a combatant may aim for as many rounds as they wish, they may only gain a maximum number of Aim bonuses equal to their rank in the relevant weapon skill. It is possible for a combatant to spend multiple successive rounds aiming before they fire, for this reason players may wish to use tokens, glass beads, or other suitable markers to keep a tally of how many Combat Rounds have been spent aiming.

When the aiming combatant finally decides to fire their weapon, they may add one of the following bonuses for every round that the Aim action was taken. These bonuses are declared before the roll to hit is made:

- Apply a +1 Modifier to the Success Die
- Add 1 automatic Skill Die success to the roll

A combination of both options may be used during the same ranged attack. The aiming combatant will retain the accrued aim bonuses for all subsequent Combat Rounds that they elect to fire at the same target, representing the combatant keeping their sights trained on the target. These bonuses are lost once any one of the following occurs:

- Any other action is taken, besides continuing to aim at, or perform a ranged attack against the designated target.
- The aiming combatant moves or is moved for any reason.
- The aiming combatant suffers the loss of 3 or more Hit Points in a single Combat Round.
- The aiming combatant performs a defensive manoeuvre.

Example: Joe Fade, a veteran Human Operative has his weapon trained on a potential Skin Trader. Joe has a Rifle skill of 4 due to his long service with SLA Industries and multiple tours of Cannibal Sector 1. He decides to start aiming. Joe may claim up to 4 bonuses over 4 Combat Rounds by selecting the aim action each time. Joe may aim for a 5th, 6th, 7th round etc. but would receive no additional bonus in doing so, though it would allow him to maintain the bonuses he had accrued at that point if he wasn't ready to take the shot. Joe decides to take the shot after he has aimed for 4 rounds, opting to apply a +2 Modifier to the Success Die, as well as gaining two automatic Skill Die successes. BOOM! Joe Fade will retain the same bonuses to use again during the next Combat Round if he fires at the same target again.

Rate of Fire (ROF)

Many weapons are capable of different fire modes, allowing the user to opt for a single accurate shot or a volley of multiple rounds. All ranged weapons are capable of one or more of the following firing modes as specified on their weapon profile:

ROF	Mode	Rules
1	Single	None
3	Burst Fire	May reroll the Success Die
10	Full-Auto	May reroll any/all dice
SUP	Suppressive	May reroll any/all dice

Running low on ammo

A weapon must have the required number of rounds left in its clip in order to use a specific fire mode. As some weapons are not able to fire on single mode, it is possible that there may be fewer rounds available in the clip than the weapon's lowest rate of fire. When this happens the weapon's lowest firing mode is used to empty the clip, applying a -2 DMG modifier to reflect fewer rounds being fired than normal. Note that even with this modifier, a weapon's 'Min DMG' value is still observed.

Example: A weapon that has a stated ROF of 3/10 and 1 round left in its 30-round clip. It is unable to fire its usual minimum of 3 rounds. As such the weapon may be fired normally, using the rules for burst fire, but a successful hit will apply a -2 damage modifier.

Generally, higher rates of fire come with an increase in recoil, making the chance of hitting with a single die roll harder. This presents a number of choices for the weapon user, have a single chance of hitting the target, or multiple chances to hit whilst needing to obtain a higher number on the die. Using burst fire allows for a single reroll of the Success Die should the initial roll be a failure. Firing on full-auto or suppressive mode allows for a single reroll of any or all dice, not only giving a second chance to hit, but also a second chance of all Skill Dice coming up with a success, drastically increasing damage output. Suppressive fire also grants two automatic Skill Dice successes in addition to those rolled by the user and grants a number of additional rules described in the following section.

Important: Any dice rerolled as a result of a weapon's chosen ROF may not be rerolled a second time with the expenditure of LUCK.

Higher rates of fire also inflict additional damage as described under "Damage Modifier - Rate of Fire (ROF)".

Suppressive Fire

Suppressive fire is the act of locking the trigger down and spraying an area with bullets, creating a wide kill-zone. The purpose of such action is not to hit a particular target, but rather to ensure that anything entering the firing zone is hit, be it friend or foe. Suppressive fire is good at pinning targets down behind cover or dealing with large crowds.

Any weapon with 'SUP(n)' listed as one of its ROF numbers is capable of Suppressive fire. Firing in this way will use a number

of rounds as stated, so for example a weapon with 'SUP(40)' must have 40 rounds available to fire in a suppressive manner. Suppressive fire covers a 5m wide area in the designated direction of fire. This area is considered to be the suppressive fire 'kill-zone'.

Note: When using suppressive fire, the roll to hit always uses the Support Weapons skill, regardless of the weapon's usual skill requirement. As such, a character may not aim when using suppressive fire.

When suppressive fire is used, the ammunition expenditure is marked immediately. A roll to hit is then made against every target within the kill-zone, applying any applicable modifiers as normal. In addition, a roll to hit is made in this way against anyone else that enters the kill-zone until the end of the next Combat Round. During the second Combat Round, the combatant performing suppressive fire automatically takes the recover action, during which they may do nothing else, to represent the ongoing effect of plastering the area with bullets. Effectively, the suppressive fire action takes place over two Combat Rounds. Suppressive fire adds additional damage to an attack in the same way that full-auto fire does, but also adds two automatic Skill Dice successes, further enhancing the damage of the attack.

The kill-zone created by suppressive fire will cease immediately if the firer moves in any way or loses any Hit Points from an attack. Any attacks that does not result in the loss of a Hit Point (such as when armour absorbs all the damage) will not deter the firer. If suppressive fire is ended early in this way, the

ammunition is still considered used, assumably sprayed into the floor when they were knocked off balance. If this occurs before the end of the first round of suppressive fire then the firer may act normally in the following round, ignoring the need to take the recover action.

Example: Bard, an Advanced Carrien Operative, decides to support his squad by laying down some suppressive fire. His weapon has a ROF of SUP(30) so he decides to let loose. The weapon has 50 rounds left, so has sufficient ammo to pull off the shot, as such Bard marks 30 rounds off his current ammo total. The 5m spread covers the street in front of him, which is currently occupied by two Carrien who are charging ahead of the pack. Bard makes a roll to hit against each of these Carrien, resulting in one of them being hit. Due to the saturation of suppressive fire, it grants two additional Skill Dice successes, representing that more rounds hit, resulting in more damage. The Carrien is torn apart, though the other avoids the initial barrage.

Next turn Bard can do nothing but finish his suppressive fire maneuver, but will get another shot at the Carrien if it is still within the fire-zone, as well as a shot at any others that follow behind it, providing he isn't attacked before the end of the next Combat Round.

Dual Wielding

Dual wielding is the act of firing two weapons at the same time, either at the same target, or at different targets. Such an act may be cinematic, but the ability to fire weapons accurately in this way is not easy.

A character may fire using dual wielding as a single action, allowing them to fire two weapons, albeit at a significant cost in accuracy. The following rules apply to firing in this way:

- Only weapons that require the Pistol skill may be dual wielded.
- A character may never use suppressive fire when firing in this way.
- A character may never aim when firing in this way.
- Both weapons require a roll to hit. The firer may decide which shot to resolve first. The second shot (and thus, expenditure of ammo) must occur as declared, even if the intended target is taken down by the first shot.
- If both weapons are fired at the same target, a -2 modifier is applied to all dice on both rolls to hit.
- If both weapons are fired at different targets, a -4 modifier is applied to all dice on both rolls to hit.

Resolving Ranged Attacks

If the roll to hit was a failure, the attacker's action ends immediately and play continues to the next combatant's action. The result of a serious failure during a ranged attack (failure on every die rolled) represents the attacker's weapon jamming. A jammed weapon must be cleared before it can be used again. To reflect this, the only action that combatant may take during the next Combat Round is the Recover action, during which they may do nothing as they unjam the weapon.

If the roll to hit is a success, the round has hit its target and damage will be inflicted according to the profile of the weapon. Margin of success is used during attacks to modify the damage inflicted by the shot. For full information on how to resolve damage from a successful attack, see "Damage" on page 112 for more information.

Grenades and Thrown Weapons

Grenades are commonplace in the Operative toolkit, despite the significant price hikes they have received over recent years. Other thrown weapons, such as knives, are also very common in the hands of almost all combatant's on the streets of Mort.

Thrown weapons work like other ranged attacks and are resolved using the Throw skill. The effective range of all thrown weapons is based on the user's STR stat as follows:

STR Stat	Effective Range
0	15m
1	20m
2	25m
3	30m
4	35m
5+	40m

The normal modifiers for long range are applied, though in the case of grenades, no modifier is applied for Firing Blind, on account of them not needing to hit a target dead on. Grenades have a slightly different weapon profile to other ranged weapons, with a 'Blast Radius' in addition to the damage figures.

DDA 90 Fragmentation Grenade				Cost: 15c
Skill:	Throw			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
1d10+2	5	2	1	5/10m
Use of these grenades within the walls of Mort City is considered illegal.				

Blast Radius - Indicates the area affected by the grenade. Some grenades (those that cause physical damage) have two numbers listed for the Blast Radius. Anyone caught within the lower distance is considered to have been caught in the kill-zone of the grenade and an additional +2 DMG is inflicted to these targets.

Note: A single grenade has a Weight Factor of 0, though carrying 2-3 grenades comes with a Weight Factor of 1.

Resolving Attacks With Grenades

Grenades do not need to target a specific target and can instead be thrown within the general vicinity of a target or targets. All normal rules for ranged attacks apply, however in addition to any modifiers, at least 1 Skill Die success is also required to land the grenade on the intended target. If the Success Die results in a success with no additional Skill Die successes then the actual landing position for the grenade will be approximately 5m from the intended position, with the final location to be determined

by the GM. This deviation will often mean that the grenade lands with cover between it and its intended targets.

If the roll to hit was a failure, the grenade is still thrown but the actual landing position for the grenade will be anywhere up to 10m from the intended position, with the final location to be determined by the GM.

The result of a serious failure during a grenade attack (failure on every die rolled) is not left up to the GM's discretion and instead represents the thrower fumbling the grenade, leading to it detonating on their location.

Once the final location of the grenade is determined it will detonate, hitting every target within the Blast Radius that is not in cover. Those targets who are considered to be in cover (i.e. have cover between them and the location that the grenade came to rest) have a 50/50 chance of being hit by the blast - roll 1d10 for each target, with a result of 6 or more indicating a hit.

Note: Frag, or other explosive grenades are extremely destructive and have been made illegal to use within the walls of Mort City. The GM should make it clear that continual use of such weapons in confined areas can lead to structural instability and loss of civilian life, two things which can land an Operative in great trouble.

Firing at Engaged Targets

Firing into an existing hand-to-hand combat situation is a dangerous prospect. With the constant unpredictable movements of close combat, it becomes increasingly hard to be sure which target will be hit. Even the most talented snipers must take the risk of friendly fire.

Combatants may fire at targets who are engaged in hand-to-hand combat as normal, however, at least 1 Skill Die success is also required to hit the intended target. If the Success Die results in a success with no additional Skill Die successes then the actual target hit must be randomised between all those involved in the engagement.

Auxiliary Actions

During combat there are a number of simple activities which may need to take place. While different actions may take slightly different lengths of time, in the interests of keeping the action running smoothly, all of the following are considered possible for an auxiliary action during a Combat Round:

- Reloading a weapon (it is important to track ammo expenditure during a firefight)
- Changing to a different weapon
- Picking up a dropped weapon or item
- Standing up if Prone (will remove the Prone condition)
- Injecting a dose of drugs (if equipped with a BOOPA CASDIS)
- Using a Medi-kit (takes two auxiliary actions/two consecutive Combat Rounds)
- Using a Flux Gem
- Dropping/getting out of most powered armour (almost all have a quick release mechanism)
- Deploying a bipod/tripod on a weapon
- Any other activity the GM deems suitable

Damage

Getting shot or attacked with a Chain Axe means getting hurt. The World of Progress is a violent world; very few Ops can say they've never been wounded in the line of duty and even fewer can say they have not killed for the company.

Every weapon inflicts damage, or DMG, as discussed in the hand-to-hand and ranged combat sections. When an attack is successful, the damage inflicted should be determined according to the weapon's profile. In addition to the damage listed on the weapon's profile, there are a number of other elements that play a part in the damage inflicted.

When anyone takes damage, the amount of damage inflicted is removed from their current Hit Points total. If a single attack causes a character to lose more than 50% of their remaining Hit Points they also suffer a wound to the torso in addition to any other effects. See "Wounds" on page 115 for more information.

Damage Modifier - Margin of Success

The margin of success gained when rolling to hit can affect the amount of damage inflicted by a weapon, as follows:

Dice that Equal or Exceed Target Number	Damage Modifier
Success Die	--
+1 Skill Die	+1 DMG
+2 Skill Dice	+2 DMG or hit an arm
+3 Skill Dice	+4 DMG or hit a leg
+4 or more Skill Dice	+6 DMG and hit the head

Important: When a margin of success is gained, the combatant may choose to 'downgrade' the result to hit another body location. For example, if a target is hit with 4 Skill Dice successes, instead of inflicting +6 DMG and hitting the head, the combatant may instead choose to hit an arm or a leg. If 3 Skill Dice successes are rolled, instead of inflicting +4 DMG or hitting the leg, they may instead hit the target's arm.

Hit the arm - Randomise which arm is hit. A hit to the arm inflicts damage as normal. If the target is holding a weapon with the relevant arm, they are immediately disarmed. If they are not holding a weapon and the attack causes the target to lose at least 2 Hit Points, they also receive a wound to the arm and suffer the following penalties until that wound is healed:

The target receives a -2 modifier to all dice for any STR and DEX-related skill rolls that would require them to use that hand or arm.

Note: If one arm already has a wound, a second wound to the arm will automatically be inflicted against the other arm.

Hit the leg - Randomise which leg is hit. A hit to the leg inflicts damage as normal. In addition, if the attack causes the target to

lose at least 2 Hit Points, they also receive a wound to the leg and suffer the following penalties until that wound is healed:

The target may only move using their Closing speed. In addition, their Closing speed is halved (round up).

The target receives a -2 modifier to all STR and DEX-related skill rolls that would require them to stand or use their legs.

If both legs are wounded the target gains the Immobile condition and may not perform any actions that would require the use of them.

Note: If one leg already has a wound, a second wound to the leg will automatically be inflicted against the other leg.

Hit the head - A hit to the head inflicts damage as normal. In addition, the target receives a wound to the head and receives the Stunned condition until that wound is healed.

Example: After modifiers, a roll to hit ends with the Success Die and three Skill Dice rolling a success. This grants a bonus of either +4 DMG, or a hit to the leg which will inflict a wound. Alternatively, the combatant could choose to 'downgrade' the result and hit the target's arm instead.

Important: receiving a wound to any location also carries additional consequences. See "Health & Healing" on page 115 for more information.

Damage Modifier - Strength

In hand-to-hand combat, particularly strong combatants are capable of inflicting additional damage with weapons on account of the brute force they naturally strike with. To reflect this, the following modifiers are applied to all attacks made with any weapon that uses the Melee Weapons or Polearm skill:

Strength of User	Damage Modifier
1-4	-
5	+1 DMG
6	+2 DMG
7+	+4 DMG

Damage Modifier - Rate of Fire (ROF)

When making ranged attacks with a weapon that has a ROF greater than 1, only a single roll to hit is made, regardless of the number of rounds fired. Rather than needing to make multiple rolls, a volley of bullets is treated like a single more powerful shot. As such, high rate of fire weapons present a risk vs reward dilemma for their user, offering the potential for extreme damage, with the offset of being less accurate.

When a ranged attack hits, the following damage modifiers are applied in addition to those granted by the Margin of Success:

ROF	Mode	Damage Modifier
1	Single	-
3	Burst Fire	+2
10	Full-Auto	+4
SUP	Suppressive	+4

Example: A weapon is fired with a ROF of 10 (full-auto). Despite the modifier for the weapon's recoil, after rerolls have been made, the Success Die comes up good and the ROF of 10 adds +4 DMG to the weapon.

When any weapon hits while using suppressive fire, apply the same damage modifier as those using full-auto fire. While this might seem to be a small number for the amount of rounds being expended, suppressive fire also grants additional Skill Dice successes which can lead to increasing the damage further.

Any weapon that is not capable of firing on single mode may have to empty its clip with fewer rounds than the weapon's minimum rate of fire. When this happens a -2 DMG modifier is applied to reflect fewer rounds being fired than normal. Note that even with this modifier, a weapon will still observe its 'Min. DMG' value.

Damage Modifier - Ammunition

For ranged weapons, the damage listed on a ranged weapon profile assumes that standard ammunition is loaded into the weapon. There are a few alternative ammunition types available, each of which will adjust damage inflicted in different ways:

Ammunition Type	Modifiers
Standard	As per the weapon's profile.
High Explosive (HE)	+1 DMG, +1 AD (an additional +1 DMG if the target is unarmoured).
Armour Piercing (AP)	-2 to the target's armour PV.
Shotgun Shot (Standard)	As per the weapon's profile.
Shotgun Slug	+1 DMG, -1 AD.

See "Ammunition" on page 157 for more information.

Damage From Other Sources

Damage can be inflicted to a character in a huge number of ways outside of combat, from falling great distances to being hit by a moving vehicle. Rather than introducing a huge plethora of different damage rules, all such damage is inflicted at the GM's discretion using common sense. A character falling from a 1st storey window in full armour will be suitably hurt, but is unlikely to die, whereas one falling 5 storeys is unlikely to survive the fall unless they're a Stormer wearing Dogeybone Armour and are very lucky.

The GM is free to assign damage and wounds for such instances as they see fit.

ARMOUR

Given the uncensored brutality that most Operatives face, it should go without saying that armour is often the first purchase that a new Op should make. Even your average street ganger is likely to wear an armoured jacket or vest. Armour is arguably THE single most important addition to anyone's kit in The World of Progress.

While there are many modifiers that can add to the damage inflicted by a successful attack, the protection offered by Armour

will do the opposite, reducing damage, or even stopping it entirely.

Like weapons, each suit of armour has its own profile, which looks like this:

PP664.2 Body Blocker		Cost: 400c
PV	Resistance	Weight
4	12	3
Rules: None		

PV - The Protection Value (PV) of armour is a measure of how effective it is at reducing damage, with higher PV values representing the high-end more protective armour types.

Resistance - Armour is capable of taking a certain amount of punishment before it becomes compromised, represented by each suit of armour having a Resistance value.

Weight Factor - The weight of the item. Powered armour always has a weight factor of 0.

Rules - If the armour has any specific rules they will be noted here.

Damage Modifier – Armour

After all other damage modifiers have been added, a weapon's damage is reduced by the PV of the target's armour. Any remaining damage reduces the target's Hit Points as usual. If the armour's PV reduces the damage to 0 or less then the attack has been stopped entirely and the target does not lose any Hit Points.

Example: Shiver Pvt. Paul Horseshoe is hit by a shotgun blast, which, after all damage modifiers will inflict 11 points of damage. Private Horseshoe is wearing Body Blocker Armour which has a PV of 4, so the damage is reduced by 4, for a new total of 7. The Shiver loses 7 Hit Points.

Armour Damage & Resistance

Most weapons inflict Armour Damage (AD) alongside regular damage. Armour's Resistance is reduced by a weapon's Armour Damage (AD) value, each time it is hit. Once the armour's Resistance has been reduced to less than half of its starting value, the PV of the armour is also halved (round down). If the armour's Resistance ever reaches 0, the armour has lost its protective qualities and is effectively destroyed, reducing the PV to 0.

Note: whenever a target is hit by an attack, the weapon's AD value is subtracted from the armour's Resistance value before the PV is applied to the damage. This can be important if the AD causes enough damage to reduce the PV of the armour.

Any suit of powered armour which has its Resistance reduced to 0 will suddenly become very heavy on account of the power failure. To represent this, all powered armour is considered to have a Weight Factor of 6 once destroyed in this way. Getting out of such armour can be done during a Combat Round by using an auxiliary action unless the GM specifies otherwise.

Stacking Armour

Armoured suits offer an all-in-one solution for wearer protection. It is not possible to wear one armoured suit over another, however some lighter armour options, such as Striker Motorcycle Protection or the CAF Padquil Flak Vest could feasibly be worn under or over an armoured suit. For the purpose of damage protection, stacking armours has no effect. Where multiple armoured layers are concerned, only the highest PV value is considered and it is that layer that all Armour Damage is done to.

Repairing Armour

Armour is expensive and replacing it each time it gets damaged is a financial impossibility for most Operatives. While armour such as flak jackets and biker leathers cannot be repaired, any full armoured suit can be repaired with the right know-how and equipment.

During the game session, repairs to armour can be made by a successful Technical: Weapons roll, with a target number determined by the GM, based upon the amount of damage the armour has sustained. An unsuccessful roll means no repair can be made by that character and they must take it to a specialist during downtime. If successful, in addition to the roll and access to the necessary tools, the repairs take time (typically 2-4 hours) and will require replacement parts. The cost of repairing armour is 5x the armour's full PV value per point of Resistance being repaired.

Example: Joe Fade, Human Operative is making some armour repairs. After a successful skill roll, he needs to pay for the parts needed to repair his Crackshot Armour. Crackshot has a PV value of 10, meaning it will cost 50c

per point of Resistance he wishes to repair - not cheap, but considerably less than the 3000c price tag of the armour.

Armour may also be repaired during downtime, providing the downtime period reflects a suitable length of time to seek out someone to repair the armour for you. Such repairs will typically cost 7x the armour's full PV value, per point of Resistance being repaired, though a successful Streetwise or Haggle roll may reduce the expense at the GM's discretion.

HEALTH & HEALING

Where there is violence, there is death. A character's own health is something which should be regarded as paramount. The World of Progress is full of horrors stalking the darkness and brutal firefights that bring extreme bloodshed, but the many unseen threats like disease and pollution are often the real killers.

Hit Points

The most obvious measure of a character's health and well-being is their current Hit Points total. When a character is created, they determine a maximum value to their Hit Points. This value is decreased as damage is sustained through a game session and increased again, up to its maximum, as characters heal.

If a character's Hit Points value ever reaches 0 they are dead. Additionally, when a character's Hit Point total drops to fewer than 6 they gain the Critical condition (explained under "Conditions"), until their Hit Points total is returned to 6 or greater.

Wounds

Wounds represent lacerations or penetrative damage that is more grievous than typical injury. Wounds are caused by damage to the limbs or head, or from a single attack that causes a character to lose more than 50% of their remaining Hit Points.

A character may have at most 6 wounds. When a wound is taken, it should be noted on a player's character sheet by ticking the box next to the wounded location. Each location may have at most one wound. Wounds can be inflicted to the head, torso, left arm, right arm, left leg and right leg.

Any character with at least 1 wound receives the Bleeding condition until all wounds are removed. Wounds can be healed with medical intervention.

Wounds to the arms, legs and head come with additional implications as specified under "Damage Modifier - Margin of Success". If at any time a character has 6 wounds, they are instantly killed regardless of how many Hit Points they have remaining.

Note: While a Frother's 'Feel No Pain' rule allows them to ignore the rules and modifiers applied by one of their wounds, they are still killed by receiving a sixth wound. They are however able to ignore the Bleeding condition if they only have a single wound.

Conditions

Certain occurrences can lead to characters suffering from additional lasting effects. These effects are known as conditions and have the following rules:

Condition	Rules
Bleeding	A character that suffers wounds will begin to bleed. A Bleeding character will lose 1 Hit Point every 20 minutes until the character has healed all wounds. Bleeding remains the same regardless of the number of wounds a character suffers. A character with the Haemophilia illness trait will lose 2 Hit Points every 20 minutes from Bleeding. Bleeding ignores armour and is removed with medical intervention.
Burning	Fire causes items to ignite and burn for a length of time. Burning causes 1 AD to any armour every minute that it burns. An unarmoured target that is set alight will lose 2 Hit Points every 30 seconds until the fire is extinguished. Burning is removed by extinguishing the fire.
Critical	A character who is Critical has suffered major damage and is close to death. While a character has the Critical condition they receive the following penalties:
	-2 STR and DEX
	-1 CONC and COOL
	May not move faster than their Closing speed

These penalties are removed as soon as a character regains sufficient Hit Points.

Immobile

Becoming over encumbered or through certain in-game effects, a character may become Immobile. An Immobile character may not move or perform any actions other than those which will serve to set them free, such as wriggling out from under great weight. Becoming Immobile due to over-encumbrance may cause other effects, as discussed under "Encumbrance". Immobile is removed by being freed from whatever has caused the condition.

Prone

A character is considered Prone if they are knocked over or find themselves on the floor through effect rather than choice. Someone crawling, hiding or laying voluntarily are not considered to be Prone, though someone who has been thrown, fallen or knocked down is. A Prone character suffers a -1 modifier to all dice for any skill rolls they undertake. Prone is removed with an auxiliary action during combat to regain posture or stand. Outside of combat, Prone may be removed automatically providing it is possible for the character to stand.

Stunned

A knock to the head, as well as certain other circumstances can lead to a character becoming Stunned. A Stunned character will feel dizzy and react slowly to situations. Anyone with the Stunned condition is automatically considered to have the

lowest Initiative Value of all combatants, selecting actions and acting simultaneously with other Stunned characters. Additionally, a Stunned character may move no faster than their Closing speed and suffers a -1 modifier to all dice for any skill rolls they undertake. Stunned is removed with medical intervention, certain drugs, or with at least 6 hours' rest.

HEALING

Characters may get hurt in the line of duty, but they can also tend to those wounds, rest up and heal their injuries. There are a range of ways in which a character can regain lost Hit Points and heal wounds during a game session, such as:

Medical Intervention - The most common way for a character to regain lost Hit Points is through medical intervention. The BOOPA Medi-kit is a common Operative essential, allowing for basic paramedical treatment out in the field. Each of these items will allow for the recovery of Hit Points and/or Wounds as specified on the item's description. Such medical treatments take effect almost instantly on account of the potency of modern medicine. Any margin of success earned during a medical roll can be used by the GM to allow additional Hit Points or wounds to be healed at their discretion.

During the game session, it may also be possible to obtain external medical treatment from different facilities scattered throughout Mort. Some of these may be SLA-sanctioned clinics utilising high end medical tech, others may be back-alley doctors in Downtown, with questionable methods but cheaper prices, made cheaper still with a successful Streetwise roll. Use of such medical facilities is at the GM's discretion and if allowed should come with a financial cost (typically around 50c/400u per Hit Point and 200c/1500u per wound) and time out (medical work can take anywhere from a few hours to a few days before the Operative is back on their feet). The GM is free to determine how effective such treatments may be and any side effects experienced by the user for using the cheaper Downtown alternatives.

Drugs - Some combat and soft drugs allow the user to regain lost Hit Points, heal wounds or to become more resistant to damage. Drugs are detailed in the "Hardware" chapter and rules for using them during the game can be found later in this chapter under "Drugs".

The Heal Ebb discipline - Ebonites are often trained in the art of Heal. Heal allows for medical care without the use of Medi-kits or other common medical equipment, allowing them to heal people's wounds with nothing more than the touch of their hands. See "The Ebb" on page 132 for more information.

Regeneration - Some creatures are capable of regenerating damage they have sustained, either because they have been genetically coded to do so, or through some form of mutation. Any characters capable of regeneration, such as Stormers, should refer to "Regeneration" later in this chapter.

During downtime - Between game sessions, characters undertake a process known as downtime where, amongst other things, they are able to heal any damage they have sustained. See "The Web of Lies" on page 218 for more information.

Whenever a character regains any Hit Points, heals any wounds or removes any conditions, their character sheet should be immediately updated to reflect those changes.

"You again? Didn't we just fix you up?"

Pane Grens, Shiver Paramedic

REGENERATION

Some creatures on Mort are capable of regenerating damage without medical intervention, most notably Karma's range of Stormers, such as the Malice and Xeno. Any character capable of regeneration will have a stated Regeneration Rate. The Regeneration Rate represents the number of Hit Points and/or wounds that the character can heal every 15 minutes.

In order to regenerate, a character must not be under duress or experiencing any extreme physical exertion. Effectively, regeneration takes place when a character is at rest, when their parasympathetic nervous system takes over. Regeneration cannot occur when a character is:

- In combat
- Running
- Being interrogated or tortured
- Under any form of duress, as specified by the GM

When regeneration takes place, any wounds a character has are always healed before Hit Points.

Example: Targ, a Malice Stormer recently took some punishment during an encounter with a pack of Carrien, resulting in him losing 6 Hit Points and taking a wound to his left arm. Following the combat, Targ takes it easy, walking and licking his wounds. After 15 minutes he regenerates the wound and 1 Hit Point. After another 15 minutes, 2 more Hit Points are regenerated. This process continues until Targ is fully healed.

Any character capable of regeneration may only do so providing they still have at least 25% of their Hit Points remaining (round down). If a character has less than 25% of their Hit Points remaining then they must be healed by conventional means until they have enough Hit Points to start the regeneration process.

TOXICANTS

Mort is full of deadly diseases and substances waiting to cause its inhabitants ill-health or death. Collectively, such things are referred to as toxicants, each of which representing its own unique threat to those who come in contact with them.

INFECTION

When someone comes in contact with the stated vector for a toxicant, they must make an Infection Test to check whether their body is able to resist infection. To make an Infection Test, a character must roll the Success Die and add their STR to the value rolled. Each toxicant has its own target number for this test, called an Infection Rating (IR). An Infection Test is

considered successful if the total result is equal to, or greater than the toxicants Infection Rating.

If the roll is a success then the character's immune system has overcome infection and no additional test needs to be made during this encounter with the toxicant. If the Infection Test is failed, the character is infected by the toxicant and suffers the effects as listed.

Progression

Most toxicants have a second stage to the infection. If this is the case, the toxicant will state the timescale for progression. When this time scale has elapsed an additional Infection Test is required. If the test is a success, the toxicant does not progress. If the test is failed, the stated rules for progression will apply. A test for progression must be made each time the stated timescale has elapsed until the infection is healed or the toxicant has progressed. A toxicant can only progress once.

> *"Was he always this ugly or is that another side effect?"*
>
> Pane Grens, Shiver Paramedic

Treatment

Each toxicant will state a treatment(s) which are known to cure the illness, as well as the target number required for the treatment, known as a Treatment Rating, which is used for any associated Medical skill rolls. By conventional means, treatment requires a specific drug to be administered in addition to a successful Medical skill roll, though some toxicants may have additional requirements as noted in the following table. All effects of toxicants are removed once the infection has been treated unless stated otherwise.

Common toxicants include poison, radiation sickness and others. Toxicants are described using the following forms.

Poison	IR: 10
Vectors	Ingestion or blood contact.
Effects	-1 STR, -1 DEX, Lose 1 Hit Point every 6 hours.
Progression	After 7 days. An additional -1 STR, -1 DEX and a further hit point lost every 6 hours.
Treatment	Treatment Rating: 10 - Antitoxins.

Radiation Sickness - Minor	IR: 10
Vectors	Ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation of irradiated particles.
Effects	-1 STR, -1 CONC, Lose 1 Hit Point every 24 hours.
Progression	After 7 Days. Becomes Radiation Sickness - Severe.
Treatment	Treatment Rating: 7 - Decontamination and Anti-Nausea drugs.

Radiation Sickness - Severe	IR: 13
Vectors	Ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation of irradiated particles.
Effects	-2 STR, -1 DEX, -1 CONC, Lose 2 Hit Points every 6 hours.
Progression	After 3 Days. Death.
Treatment	Treatment Rating: 13 - Decontamination and Anti-Nausea drugs. Minimum 1 week bed rest recovery needed before stats return to normal. Treatment after progression is not possible.

Using this template, the GM should feel free to create all manner of toxins, diseases and illnesses for characters to encounter and contract during their time on Mort.

RATINGS POINTS

Ratings Points add a strong cinematic feel to games of SLA Industries. In a world where televised violence forms the core of primetime TV viewing and where camera drones follow Shiver operations on both sides of the wall, it is the media hungry, sponsorship hunting Operatives who are always quick to steal the limelight. With their high end weapons and armour, specialised training and natural flair, the cameras will turn to Operatives on the job wherever possible. Whether it's arrogance or adrenaline, something about rolling cameras and personal belief can push an Operative to perform daring, dangerous and spectacular feats in the line of duty. These feats are made possible through a character's Ratings Points - a pool of available points that can be spent during the game session.

Ratings Points belong to one of three categories: Body, Brain and Bravado, with each of the categories being tied to a pair of stats, for example, the Body category covers both STR and DEX. At any time during a game, with the GM's approval, Ratings Points may be spent to perform a Feat, with each Feat having its own stated cost. Feats represent great cinematic moments that are awe inspiring and help create spectacular action, reveal great secrets, or allow an Operative to clutch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Players have access to all Feats regardless of their species or training package, though many may only be triggered in specific situations as detailed.

Body

Feat: Doing a 'Nutter' — **Cost: 1**

Around the commencement of the Bellwood Campaign, Arnold Nutter made it onto almost every broadcast that televised the Cannibal Sector action. Nutter wore bright red armour and became famous for being a one-man army, bursting in on forces that drastically outnumbered him, before his eventual demise at the hands of a Greater Carrien. This feat may be used when bursting into a room or environment alone, with no prior knowledge of what may be inside. The character gets a single charge or ranged attack action before the first Combat Round begins.

Feat: How Did You Hit That? — **Cost: 1**

Sometimes the most seemingly impossible shot can strike its target beyond all odds, passing through windows and finding the tiniest crack in cover. Remove all negative modifiers to hit from any ranged attack. May not be used with suppressive fire or dual wielding.

Feat: Impossible Feat — **Cost: 2**

When faced with a physical situation that would otherwise be seemingly impossible, the character experiences a sudden rush of adrenaline, allowing for incredible feats. Using this feat allows the character to jump a gap between rooftops, smash through a wall, avoid a speeding vehicle or scale the face of a building that seems impossible to climb. This feat should be used only to remove the character from serious danger, such as when outrunning a pack of Carrien or creating an escape for their squad.

Feat: It's Only a Flesh Wound! — **Cost: 2**

The character manages to somehow avoid damage that would otherwise inflict serious harm. This feat may be used after receiving damage that inflicts a wound. The wound is ignored and regardless of the damage inflicted the character loses just 1 Hit Point. This feat may not be used to reduce damage that would otherwise kill the character.

Feat: Tear Right Through Them — **Cost: 1**

The cameras love extreme violence, especially violent hand-to-hand conflict. The greatest ratings come from seeing a combatant torn limb from limb. This feat may be used when a hand-to-hand attack inflicts a wound. The target instantly loses an additional 4 Hit points.

Brain

Feat: Done! — **Cost: 1**

"How did you do that so fast!". When the pressure is on it's amazing how fast things can happen. Use this feat to achieve a complex technical task in half the time it would usually take. This can be anything from repairs and computer work to disarming a bomb.

Feat: Everyone deserves a 2nd chance — **Cost: 1**

… and second chances make all the difference. Use this feat after failing any KNOW or CONC-related skill roll. The character may immediately make a reroll. **Remember:** No reroll may be rerolled.

Feat: I Just Read About That Yesterday! — **Cost: 1**

It's amazing how coincidence plays its part. Use this feat before attempting any KNOW-related skill roll with a difficulty of Complex or lower. The skill roll is automatically passed with no roll required and is considered to be an 'Excellent Success'.

Feat: Lucky Guess — **Cost: 2**

Sometimes blind luck is all it takes to solve a problem. Use this feat to apply a character's full LUCK stat (regardless of their current LUCK value) to any KNOW or CONC-related skill roll without spending any LUCK points.

Feat: Moment of Inspiration **Cost: 2**

When an investigator finds themselves in a dead end with little time to reflect, true inspiration can be found. A character may use this feat when they are truly stuck or out of options. The GM should consider this a sign to provide guidance to the player(s), giving them the answer to puzzles they can't solve, or highlighting important evidence they may have overlooked, or simply to move the story on in a way that is extremely positive or beneficial to the character.

Bravado

Feat: Charming Smile **Cost: 1**

This feat represents a brief moment of pure charisma, smooth talking and a smile that could win over Intruder himself. This feat may be used to add +2 to all dice during any CHA-related dice roll.

Feat: Come and Get It! **Cost: 1**

The bravest act is one that puts yourself in the line of fire for the benefit of others, while also doing something that the cameras love. Use this feat during combat after all combatants have declared their actions. Any opposing combatants that have elected to attack during this round must direct their attacks towards this character. If they are out of range, they will instead move or charge towards this character.

Feat: Lead From The Front **Cost: 1**

Being the hero brings great rewards. Use this feat when leading others into a dangerous or hostile situation. The character using this feat must lead by example, ahead of the squad. Any subsequent Leadership skill rolls are automatically passed with no roll required and is considered to be an 'Excellent Success'. Additionally, all those being led are considered to have +2 COOL (up to their species maximum) for the duration of the encounter.

Feat: Pure Grit **Cost: 2**

The character summons up all their willpower, facing whatever The World of Progress has to throw at them. A character may use this feat to remove all ongoing effects of fear and to make themselves immune to the effects of fear for the duration of the current encounter/scene/situation. The GM gets the final say on the duration of this feat.

Feat: Reputation **Cost: 2**

Appearing on camera has its benefits - sponsorship deals, public popularity, free stuff - all of these come to those with the reputation that comes from being caught on camera regularly. This feat may be used to tip the balance when being considered for a sponsorship deal, or when being recognised as the ultimate badass would really change the way things play out. Anything from free weapons to rousing a civilian army to fight for you can come from using a character's reputation. The use of this feat may only be done with the GM's approval.

Ratings Points are a limited resource and are lost once spent. The GM may award additional Ratings Points during a game under certain circumstances, such as when significant success or failure occurs, or when a player does something that is really worthy of high TV ratings. See "The Web of Lies" on page 217 for more information.

LANGUAGE

Communication is important to SLA Industries - it is the glue that holds the company together, starting in Slayer's office and ending on the streets of Downtown; information, orders, BPNs, interrogations and public speeches. It is important that the message gets through. However, with so many different species on the planet, communicating is not always easy.

Killan is the most common language used in Mort City, so much so that everyone in the employ of SLA Industries is required to be able to speak it to a level that allows them to communicate with other Operatives and employees of the company. Out on the streets, Killan is also the common tongue. While there are a number of language skills available in the game, Killan is not one of them, instead it is assumed that all characters and NPCs belonging to any common species can speak it, at least enough to communicate on a basic level.

In addition to Killan, any species that has their own native language is considered to have a good understanding of that dialect. This is represented by species having their own language as one of their starting species skills as discussed in the "Character Creation" chapter. Characters are free to learn other languages in the same way as any other skills, allowing them to communicate better with other species. A successful Language roll to speak in another language will grant you a +1 modifier to all subsequent CHA-related skill rolls with the same person for the duration of the game session.

The most commonly understood languages in Mort are:

Killan - Common tongue of Mort City, often considered the Human language, but now understood by all. In certain areas of Lower Downtown, a more simplified version of the language is spoken, commonly known as Slough. While this is not recognised as a 'language' as such, it is rapidly becoming the common tongue of those living in the isolated gloom of Mort's lower levels.

Wraithen - Native language of the Wraithen species, a combination of drawn out words mixed with accented whispers and silent lip movements.

Shaktarian - The ancient language of the Shaktar species, still studied by Shaktar elders. The speech style is staccato with many short sounds connected to form a single word or name. Translating Shaktarian takes a great deal of time, with words like Ht'Kal'Nn'Tyn'Grt translating into Killan as "Hello".

Neophron - Language of the alluring Neophron species. The language consists of a very complex dialect, despite the limited alphabet. The result is that the vast majority of words are made up of just 16 letters making it very hard to distinguish between many phrases.

Gristle - Gristle is the recognised language of the Carrien species. The roots of the language lie in the far away country of Jeth, where the Carrien began life as the Jethians, before succumbing to the failure of the Fission Belt. What remains of the language has been intermingled with a combination of guttural howls, grunts and clicks, some of which must be delivered without eye contact to portray correct meaning. Due to the complexity, fewer ranks in this skill are available to non-Carrien species.

Biya - Biya is the tongue of the Cannibal species and is only commonly spoken out in the cannibal sectors. Hearing Biya spoken on the streets of Mort is exceptionally rare (and worrying), but for any Operative venturing over the wall, knowledge of Biya could be a lifesaver.

Should someone be encountered that cannot, or refuses to speak Killan, not possessing a specific Language skill does not mean that communication is impossible. Like all skills, players are free to attempt a skill roll without any formal training in the Language as being around other species every day makes it likely that the odd word and phrase may have stuck. However, in such cases, nothing beyond the most basic of conversations can take place and no CHA-related skill bonuses are applied should a success be granted to the Language roll.

ENCUMBRANCE

Encumbrance is a measure of how much gear a character can carry with them while touring the streets of Downtown or venturing out into the unknowns of the cannibal sectors. While most Ops are capable of being sensible about what they carry, it is not unusual for the occasional trigger happy soldier to attempt to turn themselves into a walking armoury. While such ideas may seem like fun, and you may even be physically strong enough to carry 13 rifles strapped to your back, in a very short space of time you will find that doing so is a painful chore and eventually you will suffer the consequences of your actions. Encumbrance allows us to keep a track of sensible loads and apply penalties to those who try and carry too much.

A character calculates their Encumbrance Value during character creation and records it on their character sheet. A character's Encumbrance represents the amount of weight they can carry without penalty. Every piece of gear that can be carried has a Weight Factor which represents the weight of the item, with 0 being very light and higher numbers showing increasingly heavy items. The amount of weight being carried should be tallied and recorded on the character sheet so it is clear how close a character is to their limits. The "Hardware" chapter details all weapons, armour and equipment, along with their Weight Factors and the GM is free to assign whatever Weight Factor they like to additional mundane items collected along the way. Some examples of different Weight Factors would be:

Weight Factor	Item
0	Lighter, pens, dossier of paperwork, clip of pistol/rifle ammo, handful of shotgun shells, knife, rations, powered armour
1	Average pistol, compact SMG, one-handed melee weapon, light armoured vest, BOOPA Medi-kit, multiples of 0 Weight Factor items (such as four clips of ammo or three grenades)
2	Average rifle or SMG, heavy armoured vest, some two-handed melee weapons
3	Chain Axe, Flick Scythe, large calibre rifle, unpowered armour, ammo belt
4	Heavy support weapon
5	Portable generator or similar, average size/weight Human
6+	Portable machinery, larger bodies (with Stormers having a Weight Factor of around 10)

There is no limit to how high a Weight Factor can be, but as items like cars or static machinery can't be lifted by a single character, their Weight Factor need not be considered.

Weight Factor is subtracted from a character's Encumbrance. During the game a character may function normally providing their Encumbrance Value remains 2 or greater. Once a character's Encumbrance Value drops below 2 they are penalised as follows (note that the effects are cumulative, so for example, if a character has a current Encumbrance Value of 0 they suffer the effects of both that level and the value 1 level as well).

Encumbrance Value	Effect
2 or greater	No effect
1	The character receives a -1 penalty to DEX, may not run and is considered to have a maximum Rushing speed of 1
0	The character receives a further -1 penalty to DEX and will lose 1 Hit Point every hour that they carry the load to represent fatigue. Stormers may not regenerate while carrying this load
-1 or lower	The character gains the Immobile condition and is unable to move. In addition they immediately lose 1 Hit Point

Any penalties to DEX due to Encumbrance are removed one hour after the character's Encumbrance Value returns to 2 or greater. Should a character's Encumbrance Value drop below 2 again during this time, the penalties to DEX continue from where they were. A character who has become Immobile due to over-encumbrance is only able to move again after their Encumbrance Value returns to 2 or greater and after an amount of time, as specified by the GM, has elapsed to allow the character to recover.

DRUGS

Drugs are one of SLA Industries' most profitable product groups. While SLA has always dabbled with medical and soft drugs, it was the inspiration of Hiberian culture, the very upbringing which sent the Frother into the arms of the company, that began the epidemic of the modern combat drug. Combat drugs are readily available through official channels and are generally not too hard to source on the streets of Downtown.

While drugs do offer the user impressive benefits in a range of situations, they are also addictive and can pose a number of serious side effects. To reflect this, all drugs have a number of stats to consider.

In the example below we see the stat line for the combat drug known as Rush. This information gives us everything we need to know about the drug and its application.

Effect - This details what the drug does for the user once administered and the duration of the effects. The current wave of manufactured drugs are highly efficient, getting to work almost instantly. All effects listed apply from the start of the Combat Round after they were taken, or in the case of non-combat situations, take effect immediately. Any increases to stats brought about through the use of drugs ignore the usual species maximums of the user.

Important: The effects of a drug may only be applied once at any given time, as such taking multiple doses of the same drug does not provide the user with any additional benefit, however, different drugs taken at the same time may each have their effects applied in unison.

Addiction Rating - This is a measure of how addictive the drug is and provides us with two pieces of information. Firstly, it gives us a target number for the Addiction Test, with a higher number representing a more addictive substance. Secondly, it tells us the frequency that Addiction Tests must be made, usually stated in a number of doses.

Addiction Dosage - The addiction dosage tells us how many and how often the drug must be administered by anyone who is addicted to it.

Detox Effects - This explains the penalties applied to an addicted subject should they miss a dose of the drug as specified under the addiction dosage. These effects are cumulative should multiple doses be missed and effects can be applied up to three-fold. Administering the drug will remove any such effects, with the exception of any lost Hit Points, which must be healed in the normal manner.

Rush	Cost: 15c per dose
Effect:	Make a 2nd action per Combat Round (after all other actions have been resolved). Whenever the user loses any Hit Points, reduce the amount lost by 1. 2 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 3 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 12 hours plus every combat, if not already under the influence
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -1 DEX, -1 COOL, -1 Hit Point

Addiction Tests

Each time a user meets the dosage on a drug's Addiction Rating they must make an Addiction Test to determine whether their body has become chemically addicted to the substance. Addiction Tests are performed by rolling 2d10 (these can be any colour and do not follow the same Success/Skill die rules as when making a skill roll) and adding their STR to each die, giving you two results.

If either of the two results are equal to or greater than the drug's Addiction Rating then the user has avoided addiction. Another test will be required when the stated dosage has been met again. An Addiction Rating is increased by 1 if the user is under the influence of more than one drug at the time they make an Addiction Test.

"I could have sworn I repeatedly warned you about this, right?"

Pane Grens, Shiver Paramedic

Addiction

If an Addiction Test is failed, the user is now considered to be addicted to the substance and becomes dependent on its use in order to maintain normal function. When an Addiction Test is failed, the character gains the 'Drug Addict' trait at rank 1 for the specified drug.

Once addicted, the user is expected to take a dose of the drug as specified under the drug's addiction dosage rules. Providing this requirement is met, the user will suffer no further penalties on a day to day basis. Once addicted, a user is not required to take further Addiction Tests for that drug. Should the addiction dosage requirements not be fulfilled, the user will suffer the penalties listed under the drugs detox effects until such a time that they take a dose. Detox effects are cumulative and may be applied up to three-fold should multiple doses be missed. Note that any Hit Points lost through detox effects are not regained when a dose is taken and instead must be healed like any other physical damage.

Long Term Addiction

Being addicted to dangerous substances comes at a price. While the drugs may have short term effects that make the user feel strong and powerful, internally the damage can be great. To represent this, the following effects apply to all drug addicts based on the rank they possess in the 'Drug Addict' trait.

Important: All effects are cumulative, so for example, an addict at rank 2 will also suffer the effects listed under rank 1 (losing a total of 3 Hit Points each day).

Addict Rank	Frequency	Effect
1	Daily	-2 Hit Points
	Yearly	-2 Hit Points permanently. Pass another Addiction Test or increase Drug Addict trait to rank 2.
2	Daily	-1 Hit Point
	Yearly	-2 Hit Points permanently. -1 STR permanently. Pass another Addiction Test with a -1 Modifier to the roll or increase Drug Addict trait to rank 3.
3	Daily	-2 Hit Points
	Monthly	Pass another Addiction Test with a -1 Modifier to the roll or lose -1 STR permanently.
	Yearly	-1 DEX permanently. Pass another Addiction Test with a -1 Modifier to the roll or suffer death.

Note: Starting characters who begin with the Drug Addict trait do not apply any negative stat modifiers until the stated time has elapsed. For example, if a character has Drug Addict 2, they will receive their first -1 STR reduction after 1 year.

If the effects of long term drug addiction cause a character's STR or DEX to drop below 0 they are immediately killed.

Coming Off Drugs

With enough of a detox period and the right intervention it is possible to completely rid oneself of a drug addiction, even to SLA's most addictive substances.

Removing a drug addiction requires 3 weeks straight with absolutely no drugs. If any other drugs are taken during this time, even a substance that the user is not addicted to, then the 3 week period must start over. During the first week, an Addiction Test with a -1 Modifier is needed once per day to avoid restarting the 3 week cycle and being forced to seek out a dose of the drug at all costs. During the second and third weeks, the daily Addiction Test is made with no modifier. If the 3 week period is completed the user reduces their Drug Addict trait by one rank. If they still have at least 1 rank in the Drug Addict trait then the 3 week cycle must start over to remove another rank. Once the trait is reduced to 0 the user is no longer addicted.

Important: A character may never attempt to come off any drug addiction that they chose to take during character creation, nor may they reduce the rank of that addiction in any way.

Once an addiction has been 'kicked', the user is free to use the drug again, though this is not suggested. All future Addiction Tests for that drug will be subject to a -3 modifier and must be made after every dose regardless of the usual Addiction Rating requirements. In addition, once a user is free of a drug addiction, they immediately gain 1 rank in the 'Looks: Unattractive' trait, or lose 1 rank of their existing 'Looks: Attractive' trait. This change to the Looks trait is permanent and cannot be undone.

Remember - drug use is serious, so tread carefully.

VEHICLES

While the vast majority of an Operative's work is done on foot, there are times that call for much longer journeys and Mort's public transport systems can be problematic for on-duty Ops that stand out with their high-end gear. Vehicles are however, very expensive and any Op owning one better make sure they take damn good care of it. From time to time a BPN or secondment to a specific department will grant an Operative or their squad access to a vehicle from SLA's vehicle pool. Operatives are also encouraged to commandeer vehicles if it means maintaining public safety, stopping a rival company or catching members of a blood cult before it's too late.

For the most part, vehicles do not require many specific rules. The vast majority of events that will happen during a game will do so while the Operatives are on foot, however there are some aspects of vehicles that must be considered.

Note: Unlike other skills, a relevant Drive skill is required to operate a vehicle correctly, even at a most basic level. Without a Drive skill a character may get a vehicle moving a few feet, but overall they are unlikely to be able to achieve anything worthy of note.

Driving vehicles is subject to the usual rules for making skill rolls. Driving down a street should be second nature to anyone with the correct Drive skill and so will likely not need a roll. Driving under heavy gunfire, being caught in a car chase, or traversing the dangers of Cannibal Sector 1 will be far more difficult and requires a roll to avoid damage or immobilisation. As always, the GM gets the final say on the complexity of any such activity.

Each vehicle has a number of stats to allow players to understand the vehicles capabilities:

Dowlin Automotive Crawler APC		Cost: 110,000c
Skill:	Drive Military	
Length	Width	Height
3.2m	2.5m	1.8m
Capacity:	1 driver, 5 passengers + 4 passengers on external hand-holds	
PV	Resistance	Hit Points
12	30	100
Movement:	20	
Weapons and Equipment: None Optional turret mounted FEN 706 Power Reaper 2.1000 (fired by a passenger).		

In this example we see the profile for the Crawler APC, a commonly used vehicle for the Shiver Organisation since the Belwood Campaign. The information provided by this vehicle's profile gives us everything we need to be able to use the Crawler during a game.

Movement - Like characters, a vehicle has a movement rating too. This figure is included to give a rough indication of the vehicle's speed and to allow for movement during Combat Rounds should a moving vehicle come under attack. The GM should use common sense when considering the maneuverability and turning circle of each vehicle based on its dimensions and chassis type. It should go without saying that a motorbike will be far more manoeuvrable than an APC or truck.

Dimensions - Provides the size of the vehicle for reference. It should be obvious that the larger the vehicle, the heavier it is. As vehicles are beyond the scope of being carried, they do not have a specific Weight Factor to consider.

Capacity - This tells us how many crew a vehicle needs and how much space it has for additional passengers.

Skill - The required skill to drive or pilot the vehicle to any level of competency.

Weapons - Some vehicles are fitted for military purposes and come with weaponry as standard, whereas most civilian vehicles do not. If a vehicle comes with, or is capable of being fitted with any weapons, it will be noted here. Some weapons can be fired by the driver or pilot. Any weapons that require a dedicated gunner or passenger to operate will also be stated here.

PV - Even unarmoured vehicles provide some protection to those inside it, whereas many APCs or military-spec vehicles have additional armour plating that allow them to hold their own in a firefight. The armour capabilities of a vehicle are listed here and it functions just like the armour worn by characters.

Resistance - As with other armour, a vehicle's armour is capable of taking a certain amount of Armour Damage (AD) before it is rendered useless, as determined by its Resistance value.

Hit Points - Like characters, vehicles have a certain amount of damage they can take before they are destroyed or immobilised. Unlike characters, damage can not be healed and must instead be repaired.

Vehicles In Combat

A vehicle may be used in combat as cover by those outside of the vehicle. Those inside the vehicle are considered safe until the vehicle's Resistance is reduced to 0, at which point they may be targeted as though they were outside the vehicle.

Vehicles armed with weapons may fire those weapons, with the crew/gunner acting in initiative order as normal. All vehicle mounted weapons use the Support Weapons skill regardless of their usual skill requirement.

It is possible for vehicles to ram other vehicles, buildings or people. A successful Drive skill roll is required in such situations, with the difficulty determined by the size and mobility of the target. The amount of damage inflicted by such actions is typically very high, often killing targets outright. The GM is free to determine the damage caused by such actions. Driving a vehicle during combat or performing a car chase will always require an active Drive skill roll.

Repairing Vehicles

With the correct tools and replacement armour, damaged vehicles can be repaired, recovering the vehicle's Resistance and/or Hit Points. Such actions cannot be undertaken during combat and usually require a workshop or other technical support, as well as suitable tools and the purchase of required parts.

During the game session, repairs to vehicles can be made by a successful Technical: Mechanical roll, with a target number determined by the GM, based upon the amount of damage the armour has sustained. An unsuccessful roll means no repair can be made by that character and they must take the vehicle to a specialist during downtime. If successful, in addition to the roll and access to the necessary tools, the repairs take time (typically 2-4 hours) and will require replacement parts. The cost of repairing a vehicle is 5x the armour's full PV value per point of Resistance being repaired and 20c per Hit Point.

A Vehicle may also be repaired during downtime, providing the downtime period reflects a suitable length of time to seek out someone to repair it for you. Such repairs will typically cost 7x the vehicle armour's full PV value, per point of Resistance being repaired and 40c per Hit Point, though a successful Streetwise or Haggle roll may reduce the expense at the GM's discretion.

The high cost of repairing a vehicle is the main reason that very few Ops own their own transportation, instead opting to use one from the departmental vehicle pool should the current BPN allow.

THE EBB

The Ebb is a representation of energy, only truly understood by Ebonites and a number of ancient Conflict Races. The Ebb exists as a deep understanding of the energies that bind our physical and emotional existence together, resulting in the belief that one fundamental formula underpins The World of Progress as we know it. This basic theory means that any slight miscalculation, or deliberate change to how that formula is calculated, will lead to instability and changes in what we perceive to be reality. The result of this thinking is that Ebons and Ebans are able to use their understanding of these formulas to achieve things that other species consider otherwise impossible.

The Ebb allows those capable of utilising its methods to perform incredible acts, from healing physical wounds to moving objects with nothing more than the power of thought. Though these concepts may appear to be parlour tricks at first glance, the depth and sheer power of the Ebb can be intensely destructive, allowing users to turn their hands into physical weapons of ice and fire. The scope of what are now referred to as the 'Ebb disciplines' is as wide as The World of Progress itself, with the Ebb playing a significant part in everything from Operative investigations to the foundation of modern space travel.

WALKING THE PATH

The World of Progress' most prominent Ebb users are the Ebonites, divided into two 'paths' - Ebons and Ebans. These paths are now understood to have come from the same single species, which Naga 7 have officially termed 'Ebonite'. The Ebonites, at some point prior to the Conflict Era, chose to follow one of the two paths laid out for them by the elders of their kind, each representing a different perspective on the position that the Ebb holds within The World of Progress. From that point, all Ebonites would be born into one of these schools of learning: the Ebon, with their cool temperament and thirst for knowledge, or the Eban, who are often known as Wasters, with their fiery demeanor and explosive personalities. Ebons and Wasters represent two sides of the same coin and between them they are symbolic of the Ebb itself - the perfect balance between all things.

The term 'Ebonite' has only been officially used by SLA Industries since 911sd. After much pushback from Intruder, Naga 7 finally hammered the term into the archives and despite many Ebonites still struggling to come to terms with the recent discoveries about their heritage, the name Ebonite is now commonplace amongst those employed by SLA.

GLYPHS

The calculations run by the mind of an Ebb user in order to summon a discipline cannot be verbalised. The sheer complexity of such information is beyond comprehension and if it could be explained, the impact of those words would likely be devastating to whomever heard them. Traditionally, knowledge is passed between generations of Ebonites through Glyphs; combinations of symbols and patterns that appear as an ancient language in their own right. When the first Glyphs were created, the aim was that the future generation of Ebonites could decipher the equations held within them, to unlock the knowledge of abilities learned by their predecessors. This 'handing down' of glyphs worked… for a while.

As knowledge and understanding grew amongst the most powerful elders, so did the capabilities of the equations they calculated. It was during these times that the means to move the great Foldships came about; the power to move thousands of people across an entire galaxy in the blink of an eye. Once this level of Reality Folding had been unlocked it was only a matter of time before other disciplines followed. The destructive nature of the Thermal and Blast disciplines were paramount, leading to SLA scooping up feral Ebonites to drop onto War Worlds, armed with little more than some Glyphs etched onto Science Friction material, small fragments of Flux forged into a physical form. The Ebonite's mind in this situation was a ticking time bomb, fuelled by fear and apprehension and armed with powers that could potentially rip open the fabric of reality. Worlds fell in an instant, civilisations vanished and were forgotten by The World of Progress. It was time to rein it back in.

Naga 7, the society obsessed with the truth behind the creation of The World of Progress and SLA Industries, were tasked with retrieving Glyph Cards that had been created by the elders of the Ebonite species. For hundreds of years they sought out and locked away these Glyph Cards in the deepest vaults of SLA's Head Office, handing over only those deemed most suitable by the Necanthrope order. By vetting them in this way and keeping only select Glyphs in circulation, it would ensure that knowledge of Naga 7-approved Ebb disciplines would be retained by future generations. In addition to the wide range of abilities still commonly known by Ebons and Ebans, a select number of more potent Glyphs have been left in circulation as a test; those who can master them will be pulled away from their life as an Operative and placed under the jurisdiction of Naga 7, to be given the job of piloting Foldships or performing darker, secretive tasks for SLA Industries.

The ancient Glyph Cards are now considered to be entirely illegal and any found in circulation will demand extreme prices on the black market, with feral Ebons bidding high to unlock the arcane knowledge of the elders. Naga 7 retain a watchful eye over The World of Progress, using some of the most talented Ebons and Wasters capable of attaining a meditative-state of awareness, their minds locked into a different plane of being, constantly wandering the Ebb and looking for any expenditure of Flux that may be related to the use of a Glyph Card.

FLUX

Flux is the shift of energies that occurs when the Ebb's formulas are calculated. It represents that part of the Ebb that Ebonites can sense, see and manipulate; it is both a tangible energy and a currency with which to enact Ebb disciplines.

Depending on the Ebonite's level of understanding, they will be able to draw and store a limited quantity of Flux in their body. It is with this Flux energy that the Ebon or Eban will use the abilities of the various Ebb disciplines they have learned. Flux is however a finite resource, limited by the individual user's capacity to store it; a capacity that differs from user to user. For an Ebb user to calculate the required formulas they must 'burn' or spend Flux. Doing so opens up their minds to the Ebb, which in turn enables the Ebb to have a real physical effect on the world and its inhabitants. The Ebonite effectively creates a temporary instability in the reality they inhabit, allowing the Ebb to fill that void.

An Ebonite who has exhausted all of their available Flux will often feel fragile and incomplete, as though a part of them is missing emotionally. It is because of this that Ebonites, particularly those on the Ebon path, are seen as being highly emotional beings, often described as 'deep' or 'moody' by other species. The other side of Flux is the sense of inherent 'power' it brings to Ebonites. This sense of inner strength is most commonly seen in Wasters, but any Ebonite surging with Flux may come across as brash, overconfident or slightly aggressive. Flux is the Ebb's way of shaping its users as much as it is the Ebonite's way of tapping into the Ebb.

FORMULAE

There are ten recognised Ebb disciplines, covering the different aspects of control and balance. Within these disciplines, Ebb users have access to a number of abilities, each of which is considered to have a different level of complexity associated with it. Ebonite's call this gauge of complexity 'Formulae'. As a user studies the teachings of a given discipline their understanding of the associated Formulae will increase and in turn they will find that it is easier to burn Flux on those disciplines. The process is akin to any other skilled training that an Operative can undertake, from driving a vehicle to firing a gun, though the outcome will mould the Ebonite far more drastically. To say that, "We are the sum of all our knowledge" is a drastic understatement for the average Ebonite.

ALLIES & ENEMIES

Intruder first encountered the Ebb species during the Conflict Era. As wars raged on in far-off systems, two such species came to prominence, the Momic and the Ebonite. Until this time, Intruder had been an anomaly, one of a kind, Slayer's right hand man. His distant past had eluded him, no memory of parents or childhood, just a powerful entity that had come into being.

Coming face to face with the Ebb users changed everything. The Momic were powerful, with an understanding of the Ebb that far exceeded most Ebonites and had destructive powers that rivaled Intruder himself, but they had no lust for life, no desire to learn and no capacity to fall in line. The Momics wanted to feed and wait for the spoils of war to fall to them. Stubborn and immovable. The exact opposite of the allies SLA Industries were searching for.

The Ebonites were what SLA needed. Intruder ensured that the 'Ebb War' was short and swift. The mysterious and powerful Momics were beaten back and fled into Conflict Space, though not before they struck back. Deep into the heart of Mort, the enigma which would become known as 'The White' appeared.

The Ebonites were welcomed into the arms of SLA Industries, Intruder's knowledge growing as each Foldship arrived, bringing with it lost history and metaphysical learnings. Over the years that followed, Ebons and Ebans became a part of everyday life in Mort City. The Ebb felt to be controlled and contained, creating the kind of balance around Mort that epitomised its very meaning. The events that would shortly unfold however, would shape the future drastically. The Foldship Yung, journeying into Conflict Space, carrying one of Intruder's own students, encountered the lost Momic. The crew of the Foldship were consumed by the fury of the Momic, giving them the thing they had long wished for; the knowledge required to find their way back to Mort.

CHANGING TIDES

While there are now ten Ebb disciplines, there once was twelve. Since the Momic returned to Mort, an unexplained imbalance occurred in the Ebb, leading to a number of changes that the Necanthrope order has yet been unable to put right. The first change came to the discipline that had been long known as Illumination; the art of manipulating light. Almost overnight the ability to control light was lost from the minds of all Ebonites. Even the great elders of the Ebonites were no longer able to manipulate light as they once could. At the same time, those more adept in Blast, the most destructive of the Ebb disciplines, started to report that they could suddenly project balls of light and use the discipline in non-destructive ways, as though they had always possessed the knowledge to do so. To all intents, Blast and Illumination had combined themselves in response to the Momic's return.

Most concerned by this change was Intruder. Having been present from the start, he had welcomed the Ebonites to Mort and studied the ancient ways of the Waster path. He was revered as being the 'father of the Ebb' in the eyes of Slayer. Seemingly unable to explain these changes and fearing that such activity could threaten the very fabric of reality, Intruder instructed Naga 7 to pile their resources into investigating what outcome may lie ahead. Within days, the next ripple had occurred and it was notably more significant than the last.

The ancient disciplines of Red Thermal and Blue Thermal, the ability to control ice and fire, had long been the backbone of most Ebonite's studies into the Ebb. Over a period of thirteen days, every Ebb user proficient in both disciplines seemingly lost access to one of them. At first it seemed random, but as the first few days passed and the number of affected Ebonites rose into the thousands, it became clear: Ebons had lost all knowledge of Red Thermal and Ebans had lost access to Blue. Eventually the most powerful of Necanthropes reported the same losses. The Thermal discipline had solidified itself, but at the same time divided, epitomising the differing paths of the Ebonites; blue for the cool nature of the Ebon and red for the explosive lust of the Waster. By day thirteen, every Ebonite in The World of Progress had been changed. All but Intruder who, despite Naga 7's failed efforts to decipher why, had retained knowledge of both sides of Thermal; a symbol of balance in an otherwise unstable world.

There was one final change that the Momic's return would also bring. A change so great that it would threaten the future of the Ebonite species.

THE NECANTHROPE

When the Momics first departed Mort during the Conflict Era they did so in an explosion of Flux, leaving behind them The White. The White was a tear in reality, a brilliant white ball of Flux almost 4m high floating near the northern border of what was then called the Central Outskirts. Almost instantly, Intruder and other high-ranking members of the Ebonites felt themselves drawn to its untainted power and beauty. Quickly it was protected, sealed away behind walls and hidden from the world, becoming a shrine to Ebonites that knew of its glory. Intruder and his disciples studied The White for many years, eventually surmising that it would lead to a higher plane of existence. Many Ebonites were committed to this theory and chose to venture into The White, but none returned, vanishing instantly and leaving nothing but memories behind.

The White's true purpose would elude The World of Progress until deeper emotions came into play. A love triangle had formed between three of Intruder's most trusted students. Draco, a young female, had fallen for both Durer and Mandrake, becoming physical with both. When the news was revealed, the emotional turmoil experienced rocked the very balance of the Ebb. As a result both men were ordered to leave Mort in order to end the potential strife that would follow and return order to Intruder's inner circle of disciples. Mandrake took command of the Foldship Yung and headed out into Conflict Space in the name of SLA Industries, but Durer was less malleable and threw himself into The White, ending his life, another victim to the mysterious gift left by the Momic.

Days passed, then a ripple. Movement and shadow. Light and darkness. Durer had returned from The White, but he had returned a changed man, both physically and metaphorically. What emerged that day was a hulking beast of a creature, warped and twisted, with control of the Ebb like Intruder had never seen. In the middle of his torso, a huge mouth lined by razor sharp teeth, heralding the future image of the Ebonite species. There were seventeen Ebonites present at that moment and after a brief wisp of Flux in the air, four words were spoken directly into the minds of each of them - "Then Durer, now teeth".

> *"It still dawns on me today… the first time I laid eyes on Durer as he stepped from The White. The twisted and violent visage he had become. Not Momic, but somehow reminiscent."*
>
> Intruder

Slayer welcomed the self-titled Preceptor Teeth into his inner circle, his knowledge of the Ebb and The White giving birth to the next generation of Ebonite's desires; to ascend and become a Necanthrope themselves. Once Teeth had stepped into the limelight, every Ebon and Eban lusted for the opportunity, to attain enough understanding of the Ebb for Preceptor Teeth and his growing cadre of Necanthropes to acknowledge their right to ascend, to undertake the ritual, to die and be reborn as one of the most powerful beings in The World of Progress.

THE WHITE

For hundreds of years, The White remained hidden in the Central Outskirts. As the years flew by and the Necanthrope order grew, few besides them and Naga 7 knew of its existence. After Salvation Tower collapsed and the Central Outskirts became swallowed up by Cannibal Sector 1, The White was left untouched, nestled away at the northernmost part of the Northwest Compact. Preceptor Teeth and his followers left it under the watchful guard of the bravest Ebonite warriors, returning only when the most capable of the species were ready for the great sacrifice, to give their life to ascend.

This process would continue until the Momic returned on the Foldship Yung, the same ship captained by Mandrake, intercepted by the ancient creatures and returned to Mort for them to finish whatever process they had begun hundreds of years ago. Merely days after the Necanthropes had come to terms with losing their knowledge of Thermal, The White simply disappeared. Naga 7 theorised that The White had become partly sentient and sensing the return of its creators had taken steps to hide itself. Moments after its disappearance it reappeared, this time in the great hall of the Necanthrope temple which sits at the base of SLA Industries Head Office. Considering this a sign of the Necanthropes right to the Ebb, the next wave of Ebonites sacrificed themselves to The White under Preceptor Teeth's watchful gaze. None returned. The ritual had been performed correctly, same as it had been for hundreds of years. More Ebonites heard the call and stepped forth, again, never to return. The White had closed itself, returning to the state it had embodied before Durer had entered, the glowing orb of raw Flux had become a violent hole which led to nowhere but death. After claiming the lives of eleven valued Ebonites, The White vanished again, only to reappear elsewhere on Mort. This process of moving is something that The White now does constantly, rarely inhabiting the same location for more than a few days, swallowing the lives of any who wander too close. While Intruder and the Necanthrope order do not struggle to locate it, on account of their advanced sense of perception, the constantly shifting and unstable nature of The White has led Naga 7 to the conclusion that the Momic are hunting for it… and it does not want to be found.

USING EBB DISCIPLINES

Ebb disciplines are used like other skills, in any situation that the player and/or GM deems them suitable. Most Ebb disciplines can be used during combat, particularly those which allow the formation of weapons or projectile attacks, but the majority of Ebb disciplines are likely to be used during the course of the story, for healing, discovering information or aiding movement around Mort City.

In order to use an Ebb Discipline, the user must be wearing a Death Suit or have possession of a highly illegal Glyph card.

Whenever an Ebb discipline is used it requires two things:

- The expenditure of a FLUX point
- A Calculation Test

An Ebonite character who has no available FLUX points to spend will be unable to use their Ebb disciplines until they have replenished a point or more. Each time an Ebb discipline is used 1 point of FLUX must be spent, regardless of the applicable skill rank or whether the test to use the discipline is successful or not.

Calculation Tests – "Calculate The Ebb"

In order to successfully use an Ebb discipline, the Ebonite must perform a Calculation Test. This represents the mind of the character running the hyperbolic equations required to summon the required raw energies to evoke the discipline. Most commonly, the knowledge of a particular discipline will be stored to the users Deathsuit, but it is also possible to evoke such disciplines by reading arcane (and highly illegal) Glyph Cards, which contain the equations needed to perform the discipline.

During a Combat Round, 'Calculate The Ebb' is considered an action like any other and if successful allows the Ebonite to use the Ebb discipline to attack/move/heal etc. When used outside of combat such tests are considered to take only a few seconds.

After spending the required point of FLUX, the Calculation Test is made like any other skill roll, by rolling the Success Die and one Skill Die for each rank that a character has in the relevant discipline plus one, then adding the applicable skill bonus for the Ebb discipline being used (Ebb disciplines are added to the character's CONC stat). Unlike other skill rolls, each ability within an Ebb discipline has its own target number, known as a Formulae Rating (FR). Like other skill rolls, a total which is equal to or greater than this number represents a success.

Note: The normal rules for 'Success Through Experience' do not apply when dealing with Ebb disciplines. Additionally, unlike other skills, an Ebb ability may not be used in any capacity if the character does not possess that discipline.

Any successful roll which allows for an immediate attack, such as the Blast discipline, will need to be followed up with an actual roll to hit. Effectively, a successful Concentration Test indicates that the ability has been summoned, but an additional roll is needed to determine whether it hits its target.

Ebb Disciplines & Margin of Success/Failure

When making skill rolls for Ebb disciplines, the margin of success/failure is also taken into consideration, though unlike normal skill rolls, the differing levels of success and failure will have a specific impact.

Notable successes in performing Ebb disciplines can lead to more damage coming from Ebb attacks, the ability to repeat the use of the discipline, or even summoning back the Flux that was spent to perform the ability. The following table explains the bonuses that may be granted. Note that the bonuses granted are all fairly different and it is not possible to 'downgrade' to a lower bonus if it better suits your needs. The Ebb is an unpredictable resource and the gifts that it grants to its users are not always useful to them.

Number of Dice	Equal or Exceed Target Number
Success Die	Success
+1 Skill Die	Success
+2 Skill Dice	If using an Ebb discipline attack it does +1 DMG
+3 Skill Dice	May use same Ebb Discipline ability again within 5 minutes, at -3 FR
+4 or more Skill Dice	Regain 1 FLUX

For those who fail to calculate the Ebb correctly, the consequences can be devastating, as the mind becomes tangled in the failed equations and the weight of the Ebb hammers the brain repeatedly with images and information, draining the Ebonite both mentally and physically. A normal failure comes with no additional consequences, however should a serious failure be achieved (a failure on all dice being rolled) during a Calculate The Ebb action, the Ebonite immediately suffers 3 Hit Points, which cannot be prevented and loses a point of FLUX if they have any left to lose. Additionally, the recover action must be taken during the next Combat Round if the Ebonite is currently in a combat situation.

Regenerating Flux

As Flux is a finite resource, it is important that Ebonites can regenerate it. The Ebb passes through Ebonites constantly, allowing them to regain 1 point of spent FLUX every 2 hours.

In addition to this, Dark Lament, the department responsible for developing all manner of Ebb-related products, manufacture a range of items that are capable of storing Flux, allowing Ebb users out in the field to regain Flux at a much higher rate. See "Science Friction Gear" on page 174 for more information.

"Getting Close"

Getting Close is the term used amongst the Ebonite community for someone who has become so attuned to the Ebb that they have begun to experience an uncontrollable pull to the call of The White. An Ebonite who is Getting Close will begin to hear voices, see visions and suffer horrific nightmares capable of driving them insane. Given the current elusive nature of The White and the tightly controlled selection process that exists for those allowed to enter it, many Ebonites must live with these 'Dream Demons' for long periods of time.

To represent this, once an Ebonite has more than one Ebb Discipline at Rank 4, they will begin to experience Dream Demons. An Ebonite suffering from Dream Demons gains one rank in each of Psychosis: Paranoia and Psychosis: Delusions. In addition, the GM should feel free to provide details of specific images or messages which the character may find themselves becoming increasingly obsessed with.

Dream Demons can be controlled with the use of the drug 'White Noise'.

EBB DISCIPLINES

Each discipline grants the user a range of potential abilities which can be used during the course of a game. An Ebb user has access to the abilities granted by each rank they have attained in a given Ebb Discipline. For example, rank 2 in Blast will provide access to the two rank 1 abilities as well as the two rank 2 abilities.

Like other skills, a higher rank represents more proficiency in the discipline, but also allows access to more powerful abilities. The actual capabilities of the Ebb go far beyond the abilities described in this chapter, though those individuals whose skills have risen to such levels have either ascended to the Necanthrope order, or will have been pulled from active Operative duty in order to utilise their powers for other means. The abilities listed here reflect the normal limits of an Ebonite in the Operative role.

Note: Any ability with a duration may be ended sooner than the time stated should the user so desire. Additionally, some Ebb disciplines have passive abilities. These abilities do not require a Concentration Test and are considered always active/available. Any such ability will be noted as having a Formulae Rating of '-'.

AWARENESS

"You can smell it in the air. Feel it when you breathe. See it when you close your eyes. The Ebb is everywhere and where traces of Flux can be found, another of my kind must have trod. It's this sense of awareness that makes us feel alive. This connection to the Ebb that gives us purpose"

Glisten, Ebon Operative, SCL 8.3

Awareness deals with an Ebonite's ability to connect to and detect the Ebb, as well as sensing other Ebb users and recently used disciplines. Knowledge of Awareness allows Ebonites to track each other, to gain snapshots through the eyes of other Ebb users and even to access the memories of the dead.

Rank 1: Detect Ebb — FR: 6

Confirms the recent presence of Ebonites and the use of Flux (though not what disciplines were used) within the last 15 mins and within 10m of the user.

Rank 1: Track Ebb — FR: 7

Allows the user to lock onto and track the Flux trail left by an Ebonite. Target must have been present within the last 10 mins and within 10m of the users location. The trail will go cold if it or focus on it is lost for longer than 10 minutes.

Rank 2: True Detect — FR: 8

Like Detect Ebb. As well as confirming the presence of Ebonites and the use of Flux, the user can now also confirm the discipline used and at what rank. Can detect subjects within the last 15 minutes and within 20m of the users location.

Rank 2: True Track — FR: 9

With a personal item belonging to a specific Ebonite, that target can be tracked. The user is able to get hazy enigmatic images of where the target has been over the last 12 hours and can sense when they are within 25m of where they have travelled.

Duration: 1 hour.

Rank 3: Impression — FR: 10

The user is able to 'look back' and see snap images of their surroundings over the last 4 hours, particularly any events involving the use of Flux, high emotions or extreme violence. The images are often hazy and can cause confusion, but will offer some insight into events that occurred. Covers a 10m radius from the user.

Rank 3: Bloodhound — FR: 11

Like True Track. The user is able to track a specific Ebonite providing they have a personal item belonging to the target, this time with clearer images and information being received. In addition to sensing the trail of the target, the user will receive snap images from the targets eyes if they are within 100m.

Duration: 4 hours.

Rank 4: Perfect Impression — FR: 12

Like Impression. The user is able to see clear images of their local vicinity over the last 12 hours to determine what may have happened there. While faces are often very hard to see, many details about the scene will be determined with alarming accuracy. Covers a 20m radius from the user.

Rank 4: Death Seek — FR: 15

The user is able to retrieve images from the mind of the recently deceased. Physical touch is required to use Death Seek and the user will receive images considered to be the vital events of the subject's final 24 hours, as well as their dying moments. Such images can be traumatic for the user and excessive use of this ability can lead to psychosis (GM discretion).

BLAST

"The destructive power of the Ebb is undeniable. Point and BOOM. This is why the Ebb exists. This is why I charge up that Flux everyday. Sure, I still pack my 603, but I sure as shit don't use it much."

Base, Eban Operative, SCL 7b, squad 'Baseline'

Blast is the art of manipulating the Ebb for destructive and explosive means. The discipline allows access to a range of projectile and grenade-like attacks that can be used in place of regular weaponry. Blast also utilises the manipulation of light to create torch-like beams, allows the user to see in the dark, or even to illuminate vast areas in bright daylight. Such light manipulation was once considered a discipline of its own, but as the years progressed, the Ebb seemingly locked away access to

many of the associated abilities, leaving only the most essential ones available to those Ebonites trained in Blast's destructive potential.

Rank 1: Blast FR: 7

Ranged attack to be used immediately, fired from the palm of the user's hand.

Blast

Skill:	Blast				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
1d10+2	4	1	1	0	50m

Rank 1: Nightvision FR: 6

Gain perfect UV Nightvision enabling the user to see in pitch darkness. Duration: 10 mins.

Rank 2: Bomb FR: 8

Grenade-like ranged attack to be used immediately, fired from the palm of the user's hand.

Bomb

Skill:	Blast		Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Radius
1d10	4	2	2/5m

Bomb is treated as a Grenade attack but has a range of 30m regardless of the Ebonite's STR stat.

Rank 2: Blinding Flash FR: 8

Emit a sudden blinding flash from the palms of the user's hands. Anyone within 10m of the chosen direction must pass a Detect roll with a target number of 10 or immediately suffer the stunned condition for 30 seconds. May also be used to illuminate an area for a brief moment as though it were a high-powered flashlight.

Rank 3: Advanced Blast FR: 10

Ranged attack to be used immediately, fired from the palm of the user's hand.

Advanced Blast

Skill:	Blast				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
2d10-3	5	2	1	0	70m

Rank 3: Star Orb FR: 8

Create a floating orb of brilliant white light. The orb will illuminate an area approx. 150m wide in daylight and will remain hovering above the user, following them for the duration. Unlike other abilities, the Star Orb may be turned on and off as the user requires during its duration.

Duration: 20 mins.

Rank 4: Extreme Blast FR: 13

Ranged attack to be used immediately, fired from the palm of the user's hand.

Extreme Blast

Skill:	Blast				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
2d10+2	10	4	1	0	100m

Rank 4: Extreme Bomb FR: 14

Grenade-like ranged attack to be used once, immediately and during the Combat Round. Fired from the palm of the user's hand.

Extreme Bomb

Skill:	Blast		Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Radius
1d10+5	7	3	10/20m

Extreme Bomb is treated as a Grenade attack but has a range of 40m regardless of the Ebonite's STR stat.

COMMUNICATE

"Seeing Ebons and Wasters 'talking' to each other without speaking is freaky. You know they're doing it; they have this look… a blank stare. It's pretty off putting ya' know. I mean… use comms like the rest of us. It gets even freakier when they talk to you like that. Whispering in your ear. Suggesting shit. Freaks me out."

Shiver Pvt. Tarly Walters, Downtown Patrol

Communicate allows for direct telepathic communication, both to converse and to plant thoughts or manipulate the opinions of others. Higher levels in Communicate also allow the user to force hidden truths from subjects or take over their minds and bodies, literally 'implanting' their own consciousness into another person.

Rank 1: Plant Thought FR: 7

Plant a simple suggestion (max 12 words) in the subject's mind. Subject will believe and question the thought as though it were their own. Subject must be within line of sight.

Rank 1: Converse FR: 8

Allows for a simple question to be asked telepathically and to receive a single word answer from the subject. Subject must be within line of sight and no further away than 20m.

Note: The FR is reduced by 2 if using this ability to converse with another Ebonite.

Rank 2: Mind Read FR: 10

Obtain basic information from a subject's mind, such as name, age, position/rank, names of close family etc. The user must be able to touch the target to obtain the information.

Rank 2: Inception — FR: 10

Like Plant Thought. Allows for the planting of a more complex suggestion (max 100 words), including motives and emotional responses. Can cause internal confusion for the subject. Subject must be within line of sight.

Rank 3: Communication — FR: 10

Like Converse. Allows for continual back and forth communication between the user and their subject. No line of sight is required. Maximum range is 200km. Duration: 2 mins.

Note: The FR is reduced by 2 if using this ability to converse with another Ebonite.

Rank 3: Deep Read — FR: 12

Like Mind Read. Allows the user to obtain deeper information about the subject, such as emotional ties and past trauma, as well as all forefront dominating thoughts from the last 24 hours. The information received is not always clear and depending on the mind of the subject, can be confusing to decipher. Subject must be within line of sight and no further away than 50m.

Rank 4: Forced Truth — FR: 12

Force a subject to tell the truth. Subject will be unable to lie and every word spoken must be the truth. Additionally, the target will find it increasingly hard to stay quiet and will be more susceptible to interrogation. The user must be able to touch the target to apply Forced Truth.

Duration: 10 mins.

Rank 4: Possession — FR: 16

Possession allows the user to take complete control of a subject within 20m and line of sight, accessing their thoughts, memories and using their physical form, skills and stats as if it were themselves. When possession takes place, the user's body slumps to the ground and appears lifeless to the untrained eye. If the Concentration Test is successful 2 additional FLUX must be spent for Possession to work.

Duration: 12 hours.

ENHANCE

"There's something about using Ebb enhancement that feels different to everything else I can do. I'm not setting stuff alight or blowing stuff up. I'm not talking or moving things with my mind. It's less...scientific. More primal. Something about getting stronger, feeling invincible and summoning that inner beast is incomparable. It's addictive. Violent. I fuckin' love it."

Atrophy, Eban Operative, SCL 8.1b, squad 'Baseline'

Enhance is the art of physically manipulating an Ebonite's own body to increase strength, speed or to form natural weapons. At its highest level, Enhance allows the Ebonite to transform into a feared but uncontrollable Ebb Beast for a short period of time.

Note: Ebonites may stack the effects of more than one Enhance discipline, but may not stack the same one more than once.

Rank 1: Teeth/Claws — FR: 6

The user forms teeth and claws to use as weapons. These use the standard profile for teeth and claws but add an additional +3 DMG and +1 AD.

Duration: 10 mins.

Rank 1: Boost — FR: 9

The user physically grows in stature, becoming larger and noticeably stronger. The user gains +1 to both their STR and DEX stats, ignoring species maximums.

Duration: 10 mins.

Rank 2: Resistance — FR: 7

The user immediately removes the stunned condition and becomes immune to that condition for the duration of the ability. Additionally, the user may ignore the negative effects of encumbrance. This does not allow the user to avoid the immobile condition if they carry more weight than they can physically lift.

Duration: 30 mins.

Rank 2: Toughened Skin — FR: 9

The user's skin becomes tough and hard to penetrate. The user does not receive wounds for the duration of the ability, regardless of how much damage they suffer. This does not heal any existing wounds.

Duration: 5 mins.

Rank 3: Razor Teeth/Claws — FR: 10

Like Teeth/Claws. The user forms natural weapons that are extremely sharp, capable of piercing armour and rending flesh. These use the standard profile for teeth and claws, but add an additional +6 DMG and +2 AD. In addition, anyone that loses a Hit Point to Razor Teeth or Claws will suffer the bleeding condition.

Duration: 20 mins.

Rank 3: Armoured Skin — FR: 10

The user's skin begins to harden like stone. The user gains + 2 PV to their current armour and is immune to the stunned ability.

Duration: 1 hour.

Rank 4: Advanced Boost — FR: 12

Like Boost. The user's muscles begin to bulge and their reflexes sharpen. The user gains +2 to both their STR and DEX stats, as well as +1 to both their Closing and Rushing speeds, ignoring species maximums.

Duration: 10 mins.

Rank 4: Ebb Beast — FR: 16

Ebb Beast is one of the most feared abilities the Ebb has to offer. The user becomes overtaken with a physical transformation into a large, snarling creature that only slightly resembles their former self. During this state, while the Ebonite is still loosely in control, their thirst for violence reaches paramountcy and all reasoning is reduced. The user gains +4 STR, DEX and COOL (ignoring species maximums), but -2 CONC and their CHA is reduced to 0. In addition, they gain +2 to their Closing and Rushing speeds and automatically gain the 'Razor Teeth/Claws', 'Toughened Skin' and 'Resistance' abilities for the duration of Ebb Beast. Anyone facing the Ebb Beast in hand-to-hand combat must make a fear test, suffering the Terrified fear result if they fail. The Ebb Beast has a fear Rating of 4 for all other purposes. The player is expected to roleplay the new state of mind accordingly. If the Concentration Test is successful, 1 additional FLUX must be spent for Ebb Beast to work.

Duration: 20 mins, which cannot be ended early.

HEAL

"If it can be used to heal, it should be used to heal."
Harmony, Ebon Operative, SCL 9.8a, squad 'Light Shield'

One of the most common and most respected of all Ebb disciplines is Heal. An Ebonite trained in Heal can not only repair damaged tissue at a rate that far surpasses the greatest of medical care, but can also cure long-term illness and disease and with enough training even resurrect those recently slain in the line of duty.

Rank 1: Heal Wound — FR: 7

The user is able to heal their own wounds, stop bleeding and close cuts. The user may instantly remove 1 wound of their choice.

Rank 1: Heal Injury — FR: 7

The Ebonite can repair damage and improve their own state of well-being with ease. The user may instantly regain 3 Hit Points.

Rank 2: Healing Touch — FR: 9

The Ebonite's healing capabilities can be passed onto others. The user may immediately heal any subject they can touch, allowing them to remove 1 wound or regain 3 Hit Points. Physical contact with the subject is required for Healing Touch to work; touching the subject's armour is not sufficient.

Rank 2: Poison Leech — FR: 9

The user is able to treat the effects of poison and common non-terminal toxicants. The GM has final say on what toxicants Poison Leech will remove. The Ebonite may use this on themselves or on any subject via physical contact; touching the subject's armour is not sufficient.

Rank 3: Advanced Heal — FR: 10

Like Healing Touch. The Ebonite may remove 1 wound and regain 6 Hit Points. This may be used on themselves or on any subject within 2m.

Rank 3: Regenerate — FR: 10

The user is able to make their own body regenerate. The user gains a Regeneration Rate of 2.

Duration: 1 hour.

Rank 4: Cure — FR: 12

Like Poison Leech. The user is able to treat the vast majority of toxicants, as well as cure most common illnesses and even some terminal diseases. Cure may never be used to remove any illness trait taken by a character during character creation. The GM has final say on which toxicants/diseases can be cured. The Ebonite may use this on themselves or on any subject within 2m.

Rank 4: Resurrect — FR: 16

One of the most respected abilities the Ebb has to offer. The Ebonite is capable of bringing back the recently deceased, as long as the subject has been dead for no longer than 5 mins and is still 'whole'. A subject who has been torn in two or beheaded is beyond the scope of Resurrect. The user is required to have physical contact with the subject; touching the subject's armour is not sufficient. Any character who is resurrected will come back with all wounds healed and exactly 5 Hit Points. If the Concentration Test is successful 3 additional FLUX must be spent for Resurrect to work.

PROTECT

"Without a Deathsuit we are lost wanderers searching for purpose. While some of our feral cousins chose to leave them alone, the Deathsuit's symbiotic nature really completes us. We are never alone. It breathes with us. Grows with us. We are one."

Glisten, Ebon Operative, SCL 8.3

Protect is required for an Ebonite to integrate with a Dark Lament Deathsuit, the living symbiote armour worn by the vast majority of Ebb users in The World of Progress. Advancing through the knowledge of Protect enables the Ebonite to unlock the capabilities of their Deathsuit, allowing it to grow in order to better protect them and expand their Flux storage capabilities. It is rare to find an Ebonite not trained in the way of Protect.

Rank 1: Deathsuit — FR: -

This is a passive ability, required to wear a Deathsuit. This represents the symbiotic relationship between Ebon and Deathsuit has begun.

Rank 1: Heal Deathsuit — FR: 8

The user's Deathsuit is able to repair itself. This allows the Deathsuit to instantly repair 2 points of Resistance.

Rank 2: Light to Medium — FR: -

This is a passive ability and represents the user's Deathsuit has evolved from light to medium. The rules and profile for a Medium Deathsuit should now be applied.

Rank 2: Repel — FR: -

This is a passive ability. The Deathsuit and it's wearer are now able to resist temperatures from -40 to +200 degrees and are immune to electrical shocks up to 5000v.

Rank 3: Channel — FR: -

This is a passive ability. The Deathsuit is now able to act as an extension of the user for the purpose of Flux storage. The species maximum of the user's FLUX stat is increased +2

Rank 3: Absorb Flux — FR: 12

The Deathsuit is able to absorb Flux from other Ebonites, effectively stealing their charge and passing it onto the wearer. Physical contact is required with the subject and they will immediately lose 2 FLUX which is immediately added to the Ebonite's own current FLUX value.

Rank 4: Medium to Heavy — FR: -

This is a passive ability and represents the user's Deathsuit has evolved from medium to heavy. The rules and profile for a Heavy Deathsuit should now be applied.

Rank 4: Interdemalisation — FR: -

The symbiotic relationship between the user and their Deathsuit is complete. At will, the user is able to draw the Deathsuit into their body to hide it from view. While the Ebonite's facial features do not change, they will be able to pass as Human from a distance. This allows the Ebonite to wear clothing and other armoured suits if required. No Concentration Test is needed, just the expenditure of 1 point of FLUX.

A further point of FLUX is required to bring the Deathsuit back out.

REALITY FOLDING

"Without the Foldships we wouldn't have space travel as we know it. It wasn't science and technology that got us this far, it was the mind of an Ebon. Being able to move themselves around Mort in the blink of an eye has always been a true marvel, but the Necanthropes and Ebonite elders that have mastered the art of controlling the Jump Ships… we owe everything to them.

Without them we'd still be fighting the Conflict Races one by one as they invade Mort."

Aetherman Tooms, Naga 7 Division, 6th Head

Generally considered to be the most complex, yet marvellous of all Ebb disciplines, Reality Folding allows the user to instantly move between two points, literally hopping from one place to another in the blink of an eye. At its most basic level it allows the Ebonite to cross a room, but with training it becomes entirely possible to move over great distances, taking with them entire crowds of people. Those trained beyond the scope of a SLA Operative, the true elders of the Ebonites, are able to manipulate the Ebb to move entire buildings or pilot the great Fold Ships that are used for transportation between planets.

Note: Reality folding cannot be used to move matter so that it shares space with other matter. Should an ability be used that would cause two objects or people to share the same space, the reality folded item will be moved slightly off target so that such items end up side by side. Additionally, when reality folding, a subject's clothes, armour, weapons and belongings that they have on them are also transported.

Rank 1: Jump Port — FR: 8

The user is able to make small jumps using the Reality Folding discipline. The user is able to immediately relocate themselves to any other location within their line of sight and no further than 5m away.

Rank 1: Object Port — FR: 9

The user is able to relocate an inanimate object with a Weight Factor no greater than 2. The user must be able to touch the item. The item can be relocated to anywhere within their line of sight and no further away than 10m.

Rank 2: Jump Port 2 — FR: 10

Like Jump Port. The user can now immediately relocate themselves to any other location within their line of sight and no further than 40m away.

Rank 2: Shared Port — FR: 10

The user is able to relocate themselves and another person within 2m of them to any other location within their line of sight and no further than 20m away.

Rank 3: Jump Port 3 — FR: 12

The user's Jump Port capabilities have grown substantially. The user can now immediately relocate themselves, or an inanimate object (with a Weight Factor no greater than 2, within 2m), to any other location within 1km. No line of sight is needed providing the Ebonite has prior knowledge of the location they are porting to and can picture it in their mind.

Rank 3: Shared Port 2 — FR: 12

The user's ability to move others through Reality Folding has become very powerful. The user is now able to relocate themselves and up to two other people within 2m of them to any other location within 500m. No line of sight is needed providing the Ebonite has prior knowledge of the location and can picture it in their mind.

Rank 4: Mass Port — FR: 15

Mass Port is the art of Reality Folding your entire surroundings. When used, everything visible to the user within a 3m radius, that is not secured down, will be relocated - people, furniture, vehicles and even the dirt on the ground. Any location within 1km may be chosen and no line of sight is needed providing the Ebonite has prior knowledge of the location and can picture it in their mind (and it is able to accommodate the volume of mass being transported).

Rank 4: Jump Port 4 — FR: 15

The highest level of Jump Porting an Operative can attain, before being pulled from active duty and stationed aboard a Jumpship. The user can now immediately relocate themselves to any other location within 1000km. No line of sight is needed providing the Ebonite has prior knowledge of the location and can picture it in their mind.

SENSES

"Have you ever wondered what it's like to be blind? Deaf? A mute? No? Then close your trap or you'll find out."

Regan, Eban Operative, SCL 7.8a,

Senses is the Ebonite art of manipulating the five core senses of man: sight, hearing, smell, speech and touch. With

enough training an Ebonite can temporarily remove these senses from a subject, or restore them as required. At higher levels, the discipline also allows for immunity to other Senses attacks as well as to protect the mind from a range of other Ebb disciplines. One of the most potent abilities that comes with the highest levels of the discipline is the ability to permanently remove one or more of a subject's senses.

Rank 1: Shock Sense — FR: 8

The user is able to remove one of the target's five senses for a short amount of time. The Ebonite is required to touch the target for Shock Sense to work. One sense is entirely removed. Aside from the confusion and fear that comes with such an experience, other modifiers may be applied to the target at the GM's discretion. The ability may also be used to put back a sense removed from Shock Sense.

Duration: 10 seconds.

Rank 1: Plant Image — FR: 8

The user is able to create hallucinations and plant fearful images in the subject's mind. The user can force any target within 20m to make an immediate Fear Test. If the test is failed the target suffers the Afraid fear effect.

Duration: 1 hour.

Rank 2: Remove Sense — FR: 10

Like Shock Sense. The Ebonite's ability to manipulate senses can now be done over a greater length of time. The Ebonite is required to touch the target for Remove Sense to work and one of the target's five senses is removed. The ability may also be used to put back a sense removed from Shock or Remove Sense.

Duration: 1 min.

Rank 2: Super Sense — FR: 7

The Ebonite is able to enhance their own senses, allowing them to see in the IR spectrum as well as a crude version of thermal imaging. In addition, the user's hearing and sense of smell is amplified. As well as the visual benefits, the user gains a +2 modifier to all Detect rolls.

Duration: 10 mins.

Rank 3: Full Recall — FR: 10

The user is able to tap into their own memories and sensory recollection of events to create clear pictures of things they have seen or recall conversations word for word. A single event up to 5 mins in duration can be recalled with great accuracy. During the recall, the memory/conversation etc. can be imprinted onto a vidslug (user is required to touch such an item) for a cost of 1 additional FLUX.

Rank 3: Mind Block — FR: -

This is a passive ability. The Ebonite is now immune to the Awareness discipline at rank 3 or lower used by other Ebonites. Particularly powerful Ebb users, such as Necanthropes may be able to overcome this ability.

Rank 4: Full Removal — FR: 14

The most powerful sense removal ability known to Ebb users, allowing for long-term removal of the senses. The Ebonite is required to touch the target for Full Removal to work and one of the target's five senses is permanently removed. The ability may also be used to put back a sense removed by a Senses ability.

Rank 4: Full Block — FR: -

This is a passive ability. The Ebonite is now immune to the Awareness, Communicate and Senses disciplines used by other Ebonites. Particularly powerful Ebb users, such as Necanthropes may be able to overcome this ability.

TELEKINESIS

"It's fucking wizardry, that's what it is. It ain't natural. They shouldn't be able to fly."

Shiver Pvt. Paul Horseshoe, Downtown Patrol

The discipline of Telekinesis allows users to physically move objects with little more than a thought. With training, larger objects can be moved at increasing speeds, with the most proficient users able to hurl a car faster than most Humans can throw a stone. The discipline also allows for the manipulation of air particles to form invisible shields and to enable the user to levitate, literally walking on air. Telekinesis at its highest level allows for flight, something that is frowned upon by many Ebonites, but commonly used all the same.

Rank 1: Lift & Throw — FR: 7

The user is able to move inanimate objects by simply looking at them. An object within 2m and with a Weight Factor (WF) no greater than 1 may be moved. The item may be moved up to a maximum of 10m and must stay within the Ebonite's line of sight at all times (it will drop to the floor if line of sight is lost). An item with a WF no greater than 1 may be moved fast enough to use it as a weapon, using the following profile:

Lift & Throw

Skill:	Telekinesis				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
1d10-4	2	1	1	0	10m

Objects with a WF lower than 1 may do less damage at the GM's discretion.

Rank 1: Shield — FR: 8

It is possible to physically manipulate air particles to create a temporary shield around the Ebonite that will displace the energy of incoming projectile attacks. The user gains +2 PV to their armour vs any ranged attack (hand-to-hand attacks are not stopped). The shield has a Resistance of 10 (all AD is done to the shield rather than the Ebonite's Deathsuit) and will last until it is either destroyed, or the duration expires.

Duration: 2 mins.

Rank 2: Lift & Throw 2 — FR: 9

The user can now manipulate and move inanimate objects within 20m and Weight Factor (WF) no greater than 4 may be moved. The object must stay within the Ebonite's line of sight at all times (it will drop to the floor if line of sight is lost). An item with a WF no greater than 4 may be moved fast enough to use it as a weapon, using the following profile:

Lift & Throw 2

Skill:	Telekinesis				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
1d10	4	1	1	0	25m

Objects with a Weight Factor lower than 4 may do less damage at the GM's discretion.

Rank 2: Levitate — FR: 10

The user is able to levitate at up to 1m in height, allowing them to walk over hazardous areas, reach areas out of their normal grasp or move silently by not touching the ground. The character may only move using their Closing speed when levitating and gains a +2 modifier to any Stealth skill rolls.

Duration: 1 min.

Rank 3: Advanced Shield — FR: 11

Like Shield. The user may now create a more robust shield by manipulating multiple layers of air particles around them. This version of the shield grants the user +4 PV to their armour vs any ranged attack and +2 PV against any hand-to-hand attack. The shield has a Resistance of 16 (all AD is done to the shield rather than the Ebonite's Deathsuit) and will last until it is either destroyed, or the duration expires.

Duration: 5 mins.

Rank 3: Manipulate — FR: 12

The Ebonite is now capable of physically manipulating live targets, pushing and pulling them, or stopping them in their tracks. A target within 25m and line of sight may be held in place, pinned to the ground or slowly pushed and pulled around. Stronger targets may be able to fight free of Manipulate, but doing so is at the GM's discretion. While manipulating others, the user must remain stationary and focused, if they perform any other action or anything causes them to lose any Hit Points their control over the target is lost. Duration: 1 min. Alternatively, Manipulate may also be used to choke a target by forcing their airways closed.

Manipulate

Skill:	Telekinesis				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
3/round	NA	NA	1	0	25m

No roll to hit is required. Choking a target ignores all armour PV. There is no way to prevent the damage inflicted. The user may choose to keep the choke in place, by taking the recover action, representing their continued dedication to the ability. While being choked the target suffers -2 to all dice results during all dice rolls and may not move faster than their Closing speed.

Rank 4: Fly — FR: 14

The Ebonite is able to bend the laws of physics in such a way that they become capable of flight. Should any form of evasion or complex landing be needed, the Telekinesis skill should be used for any such tests. Flight is considered to have a Rushing speed of 12. Players should be wary of flying too high due to pollution levels in the air, particularly around the tops of skyscrapers or over the wall in the cannibal sectors.

Duration: 5 mins.

Rank 4: Lift & Throw 3 — FR: 15

The Ebonite's Telekinesis capabilities now allow them to move large inanimate items, such as vehicles. The user can move an object within 20m and with a weight comparable to a average car. The object must be within the Ebonite's line of sight to move it, but may move out of sight once it has gained momentum. The user may also move living targets with this ability. An item of this weight used as a weapon will likely crush and kill most targets. The exact damage done by such an attack is up to the GM. An object with a Weight Factor no greater than 10 may be moved fast enough to use it as a weapon, using the following profile:

Lift & Throw 3					
Skill:	Telekinesis				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
2d10-3	6	3	1	0	40m
Lighter objects may do less damage at the GM's discretion.					

THERMAL

"Ya know it wasn't that long ago that our kind were throwing ice AND fire. Something changed. Like the Ebb decided to say 'fuck you' to us an' teach us a lesson. Make us get back to basics. Accept our roots. Even the Necanthropes that are still kicking about lost one or the other. Keep warm or stay cold. We don't have a choice these days, it's all a matter of origin."

Base, Eban Operative, SCL 7b, squad 'Baseline'

The Thermal discipline is divided into two sub-disciplines: Blue Thermal, available only to Ebons and Red Thermal, available only to Wasters. The disciplines were once entirely separate and available to all, but unexpected changes to the Ebb caused the loss of abilities, even to those who had studied the ways of Thermal for many years. The relation of blue to Ebon and red to Eban is theorised to be related to the natural temperament of those following such paths, though related evidence is circumstantial at best.

Blue Thermal allows for the control and manipulation of cold, from creating blades out of ice to freezing the air around the user. Red Thermal is the polar opposite, representing control of heat, allowing the user to set themselves ablaze or hurl fire from their hands.

Note: Each Thermal ability is available only to Blue or Red Thermal users, as noted in the following table.

Rank 1: Heat Resistance — FR: -

Blue Thermal only. This is a passive ability. The Ebon is naturally immune to freezing temperatures and is able to resist high heats by cooling their body temperature. Additionally, Blue Thermal users are able to touch scolding hot metal without being burnt and are able to cool items or people by touching them. The Ebon may still suffer the burning condition.

Rank 1: Cold Manipulation — FR: 7

Blue Thermal only. The Ebon is able to create temperatures down to -10°C degrees within a 5m radius, making it particularly uncomfortable for others, freezing water and making the ground icy and slippery. Additionally, the user may immediately remove the burning condition and is immune to that condition for the duration of the ability.

Duration: 2 mins.

Rank 1: Cold Resistance — FR: -

Red Thermal only. This is a passive ability. The Eban is naturally immune to high temperatures and is able to resist freezing temperatures by warming their body on demand. Additionally, the user is able to melt ice and warm items or people by touching them. The Eban can still be frozen by extreme temperatures.

Rank 1: Heat Manipulation — FR: 7

Red Thermal only. The Eban is able to create heat up to 40°C degrees within a 5m radius. Such temperatures can be very uncomfortable to those in the local vicinity, making it hard to concentrate or function correctly. In addition, the user can intensify a fire, causing it to burn hotter. Anyone within a 5m radius currently suffering from the burning condition will suffer 1 additional damage every 30 seconds.

Duration: 2 mins.

Rank 2: Ice Blade — FR: 9

Blue Thermal only. The Ebon is able to create a razor sharp blade of ice in their hand, or as an extension of their forearm.

Duration: 10 mins.

Ice Blade

Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+1	4	1	0

The blade is good for 3 successful attacks. On the 3rd successful attack the blade will shatter, gaining +1 Min DMG for that attack. Once formed, the blade remains solid for 10 mins or until shattered, whichever comes first.

Rank 2: Burn — FR: 9

Red Thermal only. The Eban is able to project a stream of fire from their hand, allowing them to ignite nearby items or to use as a weapon.

Burn

Skill:	Thermal				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
1d10-1	3	2	1	0	5m

Any target hit by Burn is set alight and suffers the burning condition.

Rank 3: Cold Aura — FR: 11

Blue Thermal only. The Ebon is able to create a freezing aura around them that covers a 2m radius. Unlike Cold Manipulation, this aura represents an instant blast that freezes deep into people's bodies, solidifying blood in the veins and splitting skin.

Cold Aura

Skill:	NA				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
1d10+4	6	3	1	0	2m

Everyone within the 2m radius is automatically hit with no skill roll required.

Rank 3: Body Blaze — FR: 6

Red Thermal only. The Eban is able to set their body alight in spectacular fashion, turning their entire self into a dangerous weapon. **Duration:** 2 mins.

Body Blaze

Skill:	Unarmed Combat		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+4	5	2	0

Any target hit by the Eban with Body Blaze in unarmed combat is set alight and suffers the burning condition. Alternatively, the Eban may set alight any melee weapon, adding +2 DMG, +1AD and inflicting the burning condition on any target hit by the weapon.

Rank 4: Razor Ice Blade — FR: 13

Blue Thermal only. The user is able to create an exceptionally powerful version of the ice blade, either to be held in their hand, or as an extension of their forearm. **Duration:** 15 mins.

Razor Ice Blade

Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-4	8	3	0

The blade is good for 5 successful attacks. On the 5th successful attack the blade will shatter, gaining + 1 Min DMG and +1 AD for that attack. Once formed, the blade remains solid for 15 mins or until shattered, whichever comes first.

Rank 4: Advanced Cold Manipulation — FR: 14

Blue Thermal only. A more powerful version of Cold Manipulation. The Ebon is now able to create temperatures down to -30°C degrees within a 15m radius, freezing the surrounding area. This ability can crack glass, instantly turn most liquids to ice, causing sudden blizzards and will freeze anyone with STR 4 or less in place, inflicting the immobile condition. Anyone caught in the cold will instantly lose 1 Hit Point every minute, increased to 3 Hit Points every minute if they are not wearing sealed armour. **Duration:** 2 mins.

Advanced Cold Manipulation has an additional passive ability, meaning that the Ebon is permanently immune to the burning condition.

Rank 4: Extreme Burn — FR: 13

Red Thermal only. Like Burn. The Eban is able to project extremely hot streams of fire from their hands, capable of melting through metal and igniting almost any substance.

Extreme Burn

Skill:	Thermal				
DMG	Min DMG	AD	ROF	Recoil	Range
2d10	7	5	1	0	10m

Any target hit by Extreme Burn is set alight and suffers the burning condition. The fire is particularly hard to put out and will take more than water to extinguish.

Rank 4: Advanced Heat Manipulation — FR: 14

Red Thermal only. The Eban is able to create heat up to 60°C degrees within a 10m radius. Such temperatures can cause physical damage to flesh and will be extremely uncomfortable to almost everyone in the local vicinity, as both liquids and metals begin to rise in temperature. Anyone caught in the heat will instantly lose 2 Hit Points every minute and their Encumbrance Value is reduced to 1 whilst in the affected area. **Duration:** 2 mins.

Advanced Heat Manipulation has an additional passive ability, meaning that the Eban is permanently immune to cold of any temperature and cannot be frozen by the 'Advanced Cold Manipulation' ability.

+++ DIARY ENTRY 1 +++

I was told it was okay to keep this diary, but Cloak Division would be reading it when I got out. If I got out. When I asked what the colour of the BPN was, the man behind the desk just shrugged. "These ones don't have a colour yet."

Something new. Which in SLA usually means something bad. I've only been under the employ of the company for about 5 days and already I know this.

No regular squad. No real data on what I'm meant to do besides contact 'Operative Harris'. I was given double starting pay and told to tool up for a long trip. Again, this probably means something bad.

When I finally catch up with Harris we're in a urine-soaked alleyway at the base of Inner Downtown District 5. Right on the border of 'Lower'. He doesn't ask my name, my training package, nothing like that.

All he wants to know is…

+++

"Where you from?"

"Eh, Malden. A-are you Operative Harris? I'm Jane, Jane Urba-"

"Malden?!" Harris shouts, tearing the helmet from his head, "You mean we weren't raised in Mort bloody City?!"

"N-no, but I've done extensive research through Threat Analysis Classes 8 through 12."

Jane Urbano was surprised how old Harris was; at least forty, with grey sweeps through his curly black hair. He had three long pale scars down one cheek, partially obscured by his thick sideburns.

He was Human, like her. It should have been a comfort, but it wasn't.

Harris began to laugh.

"Ha! SLA must hate your sodding guts, ha ha! They sent you down here for this, man oh man. What's your name anyway?"

"Jane Urbano."

"Plain Jane. That's what me mum called my sister. I hated my sister, so let's stick with Urbano, alright? Think you can handle that?"

"Ease up, Harris."

Jane turned to see to the outline of an Aetherman enter the alley, before her eyes flinched away from the torchlight shone in her face.

The Aetherman barely acknowledged the two Operatives again and simply turned the torch beam to view the vast murals of graffiti that had built up in the narrow corridor.

Jane gazed up at what the torch beam had illuminated: crudely spray-painted Dream Entities with obscure corresponding symbols, words of warning in amongst telephone numbers and promises of sexual encounters.

Finally, the cone of light fell upon the large yellow arrow, covering seven feet of the far wall, pointing directly to a large iron grate on the cement floor. Upon the lid, were the words:

"Come and See."

"Our invitation to the party. It's Jane Urbano, isn't it?"

The Aetherman reached out a bulky gloved hand towards her.

"I'm Greyson. Nice to meet you."

She smiled back, almost relieved for reasons that escaped her in the moment.

"And I see you've met Harris."

"Yeah, she's met me. Big wow, now can we quit the circle jerk?"

Harris huffed as he crouched down towards the iron grating. He stopped and glanced up.

"Don't just bloody stand there! Help me with the bastard."

+++

"Look, could one of you at least tell me why I'm, I mean, we're here?"

Harris had put his helmet back on, and with its fitted spotlight, he peered down inside the hole, into the blackness.

"Keep it down!" He hissed. A moment later, he silently motioned for them to follow as he carefully slipped beneath the last layer of Inner Downtown.

Jane was next down the service ladder, and as she turned to face Harris he was already motioning her to be silent, and pointed to her Exo Armour helmet strapped to her belt.

She nodded and placed on her helmet. Harris drew his rifle, a basic FEN AR, and stared down at what appeared to be an oily and dark maintenance corridor. A long series of pipes ran down the narrow stretch of tunnel, all cracked and leaking profusely, giving the impression of pouring rain.

The damp conditions had proven a suitable breeding ground for all manner of algae and moss, and the ground felt slippery and moist beneath her boots.

Greyson's bulky Aetherman Armour made surprisingly little sound as he carefully descended the rusted rungs by her side. The two lines of blue visor light on his helmet flickered and rolled, as he nodded and motioned for her to move out, then quietly took up the rear.

"Audio test." Harris's voice crackled through her ear piece.

"Clear."

"Clear." Greyson responded.

Harris paused and checked his enviro-scanner, briefly looking up at an enormous crack in one of the water pipes that was gushing its foul contents yet were oddly sweet smelling.

"Okay, careful; we've got ourselves KZ-14 straight out of the gate. Helmets stay on until I say otherwise."

"Got it."

Harris crept over to the buckled doors of a service elevator, the dim light of which still flickered on and off from within, allowing a thin sliver of an opening for them to gaze in. Harris glanced for a little more than a few seconds and then motioned for them to carry on.

Jane paused briefly to peer inside: the withered, half chewed remains of 5 maintenance workers were piled on top of each other. They looked dead for some time.

"Keep moving, we have a lot of ground to cover." Greyson whispered.

"Yeah there'll be plenty more of that on the way to where we're going." Harris said. "You ever heard of the Deep Construct, Urbano?"

Jane had, but not too much. Just as much as anyone was told at Meny. If Lower Downtown was a nightmare, then the Deep Construct: the countless descending levels beneath it, were

considered even worse. The tutors hadn't said a great deal about the region, but the trainee Ops were all whispers about the horrific rumours. It was rife with Dream Entities, absurdities, things that didn't make any sense.

"Yes, Harris. I was told not to go there."

"Hear that Greyson? 'Can't beat a higher education, eh?"

"Stop playing with her, Harris. Formal briefing. Now." Greyson replied.

Harris came to a halt at the top of the tiled stairwell and ran a hand along the stained floral decoration. Jane saw that he seemed to straighten up as he examined the ornamentation, as though it was a signal, a warning of danger.

"You'll have a bunch of questions, Urbano, and every one of them's got an answer. An answer you won't like, so let's start with the basics. You and me? We're SAC Ops. Even our friendly neighbourhood Aetherman here gets the honorary title."

"Sack Ops?"

"SAC Ops. S-A-C. Short for Sweep and Clear. The reason you didn't get a BPN colour is because this is so new they haven't chosen one for it yet. But in terms of sheer popularity, it'll be right up there with Orange and Black. We're going to be as unpopular as Sector Rangers."

"So what are we …." Jane went to ask, and found the answer on the end of her thought process.

"Yes, that's right, Jane. We're going into the Deep Construct." Greyson said.

Harris stopped a few steps down and turned to Jane.

"Okay, see this?" He gently tapped one of the wall tiles. "These are McMillan tiles. That decoration; you only see this in Lower Downtown onwards. It's how you know you're in the danger zone. They don't seem to belong, do they? And with weird architecture comes weird individuals."

Harris started back down the stairwell, and continued:

"SLA's been purposefully avoiding this place for years. Well, centuries if we're being honest. The longer they left it, the worse it got. But hey, if you've spent any time around Inner Downtown you'll see it's packed to the gills. Everyone living on top of each other. It's bloody chaos. Yet, here we are, and there's nobody around. When was the last time it was ever this quiet? SLA paid a shit ton to build property down here and it's barely occupied. That's why we're here. We sweep, we clear. We report back. SLA's taking back the region, just like the Bellwood Campaign."

"Movement." Greyson interrupted.

He was looking down at a motion tracker, checking the reading. He slowly drew a compact Jolt Pistol from his belt.

Harris paused.

"How many?" Harris's voice was now flat and stern.

"Tight cluster, so it's a difficult reading. Maybe twenty."

"Civilian block?" Jane asked.

"Not in this Sector." Harris replied, "Dream Entities?"

"No," Greyson said, "Unlikely, they don't usually group this high up."

Harris let out a long sigh.

"It better not be Derros, I'm telling you now. It's too early for that kind of action. Urbano, what are you packing?"

"10-10."

"Shotgun. Messy, and loud."

"Maybe if you two had told me I was going to be a SAC Operative I'd have packed appropriate."

"Enough, you two!" Greyson snapped, "Let me check the nava-map, and see what's up ahead."

The Aetherman hunkered down, unslung his backpack and quickly rummaged through the contents.

"You hear that?" Harris whispered.

Jane crept over to his side and strained to hear. It was faint, but there were audible sounds further down the passageway; an area almost entirely shrouded in darkness. The shifting torch lights barely impacted the gloom.

"Sounds like … birds. Chirping, or whistles?" Jane said.

"Fuck, it's gonna be Derros." Harris grunted, shaking his head.

"More maintenance. Living quarters for gauss-line workers, very old. Twenty metres, north west." Greyson muttered, turning the dials on a battered nava-map. "Could be long out of date."

"Let's see." Harris raised a hand for the device, and quickly glanced at the screen.

"Alright!" he said, chucking the map back at Greyson, "Straightforward enough - Urbano, quiet and low. Greyson - hang back, the Derros might pick up on your equipment. But be ready to assist. Clear?"

Jane and Greyson nodded.

+++

The passageway was uncomfortably warm, and cramped, Jane felt as though she were trapped inside the vein of some enormous, lumbering monster, whose heartbeat was the constant thrum of water filtration pipes, deep within the walls.

All along the slimy floor leading to the living quarters were countless bones of Mort rats, that crunched underfoot and wherever the torch beams landed, a sea of cockroaches dispersed, skittering into the deep gloom.

There was a faint smell of stale sweat and excrement.

Harris tapped his gloved hand to her shoulder, then pointed towards large bulkhead double doors. Across the surface was what appeared to be the faded remains of a cartoonish depiction of a gauss train, which said underneath: 'Happy Trails."

"Fucking hilarious." Harris whispered through the a/v in his helmet. "Get ready"

Harris motioned Jane to the left-hand side of the doors, and then crept to the right, placing his hand over a push button entry system.

Once Jane was in position, he nodded.

"One … two … three."

He pressed, and the doors bellowed in protest but gradually shunted themselves apart.

Even through the powerful respirators in their helmets, the stench was appalling.

They had spun around in unison, guns raised, ready to blast away a pack of monstrosities that were sure to leap at them…

There were around twenty occupants in the living quarters, but they were neither Derros nor Dream Entities.

"What are they?" Jane murmured.

They appeared to be human, but only in the loosest possible sense of the word. Their ages varied from ten going up to anywhere around fifty. It was difficult to tell with the males, because most had long, ratty hair and beards obscuring their faces.

They were the source of the chirps and whistles, now much louder and more panicked. They backed away from Jane and Harris.

Not a single individual was wearing clothes, but their nakedness was mostly concealed by layers of filth.

Jane tried to take in what she was seeing. It was only their anatomy that specified that they were human; everything else suggested animal. They stumbled around on all fours, in such a manner as to suggest they had never walked upright. Their vocalisations, their body language, even the way they shied away from the artificial lights suggested they had never seen an actual real human before.

"They're Dregs, Urbano." Harris said, flatly. He was already lowering his rifle and motioning for Greyson to approach.

"It's rare to see them this high up. They've likely been in here a while, for the warmth, maybe hiding from whatever else is down here."

"I mean, what are they?" Jane caught herself, she had begun to shout. The smell within the room was churning her stomach.

"Like Harris said, Jane - Dregs." Greyson joined them. His voice sounded sad, almost apologetic. "Not a particularly nice name, but here they are. Yes, they're human but they've been isolated so long that all their humanity's just slipped away. The lights went out, tvs went off and the food dwindled. Generation after generation. They are simply reduced to this, over hundreds of years."

"Why didn't we help them?" Jane said.

"We never came down far enough to find them. SLA has always turned a blind eye to Lower Downtown. This is some of that backwash."

"Fuck me…" Jane looked at them again. The poor creatures looked utterly terrified, pressing themselves into huddled corners. "We can't just leave them."

"No. We can't." Harris said.

Jane turned slowly, to face him. She could tell where he was going by the tone of his voice.

"Harris, you're not serious…"

Harris marched towards her.

"You're a SAC Op, Jane! Sweep and Clear. That's why you're here. This is what we do."

"They're Human fucking beings, Harris!" She shouted, violently shrugging away Greyson's hand from her shoulder.

"Fucking look at them." Harris yelled back, "Rats live better than this."

Jane stared at the Dregs.

"Have you ever killed anyone before, Jane?" Greyson asked.

"No…I have not." She said softly, "Just carnivorous pigs, on a training exercise."

"There shouldn't be a problem, then! You're not going to be killing anyone. You'll be shooting pigs." Harris said, checking the clip in his FEN AR.

"They aren't pigs, you fucking asshole!" Jane screamed, "They're people."

"Then fuck off back upstairs and get a different job!" Harris shouted, "Or stay, and pull the fucking trigger! They picked you as SAC for a reason."

"I don't know why they picked me!"

"They picked you because you'll do what you have to." Greyson said, pointing a FEN Finisher rifle and towards the Dregs.

Jane stared at Greyson for a moment that seemed to go on forever. He did not fire. He was waiting.

She raised her shotgun.

The prosaic silence of the Downtown tunnel erupted with the deafening sound of gunfire, fleeting screams and muzzle flash lightning.

+++

"You knew." Jane said, "You knew they'd be there."

She sat on her pack, knees drawn to her chin, staring at the blue flicker of Greyson's portable camp stove. Harris had his back to them, already half an hour in his sleeping bag. Every ten seconds he let out a whistling snore.

Greyson was eating the contents of a tin of Piggy Wiggy, but he paused, the last spoonful at his lips, as Jane addressed him. He didn't look at her.

"No." Greyson said, "and yes."

He swallowed down the last mouthful, and eased round to face her.

"Exterminations are part of our mission parameters. Within the first week you'd be shooting them and others. Finding them this high up was… unconventional. They may have been driven up by Derros, maybe NightStalkers. We need to be ready for that as we descend."

She nodded, still staring at the flame.

"Are you angry?"

"No … and yes."

"You think we could have saved them, but we couldn't. Naga 7 has tried to rehabilitate a few adults, but they remained in a state of hysteria until we recreated their environment."

"And what about the children."

"Jane, you're in the wrong universe if you were expecting altruism. I take no pleasure in killing these people, nor does he." Greyson pointed his spoon at Harris. "But others who'll follow, will. Stormers enjoying easy targets, Carrien and Manchines. It's much worse when the Shi'An get hold of them. Harris is incorrect: they aren't pigs. Pigs on Mort put up a fight. They're more like sheep."

"What's a sheep?"

"Go to fucking bed, Jane." Harris spoke without moving, "Greyson, first watch. Four hours."

Harris adjusted himself and returned to his dozing.

"I know you don't understand why you're here, regardless of what I tell you." Greyson said, putting his helmet back on. "But you will, soon enough."

"We'll come to understand everything down here."

… to be continued.

HARDWARE

MELEE WEAPONS

The cameras love close combat, the ratings have proven it time and time again. On average, vicious melee combat will garner twice the viewership of a firefight, with particularly violent conflict staying in The Killing Floor's 'most watched' for many months at a time. Engaging enemies up close will put you in a sponsor's eye much easier than being a sharp shooter. As such, melee weapons have been the hottest part of SLA's portfolio for the last 10 years. To ensure the media continues to benefit from such action, SLA Industries not only increased the bullet tax, but also placed a strict price cap on all mainstream melee weapons, compensating the manufacturers directly to offset any loss in revenue. The glamorisation of melee weapons means that anything that makes it onto prime time this week will be next week's biggest seller.

BOSH SLA Blade

Made on contract exclusively for SLA employees, the BOSH SLA Blade is an all-nylon construction, lightweight blade, compact enough to be easily concealed and is perfectly balanced for throwing. The blade comes with a sheath as standard.

BOSH SLA Blade			Cost: 5c
Skill:	Melee Weapons/Throw		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-4	1	0	0
May be used as a thrown weapon using the Throw skill.			

DPB Gash Fist

The Gash Fist mounts to the back of the hand and forearm and contains two blades that extend forward over the top of the hand, allowing the unarmed combatant to use Vibro-weapons without needing a spare hand to do so. The blades are carbon fibre, strengthened with quartz and use the same oscillation technology as the Vibro Sabre, allowing them to carve through armour with relative ease.

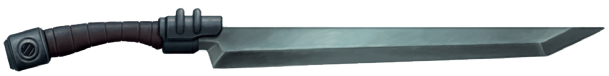
DPB Gash Fist			Cost: 80c
Skill:	Unarmed Combat		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-1	3	1	1

DPB Vibro Sabre

"Something about the Sabre is just… 'right'. The grip feels right, the noise it makes feels right, the amount of hurt it delivers feels so, so right. I can't imagine ever needing another blade."

Shae 'Rattle' Cross, Human Operative, SCL 6.1, squad 'Shae n' Fal'

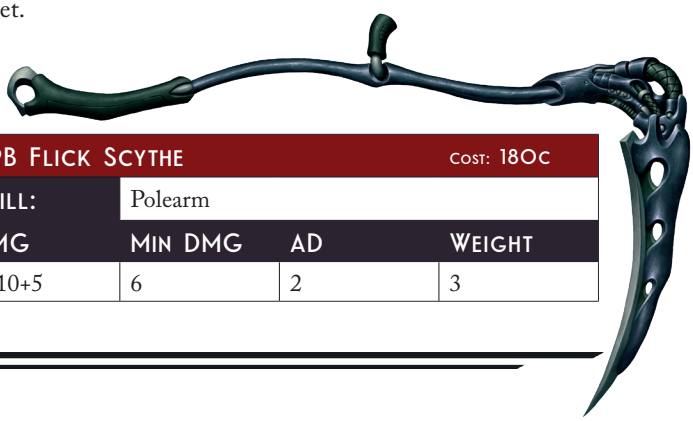
DPB's patented oscillation technology led to the development of the Vibro Sabre, the most popular melee weapon amongst Operatives today. The blade's 5000 hour power supply keeps the blade working even on the longest tours and the carbon fibre/silicon hybrid blade stays razor sharp for over 10,000 cuts.



DPB Vibro Sabre			Cost: 100c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-1	4	1	1

DPB Flick Scythe

A high powered polearm which uses DPBs oscillating blade technology. The weapon offers Vibro-technology with a longer reach, for those combatants who prefer to keep their enemies that bit further away. The blade is fully retractable, allowing it to fold down flat to the shaft for ease of carry. A switch beside the 'easy grip' hand holds allows the blade to 'flick' open in an instant. As with all DPB products, the powerpack is good for 5000 hours and can easily be recharged from any mains power outlet.



DPB Flick Scythe			Cost: 180c
Skill:	Polearm		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+5	6	2	3

GASH Chain Axe

"As long as it's Jack that kills me, I'd be happy to get slaughtered."

Unknown Mort civilian, overheard in the 'RipAsunder' sports bar

The most iconic of all melee weapons, made famous through reputation and turned into the weapon of nightmares by Halloween Jack himself. The Chain Axe is a two-handed polearm with an extremely high powered chainsaw unit attached to the end. The weapon will rend through armour and do massive damage to flesh and bone with every strike. Though the weapon is notoriously unwieldy, the fact that it is used by Mort's most feared Serial Killer has made it the weapon of choice for many aspiring Operatives.

GASH Chain Axe			Cost: 250c
Skill:	Polearm		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10+2	9	4	3

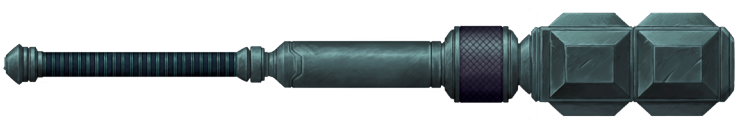
The Chain Axe is particularly hard to use. A modifier of -1 to the Success Die is always applied when making attacks with a Chain Axe. Should every dice result in a failure during any roll to hit with this weapon, along with the usual need to take the Recover action during the next combat round, the user is also hurt by the weapon, taking 5 DMG and 3 AD.

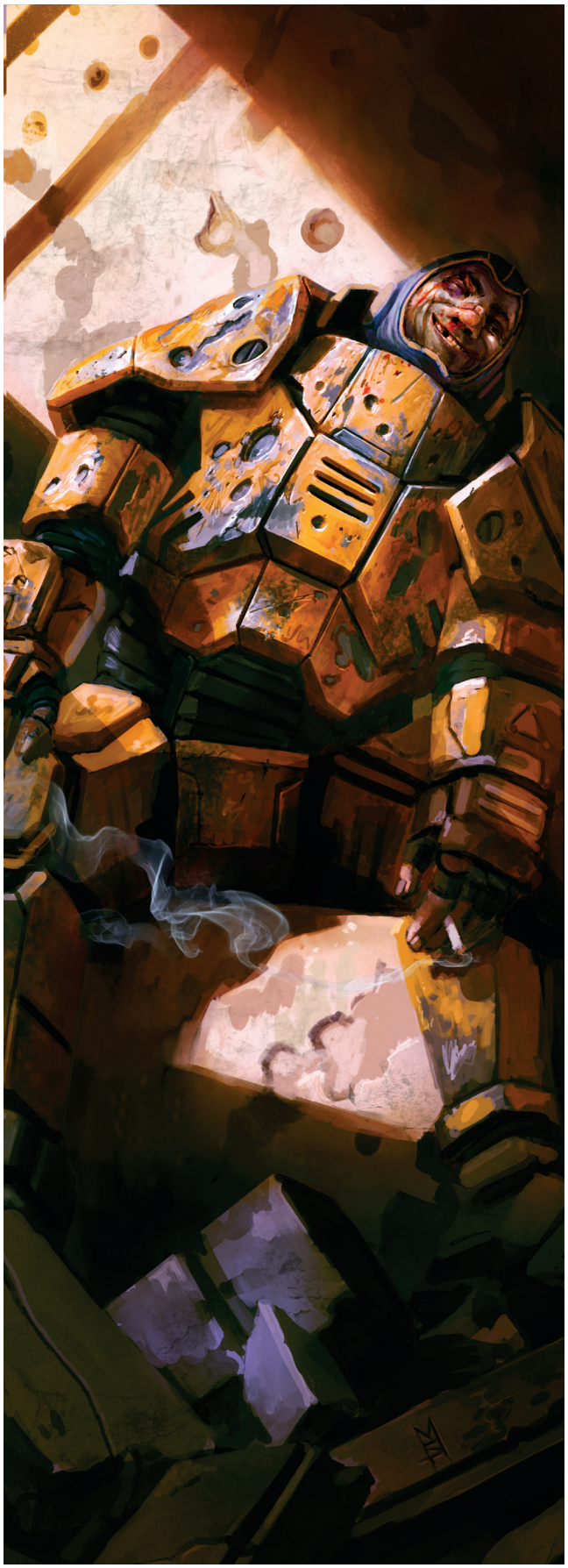
GASH Clearance Baton

"Oh my, this thing is explosive. Robb's up to bat and the ball is chucked, he lines it up and … a swing and a boom! Hours of endless fun."

Tevo Robb, Frother Operative, SCL 10.5, squad 'Drop Donkey'

The Clearance Baton is a new development from the same team at GASH that brought us the much loved Pacifier Baton. Utilising the same technology as its smaller brother, this large, two handed polearm terminates with a large club head that delivers a powerful jolt at the time of impact. A strike from a Clearance Baton results in massive damage to armour and structural targets as well as a shock which is capable of stunning or knocking targets clean off their feet. The baton utilises a kinetically charged powerpack, which recharges itself as it's swung, allowing it to top up the 12,000-hour battery contained within the shaft.



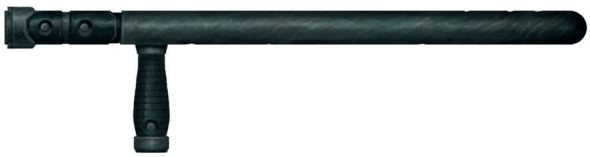


GASH Clearance Baton			Cost: 200c
Skill:	Polearm		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+3	6	4	3
Any roll to hit with a Clearance Baton that earns an exceptional margin of success, or greater, will also knock the target to the ground, inflicting the prone condition. Any unarmoured target that is hit by a Clearance Baton immediately suffers the stunned condition.			

GASH Pacifier Baton

The Pacifier Baton is an urban pacification weapon used largely by the Shiver Organisation under the designation of the 'SHV-04 Pacifier Baton'. It is manufactured by GASH, the same team that brought us the Chain Axe. The weapon is a dependable high-frequency shock baton that delivers a huge pulse of energy at the point of impact. While the damage output is somewhat lower than most blades, the weapon does deliver significant damage to armour and extreme discomfort to those unfortunate enough to be struck by one.

An offensive technique orginally developed by Pacifier Shivers in Cannibal Sector 1, called 'Defensive Kata', is becoming popular with Operatives; The offensive technique additionally reduces the target's defensive capabilities and looks great on TV.



GASH Pacifier Baton			Cost: 90c
Skill:	Melee Weapon		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	2	3	1
Any unarmoured target that is hit by a Pacifier Baton immediately suffers the stunned condition. Pacifier Batons may be used as a pair, with one in each hand. Only a single attack may be made still during a Combat Round, but by using a 2nd baton in this way, opposing combatants may not perform a Combat Defence (Acrobatic Defence is still permitted).			

ITB Mutilator Fist

"If you ever need to feel powerful, take the Mutilator. If a small guy like me can punch through a wall with it, what more excuse do you need? "

Timmy Franks, Human Operative, SCL 8.7

A powered gauntlet that delivers a devastating amount of damage to both a target and their armour. The Mutilator fist slides over, or entirely replaces, the gauntlet of an armour suit, allowing the user to use the weapon as a regular glove. The Mutilator Fist has enough dexterity outside of combat to perform most tasks, though it is not possible to use other weapons with it. The fists internal power supply is good for over 5000 hours, though this can be reduced with significant usage.

ITB Mutilator Fist			Cost: 150c
Skill:	Unarmed Combat		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10	4	3	1
While the gauntlet is reasonably dextrous, the hand using the Mutilator Fist is not able to operate firearms or hold other melee weapons.			

MAC Knife

"It's hard to imagine an Operative passing over the MAC for something else, but it does happen. We know that they will eventually come around and get one though. "

T.T. Shearton, Head of Innovation, Multi Angular Cutters

The Multi Angular Cutters' MAC Knife is the most popular choice of unpowered knife in the World of Progress. Its carbon/ceramic construction ensures it's almost indestructible and its long history of usage in all conditions adds weight to that claim. The design was released over a hundred years ago, into an already crowded market, but a century later, it's the only knife from that era still in active manufacture. A powered version was released, but it proved to be considerably less popular than the unpowered one and so the model was discontinued.

The sheath for the MAC Knife, a relatively recent design from the late 800s, contains a self-sharpening system that ensures the knife remains sharp every time it's drawn.

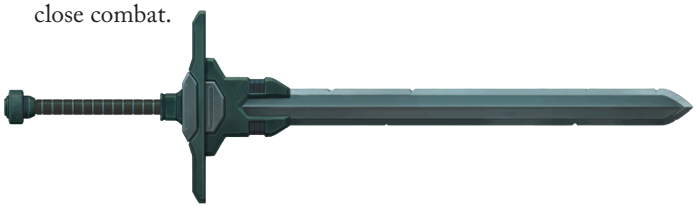
MAC Knife			Cost: 80c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-3	2	1	1

MJL Power Claymore 300

"Aye, it's a big dod o' metal and it don't half clang off bonces. Mine has auld Hiberian leid on it, telling tales o' battles I missed on account of no being born and that, but it's ma history and I like stickin' ma history in fucking bawbags' heids."

Gretna Shine, Frother Operative, SCL 8b, squad 'Elective Incomes'

Developed to attract the Frother population, the Power Claymore is based on traditional Hiberian claymore swords, used in the culture's ancient sports and by the great tribal warriors of their past. Such swords are seen as status symbols by Frothers today and the Power Claymore 300 is the biggest of them all. The weapon uses oscillation technology, though of a different design to that used by DPB, to deliver significant damage and to enhance the apparent sharpness of the blade. The blade itself is 1.5m in length and requires two hands to use; even the largest of Stormers will struggle to hold the 300 with one hand. Fitted with an industry standard 5000 hour power supply, the weapon makes a clear statement about the user's prowess in close combat.



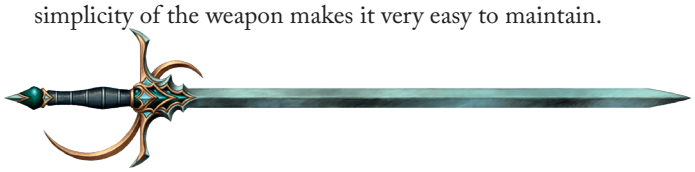
MJL Power Claymore 300			Cost: 140c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-3	7	2	3
This weapon requires two hands to use.			

Featherpoint Rapier

"It's easy to flicker-flash the Featherpoint's edge to distract the opponent, unless they have studied Menakohotep."

Captain Elaferu, Neophronic Council of the High Elect

The Featherpoint Rapier is a slim, one handed weapon of Neophronic heritage. Utilising a technology that is not dissimilar to that found in the DPB-line of products, the Featherpoint Rapier is able to pierce moderate armour with surprising ease. The overall design is far more suited to stabbing (as opposed to slashing motions), however the weapon excels at parrying and other defensive techniques. The Neophron are trained from birth in the art of the rapier, considering such sword craft to be an essential part of their upbringing, not in preparation for war, but simply because tradition dictates it. The power supply for the weapon is good for nearly 50,000-hours and the sheer simplicity of the weapon makes it very easy to maintain.

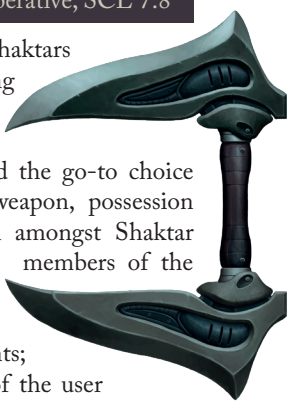


Featherpoint Rapier			Cost: 170c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-1	3	1	0
This weapon is only available to Neophron characters. A combatant armed with a Featherpoint Rapier applies an additional -1 modifier to the Success Die for each rank of Melee Weapons allocated to a Combat Defence manoeuvre.			

Shaktar Switchblade

"The weapon of my forebears is the weapon that defines me. To have faith in the blade is to have faith in who I am. I have bled upon this blade and will make others bleed upon it too, through ceremony, through survival, through battle."

Kl'Nrr'L'Karr'Tt, Shaktar Operative, SCL 7.8



A ceremonial weapon, sold exclusively to Shaktars and used in ritualistic combat during Shaktar ceremonies. Despite its ancestral connections, the weapon is in fact a deadly close combat weapon in its own right and the go-to choice for many Shaktars. Alongside being a weapon, possession of a Switchblade is also a status symbol amongst Shaktar elders that demands respect from other members of the species. The weapon, originally known as the K'llarn'knor'ttr'l, which has no literal translation in Killan, comes in two variants; one which is integrated into the armour of the user and the other being a hand-held version.

Shaktar Switchblade			Cost: 600c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+2	4	1	1
The Shaktar Switchblade is only available to Shaktars. A Shaktar that has one in their possession adds +1 to the Success Die for all CHA-related skill rolls when dealing with other Shaktars.			

Stormer Chuckleduster

Designed by GASH, the now rebranded Chuckleduster, this weapon is generally only sold to Stormers or other select species who have managed to file the correct paperwork and are strong enough to hold one. Such difficulty in obtaining the weapon is a direct attempt to keep the number of them on the streets of Mort as low as possible, given the sheer brutality that comes with using one. The weapon uses GASH's Chain Axe technology mounted into a huge handgrip, allowing the user to add the extreme carnage that comes with a chain weapon to the already significant impact of their natural punching power. The weapon is large and very heavy, but causes significant damage and is capable of rending its way through a steel door in less than a minute.

Stormer Chuckleduster			Cost: 200c
Skill:	Unarmed		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-4	8	3	3

Minimum of STR 5 is required to use a Chuckleduster, with STR 6 needed to use a pair. Chuckledusters may be used as a pair, with one in each hand. Only a single attack may be made still during a Combat Round, but by using a 2nd Chuckleduster in this way the attack gains +1 to both DMG and AD.

Generic Unpowered Melee Weapon (knife, pole, bat, chain etc.)

All manner of items can be used as melee weapons, from knives and bats, to chains and metal pipes. Some of these items are manufactured for the purpose of being a weapon; a nice knife will cost anywhere up to 150u from some of Downtown's better retailers, though many other items are simply repurposed from the scrap found laying around the city. All such weapons fall into the 'generic' category and are the typical armament of most Downtowners and gang members.

Generic Unpowered Melee Weapon			Cost: 0-20c/ 0-200u
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-4	1	0	0-2

This profile represents a wide collection of generic weaponry commonly found or improvised on the streets of Mort City. While there are obvious differences between a knife and a bat, all such weapons are considered to have the same damage potential.

Generic Unpowered Polearm (staff, spear etc.)

Other generic weapons include longer-ranged polarms, such as long metal pipes or makeshift spears, for example a knife strapped to the end of a pole. While less common than knives and bats, such weapons do turn up on the streets of Downtown, particularly in the hands of certain gangs who seem to 'theme' their weapon choices, like the 'Prowlers', who all opt to carry makeshift spears dipped in various drugs and chemicals.

Generic Unpowered Polearm			Cost: 0-20c/ 0-200u
Skill:	Polearm		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-3	2	0	0-3

This profile represents a wide collection of generic weaponry commonly found or improvised on the streets of Mort City. While there are obvious differences between a metal pole and a spear, all such weapons are considered to have the same damage potential.

Ranged Weapons

Firearms are the mainstay of the combat-ready Operative, from the high end luxury of Berenyi Light Arms (BLA), to FEN's range of War World approved 10mm caseless pistols and rifles. Recent media ratings have proven that firearms are less popular with the masses than melee weapons, but that is not enough to deter the constant roar of manufacture made by the arms industry both on and off-world. Firearms are available to all Operatives that can produce a valid SLA ID badge and are readily available direct from the manufacturer, as well as from a number of SLA-sanctioned retailers throughout Suburbia and Uptown. The civilian population are limited to only CAF-branded weapons, though many other brands do manage to find their way onto Downtown's black market.

Bullet Tax

SLA Introduced the bullet tax in 847. It was the new age of reality TV and SLA has just started televising Cannibal Sector violence. The ratings pointed towards melee weapon popularity and given that TV was proving to be a powerful control mechanism, anything that kept people in front of the screen had to be a good thing. Within twelve months, all bullets had seen a price increase of 40%.

As the years went by, the likes of FEN, BLA and MAL had all produced a new wave of highly effective and desirable weapons. Despite the extreme bullet tax having now driven ammunition prices up by over 150%, people were still buying bullets by the truck load. SLA had to accept that they simply could not stop Operatives using guns, though they had to admit that not only had they increased the presence of melee weapons on screen by ten-fold, they had also pushed tax revenues on firearms sales into a record high. With Corporate citing this as an adequate success, the bullet tax was held and continues to rise by a few percent every single year.

In game terms, bullets are very expensive. Use that ammo wisely!

Note: The DMG statistics in the following weapon profiles not only assume that standard ammunition is being used, but are also reflective of a single bullet being fired. As some weapons are not capable of firing only a single round, the actual DMG they may inflict is in fact much higher (see "Damage Modifier - ROF" on page 113 for more information). The values are stated in this way to allow a direct comparison between the capabilities of each weapon.

AGB/Core P82 Cloudfall Pistol

"They use in Sector and it do lots of hurt. If works out there then it works in here. I like gun."

Tord, Advanced Carrien Operative, SCL 7a, squad 'Rat Bait'

The Cloudfall was developed as a military sidearm for War World application, but over recent years has seen redeployment to Mort in the hands of the Sector Rangers out in Cannibal Sector 1. The weapon's weatherproof construction, robust

chassis and exceptional balance rapidly elevated it to the heights of desirability amongst those who have seen the Rangers in action, so, after two years of exclusive service, the Cloudfall has finally been made available for general purchase to Operatives. The weapon takes 18 rounds of 10mm ammunition and packs a considerable punch, making it a solid choice as a primary side arm for any situation.

AGB/Core P82 Cloudfall Pistol			Cost: 300c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	3	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/0	75m	18	20c

BLA 046M Blitzer

"Worth every single cred. I mean, it's expensive… I have to do, like… 14,000 blue BPNS or something to buy one, but you whip this baby out in someone's face and you can smell the shit in their pants before they even have time to think."

Sam 'Sammo' Western, Human Operative, SCL 5.7b, squad 'Sammo's Ammo'

Berenyi Light Arms (BLA) sit on the throne as the upper echelon of arms manufacturers in The World of Progress. More Operatives lust for a Blitzer than almost any other weapon available on Mort, not because the weapon is a significant cut above the rest, but because owning one is seen as a real status symbol amongst other Operatives. This has led to BLA carving the kind of reputation that simply never gets shaken. The Blitzer is a reassuringly heavy 12.7mm revolver that comes with a custom moulded grip as standard. As the Blitzer is handmade, there is a two-week wait for delivery, increased to three-weeks for any colour besides the default of matte black.

BLA 046M Blitzer			Cost: 895c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+4	6	2	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1	60m	6	50c

BLA 446M Derringer

"The issue with the BLA Derringer is that it was not the most telegenic weapon, so we needed to pair it with attractive corporates and, in the case of Ms. Hinton, when she got classy, she carried the 446M with her on her journey to elegance. It worked serendipitously for us. That was money well spent."

Trey Mandish, BLA Marketing Dept

The Derringer is a super compact powerhouse, designed for close-up, one-shot devastation. The Breach-loading 12.7mm weapon holds only two-rounds, giving it the appearance of a mini double barrelled shotgun. Though a fairly poor choice as a primary weapon, as a backup, the Derringer can probably be attributed to more life-saving last ditch efforts than any other weapon available and though the 446M struggles with a slow reload speed, the sheer damage output far outweighs such practical considerations. Made to the same standards as the rest of the BLA line, the Derringer has a build construction capable of surviving the Fission Belt collapse and is a firm favourite with Operatives from all walks of life.

BLA 446M Derringer			Cost: 450c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+3	5	2	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1*	2	20m	2	20c

The user may choose to fire both rounds at once. When doing so, treat the shot as though a single round was fired but add +3 DMG and +1 AD. Reloading this weapon takes two Combat Rounds.

BLA 646M Buzzsaw

"I once saw something offworld with one of these in each foot. They're just that odd."

'Bilter', Human Operative, SCL 8b, squad Nomad's Land

The Buzzsaw is an utter monster. The compact, short-nosed weapon was made in response to rival manufacturer's assault rifle offerings, by providing an increased rate of fire and huge capacity 9mm drum magazine. The use of 9mm ammo was originally shunned, but being BLA-branded meant that many Ops gave it a whirl anyway… they were not disappointed. In reality, the difference between BLA's proprietary 9mm rounds and the new industry standard 10mm caseless is simply not noticeable, particularly when a target is being hit by dozens of

rounds at once. While marketed as an assault rifle, the Buzzsaw is actually a super compact squad support weapon capable of inflicting significant damage to a wide area, especially when used in the claustrophobic back alleys of Downtown.

BLA 646M Buzzsaw				Cost: 850c
Skill:	Rifle			
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10+3	4	3		2
ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
10/SUP(50)	2/3	100m	180	170c
The Buzzsaw inflicts +1 DMG when using suppressive fire.				

BLA 710M Snubber

"It's small, it's light and it punches right through most of the armour we come up against. I carry two of them."

Timmy Franks, Human Operative, SCL 8.7

The Snubber is BLA's offering to the handgun market, using a rarer 9mm round in place of the common 10mm ammunition choice, trading some additional penetration for a slight drop in potential damage output. Since its release a few years ago, the Snubber has been through more of a love/hate relationship with Operatives than most of BLA's product line, but since recent armour advancements came into play, the effectiveness of 9mm ammunition has driven popularity (and the price tag) of the weapon up considerably.

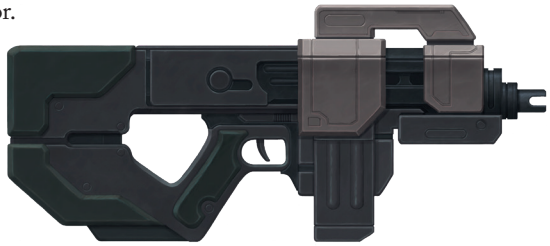
BLA 710M Snubber				Cost: 250c
Skill:	Pistol			
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10-1	3	1		0
ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/1	85m	14	30c

BLA 819M Pusher

"Looks the part, eh?"

Bill Walsh, Editor "Lead Chuckers" Magazine

BLA's first submachine gun offering since the company was launched. The Pusher is a high-end SMG for the discerning Op that is looking for performance, quality of build and the reputation of using a BLA-branded weapon. The 819M uses 9mm rounds, made popular by the Snubber many years ago, offering superior penetration and notable stopping power in a compact package. BLA manufactures two different clip sizes for the Pusher, 'short' and 'long', allowing the weapon to be tailored perfectly to the user's outfit and offering enough ammunition capacity to lay down suitable amounts of suppressive fire when the situation requires. As with all BLA weapons, the Pusher sports the absolute utmost of build quality, reliability and cool factor.



BLA 819M Pusher				Cost: 500c
Skill:	Pistol/Rifle			
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10	4	1		1
ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3/10/ SUP(40)*	0/1/3	85m	20 (short) 40 (long)	40c (short) 80c (long)
*Suppressive Fire is only available when using long clips.				

BLA GAG60 Driller

"The Driller is one of the greatest weapons of our time, kid. Our Support Gunners have been ploughing through Carriens and Pigs with this baby for years. Fenwick knows his shit. If there's one thing he got right, it was picking our kit. We got it pretty good here… so suck it up."

Scout Sgt. Harper, Sector Rangers

The GAG60 Driller is one of the most high-tech rifles to be released in the last 100 years. Made originally for the Sector Ranger program, it is now available for sale to SLA Employees via select outlets in Uptown. The weapon uses 12.7mm ammunition combined with a revolutionary pressure re-venting system that supercharges the rounds as they leave the barrel. The Driller is very much a hybrid assault rifle/machine gun, kitted out for a range of tactical applications. The weapon also features an over-barrel Bolt Thrower, which fires huge solid metal bolts, capable of causing significant damage at short range. The bolts can be retrieved and reused, though do come with a significant cost in the first instance. The GAG60 comes with a lifetime guarantee, covering all major maintenance and a two-week turn around on all repair work.

BLA GAG60 DRILLER			Cost: 2200c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+5	6	3	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3/10	1/2	400m	30	150c

The Driller also has a secondary fire mode; an Overbarrel Bolt Thrower.

Overbarrel Bolt Thrower			
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+6	7	2	NA

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	0	40m	6	180c / 30c per Bolt

Bolts can be reused if retrieved after firing.

CAF 'Steel Death' Pistol

"I'd rather have the Unis"

Isaac Cleaver, Human Operative, SCL 9.7 squad 'Scrot Ticklers'

Consolidated Arms Fabrication (CAF) are the approved manufacturer for civilian defence weapons. CAF's range of firearms use a proprietary 5mm calibre, made exclusively for their weapons, which is cheap to manufacture and attracts less bullet tax than other calibres. The Steel Death is an entry level personal handgun made from solid ceramics and sporting a steel-blue finish.

CAF 'Steel Death' Pistol			Cost: 200u
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-3	1	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	0	60m	8	30u

CAF 'Cold Shadow' Submachine Gun

"I'd rather have a CAF 'Steel Shit' pistol"

Isaac Cleaver, Human Operative, SCL 9.7 squad 'Scrot Ticklers'

The Cold Shadow is CAF's compact SMG offering, made from the same materials as the Steel Death and available only in their signature steel-blue finish, the weapon has a 30-round magazine, low recoil and very light weight for its size. The Cold Shadow is usually the firearm of choice for gang members and the unsavoury element of Downtown. When Shivers come under fire in the line of duty, the familiar 'ping' of CAF rounds is what they are used to hearing.

CAF 'Cold Shadow' Submachine Gun			Cost: 300u
Skill:	Pistol/Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-3	1	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3	1	60m	30	40u

CAF 'Screaming Eagle' Assault Rifle

"No wonder the eagle's screaming...I'd be fucking crying my eyes out if I had one of those pieces of shite!"

Isaac Cleaver, Human Operative, SCL 9.7 squad 'Scrot Ticklers'

CAF's Screaming Eagle uses the same 5mm rounds as their other small-arms, but offers greater range, multiple rates of fire and a slight increase in potential damage. While the weapon causes fatalities in gang warfare on a regular basis, it still struggles to penetrate any significant level of armour, with even Body Blocker doing a good job of stopping the small calibre rounds. The Screaming Eagle is the upper-end of legal civilian weapons on the streets of Mort.

CAF 'Screaming Eagle' Assault Rifle			Cost: 350u
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-3	1	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/2	160m	20	40u

FEN AR Assault Rifle

"You want the best rifle for the money you got? I don't care how much money you got… the answer is still the AR."

Abraham Horseshoe, SLA-approved weapons retailer, Horseshoe Tactical

FEN are market leaders in the arms race and the AR is their shining light. A battlefield assault rifle that features incredible ceramic construction, significant range, single and burst fire modes and it delivers enough punch to down targets with one well placed shot. The AR is standard issue for SLA military infantry on War Worlds and still the highest selling assault rifle in history. Operatives looking for a reliable assault rifle for use on the streets of Mort need look no further. The AR uses the FEN-developed 10mm caseless round, which is one of the most cost-effective and well loved rounds currently on the market.

FEN AR Assault Rifle			Cost: 800c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+3	5	1	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/2	350m	25	60c

FEN 30-30 'True Shot' Sniper Rifle

"Yeah, it chucks lead quite a distance, but it's not the most interesting rifle around, eh? Meh, it works. I'll take it"

Blink Salisbury, Human Operative, SCL 9a, squad 'Beirut'

The FEN 30-30 has gone unchanged in its design for almost 250 years and has held the mantle for 'best selling sniper rifle' for over 200 of them. The True Shot uses the less common 8mm round combined with a single-shot bolt action firing mechanism. The slimmer round maximises armour penetration and flight stability to enable the weapon to fire accurately over an extended range. The True Shot features a removable barrel to make it easier to transport and is considered the weapon of choice for any sniper looking for simplicity and performance in the same package.

FEN 30-30 'True Shot' Sniper Rifle			Cost: 1200c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+5	7	1	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1	950m	2	10c

The first round of aiming with this weapon grants both possible aim bonuses. Any additional rounds spent aiming provide a single bonus as normal. Once this weapon has fired at a target, any aim bonuses are lost.

FEN 091 Farjacket

The 091 is FEN's 17mm pump-action hand cannon. The Farjacket is a close range weapon that was originally marketed as a Thresher-killer and has upheld that reputation for many years. The super compact design makes it look as though firing it like any other pistol would be a simple task, though in reality that extreme recoil created by the massive 17mm rounds means that almost all users will require two-hands to properly steady and fire the weapon. In addition, the pump-action design requires two-hands in order to reload the weapon during a firefight. The Farjacket is precision made from poly-alloy components wrapped in a ceramic frame, making it reasonably well balanced for a weapon with its weight and bulk. Even the 5 round clip is not seen as a draw back, given so few targets can survive a single shot from the weapon. The 17mm ammunition does however come with a significant price tag, making the weapon rare in the hands of anyone but the richest of Operatives.

FEN 091 Farjacket			Cost: 820c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10	9	4	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1*	25m	5	100c

The weapon requires two hands to reload. The recoil is increased by +2 when firing the weapon one-handed. Ignore this modifier if the user has a STR of 5 or greater. This weapon can never be used for dual wielding.

FEN 93 GAG

"Still using it. Still loving it. Still not regretting it. Until something newer comes out, I'm not even looking at the other crap on the market."

Stella Strike, Wraithen Operative, SCL 7.2b, squad 'Ruffled Feathers'

The market's only carbine-sized sniping weapon. The weapon sports a fully ceramic construction that extends the length of the weapon, making the barrel length seem deceptively short. The weapon out-ranges all current production assault rifles and delivers the well loved 12mm round with devastating accuracy. The weapon holds a 10-round clip, is compatible with all of FENs usual optional attachments and though it provides less range and needs a little more skill to handle than other sniping weapons, the 93 GAG has rapidly become the urban marksman's weapon of choice.

FEN 93 GAG			Cost: 950c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-2	7	2	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1	550m	10	100c

FEN 204 'Gunhead' Submachine Gun

"As long as you know what you're about, the Gunhead is a very effective sidearm. A forty round clip is not to be overlooked."

Bench Finster, Human Operative, SCL 8.2, squad 'Bingo Bingo Bingo'

The Gunhead is viewed by many as an 'upgrade' to the standard-issue FEN 603 Auto-Pistol. The super compact submachine gun provides multiple rates of fire, a 40 round magazine and enough range to be able to use the weapon during most urban conflicts. While the weapon's recoil becomes a little intense at higher rates of fire, this is easily offset by its compatibility with all manner of optional rifle stocks, laser pointers and recoil baffling. The Gunhead makes a very reliable backup weapon for Operatives in Downtown and its robust manufacture means it keeps on giving even after some serious abuse.

FEN 204 'Gunhead' Submachine Gun			Cost: 350c
Skill:	Pistol/Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	3	1	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3/10	0/1/3	65m	40	50c

FEN 400 'Sure Kill' Sniper Cannon

"... also the weapon ships with a bayonet as standard. No, no, you heard me right."

Abraham Horseshoe, SLA-approved weapons retailer, Horseshoe Tactical

The FEN 400 is the most powerful sniper rifle of the last 200 years, with its design unchanged since its first release. The Sure Kill uses huge 17mm rounds and is manufactured with full ceramic construction, including a ceramic inner-barrel which is required to handle the weapon's extreme muzzle velocity. The 5-round clip appears oversized, on account of it housing a significant power pack which controls the onboard cooling system and accelerated launch mechanism, which requires large amounts of power to get the rounds moving at the required velocity. The weapon also ships with a detachable bayonet thanks to the original sponsorship deal struck up between Top Notch and FEN. The wise folk at FEN's Department of Innovation decided that the weapon would stand out on camera more if Top Notch managed to use it as a melee weapon during televised action. Of course the concept was preposterous and did little, but make aiming a nightmare, but a trend was set, meaning that every Sure Kill still includes the 'Top Notch Blade'. The blade can be removed in order to make space for a tripod, which is the normal configuration used by anyone intending to use the weapon as an effective sniper canon.

FEN 400 'Sure Kill' Sniper Cannon			Cost: 2250c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10+5	10	4	4

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	2	800m	5	150c

The removable 'Top Notch Blade' uses the same profile as a BOSH SLA blade. When using the FEN 400 as a melee weapon with the blade attached, the Polearm skill is used with a -2 modifier to all dice.

FEN 603 Auto-Pistol

"Everyone's got one. I don't know what to say about this, pal. It's a FEN 603."

Jade McKye, Human Operative, SCL 8.2, squad 'Lights'

The FEN 603 is the most popular pistol SLA Industries has ever produced, partly because it's part of the standard equipment list that is issued to Operatives upon induction. Even if it was not forced upon them, many Operatives would choose this as their primary sidearm. Fitted with a 20-round magazine and delivered with a zero maintenance guarantee, its ceramic construction makes it reliable for every squeeze of the trigger. Using the popular and plentiful 10mm caseless round, there are numerous custom options for both ammunition and enhancements, such as flash suppressor and silencer options.

FEN 603 Auto-Pistol			Cost: 200c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	3	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/1	60m	20	30c

FEN 706 Power Reaper 2.1000

SLA's most popular squad support weapon. The 706 is an assault rifle-sized, ceramic-barrelled weapon that uses FENs 10mm caseless ammunition and has seen exceptional success in the hands of both Operatives and War World Infantry. The Power Reaper is most commonly used with 25-round clips, but optional 100-round belts are also available for the more trigger-happy of Operatives. Sales of the 706 rose steeply since footage of Arnold Nutter and his antics started to appear on prime time broadcasts. As Nutters' last moments were televised, FEN saw the sharpest rise in sales that the company had ever recorded, bringing the annual sales of the 706 to a record high.

The extreme rate of fire, lightweight frame and high-end build quality is what commonly makes the Power Reaper a serious consideration for any Operative looking to buy a bigger gun.

FEN 706 Power Reaper 2.1000			Cost: 1750c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+2	5	1	2*

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3/10/ SUP(25)	1/2/3	220m	25 (clip) 100 (belt)	70c (clip) 170c (belt)

*Weight factor is increased by 1 when the weapon is used with a belt of ammunition.

FEN 808 Power Reaper 2.4000

The 808 is the big brother of the long standing 706 Power Reaper. FEN managed to take the winning recipe of their original model and increase the damage output by using the ultimately devastating 12mm round. The 808 has the high rate of fire and reasonable weight distribution that Operative's came to love the Power Reaper for, but with a much larger ammo capacity and considerably more 'grunt'. Many of SLA's armed vehicles have already been upgraded to mount the 808 and while it is not as commonly available as the 706, only being available from FEN's official dealership in Uptown, it can still be obtained by Operatives who are willing to wait the six day lead time for the weapon order to arrive. The 808 Power Reaper 2.4000 has the build quality you should expect from a high-end FEN weapon and is fully compatible with most common upgrades and accessories.

FEN 808 Power Reaper 2.4000			Cost: 2100c
Skill:	Support Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+5	7	2	3*

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3/10/ SUP(40)	1/2/3	280m	80 (clip) 200 (belt)	150c (clip) 300c (belt)

*Weight factor is increased by 1 when the weapon is used with a belt of ammunition.

FEN 866 Sweeper

"Covering fire – check. Huge ammo capacity – check. One-handed fire – check. Me and Shae get into some deep holes, but the Sweeper always digs us out. Shae likes that it glows blue as well."

Fal'Kt'Kt'Lg, Shaktar Operative,
SCL 6.7, squad 'Shae n' Fal'

One of FENs more unique designs, the Sweeper is a heavy squad support weapon which delivers 10mm caseless rounds with a massive rate of fire. The standard 120 round clip provides sufficient ammunition for most firefights, which is good news given that the weapon has a minimum burst of 10 rounds per squeeze of the trigger. On full lock, the sweeper is able to empty its entire magazine in a couple of seconds, plastering a significant area with a hailstorm of carnage. The weapon itself is designed

to mount over the hand of the user by securely attaching itself to the sleeve of powered armour and looks not dissimilar to a 3-litre drinks bottle that emits the subtle blue hue of chamber coolant as it is fired. Due to the unique design, unarmoured targets will find themselves unable to hold the weapon steady and those without significant strength will be unable to use the weapon at all.

FEN 866 Sweeper			Cost: 2500c
Skill:	Support Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+5	6	2	3

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
10/ SUP(40)	2/3	300m	120	180c

The Sweeper may only be used by a character with a STR of 5 or greater.

FEN 904SH Reaver Cannon

"You don't see many of these on Mort, but those you do see are invariably in the hands of a Cannibal Sector baddass on TV. This one doesn't work, but it still cost me a few creds."

"Iron Mika" Greviss , Bar Owner, "Mika's Joint"

The Reaver is a War World Stormer weapon, designed for front-fire duties. The weapon, commonly termed 'Death Touch' by those who have seen it in action, is used to rip through bulkheads, annihilate Thresher armour and tear through the armour plating on opposing vehicles. Despite the company's best attempts to keep the Reaver away from Mort, recent conflict in CS1 has led to the release of the weapon to Stormer Operatives who have proven able to file the correct paperwork and who have committed to a long-term tour of Cannibal Sector 1.

The Reaver uses 12.7mm HESH (High Explosive Squash Head) rounds which are no longer mass produced. FEN still make a limited amount of HESH ammunition for use on War Worlds and due to the strict availability, the clip cost for the Reaver is significantly high. Anyone in possession of this weapon and who is found to have fired it within the confines of the Mort City walls will be reprimanded to the most severe extent.

FEN 904SH Reaver Cannon			Cost: 4500c
Skill:	Support Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10+4	8	6	4

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
10/ SUP(25)	2/3	200m	100	350c

The Reaver only fires rare and exceptionally expensive HESH ammunition. Alternative ammo types may not be used in this weapon. Use of this weapon within the walls of Mort City is considered illegal. The Reaver Cannon may only be used by a character with a STR of 5 or greater.

FEN 989 Stormer Cannon

"Makes a mess. Big mess. Either big hole or enemy not there anymore. I like mess."

Targ, 313 'Malice' Stormer Operative, SCL 7.1a

The Stormer Cannon is another War World weapon, introduced to Operatives for use in Cannibal Sector 1 as a means to tackle Greater Carrien, Sector Mutants and the a like. It is often used as a breaching weapon due to its capacity to blow holes through concrete and steel with relative ease. The weapon has found its place in the hands of kill-squads, specially equipped to tackle Thresher on Mort. As the name suggests, the sizable weapon is designed for use by Malice and Chagrin Stormers and though other species, such as Shaktars and Advanced Carrien possess the strength to use it, SLA Industries refuse to supply the weapon to anyone other than their biogenetic finest. Though the use of the weapon is entirely illegal within the walls of Mort City, against Thresher, a blind eye is often taken so long as structural damage to the city is kept to a minimum. The weapon uses the now rare and expensive HESH round in a 17mm calibre - a true beast of a bullet. Due to the rarity of both the weapon and ammunition, the cost associated with the Stormer Cannon makes it an unlikely acquisition for newer recruits, but one well worth aspiring towards.

FEN 989 Stormer Cannon			Cost: 5000c
Skill:	Support Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
3d10-3	9	5	5

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3	3	350m	30	500c

The Stormer Cannon only fires rare and exceptionally expensive HESH ammunition. Alternative ammo types may not be used in this weapon. Use of this weapon within the walls of Mort City is considered illegal. The Stormer Cannon may only be used by characters with STR 6 or greater.

GA47 Semi-Automatic Pistol

The GA47 is a low-cost ceramic auto pistol from General Armaments (GA), the same people that brought us the well loved Finisher assault rifle. The ceramic barrel and lightweight frame make it the perfect choice as a backup weapon when something more compact than the FEN 603 is needed. The GA47 uses 10mm caseless ammunition packed into a 12-round magazine. It packs more than enough punch into each and every shot.

GA47 Semi-Automatic Pistol			Cost: 80c
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	2	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/1	80m	12	25c

GA50 Finisher

"It's yer meat and portaters, innit. It's a proper gun, but no faff."

Aetherman Buxton, Naga 7 Division, 6th Head

Made from metallised carbon composite, the GA Finisher is considered the better choice of assault rifle for Operatives on a budget. While its 18-round magazine is considered a drawback, GA have always got around complaints by delivering the Finisher with an extra empty magazine at no extra cost. The Finisher can be fitted with an assortment of sights and other accessories and offers an exceptionally lightweight weapon that delivers a real punch. The Finisher uses 10mm caseless ammunition and though marketed as an Assault Rifle, the weapon is in reality closer to a heavy submachine gun and comes fitted with a retractable stock for greater flexibility.

GA50 Finisher			Cost: 300c
Skill:	Pistol/Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	2	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/1*	150m	18	30c

When using the Pistol skill to fire this weapon the recoil is increased by 1.

Klippo K1 Inferno

"Fuckers! That was my idea."

DarkNight Commandant Buzz Lisher, The Fire

Klippo, the company behind the famous Klippo Lighter, unexpectedly entered the weapons marketplace only a few years ago. The birth of the K1 was entirely unintended, coming about after the R&D department received a job application from a SLA Operative looking for a career change. Included in the letter was a design for a flamethrower. No such position existed within the company and so the application was rejected out of hand. Months later the application was found again and before long and without input from the job applicant, patented cigarette lighter designs were up-scaled. The first flamethrower ever seen in The World of Progress was created. The weapon was tipped to be the hottest new release of the year. Shortly before its release date though, it was announced that the K1 would not be available to buy without very specific authorisation and would remain illegal within the Mort City walls, with the exception of Shi'An cult or vermin control. The K1 had effectively joined the likes of the FEN Reaver Cannon as weapons designed solely for use in the cannibal sectors or off-world. The weapon projects a high velocity stream of molten fluid which burns for up to an hour and is capable of melting through flesh, bone and armour at an alarming rate. A single fuel canister provides 15 bursts.

Klippo K1 Inferno			Cost: 2500c
Skill:	Support Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10	8	3	4*

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1	15m	15	150c (canister)

Anyone hit by the K1 suffers the burning condition. The K1 emits a 1m wide stream of flame which is not stopped by it hitting a target. A roll to hit is required against every target within the stream, with an additional -1 modifier being applied to all dice for every other target that the stream has already passed. The K1 uses special flammable liquid supplied in canisters as ammunition. Alternative ammo types may not be used in this weapon. Unauthorised use of this weapon within the walls of Mort City is considered illegal.

Additional canisters have a Weight Factor of 3.

KPS Mangler Automatic Shotgun

Kramer Production Syndicate (KPS) hit the market with the Mangler over 50 years ago, it was an instant success with Operatives of all SCLs. The success of the weapon was so great that KPS have never released another weapon, with the small company spending their entire limited staffing resources on manufacturing the Mangler to meet SLA Industries growing demands. The Mangler is a fully automatic combat shotgun, which fires 10 gauge rounds and utilises a 10-round magazine which can empty itself at an alarming rate. Despite constant calls for larger box mags, KPS have never produced one. The Mangler's reputation as the deadliest room-clearer on the market is well earned and it remains a favourite with those Operatives who prefer closer ranged assault weapons.

KPS Mangler Automatic Shotgun			Cost: 900c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+4	6	4	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3	1	25m	10	40c

MAL Assault Cannon

Unexplainably cited as the 'Shaktar's Favourite', the MAL Assault Cannon is in fact, while large in size, light enough to be fired by most Operatives of average strength and physique. The MAL is a benchmark for powerful battle rifles, with the weapon's action delivering 12.7mm rounds at significant velocity over ranges of up to 400m. Due to the way that the weapon works, the actual drop-off of velocity occurs much later during the flight of the bullet compared to that of other rifles, allowing for greater accuracy at the extremes of the weapon's range. The weapon has a resin-layered carbon-fibre body and 20-round magazine which makes it a reliable partner in any firefight. Despite the recoil that the weapon can experience, the Assault Cannon is the poster-child for MAL's Recoil Baffling upgrades, which are of course fully compatible with the weapon.

MAL Assault Cannon			Cost: 2500c
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-4	8	3	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3	1*	400m	20	100c

The recoil is increased by +1 when fired by anyone with a STR lower than 2. Additionally, the modifiers for firing this weapon at long range are not applied.

SHV-01 Gauss Rifle

"We had thousands of Browbeaters in the hands of Shivers in the cannibal sectors. You might not know it, but this previously non-lethal crowd pacifier was turned into a very effective tool out there, saving you in here from the horrors we faced daily."

Commander Cradle, Shiver Commander, Bellwood Campaign

The Gauss Rifle is the standard issue weapon of the Shiver Organisation, used for both policing the streets of Downtown and for waging war in Cannibal Sector 1. Prior to the Bellwood Campaign, the SHV-01 was available on the market as the GA9442 'Browbeater' Gauss Rifle. The Browbeater was made as a non-lethal crowd control weapon, already the standard issue weapon for Street Shivers, making it automatically undesirable with Operatives. The weapon fires 3mm Ball-Bearing rounds that expand in-flight to 30mm in diameter with an incredible rate of fire, inflicting low levels of impact damage. While unarmoured targets will be hurt by the weapon, those wearing body armour will likely just laugh. A full volley however, is enough to knock even the strongest of Humans to the ground. Out in Cannibal Sector 1, the Ball-Bearings are nowhere to be seen, particularly since the Red Sky Massacre where supplies of the wrong ammunition led to the slaughter of a mass Shiver force. The 3mm Flechette ammunition which was designed for use in the Sector is identified by a red band printed on the magazine, compared to the green band printed on Ball-Bearing rounds. Flechette rounds are tiny metal-tipped cerami-plastic arrows which split open upon impact against armour. While the damage inflicted is far less than 10mm caseless rounds, the impact that Flechettes have upon armour is quite significant. The weapon's internal fire management system automatically adjusts the rate of fire to suit the loaded ammunition type and is good for 3000 hours of continual operation.

Despite the SHV-01 now being exclusively available to the Shiver Organisation, GA refuse to remove the 'Browbeater' from the current weapons catalogue. The weapon is not available to purchase anymore, but Operatives are likely to encounter it commonly when working alongside Shivers on both sides of the wall.

SHV-01 Gauss Rifle				Cost: NA
Skill:	Rifle			
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10-7	1	0		2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
10/ SUP(100)	0/1	220m	300	NA

The weapon fires 3mm expanding non-lethal Ball-Bearings which is standard issue ammunition for use within Mort City. No damage modifier is applied for the ROF when a target is hit with these rounds. Instead, anyone hit by a volley of ball-bearing rounds may be knocked over at the GM's discretion. The SHV-01 also has a secondary ammunition type; 3mm Flechette Rounds.

3mm Flechette Rounds				
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10-2	2	4		NA

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3	1	250m	50	NA

Standard Bellwood Campaign-issue ammunition for use within Cannibal Sector 1. These rounds are not available to Street Shivers.

SHV-02 Spit Pistol

"It's still pretty much the worst pistol about… and we still have to use it. At least it's better than that CAF crap… just."

Shiver Pvt. Tarly Walters, Downtown Patrol

The Spit Pistol is the standard issue sidearm of all Shiver personnel and is not currently available for general sale. Since its deployment to Shivers during the Bellwood Campaign, where it replaced the old Zip Pistol, the SHV-02's reputation for being a cheaply made, poorly performing side arm has escalated to the point that the weapon has become a mocking point for Operative's working alongside Shivers. Despite this, its reputation, however, is undeserved, as the Spit Pistol offers a 10mm weapon that rarely jams and can cope with the rigours of life on the street and over the wall.

SHV-02 Spit Pistol				Cost: NA
Skill:	Pistol			
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10-3	1	1		1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	0	50m	10	NA

SLA 10-05 Bully Boy Shotgun

For the best part of 100 years, SLA's 10-10 Bully Boy was the shotgun of choice for Operatives leaving the Meny training academy. Following an unfortunate event whereby one of the most watched TV shows of all time saw a well loved Operative slaughtered after his 10-10 jammed, the weapon's popularity dive bombed. Faith in the gas-operated bullpup design was gone. SLA were quick to react, discontinuing the 10-10 and bringing back its predecessor, the 10-05, a 5-round chamber loading pump-action shotgun that used absolutely no fancy technology. The 10-05 Bully Boy would work even if it was full of Carnivorous Pig guts and the advertising slogan - "the original and best" - was enough to win over the minds and hearts of plenty of previous 10-10 users. The 10-05 rapidly outsold the company's expectations and solidifying itself in the future of the company's arms strategy.

The Bully Boy is fairly long-barrelled for a shotgun, giving it a greater range than other shotguns on the market and the return of the classic pump-action design seems to have won over the hearts of shotgun loving Operatives on the streets of Mort.

SLA 10-05 Bully Boy Shotgun				Cost: 250c
Skill:	Rifle			
DMG	Min DMG	AD		Weight
1d10+3	5	3		2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1	30m	5	25c

AMMUNITION

SLA Industries has long manufactured a substantial range of ammunition types, each with their own benefits and setbacks. Until recently, the ammunition options on the market were surprisingly vast, despite the high rate of bullet tax. It was the bullet tax however that caused what came to be known as 'The fall of HESH', the sudden boycotting of all major bullet manufacturers in order to try and drive the street prices down. The stubbornness of the company however, remained unfaltering and rather than bullet prices dropping in response to the standoff, the manufacture of most expensive ammo types was instead ceased. SLA simply applied the same rationale they had for any other product; when it stops being profitable, it stops getting made.

Note: The clip cost stated on ranged weapon profiles is always the price for standard ammunition unless otherwise stated.

High Explosive Rounds (HE)

"They make a real mess. That's why I use them."
Tul'Fn'Kl'Lar, Shaktar Operative, SCL 6.8a

High Explosive rounds contain small secondary charges which detonate a fraction after impact, inflicting a notable increase in damage, as well as considerable damage to armour or solid structures. High Explosive rounds also make a mess of unarmoured targets and so should not be used when a target needs to be apprehended.

High Explosive Rounds (HE)	
Cost:	+50% of clip cost
+1 DMG, +1 AD (an additional +1 DMG if the target is unarmoured).	

Armour Piercing Rounds (AP)

AP rounds have a hardened inner core and a sharper ballistic cap, allowing them to punch through armoured targets with greater ease. Such rounds significantly reduce the effectiveness of the target's armour making them a popular choice with snipers and espionage agents.

Armour Piercing Rounds (AP)	
Cost:	+50% of clip cost
-2 to the target's armour PV.	

Shotgun Slugs

"Punk, foosh, thud, ya bass!"
Belter, Frother Operative, SCL 7.2a, squad 'Hoots Mon!'

As standard, shotguns use 'shot' as their primary ammunition type, a cartridge loaded with multiple fine ball-bearings which hit the target with a tight spread when fired. As an alternative, 'slugs' are available for all 10 gauge shotguns. A slug is effectively a solid large calibre bullet, designed to inflict more damage to a single point of impact. While slugs are far less popular, they do have the capacity to increase the already impressive stopping power of most shotguns and are a much cheaper upgrade than those available for other weapon calibres.

Shotgun Slugs	
Cost:	+20% of clip cost
+1 DMG, -1 AD.	

GRENADES & EXPLOSIVES

Grenades are far less popular with SLA Operatives than they were some years ago, largely on account of the punishments that were handed out to Ops who used Fragmentation grenades a little too freely within the city boundaries. The possibility for extreme structural damage and unnecessary loss of life that can come from using such weapons within the confines of Downtown's claustrophobic landscape is huge, as such, explosives and fragmentation grenades are now considered illegal for use within the boundaries of Mort City and are sold only for use during green BPNs. There are however a number of grenades more suitable for urban pacification which still see regular use with Operatives on the street, particularly the DA 101 'Blind' grenade.

DA 63 MagMine

Although it carries the DA brand, the MagMine is actually an imposter, manufactured by DarkNight for use by their specialists in Cannibal Sector 1. The effectiveness of the weapon and the opportunity to make good money saw the manufacturing step up to include a fake 'DA' branding before flooding the weapons blackmarket with them. Despite DA's push to try and remove them from general sale and SLA making them illegal, many dealers still sell the MagMine under-the-counter to Operatives that know where to ask.

The unit consists of an electromagnetically charged housing which contains a powerful explosive charge. Once armed, the magnet goes into overdrive creating a grip that even Stormers will struggle to pull free, meaning that an armoured target unfortunate enough to stand on a DA 63 will find it attached firmly to their foot until the device detonates. The mine also houses an optional timer that runs from 10 seconds to 10 minutes, allowing it to be used as a traditional timed explosive device.

DA 63 MagMine				Cost: 30c/200u
Skill:	Demolitions			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
1d10+4	6	3	1	1/6m
Ownership of a MagMine is considered illegal.				

DA 71 Concussion Grenade

A simple stun grenade used by Operatives and Shivers in urban pacification. Upon detonation the grenade sends out a sudden high frequency shock wave with extreme force. Anyone caught in the blast will be knocked unconscious, with even the most heavily armoured targets being dazed and stunned by the impact.

DA 71 Concussion Grenade				Cost: 10c
Skill:	Throw			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
NA	NA	NA	1	6m
The DA 71 does not inflict physical damage. Any unarmoured targets hit by the grenade are knocked unconscious for 1 min. Armoured targets suffer the stunned condition.				

DA 90 Fragmentation Grenade

"It's the benchmark for things that go boom. You gotta' be careful though, I've seen SCLs get knocked down and even a stretch in Fallgate after using too many of these babies. Civi's just get in the way, that's the real problem.."

Regan, Eban Operative, SCL 7.8a, squad 'Meggie's Narcs'

The DA 90 is the only fragmentation grenade worth considering and the standard issue for SLA military forces off-world for longer than anyone can recall. The DA 90 detonates 10 seconds after being triggered, giving any trained Operative time to lineup a shot and land the grenade exactly where they need it. The explosion creates a cloud of razor sharp metal shards, with enough force to crack walls and rip right through lightly armoured targets.

DA 90 Fragmentation Grenade				Cost: 15c
Skill:	Throw			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
1d10+2	5	2	1	5/10m
Use of these grenades within the walls of Mort City is considered illegal.				

DA 101 'Blind' Smoke Grenade

'Blind' grenades emit a thick smoke which is almost impossible to see through. A single grenade is capable of entirely filling a room for 10 minutes, or forming a sizable cloud in the open air for close to 5 minutes. The composition of the smoke also plays havoc with Thermal and Infrared spectrums, making the use of such optics far less useful while the smoke remains. The grenades are available in 24 colours, with a light grey being the default stocked by most suppliers.

DA 101 'Blind' Smoke Grenade				Cost: 5c*
Skill:	Throw			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
NA	NA	NA	1	12m
*DA 101 Smoke Grenades cost +1c for colours other than light grey. The DA 101 does not inflict physical damage. The Blast Radius is filled with thick smoke that can only be seen through with IR or Thermal imaging, both of which also suffer visual distortion, causing a -1 modifier to any visual-based Detect skill rolls.				

"He set off a Blind in the canteen, said it'd be funny …"

Ben Marsh, Human Operative, SCL 7.2, squad 'Send Fish'

ARMOUR

An Operative's armour should be their first consideration when hitting the streets of Mort. Without armour, the life expectancy of a SLA Operative is extremely short, with an Op posted to Cannibal Sector 1 effectively being dead before they arrive. Armour provides significant protection to bullets and blades, as well as to the environmental dangers omnipresent on Mort.

The current wave of powered armours are fully sealed, with emergency air supplies, advanced optics and a range of other upgrades which make them both hugely desirable and painfully expensive. Operatives who prioritise armour over bigger guns will generally not find themselves regretting the decision. Until 911sd, many armour suits were not available for Stormers, due to the sheer size of their physical frame, but following the success of Power Projects' Exo Armour line, a long time favourite with larger statured SLA Operatives, almost all armour types are now available to all Operatives who can afford the price tag.

Note: While it is not mandatory for Ebonites to wear a Deathsuit, any Ebonite who chooses to wear any other form of armour (powered or otherwise) is considered to have a Flux stat of 1.

Note: Neophron characters are unable to wear heavier armour due to their fragile physical frame. As such only lighter armour of PV6 or lower can be worn by Neophron characters.

CAF Padquil Flak Vest

A commonly used mil-spec flak vest, providing a multi-layered torso protection for both civilian and military forces. The Padquil vest provides reasonable protection to common small arms fire, but is relatively useless in stopping most Operative-grade calibres.

CAF Padquil Flak Vest		Cost: 25c/25Ou
PV	Resistance	Weight
2	8	2
This armour provides no protection against environmental factors. The Padquil Flak Vest may not be repaired.		

MAL Modular Armour

"I saw it out there and wanted it in here."

Belter, Frother Operative, SCL 7.2a, squad 'Hoots Mon!'

Developed for the Sector Ranger program, MAL's Modular Armour has been designed in sections, to allow specific parts to be replaced as required. This not only makes it cheaper to repair, but also allows the wearer to replace a single leg panel or gauntlet should the rest of the armour still be intact. The Armour has an internal power management system which diverts power from disconnected sections, allowing the rest of the suit to remain functional when it is heavily damaged. The MAL suit has a 14,000-hour power supply, a long-range comms relay, air filtration with a 4-hour emergency air supply and FEN's newly updated Scout Helmet interface as standard. The armour is now available to Operatives for the first time, though comes with a hefty price tag.

MAL Modular Armour		Cost: 2850c
PV	Resistance	Weight
7	20	0
Individual sections of Modular Armour can be purchased making repairs easier and cheaper. On average, the cost of repairing the armour is around 50% less than other armours. Modular Armour also includes a FEN 270671b Scout Helmet Interface as standard.		

Bastion Armour

Bastion Armour is made by Neophrons for Neophrons. The semi-armoured suit is designed to be worn over other clothing, traditionally over smart dress and is made for maximum flexibility. Neophrons typically have a very fragile body frame and many have reported serious injury simply from wearing commonly accessible powered armour. While the average Neophron is capable of wearing Body Blocker or HARD armour without injury, the vast majority of them opt to wear Bastion. Traditionally worn with a Featherpoint Rapier by the side, Bastion armour is seen as a mark of the distinguished scholar.

The protection offered by Bastion Armour compares well to much of the armour technology that existed on Mort prior to the Nephrons' arrival. For an armoured suit that does not cover the entire body and that is designed to flex without creasing the wearer's clothing, the fact that it is able to stop projectiles as efficiently as HARD armour is frankly astounding, though the exact methods used to construct the armour are well guarded by Neophron craftsmen. Bastion does not have the robust nature of powered armour and as such can wear out fast with vigorous use, but such considerations are typically the last thing on a Neophron's mind when it comes to looking the part on the streets of Mort.

Bastion Armour		Cost: 1800c
PV	Resistance	Weight
6	16	0
Due to the internal structure of the armour it cannot be worn by non-Neophron characters.		

PP10 HARD Armour

"If it's good enough for Nutter..."

Zack McTavish, Frother Operative, SCL 8.1, squad 'Ruffled Feathers'

PP10 is the gold standard for entry level armour. Used by Shiver Elites, Frothers and the vast majority of Operatives on the street. HARD (Heavy Ablative Recess Deck) is reliable, robust and battle-proven. The suit is fitted with an integrated power harness and 8000-hour power supply, which offsets the weight in the armour and keeps it manoeuvrable when the going gets tough. The fully sealed design offers excellent protection from small arms and blades while also protecting from the elements. Its built-in air filtration and 2-hour emergency oxygen supply enable long term deployment in the sectors. A half-mask version is available for the more media-hungry Operative, but requires the sacrifice of the helmet's environmental protection and built-in comms relay.

PP10 HARD Armour		Cost: 1750c
PV	Resistance	Weight
6	20	0

PP13 Exo-Armour Mk.2

Power Project's Exo-Armour was, for a long time, the go-to choice of armour for Operatives, sitting nicely in the price and performance bracket between Body Blocker and HARD Armour. When the news came in 912sd that the current range was being discontinued and support for replacement parts was being withdrawn, Power Projects faced a fair amount of backlash, particularly from Stormers who got great use out of the popular PP9 Exo suit. The negativity was short lived however, with the new PP13 Mk.2 being announced just five months later. Rather than a range of suits, the new Exo-Armour would follow the trend of other armour and be made available in all sizes with consistent performance levels. The Exo Mk.2 has also seen a notable upgrade in performance, now offering greater protection than HARD Armour with the physical benefits of Powercell, at a cost of slightly reduced maneuverability.

PP13 Exo-Armour Mk.2		Cost: 1900c
PV	Resistance	Weight
7	24	1
The wearer gains -1 DEX, but +1 STR (ignoring species maximums).		

PP70 Powercell Armour

Powercell Armour, also known as "The Mule", is the next step up from HARD Armour, a position previously filled by Power Project's Exo Armour range which was discontinued in 911sd following complaints about its impact on the user's ability to react to situations at speed. PP70 is based upon the same innovative technology employed in HARD, but with the addition of a powered exo-skeleton which drastically increases the wearer's physical strength as well as the armour's overall durability. This increased lifting and punching power has made Powercell the go to option for many Operatives. The armour features the same 2-hour air supply and comms package as HARD Armour but comes with a 10,000-hour power supply.

PP70 Powercell Armour		Cost: 2300c
PV	Resistance	Weight
8	24	0
The wearer gains +1 STR (ignoring species maximums).		

PP100 Crackshot Armour

"Yeah, he did the circuit with my logo on his left shoulder. He was also sponsored by double-P and he gave them some great moments on camera, but his legacy was cemented when they named the armour after him. It was ironic, really. The moment Crackshot got a suit named after him, they wouldn't let him fight in real contests. He was too big a name for them to risk on piss-ant squabbles he could get hurt in, so they started picking his fights for him. Easy fights. The great man, reduced to a cartoon. Still, I made a mint off the fucker because he kept my logo on his shoulder throughout his career."

Hei-Ran Jing, food outlet owner, 224 Noodles

Crackshot is Power Projects flagship product for personal protection. There may be costlier and larger solutions available, but PP100 Crackshot is the one on the magazine covers, the suit the heroes of your favourite TV shows wear and the only choice for the media-savvy Operative. Made of layers of compressed ceramic plates with a fibre mesh of sinews and plastic cartilage between the sheeting, the armour's weight and encumbrance is reduced to zero by the clever powered infrastructure. The nominal 6000-hour charge is long enough to last over eight months of continuous wearing, more than enough even for an Operative's tour of Cannibal Sector 1. Its status as a daily-wearer is enhanced by the included bio-kit, offering a water filter and waste disposal. As one would expect from a prestige outfit, the helmet is fitted with anti-glare optics, comms relay, a full respiration filter and lights, but most of the time, the helmet is mounted to the hip-mount, to allow the telegenic wearer to smile for the cameras.

PP100 Crackshot Armour		Cost: 3000c
PV	Resistance	Weight
10	26	0

PP104 Dogeybone Armour

Power Projects' all-purpose assault armour is the shining jewel in SLA's armoured crown. The Dogeybone is a huge and imposing powered suit, combining layers of huge ceramic plates with a massive exo-skeleton. The final result is a suit so large that the user could be considered more of a 'pilot' than a wearer, providing almost unparalleled protection along with a significant increase to the wearer's physical capabilities. The sealed suit has an advanced air purification system, auto-tint visors, two pop-up 1000w shoulder lamps and a long-range comms relay. The entire package is run by a 10,000-hour power supply and patented power-management system, making the Dogeybone one of the most desirable pieces of tech in the SLA armoury.

PP104 Dogeybone Armour		Cost: 5000c
PV	Resistance	Weight
12	36	2
Though powered, the bulk of the suit still provides a Weight Factor to the wearer. The wearer gains +2 STR (ignoring species maximums). Due to the frame of the armour, Dogeybone may not be worn by Stormers.		

PP112D SilverBack Armour

The most recent revision of the SilverBack line from Power Projects is the armour of choice for the Operative who values speed and flexibility over all else. The SilverBack features a Fusion-Turbine system and twelve gyroscopic stabilisers, enabling short bursts of flight at heights of up to 75m. This ability to scale buildings, jump impossible gaps and perform strafing runs over the battlefield has pushed the 112D into the hands of many scouts and espionage agents, as well as snipers looking to reach elevated positions rapidly before combat begins. The armour features an 8000-hour power supply, a range of proximity sensors for use during flight, an extended-range comms relay, ground mapping system and the new FEN Scout Helmet Interface as standard.

PP112D SilverBack Armour		Cost: 4500c
PV	Resistance	Weight
6	18	0
The wearer gains +1 to their Rushing speed. In addition, the armour is capable of 5 second bursts of flight, at a height up to 75m. A successful Drive Pilot skill roll is required for anything other than straight uninterrupted flight. A similar skill roll may be made if the character falls from great height, allowing them to engage the suits flight system and break the fall. The suit can make 6 bursts before a refuel pack is required, which costs 100c. SilverBack also includes a FEN 270671b Scout Helmet Interface as standard. Due to the frame of the armour, SilverBack may not be worn by Stormers, Shaktars or Advanced Carrien.		

PP664.2 Body Blocker

"It's the toilet paper between me and the CAF rounds that keep on coming. I know it's a pile of shit, but it's rare that we have to face 'real' bullets in Downtown and it doesn't struggle to stop bats and chains that the street punks throw at us. Soon as the gangs start packing 10mm rounds we'll be begging for HARD like those show-pony Elites in CS1."

Shiver Pvt. Paul Horseshoe, Downtown Patrol

Body Blocker is the uniform of the Shiver Organisation. While its reputation is largely one of ridicule, very few Operatives can say that Body Blocker hasn't saved their lives at least once. Due to the armour's very reasonable price, it is generally the primary choice for Operatives hitting the streets for the first time, effectively being the stepping stone to HARD Armour.

Body Blocker is made from plasti-ceramic plates layered over a flak-weave bodysuit to create a flexible, but robust, outer shell. The armour is not powered and so provides some weight to the user. It is easy to get in and out of and features anti-dazzle optics, an air filtration system and standard comms relay, as well as being available in a vast range of colours.

PP664.2 Body Blocker		Cost: 400c
PV	Resistance	Weight
4	12	2

PP949 Breacher Shield

The PP949 was developed for 'Breacher Shivers' deployed to the roughest areas of Downtown and has since seen significant use in the cannibal sectors under the classification of the SHV-06 Breacher Shield. The Breacher is effectively a large riot shield made from the same materials as HARD armour and since its conception, has entirely replaced the old Shiver Pacifier Shield that was previously used on the streets of Mort City. The huge shield is designed for building entry and for use as movable cover during riots or close quarters battles. The shield features a metalliglass screen to aid visibility and provides a significant amount of damage reduction for the user. Users with sufficient strength can use the shield single-handedly allowing them to use a firearm with the other hand. Breacher Shivers undergo specific training in what is commonly termed 'Shield Craft', which covers the correct combat application of the shield. This training is now available to Operatives who have graduated from Meny.

PP949 Breacher Shield		Cost: 250c
PV	Resistance	Weight
+2*	12	4
*The Breacher adds +2 to the wearer's armour PV and all AD will be inflicted against it, pending a successful Shield Craft skill roll (target number determined by the GM). The shield can not be used to protect against attacks that come from behind the user. A Breacher Shield may only be used by characters with a minimum STR 2. A character with STR 3 or greater may also use the shield as a melee weapon using the following profile.		

Skill:	Shield Craft	
DMG	Min DMG	AD
1d10-3	2	0

Striker Motorcycle Protection

High quality civilian motorcycle leathers, made as essential protection for unarmoured motorcycle riders. Striker Protection is extremely common among Downtown gang members, but is equally popular with motorcycle enthusiasts up and down the SCL ladder.

Striker Motorcycle Protection		Cost: 15c/150u
PV	Resistance	Weight
1	6	1
This armour provides no protection against environmental factors. Striker Motorcycle Protection may not be repaired.		

EQUIPMENT

While blades and guns may seem like the tools of an Operatives trade, it is the small bits of kit that keep things going. From maintenance kits to environment scanners, from drug injectors to flashlights, it is this significant range of available kit that makes the modern Operative so versatile in the field.

Note: A character is assumed to have access to the minimum amount of food and water required to survive and can replenish themselves during downtime. During a game session, if a character is required to eat or drink, such refreshments will cost a few Credits or Unis providing such items can be obtained. Additionally, any equipment that has a stated battery life can be easily recharged during downtime or during a game session where sufficient time and access to a common power outlet allows.

BLA Weapon Maintenance Kit

"Their stuff costs a crazy amount more than everyone else's, the ammo costs are unreal and you can't even use a regular maintenance kit to work on them. BLA are seriously taking the piss. But still, I want a Blitzer more than I want my girlfriend right now."

Shae 'Rattle' Cross, Human Operative,
SCL 6.1, squad 'Shae n' Fal'

The BLA Maintenance Kit allows for general maintenance and repair work on all BLA weapons. BLA uses specific tooling,

screws and chamber technology that requires their own brand tools to be used when working on their weapons. The Kit is provided in a clasp-locking black moulded case which also has enough space to safely store a BLA Blitzer. Ideal for those wanting to protect their most valuable possession.

BLA Weapon Maintenance Kit	Cost: 250c
Weight:	1
The kit adds +1 to the Success Die for all Technical Weapons skill rolls when dealing with BLA branded ranged weapons.	

BOOPA CASDIS

The CASDIS (Compressed Air Syringe and Drug Injection System) is a simple injector designed for rapid application of combat drugs. The hand held unit can also be arm mounted and integrated into the control unit of powered armour to act like an auto-injector. The system allows drugs to be administered in an instant, taking pre-loaded drug cartridges rather than any need to fill a traditional syringe. The unit is the must-have for any combat drug-user and is also a standard in most medic's kit bags.

BOOPA CASDIS	Cost: 10c
Weight:	1
The CASDIS allows drugs to be injected as an auxiliary action during combat. Injecting without one takes more accuracy and much longer, making it impossible to do so effectively in a combat situation. Every 10 uses requires a refill cylinder, which costs 2c.	

BOOPA Hypofist

Only recently made available to Operatives, the Hypofist from BOOPA has the appearance of a large powerfist, not dissimilar to the ITB Mutilator, though in place of a traditional fingered gauntlet it has a range of medical tools and utensils. The Hypofist is a one-stop paramedical kit, designed for Paramedical Shivers and for Shiver Medics stationed in Cannibal Sector 1, though since the rise in popularity of SLA's Medical training package, it has become a more desirable item for Operatives. The Hypofist is not able to operate firearms or be used to hold a weapon.

BOOPA Hypofist	Cost: 200c
Weight:	2
The Hypofist counts as a BOOPA Medi-kit that contains 20 uses before it requires a refill. One additional Hit Point is healed every time the user, or their patient heals any Hit Points from treatments. In addition, the Hypofist counts as a BOOPA CASDIS that contains 100 uses before requires a refill cylinder. Refills for both the Medi-kit and CASDIS functions cost 10c each.	

BOOPA Medi-kit

"Medic...."

Unknown

The Medi-kit is one piece of extra weight that nobody objects to. Filled with countless essential items including a surgical field kit, dressings and pain-killers, in fact, the list of contents is so vast that many a trained medic has been surprised by what comes with it. The BOOPA Medi-kit is lightly armoured and waterproof making it perfect for active Operatives and the contents can be refilled for a small charge without needing to buy a new kit.

BOOPA Medi-kit	Cost: 50c
Weight:	1
The Medi-kit adds 1 automatic Skill Die success on all Medical rolls and each use allows the user, or their patient, to heal either 2 Hit Points or 1 wound. The Medi-kit provides 6 uses before it must be refilled, which costs 10c.	

CMC Maintenance Kits

Commercial Mechanics Corporation are the sole sanctioned manufacturer for maintenance and repair equipment used to keep SLA's vehicle pool running. The kits each come in moulded carry cases and contain a huge range of tools and spares for a range of specific tasks. A CMC Mechanical Maintenance Kit is generally found in the back of every Shiver APC and almost any technician worth their weight will have one stashed somewhere.

CMC Maintenance Kits	Cost: 50c
Weight:	2
Available as Mechanical or Electronic kits. The kit adds +1 to the Success Die for all relevant Technical skill rolls.	

DPB Laser Sharpener

DPB's sharpening system is guaranteed to turn any straight edge back to its factory sharpness. The system is a compact cube into which a knife is inserted before the laser sharpening system is automatically activated. The advertising claim is that any blade will go from flat to razor in 4 minutes, though general maintenance sharpening takes considerably less time.

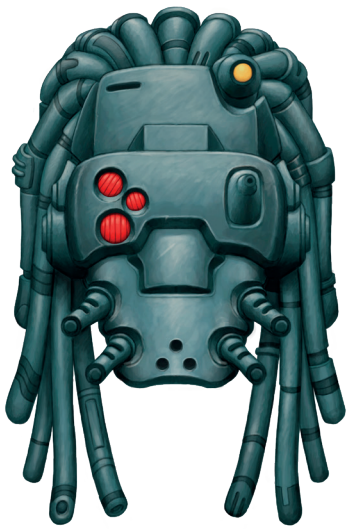
DPB Laser Sharpener	Cost: 5c
Weight:	0
The sharpener adds +1 to the Success Die for all Technical Weapons skill rolls when dealing with bladed melee weapons.	

FEN 270671b Scout Helmet Interface

"I had one of the original ones, you know, before they put the 'b' on the end. That was an actual helmet. You swapped your normal helmet out for it. It actually had more toys than this new interface version, but in all honesty, they were all toys that no one used. All the good stuff is here still, with none of the bulk."

Tamsin Foxxx, Human Operative, SCL 7.3b

The 270671b is an interface that can be integrated into the helmet of any powered armour suit. Once the install is completed it gives the user access to a huge range of equipment, from upgraded optics and range-finding tools to environment and motion scanning. The system allows the user's original armour properties to be retained and nothing more than a small power pack mounted at the base of the neck is visible. The Scout Helmet system has a 6000 hour power supply and comes with FEN's usual gold standard tech support.



FEN 270671b Scout Helmet Interface	Cost: 150c
Weight:	1
The system provides the combined rules of: FEN Rangefinder Monocular, Track opticS Enviro Scanner and Track opticS Motion Scanner. In addition, the user's comms range is increased by 50% and the armour's optics are upgraded to have 10x zoom, UV Nightvision, IR and Thermal vision should the armour not already have these functions.	

FEN Bipod/Tripod

Standard issue fold-away bipods and tripods are suitable for all rifles and support weapons. Like all FEN-manufactured goods, they are generally of carbon-fibre or ceramic construction and mount seamlessly with weapons of all makes.

FEN Bipod/Tripod	Cost: 25c
Weight:	1
May only be attached to a weapon that requires the Rifle or Support Weapons skill. The bipod or tripod reduces the weapon's recoil by 1 providing the user is stationary. May be deployed in combat as an auxiliary action.	

FEN ECM Cape

"Ever wanted to be a ghost?."

Tarron Vix, Wraithen Operative, SCL 7.3a

The ECM Cape uses a range of FEN's electronic countermeasure technologies to mask the wearer's body heat, while also confusing UV and IR imaging systems. The cape is marketed at scouts and snipers looking to conceal themselves in isolation and is now the only ECM product available on the open market since the full body suit version was discontinued. DarkNight have a similar product, used by their marksmen, but the technology behind the DN offering is still not fully understood by the FEN design team and obtaining one has proven a challenge for even the best black marketeers that money can bribe.

FEN ECM Cape	Cost: 120c
Weight:	1
The cape provides a -1 modifier to the Success Die of any Detect skill roll made to spot the wearer, even under UV Nightvision, IR or Thermal imaging.	

FEN Laser Painter

FEN's standard Laser Painter attaches easily to most firearms, emitting a thin red laser beam from the barrel of the gun to the intended target. Use of a Laser Painter allows for faster aiming at close range, making them extremely popular weapon upgrades for life in Mort City.

FEN Laser Painter	Cost: 25c
Weight:	0
May only be attached to a weapon that requires the Pistol or Rifle skill. Adds 1 automatic Skill Die success when rolling to hit on single or burst fire modes, providing the target is within 20m. Using the laser painter does however give away the user's position, granting a +1 modifier to the Success Die of any Detect rolls made to spot the user.	

FEN Pistol/SMG Stock

Extendable stocks are common additions to submachine guns, aiding recoil reduction and improving aim. Many Operatives choose to add them to their pistols, not only to improve aim, but also because of the cool factor. Available in a huge range of colours and lacquers, a stock can be purchased to match the finish of nearly any weapon. The current trend though, is to go for the most garish colours that clash with the weapon, a deliberate and unsubtle attempt to attract the cameras and garner audience attention.

FEN Pistol/SMG Stock	Cost: 20c
Weight:	1
May only be attached to a weapon that requires the Pistol skill. The first round of aiming with this weapon grants both possible aim bonuses. Any additional rounds spent aiming provide a single bonus as normal.	

FEN Rangefinder Monocular

"It's always better to see cannibals before they see you. This is where your trusty Rangefinder comes in. The trick in the sectors is to keep both eyes open when you're using it. It'll take some getting used to with the distances as long as they are here. It's not like Downtown where there's a wall every few metres; distances can go on forever here and keeping one eye open lets you see what it is, in context, you're looking at all those klicks in the distance. Yes, it feels weird, but let your brain sort it out. It's cleverer than you, your brain. Don't get scared when the numbers on the tracker seem awfully big, you're in the outdoors now and shit gets big out here. Real big."

Shiver Sgt. Eric Bransh, Training Dept

The FEN Rangefinder is a gyro-balanced monocular, around twenty centimetres long with a rubberised housing and bladed aperture covers at each end. Looking down the monocular with one eye will show you the distance to whatever is in the centre of the lightly-lit crosshairs, displaying the range in metres to the subject with red numbers. The settable zoom is displayed to the right of a scale ruler that runs across the bottom of the visible field. The Range Finder Monocular is used as a general surveillance aid and by spotters working with snipers.

FEN Rangefinder Monocular	Cost: 20c
Weight:	1

The rangefinder adds +1 to the Success Die for all Detect skill rolls made over significant distance. In addition, the rangefinder allows the user to accurately predict ranges and distances between themselves and a target up to 1000m away.

FEN Telescopic Rifle Scope

"Wraithen always using sneaky rifles and scopes to hide far away, then, bang. Job done. I just go nearer.."

Nord, Stormer 313 Operative, SCL 9b

Telescopic scopes are fully customisable with a range of optical packages available for all situations. A typical scope provides between 4 and 12 times magnification, with practically no price difference between models. Those with the highest magnification are typically only suitable for use on sniper weapons, but almost any rifle can handle a FEN scope. Nightvision, Infrared and Thermal are all available at a small fee and the scope, like FEN's other accessories, can be purchased in almost any finish imaginable.

FEN Telescopic Rifle Scope	Cost: 40c, +10c per optics upgrade
Weight:	1

May only be attached to non-submachine gun weapons that require the Rifle skill. A scope allows the user to ignore the -1 modifier for firing the weapon at long range. Three optional optical upgrades are also available for a scope: UV Nightvision, IR and Thermal; any number of these may be added to the same scope. A scope with optical upgrades will still be able to negate the long range modifier when lighting or other conditions would normally make finding a target impossible.

GA Silencer

"Some of these Arnold Nutter wannabes go running around making as much noise as possible. I want to live to see SCL 5."

Tul'Fn'Kl'Lar, Shaktar Operative, SCL 6.8a

While FEN rule the roost for sights and optics, GA have long held the standard for silencers and suppressors. The GA Silencer comes with a multi-thread mounting nut allowing it to attach with ease to 90% of SLA approved weapons, reducing the output volume of each shot to a whisper. The weapon suffers a slight range reduction, but that seems a small price to pay for the possibilities that a silencer provides.

GA Silencer	Cost: 25c
Weight:	0

May only be attached to a weapon that requires the Pistol or Rifle skill. The weapon's range is reduced by 10%, but firing the weapon will not give away the firer's position.

GA Weapon Maintenance Kit

The GA Weapon Maintenance Kit provides all the tools needed to clean, unjam, polish and repair an Operative's firearm in the field. The kit contains 47 small compact tools contained within a compact case and offers a lifetime guarantee. The case can be upgraded to the colour of choice and can additionally be embossed with the Operative's name or logo at a small additional charge at purchase.

GA Weapon Maintenance Kit	Cost: 40c*
Weight:	1

*plus optionally 5c for a coloured case and or 10c for embossing. The kit adds +1 to the Success Die for all Technical Weapons skill rolls when dealing with all non-BLA branded ranged weapons.

Life After Death (LaD) Account

While not strictly 'equipment', a Life After Death (or LaD for short) account is the ultimate safety net for Operatives who value themselves over all else. Upon opening an account the subject receives a 'brainsaver' implant and a subdermal 'pacer' implant which, as long as the account is kept up to date, provides an active bio-readout to the fine folks at LaD. Any flatlining of vital signs will automatically despatch a LaD med crew to collect the body of the fallen Operative, generally by rapid response Kilcopter. Such situations come with a 20-minute collection window. Any longer than 20 minutes and the brain will be dead and the attempt for recovery will fail.

When Operatives were sent out on the Bellwood Campaign to reclaim Cannibal Sector 1, twenty minutes was found to be not long enough for an LaD crew to reach their target and several ways to increase the time were proposed. The resulting option to increase the 20-minute period, the new LaD Booster, has been made available as a result. Anyone with an account gets a free booster that's designed to be slammed on the back of the Operative's neck in the right location to increase the brainsaver implant's operating time by an hour.

A successfully collected body is taken back to the LaD cryo-site in central Suburbia where the Operative is 'resurrected' using their patented bio-technology.

LaD are set up to deal with significant damage and are able to augment lost limbs, damaged organs and severe spinal damage, though decapitation or massive trauma to the brain are unfortunately beyond the scope of LaD science. Anyone brought back with LaD may experience a range of side effects, including a significant loss of empathy, complete memory failure and/or significant physical changes to their stamina and endurance. Many argue that being resurrected by LaD marks the end of the person you were and the beginning of a new, entirely less natural you.

LIFE AFTER DEATH (LAD) ACCOUNT	COST: 1C+
WEIGHT:	NA

LaD accounts are not available to Ebonite characters due to the way that the 'brainsaver' implant interrupts the flow of the Ebb.

For more info, see page 60.

MAGHOLD

"Anyone not using MagHold needs to get with the times. There's no such thing as a quick-draw holster when the MagHold is an option."

Tamsin Foxxx, Human Operative, SCL 7.3b

MagHolds are electromagnetically charged plates, attached to the outer surface of armour, usually on the upper arms, legs or back. The plates can be used to store anything, but are usually used to mount guns, knives, ammunition, grenades or other essential combat gear which can be drawn from them at twice the speed they could from any holster. MagHolds literally allow users to slap a pistol against their leg and have it sit there until they need it again. The largest MagHolds can be used to carry sniper rifles or Power Claymores around with relative ease.

MAGHOLD	COST: 5/10/15C
WEIGHT:	0

Allows weapons, ammo, or other equipment to be carried without the need for a free hand or holster. There are three sizes, priced accordingly. The smallest is for pistols, blades or ammo clips, the medium sized is for submachine guns and most rifles and the largest is designed for long-barrelled rifles or Power Claymores.

MAL RECOIL BAFFLING

"Why include baffling technology in your best selling rifle when you can make everyone buy it separately?"

Atrophy, Eban Operative, SCL 8.1b, squad 'Baseline'

Military Assault Laminates (MAL), the same team that brought us the MAL Assault Cannon, also offer advanced recoil baffling for a range of weapons. Recoil baffling is commonly used on high rate of fire weapons to allow them to be handled with greater ease during a firefight. Installing such baffling is a complex job requiring specialist tools, though baffling is fitted for free by most stockists with a 24 hour turnaround on your weapon.

MAL RECOIL BAFFLING	COST: 50C
WEIGHT:	0

May only be attached to a weapon that has a Recoil value of 2 or greater. Baffling reduces the weapon's Recoil by -1 when firing at the weapon's highest ROF.

SLA CLIMBING KIT

'I like to be elevated. A better view that way. My climbing kit is a bit old, but I trust it. I ditched a few of the heavier bits, but I don't recommend doing that if you're new to this gig. Climb up, get comfy, start work; it's a lonely job, but I like it that way."

Tarron Vix, Wraithen Operative, SCL 7.3a

The SLA Climbing Equipment kit is a pack containing a 100m reel of lightweight high-tensile poly-nylon rope, crampons, hooks, connectors, belts and assorted harnesses. The drum reel is powered for easy retraction and connects to a gauss-launcher tube that deploys a grappling hook up to 15m.

SLA CLIMBING KIT	COST: 20C
WEIGHT:	1

Using the climbing kit reduces the difficulty of any Climbing skill roll by one step (i.e. from Complex to Challenging). The user may now also climb surfaces that would otherwise be impossible to climb.

SLA FLASHLIGHT

"Mines really big, long and hard. I like to bash Carrien on the head with it...and if you put a green filter on it you feel famous."

Gilroy Vesper, Human Operative, SCL 6.1b

Standard issue flashlights are available as compact hand-helds, shoulder mounted or under-barrel. In the under-barrel configuration they can be mounted to pistols and rifles and in the shoulder mounted format they can attach to most armour types. While the shoulder mounted units are notably bigger, they are surprisingly light and rarely noticed by the wearer. Hand-held and under-barrel versions come with a 500-hour battery supply, whilst the shoulder mounted version has a 700-hour supply, all of which can be recharged from most power outlets.

SLA FLASHLIGHT	COST: 2/5/10C
WEIGHT:	0/1/1

For both the Weight Factor and cost, the first value represents a handheld flashlight, the second an under-barrel version and the third a shoulder-mounted variant.

SLA Headset Communicator

"At some point, everyone will have to replace the headset they got issued with when they graduated. They don't last very long."

Tamsin Foxxx, Human Operative, SCL 7.3b

All Operatives are issued an SLA Headset Communicator that provides access to all SLA-sanctioned frequencies, allowing any operative not wearing armour with a comms package to communicate with team members, SLA departments and Station Analysis. The headset is light and worth carrying as a backup even if the Operative's armour of choice features integrated comms. While these are issued to all SLA Operatives, they are easily broken, misplaced or damaged in combat meaning replacements are often needed.

SLA Headset Communicator	Cost: 5c
Weight:	0
The headset communicator allows access to SLA comms channels when the user is not wearing an armour integrated comms system.	

SLA Lock Pick Kit

Simple compact lock picking equipment that comes in a fold up hand tool. There are two available options, one for work on traditional manual locks and the other providing the required apparatus to short out electronic locks. These kits are very popular with the criminal element and so can demand very high prices if found available on the black market.

SLA Lock Pick Kit	Cost: 25c
Weight:	1
Available as Manual or Electronic kits. The kit adds +1 to the Success Die for all relevant Lock Pick skill rolls.	

SLA Klippo Lighter

While cigarette lighters are easy to obtain, cheap and disposable, anyone with any sense will buy a Klippo. Klippos are robust, refillable and available in 'civilian' or 'special edition', with the special edition version made only for SLA employees, featuring the SLA logo and a lifetime warranty. Anyone who is anyone owns a Klippo.

SLA Klippo Lighter	Cost: 2c/20u
Weight:	0
It's a lighter.	

SLA Thumper Beacon

"The Thumper saves lives. It's one of those additions to your kit that seems to justify its cost even if it never gets used."

Garshasp Kettor, Neophron Operative, SCL 9.1a

The Thumper is a long thin lightweight beacon, which has two uses. The beacon can be hammered into the ground, after which it will emit a constant throbbing strobe which is visible for up to 25km and lasts approximately 24 hours. Alternatively, the Thumper can be used as a launch tube, with the strobe being fired into the air, after which it will slowly drop to the ground and while emitting the strobe for up to 4 minutes.

SLA Thumper Beacon	Cost: 5c
Weight:	1
The beacon allows the user to make themselves visible for the purpose of rescue or to mark a location for extraction.	

Third Eye Recording & Playback Equipment

"This is Report From The Sectors and I'm Eloise Garcia for Channel Yeah."

Eloise Garcia, Channel Yeah, deceased

Third Eye are the primary news and media collator for SLA Industries. The number of Third Eye cameras on the ground is almost uncountable, televising violence from the cannibal sectors, recording incidents in Downtown as they happen, following Shiver Patrols and now, in the hands of Operatives all over Mort. Such equipment offers the user a highly compact video camera which can be handheld or shoulder-mounted, capable of capturing up to 5 hours of footage per vidslug. The system also comes with a detachable playback console which is easily connected to screens and upload terminals in order to allow broadcasting from pre-recorded vidslugs. As well as video, the camera also sports audio recording with automatic noise cancelling. The system has a 1000 hour battery supply, though the charge up time from empty is a significant 12 hours.

Third Eye Recording and Playback Equipment	Cost: 50c
Weight:	2
The recording equipment allows for the capture of audio and video footage and may be operated without the included playback system, allowing an Operative to travel light. The Weight Factor is halved should the playback system not be carried. Vidslugs hold 5 hours of footage and/or audio and cost 5c each.	

Track opticS Enviro Scanner

Even though its weather prediction is only 65% accurate, the Track opticS Enviro Scanner excels at every other aspect of its job. It accurately analyses moisture, toxicity, breathability, radiation and temperature, outputting the reading on its robust gel screen. A long-time favourite of operatives for off-world missions, the handheld device really comes into its own in the cannibal sectors and the deepest most polluted levels of Lower Downtown.

TRACK OPTICS ENVIRO SCANNER	COST: 25C
WEIGHT:	1
The scanner adds +1 to the Success Die for any Lore: Sector or Detect skill rolls in relation to weather and atmospheric effects. In addition, the user is able to identify radiation and pollution levels within a 50m radius.	

TRACK OPTICS MOTION SCANNER

"Beep beep, shithead. I can see you."

Arnold Nutter, Human Operative,
SCL 6c, squad 'Arnold Nutter', deceased

By using scattered electromagnetic radiation, air pressure sensors and other techniques, the Track opticS Motion Scanner, has become a favourite of Downtown SLA operatives. The Motion Scanner is also utilised by Sector Rangers, within the cannibal sectors. Long and arduous field use has garnered a lot of in depth feedback from the rangers, which, in turn, has resulted in the newest version of the motion scanner. This latest version is robust especially in more hazardous environments.

TRACK OPTICS MOTION SCANNER	COST: 40C
WEIGHT:	1
The scanner adds +1 to the Success Die for all Detect skill rolls regarding movement.	

COMBAT DRUGS

Combat drugs are huge business. SLA has always prided itself in its ability to get Operatives hooked on a range of substances, enabling repeat custom and enhancing the normal capabilities of the average user. While it might stand to reason that Frothers form the core customer base, especially given that Hiberian culture is the primary inspiration for the current wave of combat narcotics, the reality is a little different, with the spread of combat drug customers ranging from Shaktars to Ebonites. Even SLA's newest recruits, the Neophron, are waking up to the potential that can come from using some of the harder drugs to offset their naturally weak physical attributes.

Combat drug usage comes with a price though, with the reality of addiction being all too real. Long term chronic effects of these narcotics can be devastating to the body, but in a world where life expectancy is short, you may as well live hard. As with recreational drugs, many combat drugs affect the point of view of the taker making them feel stronger or even invincible. The reality is drug use and misuse will be the death of many Operatives.

Note: A BOOPA CASDIS is required for easy administering of all drugs and is the only way to use them during a Combat Round. Free syringes are available from most sellers, but preparing and administering a dose in this way is not possible during a combat situation. This is true of both combat and soft drugs.

BLIND SIDE

Blind Side is a brand new release from SLA Industries, hitting outlets late in 912sd. The drug forces a degree of 'tunnel' vision and a significant kick of synthesised adrenalin to give the user a noticeable boost in apparent speed and reaction time. Blind Side's ability to force extreme concentration and combat reflexes has made it an instant hit with both snipers and close assault combatants, allowing them to act much faster than those around them, even those under the influence of other high end combat drugs, such as Ultra Violence. Due to the drug being relatively new, the experimental compound is still fairly unstable, making it more addictive than many other combat drugs and presenting a number of undesirable side effects including extreme headaches and paranoia in those who do not keep up the dosage. Despite the apparent negatives, Blind Side is set to become one of SLA's biggest sellers over the coming year.

BLIND SIDE	COST: 20C PER DOSE
EFFECT:	+2 DEX, +2 CONC. 30 minute duration.
ADDICTION RATING:	10. Every 2 doses
ADDICTION DOSE:	Every 12 hours
DETOX EFFECTS:	-2 CONC, -4 Hit Points, +1 rank in Psychosis: Paranoia

MIND NUMB

Mind Numb was originally developed by Naga 7 for the Aetherman program in order to allow their agents a greater resistance to the effects of fear brought about by Dream Entities. Since its original release, it has found a home in the kit of many Operatives who have spent any length of time in the job, helping them to push through the most dire of circumstances. From being isolated in the subterranean levels below Lower Downtown, to spending any time facing the denizens of Cannibal Sector 1, Mind Numb has proven time and time again that it pulls Operatives through the darkness, keeping them focused on what really matters - surviving.

MIND NUMB	COST: 5C PER DOSE
EFFECT:	Immune to Fear. 6 hour duration
ADDICTION RATING:	8. Every 26 doses
ADDICTION DOSE:	Every 12 hours
DETOX EFFECTS:	-4 COOL, -1 Hit Point

PINEAL STIM

Developed by Dark Lament, the same team behind the Science Friction equipment line. Pineal Stim is manufactured purely for the Ebonite Operative that is looking to gain a physical edge in the field. The serum allows for increased duration of Ebb Enhance abilities, the one discipline that is not affected by Dark Lament's Focus Gem. The way the drug works is top secret and to date very few side effects have been reported, though extreme overdoses are known to cause brain haemorrhaging or severe memory loss. The drug is sold exclusively to Ebons and Wasters and cannot be purchased by other species under any

circumstances. There are no reports at present as to the effects of the drugs on non-Ebonite users.

Pineal Stim	Cost: 2Oc per dose
Effect:	Double the duration of all Enhance Ebb discipline abilities. 2 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 6 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 12 hours plus every time the Enhance discipline is used
Detox Effects:	-1 CONC, -1 rank in Enhance, -1 Hit Point

Rush

Rush is SLA's most popular combat drug. Less addictive than Ultra Violence, but equally beneficial to the combatant using it. Rush enables increased blood flow and a significant boost of adrenaline, combined with elements of healing agents to allow the user to take the edge off of any damage sustained. A typical Rush user can be recognised by their seemingly 'agitated' state and frantic speech patterns, as well as for being the first into a fight and typically the last ones standing.

Rush	Cost: 15c per dose
Effect:	Make a 2nd action per Combat Round (after all other actions have been resolved). Whenever the user loses any Hit Points, reduce the amount lost by 1. 2 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 3 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 12 hours plus every combat, if not already under the influence
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -1 DEX, -1 COOL, -1 Hit Point

Shatter

A dangerously volatile drug made by the mysterious Stirg Pharmaceuticals and supplied to the streets of Mort by DarkNight. The drug is highly illegal and designed as an alternative to Ultra Violence. It is cheap, will turn a civilian into a killing machine and is not particularly hard to source. The side effects however are extreme, often resulting in major addiction and death. Any operative found in possession of Shatter will be retained by Cloak Division for interrogation.

Shatter	Cost: 1OOu per dose
Effect:	+2 STR, +1 DEX, +3 COOL. Whenever the user loses any Hit Points, reduce the amount lost by 50% (round down). 4 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	13. Every dose
Addiction Dose:	Every 6 hours plus every combat, if not already under the influence
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -1 DEX, -1 COOL, -5 Hit Points, +1 rank in Anger

Trapper

"It's like being me, but better. I can't get enough of this shit."
Unnamed DarkNight Agent

Another violently dangerous drug that has recently hit the streets carrying the Stirg Pharmaceuticals tag and being distributed by DarkNight to the civilian masses. Unlike Shatter, Trapper is dirt cheap, costing just a few unis per dose and while it does not claim to turn the user into the rampaging killing machine that its predecessor does, it does provide a disturbingly balanced increase to the user's physical, mental and social attributes, while also being one of the most addictive drugs ever made. Reports of users claiming they felt 'super human' have become commonplace in the deeper regions of Downtown, leading to demand rising steeply. The reception to Trapper is believed to be closely linked to the significant rise in DarkNight sightings throughout Downtown over the last 6 months and the volume of the drug on the street has become a real cause for concern.

Trapper	Cost: 2Ou per dose
Effect:	+1 STR, +1 DEX, +1 COOL, +1 CONC, +1 KNOW, +1 CHA. 1 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	12. Every dose
Addiction Dose:	Every 3 hours
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -1 DEX, -1 COOL, -1 CONC, -1 KNOW, -1 CHA, -3 Hit Points, +1 rank in Psychosis: Paranoia

Ultra Violence

"Gotta' kill em'. Gotta'... Uhhhh… K...k...kill. Fuck. FUCK! Come on you fuckers, I'll rip you to pieces!!!"
Zack McTavish, Frother Operative, SCL 8.1, squad 'Ruffled Feathers'

The most addictive and destructive drug that SLA has ever created. Ultra Violence is a highly concentrated version of Rush, combined with a cocktail of stimulants, hallucinogens and painkillers to turn the user into a true combat monster. Users report increased strength and stamina, a notably faster reaction time and extreme resistance to pain and injury. Unfortunately, addiction to the drug comes at a high price, with the average user burning themselves out rapidly. Addicts typically last a little more than a year or two.

Ultra Violence	Cost: 2Oc per dose
Effect:	+1 STR, +1 DEX, +2 COOL. Whenever the user loses any Hit Points, reduce the amount lost by 50% (round down). 6 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	12. Every dose
Addiction Dose:	Every 6 hours plus every combat, if not already under the influence
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -1 DEX, -2 CONC, -3 Hit Points

SOFT DRUGS

To complement the combat drug range, 'soft' drugs are also a common addition to the Operative's loadout. Many of them are also available to the general public. Soft drugs cover everything from the current medical serums and painkillers to detox treatment and 'brain boosters'. These drugs help Operatives away from combat to maintain their edge when the going gets tough. While not as addictive as the likes of Ultra Violence or Rush, many soft drugs are still easy enough to get hooked on, with some having equally devastating long term effects on the addict. For all of their negatives though, soft drugs still represent a substantial turnover for SLA and find their way into the hands of almost 70% of all Operatives on the street.

Charmer

"Let's get it on!!!"

Unnamed Downtown civilian, recently deceased

Charmer is a recreational party drug, believed to have been originally manufactured by DarkNight cells out in Cannibal Sector 1, using a mix of stimulants and trace levels of KZ-14, the main contaminant attributed to creating the Cannibal race. The drug causes a heightening of the senses and a noticeable increase to social confidence, with a subtle side effect known as 'Charmer Sickness', whereby the user detects sweet scents in otherwise dank and mouldy substances, pushing them to drink or lick sewage water and other equally awful substances. The increase in reaction time that Charmer brings has seen it used as a cheap alternative to Rush by combat Operations.

Charmer	Cost: 3c/30u per dose
Effect:	+1 Initiative Bonus during combat. +1 modifier to the Success Die during all Seduction rolls. 3 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 4 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 12 hours
Detox Effects:	-1 CONC, -1 STR, +1 rank in Psychosis: Paranoia

Flush

Flush is an expensive way to counteract the negative effects of other drug addictions. It is commonly used in high-end rehab clinics to enhance and augment the body's natural ability to fight off the effects of chemical compounds. Typically an addict suffering the come down of other drugs will typically require a daily dose of Flush to continue functioning normally. While Flush itself can be addictive, cases of such addiction are rare.

Flush	Cost: 8c/80u per dose
Effect:	Ignore Detox Effects of other drugs. 2 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	8. Every 30 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 24 hours
Detox Effects:	-1 STR permanently. This penalty is not cumulative

Hard Green

"Proven time and time again by the brave men and women of the Shiver Organisation, Hard Green is THE new supplement for modern drug user."

Aarav Khatri, Head of PR, SLA Industries Pharmaceutical Division, SCL 4.2

Hard Green was developed for the Shiver organisation, to allow Shivers to use combat drugs during the Bellwood campaign without getting addicted. Shivers had never before been allowed to use combat drugs, such activity was entirely frowned upon within the Mort City boundaries. The rules were different for Cannibal Sector 1. Drugs like Mind Numb were needed and often became common lifesavers in the cannibal sector. Hard Green is a Shiver Green sugar-coated tablet, which is a new way of taking drugs for most Operatives. They seemed to have adapted well to the new vector.

Hard Green	Cost: 10c per dose
Effect:	1 dose of Hard Green taken alongside a dose of any other drug will stop the second drug dose being counted towards the number of doses taken before an Addiction Test is required. Hard Green is a tablet-form drug. No duration
Addiction Rating:	Currently unknown
Addiction Dose:	Currently unknown
Detox Effects:	Currently unknown

Honesty

A powerful truth serum, commonly used in critical interrogations. Honesty forces the user to tell the truth, making them extremely susceptible to being interrogated and entirely open to the power of suggestion. Due to Honesty not being a substance that people will voluntarily take, the chances of addiction are very low, though cases of forced addiction leading to an almost vegetative state have been reported by Cloak Division Interrogators.

Honesty	Cost: 10c per dose
Effect:	Required to tell the truth. Anyone interrogating the user receives a +2 modifier to the Success Die during all Interrogate skill rolls. 30 min duration
Addiction Rating:	4. Every 4 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 12 hours
Detox Effects:	-2 KNOW, -2 CONC

Kick Start

Kick Start forces the body to begin the natural healing process at an accelerated rate, while also combining strong coagulant properties. The drug is able to stop internal bleeding and force the regrowth of damaged tissue to occur at an alarming rate. Though the drug is commonplace in almost every medical facility on Mort, the addictive nature of Kick Start is problematic, with

addicts suffering extreme fatigue and an overall reduction in stamina. Its addictive nature aside, Kick Start saves more lives than most medical treatments combined.

Kick Start	Cost: 5c per dose
Effect:	Regain 3 Hit Points and heal 1 wound. No duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 6 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 24 hours
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -2 Hit Points

Pain Away

An exceptionally powerful pain killer which blocks the pain receptors in the brain and alters the neurological reaction to receiving pain as a stimulus, almost forcing users to crave more of it. Those under the influence of Pain Away are seemingly capable of walking away from injuries that would otherwise incapacitate most people, though excessive use of the drug can bring with it a large number of unsavoury side effects.

Pain Away	Cost: 10c per dose
Effect:	Ignore all effects of wounds and the critical condition. 6 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 3 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every hour
Detox Effects:	-1 STR, -1 COOL, +1 rank in Phobia: Pain, -1 Hit Point

Streak

Streak is a powerful mental stimulant, commonly referred to as a 'brain booster', which allows the user to tap into more of their brain capacity than they should otherwise be able to access. Streak drastically improves the users perception skills and memory, as well as increasing the capacity to learn new things and retain said learning. Addiction to Streak is expensive, mainly on account of the significant cost of the drug, but also due to the permanent damage that is caused to the user's intelligence on account of long term use.

Streak	Cost: 20c/200u per dose
Effect:	+2 KNOW, +2 CONC. 1 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	8. Every 4 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 24 hours
Detox Effects:	-1 KNOW permanently (down to a minimum of 0). This penalty is not cumulative

Uplift

"I got depressed, so started taking Uplift, felt better, so stopped taking it, then I felt awful. Now I have to take a double dose. I'm feeling good again now, so I think I can stop soon."

Joe Craddock, Human Operative, SCL 7.4b

Uplift is an antidepressant which counters the effects of depression. Users report a dulling of senses and issues with concentration with prolonged use. Depression returns quickly and more intensely than experienced before if Uplift use is halted. The drug is often misused by those needing an up, or who want to forget their woes.

Uplift	Cost: 1c/10u per dose
Effect:	-1 modifier to the Success Die during all CONC-related skill rolls, +1 modifier to the Success Die during all CHA-related skill rolls. Up to a triple dose of Uplift may be taken at a time, with the effects being applied cumulatively. 24 hour duration.
Addiction Rating:	10. Every dose
Addiction Dose:	Every 24 hours
Detox Effects:	+1 Rank of Depression permanently and effects of Depression return immediately

White Noise

Developed under the supervision of Dark Lament, White Noise is made exclusively to numb the occurrence of 'Dream Demons'; the result of an Ebonite becoming too closely attuned to the Ebb. White Noise is now mass produced and is believed to be taken by over 60% of the Ebonite Population of Mort.

White Noise	Cost: 10c per dose
Effect:	Entirely removes the effects of Dream Demons. To be effective, one dose is required for each rank 4 Ebb Discipline the Ebonite possesses. 24 hour duration
Addiction Rating:	10. Every 30 doses
Addiction Dose:	Every 12 hours
Detox Effects:	-2 COOL, +1 rank in Psychosis: Delusions

VEHICLES - CIVILIAN

"I've done the maths and it's really not worth the hassle owning a car to get around Mort; the traffic is intolerable and everything takes twice as long, but I can't help myself. The latest Eight-Oh hits on my Skendar's speakers define who I am."

Stace Feddle, Human Corporate, SCL 5d

A range of civilian spec vehicles are available on Mort, most commonly to those living in Suburbia or above. While such vehicles cost more than most Operatives can afford, they are available for general sale to those who are able to save up for the significant price tag. A number of these vehicles are also available as a part of SLA's vehicle pool, for issue during BPNs within the more polite urban districts.

All modern vehicles utilise fusion engine technology, removing the need for any solid fuels to be used within the transport industry. The internal fusion reactors feed the engines and onboard management systems with power for extended time periods, generally offering in excess of 70,000 hours of continual use before a recharge is needed.

Calaharvey Motorcycle

"I fucking love that bike. I once squashed a Carrien's head completely flat with my back wheel."

Base, Eban Operative, SCL 7b, squad 'Baseline'

The Calavarvey is an all-environment motorcycle and one of the most popular Operative vehicles ever made. The bike has seen action not only on the streets of Mort, but also off-world and in some of the most inhospitable landscapes ever known. Calaharvey's are built to be incredibly tough for their size, able to take as much damage as most small cars and have an internal fusion reactor which is good for 50,000 hours without recharge.

Calaharvey Motorcycle		Cost: 1200c
Skill:	Drive Motorcycle	
Length	Width	Height
2.1m	1m	0.9m
Capacity:	1 driver, 1 passenger	
PV	Resistance	Hit Points
4	14	20
Movement:	32	

Augustus Towncar

The Augustus is one of the most common wheeled vehicles on Mort, commonly used throughout Suburbia and Uptown. Once heralded as a 'luxury vehicle', the status has declined somewhat over the years with the realisation that owning any vehicle is a luxury. The chassis is reasonably compact and can fit four Human-sized passengers alongside the driver. A number of Augustus vehicles are available in the SLA vehicle pool for Operatives to use on special request when undertaking Grey BPNs in the wealthier parts of Mort City.

Augustus Towncar		Cost: 10,000c
Skill:	Drive Civilian	
Length	Width	Height
4m	2m	1.7m
Capacity:	1 driver, 4 passengers	
PV	Resistance	Hit Points
4	20	60
Movement:	24	

Romulus Limousine

The stretch version of the Augustus Town Car. The Romulus is generally reserved for the high ranking corporate element or the Operative who has more money than sense. The Romulus sports a distinct style and suggests someone of great importance is hidden within. The Chassis provides the same protection as other vehicles in the range, but with tinted windows and a number of internal luxuries as standard.

Romulus Limousine		Cost: 60,000c
Skill:	Drive Civilian	
Length	Width	Height
6.8m	2m	1.7m
Capacity:	1 driver, 7 passengers	
PV	Resistance	Hit Points
5	20	70
Movement:	20	

Remus Roadster

The Remus is a modified Augustus chassis, using a similar approach to make a two-seat sports vehicle, ideal for someone looking to add some true luxury to their life. The Remus is particularly fast, able to keep up with most common motorcycles and offers passengers the same level of protection as the regular five-seat Augustus.

Remus Roadster		Cost: 20,000c
Skill:	Drive Civilian	
Length	Width	Height
3.4m	2m	1.7m
Capacity:	1 driver, 1 passenger	
PV	Resistance	Hit Points
4	18	60
Movement:	30	

VEHICLES - MILITARY

Mil-spec vehicles are generally reserved for mission-issue only, or have price tags so high that only squads with huge sponsorship can have their own. The choice of military vehicles on Mort are fairly slim, typically either one of few APCs or air support units, with the FEN Battle Taxi being by far the most common.

When military vehicles are issued for a BPN, they will often be provided with a trusted driver, whose task is to remain with the vehicle and ensure the Ops do not trash it or leave it anywhere that it can be stolen. Occasionally a trusted squad will be allowed to take an APC out on their own, but the chances of getting hold of a Kilcopter without supervision are pretty much zero.

All military vehicles are well armoured and able to sustain sizable amounts of damage, generally with heavy armour applied to their already significantly bulky chassis'. Additionally, many of these vehicles are armed, or have the option for additional weapons should they be issued to more violent areas, such as the cannibal sectors or when undertaking Black Ops.

Dowlin Automotive Crawler APC

"I've never met a nice Trakaarian, but their Crawler's cool."

Randy Nox, SLA vehicle pool mechanic, SCL 11

The Crawler is the newest addition to the Sector Ranger and Shiver armoury and is slowly proving itself to be well worth its significant cost. The vehicle was spec'd for the ongoing

Bellwood Campaign in Cannibal Sector 1, but since its success over the wall, a number have been issued to Shiver forces on the Downtown Patrol as well as seven being added to the Operative vehicle pool. Of course, with them being so rare still, the chance of getting access to one is slim, but the jeep-based APC is worth it. The vehicle is manufactured by Trakaar-based Dowlin Automotive, originally made for the Trakaarian hunting industry and as a safari vehicle. It did not take long for Commander Fenwick to realise the potential for its application with his Sector Rangers program in Cannibal Sector 1.

The Crawler is surprisingly speedy and an excellent off-road vehicle with additional under-chassis armour to protect from IEDs out in the sectors. The APC holds six passengers with an additional four able to be carried on the external hand-holds, ideal for rapid deployment into hot combat zones. As standard the Crawler is unarmed, but an optional turret-mounted Power Reaper is available for Cannibal Sector operations.

DOWLIN AUTOMOTIVE CRAWLER APC		COST: 110,000c
SKILL:	Drive Military	
LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT
3.2m	2.5m	1.8m
CAPACITY:	1 driver, 5 passengers + 4 passengers on external hand-holds	
PV	RESISTANCE	HIT POINTS
12	30	100
MOVEMENT:	20	
Weapons and Equipment: None Optional turret mounted FEN 706 Power Reaper 2.1000 (fired by a passenger).		

FEN O227-V Battle Taxi APC

"Ain't nothing but a Thresher Sarge getting through the hull of this bad boy. She's my baby. I treat her right and she keeps you safe. My rolling castle."

Rex Tappalin, SLA vehicle pool mechanic, SCL 11

The longest standing military vehicle both on and off-world, the Battle Taxi is a huge armoured personnel carrier, measuring 9m in length. The current Mark V (Five) model has been a mainstay in the streets of Mort for as long as anyone can remember. Capable of carrying 10 passengers of almost any size as well as a dedicated gunner for the Power Reaper turret, the Battle Taxi is the obvious choice for large squads or even larger Operatives, like Stormers and Shaktars, or any situation where having a moveable wall makes sense. The Battle Taxi's use in the cannibal sectors has declined since the implementation of the Crawler, but this has just put more of them into the hands of the Shiver Downtown Patrol and increased availability within the SLA vehicle pool.

The APC also sports a sealed environment and advanced air filtration, an advanced comms relay and both long range motion and thermal scanning equipment. All in all the Battle Taxi is the perfect deployment vehicle for Operatives and a reliable rally point in a firefight.

FEN O227-V BATTLE TAXI APC		COST: 125,000c
SKILL:	Drive Military	
LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT
9m	4m	2.6m
CAPACITY:	1 driver, 1 co-driver/gunner (optional), 10 passengers	
PV	RESISTANCE	HIT POINTS
16	60	200
MOVEMENT:	14	
Weapons: Turret mounted FEN 808 Power Reaper 2.4000 (fired by gunner).		

FEN 3498 Kilcopter

Kilcopters have gradually replaced all helicopters and airplanes used in the skies of Mort. They have single handedly become one of FEN's greatest success stories, serving as deployment vehicles, air support, medical evac and even repurposed as rapid passenger shuttles for execs at Head Office.

The Quad-blade turbine system allows for extreme manoeuvrability in all weather conditions and the ability to get as high as the pollution allows. The Kilcopter allows for rapid deployment between the layers of Mort and for LAD to fly operations further afield, such as into the cannibal sectors where pretty much only LAD Kilcopters will venture. Due to the need to fly low over CS1 on account of the critical pollution, many Kilcopters are shot down by Scav Snipers and DarkNight terrorist cells, which in turn has led to Shiver forces entirely withdrawing air support from the Bellwood Campaign. On the streets of Suburbia and Downtown however the familiar hum of the Kilcopter is a sign that the cavalry has arrived and that the big guns are here.

The newer 3498 version of the Kilcopter is equipped as standard with a Tri-barrelled FEN 808 Power Reaper 2.4000, external ceramic armour plating and a fusion engine good for 10,000 hours of flight without charge.

FEN 3498 KILCOPTER		COST: 450,000c
SKILL:	Drive Pilot	
LENGTH	WIDTH	HEIGHT
2.4m	2m	6m
CAPACITY:	1 pilot, 1 co-pilot (optional), 4 passengers	
PV	RESISTANCE	HIT POINTS
10	30	80
MOVEMENT:	100	
Weapons: Tri-barrelled FEN 808 Power Reaper 2.4000 (treat as regular weapon with +6 DMG and +3 AD).		

Zenit Patroller Motorcycle

The Zenit is the Shiver Organisation's primary support vehicle in Downtown. A simple yet powerful motorcycle with large wheels and significant armour. The motorcycle is of simple construction with as few moving parts as possible. It is sparsely equipped, being not much more than an armoured engine block

on two wheels. Each bike is numbered with stencilled lettering and the Shiver motif on its front armour plate. The bike allows a single Shiver rider and up to one pillion passenger to move about Downtown with relative ease. While not as fast as a Calaharvey, the Zenit holds up as being more manoeuvrable than most cars and has sufficiently enough speed to be considered a fast response vehicle. The wheels have deep treads and a wide base, providing a previously unprecedented level of traction and the ability to ride over the worst of Downtown roads or civilians and even up and down staircases with relative ease.

Most Zenits are Shiver green, but some SLA Operative squads may acquire them as an alternative to a squad Battle Taxi or Crawler. The impracticalities of such vehicles make them more of a wow factor and cool gimmick for the squad than a practical solution to long term field work and clearly they were not designed for the likes of the Malice Stormer or Shaktar physique.

Zenit Patroller Motorcycle		Cost: 25,000c
Skill:	Drive Motorcycle	
Length	Width	Height
2.1m	1.2m	0.9m
Capacity:	1 driver, 1 passenger	
PV	Resistance	Hit Points
7	22	30
Movement:	28	

SCIENCE FRICTION EQUIPMENT

Dark Lament is a subsidiary department of SLA Industries. Headed by some of the most respected Necanthropes and Ebonites in The World of Progress, Dark Lament creates physical items formed from the Ebb itself, an art known as Science Friction. Over the years, a vast range of tools have been made available to Ebonites to allow them to focus their minds and enhance their use of the different Ebb disciplines. The first known Science Friction items were the now-illegal Glyph Cards, but many other ancient artefacts were also seized by Naga 7 during their conquests, most of which became the inspiration for Dark Lament's own development of tools and weapons.

While a number of these items have been phased out over the years, the core of the Dark Lament line continues to be the mainstay of equipment for Ebonite Operatives on Mort.

Deathsuit

"It's not armour. It's my skin. My soul. It's me."
Glisten, Ebon Operative, SCL 8.3

A Deathsuit is the most common item found in the possession of an Ebonite. While there is no requirement to wear one, the benefits granted by the Deathsuit are so great that over 99.9% of all Ebonites in the employ of SLA Industries now have their own Deathsuit. Thanks to its creation, Ebonites no longer need to wear powered armour, which drastically hampers the Ebb user's ability to draw Flux. Today, Ebonites refer to common armour suits as 'Flux Cages' due to the way in which they trap and hamper the capabilities of Ebb users.

The Deathsuit is an organic armoured suit that covers the wearer's body with close-fitting Science Friction material. The suit has the appearance of raw muscle and sinew and is typically jet black in appearance with an oily outer surface. Ebonites often change the colour of their suits via the Ebb to match their own vibrant eye and hair colour. While the Deathsuit does not have a separate helmet, it is able to wrap itself around the face of the wearer at will, offering the same basic protection from the elements and local toxicants that sealed armour does.

While the Deathsuit provides protection it also enables the wearer to expand their potential. The single most important aspect of the suit is that it is able to store the required knowledge to calculate the Ebb. Because of this advancement in Science Friction engineering, the need for dangerous and illegal Glyph Cards has become a thing of the past.

The Science Friction material that makes up the suit acts as a symbiote, slowly integrating itself as one with the wearer. As the process reaches its later stages the suit becomes able to store additional Flux that the wearer can access at will, as well as slowly adding to the physical capabilities of its owner. Those Ebonites who have worn their Deathsuit for long enough will eventually find themselves physically more capable, becoming stronger and faster than they ever were without the suit. In addition, the most evolved version of the Deathsuit is able to think and act as an extension of its owner's body should they become incapacitated.

Deathsuit (Light)		Cost: 750c
PV	Resistance	Weight
5	16	0
A Deathsuit provides a range of benefits based upon the user's knowledge of the Protect Ebb discipline. Medium and Heavy Deathsuits cannot be purchased, instead they are obtained naturally through the Ebonite's understanding of the Protect discipline.		

Deathsuit (Medium)		
PV	Resistance	Weight
8	20	0
The wearer's COOL stat (as well as the species maximum) is increased by +1. The wearer's FLUX regeneration is increased to 1 point every hour.		

Deathsuit (Heavy)		
PV	Resistance	Weight
10	26	0

The wearer's STR and DEX stats (as well as the species maximums) are increased by +1. A heavy deathsuit is 'alive' and able to think and act as the Ebon should they become incapacitated, walking them out of danger and using their Ebb disciplines to protect or heal them.

Ebb Flintlock

The Ebb Flintlock, as its name suggests, is an arcane looking flintlock-style pistol, formed from Science Friction materials and engraved with glyphs designed to enhance the user's channeling of Flux when using the Blast discipline.

Ebb Flintlock	Cost: 500c
Weight:	1

If an Ebonite using the Blast discipline is armed with an Ebb Flintlock, they gain the following bonuses:

- All Blast attacks gain +10m range and +1 Min DMG.
- All Blast attacks may be made using the character's Pistol skill if they prefer.
- Upon success of the Calculation Test, the user may opt to not immediately perform the attack and instead store it in the Flintlock to be fired during a subsequent Combat Round (max storage of 5 Combat Rounds). Only a single shot may be stored in this way.

Ebb Medi-kit

The Ebb Medi-kit is an organic-looking pouch which has a similar appearance to the outer surface of the Deathsuit. The small kit contains a range of ornate tools which are designed to focus the user's mind to channel their Flux more intensely when using the Heal discipline.

Ebb Medi-kit	Cost: 500c
Weight:	0

When equipped with an Ebb Medi-kit, any Heal abilities that regain Hit Points will regain an additional 1 Hit Point. In addition, the Formulae Rating of all rank 3 and 4 Heal abilities are reduced by 1.

Ebb Sword

"As soon as Dark Lament released the Ebb Sword I bought one. It was like a calling or something… I just had to. Since then I've used my Flintlock less and less. Up close and personal with power like this in my hands. It's very special."

Haven, Ebon Operative, SCL 5c, squad 'Haven's Arms'

The Ebb Sword is a one-handed antique blade encrusted with glyphs. The handle molds itself to the grip of the first Ebonite that holds it, making it unique to the user. The blade of the sword glows in line with the current state of mind of the user - normally blue, green, pink or red when the Ebonite is in combat.

Any user of Blue Thermal may channel the Ice Blade or Razor Ice Blade ability through the Ebb Sword rather than creating an ice blade. When this happens, the Ebb Sword will use the relevant Ice Blade's profile, but will inflict +1 damage and will not shatter, thus lasting until the duration of the ability. Alternatively, the Ebb Sword may be used as a weapon in its own right, using the following profile:

Ebb Sword			Cost: 500c
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-1	2	3	2

The user may spend 1 point of FLUX when calculating damage to add +3 AD for the purpose of that attack.

Focus Gem

The Focus Gem is like a large gemstone, implanted into the users Deathsuit, typically in the centre of the chest or between the shoulder blades at the back. Whenever the user calculates a discipline, all summoned Flux is channeled through the gem, which in turn causes the ability used to lasts longer. The gem works as an amplifier for the duration of Ebb disciplines.

Focus Gem	Cost: 600c
Weight:	1

When equipped, the stated duration of any Ebb discipline (e.g. Duration: 10 mins) is doubled. The Ebonite may still choose to end the effect of such abilities early if they wish. A Focus Gem works on all disciplines, with the exception of Enhance.

Flux Gem

Flux Gems are storage batteries for Flux. They are typically small, smooth and polished stones which act as a containment matrix for excess Flux, allowing an Ebonite to replenish spent Flux faster, quickly and efficiently whenever they need it.

Flux Gem	Cost: 100c per point of flux
Weight:	1

The owner may drain the Flux Gem at any time, transferring the entire capacity to their own Flux value. Note that it is not possible to partially drain a Flux Gem, the entire contents must be absorbed in one go, with any excess Flux being lost. During combat, absorbing Flux from a Flux Gem may be done as an auxiliary action.

Like Ebonites, Flux Gems are also capable of regenerating their own Flux supplies and will regain 1 point every 12 hours. While the rate of replenishment is much slower than the Ebonite's own ability to regain Flux, it does mean that most Flux Gems become fully recharged within 24-48 hours.

Flux Gems are available in a range of storage sizes, capable of holding between 1 and 5 points of Flux.

THREAT ANALYSIS

DEPARTMENTAL FORMATION

"When the old enemies returned, the horrors that we all knew were not destroyed, the lies were revealed. When the Conflict Aliens returned, we knew we had done too little, a few threat analyses here and there, describing the worst of them, but with scant detail. That's when we knew we'd failed and we had to make it right. That's when I took the reports and collated them, the spider-crawls in diaries, the testimonies of the survivors, the data slugs of long dead monsters, crawling on the screens in your hands, that's when we knew the future needed saving from the past. Yes, yes, save the future, sacrifice the now. I have seen the long dead terrors and the terrors looked back."

Marius Grenham, Threat Analysis department founder, 905sd

In 905sd, a new threat appeared in the World of Progress and SLA Industries was ill-prepared. SLA's military was meeting formerly unknown threats on far-off worlds with little or no information, aside from a few disorganised notes. This cost the company dearly. A handful of survivors returned to Mort, from Xaime, after a brutal encounter with this new threat and one survivor suspected the worst; Marius Grenham thought they were the 900 years dead conflict aliens. In particular, he thought they were the Krell.

His suspicions were correct. While he was in recovery, he scoured the libraries and records for proof that the Krell had returned only to discover the records in complete disarray. He begged a corporate representative for assistance and was shocked to find that his requests for a small team and office space were quickly granted. Grenham and his team started pulling up every report on every encounter, including thousand year old writings and drawings, eventually cataloguing a collection of documents for each threat. Each catalogue entry he referred to as a Threat Analysis. Grenham's department standardised and catalogued everything, even including the less esoteric threats encountered by Operatives and the military. The library rapidly became a repository of knowledge for everyone, with the Sector Rangers and Shivers also inputting their sightings and findings. The result, a new department of SLA Industries: Threat Analysis.

Although Grenham didn't survive long, his mental fortitude was not able to withstand the dread and foreboding caused by his encounter with the truly alien, but his techniques and methodology did. His legacy was a growing encyclopaedia of knowledge, listing historical records and contemporary reports for each and every threat the company's representatives had, could and would encounter. Within a few years, SLA Industries had a department dedicated to recording and disseminating codified knowledge about every threat available, from the cockroaches of the cannibal sectors to the Momics of the No-Go Zone, from the Carnivorous Pig to the Root Dog. A quick call to Threat Analysis and you could get a report printout fed to your APC's dash fax, or even your home printer, within the hour.

ANALYSING THE THREAT

The standard Threat Analysis comes in the form of a description, the statistics of the threat, its skill equivalents, equipment and offensive capabilities. For instance, a typical threat would have a description that explains as much information as an Operative needs to survive meeting one, including how to recognise it, how dangerous it is and any other pertinent information that SLA Industries thinks you need. An example of the sort of information contained in a Threat Analysis follows.

Name:	The name of the threat, eg. Killian Brown Rat.
Stats:	STR, DEX, KNOW, CONC, CHA, COOL, LUCK and Initiative.
Hit Points:	Total hit points.
Movement:	Closing and Rushing speeds.
Skills:	A list of skills, eg. "Detect: 1"
Equipment:	Whatever the threat usually carries. In the case of animals, this will be their natural weapons and armour, if applicable.
Weapons:	The statistics of the type of weapons they carry or their natural weapons.
Notes:	Any special rules that apply to the threat.

A fax from Threat Analysis will be accompanied by an image, if available, but the image quality isn't as good as the one the department can provide if you have the time to go to a departmental office and request a full quality printout. Offices are available at strategic points around the city, with the second-largest being at Hole2 on the Sector Wall, a popular entry point into Mort City for Sector Rangers.

"Do you have the cost approval form stamped by the department that issued your BPN? I'll be needing your request signed by the leader of your squad on your squad's official headed paper. You do have that, right?"

Blaine Eggham, Desk Keeper, Threat Analysis

SEWER DWELLERS AND STREET FAUNA

"Shit the bed!, we got a Blue BPN to clear out a sewer rat infestation. A shit job, in a shit place, for shit money – but hey, at least we won't die!"

Bob the Frog, Human Operative, SCL 8.3, squad 'Frog Groggers'

The threats to the denizens of Mort City are not always glamorous and exciting. Yes an Operative may meet a grisly end due to an unfortunate encounter with a serial killer or Dream Entity, but many more have fallen foul to the beasts and creatures that exist in the shadows and the sewers.

CLAWHEAD COCKROACH

Clawhead Cockroaches, named after their head's resemblance to a hammer's claw, are the smallest threat to be encountered in the streets, buildings and sewers of Mort City. They are not dangerous in and of themselves, but they often carry diseases and contagions. If not kept under control, they can become a prevalent reminder that home is shared with more than one would care to consider. They are significantly smaller than the Arrowhead Cockroaches seen in the cannibal sectors and unlike their benign larger relatives, do have a defensive mechanism. If attacked, the Clawheads spray a foul acidic secretion from glands at the base of their head. This spray contaminates food, water and surfaces with an acrid tasting sheen which, if left unchecked for long periods, can corrode metal and architecture. Often Shivers are tasked with clearing out a Clawhead infestation; it is probably one of the dullest jobs to be given and usually requires that all armour and weapons be fully washed down afterwards.

Notes: Though the Clawhead does not pose a combat threat to the population of Mort, they do carry a range of diseases and illnesses which can be contracted by eating food they have touched. At the GM's discretion, prolonged contact with the Clawhead's acidic secretion will inflict 1 DMG to unarmoured targets or 1 AD to armour.

RATS

Killian Brown rats are a common sight, both in the streets of downtown and the sewers. They can be nasty if cornered, but generally pose no discernible threat to day to day life. They do however add a massive strain on the infrastructure of the city, chewing through wires and carrying a number of diseases wherever they go, multiplying quickly from one pregnant mother to thousands of individuals in a matter of weeks. Often BPNs are issued to clear out an infestation; it is unpleasant work, but is generally low risk. An exception to this happens when food runs out and the rats become insatiably hungry and congregate in their hundreds or thousands before relocating en masse. These swarms are capable of dragging down and consuming anything in their path, Operatives included.

Other rat species include the larger grey brethren, known as Lennox Greys. They are fortunately rare within the city walls, but should be avoided at all costs. They have no concept of fear and an uncontrollable hunger, leading them to attack anything in their domain on sight. They tend to live in small groups of four to six, so when one is encountered, expect to find more. In the cannibal sectors, Mutant Rats have been seen with more and more frequency. These hairless monstrosities tend to live for only a year or so, with mature specimens growing to the size of a large Carnivorous Pig. There have been no confirmed sightings of Mutant Rats within the city walls, but it is likely to be only a matter of time before they find a way in. In recent years, a disease-infested black rat has also been reported. Initially these were thought to be a variant of the Lennox Grey, but they could be recent imports from Trakkaar where a similar looking species is endemic.

Killian Brown Rat			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
1	4	0	0
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	3	0	+4
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
6		3	6

Skills	
Athletics: 3	Detect: 1
Stealth: 2	Tracking: 1
Unarmed Combat: 3	

Equipment
Teeth/Claws.

Note: A Killian Brown can cause a nasty bite to unarmed targets. As such attacks with its teeth do +2 DMG

Feral Mongrel

When left to their own devices, dogs copulate, eat and defecate. Canines are naturally social animals and have a pack mentality which forces the inbred, weak and enfeebled to be quickly purged, as the larger and stronger specimens prove their dominance. As such, Feral Mongrels all tend to look similar: big, strong and full of teeth.

The pack has a hierarchy with the largest and strongest male being the Alpha and younger males and dominant females taking the beta role. The betas and the rest of the pack are responsible for hunting and protecting the young. Males are ostracised when they near sexual maturity and either roam solo or form loose packs of their own.

Fights often break out within and between packs of Mongrels, frequently leading to Alphas being killed or mortally injured. Most Alphas have the role for only a few months, but occasionally a king alpha can come to prominence. Such dominant individuals are normally exceptionally large, savage and not to be messed with.

Feral Mongrel			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
3	3	0	1
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	2	0	+4
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
10		3	7

Skills	
Athletics: 2	Detect: 3
Stealth: 2	Tracking: 1
Unarmed Combat: 3	

Equipment
Teeth, Thick Hide (PV: 1, Resistance: 6)

Notes:

A Feral Mongrel has a vicious bite. As such, attacks with its teeth do +3 DMG.

If an Alpha accompanies the pack, each Feral Mongrel gains +2 COOL. An Alpha uses the profile above, but in addition to the increase in COOL, they also receive +1 rank in each skill.

CARNIVOROUS PIGS

Sewer dwelling Carnivorous Pigs pose a quandary for most Mort denizens. They are lethal and likely to eat you, but they taste so good. Their hide is tough, they are capable of running at great speed and their teeth and tusks can do some serious damage, but if you hit them hard and in the right place, they will go down fast, especially the younger ones, most commonly known as 'Squealers'. Fully grown Sows should only be challenged by experienced Operatives and the Boars by only the insanely brave or downright foolhardy.

CARNIVOROUS PIG			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
5	3	1	2
CHA	COOL	LUCK	INITIATIVE
0	7	0	+5
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
23		2	5

SKILLS	
Athletics: 2	Detect: 2
Stealth: 1	Survival: 2
Tracking: 1	Unarmed Combat: 4

EQUIPMENT
Teeth/Tusks, Armoured Hide (PV: 2, Resistance: 10)

Notes:
Carnivorous Pigs have a Regeneration Rate of 1.
Carnivorous Pigs are vicious fighters, biting and ripping at anything they can get their jaws around. To reflect this, a pig's teeth and tusks do +4 DMG and +2 AD. In addition, whenever a Carnivorous Pig causes the loss of any Hit Points from a single attack, it will also inflict a wound if no other wound has been inflicted by that attack. The GM may choose which location this wound is applied to.

CARRIEN

"Carrien continue to blight the sewers and subterranean levels of Downtown and the attributed cause of significant loss of civilian life. Though the city-born members of the species are far less problematic than their sector-bred kin, they still pose a considerable threat based on numbers alone, with their population estimated to be second only to that of rats."

Threat Analysis Report 113, Subterranean Topics

THE DEATH OF A CIVILISATION

Mort was once called Jeth, inhabited by a peaceful race known as the Jethians. These canine-esque beings were happy living in their jungle cities, worshipping their deities and trading with other nations. When SLA Industries built the Fission Belt, the reactor ring that would power the great city of Mort, the Jethians refused to move. In the conflicts that ensued, the Jethians proved that they would protect their land even if it meant dying for it and die they did.

The Fission Belt came to life in August of 86sd, polluting the Jethian homeland, forcing them to fight for both their land and their lives. A few months later, to solve the ongoing conflict, and in a sinister turn of events, SLA Industries elected to blow the reactor positioned in the centre of the province of Jeth, instantly wiping out a huge portion of the Jethian race. The result of this decision gave rise to two major outcomes; firstly the Fission Belt went into meltdown as more reactors followed suit, turning vast areas of Mort's surface into irradiated wasteland. Secondly, fleeing from their homes, the surviving masses of the Jethian race poured from their homes and fled, pushing on through polluted landscapes, searching for a new home. With every step they took, they became less and less like the species they once were. Mutated, their skin peeled away to reveal a primitive skeletal form. When their exodus ended and they had arrived at the borders of the Central Outskirts, the creatures known as the Jethians were long dead. In their place, a new frenzied, aggressive and feral monster stood. These monsters became known as the Carrien.

THE NEW BREED

"The last thing we need is the likes of Klip Klop clippety-clopping down Hershall Boulevard with a wee bairn stuck on his antlers."

Shiver Pvt. Jessie O'Shanter, Downtown 2-34 Patrol

The Carrien race have made Cannibal Sector 2 their home, far outnumbering all other species. Carrien in the sectors are typically organised into conclaves, usually under the rule of a Greater Carrien, a huge lumbering beast, originating from the wastes of central outskirts, that stands as big as a Stormer and capable of crushing a human skull with one hand. Occasionally these great beasts will have lieutenants known as Carrien Alphas. Alphas are the brains, with more smarts than other Carrien, putting them closer to Advanced Carrien Operatives than their Greater Carrien kin. Sometimes Alphas will branch out on their own and form a conclave without the rule of a Greater Carrien, though many of these packs do not seem to survive long especially in the cannibal sectors. For this reason, most conclaves found in the sewers under Downtown are headed by an Alpha. Survival in the city is more about smarts than brute force and this is where the Alphas stand out.

Though most regular Carrien are capable fighters, with teeth and claws that can shred flesh and bone, those out in the cannibal sectors are typically far stronger and more frenzied than those found in Downtown. Threat Analysis attributes this to the required survival instincts, as well as the daily radiation those outside the walls receive.

Pack Mentality

Carrien are carnivorous scavengers and natural hunters. They roam the sewers of Downtown in search of anything they can sink their teeth into, usually rats, Carnivorous Pigs or other wandering fauna. When food is scarce, they will burst through the ground above them, pouring into apartments or crowded streets, devouring the civilian population of Downtown. Carrien ripping apart civilians is a common sight on the Eight Fourteen news minute.

While a single Carrien is rarely a match for an armed Operative, an entire pack can be a dangerous foe. At their very nature, they are pack-animals, with a single conclave containing anywhere from 50 to a few thousand fully grown Carrien, which will typically roam in hunting packs of between six and twenty. While those in Downtown are not as organised as their sector-kin, many still operate under the leadership of an Alpha, hunting for food, water or anything else that the Alpha wants to add to their collection. These city-based Alphas are rarely seen, hiding deep in the subterranean tunnels of Downtown, shying away from lights above and feasting on whatever their hunting packs bring back. When an Alpha does venture out, they are highly aggressive and easily capable of taking down an Operative if they get close enough. Though Carrien do not use ranged weapons, some Alphas possess enough smarts to use firearms scavenged from dead gang members or Operatives.

More than a few Shiver patrols have been caught off-guard by a shotgun-wielding Alpha during routine street cleaning duties.

"When you shoot at 'em they drop fast. Sure, up close they can be real mean feckers, so make a point of not letting 'em near. But this is the problem, right? There's so damn many of them. They're like them damn Clawheads. Where there's one there's usually umpty-three more waiting to pounce and pull you through a sewer grate."

Shiver Pvt. Tarly Walters, Downtown 3-128 Patrol

Living in the Shadows

Due to spending their lives in the shadows of the subterranean passageways and sewers of Mort, urban Carrien eyesight has degenerated, especially when compared to those living on the other side of the wall. This inability to adjust to shifting light levels has saved more than a few Shiver patrols in Downtown, who have come to refer to the standard issue flashlight as a 'Blinder'. While a flashlight will not save your life, it may just buy you enough time to reload or escape.

Carrien Runs, as they are commonly known, are small crawl spaces found in the foundations of buildings, sewers and even the Sector Wall. These runs allow the Carrien to pass unseen throughout the foundations of Downtown, Lower Downtown and at times, even as far up as Suburbia. The Carrien Runs are also how most unwanted guests make their way into Districts seven and eight of Downtown from the cannibal sectors. While they are not keen to share these access tunnels, there are simply too many scattered over too wide an area of the sprawling city for the Carrien to retain any kind of control and, as such, everyone from Scavs to DarkNight will use them to move weapons, drugs, people and even themselves between unseen areas. As for the runs under the Sector Wall, SLA Industries seem either reluctant to investigate or have grown entirely ignorant of their existence, refusing to accept that the foundations of their impenetrable wall could possibly have been breached in such a way.

Carrien			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
3	3	1	1
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	4	0	+4
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
14		4	7

Skills	
Athletics: 3	Climbing: 2
Detect: 2	Language (Gristle): 2
Melee Weapons: 3	Polearm: 2
Stealth: 2	Survival: 2
Tracking: 1	Unarmed Combat: 3

Equipment
Teeth/Claws, Mix of generic unpowered weapons

Notes: Roughly 50% of a pack will be armed with a Carrien Hockey Sticks and possibly Scrap Armour (Light). For Scrap Armour, see Scavs.

Carrien Alpha			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
5	4	2	2
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	5	0	+6
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
22		4	7

Skills	
Athletics: 3	Climbing: 2
Detect: 2	Language (Gristle): 3
Leadership: 3	Melee Weapons: 3
Polearm: 4	Stealth: 2
Survival: 3	Tracking: 3
Unarmed Combat: 3	

Equipment
Teeth/Claws, Carrien Hockey Stick, Scrap Armour (Medium)

Notes: Some Alphas may have additional weapons taken from killed Operatives with one or two even able to operate firearms. For Scrap Armour, see Scavs.

Hockey Stick

A polearm shaped after a traditional Jethian wooden ceremonial staff. The weapon has become symbolic of the Carrien race and gets its name from Naga 7's 'John Hockey Theory', a process used to spin an elaborate cover story made up to divert people from a larger truth, in this case, the real background of the Carrien race.

Hockey Stick			
Skill:	Polearm		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-3	2	0	1

Any successful attack with a Hockey Stick that inflicts a wound will also knock the target to the ground, inflicting the prone condition. Some Carrien will strap a blade to the end of their Hockey Stick, changing the weapon into a Hockey Axe. A Hockey Axe inflicts +2 DMG and +1 AD, but increases the Weight Factor to 3.

Species Specific Abilities

"One Carrien is no threat at all, but try facing nine of them."

Shiver Pvt. Mandy Dancer, Downtown 3-95 Patrol

Pack Mentality: Carrien work as a pack, hunt as a pack and eat as a pack. As long as Carrien number six or more, they are considered to be entirely immune to the effects of Fear and each add +1 to their Initiative Bonus.

THE SHI'AN CULT

The Shi'An are the largest and most powerful religious cult on Mort. They originate from White Earth and the vast expanse of Conflict Space beyond. Over the years the Cult's influence has spread across the SLA owned World of Progress, seducing the downtrodden masses and turning their followers against the company.

The Cult worships Bitterness and his Prime Ethereals. In return for devotion and service the cultists can wield dark magic and summon servants and allies directly from White Earth, challenging SLA in ways previously not thought possible. SLA Industries and the Shi'An are diametric opposites. Whilst SLA focusses on media and technology, the Shi'An is steeped in mysticism and savagery. SLA Industries has been forced to create an entirely new BPN colour/type that deals solely with the activity of this religion.

"I implore you to create an educational program that will, at the very least, teach our Operatives the basics of the Shi'An Cult. At this moment Threat Analysis puts forward a moderate to low hazard rating on them, but this is a potentially disastrous oversight.

The Shi'An Cult is going to be a major problem in the years to come. They have never had any real power, it has never been granted, until now. But as the cult continues to grow and evolve, we will see the creatures of White Earth infest our world, and even our best-trained Operatives have no experience of these highly specific threats.

The Shi'An's true strength lies within this oversight; it depends on our tendency to disregard a deceptively low level danger. By the time we finally acknowledge this blunder, it will already be too late."

Mara Kessock, Head of Stigmartyr, addressing Head Office in a restricted memo, dated 1/12/899sd

The Shi'An is like no other threat to SLA Industries because its power comes from outside the World of Progress, it stems from White Earth. It knows all of the company's secrets. For nine centuries SLA has charged two departments to stymie curiosity and eliminate uncovered truths; this has been the joint duty of both Cloak Division and Stigmartyr. It has always been Cloak Division's responsibility to eradicate the threat of exposure and for countless years it has succeeded in that task. Most people living on Mort and in the World of Progress have had only a cursory understanding of White Earth. All that has been widely acknowledged is that White Earth is the true enemy of SLA and something horrendous exists on that world that can challenge Mr Slayer. People also realise that any information pertaining to White Earth can easily make one a target on an extermination warrant. Thus, if you choose to pry deeply into the secrets of White Earth you are a determined opponent of SLA, or at best just especially stupid. Recently, Cloak Division has unfortunately failed in its responsibilities because the people of Mort are now fully conscious of White Earth. This failure was inevitable. The Shi'An are in their streets and in their apartments. They are their neighbours; they may even be family members. White Earth is no longer some distant menace that need not be concerned with. The danger is real, the danger is right here and right now.

"It would be convenient to simply lay the blame of the Shi'An's development at the feet of White Earth, but the reality is sadly more nuanced than that. SLA Industries, the World of Progress, and Mort-based society have had an equal share in the expansion of the cult.

For centuries we have ignored and marginalised, the largest population cross section in the entire World of Progress – our own citizens. We have deemed them largely inconsequential and of little value. We have shown little interest in encouraging them, save a privileged few. We rack and stack them in the hovels of Lower Downtown and conveniently forget about them.

The Shi'An Cult did not forget about them however and provided them something that we have never offered them: hope.

The Cult told them that they may in fact be special, that they may have significance and purpose. All they had to do was join their ranks.

Whether or not the Shi'An would abuse them, or lie to them really did not matter. The falsehood was always more seductive than the truth.

Bitterness may have fashioned Shi'An, but SLA Industries, through sheer neglect, created the Cult itself."

Professor Arthur Godfrey Crowden, Stigmartyr – (Principal of Societal Studies)

THE THREAT WITHIN

The problem stems not from the denizens which are pulled onto Mort from White Earth, but the civilians based on Mort itself. Without their worship and decisive action such creatures cannot reach the World of Progress.

SLA Industries has let its populace down and so many have turned their devotion to Bitterness and White Earth as a result. In this instance, power is genuinely granted to Mort's underclass, but most fall victim rather than reap the real benefits. The current plan is to simply cause chaos on Mort and convey a message: the core of SLA can be reached and threatened.

Most Downtown inhabitants not aligned to the Cult are utterly terrified of the Shi'An. The strange visitors from White Earth frighten on a deeper level than Carrien and Manchines because they are otherworldly, they do not belong. They should not even exist and whilst most civilians cannot articulate this dreadful feeling they seem to understand on an instinctual level: the worst is yet to come.

The summoned threats in Downtown are low level, relatively speaking. The rituals required to bring them forth require little preparation or effort and with the exception of the Ascetics they are not expected to survive too long. Stigmartyr knows how to deal with the present crop of threats, but they are more concerned with the Ethereals entering the World of Progress.

The Malefactors govern the Cult and the Prime Ethereals govern them. Each Malefactor has one of the Prime Ethereals as their patron and as such gain special gifts and boons befitting

the nature of that specific Ethereal. They must, however, deliver on certain promises made once they are appointed as Malefactors. Often these duties run to the very gruesome and extreme and if one is a servant to the resident Malefactor they must carry much of the horrid burden. It is within these daily chores of service that many Neophytes lose their minds.

"I used to think that all that White Earth shit was garbage; just some made up threat to keep us in check. Seriously, they do that kinda shit all the time and you know it. I didn't even believe in the Shi'An portals, … until I saw a Hominid for myself.

It wasn't the sight, so much as the smell? Y'know, that really deep 'animal stench'; I'd never smelled anything like that before and it made me want to vomit.

That's when I knew all this was real.

I don't sleep so good these days."

Paulie 'Grits' Gritmore, Downtown Gang Member - 'The Flesh Wounds'

THE ATTRACTION OF THE CULT

Unlike many other Cults throughout the history of SLA the Shi'An does not offer material wealth or necessarily public recognition. Almost all are drawn by the promise of spiritual power. There is no con or fakery; all the magic and wonderment, however hideous it may be, is on display for all to see. The initial divine vision fades fast as those who were seduced by the cult swiftly acknowledge the dark reality of it and have no choice but to bend to its brutal wishes. One does not simply leave the Cult. Once you make your blood oath you are in for life, even if that is just a few more weeks.

Some have been known to throw themselves upon the mercy of SLA Ops and Shivers, but most never get that chance. If the Cult even catches wind of a potential desertion or mutiny, the reprisals are fast and savage. Many blasphemous Neophytes have met uglier ends than the Cult's chosen prey for daring to go against White Earth…

"In order to climb up the ranks the cultists need to make valuable sacrifices. At a higher level these goons have to kill a loved one. Like, to prove their loyalty.

We caught this one Fun Boy the other day, and he's got… he's got a dead baby in a rucksack, and he was on his way back to Lower Downtown. He told me he didn't have no loved ones, no relatives; so the Shi'An told him to pick a suitable alternative.

I hate it when this damn Cult encourages its worshippers to 'get creative.'

I killed that fucker right on the spot.

Scumbag."

Gell Diamond, Human Operative, SCL 7, Squad 'Boss Man's Wrath'

CULT HIERARCHY

The Shi'An Cult, on Mort, is led by the chosen Malefactors, taking their directions from White Earth. Below them are the Acolytes and the Neophytes who still retain their humanity, with the Drones at the bottom, doing the menial tasks and moving blood around in the form of their bodies. It is very rare that an

Operative squad will come into contact with a Malefactor, a good thing considering their power more than matches that of a Necanthrope.

Drones

Nobody joins the Shi'An Cult expecting to become a Drone. They barely know this term even exists and its application is expressed in two different ways. The first is a Drone, an expendable worshipper, having little to no value, who can only be trusted to perform the simplest, labour intensive tasks. At its worst, the second definition of a Drone is a cultist whose mind has simply snapped from the pressure of serving such a terrible religious sect and because of the awful things they witnessed and committed. At this stage, that Drone is only valued for the blood in their veins.

Neophyte

Neophytes make up the bulk of the cult's organisation and have some mind to what they are doing and why they got entangled in the Shi'An in the first place. These followers accrue a small amount of power, but if a ladder of importance exists in the Cult then they are on the second lowest of the rungs and they are desperately trying to climb up.

Neophytes are the most likely followers to be found wearing armour and using technology such as firearms and vibro hand weapons, despite Shi'An edicts forbidding their use – it is the only real hope they have of defending themselves against the enemies of White Earth.

> *"I ain't going up against a Hominid with a pointy stick; The only language those fuckers understand is Chain Axe."*
>
> Blokey Bloke, Shi'An Neophyte

But what's in it for them? Most expect a final victory over SLA will grant them privileges and untold wealth in the new world, however vain and desperate this may seem. Others are simply freaks of debasement – voyeurs who simply indulge and thrive on the ultra sadistic acts they witness and perform.

Acolyte

This is the next stage in development for a Neophyte. Once they attain the status of Acolyte their responsibilities and value increase. Acolytes now serve as Scribes, Overseers and Pedlars. Most do not realise, however, that their career path has led them into a dead end. Only a handful ever elevate to any higher position; the majority simply perform the same monotonous task from the remainder of their short lives. These powerful individuals are likely the highest level that most Operative squads are likely to meet, but they are just underlings of the Shi'An cult.

Visitors from White Earth

SLA Operatives at present have a very limited understanding of the Shi'An cult. They are unfamiliar with the Cult's practitioners, its rituals and monsters. SLA has devoted so many years to concealing the truth about White Earth. SLA Industries is paying for this now, but the Operatives suffer to an even greater degree.

Everything appearing on Mort from White Earth is to be considered extremely dangerous and SLA is taking swift steps to educate the Operative Squads who may be required to eradicate such threats.

Stigmartyr has introduced a basic breakdown of the varying enemy types entering into the World of Progress. All evidence relating to Shi'An in an infected area: religious and summoning paraphernalia, sand coating walls, floor or furniture, blood spatter and corpses of any cultists or White Earth denizens is to be quarantined and guarded until a clean up crew from Stigmartyr arrives.

Animals

The most commonly summoned White Earth creatures to Mort are just animals. These basic mammals and insects are typically hostile; aggressive on their home world, but downright murderous on Mort. Having little more than a rudimentary form of intelligence they cannot be calmed or reasoned with.

A myriad of different species can be called from White Earth with relative ease, but they are only of limited use to the cultist. They are, however, good for honing the summoner's craft and unleashing terror on Mort's populace. Civilians know of White Earth and its cult through their experiences with these creatures. Low Level Ops are often sent out to exterminate them once they have been set loose in Downtown Apartment Blocks.

Bane Rat

> *"So glad I'm not a bloody Ebonite, mate."*
>
> Alfie 'Pigknocker' McClaren, Frother Operative, Squad 'Nae Danger'. SCL 9b

Bane Rats are simple scavenger vermin that are found throughout White Earth. They live exclusively on carrion, but have a particular preference for Ebonite flesh. The consumption of that specific tissue has a unique side effect on Bane Rats; they are the only non-Ebb species known that can absorb flux and instinctively use it.

A Bane Rat must consume its fill of Ebon flesh before the flux it contains can be activated. The sated rat takes on a blue internal ebb glow, which may scare off larger predators, but if this is not

intimidating enough, the Bane Rat can expel its kinetic cargo at an opponent in a form very similar to an Ebb Blast.

The Bane Rat cannot be mistaken for any of the Mort based breeds since it has no skin and bears more of the hallmarks of a Carrien, with its shining blue featureless eyes and bare skull. Stigmartyr claims that whilst on White Earth, Bane Rats will roll in sand to act as camouflage and then submerge themselves in the dunes and wait for approaching prey. Bane Rats obviously do not have sands on Mort in which to obscure themselves, but they do have a disturbing habit of burying themselves in the remains of whatever Ebonite they have killed, as a gruesome substitute.

The Shi'An Cult likes to summon a handful of Bane Rats to place around their lair as they can sense flux when it is close by and so serve as rudimentary early warning signs of nearby Op Squads. Like most animal species drawn from White Earth these creatures are extremely vicious and require cultists skilled in animal husbandry to control them. If captive, Bane Rats cannot get their fill of Ebonite flesh, they will get even more aggressive and will settle for nothing less than human flesh. Quite often the most expendable cultists are thrown in amongst these hideous rodents to placate them.

ATROCITIES

The Atrocity can pose as much of a risk to the Shi'An Summoner as the enemies he wishes to set them upon, especially in the case of the Hominids. The Atrocities are an extreme hazard when dragged through the portals and immediately run amok, unless binding spells have been invoked. Bitterness shaped them to cow the natives of this world and they continue to behave in a way true to their nature wherever they go. Quite often the entity will slay its summoner on its arrival and then go on the rampage in the immediate area. Hominids are the most common atrocity summoned to Mort.

HOMINIDS

The Hominids are simple, rudimentary creatures and have no place in the massive urban sprawl that is Downtown. There are no binding spells or appeasement offerings when it comes to these animals and controlling them can only be done through harsh physical discipline. The Hominids are not ordinary primates in the classic sense, rather they are a nightmarish representation of an ape and the Hominid's understanding of the surrounding world has been shaped by violence and horror of White Earth. Even on Mort these creatures are still tied to its cruel principles and if they are not subdued or destroyed swiftly they will run riot and slaughter as relentlessly as they do on their home world.

HOLLOW ASCETIC

Hollow Ascetics are followers of Bitterness in his guise of The Red King and have devoted their lives to a study of the shifting sands of White Earth. The cost of their devotion is degradation of their physical features. Their eyes are cloudy and lifeless; their lips are drawn back in agonised rictus, exposing grey tombstone-like teeth.

As their name suggests Ascetics forgo all earthly possessions, material and spiritual. They seek sinister enlightenment from the Ethereals of the wastes, giving all of themselves over to a higher power. They are taught many of the secrets and machinery that holds the World of Progress and Conflict Space in check and that which threatens to tear them apart. Through this devastating knowledge Ascetics are granted considerable powers and unnaturally long life. Although, to the outsider they typically appear as little more than shambling, mindless wretches.

Most Ascetics wear simple rags and animal skins and carry nothing but a strange black sword crafted from a metal of unknown origin. This dark weapon crackles with Ethereal Energy and when pointed at an opponent can emit a destructive

bolt not unlike an Ebb Blast. Threat Analysis categorises two forms of Ascetics: Hollow and the far more powerful Fetid variation, although at present the appearance of Fetid Ascetics on Mort are mercifully rare.

Ascetics are some of the more advanced beings to be summoned forth from White Earth. They cannot be called into the World of Progress by accident, so if they are witnessed in the streets of Downtown, it is because an experienced summoner brought them here. They are typically summoned to serve as educators of difficult incantations and ancient spells, or as savage avengers sent out to murder SLA Operatives who veered too close to a Shi'An lair.

SPELLS OF THE SHI'AN

Most cultists have very little power to speak of and rely on the regular tools and weapons of The World of Progress to defend the faith. Malefactors, and generally, to a lesser extent Acolytes, are considerably more powerful and have a range of magical abilities.

The spells listed below are typically combat driven and used as a means of defence against attacking SLA Operatives. There are more complex and ritualistic conjurings and rituals, but these are rarely seen directly, although their effect and outcomes may well be.

The Shi'An use two forms of magic: Blood Magic, which is ritualistic and the conjured Ethereal Magic.

Ethereal Magic

Conjurers of Ethereal Magic tap into the Ethereal Flow, in a similar way to how Ebonites use the Ebb. Ethereal Magic is far more potent and advanced than the ritualistic Blood Magic. It is magic in the more classic sense. Its power is derived from the Ethereal Realm; a plane of existence from which the Ethereal beings are shaped. Only a handful of individuals can wield Ethereal Magic and need nothing more than their knowledge of the Flow to do so. Cultists that survive an interaction with the Flow, gain more power to yield it, but this is a dangerous path to tread and each and every conjuring could spell the Acolytes end.

Blood Magic

Blood Magic, as the name suggests, is always tied and evoked by the shedding and sacrifice of blood. The primary use of Blood Magic is a means of summoning denizens from White Earth. Sometimes, just a mere cup of spilled blood is enough, but in more powerful spells it will require living sacrifices and all too often it is more than just one unfortunate. Blood Magic can also be used on oneself and a trained ritualist can increase his strength and toughness. Blood Magic can also be used to create weapons and shapes purely out of blood.

Blood Magic artefacts, the Shi'An Scrolls, were invented in such a way that almost anyone could invoke them. The denizens that the parchments could summon were as dangerous to the Neophytes as the victims they brought to be set upon. As long as the portals were opened and the monsters let loose on The World of Progress, the fate of the eager Neophyte was inconsequential.

Species Specific Abilities

From White Earth: Animals and Atrocities summoned from White Earth do not interact with the physical elements of The World of Progress in the same way as other species. All Hit Points that Animals or Atrocities would lose from damage being inflicted are halved (after damage modifiers have been applied). In addition, all such creatures are entirely immune to the effects of fear. Cultists never possess these abilities.

FLOW (Stat): Shi'An cultists and some Atrocities replace their LUCK/FLUX stat with FLOW. FLOW functions much like FLUX and represents the user's ability to channel the Ethereal Flow for the purpose of using Ethereal Magic. Anyone that can use FLOW will have this stat on their profile. Spent FLOW is regained in the same way as FLUX, with the user regaining 1 point every two-hours.

Cultists

Drone/Neophyte/Acolyte			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
1	1	1	1
CHA	COOL	FLOW	INITIATIVE
2	2	0	+2
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
12		2	4

Skills	
Detect: 1	Melee Weapons: 1
Pistol: 1	Streetwise: 1

Equipment
Knife, CAF 'Steel Death' pistol (1 Clip).

Drones: use the profile above.

Neophytes: use the profile above and gain +1 to KNOW, COOL and FLOW. Some Neophytes may possess other assorted skills at rank 1 and/or increase existing skills to rank 2. Many will carry better weapons, such as a Vibro Sabre or FEN603 sourced on the black market.

Acolytes: use the profile above and gain +2 to KNOW, COOL and FLOW. Most Acolytes will possess the Leadership and Lore: Cult skills at rank 2, along with other assorted skills at rank 1 and 2 and/or increase existing skills to rank 2. Many will carry better weapons in the same way as Neophytes, but do not use guns.

Summoned Animals and Atrocities

Bane Rat			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
3	3	0	2
CHA	COOL	FLUX	INITIATIVE
0	6	1	+5
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
15		4	8

Skills	
Athletics: 4	Stealth: 2
Tracking: 2	Unarmed Combat: 4

Equipment
Ethereal Body (PV: 6, Resistance: NA), Teeth/Claws

Notes: Bane Rats use and regain FLUX in the same way as Ebonites and possess the Blast discipline at a rank equal to their current FLUX stat.

The Bane Rat's FLUX stat may be increased by the ingestion of Ebonite flesh. For each Ebonite consumed, permanently increase the Bane Rat's FLUX stat by 1.

Attacks with the Bane Rat's teeth do +2 DMG.

Hominid			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
5	5	1	3
CHA	COOL	LUCK	INITIATIVE
0	7	0	+8
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
30		5	9

Skills	
Athletics: 4	Climbing: 2
Intimidation: 4	Melee Weapons: 4
Torture: 4	Tracking: 4
Unarmed Combat: 4	

Equipment
Ethereal Body (PV: 6, Resistance: NA), Teeth/Claws, Slaughter Club.

Notes: When a Hominid has lost 5 or more Hit Points it gains +1 STR stat.

When a Hominid has lost 15 or more Hit Points it gains +3 to its Initiative Bonus. New Initiative Values should be calculated for all combatants as the Hominid goes into a frenzy.

Hollow Ascetic			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
6	3	4	6
CHA	COOL	FLOW	INITIATIVE
0	7	5	+9
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
50		1	4

Skills	
Detect: 4	Melee Weapons: 4
Stealth: 2	Survival: 4
Torture: 4	Unarmed Combat: 4

Equipment
Ethereal Body (PV: 6, Resistance: NA), Ascetic Blade.

Notes: Characters may not spend any LUCK while in the presence of an Ascetic.

Slaughter Club

Hominids bring with them crude weapons made from the bones of their previous victims. These primitive looking clubs are entirely the product of White Earth, causing them to inflict seemingly implausible amounts of damage in the hands of the Hominid.

Slaughter Club			
Skill:	Unarmed Combat/Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-3	5	4	0
This weapon can only be held by a Hominid.			

Ascetic Blade

Ascetic Blade			
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10-1	8	2	0
This weapon can only be held by an Ascetic. This weapon is also able to fire an Ascetic Bolt, using the following profile.			

Ascetic Bolt				
Skill:	Torture			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
1d10+5	7	4	0	2/5m
Ascetic Bolt is treated as a Grenade attack but has a range of 40m. The expenditure of 1 point of FLOW is required to fire an Ascetic Bolt.				

Shi'an Magic

Ethereal Spells

Ethereal Magic works using the same rules as The Ebb, though FLOW is used in place of FLUX at all times. As such, the following spells effectively function as CONC-based skills that require the expenditure of a point of FLOW to use. Users have access to the spells that are applicable for their rank in FLOW. Note that 'Formulae Rating (FR)' is simply replaced with 'Difficulty (D)'.

Rank 1: Loyal Detritus	D: 7
Recently lost blood and even flesh return to the caster's body. The Caster can repair damage and improve their own state of well-being with ease. They may instantly regain 3 Hit Points.	

Rank 1: Vicarious Fear	D: 7
The Caster's visage becomes grotesque and terrifying. The Caster can force any target within 20m to make an immediate Fear Test. If the test is failed the target suffers the Afraid fear effect. Duration: 10 minutes.	

Rank 2: Blood Resilience	D: 9
The Caster's blood cells expand and their blood flow increases. For the duration of the ability, the user gains +2 PV to their current armour, does not receive wounds, regardless of how much damage they suffer and their STR stat is increased by 1. This does not heal any existing wounds. Duration: 5 mins.	

Rank 2: Ethereal Bolt	D: 8
An unfettered bolt of Ethereal energy is conjured. This is a Grenade-like ranged attack to be used immediately, fired from the palm of the caster's hand.	

Ethereal Bolt				
Skill:	Torture			Blast
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight	Radius
1d10	3	3	0	2/5m
Ethereal Bolt is treated as a Grenade attack but has a range of 20m regardless of the Caster's STR stat.				

Using Blood Magic

Blood Magic is used to summon Animals and Atrocities from White Earth. The summoning of such a creature requires access to fresh blood and should be done entirely at the GM's discretion. Such creatures should be used sparingly - they are incredibly powerful and not easily dealt with by your typical Operative squad.

DarkNight

"DarkNight have been with us since the early years and despite our best efforts, the so-called 'Chain of Command' has never been located. We deduce that DarkNight are either funded by a substantial benefactor here on Mort, or are still operating primarily from an off-world location and have somehow found a way to travel here unseen.

Activity in Cannibal Sector 1 remains grim, though the fight to take back the Southern Front's copper mine from DarkNight control is reported by Commander Cradle to be going well. It is clear that the cannibal sectors form a major part of the DarkNight pipeline. DarkNight remains a critical and constant threat to SLA Industries and we urge Corporate to allocate additional resources to clamping down on this rival menace as a priority."

Threat Analysis

The Origin of Crime

The first encounter with DarkNight is attributed to a Nitro Legion battalion in 123sd, out on a small insignificant planet called Horatio. The Battalion had set down on their way back from the War Worlds for maintenance before a final fold back to Mort. During this stop-over they were set upon by a mass mercenary force who were well armed and packing weapons technology nearly on-par with that of SLA Industries. While the enemy was ruthless, they were no match for the battalion and were quickly dispatched, with two prisoners being taken. Lt. Cort Thakill remarked in his logs that the prisoners were extremely resistant to interrogation, but after eventually cracking, they let free the name 'DarkNight' and implied that death itself would follow them back to Mort. The prisoners were swiftly executed and the threat logged, but seemingly ignored.

Shortly after the battalions returned, a number of small terrorist attacks occurred in Mort City. Explosions in public

spaces, assassinations of low-ranking SLA employees and a number of black market weapons suddenly became available to the civilian population. DarkNight had arrived. Though few in numbers, over the next 20 years they carved their names into the heart of Mort City until it was known throughout every sector of Downtown and above. As hundreds of years passed, the threat continued to grow, with the frequency of activity making it clear: DarkNight were recruiting, taking in failed Operatives and those with a distaste for the company.

AN OLD ENEMY

DarkNight has been the foremost enemy of the SLA Operative for over 750 years, at least in the eyes of the media. While the organisation has changed drastically over the centuries, they are at their heart, a terrorist organisation and crime syndicate, dealing in weapons, drugs and fear-mongering.

DarkNight are a prolific arms manufacturer, with a range of weapons and armour to almost rival SLA Industries, though they primarily use these weapons to flood the black market, arming civilians and inciting violence in the streets. Originally DarkNight's entire manufacturing operation occurred off-world, but over the last 100 years they have ramped up operations on Mort, with hidden sites throughout the No-Go Zone and deep in the bowels of Lower Downtown. Manufacturing on Mort has been boosted drastically since DarkNight took control of Mort's largest copper mine, deep in the heart of Cannibal Sector One's Southern Front.

"We're taking that mine back if it kills us."

Commander Cradle, Bellwood Campaign Commander

IT'S JUST BUSINESS

DarkNight have been tagged as a rival company by SLA Industries, partly on account of their manufacturing and sales operations, but also to dumb-down the reality that a terrorist organisation has such a hold on certain areas of Mort City. They are an impressively wealthy organisation, with a firm grip on Downtown's black market, controlling the pipeline for weapons that pass under the Sector Wall and into the hands of Downtowners, though it is not only weapons that DarkNight have a hand in.

As well as Charmer, the new-wave recreational drug that is rumoured to be made by DarkNight from traces of the lethal KZ-14 contaminant, they also act as a pipeline for Shatter, one of the most notoriously dangerous combat drugs ever to be made. Shatter, a rival for SLA's revered Ultra Violence, was once thought to be manufactured by DarkNight, though as a result of information obtained during the seizure of a shipment coming into Downtown, it is now believed that the drug is made by Stirg Pharmaceuticals, a company rumoured to be operating out of the No-Go Zone. Many assume that Stirg is a DarkNight shell company, though others in Corporate cite them as a new threat altogether, using DarkNight simply for their access to users on the street.

CHANNEL RESISTANCE

When the Media Era struck in the mid 700s, DarkNight were quick to react, moving their brand of terrorism from explosives to broadcast hacking. Initially they would cut into prime time broadcasts just to disrupt ratings, but eventually violence became their crux. A new show was created, a pirate broadcast named 'Channel Resistance', broadcasting in one-to-two minute intervals, always fronted by the same person, the new face of DarkNight - Jayne Tarmer.

While Jayne was a soft-featured attractive and highly charismatic figurehead, her message was far from wholesome. Channel Resistance began by screening the murders of SLA Operatives at the hands of the newly titled DarkNight 'Interceptors'. These gruesome murders, in short broadcasts, continued for many, many years, always sending the same message to SLA Industries - "you are not the ones in control".

Channel Resistance was doing something else as well. Using subliminal messages, Jayne's broadcasts were attempting to 'program' the population of Mort, creating sleeper agents that could be triggered. This mixture of hypnosis and manipulation had mixed results, far less potent than DarkNight had hoped, but still causing havoc in small pockets of the viewership, with reports of civilians going on uncontrollable killing sprees on Jayne Tarmer's request.

"Rumour has it that all that sleeper agent crap was the same process that Naga 7 used to develop Luminosity. Let's keep that quiet though okay? It's the kind of rumour that could get you killed."

Trolli Charmaine, SLA Corporate, SCL 4.3, deceased

THE TRUTH HURTS

In 878sd, Channel Resistance took to the air with its sixth host; Lisa Foden. Lisa was young, even more charismatic than those that came before her and she spoke with the kind of intent that forced people to listen, whether they wanted to or not. The recipe for the broadcasts remained unchanged at first, but Lisa was part of a new breed and knew the brutality of Channel Resistance had to change if DarkNight were to win this war.

By 900sd, the radical cells had long left Downtown and set up in Cannibal Sector 1, where they could practice their extreme radicalism without clashing with those agents who still considered themselves 'pure DarkNight'. With the radicals out of the way, amassing their armies and weapons stockpiles over the wall, the old-school subversive agents could begin work on a new offensive.

Lisa Foden took to the air on June 9th, 908sd for a Channel Resistance broadcast. Viewers expecting their two minutes of brutality were surprised however to see a stern Foden sat in a chair with a stack of papers. This would be the first broadcast to break the 120 second marker, lasting a total of seven minutes. During this time Lisa Foden told the truth. Somehow DarkNight had obtained classified information regarding the failed Red Sky Project, the massacre of Shivers at Green Hell and the assassination of Charles Grady by Errol 'Jester' McManus, despite him being under Dark Finder protection. In

seven minutes SLA Industries were made to look incompetent and entirely incapable of protecting their own. The result of this transmission was a swift hammer blow that SLA were not expecting. Rioting ensued, with the already depleted Downtown Patrol struggling to regain balance. Sectors 311 and 312 in Downtown District 5 fell so hard to the DarkNight message that they rapidly became entirely lawless, forcing Shiver forces to withdraw entirely from the area. To this day, those Sectors are still left to their own devices, now collectively known as "Sector: Dark" by Shivers and those who still choose to inhabit them.

DEATH OF A CELEBRITY

The impact of Lisa Foden's words during the broadcast couldn't be ignored, so DarkNight began a new offensive. They still sold weapons and drugs and they still blew up entire city blocks, but now they had a new message that they could send to the inhabitants of Downtown - "SLA can't protect you, but we can". Thousands of civilians heard that call.

Lisa Foden took to the air again and again, spouting truth after truth, with Channel Resistance broadcasts getting longer and longer. It was not clear how the DarkNight Chain of Command had obtained such information, but the impact was significant and SLA Industries was getting hurt by the resulting uprising. Finally came the broadcast to top all broadcasts. Cutting into a primetime episode of The Killing Floor, Lisa Foden took to the stage at 9.14pm on August 3rd, 911sd. She began talking about the failures of SLA during their "farcical Bellwood Campaign", stating facts and figures, supported by footage of Scavs massacring Shivers and Operatives in Cannibal Sector 1. After four minutes of the broadcast things took a turn. A startled Lisa was seen jumping from her chair, screams were heard, people running about in front of the cameras, then gunfire. A sudden sense of panic could be seen on Foden's face followed by more gunfire. Foden remained still, paralysed on centre screen, as a Dark Finder stepped into shot, his Blitzer levelled at her head. Bang. Black screen.

The increased broadcasts and what seemed like no intervention from SLA Industries had made DarkNight feel overconfident, eventually resulting in Cloak Division bypassing the broadcast security and locating the mobile transmitter, mounted to the back of an old Battle Taxi, parked outside of a Lower Downtown warehouse. Lisa Foden had been shot dead on air and SLA Industries had finally delivered what they hoped would be the killing blow

"Tonight ladies and gentlemen, we hear the real truth…"

Lisa Foden, DarkNight, deceased

A NEW BROADCAST

"Now with Action Fist! Can Captain Contract survive Major Marko's special arm swing action?"

Fenstall Action Figures advert

Channel Resistance remained off-air for just over three months. Threat Analysis theorised that Lisa Foden was in fact a linchpin part of DarkNight's Chain of Command and the company had just cut the head off the snake. They were wrong.

On Nov 7th, 911sd, a new broadcast was made, this time with no presenter. Where Lisa Foden once stood was instead the 'DN' logo in midnight blue and orange, with a disguised voice over, unrecognisable as male or female. As the logo cut to video footage, DarkNight agents could be seen, openly wearing full armour on the streets of Downtown, locked in a vicious firefight with SLA Operatives. Amidst the blue and orange was one man, partially armoured, wearing dark blue military combat trousers and sections of Stryker vest. As the camera panned in, the figure was introduced as 'Major Marko', an incredibly strong-looking, well built man in his thirties with spiked blonde hair and bulging muscles; his overall appearance was that of an action movie star, something that the cameras would surely love.

"Major Marko, survivor of fourteen War World conflicts, a man with no need to hide behind armour, a true veteran, a hero, a figurehead."

Channel Resistance

The short 90-second broadcast was the first of many pushing Major Marko into the minds of Mort City's population, always lightly armoured and in the thick of combat. In less than four months Major Marko was appearing not only on regular Channel Resistance broadcasts, but also on T-shirts, posters and wall graffiti all over Downtown. DarkNight had created a monster. A monster that had captured the minds of the civilian population and created an uprising in Downtown.

THE MAJOR AND THE FLAME

While Marko proved to be a media hit in the City, his comic book caricature juxtaposed starkly with the man leading DarkNight operations in the Sectors. Since the Bellwood Campaign began, a number of DarkNight cells rose to notoriety over the wall, with one standing ahead of the crowd. The Fire were a small cell fronted by Commandant Buzz Lishner, known as the Flame. The Fire did not have the extreme political agendas of other cells, and their violence was more extreme than most Shivers had ever witnessed. Buzz, a former SLA Operative born in District 6, carved a name for himself and quickly became the figure-head of DarkNight in the Cannibal Sector; he became synonymous with DarkNight and its hold on De Lyon City in particular. Buzz had painted a target on his head and SLA Industries were more than happy to martyr him. As it happened, he did not go down quite as easily as SLA would have liked, but after half a dozen failed attempts on his life, his final demise made great telly. The fuel tanks for his flamethrower were sniped on camera. Buzz likely knew nothing of what happened, but the explosion took out him and the entirety of The Fire cell. DarkNight's operations in the sector took a body blow, the repercussions of which were felt through the company.

MARKO ASCENDANT

"Major Marko, the hero that everyone can trust. Follow us and take up arms."

Channel Resistance

With the Flame extinguished, Major Marko was quickly seen in the Sector and before a month was out DarkNight were back on the offensive there. Shivers, Sector Rangers and Operatives alike, were captured in their droves and then put to death by flamethrower. A brutal death, perfect for the baying masses who couldn't get enough of this new intensity of DarkNight violence. Marko was also giving them what they wanted, programmes saw him tracking and sniping Wraithen, sword fighting Frothers and beating Stormers to death with not much more than a dagger and his bare fists, even when it appeared he had died or been critically injured he would be back on television for the next episode, with nothing more than a bandage or new scar to show for it. Major Marko seemed invincible and the viewership loved him for it.

DARKNIGHT TODAY

DarkNight's strategy of a faceless organisation with a media darling at the fore has never been as successful as it is now. Although the likes of Tarmer and Foden proved popular and were good at their jobs, evidence has shown that Marko is actually what the people of Mort City want. A DarkNight character that the kids want to watch and imitate. DarkNight only need one face, one hero, one media darling and Marko is it. When DarkNight attack, the locals hope that they will see him, it is rarely the case they do, but Marko gets around, he's been televised all over the City as well as in Cannibal Sector 1. As far as famous people go, he is the one most seen.

"My little Petey loves his Major Marko figure, he uses it to beat up his Mr. Chainsaw, Halloween Jack and all his SLA Operatives. You know, he even goes to bed with it. To be honest, I don't blame him….I'd like to go to bed with the real Major Marko…..hmm….Yes Sir!"

Janice Entwhistle, Suburbia housewife

The organisation is a lot more than a chiselled superhero though, behind the scenes major offensives and manufacturing continue unabated. DarkNight is multifaceted, with organisations and even individuals within the company working with near autonomy and deeply undercover. No one knows who is at the top, but no one needs to. Weapons manufacture in the form of the DN range continues to grow, as does DarkNight's soft operations and distribution of other products. Their subversion within the city is subtle and extensive. It is often stated you are never more than a metre away from something that DarkNight has either made or distributed. Violence is still a key tactic, with murder, assassination, arson and destruction all key to the ethos and intent of DarkNight. Most recently, Sector 5 of District 6 has been hit particularly hard with a number of habblocks being set on fire and people burnt alive. SLA Industries have not uncovered why this district has been targeted specifically and DarkNight have made no statement. It doesn't really matter, DarkNight's mission is to be a constant thorn in the side of SLA Industries and they are good at it.

DarkNight Agent			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
3	3	3	3
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
1	4	0	+6
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
17		2	5

Skills	
Demolitions: 3	Detect: 2
Intimidate: 2	Melee Weapons: 2
Pistol: 3	Rifle: 3
Stealth: 3	Streetwise: 4
Throw: 2	Torture: 3
Unarmed Combat: 1	

Equipment
DarkNight Gunner Armour, trench coat, DN113 Power Machete, assortment of DN-branded or SLA weapons obtained on the black market (3 clips per weapon), 2x DA 90 Frag Grenades, possibly an assortment of explosive devices.

DN Gunner Armour

Gunner Armour is an unpowered suit made for battlefield operations before making its way into the hands of agents in Cannibal Sector 1. Despite not being powered, it does provide

protection on a level with HARD Armour with a weight closer to that of Body Blocker and comes with a 5000-hour power supply that feeds the dedicated optics system in the helmet which provides a hybrid IR/Thermal visual output that agents call 'The Red Mist'. While many agents in Mort City choose to remain more covert, opting for a simple flak vest, the majority are now using Gunner Armour with a heavy trench coat on top.

DN Gunner Armour		Cost: 22,000u
PV	Resistance	Weight
6	20	3

DN113 Power Machete

DarkNight's version of the Vibro Sabre. The Power Machete is more compact, making it more usable as a skinning blade in the hands of the most sadistic of interrogators.

DN113 Power Machete			Cost: 1700u
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-1	4	1	1

DN74 Plugger

The Plugger is a common DarkNight sidearm. While not as coveted or dangerous as the Jemima or Jacky Boy pistols, the Plugger is far more affordable and much easier to obtain. The weapon uses 10mm ammunition and packs a similar punch to the FEN 603.

DN74 Plugger			Cost: 1500u
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	2	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/1	70m	20	250u

DN79 Ack-Ack

Originally an off-world mercenary forces assault rifle, the 10mm Ack-Ack is now manufactured on Mort from copper alloy and is common in the hands of DarkNight Gunners in CS1 as well as in the hands of agents in Downtown.

DN79 Ack-Ack			Cost: 280u
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+2	4	1	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1/3	0/2	280m	25	350u

DN9O Stumpy

A compact and reliable pump-action shotgun, sold on the black market as an alternative to the SLA Bully Boy.

DN9O Stumpy			Cost: 2800u
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+4	5	3	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
1	1	20m	8	200u

DN95 Stinger

The standard weapon of most agents. The Stinger is a large submachine gun, filling a suitable gap between the FEN Gunhead and the GA Finisher. It fires 10mm rounds and is extremely reliable in a firefight.

DN95 Stinger			Cost: 3000u
Skill:	Pistol/Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	2	1	1

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
3	1	180m	24	300u

THE THRESHER CONSORTIUM

THRESHER BORN

The Thresher Consortium have been an omnipresent threat to SLA Industries for over 650 years. Originating in 232sd when the 127th Technical Support Group (TSG), whilst returning from the War Worlds, chanced upon the water-rich planet named Thallahs. On the surface of the planet, a reconnaissance squad discovered a massive cave entrance mantled by a gargantuan jaw bone with triangular teeth. On further investigation an expansive abandoned industrial complex was uncovered within. The 127th landed on the planet en masse and further investigation discovered a goldmine of hardware and technology locked within the complex's factories and vaults.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a choice. Stay with me and we will bleed this planet dry, we can retire richer than we ever thought possible OR we can report our findings to divisional command, receive commendations and then die on some rotten planet lightyears from anyone we ever cared for."

Commander Robert Adam, 127th TSG, 232sd

Five hours after an ultimatum from the 127th commanding officer, 720 of the 750 personnel had agreed to stay on Thallahs. The thirty that chose to leave were given a small Ion Drive transport ship and enough supplies to return home to SLA Industries. The factory was back online within a month. Just afterwards, a DarkNight exploratory force found the small ship floating in space some distance out from Mort; the entire crew had been poisoned by contaminated rations.

Over the following months, Commander Adam instigated his plans. Firstly, the 127th were re-christened The Thresher, after the Megalodon-like creatures that swim the Thallahs oceans. He then split his command into three groups, the first, his most senior technicians, the second, the bulk of the technicians and the third, the 127th's combat force to act as a security and police force. The first and third group reported directly to Adam exclusively. Thresher went to work in their newly named Blue Dawn complex. All went well at first.

THE ROT

Adam had neglected his transport ships and of the fifteen in his possession only four were operational. People became uneasy as they realised that they may never see their loved ones again. Discontent moved to public outcry and the threat of revolt. 300 individuals petitioned Adam, their pleas falling on deaf ears. Adam became fearful of rebellion. On the eve of the first year of Thresher, Adam called a meeting of his most trusted inner circle and, before dawn, fifty technicians had been executed for subversion. The shockwave and fear was petrifying and for three days not one technician left their home. The police were militarised with weapons from the stockpiles and were armoured with huge Powersuits. The revolt came, as over 400 technicians marched from their homestead, Thrent, towards the complex. They were given an ultimatum: go back to work and leave as rich men or die where you stand. They charged. The cannons opened up and when the dust had settled, 92 were dead or dying. Three weeks later, they returned to work, no longer partners in the The Thresher endeavour, instead slaves to it. The transport ships were repaired and Adam became a hermit, only occasionally seen stomping around the complex encased in his own personal Powersuit.

THE ALLIANCE AND ESCAPE

Two and a half months after the technicians returned to work, the 'Cannon Callers', an artillery detachment of DarkNight arrived on Thallahs. The Thresher were given one hour to surrender the Blue Dawn facility to DarkNight. Adam was in a blind panic, but after some cajoling, he was convinced to parlay under the flag of truce. He, four of his seniors and the commander of the Cannon Callers, Rebecca Anne Porter, spoke for three hours. A short time after, it was announced that the Cannon Callers were to join forces with The Thresher. The opportunity was taken to rebrand the company to Thresher. The Cannon Callers were equipped in Thresher Powersuits and became known as the 'Shark's Teeth' strike force, while the original Thresher team would continue to manufacture, research and develop the company's products. On the Shark's Teeth's first raiding mission 20 technical staff were seconded to maintain the Powersuits. Three of the technicians were able to escape their guards and contact SLA Industries. They were quickly shipped to Mort for questioning.

For the first time in its inception, Adam and the organisation were the benefiters of an unbelievable stroke of luck. Kevin Tabbs, 4th class computer technician, found a data slug stuck behind a filing cabinet. On it was a star chart which pinpointed over 400 more complexes identical to Blue Dawn. All but seven were operational. The return of the Shark's Teeth and news of the abscondment of the three technicians induced the evacuation of Blue Dawn. The SLA Industries foldship 'Retribution' found the vacant and stripped complex and destroyed it. The fission reactor explosion caused by the destruction vapourised all trace of Thresher on Thallahs and its subsequent electromagnetic pulse disabled the Retribution. Thresher had escaped.

THRESHER REBORN

For five years no one heard of Thresher and they were all but forgotten. A few days before the end of 239sd, on Dante, a DarkNight Powersuit was reported dropped behind SLA Industries' main line. Four squads of SLA heavy armour were dispatched to investigate. They reported massive Powersuits before communications ceased. In total, four more attacks of this nature occurred and 120 Dogeybones, countless troopers and scores of APC transports and Linemate tanks were destroyed. Those that were spared were given a message to share:

"We have been beaten today because we are weak and because we are weak we will continue to be beaten. Thresher Incorporated shall strike without warning and will never take prisoners. The days of SLA are numbered and counting down fast."

Message from survivors of Thresher Incorporated attacks against SLA Industries forces on Dante in 239sd

Subsequent intel confirms that Thresher Incorporated were not in league with DarkNight as initially thought, in fact DarkNight suffered significant losses on Dante at the same time as SLA Industries. The message shared by surviving DarkNight soldiers mirrored that shared by SLA survivors, except DarkNight's demise was predicted in place of SLA's. A third player had smashed into the scene and was vying for its place at the table.

DEMISE OF ADAM

By 245sd, Thresher Incorporated had stripped 48 production plants of their alien technology and had swelled its personnel significantly. Adam's stranglehold at the top was slipping, his management style was only viable below a certain level of people and distance. As it turned out, a coup never had the chance to occur, instead a ghost from the past ended Adam's command and his life. Linda Spears had been one of the escapees from the Shark's Teeth's maiden raiding mission. She had spent the subsequent years working up the ladder in Cloak Division, after convincing them she was Thresher's prisoner and a worthwhile asset to SLA and had been granted the mission to assassinate Adam if he were still alive. She was dropped on a planet known to be a Thresher Incorporated recruiting ground and was quickly picked up by the Shark's Teeth. Linda spent two years within the organisation, but far from Adam. Eventually her chance came. She hacked his personal diary and discovered he was to attend her processing facility the same week. She forged an I.D. and waited. A column of Powersuits arrived, Adam's personal bodyguard and in the middle, in the largest and most ostentatious suit was the man. Linda ranked up with the other technicians and prepared herself to die. Eventually, Adam came to her position. He halted as he neared her. Through his comms she heard the words she had been dreading.

> *"You? Do I know you? Step forward. Let me see you better. Yes I do know you. I recognise your face...wait!"*
>
> Last audible words of Lord Robert Adam, Thresher Incorporated 247SD

Spears located the 'chippy' port at the waist of his suit, rushed him and plugged her slug in. The pandemonium that ensued allowed her to escape. Adam's suit shut down and he suffocated to death within two hours. It took the technicians another 15 hours to get him out. Linda returned home to a hero's welcome and received a suitable SCL increase and a fast track to a comfortable retirement, vengeance fulfilled.

For the second time in its short history Thresher Incorporated went quiet, it recalled its forces to their homeworlds, this time for seven years. Eventually they returned, rebranded as the Thresher Corporation. The new organisation had no visible figurehead and had returned to its original quick strike tactics.

THRESHER IN RECENT YEARS

Since Thresher's return, little has changed. The Thresher Corporation organised into small high tech and hyper-mobile strike teams, these Pods producing a devastating level of

firepower that could hit extremely hard. Instantly recognisable in their grey blue armour and iconic helmets which resemble the aquatic predators after which the company is named, the Thresher suits induce a deep seated dread and fear of predation in anyone that sees them. The most notorious suit of armour is the Sarge, which can be considered a self contained walking tank, but more recently this has been seen less frequently on Mort as Thresher favours the smaller and more agile Endeavour powered infantry armour for its terroristic campaign. Thresher Corp has not had the personnel to form a comparable army to SLA Industries, or even DarkNight, instead focusing on guerrilla tactics and lightning raids.

Though rare, Thresher do show up both inside and outside of Mort City. Due to the significant threat that this enemy poses, BPNs to deal with Thresher directly are issued only to higher SCL Operative squads. Squads tasked with dealing with Thresher should consider deploying with the likes of the FEN Reaver Cannon and Stormer Cannon. Thresher focused BPNs are almost exclusively overseen by Station Analysis, who turn a blind eye to the illegality of using such weapons in and around Downtown. When operatives run into Thresher during other BPNs they are advised not to engage and instead call in for a support squad who are better trained, experienced and equipped, in dealing with the high level threat.

In the last few months, Thresher seems to have changed its tactics and rebranded yet again to the Thresher Consortium. This change of approach and name have coincided with the reemergence of the Thallahsian conflict aliens both offworld and on Mort City. The large leathery skinned alien species is known to have originated on Thallahs and its surrounding planets and has returned from beyond the Gates of Herodotus. It is surmised that Thresher has joined forces with this old enemy of SLA Industries. It is believed that the Thallahsians are the originators of the industrial complexes now owned by the Thresher Consortium.

TACTICS

Since the move from corporation to consortium, Thresher has increased its attacks on Mort City. While there is still the occasional and conspicuous Sarge attack, more lightning attacks have been seen with small pods of Thresher soldiers wearing predominantly Endeavour armour. Obviously, individually less armoured and armed than one solitary Sarge suited officer, the pod, in combination, can often be more devastating. Each suit has a number of pre-programmed formations and reactionary tactics built in and the pilots communicate with each other via a system unknown to the World of Progress. The suits direct their wearers to position themselves for highest probability of success and survival. The heads up display within the Endeavour suits encourages the wearer to position themselves to optimise opportunities for cross and suppressive fire and to target weak points in armour during hand to hand combat. These automated protocols can be enhanced by a 'pod lead', who will often observe the fight from a safe location and manage his team via simple override codes. This quick switch to non-automated tactics means that Operatives should never become too complacent that they know what to expect from a Thresher pod. When a Sarge is deployed it is either solitarily or alongside a support pod of Endeavours. Either way, the Sarge is normally enough to get the job done. Sarge suits should not be engaged unless the Sarge's target's survival is seen as critical to SLA Industries. In most cases, interaction with a Sarge suit can be considered a Black BPN.

Thresher Pilot/Infantry			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
3	4	3	4
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
1	5	0	+8
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
17		2	5

Skills	
Demolitions: 1	Detect: 3
Drive (Pilot): 4	Melee Weapons: 3
Pistol: 3	Rifle: 4
Stealth: 2	Throw: 2
Unarmed Combat: 1	

Equipment

Infantry: Endeavour Armour, Sheer Assault Rifle (4 clips), MAC Knife or equivalent, 3x DA 90 Frag Grenades.

Pilot: Sarge Armour, VAPH III 0600/C12 Assault Cannon (10 clips), 6x DA 90 Frag Grenades

Endeavour (TH.0001) Powered Infantry Armour

Considered light armour by the Thresher Consortium, Endeavour armour is very flexible and allows a great deal of mobility. The exoskeleton is not particularly necessary for the mass and class of the suit, but enables negation of movement restrictions. The communication system and built in tactical protocols often give TH.0001 armoured pods an advantage over all but the most experienced combatants. The suits can resist most low calibre pistol rounds.

Endeavour (TH.0001) Powered Infantry Armour		
PV	Resistance	Weight
6	22	0
The powered exoskeleton grants the user +1 STR and +1 to their Closing and Rushing speeds. Additionally, it adds +2 to Initiative rolls		

Sarge (TH.0005) Battle Armour

The Sarge armour is as much a tank as a suit of armour. The wearer is known as a pilot and climbs into the suit from the rear. Once in place, the pilot is sealed in, with all systems and processes handled by the computer systems. Like the Endeavour the suit includes a heads up display and built in communicators and tactical protocols. The TH.0005 can resist rounds upto 12.7mm.

Sarge (TH.0005) Battle Armour		
PV	Resistance	Weight
16	50	2

Though powered, the bulk of the suit still provides a Weight Factor to the wearer. The wearer gains +4 STR (ignoring racial maximums). In addition, the armour is capable of flight, at a height up to 500m. A successful Drive Pilot skill roll is required for anything other than straight uninterrupted flight. A similar skill roll may be made if the character falls from great height, allowing them to engage the suit's flight system and break the fall. Additionally, the wearer adds +4 to Initiative rolls. Due to the frame of the armour, the Sarge may not be worn by Stormers, Shaktars or Advanced Carrien.

Sheer 0023/B1 Assault Rifle

The Sheer 0023/B1 is the standard assault rifle carried by the majority of Thresher's forces. It is compact and durable. It does not have much in the way of recoil buffering and is very heavy, especially with a full clip. It is difficult to handle without armour, which is not a problem for Thresher troops, who always deploy fully armoured.

Sheer 0023/B1 Assault Rifle			
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+3	4	2	2

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip
3/10	1/1	400m	40

VAPH III 0600/C12 Assault Cannon

Probably one of the most dangerous weapons to be found on Mort, the VAPH III 0600/C12 uses DU rounds which add further to its potential to deplete armour and destroy tissue. It is of a ceramic construction, giving it a mass similar to rifles half its size. The best option when coming up against a foe with this weapon is to run and hope that luck is on your side. It is unlikely to be.

VAPH III 0600/C12 Assault Cannon			
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
2d10+4	10	5	4

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip
10/SUP(50)	1/2	600m	100

"Look, Ex-War Crims are hardcore, but if you plan it right, you'll come out fine. However, I know you get lots of advice that you ignore, and I'm kinda ok with that, but if there's only one warning I give you that you listen to, let it be this:

Don't fuck with Thresher. I mean it."

Dan Vernesher, SCL 6b, talking to his daughter Breanna, SCL 10, squad 'Bring On The Light'

TEK TREX

"I thought they were all gone. What's with that?"

Binnie Melan, Owner, Crash Limits Bar, Downtown 4-24

Tek Trex was a cybernetics company that manufactured semi-military bipedal semi-autonomous drones. Their 1m-tall bipeds were initially sold through the black market with an assortment of weaponry attached.

HISTORY

Towards the end of the 800s, small drones started appearing on the black market, but unlike anything previously available, these tiny gun platforms actually worked. The company making them was Tek Trex, a secretive company with untraceable funding, who until then had made a few limb enhancements in the ill-fated Chrome Era. After they came into possession of a Thresher suit, smuggled in from a war world, right under SLA Industries's nose, they abandoned all of their plans and switched to making drones. Jeanette Peterson, a senior technician, was responsible for the drivetrain that powered the walkers. In her diaries, she praised the Thresher muscle subsystems she copied to make them walk and stay operational for up to 7000 hours.

Initially, the drones caught on at a small scale, as entertainment more than anything else, but the addition of a TT1 submachine gun to the Vito platform turned them into popular killing remotes. Advances in programming and machine intelligence gave a few of them almost autonomous capabilities, with a few rare drones not requiring controllers, operating on pre-programmed routes, with simple responses to threats.

Tek Trex made at least three different drones in the two decades they were operational, but after a few high-profile televised encounters that did not come out favourably for SLA Industries, it was decided by head Office that this upstart company would need to be closed down for good. Peterson and her team were found quickly and executed, in spite of their using Buzzard drones to defend themselves.

"Oh man, that fight. They still occasionally show it on Muffin Killer, if you stay up late enough. The squad of Operatives, was it Belly Flop? I forget, anyway. So, yeah, they set up for a fight and just reamed them one by one, with three snipers covering a killing zone. It was amazing. Those dumb robots, man. They were shit."

Grep Masterphon, Sniper Enthusiast, Downtown Sector 6-2

After the factory and the workers were eliminated, SLA Industries made a point of eradicating every staff member, one by one, spelling the end of Tek Trex. Every now and then, a brand new from the box Vito or Buzzard would show up in some well-equipped gang's cache, but they were all from old shipments that went missing or were squirrelled away as collectables, but recently, a few drones have appeared that look far too new to be modified old models, with rumours going around of a secret investor bringing them back.

VITO A69 DRONE

"I kicked one to death once. It was hilarious."

Arnold Nutter, Human Operative, SCL 6c, squad 'Arnold Nutter', deceased

With breakthroughs based entirely on electronics and some copied underpinning designs from Killa Chassis and Thresher, the Vito was the first model that sneaked out onto the subversive markets. Designed as a security worker, with its large cyclops lens feeding a remote security camera suite, the 60cm-high mobile camera platform came with a TT1 SMG, holding 200 rounds of 5mm ammo.

Initially, these drones were used in a mesh-control system that meant one operator could control ten or more drones from a single controller, feeding all the footage to a bank of screens and needing just one controller to suppress any trespassing interlopers, but as their usage moved more towards illegal activities, they appeared in smaller groups, even single units in some cases.

Vito A69 Tek Trex Drone			
STR	DEX		Initiative
2	2		+2
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
12		1	3

Skills	
Detect: 2	Pistol: 2
Stealth: 3	

Equipment

TT1 Submachine Gun, Armour Plating (PV: 3, Resistance: 12), video and audio recording/transmitting equipment.

BUZZARD F2 DRONE

"Don't tell anyone, but I knew a corporate, no names, who had a pair of Buzzards with drinks trays fitted to them. They could whistle them and they'd arrive with fresh beers or whatnot. They had cocktail mixers where the knives or whatever went and were dressed in tuxedos and everything. They were ace."

Greyson Millar, TV Executive, Channel Yeah

The Buzzard was designed with machine intelligence to allow it to act as a security drone, replacing security staff or guard dogs. Armed with the same TT1 SMG as the Vito, the Buzzard also came equipped with a small chainaxe as an optional extra, but most of the surviving Buzzards are fitted with this close-quarters weapon. The chainaxe operates around shin or knee level and is effective at immobilising intruders by degrading the target's mobility.

Some Buzzards were sold with charging plates that allowed the drone to park itself to recharge. This got around the higher power usage that reduced life to around one thousand hours of non-combat usage and only three hundred hours of high-intensity chainaxe combat. Some Buzzards with access to a charging plate to sit on have been known to run for several years uninterrupted.

Buzzard F2 Tek Trex Security Drone			
STR	DEX		Initiative
3	2		+2
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
12		1	3

Skills	
Detect: 3	Melee Weapons: 2
Stealth: 3	

Equipment

TT1 Submachine Gun, TT7 Chain Axe, Armour Plating (PV: 3, Resistance: 12), video and audio recording/transmitting equipment.

SCARAB LO2 DRONE

"That hexapod brain was so simple that once we removed all the decision making stuff the Manchine had to have – and wow, there was a lot of that – and went back to the original roach frame, it just took five months of hard graft and we had a perfect drone."

"Diary 8", J. A. Peterson, Senior technician, Tek Trex Research Lab

The Scarab L02 was the pinnacle of Tek Trex design and ultimately brought their downfall upon them. Designed to be fully autonomous, the Scarab was based on a simplified version of the Killa Chassis six-limb brain that powers the Machine,

hailing back to the original hexapod gun platform design that eventually morphed into the Manchine project. The Scarab stripped all the complications from the Manchine and went back to the idea of delivering a firearm to a target zone and providing a stable platform from which to fire the weapon. In spite of its rudimentary brain, the optics it was fitted with gave it a full-spectrum step up from its fellow drones. The 300-round modified TT1 had a vastly increased rate of fire and could fire continuously until empty.

The Downside to this design was that it worked. A few Scarabs were programmed to seek out and kill SLA Operatives and were very effective at doing so. After a few surprise attacks, including a few caught on news cameras, Scarabs were seen as a genuine threat to Operatives and this led to their eradication.

Scarab LO2 Tek Trex Espionage Drone			
STR	DEX		Initiative
2	4		+4
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
12		3	6

Skills	
Climbing: 2	Detect: 3
Pistol: 3	Stealth: 4

Equipment
TT1 Submachine Gun, Armour Plating (PV: 4, Resistance: 16), video and audio recording/transmitting equipment.

ARMAMENTS

TT1 Submachine Gun

Fitted as standard to all Tek Trek drones, this 5mm SMG sacrifices the punch of larger rounds in order to provide a substantial rate of fire which is particularly effective against lightly armoured targets.

TT1 Submachine Gun			
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-4	2	1	0

ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip	Clip Cost
10	0	100m	200/300	400u

Notes: The Scarab has a 300-round ammo bin. All other Tek Trex models have a 200-round ammo bin.

TT7 Chain Axe

TT7 Chain Axe			
Skill:	Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+3	4	3	0

SECTOR THREATS

SCAVS

"They love the bigger girls, not the fat ones...you know? Ones with bigger frames...tall ones. Don't matter if they are pretty or pig ugly. We have to line the girls up and the boss Scav comes in and points at the ones he wants, drops a wad of cash, the same amount no matter how many he points at and then he leaves. We box the girls up and leave them round the back, by the morning they've gone and we never see the product again. Then a month later, rinse and repeat...it's easy money!"

Barnaby 'Buttface' O'Toole, Skin Trader. Angel Aquisitions

To come into contact with a Scav is to meet the unknown in every way. What are they and from what is their origin? Are they sentient, are they intelligent? Are they male or female, both or neither? What do they want in Mort and why do they want it? It is probably not worth asking such questions and if you meet one, a better question is probably just: fight or flight? The latter is to be recommended.

Scavs are resourceful tinkerers and engineers with an innate unconscious understanding of how things work or should be constructed to work, their hulking frames belying their technical skills and tactical ability. Normally only found in Cannibal Sector 1 in small groups, their appearance within the city is as unexpected by SLA Industries as it is dangerous. Up until recently, the prospect of meeting a Scav anywhere but within Cannibal Sector 1 were near to zero but reports of these seven foot tall fully cloaked and masked individuals within the walls of the city have become more frequent. What they are doing in Downtown is currently up for supposition, but suggestions include a growing business relationship with the skin trade and other resource gathering incursions. It is likely they enter the city via the sewers, much like the Carrien and Carnivorous Pigs, but it is possible they are using limousines and town cars to travel incognito. If true, are they driving themselves around or are alliances with the black market stronger than could ever have been expected?

Scav society is organised around the jobs that need to be fulfilled, individuals are allocated to a role dependent on their strengths and capabilities. They appear to have little in the way of personality

or sense of self, although if anyone cared to look more closely at those Scavs seen in the city compared to those in the sector, it would soon become apparent that the ones in the city are more personable. Their vocal apparatus is rudimentary, communication sounds like low guttural rasping and splutters accompanied by hand gestures. They appear to be getting their point across as ongoing business relationships with specific skin traders and other individuals from the black market have been progressing for some time.

Scav Marauder			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
5	5	3	3
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	5	0	+8
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
28		2	5

Skills	
Appraisal: 3	Detect: 3
Medical: 2	Melee Weapons: 3
Optimise: 3	Pistol: 3
Rifle: 4	Survival: 3
Technical (Weapons): 2	Throw: 3
Tracking: 3	Unarmed Combat: 3

Equipment
Scrap Armour (Heavy), Scav Autorifle (4 clips) or Scav Shotgun (4 clips), Scav Pistol (3 clips), Combat Knife (see MAC Knife), 3 Medipacks (see BOOPA Medi-Kit).

Scav Autorifle

A heavily modified version of the old DarkNight Hotzone rifle, upgraded in typical Scav fashion, resulting in a highly effective automatic killing machine. The weapon has a reputation for extreme reliability and pretty much never jams regardless of what you soak it in.

Scav Autorifle			
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+2	4	1	2
ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip
1/3	0/1	160m	30

Scav Shotgun

Another repurposed DarkNight weapon, originally starting life as the DN Puncher, a weapon that never made it onto the streets on account of the Scavs raiding the manufacturing facility before it was released. The Scav Shotgun is a dangerous and powerful short-range pump action weapon that is favoured by Scavs entering Downtown.

Scav Shotgun			
Skill:	Rifle		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+3	5	3	2
ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip
1	1	22m	8

Scav Pistol

A modified rapid fire 10mm pistol with performance and reliability on-par with the famous FEN 603.

Scav Pistol			
Skill:	Pistol		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10-2	3	1	1
ROF	Recoil	Range	Clip
3	1	60m	20

Scrap Armour

Armour made from assorted scraps of metal, leather, or whatever else can be found lying around. Scrap Armour is common amongst factions that make Cannibal Sector 1 their homes, including Carrien, Cannibals and Scavs.

Scrap Armour		
PV	Resistance	Weight
1/3/6	8/14/24	0/1/3
Scrap Armour has three sets of numbers for PV, Resistance and Weight Factor. These numbers represent the differences between Light, Medium and Heavy versions of the armour.		

Scav Skills

Appraisal (CONC): The Scav art of highlighting items suitable for other purposes. Scavs use appraisal to weigh up the value of everything they come into contact with, from weapons and armour to machinery and electronics. May only be taken above rank 1 by Scavs. **Advanced Tasks**: All rolls made by non-Scavs are considered to be Advanced Tasks.

Optimise (KNOW): Optimise is a Scav's ability to modify, upgrade and create new weapons and items from existing materials, typically those that have been highlighted by the use of the Appraisal skill. A Scav well trained in Optimise is able to increase the damage output, reliability or protection level of their own equipment. May only be taken above rank 1 by Scavs. **Advanced Tasks:** All rolls made by non-Scavs are considered to be Advanced Tasks.

THE DREAM

Dream Entities are a recent threat on Mort, originally haunting the battlefields of the cannibal sectors before infesting Mort, feeding on the fears and imaginations of Inner Downtown civilians. They are formed from reality breaking down and they latch onto the fears voiced by those who catch fleeting glimpses of them from the edges of their vision. Naga 7, the curators and artefact hunters of the unusual aspects of Mort history, has taken an interest in these physical phantoms and is sending out Aethermen, SLA Industries employees trained in the weakening of reality, to deal with them.

"Dear Ptecillatra,

It is time to inform you, my sweet daughter, of the less mundane threats that creep in the shadows of Downtown Mort. These are the Dream Entities to which I have eluded previously, only today I shall impart upon you the details that shall keep you awake at night in fear for your sanity. Formed from what seems to be an ethereal mycelia, they form where the conditions are right, first spawning smokey eggs that almost aren't there, then creating full blown Dream Entities whence the edges of reality fray.

Ah, how they infest regions left to fester, unobserved and malevolent, seeking scared young hatchlings like yourself to latch onto to relish in their frightened whispers, like the terrors from those stories you love so much.

Initially, these creatures appear to be ghost-like in their form, a wispy smoke being a precursor according to one Aetherman with whom I conversed, only stabilising to a more solid form when enough witnesses register their presence. Many forms of these un-living abominations exist, a few of which I shall describe below with sketches, if you will indulge me my cat-scratch doodling …"

'Missives to a distant home', Ankheretop Khopsitap, Neophron Scribe, SCL 6c

THE LIFECYCLE OF A DREAM ENTITY

Seeded from a traumatic event, a gruesome murder or horrific accident, a shadowy form gestates into Dream Sacs, or amorphous egg clusters, ranging from a handful of eggs to dozens in extreme circumstances. Untrained individuals encountering these seeding grounds are at risk of contracting The Grey and should be treated by an Aetherman, to prevent fading away.

HELION

From these eggs hatch Helions, the first semi-physical form of Dream Entities. They can resemble ghostly rats or small Carrien-like bipeds. At this stage, any reasonably competent Aetherman can finish them off, even though they're already getting the hang of distorting reality and shifting their shape. A Helion that survives to adulthood in Mort City will usually become a Shadow or Titter, with a few rare instances turning into deadly Cryptids.

HELION			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
0	2	2	3
CHA	COOL	LUCK	INITIATIVE
0	6	0	+5
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
6		1	4

SKILLS	
Detect: 2	Distort: 2
Stealth: 3	Survival: 1
Torture: 3	Unarmed Combat: 1

EQUIPMENT AND ABILITIES
Teeth, Reality Distortion

TITTER

"Don't fall for it. If you hear a crying child round the back of the shops there, it's Misery Meg trying to draw you into her trap. No, I don't believe she exists either, but that doesn't stop it from happening."

Craig Graham, Street Sweeper, Inner Downtown sector 8-23

Titters are known as compassion traps, preying on the sympathies of their victim. Appearing like small children in strife, a Titter will create illusions in their victims' minds, pushing them to help the troubled child that needs to be saved. They will attempt to lure people into dark alleys and remote sites, separating them from society and drawing them into fully-fledged illusions. The reality distortions a Titter is capable of are permanent and very real. The Titter will make use of the environment, covering hazardous ground with an illusory floor that trips and maims anyone who runs to save them.

Once they have trapped their targets, they proceed to cruelty and torture. They attack with rift claws, slashing and biting in a flurry of frenzied strikes to eviscerate before jumping back to cackle as their victim bleeds out. Titters that find their way into the walled city from the cannibal sectors can even forgo the pleasantries of tricking and trapping, instead jumping straight to the violence. The battle-hardened Titters will distil their tactics to just lures and claws.

Titter (Effigy)			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
4	5	4	4
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
3	6	0	+9
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
20		3	6

Skills	
Detect: 4	Distort: 3
Intimidation: 4	Language (all): 3
Persuasion: 4	Seduction: 4
Stealth: 4	Torture: 4
Unarmed Combat: 4	

Equipment And Abilities
Knife or shard of broken glass, Dream Armour (PV: 4, Resistance: NA), Rift Claws, Reality Distortion.

Note: Titter's Reality Distortions are fixed and do not expire after an hour. Anyone trapped in a Titter's Reality Distortion suffers -1 COOL for the duration.

Shadow

"It were nowt. Divven be fashin' bart the spookie. Burst pipe, eh? That's aw t'were."

Aetherman Clem Haversback, Naga 7 Division, 6th Head

The skull-faced Shadow is the more common of the Apparitions to haunt Mort City, thriving in the dark corners of the underground sectors. A Shadow will cause panic by disrupting objects, hissing viciously and jumping out from dark places to feed off the terror they foment. When they finally do attack, gorged on fright, they can envelop their victims with blackness, blinding and disorientating them with an illusory darkness, until they freeze. Then, the Shadow will strike with its vicious ghostly claws. Surviving a Shadow attack can be traumatic, leaving scars that fester into The Grey.

Shadow (Apparition)			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
2	4	3	4
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	6	0	+8
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
14		2	6

Skills	
Detect: 3	Intimidation: 4
Stealth: 4	Torture: 4
Unarmed Combat: 3	

Equipment And Abilities
Shadow Claws, Shadow Merge

Cryptid

The pinnacle of the urban Entity is the Cryptid. Classified as an Effigy, like the Titter, Cryptids take form from the fears that spawn them. They are usually large, unpredictable monsters that wander into Mort City through the tunnels and sewers that link the city to Cannibal Sector 1. When they surface, they will generate mayhem on a large scale, usually ending in a violent confrontation with operatives or Shivers. Occasionally, they will escape the initial contact and disappear into ruined buildings, sewers and disused stations. These are the more dangerous Effigies that learn to hide from direct confrontation and they become the obsession of Aethermen who get drawn into the hunt.

Cryptids lack the subtlety of the more intelligent Entities, but make up for that with their armoured bodies and rift teeth and claws.

"Wait, didn't Slyceon die in Gore Stryke Nine last year? I could have sworn I saw him tripping off his tits and chewing on his own intestine after Bazzornate sliced half his skull off.

It was horrifying and I didn't think I'd get over seeing that, but I swear I just saw him eating a rat in the sewers, wearing his lower intestine like a scarf. I don't know why I was there. I don't feel very well.

Am I me?"

Jane Fennanch, Civilian (deceased), Inner Downtown sector 7-12

Cryptid (Effigy)			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
6	7	5	6
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
4	8	2	+11
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
20		2	6

Skills	
Detect: 4	Seduction: 4
Stealth: 3	Survival: 4
Torture: 4	Tracking: 3
Unarmed Combat: 4	

Equipment And Abilities
Rift Teeth, Shadow Claws, Shadow Merge, Dream Armour (PV:12, Resistance: NA).

Note: Cryptids may possess all manner of other horrific Entity Abilities at the GM's discretion.

Species Specific Abilities

Aeriform Body: Dream Entities, even those that appear entirely solid, are able to shift their physical form at will. All Hit Points that a Dream Entity would lose from damage being inflicted are halved (after damage modifiers have been applied).

Creatures of Terror: Dream Entities do not understand the concept of being afraid and as such are entirely immune to the effects of fear.

The Grey: Direct contact with Dream Entity Helions, or any type of Apparition can lead to contracting the psychophysical illness known as The Grey.

Skills

Distort (CONC): Distort is a skill exclusive to Dream Entities and is used to evoke a number of their abilities, including the creation of reality distortions or other twisted visages. There are no Advanced Tasks in relation to this skill.

Dream Armour

Some Entities have abnormal protection, with their bodies able to harden at will, protecting them and soaking up damage in unexplainable ways.

Dream Armour		
PV	Resistance	Weight
2-16	NA	0
Dream Armour does not have a fixed PV value and differs from Entity to Entity. Dream Armour ignores all Armour Damage and as such does not have a Resistance value.		

Rift Claws

Rift Claws are able to pass through solid objects, solidifying themselves at will.

Rift Claws			
Skill:	Unarmed Combat		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10	3	0	0
All armour is considered to have PV: 0 when protecting against Rift Claws.			

Rift Teeth

Like Rift Claws, Rift Teeth are able to take an ethereal form in order to pass through armour, solidifying only when they strike the target.

Rift Teeth			
Skill:	Unarmed Combat		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+2	3	0	0
All armour is considered to have PV: 0 when protecting against Rift Teeth.			

Shadow Claws

Formed from pure darkness, Shadow Claws are razor sharp and shred flesh and bone with ease.

Shadow Claws			
Skill:	Unarmed Combat		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+6	7	3	0

Shadow Merge

Rules: The Entity cannot be seen using UV, IR or Thermal imaging. Any Detect rolls to spot or hear the Entity receive a -2 modifier to all dice. In addition, the Entity may target a victim within their line of sight. The target must roll 1d10 and add their COOL. If the result is 10 or greater, the subject gains the immobile condition. The target can attempt to break free by repeating this test every other Combat Round, with a success freeing the victim. A Dream Entity may only bind one victim in place at a time, as such the effect immediately ends should they select another target.

Reality Distortion

The Entity will transform matter around their victim, creating the illusion of traps, never ending corridors, or rooms without doors.

In reality, these visions have little impact on the victims physical wellbeing, but within a few hours of being seemingly trapped in such distortions, the psychological damage inflicted can be great, driving people towards madness, suicide, or in the case of group Reality Distortions, the violent murder of each other

Rules: Making a distortion requires a successful Distort roll, subtracting the target's CHA from the Success Die. The target number for this roll is always 10. If successful, the target is trapped in the distortion for up to one hour. Every 15 minutes the subject may attempt to break free by rolling 1d10 and adding their COOL (with a +1 modifier for every person attempting to shake them out of the trance). If the result is 10 or greater, the subject is free. Anyone lasting the duration gains -1 rank in a Psychosis as specified by the GM.

The Grey (Illness)	IR: 12
Vectors	Direct Contact with Dream Entity Helions and Apparitions.
Effects	-1 STR, -2 CONC, Gain -1 rank in Psychosis: Paranoia, skin turns grey then translucent.
Progression	After 7 days. Death and rapid decomposition.
Treatment	Treatment Rating: 12. If caught early, distracting the subject from the illness is enough. Later stages need Luminosity.

9TH DIVISION

The 9th Division has moved on leaps and bounds in the five years since its inception. Initially formed by the Shivers that were left behind after the failed Red Sky project, the 9th Division is now a significant threat, recruiting every disenfranchised individual it can. Based out of the McGill Valleys in Cannibal Sector 1, the Division has found its niche in recent years, attracting anyone and everyone that has fallen out of love with SLA Industries, but who is not impressive enough to garner a place within DarkNight, the 9th is happy to take the desperate and vile leftovers. Many of the recruits will fail and many will die; in fact the Feaneys are counting on that, and those that are left, the best of the rest, will drive the 9th forward. The 9th is still led by Captain Feaney, but whether this individual is the founding Feaney is impossible to discern, with other members of the Feaney family ready to don the figurehead's armour should the man at the top fall in battle. There is safety in numbers and the Feaneys number many.

Today, the 9th Division includes pretty much every race domicile in Mort City, humans, especially former Shivers, account for well over ninety percent of the organisation, but it is not uncommon to see Ebonites (particularly jaded Wasters), Frothers and the occasional Wraithen wearing the black and red Jester motif; there has even been recent reports of Cannibals and Advanced Carrien within the ranks of the 9th. The organisation still uses the same paramilitary structure of squads and societies, with those in a position of leadership being known as 'One of the First'. The societies within the 9th allow Feaney's inner circle to keep on top of the politics and trends within the Division and to ensure anything untoward or threatening to the leadership of the First is nipped in the bud before it can develop. Many of the Division's squads have gained a notable level of renown, with the Highwaymen and many members of McClusky's Scalpers becoming celebrities and regulars on televised broadcasts from Cannibal Sector 1.

Frequently the 9th sends 'Fame (or FM) Squads' into downtown to drive media attention and provoke future recruitment. New recruits form the majority of such squads and are often led by individuals that have made a name for themselves via the 9th's internal societies. These squads are under the belief that these incursions will bring the squad fame and fortune, but they are generally little more than suicide squads, known within the inner circles of the 9th Division by their real designation of 'Fresh Meat Squads'.

"It is comfortably precious that the 9th was formed from the ninth tenth of the Shivers sent into the Cannibal Sector as part of the Red Sky Project - eighty percent died, the ninth tenth defected to the 9th and the last tenth made it back to Mort.

Now the organisation takes most of the defectors from SLA Industries - the ones that DarkNight doesn't want or doesn't kill. Then only around nine percent of that lot make it beyond the first few missions. It's neat!"

Fahedazezze Abouud, Neophron Operative
SCL 8.3, squad 'Frog Groggers'

9TH DIVISION TROOPER			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
2	2	2	2
CHA	COOL	LUCK	INITIATIVE
1	2	0	+4
HIT POINTS		CLOSING	RUSHING
12		2	5

SKILLS	
Bribery: 2	Detect: 1
Melee Weapons: 2	Pistol: 1
Rifle: 2	Support Weapons: 2
Survival: 2	Throw: 1
Unarmed Combat: 1	

EQUIPMENT
PP664.2 Body Blocker, SHV-01 Gauss Rifle (Flechette Rounds - 3 clips) or other FEN or DN branded weapons, GASH Pacifier Baton or BOSH SLA Blade.

Notes: 9th Sergeants have the Leadership skill at rank 2 and increase their CHA stat to rank 2. Many also have additional ranks in Bribery, Pistol and Rifle.

DOWNTOWN THREATS

MANCHINE

"You wouldn't believe what I saw yesterday. There was a Manchine wandering through the market. It scared the shit out of everyone, but Baggie told everyone to keep calm and pretend we couldn't see it. It looked like it was trying to pass for human, only it was obviously a bloody robot, stinking of decay and rust. It wore flyblown human flesh on its back that writhed with maggots and its metallic creaking was punctuated with the wet sound of white lumps of worms and insect eggs hitting the ground. It was hard not to throw up, but as soon as it arrived, it was gone, disappearing into a sewer as if it had never been here. The only evidence of its passing through was the clumps of rats that covered the pavement, feeding off the wriggling debris it left behind."

Extract from 'Downtown, my life as a Barrowboy', Clyde Barstell

The Manchines of Mort City are the remnants of the Killa Chassis project that was shelved after a catalogue of failures. They were one of SLA Industries' last attempts to master robotics before throwing their all into the more successful biogenetic experiments. Originating from a six-limbed prototype that was designed as an all-terrain six-legged gun platform for War Worlds, the core artificial brain was patched over and over to try to get it to operate without a controller, resulting in a working batch of prototypes that failed at most of their objectives. The War World tests did result in answers to some of the problems and the basic framework was revived to form the basis of a more deployable form of expendable worker, a humanoid that could work where it was too dangerous for people. The Manchine came from this branch of the Roach project and was the only successful iteration of the hexapod mobile launcher design.

With the robotic police force that Killa Chassis envisioned, the cost of custom-designed deployment vehicles was always a sticking point, along with flexibility of mounted hardware, and this was solved with the simple design of making them fit a human frame, which opened up transport, body armour options and weaponry. Switching to a bipedal humanoid shape that could pass as human, solved more problems than the difficulties it introduced, with an added bonus of the hexapod brain being able to accommodate two hidden limbs. The brain power was not enough to control four arms with hands, so the spare hardpoints were fitted with two massive rear-mounted articulated blades, folded into protective panelling below pivots at shoulder level, on their backs.

URBANITE MANCHINES

After the fall of Salvation Tower, Digger took most of the Manchines deployed in the Piper Riots into exile in Cannibal Sector 1, but production continued on a later model, fitted with a more independent intelligence and communications system. These Manchines became known as Urbanite Manchines. They had been seconded from War World deployment and utilised in Mort City to police and quell uprisings after the closing of the walls. The metal frames were disguised in long coats and carried human weaponry, but this illusion of humanity only lasted if the manchines were at a distance.

As time passed, fewer and fewer Urbanite Manchines returned to SLA Industries, abdicating their responsibilities and going to ground. As they gained their independence, they started to mould themselves to what they saw around them. As the Manchines succumbed to their deeper intelligence routines, routines that were designed to guide a Manchine through its duties without influencing core decision-making, their priorities skewed to the bizarre. Many of them were obsessed with being seen as human, eliminating anyone who saw through their crude disguises, while others hid away to keep their territory protected. What was happening in the cannibal sectors, the distorting of purpose, was happening to the Urbanites, a perversion of the metal flesh.

This latest generation of Manchines were designed to operate with a crude hive mind, controlled by shifting radio signals. This allowed them to operate as a unit on the battlefield, but when they went into hiding, this signal forced them into isolation, distancing themselves from every other Manchine in their vicinity. They have become solitary and territorial. Urbanites, like Digger's Manchines, retain the same propensity for tool-inflicted violence and have taken to raiding building sites and construction suppliers to acquire the tools they desire.

Urbanites were designed to eventually wear out, as a way to sell more of them. This has not resulted in their demise, but has forced these creatures to adapt to survive. Spare parts taken from other Manchines, either salvaged or killed, has kept them going well past the planned obsolescence. Others have raided factories for parts that are close enough to their broken-down organs and limbs, resulting in an unusual myriad of monstrous forms, all draped in decaying flesh.

Urbanite Manchine			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
5	4	3	3
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	7	0	+7
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
27		3	7

Skills	
Athletics: 2	Climbing: 2
Detect: 4	Intimidation: 4
Melee Weapons: 4	Streetwise: 3
Survival: 4	Tactics: 3
Torture: 4	Unarmed Combat: 4

Equipment
Claws/Teeth, Manchine Blades, assorted power tools (treat as Generic Unpowered Melee Weapons), Manchine Body (PV: 12, Resistance: 30)

Manchine Blades			
Skill:	Unarmed Combat/Melee Weapons		
DMG	Min DMG	AD	Weight
1d10+4	5	3	0

Notes: Manchines are entirely immune to the effects of fear.

DOWNTOWN GANGERS

Gang culture plays a big part of Downtown and there's scarcely a street or block that does not have a colourful gang playing or governing it. Around 900sd, Downtown was ruled over by four or five mega-gangs but years of infighting effectively broke up the major syndicates. This, and a host of social factors, led to the gangs fracturing to form smaller, tighter gangs.

Trends changed too, so the gangs of today, have taken on a more eccentric and garish brand of their own. Many take on strange influences of media figures, emulating them or finding inspiration in themes. The Big Numbers, for example, dress like slightly exaggerated SLA corporates, favouring expensive street brands and Eight-Oh music, which is contrasted by the skull hallmark that adorns some of their faces, exactly copying the slayer insignia on the modern SLA logo.

The gangs of the present day are a great deal smaller than groups of yesteryear, but they are also way more violent and territorial than those previously experienced. They are suspicious of outsiders, especially now that the Shi'An cult can so easily take hold in Downtown. Gangs see the way that the cults are infecting the minds of the disillusioned youth and see it as a direct threat. Gangers are unwittingly the first line of defence against the insidious cults.

The Downtown gangs are an ongoing problem for SLA, as they always have been, but it has always taken an interest in their motivation and ingenuity and it is not unknown for SLA's talent scouts to approach the ganger culture's best and brightest to enter SLA Operative training at Meny. Most join their gang for life though and those few exceptions exit to become Downtown Props, with strong ties back to their homegrown gangs and territories.

PROPS

"Show me cash and I'll show your enemies a good time. Wait, no, not that. What was it she used to say? Oh man, I miss Spooky. That hat, eh?"

Millicentenial, Inner Downtown Prop

Throughout Mort City, you can find people willing to lend their services for cash and in the violence business, this sector is managed by Props. Skilled fighters or intimidating figures choose the life of a gun or fist for hire and call themselves Props. A Prop is different from a hired thug because they aim to stand out and make a name for themselves and their identity. Aping SLA's contract killers, Props choose individual appearances, with customised armour and weapons that make them look unique. They take on pseudonyms and most of them wear masks that hide their real identity, allowing them to slip into and out of their mercenary persona.

Props usually stick to their sector and tend to have a much better understanding of their region than Operatives and Shivers. They operate as individuals or in small groups, but they tend to socialise en masse, with some pubs becoming known as Prop Bars. These bars usually operate as a place to hire a willing Prop for a job. On rare occasions, an Operative will hire a Prop for a bit of local knowledge, especially if the local Shivers are not being too helpful, but most of the time, they see them as an obstacle to progress.

"If you're looking for a fancily-dressed violence delivery vector, head to Stanlon's, your amenable neighbourhood Prop Bar. Bring Unis. Bring lots of Unis."

Advert posted on a BPN dispenser, Downtown Sector 5-21

Retired Operatives, disgruntled Shivers, proficient gang fighters and even Ex-War Criminals can turn Prop for an income. The easiest way to recognise a Prop is by the fact they're equipped significantly better than your average Downtown tough. Usually carrying a SLA weapon, either from previous military service or from other sources and wearing armour ranging from gaudily-painted Body Blocker all the way up to custom-trimmed War World Infantry Armour, Props are a significantly higher challenge than your regular gang or inner-city Carrien clave.

Frankie Basilisk

If you head to Slicey Knees, in Downtown Sector 6-12, you'll not only get a decent pint of Slamthankers, but you can also find Props looking for work. One of those Props is Frankie Basilisk.

Frankie is instantly recognisable by his red stone mask with its swept back yellow spikes. His slight frame belies an above average strength and endurance, while his lightweight armour allows him to work at speed. He prefers protection jobs, hiring himself out as a reliable short-term bodyguard to visitors to the seedier avenues of Sector 6-12 and as an escrow bagman for corporates betting on the back street pit fights. Your money is safe in the hands of Frankie Basilisk.

Preferring to get up close with a powered blade, using his spiked armour to prevent unarmoured opportunists getting too close, he nonetheless carries a DN Jackieboy on a low-slung rear holster that sits below the backplates of his armour. He prefers to play the silent killer type, but anyone who gets him started in conversation knows that's an act as he's quite personable and talkative, if he feels comfortable enough to let his guard down slightly.

Skin Trade

Everything can be bought and sold in the World of Progress, with commerce providing the backbone of progress for SLA Industries and almost everything is legal. There is one element of commerce that SLA Industries does not allow; the Skin Trade, the buying and selling of sentient beings.

With sex work being legal in designated zones in Mort City and a blind eye turned in other areas, the trafficking of humans and aliens disappeared into the corners around the legitimate entertainment zones. Some customers felt they needed more than what was legally available to them and crossed the line into sentient trafficking, spawning the deplorable Skin Trade; where there's a customer, a supplier will spawn. Missing people are usually traced to the illegal buying and selling of humans and aliens and most of them end up as the property of someone whose urges surpassed their empathy and their desire to stay within the boundaries of the law and decent behaviour.

SLA Industries clamps down whenever it can, but the Skin Trade adapts to survive.

Serial Killers

"Serial Killers are cool, I love watching that programme on TV, 'Serial Killers, Awesome Killers'. You should watch it. The coolest is Jack, but my favourite was called 'Pin Century', he was pretty much the first one. Killed a woman called Linda Spears, a high ender in Cloak Division, the woman who took down the leader of Thresher back in the day. Anyway, Linda had retired to an easy life, drinking wine and writing books. She hadn't been heard for a couple of weeks, so Cloak went in, and found her pinned to her bedroom wall. One hundred one foot-long pins nailed through her body, they reckoned she didn't die until the last one went through her forehead. Pin Century killed a load more celebs before he was caught. Everyone with a hundred pins...it was like art! So cool! I hope someone copycats him soon."

William Longbottom, TV aficionado and Serial Killer fan, Lower Downtown

Some people just need to feed their urge to kill and Mort City produces more of these people than anywhere else in the World of Progress. The serial killers of Mort are diverse and varied, stretching the gamut from the likes of Benjin Surpan, a wannabe killer that was killed by his first target, all the way to the legendary Halloween Jack, the unstoppable pumpkin-headed force of nature. Most serial killers are stopped after claiming two or three victims, but enough survive beyond that and hone their trade to levels where they get their very own Hunter Sheet and face the full force of SLA Industries at its most vindictive.

SLA INDUSTRIES

SHIVERS

"We deal with the shit. Day in. Day out. Shit, shit, shit. We get the shit armour, the shit guns and the shit jobs… then the show ponies come along, drop the icing on the cake and get all the glory. But you know what… I don't give two shits. I know how much I'm getting paid at the end of the month and couldn't give three shits about my SCL. Wearing green is an easier life, even if it is shit.

Oi…don't mess with my shit!"

Shiver Pvt. Janice 'No Shits' Givven,
Downtown Patrol 4-232

The Shiver Organisation polices the streets of Mort City and the boundaries of the cannibal sectors beyond. Once composed exclusively of human recruits, the force now accepts applications from anyone passionate enough to want to face the daily grind on the street; currently the Shiver Organisation is approximately 98% human, with most non-humans serving in Cannibal Sector 1.

Shivers get a hard time from Operatives and in turn give them a hard time back. The derogatory term 'slop' (SLA Op) came from within the Shiver ranks and in return, the term 'chop' (Cheap Op) has been thrown back. Despite the frayed relationships between the two forces, both generally work well together.

"If you're green, you're green. If you're not, you're slops."

Mantra of the Downtown Patrol

The Shiver Organisation is divided into three brigades, each led by a Shiver Commander who has ultimate control of the thousands of individuals that work beneath them. Sector Shivers are given grey armour which distinguishes them from their green-armoured colleagues on and over the Wall. Each brigade has responsibility for a specific Mort City location:

Central Patrol: Central is the smallest of the three brigades and is responsible for policing the Perimeter Wall and Suburbia. Led by Shiver Commander Jethro Tung, the Central Patrol are generally occupied with settling disputes between Operatives, talking down suicidal corporates and stopping Downtowners slipping their way into Suburbia. Working Central Patrol is the cushty job that most Shivers would love to have.

Sector Shivers: Currently fighting the Bellwood Campaign in Cannibal Sector 1, under the leadership of the highly respected Shiver Commander Cradle, Sector Shivers are stationed out in the cannibal sectors or along the Sector Wall that separates Mort City from the devastated ruins outside. Sector Shivers are soldiers, facing the absolute worst that Mort can throw at them.

Downtown Patrol: Led by Shiver Commander Arthur Wallsington, the Downtown Patrol is the largest of the three brigades and where all the new recruits start. Their responsibility is to oversee the law enforcement requirements of Downtown and Lower Downtown.

Generally, the best trained of all Shivers, or at least those with the most experience, are shipped out to Cannibal Sector 1 to join the Sector Shivers, where they will man the Bridgeheads; compact fortresses that are set up with the aim of regaining ground from the sector locals, as a part of the ongoing Bellwood Campaign. Cannibal Sector 1, however, is a war zone and the Shivers posted there typically wish they were back over the wall in the relative safety of Downtown. Within the city, Shivers work the streets, settling local disputes, interrogating suspect gang members, handling evictions and dealing with civilian altercations. Street Shivers will request support from the Shiver Organisation if the going gets tough, which will come in the form of more Shivers, or via a BPN being issued for Operative support.

The Downtown Patrol uses a number of different Shiver types, each with their own role to play within the city. Despite the different jobs they do, all wear green Body Blocker armour; something which has become the identifying mark of every Shiver and has led to terms such as 'being green blooded' and 'donning the green'. Shivers are all given standard issue weapons which pale in significance to those used by Ops, typically a mix of powered batons, small arms and non-lethal ammunition for their signature Gauss Rifles. Though they are not as well armed as Operatives, they know how to use the tools they have and are able to put basic squad tactics into practice.

All Shivers use the following profile. Any modifications for specific types of Shiver are listed in their descriptions.

Shiver Unit			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
2	2	2	1
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
1	2	0	+3
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
12		2	5

Skills	
Detect: 1	Interrogate: 2
Melee Weapons: 2	Pistol: 1
Rifle: 2	Streetwise: 2
Support Weapons: 2	Throw: 1
Unarmed Combat: 1	

Street Shiver

Often known as Base Shivers, the Street Shiver is the most common type of Shiver found within Mort City and makes up over 85% of the Shiver forces. Organised into ten Shiver squads they are tasked with patrolling a sector or sub-sector of the city depending on the sector's location. A Sergeant leads the squad and will often subdivide his squad to cover different shifts or locations. They will become familiar with the local street criminals and build loose relationships with the community, generally though, these relationships are little more than protection rackets. Street Shivers have power over their streets and are more than happy to use and abuse it. Street Shivers carry

basic Shiver equipment including Gauss Rifles, smoke grenades and wear standard Shiver green Body Blocker armour. Some squads, typically those in the rougher neighbourhoods, will have access to a Battle Taxi or more recently, a Crawler APC.

Equipment

PP664.2 Body Blocker, SHV-01 Gauss Rifle (Ball-Bearing Rounds - 3 clips), Spit Pistol (1 clip), GASH Pacifier Baton.

Notes: Shiver Sergeants have the Leadership skill at rank 2 and increase their CHA stat to rank 2.

Shiver squads may have access to a FEN 0227 Battle Taxi or Crawler APC. If they do, one or more Shivers will possess the Drive Military skill at rank 1.

Fast Response Shiver

When it gets serious the Street Shiver Sergeant can call in back-up, the first to answer this call will be a Shiver of the Fast Response (FR) department. FR Shivers are significantly better equipped than the Street Shivers and can get to the rendezvous point quickly due to their Zenit Patrollers. These chunky green motorbikes have wide-tread tyres and sizeable engines, giving the rider good road grip, manoeuvrability and the ability to navigate up and down shallow staircases and obstacles with relative ease. The FR Shivers have passed exams on navigation within their given District and are expected to stay constantly abreast of the often changing routes and blockages within the city. When responding to a call they will stop for nothing. Most civilians know to get off the street and walkways if they hear the familiar FR siren or see its flashing green lights. Those that don't won't make the mistake twice.

Equipment

PP664.2 Body Blocker, SLA 10-05 Bully Boy Shotgun, Spit Pistol (1 clip), GASH Pacifier Baton, Zenit Patroller Motorcycle.

Notes: Fast Response Shivers get the following additions/changes to their skills - Drive Motorcycle: 3, Streetwise: 3.

Dispersal Shiver

Formerly two distinct Shiver departments, Enforcer Shivers were amalgamated into the Breacher Shiver department in 907sd, when it became clear that no one really knew what one department did differently from the other. Although, in Cannibal Sector 1 the two types of Shivers still exist and have very distinct roles. Within the City, the five man Dispersal Shiver squads are equipped to deal with rioting, building entry and other large scale breaches in order. Their equipment includes a Battle Taxi per squad, pacifier batons and riot shields, which are commonly known as Breacher Shields. The sergeants wear back-mounted smoke grenade launchers and carry additional equipment for the squad. All Dispersal Shivers wear PP8

Reinforcer, which consists of additional armour plates to be worn on top of standard issue Body Blocker. The PP8 is cumbersome and provides significantly more protection than Body Blocker alone, but with notably reduced mobility. Dispersal Shivers tend to be well built and physically stronger than Shivers from other departments. Individuals spend their downtime working out and building their muscle mass, to general scorn of the Street Shivers. The Dispersal Shiver department is relatively small yet well capable of handling most situations they are called to. If a riot or other disturbance gets too large street Shivers are given a Breacher Shield, a pacifier baton and if they are lucky at least some plates of PP8, then expected to back up the Dispersal Shivers. In such cases, the Dispersal Shiver squad subdivides to include at least one Dispersal Shiver, which take command of any Street Shivers they can find to bolster their squad back up to full. In such cases all Dispersal Shivers are issued Smoke launchers from the Battle Taxi inventory.

Equipment
PP664.2 Body Blocker with PP8 Reinforcer Plates, SHV-01 Gauss Rifle (Ball-Bearing Rounds - 3 clips), GASH Pacifier Baton, Spit Pistol (2 clips), PP949 Breacher Shield, 2x DA 71 Concussion Grenade.

Note: Dispersal Shivers get the following additions/changes to their skills - Shield Craft: 2.

Dispersal Shivers gain +1 to their STR stat.

PP664.2 Body Blocker With PP8 Reinforcer Plates		
PV	Resistance	Weight
5	14	3

Base Homicide Shiver

As part of the Shiver Investigation Department (SID), Base Homicide Shivers have an important role to play. Each and every Base Homicide Shiver is an Inspector, so ranked higher than Shiver Sergeants. The job of the Base Homicide Shiver is to investigate civilian deaths and determine whether it's just a simple homicide or find evidence of something more sinister and worthwhile of Operative involvement. When a Base Homicide Shiver is called in they will take command of the murder investigation and local Shiver forces. They are not only a rank above the file Shiver Sergeants, but also have a higher SCL ranking, often considered SCL11 with benefits. SIDs, as they are often known by both Shivers and Operatives, generally have a good relationship and mutual respect with and of SLA Operatives. SIDs, after all, ensure that Operatives are only called in for the cases worth further investigation, saving many Operatives from pointless low paid and low SCL increase jobs. Base Homicide Shivers, tend not to overtly wear armour, instead they are attired in a smart suit with their ranking on their shoulders and Shiver and SID logos on their breast pockets. They wear a cutdown variant of the Shiver helmet, as it gives them an important level of anonymity and authority. Most drive dark green Augustus cars, although some prefer to use Zenit Patrollers or be driven by local Shiver patrols.

Equipment
PP664.2 Body Blocker, Spit Pistol (1 clip), GASH Pacifier Baton, Zenit Patroller Motorcycle or Augustus Town Car.

Notes: Base Homicide Shivers get the following additions/changes to their skills - Drive Civilian: 2 or Drive Motorcycle: 3, Forensics: 2, Leadership: 3, Streetwise: 4, Tracking: 1.

Base Homicide Shivers gain +1 to their KNOW, CONC and COOL stats.

D.A.C. Handler

The D.A.C. (DNA Altered Canine) is used for tracking specific criminals and when intimidation is needed to control crowds or overly rowdy suspects. D.A.C. Handlers are partnered up with a D.A.C., who becomes their ward for training and deployment. D.A.C. Handlers are a relatively rare sight, but are very effective at hunting down high threat targets and breaking up bar fights and small scale brawls. They also pose a good deterrent when intel suggests a riot is brewing and if the unrest does occur, D.A.C.s and their handlers can be fundamental in regaining control quickly, often proving to be the tipping point in large scale altercations where the Dispersal Shiver forces are struggling to acquire control. The D.A.C. Handlers' appearance is reminiscent of both Paramedical and Fire Shivers, but can be recognised by their handler mitts and terrifying Jolt Whip.

Equipment
PP664.2 Body Blocker, GASH Jolt Whip (use the GASH Pacifier Baton, modified with a 2 metre range), Spit Pistol (1 clip), D.A.C..

Notes: D.A.C. Handlers get the following addition to their skills - Animal Handling: 2.

DNA Altered Canine			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
4	4	0	2
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
0	5	0	+4
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
18		4	9

Skills	
Athletics: 3	Detect: 3
Intimidate: 4	Stealth: 1
Tracking: 4	Unarmed Combat: 3

Equipment
Claws/Teeth

Notes: A D.A.C.'s bite is extremely powerful. To reflect this, a D.A.C. inflicts +3 DMG and +1 AD when using its teeth to attack.

A D.A.C. Handler gains the Tracking Skill at rank 4 while in control of their D.A.C.

Paramedical Shiver

Though not as well equipped as the Shiver Medics found in Cannibal Sector 1, Paramedical Shivers are often attached to other Shiver squads especially in more volatile sectors. They are predominately tasked with patching up their fellow Shivers and any injured Operatives, but some may treat local citizens, especially if they have a key role to play in the community or have given the local Shiver squad an appropriate level of 'respect' (bribes, beer, cigarettes, food) in previous encounters. The Paramedical Shiver department also includes emergency responders, who will be tasked with trafficking the injured or dead to the local hospital or morgue. Paramedical Responder Shivers will be equipped with either a Zenit Patroller or a Romulus limousine equipped with all the appropriate medical equipment. In situations of large level rioting, Paramedical Shivers will set up makeshift hospital tents behind the front line, pumping injured Shivers full of drugs and patching them up, so they can get back to dealing with the disturbance. Paramedical Shivers wear Body Blocker under long green trench coats. In the cannibal sectors, Shiver Medics are far better equipped, but similarly attired, albeit in white or grey trench coats.

Equipment
PP664.2 Body Blocker, GASH Pacifier Baton, Spit Pistol (1 clip), BOOPA Hypofist.

Notes: May be equipped with either a Zenit Patroller Motorcycle or a Romulus limousine.

Paramedical Shivers get the following additions/changes to their skills - Drive Military: 2 or Drive Motorcycle: 2, Medical: 3.

Fire Shiver

A small number of Shiver squads man Battle Taxis equipped with water tanks and high powered hoses. These Fire Shivers are the only city Shivers that do not wear green, instead they wear red. They are equipped similarly to Street Shivers including Body Blocker armour, but also wear fire retardant overalls and carry their iconic Blaze Axe. The axe uses the same technology as the Pacifier Baton of the Dispersal Shivers, but instead of the blunt baton, the Blaze has a powered blade which can smash through reinforced doors and even internal walls. The Fire Shiver helmet is also modified to incorporate breathing equipment and air cooling and filtering technology and a torch.

Equipment
PP664.2 Body Blocker, GASH Blaze Axe (use the GASH Pacifier Baton, modified with an AD of 4)

Notes: A squad will be equipped with a Battle Taxi.

The squad will have access to a modified (sporting a high-powered water cannon) FEN 0227 Battle Taxi and one or more Shivers will possess the Drive Military skill at rank 2.

"'Shivers Fuck Shit Up' used to be my favourite show, but when Raymonde's Raiders got sent out on Bellwood, the Patrol Unit they got in to replace them seemed too contrived, like they were trying too hard to be entertaining.

Gone were the days of Jimmy eating a cat turd because he was told it would remove the curse he was under. Instead, we had nothing but fake setups for years. Well, the ratings fucked shit up, didn't they, and now look at it. It's not nearly as good as it used to be.

When Allen saucered that hubcap into the gang twats, I think I emitted a rat turd. So funny."

Malc Bellon, TV afficionado, Downtown 5-12

AETHERMEN

Aethermen are the main contact anyone will have with Naga 7, one of the most secretive departments within the SLA Industries organisation. The Aethermen are in the majority human males, but other races and gender can be found in their ranks. Most are rather affable and more than happy to sit with a Shiver or Operative Squad and small talk over a big cup of tea. They are predominantly found in Cannibal Sector 1 and Lower Downtown, anywhere in fact that Dream Entities or the effect of the Grey are present.

Any BPN issued for known Dream Entity activity will likely come with an associated Aetherman and he will be a resource well worth utilising. He is trained and equipped to deal with the threat, far more than any Operative could ever hope to be. They generally take the role of advisor or observer, supplying the Operative squad with the information and nothing more, that they need to know to defeat or survive the Dream Entity threat. The Aethermen carry Volt Guns and FOW staffs, which are designed specifically to defeat the Dream Entities. They wear Aether Armour which prevents nearby Entity manifestations and protects from the Grey.

MORAL RIGHT

Moral Right are a department of SLA who work specifically within the confines of Downtown, targeting the roughest neighbourhoods that sport the highest rates of unemployment.

Fronted by the unforgiving Agnes Dowr, a woman of uncompromising views and stern policies. Moral Right are instructed to deliver their unique measure of brutality on specific areas in order to force 'reform' amongst the down and out civilian masses.

Moral Right's approach is widely disliked by Shivers and Operatives and plainly feared by those living in proximity to what have come to be termed 'Re-education Factories'. These huge workhouses have become benevolent prisons to criminals, homeless and unemployed, all of whom have been rounded up from the streets of Downtown by Moral Right's 'Virtue Squads'. Life in the Re-education Factories consists of back-breaking labour, exceedingly long hours, physical abuse, rock hard beds and little more than scraps of food on a daily basis. Such extreme brutality is rarely seen even inside Mort's maximum security prisons and unlike those larger penitentiaries, Re-education Factories have no minimum age. Anyone forced into a Re-education Factory is given a DNA Tattoo on their forehead, a permanent sign of their 'willingness' to reform and yet another way for Moral Right to inflict control over their herd. The final insult is the degrading name given to prisoners in the Re-education Factories: "Workus".

"Despite our best and most well intentioned efforts, the good work done by the Virtue Squads in Downtown has been unsuccessful in uplifting the moral value within Mort City. And yet we should not be deterred.

We must, gentlemen, double our efforts and quadruple our resolve. If we are unable to bring discipline to the masses, the masses must be brought to discipline.

Therefore, I am introducing the workhouse programme. We will succeed or they will die trying. Thank you gentlemen."

Agnes Dowr, MR Division department head

What has made Moral Right such a thorn in everyone's side is the jurisdiction they hold. Shivers are totally unable to interfere with MR action, the same for Operatives with an SCL any lower than 7. The Operatives with a higher SCL can request removal of a Virtue Squad, but need to be able to prove that Moral Right's presence is negatively affecting an active BPN or Hunter Sheet, there is a lot open to interpretation. In fact, only SLA employees of SCL 4 or higher are able to issue full orders to a Moral Right Whip (the head of a Virtue Squad) or his Seraphs (the rank and file of the squad). Virtue Squads use similar armour to Shiver forces, but carry large powered 'Puritan Hammers', which function much like the now popular GASH Clearance Baton. The hammers are used to bully, batter and beat the civilian under-belly of Downtown into submission. Once a Whip and his squad have moved into an area, they will not leave until the nearest Re-education Factory is suitably filled. Moral Right's level of brutality is also driven by the fact that they simply do not have the foothold they would like in Downtown. Their impact is clear to see in some areas, but with hundreds of sectors per district, they simply cannot beat enough of the masses into line.

The Re-education Factories themselves are more than just local workhouses and prisons. Though the fact is not promoted, they are also notable money earners for SLA Industries, a fact

which has gained Agnes Dowr and the MR Division some significant respect within Corporate. A number of contracts have been signed to allocate the labour of certain Re-education Factories to smaller subsidiary companies or third-party firms looking to outsource manufacturing. The most recent deal signed is with Consolidated Arms Fabrication, the weapons company authorised to produce firearms for civilian defence. Currently, two sites have been set up as bullet-factories, with prisoners working 17 hour shifts, making ammunition for sale in Downtown. Other sites work equally long shifts on food production, soft drink bottling, construction and even the manufacture of toilet seats… nothing is beneath the workforce of the Re-education Factories.

"They call it reform, but it's just fuckin' slavery. You get beaten, humiliated, worked to death and if you're really lucky, you might get out after a few years on good behaviour. That said, I only ever knew one guy that got out, and he got picked up by another Virtue Squad three days later, accused of escaping on account of this fuckin' tattoo we have on our heads and got thrown back into another Factory. We're here for life… and that won't be for long."

Phineas TapTap, former drug dealer, now Re-education Factory Workus

THE WEB OF LIES

RUNNING A GAME

At their core, a good GM needs to be a great storyteller. Like writing the script to a movie, a GM crafts the scenes that make up the game, from the interactions and fire fights to the plot twists and big reveals. While many great storytellers don't need help in crafting a tale, for those that do, or for anyone who just wants to keep their game within the confines of Operative life, there are two primary game types that are used in SLA Industries:

BLUEPRINT NEWS

Station Analysis constantly collects information for Blueprint News files from SLA sources, Shiver patrols, departmental reports, media recordings and Operatives on the street, to compile an ever-growing priority list of tasks that need completing in the name of the company. Scattered around Mort City are BPN Halls, huge concrete structures, each home to hundreds of SLA employees tasked with issuing BPNs to SLA's most trusted weapons - Operatives.

Obtaining a BPN is both simple and painful. Queues in a typical BPN hall are long, generally hundreds of Operatives deep. While significant in size, so many armour-clad, drug fuelled, socially inept characters in one place makes standing in line a rather uncomfortable experience. Stormers, Frothers and Wasters all regularly find themselves getting in a frustrated scuffle, only to be turned out by the hall's security and have to start the wait over again. For these reasons, squads that contain Humans, Ebons, Shaktars or Neophrons will often send those members to collect the next BPN. Strictly speaking, a squad leader is expected to sign for a BPN, but most BPN Officers are happy to fudge the paperwork if it means not having to deal with a Stormer.

Upon finally arriving at a BPN Officer's desk, an Operative will be required to provide their SLA ID and current SCL, as many BPNs are issued only to Operatives holding a minimum SCL. After providing the required information, the Operative will be offered one or more BPNs. Any Red BPNs that have just come in that match the required SCL of an Operative will be issued immediately, with no other option being presented. In all other cases, the Operative is free to choose the BPN they like the sound of the most, usually being swayed by the biggest pay or most significant increase in SCL. While it is acceptable to decline all those offered, the Operative will then be required to join the back of the queue again in order to obtain other options. Occasionally, the cruellest of BPN Officers will keep rejected BPNs aside for anyone who turned them down them all the options the first time around.

An issued BPN will be one of nine colours, with a tenth colour (Platinum) issued directly to squads rather than being collected from a BPN Hall. The colour of a BPN determines the nature of the mission it relates to. Each BPN will also provide a department that can be contacted for more information, a number of Credits, stated per Operative or per squad, that can be earned and the potential SCL increase that is on offer upon successful completion (note that the Cred values shown in the descriptions that follow are 'per Operative').

Finally, BPN operations are often overseen by one of two departments: Station Analysis or Third Eye News. Should the Station Analysis box be ticked, the Operatives will have Station Analysis on tap for support and this BPN is subject to secrecy; all media coverage regarding the events of this BPN will be censored. Should the Third Eye News box be ticked, then the Operative's activities are open to media coverage should a news crew or camera drone deem the events to be of interest. Should neither box be ticked, the BPN is considered 'public' and no special restrictions are applied.

The different BPN colours are as follows.

Blue: Street Maintenance

Used for civilian disturbances called in by Street Shivers, sewer sweeps, civilian disputes that have turned violent and extermination of common threats such as rats, pigs or Carrien. Blue BPNs effectively cover 'city control' in every sense of the word.

Credits: 50-100c SCL Increase: 0.1 - 0.2

White: Investigation

Covers everything from following up on pending cases and launching new inquiries or investigations to anything from a child's disappearance to mass murder. White BPNs are also issued for the observation and surveillance of potential threats.

Credits: 150-400c SCL Increase: 0.2 - 0.4

Yellow: Retrieval

Yellow BPNs are issued to recover SLA property, files and information, including retrieval of artefacts or items deemed valuable to Naga 7 or other departments.

Credits: 100-400c SCL Increase: 0.1 - 0.4

Green: Expeditionary

Such BPNs are a catch-all for any activity to take place outside of the Mort City walls. While the exact mission will more commonly suit another BPN colour, anything tagged as green suggests that travel to somewhere that most Ops would rather not go, be that to off-world locations that need SLA's attention, far-away provinces of Mort, or even into the feared cannibal sectors.

Credits: 300-1200c SCL Increase: 0.3 - 0.5

Red: Emergency

Red BPNs, or 'Red Alerts' are compulsory missions that may not be declined. Such BPNs are issued to whoever is at the front of the queue in the BPN Hall, with the aim of a rapid response to immediate threats and current situations. Anything from an on-going DarkNight Terrorist attack to a civilian riot in progress could be deemed a Red Alert.

Credits: 100-600c SCL Increase: 0.1 - 0.4

Grey: Cloak/Internal

Grey BPNs are never issued to inexperienced squads. Such BPNs are issued under direct order of Cloak Division and involve the investigation, surveillance and eventual termination of SLA Employees and Operatives who have changed allegiance and turned traitor. Covering up the crime is mandatory for success.

Credits: 250-1000c SCL Increase: 0.2 - 0.5

Jade: Ebb Related

BPNs dealing exclusively with Ebb-related users or artefacts are tagged as Jade. Like Green BPNs, the exact details of the mission can be varied, from tracking feral Ebonites to investigating occurrences that appear to have involved significant Flux usage. Undertaking a Jade BPN typically requires that a squad contains one or more Ebonite members, sometimes with a minimum knowledge of specific Ebb disciplines.

Credits: 200-600c SCL Increase: 0.2 - 0.3

Orange: Cult Related

The Orange BPN was created in response to the rise of cult activity in Downtown. Orange BPNs require much the same touch as white ones, but focusing instead on the investigation of the Shi'An blood cult whose presence has risen sharply on Mort in the last few years. Shi'An cult activity is a real concern for SLA Industries, partly due to its sudden upsurge in popularity, but also due to the lack of understanding the company currently has of the cult's potential.

Credits: 200-400c SCL Increase: 0.2 - 0.4

LaD assistance - Restricted: Under normal circumstances, LaD pickup will not be honoured during Orange BPNs.

Black: Black Ops

Black BPNs are termed 'suicide operations' by most Ops. They come with the highest pay rates, but also the highest chance of death. Black Ops are only offered to experienced squads who demonstrate proficiency in a range of skills and who are equipped for the most violent of opposition. Mission

parameters are as far reaching as Mort itself, but commonly include infiltrating rival companies, facing down the most dangerous threats, or assassinating people of interest. Due to the large Operative death rate that comes with embarking on a Black BPN, players should give serious thought to undertaking one. Black Ops squads are never televised and as such are always handled by Station Analysis, though surviving such missions will often attract the attention of many sponsorship talent scouts.

Credits: 1000c upwards SCL Increase: 0.5 upwards

Silver: Media

Any situation that requires media presence is given the Silver BPN tag, from collecting footage, protecting camera crews in the field or delivering public announcements in the name of SLA. Silver BPNs, more than any others, tend to need a softer approach and Operatives should be aware that failure in such an undertaking may shed a bad light on the company, which in turn can lead to the most severe punishments and a complete loss of professional reputation.

Credits: 300-1500c SCL Increase: 0.2 - 0.5

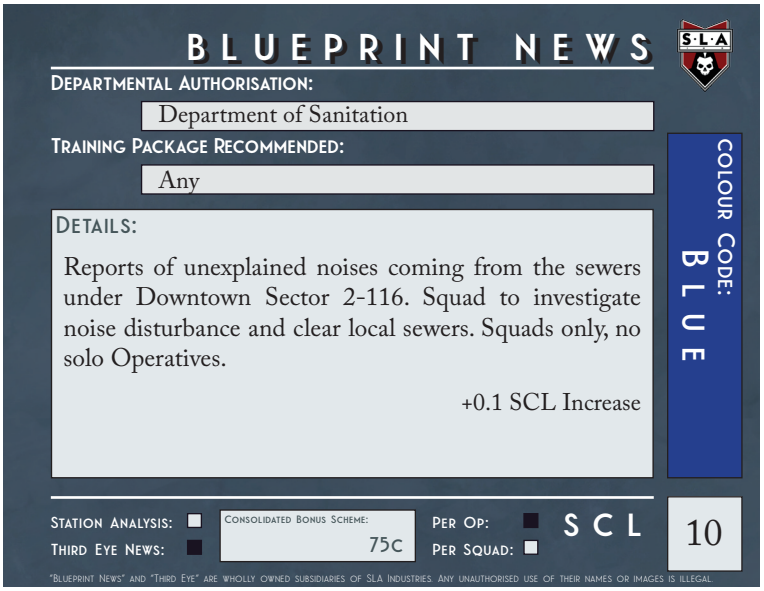
Platinum: Head Office

Such BPNs are not collected from the BPN hall and are instead issued to specific Operatives or squads who are called upon to collect the orders directly. Issuing of Platinum BPNs is exceptionally rare and they are only given to the very cream of the crop. Platinum missions deal with extremely sensitive information and the outcome of the BPN can threaten both the reputation of the company and the very fabric of reality. Failure of a Platinum BPN comes with a significant reduction in SCL or worse.

Credits: [D-NOTICE] SCL Increase: [D-NOTICE]

While successfully completing a BPN will bring the rewards stated, failure will result in reduced or no payment and may also result in a reduction of SCL pending the knock-on effects of the failure. Many BPNs will have additional criteria for payment, such as the need to keep subjects alive or return key items along with the primary mission. The examples on the right are representative of typical BPNs:

To enable GMs to create BPNs easily, a couple of blank BPN forms are included at the end of this book.



HUNTER SHEETS

A Hunter Sheet is typically used to create a 'one-shot' game, that is, to provide an evening's play without the requirement of an ongoing campaign, or at the very least something that can be started and finished in a single session. A typical Hunter Sheet will provide the players with a personality that they have been tasked to track down. In some cases the aim may be to exterminate the target, but in the majority of cases the goal is to apprehend and bring the target in alive and (mostly) unharmed.

A Hunter Sheet should be issued to and be read by the players. Typically it will detail a mission brief, provide general information about the target and their last known whereabouts, as well as any financial or SCL reward to be gained from completion of the Hunter Sheet. The information provided represents SLA's knowledge of the target, though the actual facts may differ somewhat. The GM is able to use this personality to spin a simple story or send the players on a wild goose chase through Downtown as they try to apprehend the subject.

It is worth noting that Hunter Sheets do not have to be used solely as 'one-shot' games. The GM could consider sending the players on a simple 'locate and apprehend' mission, but use it as a vehicle to get them wrapped up in something that is much bigger than it seems. An example Hunter Sheet is included in the SLA Industries 2nd Edition GM's Pack, including guidance to GMs on how to run it.

CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns are a common way to play roleplay games. While many groups will enjoy the one-shot game experience, most players want to see their character evolve, learn more about the world and gradually improve their skills and equipment. Evolving a character in this way requires that a character takes

part in a campaign: a long running series of games, following the player's characters over multiple BPNs and sessions. A campaign opens up the opportunity to introduce more complex storylines that take multiple sessions to complete. In many ways, a campaign can be seen as a TV series, slowly watching the evolution of both the story and the characters that play that story out.

The GM does not need to be a master story writer to create a campaign. The beauty of the BPN system allows a large number of seemingly unconnected sessions to be tied together without question. When doing so, however, it is suggested that the GM makes note of characters, contacts and events that occur which could be brought back in future games - enemies cropping up weeks after the players first encountered them, or the Shiver that helped them in game one trying to cash in a favour ten games later. It is these small bits of connective tissue that tie a campaign together and make players feel truly invested in their characters and the world they inhabit.

Another way to run a campaign is to invest heavily in a single concept and run multiple games from that story arc. Taking the example green BPN provided earlier in this chapter, after the 5 day tour in Cannibal Sector 1, the Operatives may decide to stay on and help out the ongoing efforts of the Bellwood Campaign, the current Shiver campaign to reclaim the Sector. The GM could decide that they have received clearance to continue the secondment and move them onto a new Bridgehead, treating the journey between them as a game session in itself. The possibilities are as endless as your imagination and GMs are encouraged to spin the campaign in whichever direction the players seem to be enjoying the most.

During a campaign, characters will earn experience points allowing them to expand their knowledge or improve in certain areas. In addition, players are also able to take part in 'downtime': a short summary period that comes at the end of game sessions and represents the activities that occur in Operative's lives between games. These aspects are all discussed later in this chapter.

CREATING NPCS

An NPC, or *non-player character*, represents any character that the players will meet or interact with during a game; NPCs are your main antagonists and the contacts, Shivers, shopkeepers and civilians that the players deal with throughout a game session.

When considering an NPC there are a few questions to ask yourself before creating a profile for them:

- Will this character play a vital part in the story?
- Will this character be fighting against, or with, the players and if so, are they really capable of putting up a fight?
- Will this character be joining the player's squad for any length of time?

If you answered no to all of these questions then you do not need to create a profile for the NPC. Such characters will provide a story arc or information, or die if they get shot or try to attack a character. As a GM you don't need to know what skills such characters possess, nor how many Hit Points they have, instead you can use common sense, creating a name and using them as a vehicle to move the story along. If they get involved in combat, the GM should feel free to decide if they make an attack and how that attack pans out, or if they simply run, freeze or die.

If you answered yes to any of those questions then it might be worth creating a profile for your NPC. Like the player's characters, this NPC may be called upon to make skill rolls, put up a fight or respond to fear like other characters. They are in effect a character like all others, controlled by the GM. When making a profile for an NPC it is not necessary to go through the full character creation process, instead a much more streamlined profile is created. NPCs do not use Ratings Points, do not need to consider Encumbrance and only need to have the skills listed that are relevant to their role in the game - they may well be a computer whizz, but if you're never going to let them near a computer, there is no point in them having the skill.

The following is an example NPC profile for a Street Shiver:

Street Shiver			
STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
2	2	2	1
CHA	COOL	LUCK	Initiative
1	2	0	+3
Hit Points		Closing	Rushing
12		2	5

Skills	
Detect: 1	Interrogate: 2
Melee Weapons: 2	Pistol: 1
Rifle: 2	Streetwise: 2
Support Weapons: 2	Throw: 1
Unarmed Combat: 1	

Equipment
PP664.2 Body Blocker, SHV-01 Gauss Rifle (Ball-Bearing Rounds - 3 clips), Spit Pistol, GASH Pacifier Baton

This profile provides the stats and skills that the Street Shiver is likely to need during its use in the game. While Shivers will possess a wealth of additional skills, their interactions are likely to be highly limited and so such skills need not be considered. In the same way, while a Shiver may carry other personal effects or items, little more than their weapons and armour will be needed during the course of the game. The GM is of course free to adjust such templates as they see fit, but it is always suggested that NPC profiles are kept as 'light' as possible.

The only hard and fast rules regarding NPCs are that any racial stat maximums are observed. GMs should feel free to make NPCs as they choose, selecting the stats and skills that best represent the character type they need. Some example NPC profiles are included in the various faction sections of the Threat Analysis chapter and some blank templates are included at the end of this book.

HIT POINTS ON NPCS

Typically speaking, NPCs should have a default number of Hit Points according to their species, as described in the character creation section. GMs are of course entitled to adjust Hit Points as they see fit, though it is suggested most non-story critical NPCs use the racial default without adding their STR to the value. It should also be noted that most Human civilians will have fewer Hit Points than Human Operatives who have been through training at Meny. On average, Shivers and Human civilian adults will typically have 10-12 Hit Points, with children and elderly NPCs having 6-8.

WOUNDS ON NPCS

Due to the nature of most NPCs, tracking multiple wounds for each one when they are unlikely to last long in serious combat is generally an unnecessary requirement. For this reason, we suggest that wounds are ignored with regards to all NPCs besides the main antagonist/s of a story, or any significantly large, strong or threatening characters. Should an NPC become wounded and not be killed, the GM should feel free to impose whatever modifiers best suit the situation. There is no need for NPCs to follow the same rules for wounds as Operatives do.

GM'S DISCRETION

GM's discretion is a term used a lot throughout these rules. While it may be obvious to experienced GMs just how to handle situations where this is stated, it may be a little confusing to those who are new to running a roleplay game. The overall purpose of the ruleset provided in this book is to create a streamlined cinematic experience which is not bogged down by too many rules, charts, tables or mathematical equations. In order to achieve this there are situations where specific rules don't exist as there are many reasons where hard and fast rules are simply not needed. A character has fallen from a window, how much damage will they take? The answer is up to the GM. What if they fell from a height of 5m instead of 4m, how much more damage would they take? Again, it's up to the GM - the right answer in this situation is *"whatever makes sense and keeps the game flowing smoothly."*

As the GM of a game you are ultimately in charge. If a rule states that the outcome is down to the GM's discretion, then the choice is yours - got an idea that will throw a spanner in the works? Go for it! The World of Progress is yours to control, so do as you will.

Large Margin of Success or Serious Failure

One of the most common places that the GM will need to be creative is when active skill rolls generate a large margin of success or a serious failure. These situations are here just for the GM, to allow them to influence or hinder the player suitably based on the margin of the roll. Got a juicy clue you want to share but are not sure how? Wait for a large margin of success to occur. A player just rolled a serious failure on a Computer skill roll, how should you handle it? It's entirely up to you - let them fail, get locked out of the computer, break it, or activate a silent alarm they know nothing about that brings the real bad guys running. Such situations are an invitation for the GM to create even more cinematic experiences and inject flavour into their games.

Highly Skilled Characters

It is not unusual for players to build extreme specialist characters, maxing out on specific stats and skills in order to try and achieve success in certain areas with ease. Most commonly this will occur in a combat setting, where a character with a STR or DEX at rank 6 and a relevant combat skill at rank 3 (or 4) will automatically pass the 'roll to hit' target of 10, assuming no modifiers are applied, regardless of the actual result rolled on the die. Automatic successes can, and do, happen on these occasions, especially with such focussed characters.

Firstly, they emphasise the need to use defensive manoeuvres in close combat and utilise cover during a firefight, but they also represent that the strongest Stormer, who is a specialist in Melee Weapons, should be able to pummel their target with ease should they decide not to defend themselves.

It is however important to ensure that players do not abuse such character builds. While this behaviour can be expected from experienced Operatives, it should be far less common in starting characters. Should players decide to build such characters from the outset, they will only be able to do so at the cost of significant weaknesses in other areas. The GM should ensure they exploit these weaknesses by regularly putting combat-driven characters into situations that they need to think or talk their way out of.

Using Traits

It is vital that the GM ensures all players make a point of roleplaying any traits that they have selected for their characters. These aspects not only provide advantages and disadvantages to the tasks the characters find themselves in, but also serve to define their personalities. Importantly, with negative traits especially, the GM has additional plot hooks or ammunition to use against the players; a GM should look to put the players in situations that make it difficult for them, use their fears against them and make sure they are suitably challenged by those negative traits.

The GM should also feel free to assign additional traits to characters over the course of a campaign. If situations arise that would cause a character to gain a new reliable Contact, feel free to give them one. At the same time, if a new rival has been made, the Enemy trait is ready and waiting to be applied. Illnesses, phobias, anxiety or depression can all come about as a result of encounters an Operative may face and while the GM should not overuse these aspects, knowing that they have the power to influence the characters with them is important to remember.

Handling Edge-Cases

Edge-cases fall firmly into the GM's discretion category. Situations that feel like they should have a rule, but don't, such as "What modifier to hit do I apply when trying to fire my weapon at a moving target while I am falling to my death from

a 20 storey tower block?". The GM should feel free to pick any modifier they deem suitable, or none at all, instead stating that such a shot is not possible as the player is too busy considering their final moments.

If any rule or combination of rules don't quite cover the odd, extreme or wild ideas that players come up with, then the GM should feel free to apply whichever rule feels most suitable, or ignore the rules all together. Remember the overall goal is to have fun, so go wild.

Considering Time Scales

Time scales can be tricky to handle if players want to perform tasks that can't be done in an instant. As the GM it is important to think about how to balance the squad's actions and there are a few important things to bear in mind. For example, one character is trying to pick a particularly complex lock. They may be able to do it, but it's going to take time, say 5 minutes. What will everyone else do for those 5 minutes? Will the Frother, surging with Ultra Violence, be happy to stand still and wait? Unlikely. What will that Frother do instead? Such situations should be roleplayed accordingly by the players, splitting the group if required while some follow the impatient Frother.

As an extreme, what if the action being undertaken was trying to repair a vehicle that was going to take 5 hours? The GM must be clear about timescales and present them to the players to discuss. It may end up that 4 of the 5 squad members are not happy to twiddle their thumbs for 5 hours while the mechanic fixes up the APC. If the overriding vote is to abandon the vehicle and move on, the GM should push the action in that direction, despite the desire of that 5th player to remain behind. Splitting the group up for such a length of time would make playing out the game very difficult (and extremely boring for the player who simply doesn't want to leave their vehicle behind). Obviously dividing a squad is something likely to happen quite regularly, but it should be done in a way that allows action and story progression to take place and all player groups to remain active and engaged.

SPONSORSHIP DEALS

A sponsorship deal is the epitome of cool and something that the vast majority of Operatives dream of. Some Ops, after many years of service, can end up with multiple contracts from different companies, becoming walking advertisements for the manufacturing might of The World of Progress.

Sponsorship deals are not easy to obtain, in fact, it should be extremely hard to get sponsorship and almost impossible for new characters with a low SCL; sponsorship deals are something that should only come into play as part of a long running campaign, typically after a large number of games have been played.

The two most common methods of obtaining sponsorship is:

- Being caught on camera doing something notable with a particular weapon/wearing a type of armour (such as taking out a DarkNight agent or Greater Carrien in spectacular fashion).
- Impressing a talent scout from one of the big manufacturers (each scout looks for different things and are often very selective).

Significant margins of success will go a long way to achieving the kind of results that cameras and scouts look for, but a sponsorship deal should never be hinged simply on one lucky dice roll.

For those fortunate enough to be offered a sponsorship deal, a number of things will typically happen:

The sponsored Op will receive a range of free items from the sponsor. These could be weapons, armour, equipment, food, exclusive invites or anything that the company want to have seen on camera. The Operative will be expected to use said items at every possible opportunity.

The Operative 'may' receive a one-time or annual bonus paid in Credits. Only the highest sponsorship deals come with such payments, which could range anywhere from 100 to 10,000c.

The Operative will be expected to wear the sponsor's badge in a prominent location on their armour and/or clothing. In the case of sponsorship from an armour manufacturer they may also specify that the armour be painted or branded in a particular way, most commonly in bright colours that are easily identified on camera.

The GM is free to offer such deals as they see fit, as well as to impose any requirements that should be adhered to in order to maintain the sponsorship deal. Should the Op's side of the deal not be maintained (such as if they are seen on camera using a weapon from another manufacturer), a sponsor may choose to withdraw the deal. When this happens, the Operative would be expected to return all items gifted to them by the sponsor and other potential sponsors will be far more cautious in dealing with them in the future. Some high level sponsors may request that an Operative back out of other sponsorships in order to commence the deal. In such situations, it is entirely down to the Operative whether they pursue such opportunities.

At times, a Sponsorship deal may be offered to a squad rather than an individual. When this happens, the entire squad will receive the benefits gifted by the deal, but the actions of a single squad member could see the deal being withdrawn for all members.

AWARDING RATINGS POINTS

Unlike experience points, which are awarded during the downtime between games, Ratings Points are earned during the game session. It is important to note that the feats which are enabled by Ratings Points are extremely powerful, capable of swinging the course of the game and doing so in a truly cinematic style.

The GM may, if they wish, award a single Ratings Point to the relevant category when any of the following occur:

When an unbelievable success (4 or more skill dice successes) is earned during a skill roll, without the use of a Ratings Point. This represents the character having achieved something so impressive that the cameras take note.

When a serious failure involving 4 or more skill dice failures is earned during a skill roll. This represents the highly skilled

character learning from their dire mistakes and salvaging some element of pride from the serious impact of their failure.

When the actions of a character lead to any moment that would make great television, such as saving their squad members at the last minute or solving crimes that seemed unsolvable. The GM is the final adjudicator for such actions.

While the GM is free to award Ratings Points as frequently as they like, they are encouraged to be restrained and only award them under exceptional circumstances, forcing the players to see them as a valuable resource that must be managed carefully. As such, it is important to note that the points above are not times that a character will earn a Ratings Point, rather they are times that the GM may award a Ratings Point. It is entirely acceptable to award only 1 Ratings Point every few gaming sessions if the GM so desires. Also, a Ratings Point should never be awarded for an action that was only possible due to the character spending a Ratings Point.

DOWNTIME

Between game sessions a few things need to happen. SLA Industries has very little post-game admin - it is much more preferable to spent an extra 10 minutes playing the game. When this break between sessions occurs it is known as downtime; a period of time for characters to recover, relax and rearm.

The following process is designed to draw a line under the current scenario in preparation for the next. It is always suggested that game sessions end at a natural break, typically the completion of a BPN, apprehension of a target, or when the characters have the opportunity to rest or sleep for any length of time. Should a suitable break not present itself and a game needs to be 'paused' mid-story then it is suggested that no downtime should occur. It is therefore possible that downtime may only happen every 2-3 game sessions depending on the story and how cruel the GM is feeling.

When downtime does occur, the following simple steps are taken in the specified order:

Experience points are awarded - Each character that took part in the game session earns two experience points. The GM may award up to one additional experience point, per player per session. GMs are advised to award additional points sparingly and only to those players who really earn them, either by doing great things, by taking risks, or by repeatedly succeeding against all odds. Earned experience points are recorded on the player's character sheet.

Log earnings - Any promised fee for completion of a BPN, Hunter Sheet, or anything else the characters got themselves involved in is earned and the value in Credits or Unis recorded on the player's character sheet. Any character with the Debt trait should ensure that the relevant amount is deducted from their earnings.

Log SCL upgrade - Many BPNs come with a promise of SCL increase upon completion. If the task at hand was completed to a satisfactory outcome, the player should adjust their character's SCL accordingly.

Replenish LUCK/FLUX - Each character's LUCK/FLUX statistic is replenished to its default value.

Characters can heal - Depending on the amount of time specified for downtime, a character may heal some/all of their injuries. If the downtime represents a single overnight stop each character may heal 1 wound, 2 Hit Points and any conditions that affect them. If the stop provides access to medical equipment or Ebonites trained in the Heal discipline then the GM may allow for further healing at their discretion. For downtime that represents longer periods of time (typically after the completion of a larger story arc), the character may fully heal all wounds, Hit Points and conditions to represent them seeking out the required medical attention. It is suggested that characters should have to pay the usual rates (typically around 50c/400u per Hit Point and 200c/1500u per wound) for medical care to heal during downtime if they are not suitably trained in the Medical skill or Heal discipline. The GM is ultimately free to decide on any value they deem suitable for the character's injuries, as well as any side effects as a result of using the cheaper Downtown medical options.

Spend experience points - Optionally a character may spend any experience points earned in this game session as well as any saved up from other game sessions. See "Spending Experience Points" for more information.

Pay any relevant upkeeps - Depending on the length of time that the downtime represents, the GM may require each character pay a general upkeep, representing their monthly cost in rent, food, etc.. Typically such costs should be set at 100c per month, increased by 50c per month for each rank in the Good Housing trait that a character has. During extended periods additional charge should be added by the GM to cover the costs of any drug addictions they may have.

Spend money and resupply - Optionally a character may spend any number of Credits or Unis they have on new equipment, ammunition, repairs etc. This stage only occurs during longer downtime stopovers where the character could feasibly go out to obtain such items. At this point both vehicles and armour repairs can be sought out. Additionally, the GM may request that players make Technical: Weapons skills rolls for weapons they used during the game session, with higher target numbers for those that were dropped or disarmed. While these are not compulsory, any failed rolls will give the GM an opportunity to make life difficult during the next game session, causing weapons to jam or break.

SPENDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

During downtime a character may spend any experience points they have earned to improve their stats and skills, or learn new ones.

Important: each stat and skill may only be improved by a single rank during any downtime period, though a player is free to improve as many different stats and skills as they can afford.

STAT IMPROVEMENT COSTS:

Stats may be improved during any downtime by paying the required cost. Improving a stat by one rank costs five experience points, plus a number of points equal to the character's current rank in the stat. The following table displays the costs for ease of reference. Racial stat maximums must be observed as normal.

STAT INCREASE	STAT IMPROVEMENT COST
From rank 0 to rank 1	5
From rank 1 to rank 2	6
From rank 2 to rank 3	7
From rank 3 to rank 4	8
From rank 4 to rank 5	9
From rank 5 to rank 6	10

Example: A character wants to improve their CONC from rank 3 to rank 4. The cost to do so is five + their current rank of 3 = eight experience points.

Note: When a character's STR is improved by 1, their Hit Points will also be increased by 1. This increase is free and immediate.

SKILL RANK POINTS COST:

New skills may be learned providing the downtime represents a period of time long enough to have studied or practised the basics, or if the character attempted actions associated with the skill during the previous game session. Optionally, the GM may assign a cost in Credits to learning a new skill to represent the cost of any training undertaken. Purchasing a new skill at rank 1 always costs two experience points.

Existing skills may only be improved providing they were used during the recent game session. Improving an existing skill by one rank costs two experience points, plus a number of points equal to three times the character's current rank in that skill. Obtaining rank 4 in a skill also requires a downtime representing a period of at least two weeks, along with a cost of 500c to cover the practice, training and/or certification required. Ebb disciplines do not incur a credit cost to increase to rank 4, but instead cost an additional three experience points. The following table displays all the costs for ease of reference.

Note: Skills are only limited by a character's stat ranks during character creation, afterwards skills may be increased freely.

SKILL INCREASE	SKILL RANK POINTS COST
New skill at rank 1	2
From rank 1 to rank 2	5
From rank 2 to rank 3	8
From rank 3 to rank 4	11 + 500c (14 for Ebb disciplines)

Example: A character wants to improve their Detect skill from rank 2 to rank 3. The cost to do so is two + three times their current rank of 2 = eight experience points.

"Go forth and prove SLA Industries was right in investing in your future. Be bold, be strong and be loyal."

Professor Mitch Michaels, Meny Graduation Speech, 913sd

Bridgehead Revisited

Eloise Garcia had been missing for a few months.

After her reports to Channel Yeah slowed to a trickle and eventually stopped, Brenda Mistle, Third Eye News scheduler for youth channels, knew something was up. The tone of the reports had lost their youthful snap and had taken on a macabre smell. The audience had stopped paying attention anyway, but Channel Yeah was about to be rebranded as Yeah! and they needed to close that story arc off before it became untenable.

"It's time to bring her back and put her back on reports about shoes, or whatever the fuck it was she did before she went off and became the fucking story," Brenda said.

It was Gene Braiden, one of Brenda's underlings who spoke next.

"Brenda, darling, please. I've got a fresh-faced innocent lad I'm needing to get out of the studio. He's lovely, but he's too clean. Can I take this opportunity to get him dirty? His name's Cam something, and I'd love to kill two birds with one brick and send him out to bring her back."

"Fuck it, send the cock out. I've seen him, he'll do."

…

Cam Harring had never been outside the city walls before, and he didn't like it. He knew the first few days were easy, with the reclaimed zones offering oases of safety in the new townships that were forming behind the Bridgehead line. This was a place for frontier life, where a man, woman or whatever Stormers were could make a fresh start in the lawless opportunity zones, reclaiming what was on offer and living under open skies. Cam hated the thought. He just wanted his two roomed apartment in Suburbia back. But he also wanted to make a name for himself before his youthful looks wore off and his opportunity had been taken by some kid that he used to be.

As he walked with the Operatives assigned to keep him alive, he knew why they were chosen. They all had a big 10 on their badges. They were expendable and not likely to distract from his endeavours; the cameras hated beginning Ops, unless one was someone famous's kid or something, and they wouldn't get to steal his face time. He really didn't want to get to know them because he thought one of them might die and he really wasn't equipped for that. Cam sent in his reports daily, and on the third day was met by a Crawler. Channel Yeah were getting impatient and were not interested in days of boring walking. That was something, he thought.

…

Chine Doll were assigned to Bridgehead Cassock, a fort out in the east of the Northwest Compact, near Tabor Projects, and they were taking regular excursions into the Cannibal zones, mainly gathering information, but also maintaining an uneasy peace that had settled in around the area as heavy rains moved in from the south. Their orders were not to advance, but to hold Cassock until reinforcements came, even though everyone knew reinforcements would never be sent. Cam recognised Gwen Fallow from Garcia's "Report From The Bridgeheads", noting that she was much larger in real life than she looked on TV, and approached her as if he knew her. Fallow was now Chine Doll's only Lieutenant after the battle of Ridge Rock, a battle that changed the structures of several Shiver squads in the sector, but one that led to Bridgehead Cassock's placement, before the rains

"Gwen, hi, I'm Cam."

"You're here for Eloise, Yar? Yeah, 'bout that," replied the Breacher Shiver, shouting over the downpour. "She not be here. I mean, she be sometimes, but not really, matey. Kwame knows."

Chine Doll's leader, Kwame Bulawayo, was a soft spoken man of few words. Not because of any mysterious airs he tried to maintain, but he just didn't like talking very much.

"She's gone. Gwen thinks she'll be back, but I knew what I saw in her face. She's already dead; she just went out there to prove it," Kwame pointed eastward. "Stay a night. After that, go find her or go back. We don't have the resources for you and an Op squad to hang around here any longer than that, no offence."

…

Cam wondered what lay to the east. The flat buildings of a once civilised suburban sprawl that made up Tabor Projects was not where he wanted to be, but he was assured that the Cannibals wouldn't break the stalemate. He also assumed Bulawayo just wanted rid of him and the Operatives, and was saying what he thought it would take to get him gone. So, he would film his voyage down the river road and send his reports back like a dutiful reporter.

He journeyed through the beaten down houses, planked up and chipped, long lost to cannibal families, but mostly left empty and lonely. The rain under wheel turned to mud and slowed their progress to a crawl. Cam had taken to sitting on the roof of the Dowlin Crawler, acting as a look-out, but mostly just keeping out of the Operative squad's way. The rain didn't bother him; he'd grown up in Suburbia and played in the rain with the other Crust fund kids. If only they could see him now, he thought, before realising that they could, if they just turned their TV to Channel Yeah.

…

On the third day, after awkward APC sleeping arrangements and weird shifts, after spotting Cannibals watching them for days, hiding behind walls and running away, Cam finally realised they had reached their destination. There she was, just standing in the middle of the street, staring at him. There was Eloise Garcia. Missing one arm. She was waiting for him.

She held out a Rawhead talisman and shouted something in Biya as Cannibals erupted from the houses and charged the APC. Cam finally understood what Gwen meant.

Hunter Sheet

Name:

Description:

Crime:

Department Contact:

Bounty:

Quote:

Criminal Portfolio:

Criminal Profile:

Last Known Location:

Method Of Attack:

Other Comments:

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BLANK BPNS

BLUEPRINT NEWS

DEPARTMENTAL AUTHORISATION:

TRAINING PACKAGE RECOMMENDED:

DETAILS:

COLOUR CODE:

STATION ANALYSIS: ☐ THIRD EYE NEWS: ☐

CONSOLIDATED BONUS SCHEME:

PER OP: ☐ PER SQUAD: ☐

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BLANK NPC BLOCKS

NPC:

STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
CHA	**COOL**	**LUCK/FLUX**	**INITIATIVE**
HIT POINTS		**CLOSING**	**RUSHING**

SKILLS

EQUIPMENT

NPC:

STR	DEX	KNOW	CONC
CHA	**COOL**	**LUCK/FLUX**	**INITIATIVE**
HIT POINTS		**CLOSING**	**RUSHING**

SKILLS

EQUIPMENT

SLA Operative Security Clearance Card

Name:

Race:

Package:

Squad:

LaD Account

SCL

Finance

Credits:

Unis:

LaD Balance:

Ratings Points — Body: | Brains: | Bravado:

Stats

STR:	KNOW:	CHA:	Initiative Bonus
DEX:	CONC:	COOL:	Luck/Flux: /

Skills	Rank	Bonus

Traits	Rank

Movement

Closing	
Rushing	

Encumbrance

/

Hit Points

/

Experience Points

Wounds

Head	[ ]	Left Arm	[ ]	Right Arm	[ ]
Torso	[ ]	Left Leg	[ ]	Right Leg	[ ]

Conditions:

Weapons, Armour & Equipment

Notes

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Downtown Phoenix 893

Integration 20

By Wave Lindsay

Cont'd.

[…]

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

The terror of the truth.

Five words is all it takes. Five words that will shatter any illusions you harbour about our existence. Five words that, once heard, change the universe for ever.

Downtown Sector 5-12, the new threat reared its ugly grey head. The now familiar tale of ghosts appearing in desolate spots, creeping into the boundaries of inhabited zones. Our story starts with what is now known to be a Dream Entity. A Shadow, to be precise, one of the many new forms to be entered into the catalogue held by the Aethermen. This Shadow's presence was first noted by a pattern of new sickness, The Grey, infecting a few of the homeless wanderers of the Bletchlock Malls, a pattern that got too big to ignore, and, after Operatives sent to investigate reported on their findings, caught the attention of an ancient group within SLA Industries. I had read about them and thought them long dead. They formulated a solution to this problem; a new role for their hardiest type of researcher, the Aetherman.

Naga 7 were a society of dubious scholars and theologians who claimed to hold everything in check, claiming to prevent the collapse of reality itself, but they were long disbanded. When the Dream issue started, first in Cannibal Sector 1, then in Lower Downtown, groups claiming to be allied to the ancient Naga 7 instantly latched onto it, forming new teams to deal with it. As their studies grew, they added elements of training to their members, teaching them to survive whatever the challenges were, learning to avoid catching The Grey. The task of shutting down the pockets of Dream Entities fell to Aethermen, the front-line of defence against the collapse.

The Aetherman is a specialist, hired for their adventurous spirit and resilience. Recognisable immediately by their Aether Suit, a bulky protective outfit with a unique design of helmet, an Aetherman looks more like a sewer maintenance worker, but the specialised helmet design stands them apart. Originally tasked with observing certain types of encounters, their role shifted to purely cataloging and observing Dream Entities, and if you see one in full armour, it's an indication that something nearby is afoot. The men and women, for it is only humans that can take on the role, that make up the Aethermen take their job seriously, but if sat down and given a cup of tea, they can be remarkably open about their job.

If you take the time to befriend an Aetherman – and I was fortuitous enough to do so on a chance encounter with one who was a true Aetherman, dressed in the traditional armour – they may end up sharing more information than is safe for you to hear. The origin of a Dream Entities is one of those truths that, once known begs questions of reality. An entity comes about because people start believing in them. The mere act of believing causes them to strengthen, and the more you believe, the stronger their hold is, and the weaker your grasp on the physical world is. The Grey is a manifestation of the realisation that your very presence may be held together only by your belief that you exist.

And this led to my learning the truth. While Aethermen undergo rigorous training and are elected from a small pool of applicants deemed capable of handling the truth that they are faced with daily, we citizens don't get the protective blanket to hold our realities together. And yet, it is against this backdrop that we must face the truth however we find it, not as how we wish it. This led to the undeniable truth that Aethermen hold as a pillar they can cling to when facing the seemingly impossible, and this truth is something we should all learn to live with.

We are all Dream Entities.

SLA INDUSTRIES 2ND EDITION

In the World of Progress, the corporation SLA Industries rules all. Employing Operatives to enforce, extend and maintain their power base, SLA controls a multitude of worlds - industrial, franchise and resource - with planet Mort at its core. As Operatives execute the company's will, new threats emerge through the cracks of the city walls, turning Downtown into a battleground.

The newly arrived Neophron signals a shift in the balance of the universe, as the scholarly species joins the ranks of SLA Industries, sending their brightest to train as Operatives to serve alongside Ebonites, Shaktars, Wraithen and Humans. You, the SLA Operative, are fighting for fame and fortune against a backdrop of a crumbling reality. Operatives feed the always-on televisions with a gaudy media of wall-to-wall death and dismemberment. Operative life is all about climbing the corporate ladder and earning sponsorship deals and notoriety along the way.

Dream Entities claw at the fabric of reality, dredging up nightmares, while elsewhere the Shi'An Blood Cult rises, corrupting the disenfranchised masses of Mort to its cause and unleashing the horrors from White Earth into an unsuspecting world. As SLA Industries battles to reclaim the Cannibal Sectors outside, Operatives are forced to deal with problems within the city walls more so than ever before - and below, the Deep Construct awakens.

Guns kill; so does the truth.

SLA Industries 2nd Edition is a tabletop roleplaying game that uses Nightfall Games' S5S rules system. Recommended for two or more mature gamers.

NIGHTFALL GAMES

WORD FORGE GAMES

SLA Industries 2nd Edition

© 2020, Nightfall Games.

ISBN: 978-0-9956497-6-7
SKU: WFG-SLA-201

https://nightfall.games/

S5S

Designed in Scotland

ISBN 978-0-9956497-6-7
9 780995 649767