

(Dis)Honour Is Everything

Foul play and dirty tricks in Inquisitor

By Cameron Swarbrick

In the grim darkness of the far future, there are a surprisingly large number of people who would balk at the idea of attempting to gouge an opponent's eyes out, or kicking them in the groin, or using any tactic necessary to gain an advantage. They believe that fights should be conducted with some form of honour; they follow moral codes that they believe everyone else follows too.

They are, of course, somewhat wrong-footed when they encounter people who will do whatever it takes to win. The idea that mercenaries and the like do have lines which they will not cross is often reinforced by them for this very purpose; to quote The Sniper from Team Fortress 2: "Professionals have standards. Be polite; be efficient; have a plan to kill everyone you meet."

Not once does he say: "Do not kick a man when he's down" or "Hands only".

Those hired from the lower elements of the Imperium's society often follow this ideal; in the eyes of their employer, they are polite, efficient and deadly. What the employers don't see is the bloody scrum in an underhive tavern, where their employee takes a wall to their prey's head, employs knees, elbows and teeth more often than fists, and, if all else fails, simply shoots anyone who looks like they might protest.

These tactics, in my opinion, exemplify all that is wonderful about the Warhammer 40000 universe; they are nitty, they are gritty, and to be honest, they'd probably be pretty damn fun in a game of *Inquisitor*. So here are some ideas for dirty tactics for use by dishonourable survivalists; including equipment, tactics, and a couple of abilities. Go forth and be mentored by Davros Shiel, Bounty Killer Supreme!



The two men, one a hunched retainer, the other hired muscle, stepped into the mid-hive pub. Harsh, angry music blared from a set of speakers that covered an entire wall. The strobe lights gave flashing glimpses of writhing dancers, men making deals and playing card games over small tables. Men garbed in mismatched armour carrying a variety of weapons watched from the edge of the bar.

"Who is the best here?" asked the retainer, looking at each of them in turn. The muscle-man shifted uneasily as the retainer's question, spoken unwittingly loudly, drew the attention of several of the bounty hunters.

"I – I would go for Galthort or Briggs, sir," he said, indicating a short man carrying a shotgun and a tall, lithe woman carrying a brace of pistols. The retainer looked them over, but his attention became caught by a cold blue gleam from a corner.

"What about him?" he asked. The muscle-man flinched when he saw the object of his employer's attention. "No, sir," he said, attempting to draw the retainer away. "You do not want to hire him."

"And why would that be?" asked a cold voice from behind the pair. They turned around, and both of them jumped



Sometimes, getting up-close and personal with a knife is preferable to blazing away with your firearm...

simultaneously. Behind them was a tall, thin man garbed in a leather storm-coat. A pistol was nestled at his hip, a submachine gun was swung over his shoulder and a knife was strapped to his leg. His close-cropped blond hair framed a weather-beaten, scarred face with a gleaming blue bionic eye in it.

"D-d-Davros . . ." muttered the muscle-man. "F-fancy meeting you here. Actually, we were just going-"

"Nowhere," interrupted the retainer. "Davros, is your name? What is your reputation?"

"I am the finest man-hunter this side of the Eastern Fringe," said Davros. "I can find any target, anywhere. I'll take it, anyway I can. Then I'll take proof of the kill back to you." The muscle-man pulled the retainer aside, muttering furiously.

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"Sir, Davros is not safe. He has no sense of honour, no loyalty above his coin. He is a loose cannon. You might as well try to hire the Mariner-" The muscle-man froze. The barrel of a surprisingly large pistol was pressed against the back of his head.

"Don't try to lose me a job, boy," said Davros, his tone laden with menace. "I'll gut you like the spineless pig you are, and then make you lick your blood off the floor as you die. Understood?"

The muscle-man whimpered slightly, indicating his understanding.

"Good," said Davros. "Now, sir, what can I do for you?" . . .

* * *

Davros struggled backwards, holding his pistol to the head of his target as he dragged the man backwards. A bloodthirsty grin covered his face as he raised his voice. "Alright! Nobody move, or your little buddy here gets it!"

The gangers surrounding him backed away. He shuffled out the door of their hide-out, and they followed him out. He moved through the dust. The gangers moved like a pack of warp-wolves, slowly surrounding them. Suddenly, Davros pulled his trigger.

The side of the ganger's head exploded, and Davros ran backwards, one hand keeping the pistol raised, the other holding the ganger's corpse as a shield. As the bullets ripped up the earth around him, he dropped his opponents one-by-one, bullets bursting skulls and vital organs. A stray



Everyone has to be willing to throw in the odd low-blow to survive the cut-and-thrust of any level of Imperial society.

+++ Post-Mortem Report +++

Examiner: Dr Bellton Miles

Subject: Name unknown. Male, 167 cm in height, well-muscled, brown hair, blue eyes. Gang tattoo across left shoulder.

Cause of death: Large cut across throat; thin but deep. Blade severed both the jugular and the carotid arteries. Windpipe also severely damaged. Suffocation and loss of blood would have led to death.

Anomalies: Sinuses and lungs show a high concentration of artificial pheromones and a number of psychoactive drugs. Testing on servitor revealed that the effect of these airborne particles was to put the victim into a highly relaxed state, triggering both the release of endorphins and some dopamine. It is possible that the victim was influenced to feel trust and attraction towards his killer.

Signed: *Bellton Miles*

shot entered his left arm, and he dropped his corpse-shield.

Cursing, Davros dropped to the ground, pulled out his submachine gun. A hail of perfect shots dropped the second to last ganger, and Davros rolled forwards. With one hand, he threw a lump of earth at his last opponent's face, and as the bloodied soil blinded the ganger, a storm of bullets took him down.

Davros stood up, brushed himself down and walked over to his target's corpse. He took a small vial and filled it with blood, then stuck a hank of hair and a piece of skin in a vacuum-seal bag. Finally, Davros took a pictograph-machine and snapped a few shots of the target's body.

"Should be good enough," he muttered, and walked away, fee earned.



Equipment

Well, on your way to becoming a top-notch honour-less bastard, you need a few things, and the first thing you're going to need is the right equipment. Apart from the usual guns and blades, there are a few specialty pieces that'll definitely get the upper edge. For example, if your opponent is utterly convinced that you aren't going to hurt them, they're going to be somewhat surprised when a knife springs into your hand and carves its way across their throat . . .

Pheromone Mister (Rare) - Often mistaken for perfume canister, these devices frequently expel a hugely concentrated cloud of mind-altering substances, wreathing their owner in an undetectable cloud of powerful pheromones and psychoactive drugs. These will often cause nearby people to react in a certain way to a person's presence. Coming in several varieties, the effects can vary.

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However, the mister's cloud is designed for use on humans, and so has a lesser effect on aliens. The misters are often supplied with a set of nasal-plugs to prevent their users from falling under their effects.

Nasal plugs give a +10% bonus to resisting airborne toxins and allow a character to ignore the effects of a pheromone mister. Characters with equipment that gives them bonuses to resisting airborne toxins get their usual bonus when taking any tests forced by a pheromone mister. However, bonuses from bionic lungs will not apply, as the pheromones and drugs affect nerve centres inside the nostrils and sinuses. Non-humans (not including abhumans and mutants) gain a +20% bonus for all tests caused by a pheromone mister.

Love: *The mister emits a cloud of substances that give people nearby a sudden and overwhelming sense of trust and affection towards the user.*

Characters within 6 yards of a character using a pheromone mister loaded with Love cannot perform hostile actions against that character without first passing a Wp test. If this test is failed, their action is counted as a Pause for Breath action instead. The character using the mister gains a +30% bonus when Persuading a character affected by Love.

Darkness: *The pheromones emitted by this canister cause a powerful and sudden mental reaction in anyone nearby. The user appears to be shrouded in an aura of dread and despair, making them difficult to face. This feeling often lingers even if the mister ceases to function.*

Characters within 6 yards of a character using Darkness must pass a Nerve test at -20% or count that character as Fearsome for the rest of the game. They only make this test once per game, when they are within 6 yards of the character for the first time.

Death: *The user is shrouded in pheromones that provoke an instinctive reaction. Most people will instantly begin to back away, their subconscious screaming out that the user is deadly. The pheromones and drugs used activate fear centres in the brain, and often trigger an adrenal surge in those nearby, regardless of whether or not they can overcome the fear that grips them. However, the concentration of the mist is so great that it often has a mild effect on the user too.*

Characters within 6 yards of a character using Death immediately count that character as Fearsome. They must then pass a Nv test or count all other characters as Fearsome for D6 turns. However, if they fail this test, they will gain +D10% to their S, T and I for the rest of the game. The character using the pheromone mister is not immune to the effects of Fearsome or Terrifying characters.

Spring-loaded Stiletto (Rare) - Mounted on a steel vambrace, this needle-like blade is loaded into a small tube with a spring at the bottom. Once fixed in place, the spring can be released with a flex of the wearer's wrist, flinging the stiletto into their hand. This can turn a seemingly harmless punch into a deadly attack, as the razor-sharp blade severs arteries and major nerve clusters.

If the stiletto is loaded into the vambrace, it can be used

instead of an unarmed close-combat attack. Test to hit as normal. This attack may be parried, but using the opposing character's Initiative instead of their Weapon Skill, to represent them reacting to a sudden and unexpected danger (Parry Penalties still apply). The stiletto counts as a knife for the purposes of Blademaster and uses the following profile:

Reach= 1 Damage= D6 PP= -50%

If a critical hit is inflicted with a stiletto, the location hit immediately starts bleeding (assuming damage was inflicted after armour). If the stiletto inflicts a critical hit to an opponent's head, it is assumed that their throat has been slit. The character immediately suffers life-threatening bleeding. They lose D6+1 Injury Points from their Injury Total at the beginning of each turn. Because of their delicate nature, stilettos do not get Damage bonuses if used by a character with a Strength of 60 or more. In addition, if a stiletto is parried with or parried, it has a 25% chance of breaking.

Note: This is obviously quite a deadly weapon if used with the Blademaster skill. However, I feel that the combination of Blademaster and a spring-loaded stiletto would be very evocative of an assassin similar to the ones from the Assassin's Creed series.

Caltrops (Common) - Originally designed to cripple warhorses during the early ages of Terran society, caltrops have existed in some forms throughout the intervening millennia. They are particularly effective at stopping a

Transcript from Compromised Vox-Channel

++Sir?++

"What is it now, Damien? I pay you to keep my house secure, not to pester me!"

++It's the men, sir. They . . . they aren't comfortable with you hiring that bounty hunter. They've heard all sorts of tales about him++

"He's the best! And I'm paying them to stand around in my garden and make sure I'm not robbed! They don't even have to talk to the man."

++They don't trust him sir. They think he's after you++

"What?"

++There is that bounty on you in Spicaa Maxim, sir++

"That's nothing compared to what I'm paying him."

++Yes, si-++

"Damien? Damien! What's happened, man!"

++Hello, sir++

"Who . . . who is this?"

++I'm the man who's going to earn ten thousand crowns when I bring your head to Spicaa Maxim, sir. Stay where you are. Don't make me chase you . . . ++

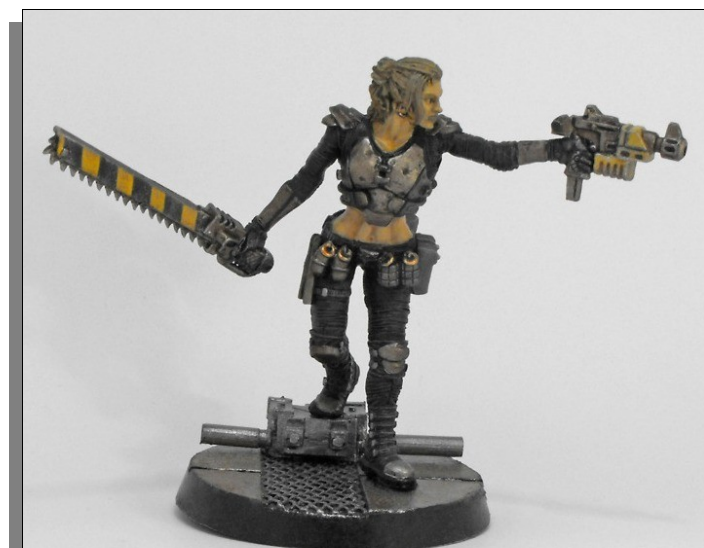
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target from getting away, as people's feet are very receptive to pain, and thus caltrops see much use by bounty hunters.

Caltrops can be spread in a square of up to 4 yards by 4 yards. It takes one Action per number of yards on one side of the square to spread caltrops; eg, it takes 3 Actions to spread caltrops over a square area of side length 3 yards. Moving through an area containing caltrops is a Risky Action; if failed the character takes D6 damage to both legs. If this penetrates their armour, they take a further D3 damage to each leg. They must immediately take a Toughness test with a negative modifier equal to the amount of damage taken. If the test is failed, the character will fall prone and take D3 hits from the caltrops to random locations.

Caltrops are assumed to remain embedded in a character's flesh if they cause damage after modifiers for armour, can be Barbed and can also be coated in the Bloodfire toxin (should only be done by particularly nasty characters). Barbed caltrops cause D6 damage when removed, ignoring any armour. Caltrops that are Barbed or coated in Bloodfire are somewhat harder to create and more difficult to acquire, and so become Uncommon items. It takes one Action to remove D3 caltrops.



For those who live at the lowest rungs of society, survival is a constant battle, and there are few rules.

Abilities

Okay, you've got the basic equipment plus a few special extras. But all of this will only give you a slight advantage if you don't have the right mindset: you have to be ready to get down and dirty, you have to be brutal enough to be feared, and you have to be completely focused on your goals. If you don't stick by these rules, you're probably going to get distracted and then get smeared all over the floor by a brawler you didn't even have to fight.

Brawler: The character is not above getting his hands (and knees and elbows) dirty, and is an experienced brawler. If he is fighting in close-combat without a close-combat weapon, he counts as having an Improvised Weapon he cannot parry with. He will also do such things as bite opponents, knee them in the groin, throw sand in their faces or attempt to gouge out their eyes.

Bad Reputation: The character is known all over the Eastern Fringe and in many other places, and it isn't for his friendliness. Gangers, bounty hunters and other underworld-related characters are likely to know of him and will count him as Fearsome. They will usually refuse to work with him, and will generally attempt to persuade their employers that he is not a good prospect (campaign use).

Fee Earned (bounty hunters only): The character will continue to fight only as long as he is in danger or his target is still alive. Once his target has been taken out, he will collect evidence of their demise and return to his employer. If his target is taken out of action, assuming there are no other enemies that could potentially attack him, he will move towards his target. When he reaches them, if they are still alive he will execute them, and once they are dead he will collect evidence such as blood samples and pictographs. Doing this takes a full turn. The character will then attempt to leave the board unless attacked.



The man crawled along the ground, his body wracked with pain. What he had thought was an honourable duel had swiftly turned into a degenerate brawl as his opponent first pushed him to the floor and then – and then...

He raised a hand to the ruins of his face and shuddered as he felt the thick, warm gel that had once filled his eyes spill over his fingers. Suddenly, he heard footsteps behind him. He tried to turn, but before he could move, steely arms wrapped around his throat.

He struggled weakly against the man's iron grip, feeling the strength quickly draining from his limbs. Everything was already black, so when the fire in his lungs ceased burning and he could no longer feel the pain coursing through his body, he did not know he was dead...



Tactics and Attacks

Alright then. You've got the equipment, you've got the mind-set, now you need the moves. These are the kind of things no honourable man would do. No honourable man would strangle another man to death, or kick him in the groin (it works on women too), and they almost definitely wouldn't attempt to blind him by gouging out his eyes. Still, if you're still along for the ride, you've probably realised that this kind of thing, although risky, can be very effective. The attacks presented here a very small sample of what can be done, so feel free to try and make up your own.

Stranglehold: This is an Unarmed close-combat attack that allows an opponent to make an automatic counter-attack if it misses. If it hits, the two characters immediately make an opposed Strength test with the character being choked having a -20% penalty to the test. This test is also made in each Recovery phase after the Stranglehold is initiated. If the character being choked wins, they break out of the Stranglehold. If the choker wins, the character being choked immediately adds 2D6 to their Injury Total. If the character continues to be choked after they lose

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consciousness, the choker automatically passes his Strength test. All attacks being made on the choker by the character being choked have -10% to Hit for each point of Reach the weapon being used has. In addition, they cannot cause Critical Hits against the choker. If this attack is used as part of a Back Stab move and successfully hits, the character being choked automatically fails the first Strength test.

Knee to the Groin: This is an unarmed close-combat attack, but the character using it gains double their Strength bonus for the attack and automatically hits their opponent's groin. If a character wears rigid armour over their groin (metal or ceramite plates, for example), any character using this attack takes damage to their preferred leg equal to their Strength Bonus plus the value of the armour on their opponent's groin. This attack can only be used when in base-to-base contact with an opponent.

Eye-Gouger: This is an unarmed close-combat attack that can only be performed when in base-to-base contact with an opponent. If this attack fails to hit, the opposing character may make a free counterattack. If it does hit, the character suffers D6+Strength bonus damage to their head, ignoring armour. If this attack causes 4 or more damage, the opponent will temporarily (game-length) or even permanently lose the use of one of their eyes (the character's controller may choose which eye). If this attack causes a Critical Hit, the victim's other eye is also damaged. If a character loses the use of one eye, they treat all weapons they use as having Reach 0 for close combat modifiers. If they lose the use of both eyes, they must subtract their Ballistic Skill from their Initiative for the remainder of the game, unless they are healed. Characters may only heal damaged eyes in-game if they have the Regeneration ability or have the Regeneration psychic power used on them. In both cases, all damage to the head must be healed before the character regains their sight. Bionic eyes and eyes covered by a visor are immune to being Gouged.



About the Author

Cameron Swarbrick hails from the distant and unusual land of Australia, where he enjoys the rich and intense version of the 40k universe provided by Inquisitor. He should definitely go and produce some models now, giving tangible evidence of his existence and thus discounting rumours that he is an Abominal Intelligence programmed to destroy Earth.

Miniatures modelled and painted by Nick Garrett. Nick likes nothing more than modelling and painting miniatures for use in Inquisitor. The size and range of his collection is legendary...