

BLOODY WORK IS ITS OWN REWARD

Inquisitor warbands with a difference.

By Ben Dell

In this article, Ben Dell looks at Inquisitors who do not hog the lime light as great heroes of the Imperium. Infact some Inquisitors are just downright evil!

You were told that Inquisitor was a game of noble Inquisitors and evil villains. You were told that Inquisitors were the most incorruptible of Imperial servants. You were told that Inquisitors faced the darkness unafraid. (You were also told if bird-poo landed on your head it was good luck!) Everything you were told is a lie!

I want to show that not all Inquisitors are noble, that not all are staunch and powerful Imperial servants, and that not all face the darkness without doubts... and because of (not in spite of) these less 'heroic' qualities they can be some of the most interesting concepts and vivid characters in the game; and fun to play too.

The First, Last and Only Line of Defence

This article presents five sample concepts for slightly unusual

Inquisitor warbands along with their backgrounds and what makes them not just your average Inquisitors. The descriptions list a few plot ideas to get them involved in your campaigns and suggestions on how to model them.

Afterwards are some scribblings to highlight more facts which shows that Inquisitors aren't always the shining heroes we hoped – thoughts on the bloody work facing Inquisitors; how to use torture, prosecutions and investigation in your games.

So, without further ado...

1. Inquisitorial Agent to the Sector Inquisitor-Lord

• Concept

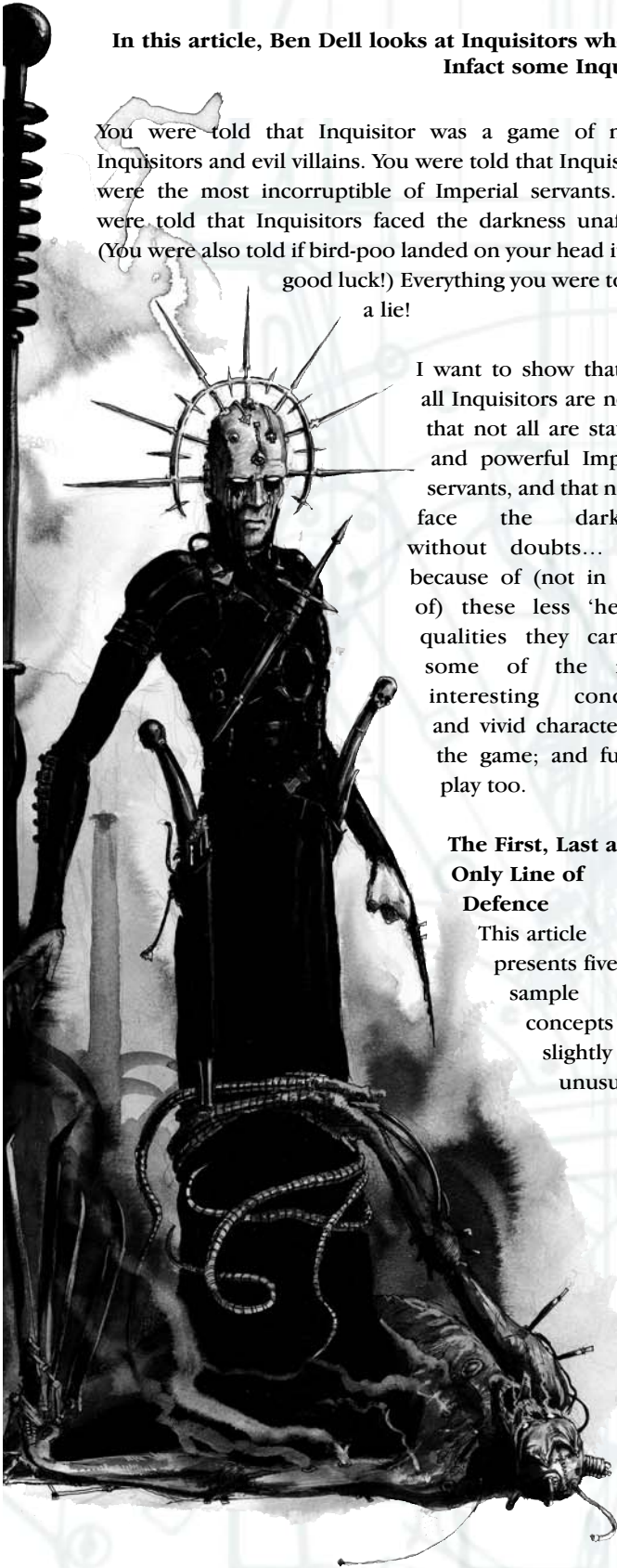
A recently-ordained, ambitious Inquisitor is becoming disillusioned because he serves the (often political) will of the Sector Inquisitor-Lord.

• Background

As an Ordo-Hereticus and an Amalathian this young Inquisitor is committed to maintaining a stable status quo, and believes in the system he serves. He has impressed his superiors from his earliest days and with much praise to his name it wasn't long before he was invited to join the retinue of the Sector's Inquisitor-Lord, as one of his Inquisitorial agents. Eager to perform well, he's undertaken increasingly difficult and sensitive missions, including bringing to task Radicals deemed to have gone too far.

One particularly sensitive mission to track a 'heretic' has caused him to question everything he once held true. The 'heretic' was a girl of eight whose only crime was to have been a concubine of a highly placed Ecclesiarch whose sermons on 'purity' had inspired religious purges in several systems. The Ecclesiarch and his purges were politically supported by the Inquisitor-Lord, so when the girl escaped and told people of the things she had endured it threatened the justification of the entire campaign. The Inquisitor-Lord quickly had to silence the girl and those she'd told. He dispatched his most trustworthy (and unquestioning) agent, thinking he was guaranteed to do whatever it took to maintain stability.

However, discovering the truth made the young Inquisitor falter and he spared the girl, smuggling her away. Since then, he has questioned his role and the motivations of his



master, looking back on those he hunted and the 'problems' he 'removed' and wondering if they were all heretics, or merely inconvenient to the Inquisitor-Lord's plans.

● Plot-Hooks

Will he become too disillusioned to continue his role? Will the Inquisitor-Lord discover the girl's not dead? What's become of her? Will the agent turn to a Radical viewpoint; perhaps becoming a Recongrigator, thinking it better to expose the scheming Inquisitor-Lord and the besmirched Ecclesiarch and risk the repercussions? Will he bury his doubts; becoming a cruel, uncaring tool of his master?

The warband can be given any mission the Inquisitor-Lord sees fit but the GM should throw in the odd 'moral dilemma' mission to push the Inquisitor one way or another; no one can swim in filth for long and still come up smelling of roses!

● Warband Members

The young Inquisitor has uncontroversial followers (no Daemonhosts/mutants) just one or two trusted colleagues; an old, roguish gunfighter and an Astropath. The rest of the team are made up from a squad of Inquisitorial Storm Troopers assigned by the Inquisitor-Lord (perhaps one or more of them have been set to spy on the young Inquisitor since the incident with the girl?).

● Modelling Ideas

The young Inquisitor agent would be easily represented by a simple Covenant conversion. There are acceptable models for the gunfighter (Slick Devlan) and Astropath (a Navigator conversion should do).

The Inquisitorial Storm Troopers would be well represented by the range of Imperial Guard models available, though stick to one or two body types to maintain a 'professional' look.

● Notes

The challenge of this warband is in charting the struggle felt by the Inquisitor. If a player can't handle a playing style that may see them trying to lose/fail in their objectives (as determined by the Inquisitor-Lord) or is just

playing the Inquisitorial agent with no ethical dilemma, then this warband isn't really suited to them.

● Resources

The prime resource for this group would be a Mentor. The Inquisitor-Lord is providing almost everything the group needs from Storm Troopers to ships; making it much more of a challenge should the Inquisitor turn against his old Mentor.

2. Training Xeno Kill-team

● Concept

A Xeno Kill-team used to train and toughen promising Interrogators before their final tests with their masters.

● Background

When trainees leave the Schola-Progenitum as Explicators and join their masters they undergo years of in-the-field training working to become Interrogators and, if they are lucky, Inquisitors. The Ordo Xenos Lord-Inquisitor for the sector has decreed that all worthy Interrogators undergo a period working for the Kill-teams; putting what they have learned into the bloodiest practice, before they can become Inquisitors. Some believe that the reason for this was that the Kill-teams were grinding up too many Inquisitorial Storm Troopers; regardless most now agree that the system seems to work very well and the mortality rate of the Interrogators isn't that high... really.

Each of the Kill-teams contain a small complement of Storm Troopers and 2/3 Interrogators. The most prestigious of these Kill-teams to be assigned to, is commanded by a Veteran Sergeant who has more individual confirmed xeno kills than the whole of most other Kill-teams (and incidentally, one of the best team survival rates).

● Plot-Hooks

Kill-teams are sent in when an Inquisitor requests them, so can be following any other Xenos Inquisitor's agenda. The Veteran Sergeant's specialities are seek-and-destroy missions deep within xenos infected areas. Very occasionally the Kill-teams will be loaned out to other Ordos with other missions in mind.



• Warband Members

The Veteran Sergeant will be a constant member of the group and cares about those in his command and in turning out Interrogators who have learned to command as well as obey. The other Storm Troopers will be veterans as well with their own specialities; a tunnel-rat pathfinder, a flamer trooper and demo-expert. The Interrogators will vary but might include a psyker and an all-rounder. Sometimes the Inquisitor who has requested the team will also accompany them. Vary rarely the team will work alongside one of the Deathwatch Marines.

• Modelling Ideas

The Veteran Sergeant is a Major Jaxon conversion, the tunnel-rat represented by Toothpick Murke and the flamer/demo-man by a Sergeant Stone conversion. The Interrogators could be any scaled down Inquisitor figure or a Slick Devlan or Enforcer conversion. Requesting Inquisitors can be any Inquisitor model and the Captain Artemis model is a Deathwatch Marine.

• Notes

One version of this warband you may like to try playing is using the team with younger versions of two player's Inquisitors (as the Interrogators) and using the adventures of the Kill-team to springboard into campaigns set later in the Inquisitor's careers; cue recurring villains and other great foreshadowing techniques.

• Resources

Followers can be appropriate for replacing Interrogators when they move on or wounded Storm Troopers with new recruits. Transport would be useful for the team as well.

3. Keeper of The Sepulchre-Library

• Concept

The Inquisitor is champion of a secret society dedicated to the protection of the Sepulchre-Library which includes tomes such

as one of the Grimoires of True Names and the Liberatus Necrosis.

• Background

For millennia a few of the most far-sighted Xanthites of the Ordo Malleus have met in a secret society to protect the many scrolls, tomes and items that their short-sighted brethren would destroy. The most senior of these Inquisitors know of and may visit the societies most valued asset; the Sepulchre-Library to help with their studies and their investigations. The society is controlled by the three most senior Inquisitors called the Sepulchral-Librarians.

Long-ago, the Sepulchral-Librarians decided they needed an Inquisitorial agent who served the Library only, who was unknown by any other Inquisitor and free to champion the causes of the Library; so it was that the role of Keeper of the Sepulchre-Library was born.

The current Keeper is a quiet, hollow-eyed man. He was marked at the Schola Progenitum and quietly disappeared in a 'freak-accident'. He was taken to the Library and his training became far more intense than even that of other Inquisitors, honing both his mystic and his martial prowess. Now he is ready to undertake the missions required of him by the Library that has come to mean more to him than even the Emperor. He knows that should he ever be caught by other Inquisitors he will not be recognised as one of their own and will be tortured and killed. The Librarians are confident he is ready and not a moment too soon; their auguries have identified great darkness in times ahead unless they act swiftly.



● Plot-Hooks

The Keeper can be dispatched for any number of reasons; to combat the evils that the Librarians have become aware of, to rescue an item of great significance to bring to the Library, to rescue a society member or silence him before he talks, etc. What are the secrets of the Sepulchre-Library? Why was it named that? Does it/did it serve another purpose?

● Warband Members

The Keeper's life is more lonely than other Inquisitors, no one outside the Society may know of the Library's or his existence so he may not have a retinue in the way that other Inquisitors may. He may, however, make use of those followers who will not betray his society; Servitors, Arco-flagellants, Daemonhosts. The Keepers are also trained in mental domination and often use it to create slave-allies from the weak willed for short periods (no more than a couple of hours).

● Modelling Ideas

The Keeper is a heavily converted Navigator figure, dark and foreboding. Other warband members may include Servo-skulls and Psyber-eagles (use giant eagles from WFB) as well as Servitors (converted Arco-flagellants) and a Daemonhost. Dominated slaves can look like any human figures (the Work Crew models would be particularly good).

● Notes

Because of his long relationship with the Library, the GM may decide to give the Keeper access to Chaos psyker powers (Inquisitor Annual 2).

● Resources

The most obvious resources for a Keeper of a library are Information and Base. The Keeper will also need Cover Identity to move around undetected.

4. Deranged Master-Mind Searching for 'Heroes'

● Concept

The Inquisitor, long presumed dead, works from the shadows proving his 'theory'

that by causing great catastrophes to the Imperium, even greater 'heroes' are discovered who will become the ultimate force against evil!

● Background

Heralded by many of his peers as one of the greatest Thorian minds in the Inquisition, this Ordo Hereticus Inquisitor commanded great respect. However, his last treatise was a radical departure where he claimed that every generation, hundreds were born with the potential to become something more than other humans, just like the Emperor (who would have been the first 'post-human', had he not been interred in the Golden-Throne).

These people could become great heroes; through their adversity they had the potential to be 'post-humans' discovering there were no limits to what they could do.

The only problem was that no one had yet succeeded in shedding all self-imposed limits, fears and concerns. Giving this speech in a crowded amphitheatre, the Inquisitor was ridiculed and called 'radical'.

The Inquisitor stormed out, then disappeared without trace and was not heard of again for decades. Now he's finished his (increasingly gruesome) experiments and is ready to prove his theories to those fools who mocked him! The Inquisitor's theories are based on a warped mix of Thorian and Istvaanian ideals; he intends to engineer catastrophic incidents on Imperial worlds, cause death to untold thousands to find those survivors strong-enough to start becoming a 'Potential', hone them into a fighting force and then push them as far as possible in hopes that one of them will become a true post-human and lead Mankind to its next state-of-being.



● Plot-Hooks

Scenarios that pit the Potentials against difficult odds and dangerous situations would be ideal for this Inquisitor. He can also generate plots for other teams as he tries to execute his catastrophes and recruit bewildered survivors. Do any of his Potentials have what it takes? Is he a genius or crazy? If he's right, what would a true post-human be like; a saviour? A monster without-compassion? Something beyond comprehension?

● Warband Members

The Inquisitor has Potentials he has been grooming since his experiments, and although they are impressive, he believes none of them will go the whole way. These first Potentials are scarred and have endured so much that they barely qualify as human anymore; drugs, conditioning, implants, torture have all been used to create these creatures. Experiments cannot go any further, he's decided it's time to test his theories in the field, so his newest recruits have not been subjected to such treatment as his first attempts though they may still undergo brainwashing. Potentials come from any walk-of-life; mutants, psychics, soldiers, shepherds, space-farers etc. Some examples are; a young farm-hand with vast psychic-potential, a mutant with incredible regenerative-properties, an ambitious Navigator accelerating his mutation-rate to become the greatest Paternova ever, and a psychotic experimental super-soldier.

● Modelling Ideas

The Inquisitor is old and wizened; an Eisenhorn/Scarn-mix conversion. The Potentials vary; the longer they've been with the Inquisitor the more enhanced and 'scary' they will be. The farm-boy is a Damian Bloodhound conversion with an Eldar long-las. The mutant and Navigator have acceptable models to convert. The psycho-soldier is a Sergeant. Stone/Arco-flagellant conversion.

● Notes

The Inquisitor may determine that one type of Potential is more likely to

succeed – perhaps all Potentials need True Grit or Heroic. The GM may decide if the Inquisitor's theories are true – if they are, and one of the Potentials approaches the threshold of being a post-human, will they develop unusual abilities? Perhaps there is no limit to their strength (Wyrld: Warp Strength) or they become resistant to damage (Daemonic: Invulnerable/Impervious).

● Resources

Followers would be important to the Inquisitor, as they would represent his team of Potentials. Deals could represent an interested group of backers, but why are they willing to help out?

5. Vengeful Blind Daemonhunter

● Concept

The Inquisitor is a fiery Monodominant who cut out his eyes after he was 'gifted' with Warp-sight by a seductive daemonhost.

● Background

This Malleus Inquisitor was staunchly Puritan and believed that all mutation/taint, no matter how small, was the sign of the daemon's hold on the heart, so he purged mutant and daemon with equal ferocity. What no-one knew was; the Inquisitor was plagued by dreams of a dark-eyed woman. He knew she was daemon, and that destiny had tied them together. Though he never recalled the dreams; every night he'd wake screaming and every morning he'd castigate himself, to drive the dreams out.

One evening in the private bed-chambers of his secure base the woman-creature appeared from nowhere by him and kissed him, long and sensually. Shocked, he stood there, discovering he was enjoying the tender touch.

Revulsion coursed through him and he pushed her away, reviling her with ancient-litanies. She looked





unperturbed, telling him he could never abjure her, for the fates had joined them, they were to be locked together for eternity; they shared one soul. Horrified yet fascinated, his words faltered, she told him he was not who he thought he was. Knowing in his heart she spoke the truth he spat out the word “liar” and with hatred he had never before known, hurled himself at her, unarmed. The daemon-woman was easily the stronger and laughed in his face as if they were playful lovers, finally she tired of the game and pinned him to the floor. She bent down and kissed both of his eyelids sending bolts of unimaginable agony through his brain; told him soon he would see the truth, see what lay in his own heart and beg her to come back and start their eternity together. With that, she disappeared.

The Inquisitor stood up slowly, his vision felt strange – his chamber looked flat, lifeless; he moved to his mirror and stared at himself. What he saw was not himself as he knew he looked; instead he saw his thoughts, feelings, his life-blood, his anima and an impenetrable black cloud he knew to be his soul. Looking at it made him sick and he dashed the mirror on the floor. His companions ran in, having heard the noise. He looked at them and all he saw was the colours of their thoughts, their emotions, the dark stains of their sins and guilt. With a heart-breaking howl, before anyone could stop him he grabbed a shard of mirror and cut his eyes out, cursing the creature all the time. Finally his companions restrained him and he passed-out.

The Inquisitor is now blind, no bionic parts have worked in restoring his sight and his eye sockets refuse to stop bleeding. He will not rest, and is feverishly working to track the daemon-woman.

● Plot-Hooks

The Inquisitor will travel across the galaxy for scraps of information if he believes it will bring him closer to the creature who cursed him. Who/what is the daemon-woman? Did she tell the truth? What did it all mean? Is the Inquisitor searching for her to kill her, or because he is obsessed with her?

● Warband Members

To compensate for his blindness the Inquisitor has commissioned a special auspex Servo-skull to help him and utilises another with a gun (he cannot use one). He has a shoulder-mounted MIU psi-cannon as the Warp-sight sometimes returns, particularly when he is around daemons. His companions are those who were with him when the incident occurred, those he hasn't alienated and driven away with his crazy talk.

● Modelling Ideas

The Inquisitor is easy to model; Covenant with a head swap; modelling putty (or food-bag ties) wrapped around the head over the eye sockets would be the easiest way to simulate bandages over the missing eyes. Remaining warband members are the most loyal of his old followers; Imperial Guard veterans, gun men, Enforcers etc.

● Notes

The GM should devise a test so each turn the player can determine if the Inquisitor sees anything with his Warp-sight; ie, on a D6 roll of 6 he sees everything with the Warp-sight (anything Daemonic is automatically seen).

● Resources

The Inquisitor has a secure base-of-operations from which to work, he also has a good spy network trying to find rumours of the creature so he has Information.

If any of these concepts have appealed to you feel free to use them; if not, then hopefully at least one small part has given you the inspiration for your own ideas. Now you have these Inquisitors, what do you do with them?

Investigations and Prosecutions

So, what do Inquisitors do all day when they aren't killing each other and blowing up barrels of promethium? Many Inquisitors, particularly as they get older, delve into research, teaching acolytes and writing papers. That's all well and good for those Inquisitors in semi-retirement but the bulk of most Inquisitors' lives are taken up with investigation.

Investigations

Investigations is a generic term for spying, covert surveillance, coercing, following rumours, chasing enemies, routing out evil-doers, looking for clues, researching in libraries and lots and lots of questioning people. Investigation is generally the bit that occurs before a game/battle when the Inquisitor is finding out what is going on and who it is he has to smite. Occasionally a battle or linked campaign will involve Investigation directly into the game. I can't present any systems for using Investigation in your games as there are too many possibilities, but they often involve making Sagacity tests or using the Awareness rules.

Unofficial New Ability: Augury

One way in which many Inquisitors aid their Investigations is with the use of Augury, the most common form being in the reading of the Emperor's Tarot. The use of Augury is not exactly a psychic phenomenon, more of a belief in the mystic and personal intuition but even the most ultra-puritan Inquisitor cannot object to the Emperor's Tarot. In game terms; for every action (up to a

maximum of five) spent consulting the Augury, the Augur can add +/-10% to any 1 percentile test in the next turn only. At the end of the actions consulting the Augury, the Augur must make a successful Sagacity roll to interpret it (if it is failed the GM can apply the bonus to any one roll of a character on the opposition team in the next turn). The whole amount must be used for the Augur's action (or those of anyone he can spend a minimum of one action communicating with, before the end of the turn the Augury was made in). Some Augury styles are: Emperor's Tarot, Rune-casting, Reading-the-bones, Crystal-gazing, Divining.

Prosecutions

Prosecutions are different from investigations because the Inquisitor already has evidence against a target and begins with the intention of bringing them to justice and proving them guilty. Investigations are speculative, and the perpetrators often unknown, prosecutions are definite and targeted against someone; prosecutions are the grudge-matches of Inquisitor. The tactics of pursuing prosecutions include; ambushes, honey-traps, raids, man-hunts and bounties, confiscations to seize evidence, impounding of transport, roadblocks and the excruciation and torture of suspects.

Unofficial New Rules: Torture

Torture takes many forms, from the purely psychological to the more DIY use of hammers and industrial-pliers, from hot pokers and thumbscrews to savage beatings. From the time of their apprenticeships, most Inquisitors are fully trained in the use of and uses for, a multitude of torture methods. Perhaps the most fiendish of all these items is the Excruciator. The Excruciator is the name for a multitude of torture machines using a range of (often quite high-tech) methods. They range in size from ones



that fill entire rooms, to ones installed in mono-tasked Servitors, to ones small enough to fit into a pouch. It is these small innocuous looking boxes that are most likely to turn up in a game of Inquisitor (see the new item below).

Torture

Most torture takes place over a period of time, sometimes hours, most often days or weeks. The rules for torture with any implement (except an Excruciator) are as follows: Every time period (GM decision whether this is hours, days or weeks) the Torturer selects a stat from the list below and the Captive and the Torturer must make opposing stat rolls. If the Captive wins, the Torturer may not select that stat for D6 time periods. If the Torturer wins the Captive loses 10% from that stat. If the Torturer wins five tests in a row the Captive is broken and will reveal everything. If the Torturer wins ten tests in a row they may begin to reprogramme the Captive. In addition, the tools used will give a +10% advantage to the Torturer in certain stat tests (see below).

As you can see things are heavily stacked so that eventually the Torturer will grind the Captive into submission. This may seem unfair but the point of torture is that it doesn't stop till you break the Captive.

Most torture will be done between games of Inquisitor, the most common reason for torture to appear actually during an Inquisitor game is in trying to get information from a Captive before a rescue attempt is made. In game terms; the time period for tests becomes turns, if there has been no out-of-game torture tested for, reduce D6 of the Captive's stats by 1-5 D10 depending on how long he's been captured (1D10-hours, 2D10-a few days, 3D10-a week, 4D10-weeks, 5D10-a month or more). Remember if the captive does break during the game, each action is only long enough for a short sentence to be revealed and the Captive may 'pause for breath' once a turn to delay.

Torture Tools

The stats which can be contested by Torturers and Captives are given below, in brackets are the techniques/tools which gain the +10% advantage.

Basic Torture Chambers Techniques

(Can be improvised in simple locations)

- **Toughness:** resistance of physical damage (Methods: Damaging Implements: Pliers, hammers, whips, beatings. In addition, for each time period of this torture add D6 to the Injury total of the Captive, regardless of test outcome).

- **Leadership:** to resist psychological torture (Methods: Psychological: humiliation, degradation, convincing of betrayal/abandonment by companions).

- **Initiative:** to avoid confusion and fatigue (Methods: Deprivation Techniques: starvation, bright lights, darkness, no sleep, temperature extremes).

Advanced Torture Chamber Techniques

(Require a more controlled set-up)

- **Willpower:** to resist chemicals and truth agents (Methods: Chemicals: depressants, truth serums, mild poisons, hallucinogenic)

- **Sagacity:** to resist aversion techniques (Methods: Aversion Techniques: sparking wires near the eyes, burns, electrocution when answers-back, partial drowning/asphyxiation. In addition, add D3 to the Injury totals of the Captive, regardless of test outcome).

- **Nerve:** to resist pain/fear of pain (Methods: Pain Infliction: Pokers, thumb screws, Iron Maiden. In addition add D3 to the Injury totals of the Captive, regardless of test outcome).

Unofficial New Equipment: *The Excruciator*

No two Excruciators are exactly the same and many are ancient pieces from the Dark Age of Technology but here is what a 'typical' one might do:

The bulk of the item is a black box, connected to it are a dozen wires ending in sharp, barbed needles. On one side of the box is a small data-pad screen. The box is connected to the body of the 'subject' (painful and damaging in itself as the barbed needles are big) some of the needles act as IVs delivering chemicals causing nausea, disorientation, truth serums and (as an occasional 'carrot') pleasure-inducing chemical cocktails. The remaining needles stimulate nerve-endings causing crippling pain without damaging the body. The screen monitors life signs and acts as a lie detector.

Excruciators work like all other torture techniques but hand-held ones get +5% to all opposed rolls (not +10% to just one type). Mono-task Excruciator Servitors get +10% to all rolls and room-size Excruciators get +15% to all rolls.