

tHE bIG pICTURE

(tHe wEaPOn)

C O N T E N T S

Introduction – nine eh? Must be a quarterly thing....

Religious Thoughts – Religion in the WoP? Is there a place for it?

Feral Ebons – Developing Feral Ebons

Never Mind The Pig – Spectral Cannibals and the infamous ‘spike dogs’, Kolos.

Scav’s. – Scavs, they’re new, they’re horrid and they’re here to stay.

Finding a Job – A Blue and a Green with beginners in mind.

Equipment – FEN 0101 Firestorm, Multi-Rounds and Karam’s Gargyle.

Soft Companies – Purge, Nightshift and Radical Waves.

Operative Views – Word out on the streets, and a Meet N Greet thrown in.

It clearly wasn't us, whatever happened, and whatever caused it, it weren't us. We produce it, they don't approve, we don't give a flying cluck. We can't be held responsible for anything, ever, under any circumstances what so ever. Unless it's good and might earn some money, in which case we cannot deny our vital part it it's happening.

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If you want to send us anything to do with progress, feel free, we will do our best to put it in **tHE bIG pICTURE**. Nobody makes any money out of **tHE bIG pICTURE** and we cannot pay for any stuff submitted.

We currently have all eight back issues available, £3 each, and three supplements, Shaktar, Frother and Wraith Raider sourcebooks: £5 each.

Cheques and PO's made payable to M. Bantleman please NOT Chocolate Frog.

Buy **tHE bIG pICTURE**, tell your local store to stock it, get your mates to actually buy their own copy (radical idea!), spread the disease.

If you like what we do; write and tell us. If you don't; write and tell us.

Slayer don't surf (yet).

Grip Inc: Nemesis, SLA music for SLA people.

Believe nothing. Believe everything.

The Big Picture is published by:

Chocolate Frog Enterprises

7 Jubilee Close

Byfield

Northants

NN11 6UZ UK.

Unless specifically credited to an author, all material in The Big Picture is written by Max Bantleman.

B a c k C o v e r

The World of Progress moves on.

Mr. Slayer does not want

you to stand still.

Be loyal. Be unique.

SLA Industries needs you.

Slayer needs you.

Your time has come.

2 0 0 1 – P D F C o n v e r s i o n

*The ninth issue of **tHE bIG pICTURE** was produced around the time of GenCon 1997. Front and back cover art by Heath Marks, and written pieces from Mark Caldwell and Leath Sheales. The zine had settled in to a definite style and feel, and the growing ‘disclaimer’ section reflects this. The internal layout was changed to reflect the SLA MRB. Jageeda were still mucking people about and allowing SLA to wither and die. The interior of the front and back cover were used for the first time and there was an inside page piece of art from *Bullets of Autumn*, which promised much but ultimately faded away.*

Max Bantleman, 2001.

INTRODUCTION

Hello.

tHE bIG pICTURE is a non profit making, unofficial fanzine, produced by a few manic fans. We do not claim to be part of any bigger organisation, or to have any agenda other than our own.

If you want to write for us, the guidelines are as follows: go for it. Anything to do with Progress will be considered.

It should be mentioned that the original Nightfall writers guidelines are adhered to, though we will often develop our own versions of 'the truth'.

We have **NO** connection to either Nightfall (as was) or Jageeda, we support them and hope they are understanding over our tinkering with their stuff.

This issue was to be ready for Euro GenCon '97 (*and is!*), hopefully the demo/participation games we run there will be as well attended and as much fun as ever. A good indicator as to the popularity of SLA is the number of new players who enquire at shows.

In this issue we have a look at two subjects that have caused some heated discussion in the WoP: Feral Ebons and religion. Ferals tend to be overlooked or played down, mainly due to a lack of fore sight, they seldom make an impact on a campaign/game. And religion. Who hasn't had the 'well, is there any need for it' discussion.

Drop us a line and give us your thoughts.

We're trying to tidy up the look of **tHE bIG pICTURE**, as it has been pointed out how inadequate the presentation is. Layout's a problem due to the low tech way we put it together. Hopefully it looks a bit better (?).

Mention should be made of the Sla-I. The SLA list is dedicated to SLA industries and constantly throws up ideas and topics of interest. If you've got a computer thingy, and you're on line, you really should be connected to it.

Send mail with no subject, with message 'subscribe sla-I' to; Majordomo@teleport.com.

(I'm pretty sure this is right...)

(*Not any more it's not. MB 2001.*)

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So. What's on the horizon. Well.

The Frother Sourcebook is ready to go. Same price as the Shaktar and Wraith supplement; £5. Next will be an Ebon book expanding upon Ebon philosophy and examining Static, tied to this will be a Dark Lament / Karma supplement with loads of new and groovy stuff.

Vincent Mottier has put forward an idea of a sort of 'atlas' for the world of progress, listing planets, their relative ease of access, etc. Sounds like a bloody good idea. It's all about time really....

Next will be our own version of the 'contract directory', listing five type of each colour BPN, introducing two new colours, and including three mini campaigns as well as two scenarios.

After this.... well I don't know.

We are still getting very little feedback on what people actually want, most SLAers seem caught up in the fanatical search for the truth behind the original concept of SLA. Until this is laid to rest, it seems impossible for the game to move forward. Shouldn't we just accept that our own truths are just as (if not more) valid than the 'official' version? Let's just get on with it shall we.

Mention must be made (again) of the various other resources for SLA, most of which are accessed via the Internet (or e-mail). The home page of Sam Pay is well worth a look and has connections to nearly all the other SLA pages on the net. Well worth a look:

<http://www.stsm.demon.co.uk>

tHE bIG pICTURE serves the WoP. SLA Industries is a bloody good game, which, in my opinion, deserves to be expanded and played. What we need is some encouragement from those behind the production of the game, as well as a belief in what we are doing ourselves. I'd like to think SLA has a future. What do you think?

"The knowledge that they fear is a weapon to be used against them."

(tHe wEaPOn)

RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS

Is there room for religion in the World of Progress?

Recently, I have seen this question asked with some strange answers being offered. All discussion of religion must come from a personal bias, and I accept that some people have reacted from a *religious* stand point. But is this really necessary?

Do we need to be wary of the subject, are we missing the whole point of the WoP?

What follows is a personal expression of how I believe religion fits in to the WoP. This includes both religious ideas that are familiar to us, and form the back drop of our every day lives (in the real world) as well as some religious ideas and concepts that may well be unique to Slayer's World of Progress. Please feel free to write to us to shoot me down in flames, or modify whatever you like.

Essentially, the question seems to take two forms:

- 1) Is there *any* religion in the WoP?
- 2) Is SLA Industries considered a religion and Mr. Slayer a God?

Let's look at number two first.

The SLA Industries corporation supplies everything you'll ever need during your life time in the World of Progress. But more importantly they sell lifestyles. SLA can tell you how to live, and supply the cultural background to make it worthwhile.

SLA are everything and are everywhere, so naturally some people will worship them above all else. And this will promote Mr. Slayer from Corporate Head to Godhead.

But what is the spiritual basis for this worship? Is there any? Can there be any?

People's religious beliefs are born from spirituality, faith and a profound need to have their life mean something.

Can SLA Industries satisfy these needs? I don't believe they can, and therefore they would not be considered a religion, especially as they are constantly stressing the fact that they are not after worship, they do not want blind followers, they want unique individuals with style, insight and cunning. There is no inherent spirituality in

SLA, they offer nothing to soothe the soul, no set of criteria by which those who believe in them can ascend to any higher form of enlightenment. Indeed, the seeking of the truth, of enlightenment, is likely to get you killed.

The 'spirituality' of SLA, if there is any, is based on the individuals need to survive in the WoP, SLA feeds the ego, encourages the growth of the self for your own sake: become more selfish, make your own life better, be loyal to SLA and they can help you do this.

Operatives are offered no more in this department than the average citizen. Be loyal to SLA, seek to strengthen the company and your position within it and you will be rewarded in this life. Only Ebons, via the curse of Necanthropy, are offered any kind of immortality or afterlife. There is nothing to indicate that SLA want to develop peoples spirituality in any broader sense. For SLA there is only the future in the WoP, there is no preparation for 'what comes after', because the head of SLA, and those closes to him, know there can be no 'after' (for them or anyone).

Faith in SLA is not disappointed. Unless you expect too much. SLA deliver the faithful in to a world of comfort and security.

To have faith in SLA is easy if you're not likely to question why they want your loyalty. Mr. Slayer knows who his enemies are, and they are your enemies too. Faith in him and the other heads of SLA Industries need not extend beyond your trusting their knowledge of what's best for you.

Faith implies acceptance; in this case, acceptance of SLA as the dominating factor in your life, a willingness to let SLA rule your world with unquestioning devotion.

Most of the citizens of the WoP are continually exposed to SLA's failings as well as their successes, it would be hard to maintain 'faith' in a company who show such flagrant disregard for those who are unfortunate enough to live in Downtown, or those who cannot be among the elite. SLA has such an exploitative mentality that faith is constantly challenged, in most cases by SLA themselves with their actions towards it's own citizens.

Do the citizens of the WoP have meaning added to their lives through SLA? SLA promise no reward after death, there is no eternal carrot dangled for the billions of mortals in the WoP,

only rewards for the living, and these are very materialistic. Can the citizens gain any meaning from their lives through SLA? Doubtful, except for Ebons, SLA offers no 'afterlife care' for its followers. Presumably SLA encourages the 'get what you can while you're here' mentality, there is no indication that it does otherwise. Maybe this is why there is a lingering discontent within the WoP and why DarkNight and other Soft Companies do so well, perhaps they offer beliefs SLA do not.

This is of course from the 'human' perspective. Shaktars have their own belief systems, which feature heavily within their lives. Wraith Raiders appear to be driven by instinct as much as by spirituality, and their religious beliefs (if any) are well buried beneath the drive to survive.

We'll come on to Ebons after we've looked at the first question.

People are spiritual creatures. They seek to find the 'meaning' behind things, they see things through their soul as well as through their eyes. Nearly all humans, and most sentient races, choose to believe they have a soul; that is, something that sets them above the animals. Most races connect intellect with the soul, though some religions insist every living thing has a soul.

And this leads to the question; what happens to the soul when the body dies?

Cue religion.

If we believe SLA Industries, if we go with their history of the Universe, there were millions of societies before SLA Industries, these fell foul of the self destruct curse and the Conflict Wars were born. SLA Industries, through the cunning of Mr. Slayer, moved in to sweep the Conflict Societies from existence. SLA Industries replaced all governments, all political persuasions, they became the governing body on each world that accepted the three P's contract. SLA Industries rules over the world of Progress to the exclusion of all others. But nothing is said of these societies religions being replaced. There is no mention of Mr. Slayer banning, outlawing or even discouraging existing religions. So, there are still countless religious beliefs floating around the WoP. Can SLA Industries allow this? Can Mr. Slayer dominate the WoP in the way he needs to if there are religions in his way?

Let's have a look at where SLA Industries stands, and how Mr. Slayer can afford to view any religion and its followers.

Firstly we must accept that the WoP, although similar to our own universe in some ways, differs drastically in others. We may find it hard to accept the concept of a single dominating force, believing that such an organisation as SLA would be impossible in our world. But this is not our world. And SLA does exist.

SLA Industries controls progress, there are no real contenders to SLA's throne. SLA rule supreme. So where *can* religion fit in.

Religions would be consigned to the status of 'cults', with the millions of differing beliefs fracturing the populations ability to unify beneath any single belief. The concept of a religion such as Christianity, would be converted in to terms that could apply in the SLA ruled WoP. The notions of messianic prophets leading the oppressed to freedom through their teachings of love, compassion and obedience to an omnipotent god, would fall on the same ears that received the teachings according to SLA; nothing is more powerful than SLA Industries and Mr. Slayer, nothing will outlast SLA Industries (or Mr. Slayer), only SLA Industries offers any form of salvation.

Concepts of an afterlife would be stained with the knowledge that immortals walk among the general population, taking the gift of immortality from the realm of the gods, and placing it firmly within the 'real' world that surrounds the citizens of progress.

Mr. Slayer, Intruder, Senti and most Necanthropes, while appearing to be god like in their rejection of death, constantly deny their veneration as gods, both in words and actions. The immortals of Progress don't want to be considered as gods, and their existence would seem to exclude the existence of other deities.

There is no reason why any of our 'real world' religions shouldn't be represented in Progress. Whether they take on the same importance is, of course, up to the individual GM.

Consigning real world religions to cult status may seem an extreme step to take.

Citizens of progress are offered numerous outlets for their worship, some sanctioned by SLA, others firmly opposed by them.

The cancerous presence of DarkNight within the WoP, as well as the growing awareness of White Earth and Bitterness, offer the disillusioned citizen fresh hope for their salvation.

But there are other, more twisted, seemingly impossible targets for worship.

Progress is ruled by TV, SLA realise the importance of TV as a sedative and use it to the full. Most citizens never need to leave their home in order to experience all of the horror and wonder of progress, it is brought straight in to their living rooms. People whose lives have become completely controlled, who have no power to change their destiny's, soon begin to view themselves as victims. And victims often react violently against their 'oppressors'. SLA keeps people from reaching this state by offering them the lie that is Progress. SLA offers everyone the chance of a better life, all they have to do is trust SLA, believe in SLA, strive to make SLA stronger, and they will be rewarded. SLA do not want victims, they want soldiers. SLA Industries wants every citizen of Progress to be prepared to defend their society from attack from the outside, even though those within Progress know in their heart of hearts that Progress itself is their greatest enemy.

To achieve this SLA must use religion, as it must use all focus for belief, as a positive factor in their control of the peoples of Progress. Suppression of religion would backfire on SLA as it would indicate they were afraid of it, that it was a threat to them, implying that something *could* actually threaten them as supreme rulers of Progress.

Mr. Slayer is smarter than that.

In the realm of nightmare that is Progress, there is greater horror than can be suspected by most sane minded citizens. These horrors, these truths, must be kept from the populace. Anything that distracts them, placates them, keeps their minds on other things, is to be used by SLA Industries, including religion.

Cults and religions are carefully monitored, their growth recorded and their followers catalogued. If a cult starts to grow beyond it's usefulness, it is shut down.

SLA Industries has wiped out civilisations in the name of Progress, has shattered whole worlds in defence of it's ideas of Progress. Mr. Slayer will not hesitate to annihilate a cult that

seems to be on the verge of turning in to something out of his control. SLA Industries will move in, shut down the cult, and Third Eye will broadcast it as a successful operation in the defence of Progress. And they would be right.

Ultimately Mr. Slayer is loathed to use the ultimate sanction. He knows the power of an idea does not live and die with it's immediate followers. For true power to remain with SLA Industries, Mr. Slayer must fight ideas with ideas. No religion or cult can be seen to offer a more satisfying idea than Progress.

A religions promise of reward in 'the afterlife' can easily be countered by SLA with the argument that there are beings for whom there is no afterlife, they are immortal.

Promises of retribution from angry gods can be countered with real action from the most ruthless corporation ever to exist. Threats of divine punishment for non believers can be countered with SLA's flagrant disregard for any gods feelings. SLA Industries needs no gods, it has gone beyond them, perpetuating the notion that SLA itself is a form of divinity.

We must stretch our imaginations. The concepts and ideas needed to allow the suspension of disbelief over SLA are complex and personal to every individual GM. What is right for one persons concept of SLA, will be completely wrong for another GM.

Players must be given enough depth and information to satisfy their curiosity, to allow them to believe in SLA. Part of this depth must come in respecting the players ideas; if they want to have religion, give it to them. All be it in a form decided by you, to fit in with your own truths about Progress.

At the beginning of this (short) article, no doubt most of you thought "this should be funny, how can he cover such a vast subject...." and of course I can't.

All I can do is offer my own ideas about religion in the WoP. And in my WoP SLA Industries and Mr. Slayer use religion the same as they use TV; as a tool. As another weapon in their arsenal of anesthesia. Keep 'em sedated, wake 'em up when you need 'em. That's why Op's are so dangerous. They rise above this, they get to glimpse the truth, a truth that challenges the very concepts behind religion. Operatives get to see the light at the end of the

tunnel, get to decide whether to turn towards, or away from it.

SLA Industries is all embracing. If it needs to take religions under its wing, it does so. Followers of all religions come and go but Mr. Slayer is immortal. A living demonstration that SLA Industries is an eternal power whose rule over Progress is complete.

It is a game of 'horror', right?

FERAL EBONS

Mention has been made of Feral Ebons, though not much has been said about them. It is clear that they operate without a Deathsuit, using either Glyph Cards or some sort of 'natural' ability to formulate. But how can this be? Why aren't SLA out to recruit these Ebons and keep them 'feral', exploiting their ability to do without a Deathsuit?

This article looks in to some of the possible background and reasons why Feral Ebons will always remain outside of the control of SLA.

Background

At the close of the Conflict Wars Intruder had brought the Ebon race within the SLA Industries fold. They were spared by Slayer from the destruction that faced the other races, Intruder became a messiah figure for them, someone who they loved and respected, someone who knew them for what they were and taught them all they needed to know about understanding and using the Ebb.

Intruder saw the Ebons great potential and could not let them die. He knew Slayer did not understand what he saw in them, but he also knew Slayer would respect his decision to save them if he, Intruder, remained loyal to Slayer. So Intruder was bound even tighter to Slayer.

Once the Ebons were officially recognised by SLA Industries, their indoctrination and training began. Intruder went to Static, where he set up many training schools, using the best from the Ebon race to teach others what he had taught them. Among these original teachers were several 'Feral' Ebons, who seemed to be able to somehow use the Ebb without the usual use of formulae. These Ferals were gradually

separated from the other Ebons, who were being taught using Glyph Cards.

The Ferals were no longer present in any training school by 12SD., though there are rumours that Mandrake was in fact a Feral.

Gradually the Ferals were hired by Dark Lament, or sent to Mort or to War Worlds, where their ability to formulate quickly was most needed. The Ferals began to realise that SLA had no place for them, and that, if anything, other Ebons and those within SLA actually feared them.

In 101SD. the first Feral revolt took place, led by Faeron, a Feral who had returned from Cross to unite the Ferals on Mort. Faeron took the Ferals away from SLA, leading them in to Cannibal Sector Five, from where they would strike out at SLA, stealing what they could of equipment and supplies.

By 110SD. Ferals were being hunted on Mort as enemies of SLA, with the rest of the Ebon race reluctantly accepting the outlaw status of their brethren. Intruder has never, and (it is said) will never take part in the hunting down of Ferals.

In 113SD. Necanthropes had cleared the last of the Ferals from Mort. Or so they thought. But they were wrong.

Feral Ebons live mainly in Lower Downtown or in the Cannibal Sectors, occasionally a Feral can disguise himself and live in suburbia, for a while....

Ferals are hunted by SLA and so they tend to be always on the move. They rarely stay in one place for longer than a year, and never really make friends, trusting no one completely.

It has been noted that Scavs have been seen in the company of Ferals, though whether this is purely a trading agreement no one is sure.

Feral Ebons are extremely rare. Within the Ebon race itself, one child in a million is born Feral, that is with the ability to manipulate the Ebb naturally from birth. These offspring are sent to a special training school on Static, where they are taught to use Deathsuits, even though they don't need them. These Ferals live without knowing their Feral nature, if they ever find themselves aware of it, the curse that it also brings begins to destroy them.

Feral Ebons that produce offspring outside of Ebon society, produce 'Ebb Mules' 99% of the time and a Feral Ebon the other 01%. Mules have no Ebb ability and rarely live past

puberty, when they are prone to suicidal depression.

The Feral Curse

Feral Ebons live with an inner conflict that they never resolve. Those that have entered the White have brought their insanity back with them.

From the day they are born Ferals are able to use the Ebb, to manipulate Flux and to access their Ebb Abilities. From the moment they are born they struggle to understand what they are, what the Ebb is and what forces work through them. Feral Ebons come in to the WoP knowing the Ebb, and knowing that they are different, that their knowledge and ability make them outlawed, hunted, Ferals know from the day they are born that they can never be part of the WoP, they are born rebels, they are born wary of all things connected with SLA.

It does not take long for Ferals to realise the curse of their nature.

Accessing the Ebb, the use of Flux, though done 'naturally' is still done using Formulae; only the Feral is not consciously aware of the nature of the Formulae. Feral Ebons begin to have 'insane insights' from the minute they are born. Eventually the insanity of their existence catches up with them, and they lose all control over their waking mind. It is at this stage that they seek the oblivion of the White. And when they do, Intruder is waiting for them.

Feral's use of the Ebb causes them to alter the relationship between their conscious and subconscious minds, until one is indistinguishable from the other. When this occurs, the insanity is complete.

Only Intruder can bring a Feral back from the White. How he does this is a closely guarded secret, known only to Slayer and Intruder, not even Senti knows the process. Faintly whispered rumours suggest Intruder somehow escorts the Feral in to the White.

What emerges from the White is unrecognisable as an Ebon, it bears no resemblance to the Feral that entered, leaving other Necanthropes looking sane by comparison.

The only known Necanthrope of Feral origin on Mort is Frost, working for Cloak and Stygmartyr, she is an enigmatic figure seldom seen by the citizens of Mort.

Game System Stuff

So, how do Ferals' actually do it then? How do they use Flux and what is their command of Ebb Abilities.

Here's how we work it in our WoP, change what you don't like, mess with it as you will.

How They Use Ebon Abilities

Ferals do not consciously use the hyperbolic equations that other Ebons rely on. Instead their subconscious works through the equations using the language of dreams. The calculation takes 1.8 seconds, or three phases in combat rounds. Ferals may begin 'calculating' in any phase, as long as the ability 'goes off' in a phase in which they have an action. The Flux cost of the ability is paid upon activation, not at the beginning of the formulating.

Feral Ebons do not suffer the same negative modifiers as their Ebon cousins; they ignore anything that would cause them to 'lose concentration', as they are not actually concentrating on formulating.

This effectively means that Ferals do not make CONC rolls to successfully use Ebb abilities, once they start to formulate, they cannot be stopped.

Flux

Feral Ebons store and use Flux differently from other Ebons. Each Feral gains their KNOW in Flux every six hours, and they may 'store' Flux equal to their KNOW X Formulae. So a Feral with KNOW 10 and Formulae 4, may store 40 Flux. Every Feral Ebon must discharge Flux equal to their maximum storage every day, failure means they will discharge in their sleep, doing themselves physical damage equal to the Flux discharged.

Ebb Abilities

Feral Ebons may have access to the full range of Ebb Abilities. Each Feral will show a preference for a number of abilities equal to their CONC divided by 2. So a Feral with a CONC 9 has access to 5 abilities. The Feral has access to all of the abilities within each group they have chosen, regardless of Rank, and may use any ability as long as they have the Flux to pay for it.

Feral Curse

The Feral Ebon pays a high price for their use of the Ebb. Every time they sleep, they dream. And when they dream they gain insight, this causes the creeping madness that afflicts all Ferals.

During the dream the Feral has to make a DIA roll as a skill, using the total Flux used since they last slept as a positive modifier (not Flux discharged during last sleep). Negative modifiers are damage points taken as Flux Burn during their present sleep and Formulae. Success means they fight off the madness for a while, failure means they gain an Insight Point. When their Insight Points exceed their Formulae and their DIA added together, they go insane.

Ferals may be taught how to use Deathsuits if caught at an early age, usually before they are ten, and at this stage they may be taught how to block the Insight Dreams, if they are, they progress as 'normal' Ebons as long as they wear their Deathsuits. If they lose their Deathsuit, they revert to Ferals.

Feral

Race	Feral Ebon
Height	6'3"
Weight	160 lbs
STR	6
DEX	9
DIA	8
CONC	9
CHA	8
COOL	10
FLUX	27
Formulae	3
HITS	16

Ebb Skills

Blue Thermal : Glacial Ebb
 Healing : Art of Healing & Purification
 Enhancement : Augmentation
 Reality folding : Ebb Manipulation
 Senses : Sense Perception

QUOTE: "Leave me alone. I'm not part of your world and I don't want you as part of mine. Keep away from me and we'll get along just fine."

INSIGHT: You are a Feral Ebon. You do not have the luxury of openly displaying your

emotions, you do not share the emotional flamboyance of your Ebon cousins. You must keep your emotions in check, inside, hidden, and it tears you apart. You are hunted by all in the World of Progress, SLA Industries shows you no friendship and no mercy. Suspicious of everyone, you have no friends, only some you distrust less than others. Intruder knows the pain you feel, and when the insanity finally takes you, he will show you your release, or give you the release you cannot take for yourself by killing you.

APPEARANCE: Feral Ebons share the same pale complexion of their Ebon cousins, their hair is always thin and wispy, most Ferals shave their heads. Ferals have prismatic eyes with no pupil, some wear coloured contacts to disguise themselves. All Ferals are painfully thin, having taught, wiry frames, with long fingers and pointed features.

INTERACTION: Ferals On:

Humans: "Prolific. They are everywhere and their ignorance of the world they control astounds me. It will be a worrying day for SLA when they finally wake up."

Ebons: "I envy and despise my cousins. They have the luxuries denied to me. They have the support of SLA, I am a fugitive. They hunt me. I kill them."

Brain Waster: "Simply undisciplined Ebons. To be despised as much as their passive cousins and killed without mercy."

Frothers: "Weak willed psychopaths. Keep at arms reach. Sometimes there is a certain honesty in their addictive way of life."

Stormers: "SLA's greatest monstrosities. Stormers are to be feared by the wise and avoided by all enemies of SLA. Feeling sorry for them is likely to get you killed."

Shaktars: "As alien to me as I am to them. Honour? Trust? I don't know, sounds like a recipe for disaster. Good warriors though, and you can hold them to their word, which is rare indeed."

Wraith Raiders: "Senti's children. I do not understand what they want and keep out of their way. They are hunters and I am the prey."

Feral Ebons In The WoP

Ferals are almost universally hunted by SLA. They are seen as a subversive threat, far more dangerous than any Soft Company.

In turn, Ferals are often employed by Soft Companies, who play both on their need for equipment and food and their hatred of SLA Industries.

Feral Ebons remain an unorganised force, seemingly uninterested in banding together. But what if they did? What if a Feral leader came along and united them? They would certainly become a major force in the WoP. Maybe they are united, and maybe they are behind the Scavs, maybe they are using the Scavs to search for something?

Players should not generally be allowed to have Ferals as characters, it will throw a spanner in to the workings of your normal Ebb rules and may give them too much power. This is of course your call. Maybe having one of your Ebon players discover they are really a Feral, after they have been playing for some time might be in order.

If you keep the theme of Ferals entering the White with Intruder, you may use him as a sort of silent benefactor for them. But what are his plans for them? And does Slayer know?

NEVER MIND THE PIG

SPECTRAL CANNIBALS

These beasts are exclusively from Cannibal Sector Five, they seldom roam from their home ground, though there are reports that some have been seen in the neighboring Downtown Sectors.

Spectral Cannibals have mutated in to a sub-species with some Ebb-like abilities. Each has a differing ability as well as the common 'reality folding' all Spectral Cannibals possess.

Stats.	Min.	Max.	Norm.
STR	4	12	7
DEX	4	10	6
DIA	2	5	3
CONC	1	5	2
HITS	8	23	14
Height	1.8M	2.5M	2M
Weight	60kg	180kg	100kg
Movement	28	44	34
Half Move.	56	88	68
No Move.	196	308	238
Walk 1. Run 2. Sprint 4.			

Weapon	PEN	DMG	AD
Bite	*0	1	0
Claw	*0	2	0

SKILLS	RANK
Detect	4
Unarmed Combat	8
Sneaking	5
Hide	5
Run	6
Swim	10
Climb	8
Tracking	5
Survival	7
Throw	4

*Spectral Cannibals can 'phase' their bodies, using a sort of natural Reality Fold. They do this by expending energy in the form of Flux. Each Cannibal has its DIA + CONC in Flux, which it regenerates at one point per three hours. Every time the Cannibal uses either of its natural Ebb like abilities, it costs 1 Flux.

The form of Reality Fold known by all Spectral Cannibals allows them to pass any part of their body through a solid object as if it was not there, the fold lasts for the Cannibals CONC in seconds. So, a Spectral Cannibal could reach his claw through armour, or a wall, or they could 'step inside' a suit of powered armour, if there was enough room, to claw and bite.

Immediately after the use of this 'phase' ability, the Cannibal is slightly stunned, making it an easier target (+3 to hit) for the same number of seconds as it 'folded'.

Each Cannibal will have a secondary ability, generated randomly from the Ebb Ability list (roll 1D10) ignoring Reality Folding, Senses

and Gore Cannon. The Cannibal can use any Ebb ability it has the 'Flux' to pay for. It is speculated that Spectral Cannibals are somehow related to Feral Ebons, though exactly how is too horrid to contemplate.

K O L O S (S p i k e H o u n d s)

Kolos are from a small planet in the same system as Dante, the planet, Raar, is now a barren lump of rock, devoid of atmosphere. The only remaining Kolos populations are on Dante, and now, on Mort.

Kolos are the only three legged mammal known to exist outside of the labs of Karma. In appearance, they are like three legged Bull Mastiff's, with two fore and one hind leg. They have no visible ears, having them as two slits either side of their head. Their eyes are completely black, having no 'whites'. Their extremely flat faces have tight stretched skin over their large bottom jaws. Almost always black in colour, Kolos are used as guard dogs on some bases on Dante, though the majority of the population is free roaming, hunting in wild packs of up to thirty.

Kolos are omnivores who will devour anything they can fit in their large mouths.

Stats.	Min.	Max.	Norm.
STR	3	9	6
DEX	4	10	6
DIA	0	1	0
CONC	1	2	1
HITS	7	19	12
Length	1M	2.5M	1.8M
Weight	60kg	100kg	80kg

Walk 1. Run 3. Sprint (5) 7.

Weapon	PEN	DMG	AD
Bite	1	3	0
Spike	3	4	1

SKILLS	RANK
Detect	5
Tracking	8
Dodge	6
Hide	5
Unarmed Combat	8
Run	6
Swim	6

Kolos have a bony, cartilage like spike that can be extended from the back of their throat, it varies in length from 20cm to 50cm, whipping out at lightning speed it is used to kill prey before it is devoured.

Kolos have excellent constitutions, they can go without food for very long periods without weakening and can survive in extreme climactic conditions with little difficulty. They are almost completely immune to all naturally occurring toxins and do not carry diseases easily.

It is speculated that the first Kolos arrived on Mort in 899 SD, brought by Karma as breeding stock for their experimental DAC project.

Kolos are illegally imported to Mort and may not be registered as pets except in very special cases. Mostly they roam Cannibal Sector Three and Five and some of the lower levels of Downtown. The largest pack on Mort has been reported as forty strong.

Wraith Raiders are known to enjoy hunting Kolos and some have been granted licenses to keep them as pets. War Criminals often keep Kolos near at hand as watch dogs, and perhaps as reminders of their past. Brain Wasters have recently started to apply for licenses to keep Kolos, though few have been granted.

S C A V E N G E R M E N A C E

Scavengers, or Scav's, come from the Cannibal Sectors, they probably have the highest population in Cannibal Sector Four or Five. Sector Four would give them the easy task of dominating the Cannibals, they could easily remain hidden or semi-protected by the hordes of Cannibals, who they could dominate in small groups. Sector Five produces so many mutations of both Carrien and other beasts, that it may well be where the very first Scav's came from, maybe from some mutated genetic stock left over from some failed Karma trials.

Scav's do not sell their plunder through the usual channels, i.e. the established Black Markets. But where do they sell it, and to who?

Scav's are loathed by Props, who hate them with a passion and will (on rare occasions) hunt them without payment.

All Scav's have strength that exceeds their build and appearance, many have implants and 'additions' to their genetic make up, much like those produced by Karma.

All this we know.

Maybe it's time to look a little deeper, to see how the Scav's may fit in to the bigger picture, to try to explore their role in the WoP.

Maybe it's not, but I'm going to anyway.

Where do they come from? There seem to be three main theories:

- 1) They work for some rival company.
- 2) They are residents of the sectors who have banded together.
- 3) They come from another, unknown source.

1) Rival Company

"If Scav's work for any of the major softies, I'm a Gators next meal. You ever seen 'em work? No softie wants mutants like these on the parole."

"They gotta be workin' for either DarkNight or one of the majors. How could they move their stolen shit otherwise? And where does it go? Takes a big organisation to disappear that amount of stash."

Scav's are well armed and some well armoured, many more carry less efficient weapons and wear scraps of armour. Where do they get it all from, and where do they get rid of the vast amount of the stuff they scavenge?

Some say the only answer to these questions is a Soft Company. But if so, who?

DarkNight would seem favourite. The Scav's move and attack with purpose, not only in stealing, but in general. Their movements seem to indicate a sweep pattern as if they are looking for something. But what?

Could the Scav's be searching for whatever remnants of Integration 20 that still exist? Are they driven by DN to seek out evidence of the lie they believe SLA is maintaining? Do the Scav's represent an 'out of control' element of DN, an independent movement beyond the control of the masters of DN?

If not DN, who?

The Thresher would not trust the Scav's, they are too wild and undisciplined. But on the other hand maybe they are using them to find parts and equipment they need. do the Scav's represent a whole new 'wing' of the Thresher?

Any other possible backers?

Black Order fear the Scav's as much as Operatives, they see them as a threat and a menace to their own plans. The Scav's also keep the disaffected citizens of Lower Downtown wary of anyone and anything, making Black Order's task of recruitment more difficult.

Tempest have too much to do concentrating on SLA, their strict belief in the abhorrent nature of all implants and mutations makes it highly unlikely that they would ally with the Scav's.

This is not to say that a new and sinister company has not been born. With the deliberate nature of the Scav's actions as a clue to the new company's aims. They are looking for something. This would have to be fundamental to their reason for existing, at the core of their beliefs and all of their other actions.

RiddleTwist

Company saying: "Riddle me that!"

RiddleTwist are more of a corporation than a company, incorporating many elements from other Soft Companies, all with one thing in common.

They have all had tantalising glimpses of the truth. Their realisation and conviction that SLA only exists to bury the truth drives them with religious fever.

The core of RiddleTwist consists of thirty members, each of whom is responsible for the company's contact with their own, host, soft company. Each representative has a degree of control on a par with their own companies standing in the WoP. The chief contributors are from DarkNight and the Thresher. No member of RiddleTwist will rely on their outside companies loyalty, and the existence of RiddleTwist is not known to most of the companies whose members make it up.

DarkNight believe their is a force behind the Scav's but it does not know what it is. The Thresher do not really believe the Scav's offer

any significant threat to them or their plans for the downfall of SLA.

All of the other soft companies simply haven't the time or resources to investigate the Scav's, they simply keep out of their way and hope they kill as many Op's as possible before they are shut down by SLA.

RiddleTwist are secretly headed by two sisters, both of whom used to work for SLA, then DarkNight, and now head RiddleTwist.

They are known only as 'the sisters' to all members of RiddleTwist, they rule through veiled use of power via the Scav's and through the use of their knowledge of SLA.

Both sisters worked for Karma, each on the same project, a variant of breeding stock Carrien that could eventually bring the 'wild' Carriens within the reach of Karma's DNA altering capability. These new breeds of Carrien would then be rounded up and mutated, until there would exist a strain of Carrien with the loyalty, if not the intelligence and spirit, of the 313's.

These warriors would be unsuited for mixing with the general population, but would be ideal for 'policing' the sectors and the lower reaches of Downtown.

The sisters became horrified at SLA's apparent willingness to condone the creation of 'monsters'. They became disillusioned and were easy fodder for DarkNight. Through their betrayal of SLA to DarkNight, they realised the futility of fighting SLA at their own game. Eventually they began to form the basis of RiddleTwist, a grand design that would be beyond the clutches of SLA, DarkNight and any other corporate menace.

The sisters stayed with the program. Seeding Carriens and altering the DNA of 'wild' captives. Eventually they began to 'plant' their own codes, making the new breed of Carriens more and more aware of their role as 'pawns' of SLA.

At first the sisters filtered equipment to the Scav's via DarkNight, and then through Props who they hired and set up. Soon there were bands of Scav's roaming the sectors as well equipped as most of the major soft companies.

Then came Cloak.

The sisters were forced to work a Platinum, with the aim of taking over the DN cell they belonged to.

They escaped in 898 SD. They had nowhere to go, nowhere they could hide, they had betrayed both DarkNight and SLA. In desperation they joined forces with anyone who could use their services, building a valuable bank of allies, each of whom thought they were the sisters only contact.

In 900 SD. the sisters moved in to the Sectors, where they now live. Rumours abound as to their appearance, some say they have injected themselves with mutant strains that have made them indistinguishable from other Scav's, others say they are Ferals who have only now discovered their latent abilities.

Whatever the truth behind the sisters physical forms and make up, their drive and single minded obsession in driving the Scav's is unquestionable.

What do they want.

Simple. Integration 20. The sisters know it still exists, though it is in pieces, and they know those pieces will eventually come to those who seek them.

So the Scav's steal what they can from Operatives, softies and Props, in a hope to finding clues to the whereabouts of I20.

Anything can be considered a clue: vid slugs, data discs, books, tapes, pictures, whatever.

RiddleTwist exist to serve the Scav force that seeks I20. The various members supply support in whatever form they can, though this usually takes the form of information, it can be demonstrated by 'gifts' of equipment and resources.

RiddleTwist know about Jack. They revere him as a God and see the Scav's as an extension of Jack's will, which they believe is being bent in the search for I20.

2) They are residents of the sectors who have banded together.

"We got out because J'Ktr sacrificed himself. I am alive to testify to the nature of the Scav's. I saw Carriens, mutants, cannibals and definitely a Feral. Well armed? The biggest was a Power

Reaper, but the worst was a Chainaxe, used by a Carrien like it was a third arm. SLA has to take them more seriously."

"Carriens banding together? you must be outta your fuckin' mind! Carriens eat each other, they don't work together. You been watching too many late night psycho-dramas."

Maybe the Carriens just got smart. maybe they stopped fighting and eating everything they met and started to figure out there was strength in numbers.

maybe Carriens got fed up with being shot, and started mimicking the people shooting them by using stolen weapons.

The Carriens in Sector 3 have nearly been wiped out by the War Crims, those that have survived have done so by becoming smarter as well as tougher.

War Criminals showed the Carriens the true value of weapons and armour.

It was a mutant Carrien, now known simply as Monger, that first banded the Scav's together with other bedraggled resident soft Sector 3, to fight back against the war Crims. Cannibals, Ferals, mutant humans and Carriens all forgot their animosity in their drive to survive. Sheer weight of numbers helped them with their first few victories, thought hey paid with 80% of their numbers. those that were left were more aware of their skills and weaknesses, they were better armed and armoured, and they had become used to the sweet taste of victory.

Soon squads were being recruited to investigate the sightings of so called 'armed' Carriens. The squads that came were painfully unprepared for what they had to face. The Scav's became even more powerful, and their grasp of combat tactics was growing.

Soon the Scav's realised they needed to keep on the move, not just in the sectors but in to Downtown as well, here they could grow stronger by preying on the weaker, but well armed citizens and squads.

Today Monger still rules the Scav's. His power base is frightening, being able to command the loyalty of 90 per cent of all Scav's. His intelligence has grown to match that of the most war weary veteran. And Monger knows he must keep moving. But he has a plan.

Monger seeks an ally, his Scav's have orders. They are looking for Mongers mate.

Monger sells off what he doesn't think he'll need to representatives from the Thresher, who use the things traded/bought from Monger to arm their militia on Mort. This keeps the Thresher militia inconspicuous, as they possess none of the distinctive Thresher arms.

In times of very great danger, or in the face of Necanthropes, the Scav's will simply melt in to the deepest shadows of Sector 3, where they can rely on the War Crims to add to their cover.

3) They come from another, unknown source.

"You never heard this from me. But Monitors are here right? What's to say they are not pulling the strings of the Scav's. why? I don't know and I don't want to know."

"You will not understand, so what ask. Scav's are from out there. Many have walked the winds and sunk in to the bloody sands of terror that wash the shores of Dark Space. Do not ask if you don't want to know."

Scav's are placed by Monitors.

They are the deranged, mutated products of the Dog's.

Bitterness has taken the war to the enemy.

What do you know about White earth? About the tortured souls that roam there? About the seemingly insane, chaotic creatures that rule Dark Space? Can Scav's be products of Demi-Gods that even Bitterness and Slayer have cause to take notice of?

Who knows.....

Scav's are from varying races or they are not. So it is difficult to develop a 'template' for them. However, if we base them on 'altered' Carrien, we have a starting point for some sort of 'common' Scav type. Of course, you will have to alter this as you see fit...

STATS	MIN	MAX
Strength	10	15
Dexterity	7	15
Diagnose	4	8

Concentration	3	7
Charisma	1	3
Physique	9	15
Knowledge	3	7
Hits	19	30
Walk	2	
Run	4	
Sprint	6+Running Skill	
Height	2.2m average	
Weight	110kg average	
SKILLS	Average Rank	
Unarmed Combat	7	
Club, 2-H	6	
Blade, 1-H	6	
Sneaking	5	
Hide	3	
Running	4	
Swim	6	
Climb	4	
Tracking	4	
Survival	8	
Detect	4	
Evaluate Opponent	4	
Tactics	3	
Pistol / Rifle	5	

Adjust both the Stats. and the Skills to suit the toughness of the Scav's, the veterans would be equal to Op's, maybe even War Criminals. You should of course load them down with psychoses and maybe phobias, they must have some Achilles heel (I suppose).

For equipment you must use your own judgement, what percentage have guns, how many have armour of any worth, etc.?

I think we need to face up to the fact that Scav's are here to stay, and we all need to flesh them out for our own WoP.

Hope this helps some of you.

Please let us know how you see Scavs fitting in to the WoP and how you use them.

FINDING A JOB: BPN'S

Back to where all good Op's start, a Blue, and an introductory Green. The focus with these two has been on the slightly 'newer' player. GM's will find plenty of opportunity to 'tweak' them to suit their more experienced Op's.

"It's just a friggin' Blue! How hard can it be!"

As a GM you know the score. But maybe it's time to remind/reveal it to your PC's. This BPN is designed to give the Op's a taste of the Hell that is dealing with SLA sub-departments. The full force of the SLA beaurocratic juggernaut can be brought to bare on the Op's, frustration and disbelief are key reactions.

We begin at the beginning, at The Crib. Even if the Op's are toughened veterans, it may do them good to go back to their humble roots, back to the time when they had to *apply* for a BPN.

For starting players, this will be a chance to fix The Crib and the SLA paperwork machine forever in their minds.

SCL: 10

Contact Department Of: Administration

Training Package Rec.: Any

Colour Code: Blue

Summary: Squad of Operatives needed to sweep and check designated apartment blocks. License inspection. Contact Mr. Lewis Gunn on; 424/648-99021.

Coverage: Station Analysis

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 300c

Payment: Per Squad

The Crib is a huge building, something akin to Wembley stadium in size, with a domed roof and eight pillars reaching from floor to ceiling. The Crib has the feel of a cathedral, with the walls being covered with hangings, paintings and vid screens, showing the past deeds of squads whose careers have all started here. There are flags and drapes hanging from the ceiling, streaming down hundreds of feet to gently sway in the sparse breeze. The lighting is subdued, the darkness pierced by beams from the ceiling windows. A smoky atmosphere, with wisps of vapour coming from the thousands of wet Operatives as they begin to dry out in the muggy closeness of the Crib's main hall.

The main hall is open plan, with thousands of benches, tables and vid stations dotted seemingly randomly over the floor. Operatives report to the circular main desk in the centre of the hall, then take a seat waiting for their number to be called.

Around the edge of the main hall are hundreds of smaller steel doors, each with a neon sign

above it. When your number is flashed at one of these doors, you have two minutes to get inside and apply for the BPN, after this, your chance has gone and you must re-register at the main desk.

Once the Op's have spotted their number and have managed to get inside the cubicle (this may take two or three attempts) they will be seen by their designated BPN clerk. BPN clerks can be as helpful or as obnoxious as you like, their only concern is to relay the information about the BPN to the Op's and to get them to sign for it's undertaking.

BPN clerks care nothing for the squads themselves, and they will enforce the ten minute limit on each squad while in the cubicle. The clerks will show the Op's a number of BPN's until they select one, or they may offer them one, based on their records of the squad and the allocation system.

Suggested stats for a BPN clerk are:

STATS	Range	Skill	Rank
Str	5-8	Detect	6
Dex	6-9	Rival Company	5
Dia	5-9	SLA Info	8
Conc	6-10	Literacy	7
Cha	5-8	Streetwise	5
Cool	6-10	Interview	7
Hits	11-17	Communiqué	7
		Computer use	6
		Psychology	6

You can either play BPN clerks as SLA personnel of SCL 11 (nominal employees) or as fully fledged Operatives, maybe who have been forced in to the job through injury or disciplinary.

All BPN clerks will be armed, the choice of weapon is yours, a minimum of a FEN 603 is suggested.

Each BPN booth contains a desk with a vid terminal and computer as well as a drinks machine. Some may be partitioned by bullet proof glass, some have surveillance cameras and a few have static site weapons mounted along side the camera.

The BPN

The BPN is for a squad to sweep through two apartment blocks, both in Suburbia (bordering slums of Upper Downtown), sectors 318. The

Op's are checking licenses for pets held in both blocks.

Lewis Gunn, from the Dept. Admin. will give the Op's a detailed list of the three hundred and eight citizens with registered licenses. The Op's are to check that the licenses match the pet description, noting any discrepancies.

The squad is also to undertake ten 'spot' inspections. They must use their discretion, to inspect ten random apartments, checking for unlicensed pets.

Lewis will give the Op's three 'blank' termination warrants for unlicensed pets, to be completed at their discretion. A bonus of 50c per warrant used is offered. The apartment blocks must be checked the day after the BPN is issued.

The SLA beurocracy machine comes in to play when the Op's try to either check for licenses applied for, or check up on any citizens who have pets they say they have licenses for. There are nine different departments that any citizen could apply for a license from. The Dept. Admin. is just one. Just because a citizen is not on their list, does not mean they are not on *someone's* list as having a license.

You may want to give the Op's a chance to find this out, maybe through SLA Info, or a 'friend'. Either way, they have now got to make a decision. Either go with the BPN as is, ignoring the other depts. and the fact that some of the pets they find will have licenses with other depts., or they can try to obtain lists from all of the other eight depts., doing a completely thorough job.

What's Really Going On

The BPN is in fact a cover operation. Station Analysis have been commissioned by Internal Affairs to uncover a suspected Black Order operative hidden in one of the blocks. It is hoped that by having a squad of Op's poking around, asking questions and searching the place, the Black Order suspect will break cover.

The Dept. of Admin. are blissfully unaware of the cover operation, as far as they are concerned, the BPN is legitimate. As the Op's sweep through the apartment blocks, they will encounter hundreds of

citizens, most of them harmless and benign. Some of course will resent the intrusion, but will still be innocent bystanders. A small minority may have unlicensed pets, and then there is the Black Order operative. Just to confuse things even more, there is an undercover Operative, working a White, resident in one of the apartments, and he has (of course) an unlicensed pet.

We have listed ten encounters, including the Black Order Op and the undercover Op, play them out in any order you want. remember to fill the scenario with innocent, trivial, annoying happenings, just to grind the squad down even more.

1) Mrs. Jones. Right license for correct pet. Mrs. Jones has a license that is in good order, and her pet, a small Poodle, is completely legal. However, Mrs. Jones has a guilty conscience. She acts suspiciously, being most uncooperative, maybe even being abusive. She is a small, wiry woman, with a pale complexion and a loud voice. She insists she knows her rights and will not be frightened or bullied in to anything. Very provocative woman.

2) Mr. Beel. Right license, right pet, wrong address. Mr. Beel has moved from his old place in Upper Downtown, but has failed to register the new details on his license. Mr. Beel has six pet snakes, each well over twelve feet long, none poisonous. Mr. Beel will try to bribe the Op's, offering them 10c each to look the other way until he gets a chance to go down to Dept. Admin and change the details. Mr. Beel is an agreeable man, who just wants an even break. He has a nice apartment and a clean record.

3) Ms. Hurly. Ms. Hurly has a completely unlicensed pet. She has not got any permit, from any SLA dept. Her pet cat is large and friendly, and has been with Ms. Hurly for some years now. Ms. Hurly is in her late thirties, she is a professional woman with a promising career with Third Eye. She will do almost anything to keep this from going on her record, and she promises to get a license first thing tomorrow. Ms. Hurly may hint that she could be a good friend to any squad that helped her in her developmental years at Third Eye.

4) Harry and Martha Klows. Completely inappropriate license for their two pet dogs, a

pair of huge Dobermans. Harry and Martha have a livestock license, naming the dogs as breeding stock for a farm. They have no idea where they got the license or where they should get the right one from. Harry is a Gauss Train driver, Martha has a cleaning job, both are just normal working 'Joe's' who happen to love their dogs. Martha will get hysterical at the slightest suggestion of anything happening to her 'babies'.

5) Mark Derryl. Right license, right pet. Mark has the appropriate license for his pet monkey, but doesn't know it. He will act most suspiciously, denying the Op's access to his apartment, and claiming he has no pet. It will become obvious to the Op's that Mark is hiding something, but he isn't. All he has is an incredibly paranoid nature. If pushed to reveal his monkey (called Sam), Mark will claim it moved in yesterday, don't know where it came from or whose it is. If Sam is removed or killed, Mark will threaten legal action, suing for breach of contract regarding the ignoring of his license.

6) Dead Occupant. Pet Crow. The occupant of this apartment, one Mr. Hinkley, has been dead for several days now. There is a faint smell of decay coming from his apartment and the odd crawling. If the Op's break in they find Mr. Hinckley sprawled out in the kitchen, apparently having died from a heart attack (he is in his late forties). Hinckley's face and eyes have been pecked out by the crow, who has started to claw in to his stomach. There is a permit for the crow in among Mr. Hinckley's personal effects, as well as insurance documents stating that all property reverts to the Dept. Environment upon his death (who he worked for).

7) Capriano Family. The Capriano's consist of Leon, Mary and their eight kids. Each kid has a pet rat, none of whom is licensed. The rats are clean and appear friendly, they run free through the apartment, and their is little or no sign of their droppings. If pushed, Leon will offer to buy a license from the Op's, if this is not possible, Mary will offer to release the rats in to the wild rather than have them killed. The kids, aged between four and nine (you work it out), will be badgering the Op's the whole time they are in the apartment, going from maniacally happy to screaming in tears.

8) Empty apartment. According to the records, the apartment is being used by a Ms. Yulon Tyde, who is supposed to live here with her three parakeets. The apartment is empty and has been for some time, there is no sign of either occupant or pets, though the pet licenses were taken out only days before the Op's visit.

9) Black Order terrorist. Douglas 'neon' Farrant, waiting for orders for next assignment. Douglas is a recruiter and general nuisance maker, he is not a sniper. The apartment Douglas is in used to belong to Louise Knapp, in whose name the pet permit is held. There is no sign of her, and if the Op's follow things up, they will find she has moved away and now lives in Uptown with her RazorBall star fiancé Jamie.

Douglas is wired on Blaze UV, to which he is addicted. When the Op's come calling he will take the door off the chain and tell them to come in, when they do he begins firing. Douglas is basically out to lunch, a Black Order fanatic, he will see no chance for escape except through the Op's, he cares little for his own safety.

Use Props stats (Karma pp139), drop Haggie and Sleight, bump Rifle to 7, add Pistol at 5.

Once Douglas starts shooting, the Op's will have to take him out, he cannot be reasoned with.

10) Undercover Operative. Jason Heek, SCL 5 Human Operative. Jason is working a White for the Ministry of War. He is deep undercover and will not reveal his true identity to anyone. He has no gear or equipment that would give him away, though he does have a KK30, for which he has a special Ministry of War permit. Jason has a pet lizard, for which he has no permit. The lizard, a type of Chameleon, is the size of a small dog, and though harmless it looks quite ferocious.

Jason will be firm but polite with the Op's, saying he had a permit, but that there has been some mistake in it not being on their list. Jason will offer the Op's a 100c bribe to just look the other way.

If the Op's kill Jason's pet, or confiscate it, he will become a Major Enemy for them. Jason is pretty deranged, he loves his lizard (Izzy) and will seek to bring as much trauma to the Op's who take it away from him.

This BPN is all about role playing and getting in to character, forcing the Op's to make decisions based on rule bending, and of course, coping with Joe Public.

The BPN will be monitored by Station through the building's security cameras.

The Op's may make it to Third Eye if they take out the Black Order Op in a spectacular enough fashion.

"Yeah, I really think we're ready for a Green. I'm sick of the sight of Mort, let's just see where it takes us...."

This Green will take the players in to a mining colony to seek out the contraband left behind when a notorious smuggler was brought to justice by another squad. All the squad have to, is find the stash of the smuggler, and bring it back.

SCL: 10

Contact Department Of: Expedition

Training Package Rec.: I&I/Any

Colour Code: Green

Summary: Operatives needed to travel to Stone Rim Colonies to retrieve SLA equipment. Squads only. Off world psycho evaluation compulsory. Contact Sheera Makepeice on DE/0144-683-E12.

Coverage: Station Analysis

Consolidated Bonus Scheme: 800c

Payment: Per Squad

At the interview with Sheera the Op's will be given the impression that the BPN is a walk in the park. The reason the Dept. needs Op's at all is some small print in a section of the Depts Operating Code. The squad will be given an off world Psyche Evaluation, which they must all pass (and will unless have any phobias' psychoses of rank 7+), as well as travel permits, boarding passes and maps to their destination.

They must leave in two days time and will be gone for about a week.

The two days is to give them time to get their affairs in order for the absence of a week.

If the Op's do some digging, maybe investigate what is known about the BPN, they may find out that it is as innocent as it seems, with the general opinion being that they have 'landed on their feet' with this one.

But, we of course, know better.

What They Are Told

The squad are told that the smuggler, Nutias (pronounced Noo-ee-shass), was running drugs, guns and vid-discs, between Mort and the Stone Rim Colonies. He was captured by HireGround, a squad of mainly Wraiths, and brought back to Mort, where he awaits trial. For legal (and contractual reasons) HireGround cannot leave Mort to retrieve the contraband that will be needed as proof in Nutias trial, hence the BPN.

The squad are told that the stash is on Mining Station Rool, in the East Sector of the Colonies. The mining operation on Rool is small, being run by Deep C, a subsidiary of SLA.

The executives of Deep C will be expecting the squad, and will assist them in any way they can.

What Actually Happens

The squad are free to make whatever arrangements they see fit for their journey, and are free to gather whatever equipment they think they will need.

Providing they pass their off world psyche tests, they will be issued with the relevant travelling permits and given their boarding passes.

The Foldship Aeon is to be their transport.

Once aboard the shuttle the squad may start to notice some irregularities. They are shown to a small cabin that seats eight. As well as them, there will be two Shaktar warriors, each solemn and silent, and each wearing the Contract badge of the Ministry of war. The Shaktar, who are SCL 5, will be polite but will refuse to answer any questions put to them, saying that as they are under contract, and on active duty, they are forbidden to divulge details of their missions. The Shaktar will go so far as to decline answering the obvious.

Strict checks are made on all paperwork before they are allowed to enter the Foldship. Once aboard the Aeon, things just don't seem right. The squad will be moved to a large holding area, seating around a hundred Op's. They will be the only ones in anything less than PP70, with a lot of Crackshot and a few Dogeybone in evidence. The firepower carried by the other Op's ranges from AR's to Power Reapers. To clinch it, once the Foldship clears the Mort system, a few of

the other Op's will openly arm themselves with Grenades.

The notice to secure for Fold will be flashed briefly, the squad may pick up on everyone else preparing.

Once in Fold, all of the squad will experience a sensation like being underwater with gallons of paint flowing all around them. In the middle of this experience, a Necanthrope will calmly walk down the main gangway, scanning the rows of Op's, seemingly looking for someone in particular.

Once out of fold, the Necanthrope will return and begin ordering the Op's to disembark.

Any of the squad wearing head sets will immediately start picking up various channels and command signals. This together with the horrendous noise from outside the Aeon, will give away the squads location.

They have arrived on Cross.

The Necanthrope, Maze, will make sure the squad disembarks with the rest of the troops. They will be unable to reason with him. If he has to make a show of strength to get the squad off the ship, he will use his Intimidate and ready his Gore Cannon.

The squad will have no choice but to 'go ashore'.

Once off the Foldship, the squad will have a number of choices:

- 1) Find someone to talk to.
- 2) Join a detachment of troops and move in to position.
- 3) Hide.
- 4) Try to sneak back on to the Aeon.

They will (of course) find other choices, but these are the ones we shall tackle.

If they try to find someone to talk to, they will eventually bump in to the Muster Sergeant, who is an SCL 6 human Operative, working for the Ministry of War. Whether you play him as a gruff, unhelpful veteran or a caring father figure, keen to help, is up to you. But the Sarge will try to get the Op's to join an active unit, he needs to hit targets for troops sent to the front, and every pair of hands adds to his quota.

If the squad moves out with some troops voluntarily, you may want to look kindly upon

them. Or you may not. Either way they will get caught up in Operation CrossFire.

Trying to hide is useless. Of course, hiding takes many forms. The squad may just aim to 'mill around', simply keeping moving in the hope they can remain at the jumping off point until the next Foldship arrives. You will have to decide how successful they are, based on whether or not you want to get them involved in Operation CrossFire.

If they want to sneak back on to the Aeon, they will have to deal with Maze, whose job it is to make sure this sort of thing just doesn't happen. Use Necanthrope stats from Karma (pp145) for Maze, noting that he has Detect 10 and Evaluate Opponent 12. Maze will threaten to kill the squad if he finds them, if they still refuse to leave.....

Operation CrossFire

Basically the Op's are in deep shit. You must decide what you want to do with them. The BPN will effectively lapse if they take part in Operation Cross, earning them a minimal SCL decrease. Of course they any do well on Cross, earning a stay of execution for the failure of the BPN.

You may just want to frighten them, giving them a glimpse of Cross, then whisking them away to continue with the BPN.

We have outlined Operation Cross with suggestions for the Op's participation.

Operation CrossFire is designed to draw out the main Thresher scouting group from one of the sectors. The idea is to send out some bait, which the Scout Group will investigate. The bait will be suitably designed to tempt the Scout group in to attacking without full support, which is when the newly arrived squadron of Gargoyles will swoop in and wipe out the Thresher Scouts. That's the plan.

The Op's will soon realise that they are in the detachment that forms the bait. A small unit, theirs is the job of mounting a fake assault on one of the Thresher holding warehouses, supposedly with the intention of sabotaging, rather than raiding.

Once the Thresher Scouts find out they are there they will strike.

At a given signal, the Gargoyle squadron will move in and it should be all over.

You will have to tailor the situation to fit the squad. If they are relatively well armed and experienced, they may be expected to act as a unit on their own, being given ground to take and hold, as well as orders for the retreat. If they are obviously not up to this role, they will be amalgamated with another squad, to form an attack unit.

The Thresher Scout unit consists of twelve pilots in Close Nitt PPA (TH.0003), each suit has been 'battle fitted' with an extra 2 P.V. (12 total).

The Scout Unit is armed with Sheer 0023/B1 AR's.

The Scout Unit will attempt to pin down the opposition, until backup has arrived, if they fall for the trap, they will be tempted to get in close, when the Gargoyles will swoop.

The Op's squad is just one of seventy carrying out exactly the same plan at exactly the same time, the thinking being that even if the Thresher Scout unit does call for help, there will not be enough backup available to cover all locations.

Well, basically it's up to you how you play this one. We'd suggest a sweeping canvas of an encounter, with the squad maybe even getting hold of some 'big guns' courtesy of fallen Op's in their area. If they go for the Thresher themselves, give them a break. Make sure they are being brave and not just stupid, but it would be worth giving them a chance.

The key elements are fear and the overwhelming urge to hide/run away.

Make the Thresher out to be invincible, and of course the overall atmosphere of Cross is one of oppressive, constant, brutal violence.

Now we know we sort of tricked you here, giving you all the shepel about the Stone Rim Colonies, but if you were surprised, hey, imagine how you're players are going to feel!

This is designed to show that basically shit happens. Sometimes things go wrong and there's nothing you can do about it except go with the flow and hope to come out the other end.

EQUIPMENT

FEN 0101 FIRESTORM

Written By: M.S. Caldwell

"The Firestorm fits right in with our image y'know? With all those lovely gadgets, you just know it's gonna give the bad guys a real run for their money. I know it's not cheap, but hey, neither are we."

Newt, 313 partner in BeeBop, Mort 901 SD.

Developed originally for use of on New Paris, where the Shiver security requirements are less conspicuous, the Firestorm gained popularity as a result of its use by a number of celebrity operatives and its appearance in fashion and music promos.

A lot of its success can be attributed to it's appearance in the series; "Slaughter on the Street", where Slaughter drove a highly customised Firestorm.

Available in Slaughter Black, Midnight Blue, Firestorm Red and Racing Green with tinted armoured windows and a comprehensive security package to prevent sabotage or theft as standard fittings.

"Yeah I know it's a top security vehicle. But the temptation to wind the window down and pose is just too much."

Gallows, Brain Waster with Crimson Blade, Mort 901 SD.

SLA Industries may issue a FEN 0101 to Op's with high profile, corporate assignments, though the vehicle must still be paid for in full in the event of any loss or damage.

The Firestorm is FEN's flagship in the secure vehicle market, with further modifications to include a squad sized version.

Game System Stuff

Type: Car

Max Speed: 350km/hour 56m/phase

Movement: Wheeled / Quad axle independent drive.

Dimensions: 3m length, 1.8m width, 1.5m height

Weight: 2 tones

Crew: 1 Driver

Passengers: 2

Skill: Drive, Civilian

Armament: Optional

Cost: 12000c

P.V.: 12

I.D.: 150

Acceleration Rate: 3

Turning Circle: 3

The 'extras' list for the 0101 can be fitted at any dealership within 24 hours, and stands at:

C3S Suite : 500c

An impressive command, control, communications and surveillance suite, operable from the passenger seat. This features radar; radio scanners; IR, UV and optical camera feeds from an array of cameras mounted around the vehicle; audio filter and parabolic microphone; motion scanner; environment scanner; magnetic anomaly scanner; gravity scanner; explosives sensors and audio feeds to and from up to 30 devices including those carried by operatives. Includes Third Eye Nav Map, computer and two way encrypted satellite Television feed line.

ECM Skin : 300c

Based on FEN's successful body suits and cape this option reduces the vehicles heat, radar, sonar and audio signatures at speeds of less than 200km/hour.

Grenade Dispenser : 20c each

Up to 2 grenade dispensers can be fitted to the rear of the vehicle each capable of dispensing 1 grenade per phase, selectable from a feed of up to 30 grenades of any type.

Grenade Launcher : 80c each

Up to 4 of these can be fitted each capable of launching 1 grenade per phase selectable from a feed of 30 grenades (Range 100m Skill: Computer Use)

Forward Firing Weapon Mount : 30c Fixed, 50c Retractable

2 fixed hardpoints are available, onto which weapons may be mounted these can either be on a fixed mount or a retractable housing to preserve the vehicle's sleek lines.

Top Weapon Mount : 100c Fixed, 300c Retractable

This central platform mounted at the highest point on the vehicle allows a single weapon to be mounted on a simplified version of the 'Tri' Sniper Platform mount. It can be fitted in a retractable configuration if desired although this leads to a reduction in headroom for the rear seated passenger.

Wheel Blades : 80c Fixed 140c Retractable
A set of sharp blades for slicing and opponents vehicle or bystanders.
DMG 5, PEN, 2 AD 2.
(Skill; Drive)

Thanks to Mark for the Firestorm.
His Op's obviously have a greater sense of style than mine. All mine want to do is jump in APC's, baton down the hatches and hide.
Maybe now they'll come out a bit more....

MULTI-ROUNDS

General Armaments (GA) have been slowly fading in to the background for several years now, their products and sponsorship's eclipsed by FEN.

It is widely acknowledged that a buyout by FEN is inevitable.

In response, GA has chosen a complete change in tactics. Instead of changing their weapons, they have changed their ammunition.

The Multi-Rounds (MR) are custom built for their GA47 and GA 50. Other 10mm weapons may use the MR but at some risk, misfires are fairly common and the MR has been known to damage the weapon even when fired successfully.

"Multi-Round? Don't fucking talk to me about the MR! Nearly took my hand off, and me 603 is next to fucking useless!"

Marti Quinlan, Human Operative with DedPool, Mort 902 SD.

Multi Rounds (MR) are basically two rounds in one casing, with the front round designed to give penetration and the back to do the damage. The real beauty of the MR is that it is really two separate rounds.

GA produce two variants of MR, one AP/HE one AP/HP:

Round	PEN	DAM	AD
AP/HE	10	8	2
AP/HP	10	12	2

Successfully fired MR add +2 to the Recoil of the weapon.

MR misfire on a natural roll of '2' and when fired from non GA weapons, on a natural roll of '2-03'. Misfires have a 10% chance of destroying the chamber of the weapon and count as a shot fired with Recoil at +10, but with no chance of hitting the intended target.

GARGOYLE: MULTI-PURPOSE AIRCRAFT

Written By: Leath Sheales

Extract from Uptown Mort Magazine, Summer 901 SD.:

"The production war between those two ancient rivals increased it's pace today, when both competitors took their fight to the skies! That's right, within a mere half hour after Karma released its 'Gargoyle' Multi-Purpose aircraft, Dark Lament struck back with their incredible new design, the 'Harpie'. Rather than tell you about the two new shapes you will be seeing flying amongst the ever-present SCAFs, we'll let you read the official release reports for yourself."

"NEW! From Karma. The Gargoyle Multi-purpose aircraft. After months of extensive yet ultra-secret testing, our new design was ready for release. I think you'll agree that the Gargoyle is an impressive vessel. With its chitinous armour casing it looks like something out of nightmares, which is exactly how SLA's enemies will view it."

The initial concept was simple enough, Karma has wanted to break into the transport market for quite some time and several designs had been proposed. However, the most difficult part of the design was trying to create a way of manufacturing a biogenetic engine. After several less than impressive prototypes (which will be improved and will be seen on the market shortly) the biogenetic engine was aborted from this project and a more conventional approach was taken. After much searching, Karma obtained the services of

several engineers who had worked on the Killcopter and SCAF aircraft. From their knowledge a new high-power high-efficiency turbine and ducted exhaust system was designed. When cleared, this design was built into an incredibly strong yet light weight metallic alloy chassis. This chassis would form the base for the biogenetic tissue that would become the Gargoyle to be grown around.

The craft is basically a fleshy musculature grown around the chassis, with a very durable exoskeleton, which provides both protection and an excellent control surface. The muscle bundles of the craft contract and relax in order to control exhaust angles, turbine throttle, weapon triggers and aim, and angle of control surfaces. This is very similar to a human body moving wrists, arms and the like, it is all a natural process to the Gargoyle. Most impressive in the design of the Gargoyle is the incorporation of a semi-intelligent brain. This brain does not have the same capacity as a human or even a Stormer, but is comparable to an obedient dog, able to understand simple commands and act out its master's wishes.

For the pilot to enter, he or she speaks a simple voice signal, which the Gargoyle hears and understands. A section of the armour plating raises on top of the craft. This allows the pilot access to the cockpit. The pilot lies face-down in the cockpit, with arms outstretched, fingers extended and legs slightly separated. The fleshy interior of the cockpit has this design indented into it, so it is a simple matter for the pilot to remember the correct shape. When they have settled, the armour reseals and the cockpit interior contracts around the pilot providing a custom fit. It is actually very comfortable yet rather unnerving for the inexperienced, therefore much of a new pilot's initial training works towards desensitising the pilot to their surrounding. From this position a HUD appears in front of the pilot. This is comprised of information gathered from the various sensory receptors built into the Gargoyle. These include sight, hearing, IR vision (similar to that incorporated in the Domino Dogs), Turbine output, weapon status and others.

Once the initial discomfort of new pilots disappears they discover that the Gargoyle is an amazingly simple craft to control. Flight is a simple matter of moving your body and issuing voice commands. In fact, because the Gargoyle

so closely follows the pilot's movements, many pilots have likened it more to flying themselves rather than being in an aircraft. The piloting skills needed are nothing like a conventional craft such as a Killcopter, yet once learnt the craft becomes more agile, responsive and effective than any purely conventional mechanical craft.

The turbines that power the Gargoyle are run by efficient fusion generators. These are in turn fuelled by purified gases produced by the Gargoyles metabolic processes, which are written directly into its DNA code. The tissues themselves are fed by using Karma manufactured food bricks remarkably similar to those incorporated by their Biogenetic armour line, although they are of course larger.

G a m e S y s t e m S t u f f

Karma MP/SCA/041 - Gargoyle

Type: VTOL Jet Powered Fighter.

Max Speed. 1200 km/hour.

Movement: Twin ducted multi-exhaust fusion turbines.

Dimensions: 3.3m length, 4.0m width, 2.0m height.

Weight: 1.25 tones.

Crew: 1

Passengers: 0

Skill: Pilot, Gargoyle.

Armament: Variable (Standard load: Tri-barrelled Power Reaper, MAL assault cannon (modified 100 rounds ammunition), 2 air-to-air heat-seeking missiles (clearance codes needed for launch).

Cost: 500,000 credits.

P.V. 24, I.D. 500

Acceleration Rate: 30.0

Turning Circle: 0 stationary, 80 at full speed.

Additional Notes: Symbiotic responses +2 dodge.

Sensory Package +1 to hit.

Wings can fold up to allow passage through narrow paths. Width 2.0m, max speed 250 km/hour.

In Issue 10 of TBP, Dark Lament's response; the Harpie. (It's worth the wait....)

It has been suggested that the Gargoyle is essentially a GM's toy, and that the Op's will never get to use it, so what's the point.

Well.

The Gargoyle may need test piloting, by a PC of course, or retrieving from one of the Sectors, or a rogue Gargoyle pilot may have to be brought in by the Op's, or one of the Op's may be assigned it as part of their War World duty, or the Op's may need to rescue one from the clutches of a Thresher pilot who has it stored, you get the picture.

Of course the Gargoyle is powerful, but so is the Killcopter. The Gargoyle adds atmosphere and develops the Karma arsenal, showing why SLA Industries rules the WoP.

As a scenario idea, how about a squadron of Gargoyles (maybe five or six) taking on a full Thresher Unit, complete with Sarge and support?

War Worlds will never be the same again.

And what about if DN got hold of some, how could they use it, are there failsafe's, as basically the Gargoyle is semi-intelligent? If not, are the space ports of Mort ever going to be secure again?

SOFT COMPANIES

PURGE

Company Slogan: "SLA has nothing we need."

Purge first came to the attention of the Mort public in 895 SD., when they were credited with the destruction of the Necanthrope Union : Loom.

Since then they have been operating out of Lower Downtown and Cannibal Sector Five, with the occasional excursion in to Suburbia and even Central.

They have the reputation of being something of the brave underdog, fighting their oppressive would be masters; SLA. Most of the public at large don't know, or don't care how dangerous Purge really are. As far as most citizens are aware, Purge are simply Ebons who have had a bad deal and decided to strike back at SLA.

In the Lower quarters of Downtown the citizens are positively helpful to Purge, and one more than one occasion have helped in their evasion from SLA.

The black markets of Downtown are beginning to receive some of the goods being produced by

Purge, though they are usually priced too highly for your average citizen. Props, Financiers and some Gang Leaders have had dealings with Purge, extending their street protection even further.

There is a general feeling that Purge are on the same side as the average, downtrodden citizen, and that most of the media coverage given to them is propaganda and lies.

The most recent Purge raid targeted a squad of Op's who were sent in on a Yellow to sweep and clear a market in Downtown sector 280. The squad were killed in fierce hand to hand fighting, their bodies were never recovered, neither was their gear.

Game System Stuff

Purge were born in 895 SD. from the remnants of a secret Dark Lament sub department. DL were experimenting with Ferals working for them, the Ferals seemed to be able to instill Flux in to DL Ebb equipment far quicker than other Ebons. In 894 SD., Senti heard of their use of Ferals and shut down the department, eight DL executives, six of them Ebons, disappeared completely during the shut down.

Three of the fourteen Ferals working for the department managed to escape the purge that followed. They ran to Downtown, where they came from in the first place. The three decided to set up in opposition to SLA, to continue to manufacture Ebb artefacts and to repay SLA for their hunting down of their brethren.

The three Ferals are:

Chalice; Communication, Detect, Enhancement, Healing, Senses, Telekinesis.

Thunder; Blast, Blue Thermal, Enhancement, Reality folding, Red Thermal.

Chain; Detect, Healing, Protect, Senses, Gore Cannon. Chain has Formulae sixteen and will soon 'turn', she hears the call of the White and it will be a matter of days, maybe weeks, before she becomes Necanthrope. Chain's Gore Cannon is fully functional.

The three Ferals have gathered together a band of eight other Ferals as well as thirty four 'mules', taking the company total to forty five.

Purge are based in sector 280 in Downtown, their main haunt is a disused warehouse, next to a tenement block and a rambling entertainment

complex. All of the citizens in the adjoining buildings know of their existence and support them.

Purge currently specialise in the making of Ebon equipment, which they sell to support their hidden agenda. At the moment they can make any piece of equipment except Pineal Stem, Focus and Deathsuit.

All of their equipment costs +10%-20% more than list price for SLA stuff.

Purge also conduct hit and run raids on squads, stealing their equipment both to sell and maintain their level of operation. Each of their Mule employees is equipped as well as a Convert or a Prop, with the other Ferals equipped as well as any Op's.

The three behind Purge are working on an artefact that will allow Ferals to resist the White, and another to allow them to enter and exit the White still in control of their senses, making them beyond the control of Intruder and SLA.

Purge are of course unaware of the true nature of the White, and their grail like quest for these two artefacts blinds them to the impossibility of the task.

When Purge hit a squad, they get in and out very quickly, taking no prisoners and leaving no trace of their attack. Usually, the bodies of the Op's are removed to be searched thoroughly, then they are dumped in one of the Cannibal Sectors.

rumours are beginning to spread through SLA of Intruders secret admiration (and maybe even support) of Purge.

NIGHTSHIFT

Company Slogan: "Want to get off world? SLA don't run a NightShift."

NightShift run a small fleet of space ships around the immediate vicinity of Mort. Their main runs are to and from New Paris and planet hopping around Mort.

NightShift run cheap and cheerful excursions to anywhere within their range around Mort, they don't ask questions about cargo, and they don't

worry about using official travel lanes or space ports.

NightShift have a 90% success rate for take off and landing, having only one ship destroyed by SLA while in flight in the last year.

It is rumoured that NightShift are backed by DarkNight.

NightShift can be contacted at any of the seedier areas of any space port, or in any Downtown bar notorious for it's DN connections.

Not very much is known about NightShift on the streets, as their services are mainly used by those higher up the Soft Company chain than street level. Numerous softies have had dealings with NightShift, and all seem satisfied with the service.

Game System Stuff

NightShift are funded and backed by DarkNight.

DN found a cache of technology on the War World Cross linked to an old Cross corporation, S.L.O. Enterprises. S.L.O. built spaceships, DN raided their last storage/production facility, managing to steal six ships, huge stockpiles of spares and a vast amount of technical data, all of which they immediately shipped to Mort. NightShift were set up in the Autumn of 901 SD and have become an immediate money maker.

The six ships run by NightShift are classed as light freighters, each with a cargo capacity of about two hundred tones. In appearance they are similar to huge FEN 5009 Stingray's (Mort SB, pp82), being about ten times the size.

The NightShift vessels have Ion Drives as well as six independent Fusion Prop Motors for 'on world' maneuvering. The ships can land and take off vertically, remarkably quickly and needing only minimal room.

All of NightShift's vessels are unarmed. Each takes two pilots and a navigator to work at full capacity.

Some examples of NightShift prices are:
New Paris, Return from Mort; 240c/4800u.

Meny, return from Mort; 200c/4000u.

Full cargo hold hire, Mort to anywhere on Mort; 600c/16000u.

Full cargo hold hire, New Paris to Mort; 1000c/20,000u.

Obviously only the larger Soft Companies and the more affluent can afford NightShift services, though it is not unknown for Op's to want to move around away from 'official' channels, and NightShift ask no questions, they take anyone who can pay.

Passengers aboard NightShift flights have their weapons stowed in sealed units in the hold, with absolutely no access during flight to the hold. As well as two pilots and a navigator, each flight usually has three or four security goons, each a specialist in unarmed combat. Sometimes Props are used, armed with blades or clubs.

NightShift can call on DN agents for especially tricky missions.

NightShift's Secret Journeys

NightShift are a useful revenue earner for DN, as well as being an invaluable source of transport within the Mort system. But that is not what DN really want NightShift for.

Several rogue Ebons and Ferals have been pioneering a form of Folding that relies on 'piggy backing' a Foldship. This uses the Foldship Navigators ability, but keys the following ship to the same destination, using the Ebon/Feral pilot's ability.

Effectively the following ship is invisible to the Foldship and does not need to manipulate the vast amounts of Flux needed for Fold travel. It also leaves the following ship free to navigate without relying on Glyph pillars, whose use would signal the following ship's presence to SLA.

DarkNight have been getting more and more bold with their experimental travel, and soon they hope to shadow a Foldship towards White Earth. Eventually DN want to be able to explore the area of space around White Earth.

Only the upper most echelons of both DarkNight and NightShift are aware of the plans for the company.

Five of the six vessels are used for Mort system travel, while the sixth, the Pegasus, is most often used for shadow Foldship travel.

All travel in to and around the area of White Earth is monitored by Bitterness and his servants.

Persistent travel in to the Black Stump will alert the Diamond Dogs, who will wreak their havoc on any life forms they encounter.

You have been warned....

RADICAL WAVES

Company Slogan: "Catch a wave man."

Radical Waves were born from the ashes of Slayer Don't Surf, which was finally shut down by SLA in the Summer or 901 SD.

The new company learned from the mistakes of the first and radical waves are set to be around for a long time, by Soft Company standards anyway.

Radical Waves have toughened up the image of the Power Board, both by their choice of sponsorships and their choice of operating procedures.

Game System Stuff

Radical Waves were formed by the two surviving partners from Slayer Don't Surf; Adam Nurdin and Jonathan Seer. They employ thirty six production staff to make the boards, and hire out three Props to protect their production/storage facility. Large bribes are paid to the main gang in Downtown Sector 42, the RedRats, for added protection and extra eyes and ears on the streets. Moneys have been paid to the Shivers of 42, ensuring their selective lack of attention.

Radical Waves supply much needed revenue for sector 42 and the citizens generally support the activities in their sector.

Major innovations have been made in Power Board design. Boards are now faster and more maneuverable. Radical Wave boards leave other Power Boards in their wake, including those made by Charlie-Shak, the official SLA Sub-company in the market.

The skill needed for Power Boarding can either be; Martial Arts, Gymnastics or Acrobatics. Users with none of these skills count every point of Dexterity above six as their Power Board skill, i.e. Dex 9, power Board skill 3.

Power Boards come in all shapes and sizes, depending upon individual taste and skill preference, some people prefer wide, short boards, others like long thin ones. Radical Waves supply all tastes.

A typical board is listed below. Modifications and extras can push the price up by +10%-40%.

P o w e r B o a r d

Max. Speed: 200km/hour: 31m/phase

Dimensions: 2m length, 1m width

Weight: 18kg

Crew: 1 Rider

Cost: 75c / 2000u

P.V. / I.D. : 8 / 90

Acceleration Rate: 3

*Turning Circle: ranges 1 - 6

*Each level of turn below 6 adds +1 to difficulty of turn, i.e. TC of 1, +5 DR.

The vast majority of boards produced now have in-line wheels with the motors mounted beneath the board along side the wheels. Most breaking systems are now pressure mounted in the board, activated by the heel of the foot.

Radical Waves are currently sponsoring two Props to use their boards; Ice Maiden and HeadShot. The serial killer Ringer has also been seen making a kill on a board from Radical Waves, though no 'official' deal has been made.

Third Eye are currently looking in to the possibility of sponsoring a Power Board slot on their 'Street Racing' show, placing Charlie-Shak users in competition with Radical Wave's users. SLA tends to be slow to move against companies like Radical Waves, as they pose no immediate threat to their security.

M E E T N G R E E T

After the success of his Deely Mall Massacre interview with Jaymz from Cutting Edge, Frank

Weiss conducted a 'follow up' interview with Silk, the 'leader' of Cutting Edge.

The interview was conducted during a drinking session at BlueBerry's Bar, thanks go to 'frisky' Rick Baoum for letting us use his back room. All material licensed to Inter-Com, © 902 SD. Eye 4 Inter-Com, under license to Third Eye.

FW: "Thank you for seeing me. I understand you are currently in-between BPN's, sort of a rest?"

S: "Time to gather our thoughts."

FW: "What sort of direction are Cutting Edge looking in?"

S: "Forward. We always look forward. We aim to change, to progress, to move with the times."

FW: "Any thoughts on the outcome of the Deely Mall operation?"

S: "We were thrown in to a situation, I think we simply did what we needed to. Not one of our best, not much time to plan. Too hectic. I think Jaymz and J'Kqwn came out best, though J'Kqwn will not admit it, he was very brave, covered for us until we got it together."

FW: "Jaymz said he saw you with a Flintlock? A change for you?"

S: (smiles) "I think you'll find Jaymz was mistaken. Fen 091, no Flintlock."

FW: "Anything from Laughing Dead? I heard they were going to up your sponsorship deal, maybe offer exclusive contracts?"

S: "We are currently negotiating with Laughing Dead, so I can't really comment. But I would like some stability for the squad, maybe look to one department."

FW: "Any comments on your possible relationship with one of the Slice Girls?"

S: (laughs) "Well you know, maybe I was being a little naive to think it could work."

FW: "So you were connected to one of them?"

S: "Strange turn of phrase. Connected? Maybe 'associated', but that's history. Time to look to the future."

FW: "Do you think it's important for an Operative to have a steady relationship?"

S: "Yes. Yes I do. I know it's hard, but everyone needs someone to ground them, to give them a base, a stabiliser."

FW: "Nothing between you and Matty?"

S: (Frowns) "No. Matty is a very good friend, we have been through a lot, maybe too much to be anything other than sort of family. Who told you that?"

FW: "Just picking up rumours...."

S: "Rumours? I expected better from you."

FW: "Sorry. Sometimes the job takes over."
 S: "There's a truth for you. And a challenge."
 FW: "The outcome of the Yellow? Satisfactory?"
 S: "It's always satisfactory to receive recognition for a job well done. We all need a pat on the back occasionally, and SCL increases are the sincerest form of recognition."
 FW: "Thanks for your time, sorry it was a bit disjointed."
 S: (smiles) "I'm sure you will do better next time."
 FW: "I think there will be a next time too...."
 S: (laughs) "You have no shame."
 FW: "I'm a reporter."
 S: "Aren't we all?"
 FW: "This interview brought to you by a chastised frank Weiss for Inter-Com. Back to the studio."

Silk	
Name	Reel 'Silk' Velon
Classification	Ebon
Package	Invest. & Interr.
Squad	Cutting Edge
Strength	6
Dexterity	10
Diagnose	9
Concentration	12
Charisma	10
Physique	8
Knowledge	11
Cool	9
Walk	1
Run	2
Sprint	(3) 5
Movement	25
Half Movement	50
No Movement	75

Silk has molded her Deathsuit to resemble an ashen black liquid, which clings to her lithe frame, when she gets angry or sad, it seems to run and drip tears which are re-absorbed as they run along the suit.

"Silk is our nominated leader. She is respected by all of us, she is probably the only one who could get away with telling us *all* what to do. 'Silk'. Smooth, geddit?"

Jaymz, Human Operative with Cutting Edge.

"Silk is very effective. I've seen her talk her way out of a coffin. Humans (and Ebons) just

seem to want to do what she says. Odd. Only seen her pull her Farjacket three times, hasn't missed yet though. I'd rather be with her than against her."

Liaane, Wraith Raider with Cutting Edge.

"Silk is an honourable squad leader. Her word is as good as mine. Mess with her, mess with all of us."

J'Kqwn, Shaktar with Cutting Edge.

SKILL	RANK
Literacy	4
Detect	10
Rival Company	3
SLA Information	4
Communiqué	3
Persuasion	6
Streetwise	7
Interview	6
Forensics	5
Pistol	10
Martial Arts	8
Running	6
Evaluate Opponent	8
Psychology	8
EBB SKILLS	RANK
Formulae	3
Blast	5
Detect	8
Healing	5
Protect	10
Communication	7

E b b E q u i p m e n t

Ebb Medkit
 Deathsuit

(Deathsuit is Heavy: +2 PHYS, +2 Cool, Store of 20 Flux. PV 16, ID 100 per location).

E q u i p m e n t

FEN 091 Farjacket, Recoil Baffling 5, Laser Painting, 4 HEAP, 4 HESH clips.

Silk prefers to keep out of hand to hand combat, though she is more than capable of defending herself with Martial Arts. Silk rarely uses Blast, her Farjacket seldom sees action, though when it does, she never seems to miss.

OPERATIVES VIEWS

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"Yeah, I heard some talk, we all have. Probably just some drunk engineers shooting off their mouth. I mean the Matrix going down? No way. Just couldn't happen. Mr. S wouldn't let it."

Walken, Matrix Observer, SCL 6, Dept. Internal Affairs, Mort 902 SD.

"Yeah I saw it, and I'm telling you it was suicide. The 313 just put his Blitzer in his mouth and BOOM. Bullet from a sniper my ass. Of course, you ask me with that thing switched on, and yeah, sniper.... what do you know!"

Fingle, Mort Un-Employed, 902 SD.

"New Paris? Just a bunch of fucking skin jobs walking around with their noses up each others arses. Nothing there for me.... you might like it though."

'Wild' Bill McClintock, Frother with GoatSucker, Mort 902 SD.

"Time was it was just about the money, the paycheck, y'know? But it's not. Fame's cool, not just for the money, but for the added freedom. Responsibility? Yeah, s'pose. But being dedicated to your own success is it's own responsibility, right? And I mean look at me.... one of progress' best servants. Oh I don't know, you got me all confused now, just fuck off and leave me alone.... when will this be going out?"

Sime Moloch, Brain Waster with DownTime, Mort 902 SD.

"Stygmartyr are there for a reason. White Earth? Well, you might say that, but I couldn't possibly comment."

Janus, 'Black' Op., SCL 5a, Mort 902 SD.

"Dark Lament. Karma. Same thing if you ask me. All the fighting is just a front, a ploy to get us poor saps to believe we actually have some choice. Just another big fat lie to keep us from getting restless, know what I mean?"

Mo 'Juice' Klawinsky, SCL 9 Operative with EightBall, Mort 902 SD.

"And what about them Scav's eh? Taking out Props left right and centre. Where they coming from? Worse than the War Crims, these bastards hunt in packs! Like Carriens with brains and guns. And like the way they seem to be moving? They talk without talking, like a hive. It's no secret, they're the new menace. Better get in to 'em now is what I say."

Jerry Slazinski, Human Operative with BootBoys, Mort 902 SD.

"Word is the Atmospheric Processors have already been hit by Thresher, took out two of them back in the spring of last year. No, stupid. I know you never heard about it. That's my point. Although they must be a target for the Softies, how much damage can it do taking one or two of them out? I mean, I never noticed anything, how about you? Exactly."

Axle Bush, Engineer, Dept. Environment, Mort 902 SD.

"BPN's seem to be getting harder to come by, independent ones I mean. Seems it all comes down to working for departments. Pisses me off. Whatever happened to the good old spur of the moment stuff, get in, get out and thanks for the money. Too much paperwork, too many rules, departmental BPN's can do your head in."

Brad Gurhin, Human Operative with Zero Tolerance, Mort 902 SD.

"Well I know what I saw. I say he was an Ebon and he wasn't wearing a Deathsuit. Bang. Blast wiped out Pinky just before I got a shot off. Yeah, I think he wishes he did have a Deathsuit now, not that he can actually wish anything, being dead and all."

Ferragh 'fergie' Chaw, Wraith Raider with Dual Flow, Mort 902 SD.

"Mort's great. Off world sucks. Last BPN took us to Hed, well shit no, we didn't want to go there, that's just the way it turned out. Stone Rim Colonies, New Paris, Hed, Polo, all just Mort in a different place. Kn'nth looks interesting, probably turn out to be just the same as everywhere else though. From now on it's Mort for us. Just don't seem worth going off world. White Earth? Now that would be a BPN and a half...."

Spooky, Human Operative with LightsOut, Mort 902 SD.

Issue 9 was the last of the 'optimistic' issues. It was becoming clear that SLA was well and truly dead. I'd also run out of any artwork, and there were no more articles from other people, so I was back to writing 99.9% of it again....

Looking back on issue 9, I realise that I really did think TBP could take off in a big way, I had some interest from a writers co-operative, a bunch of artists and a few shops. But SLA was thought of in the same way as 'Sky Realms Of Jorune', a bloody excellent game, that was doomed to 'cult' status among a few faithful die hard fans.

So, with all this, and the total lack of support from the then SLA-I, it was a testing time.

But then it always seems to have been like that.

Max Bantleman, 2001.