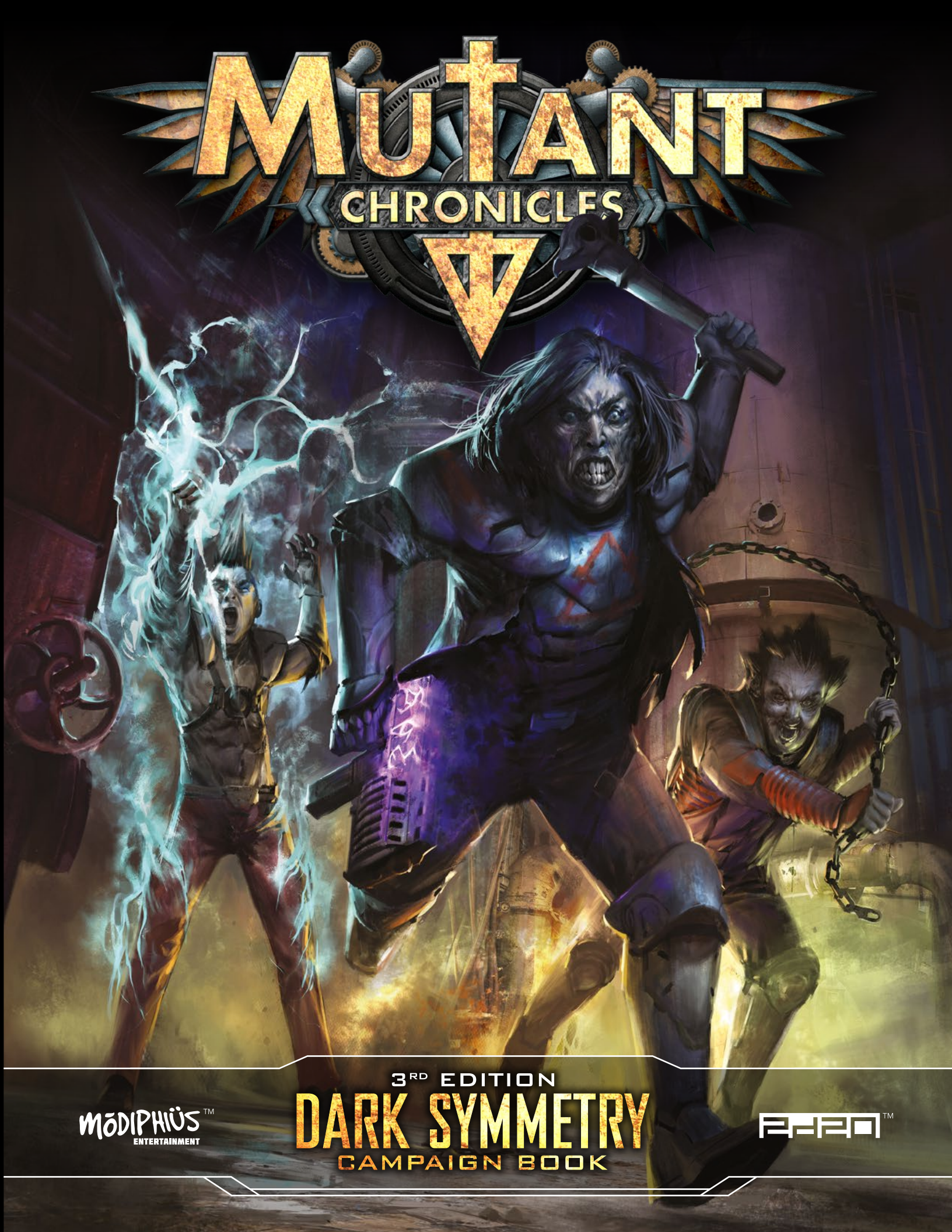


MUTANT

CHRONICLES

V



3RD EDITION

DARK SYMMETRY

CAMPAIGN BOOK

MÖDIPHÜS[™]
ENTERTAINMENT

FASA[™]



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MÖDIPHIOUS™
ENTERTAINMENT

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INTRODUCTION

BACK TO THE BEGINNING...

Welcome to the *Dark Symmetry Campaign* book. This volume contains a series of adventures set during the harrowing and traumatic time of the Dark Symmetry era—a time when mankind was first coming into contact with the horrors of the Darkness, not yet knowing what it means.

The adventures in this book can be broken into two distinct storylines—*The Fall of von Hölle*, and the *Dark Symmetry Campaign* proper.

The Fall of von Hölle, including the prelude adventure, *Straffar Gatan 39*, is set at the very beginning of the Dark Symmetry era, mere days after Imperial Conquistadors set foot upon Pluto. In this storyline, the horrors of the Dark Symmetry reach the unsuspecting worlds of mankind. A century before the Brotherhood is founded, a group of Luna PD personnel and freelancers encounter the dreadful influence of the Darkness for the first time.

The Dark Symmetry Campaign is a longer tale, broken into multiple parts, set towards the end of the Dark Symmetry era, some fifty years after the end of the First Corporate Wars and the foundation of the Brotherhood. While the war against the Dark Legion rages on across the solar system, a group of Luna PD investigators uncover a conspiracy that threatens to undermine mankind's struggle for survival.

PLAYING IN THE DARK SYMMETRY ERA

Guidelines for playing in the different eras of the *Mutant Chronicles* setting can be found in **Chapter 38: Eras of Play** in the core rulebook. However, there are two points that bear repeating and clarifying.

Firstly, player characters in the Dark Symmetry era are somewhat more limited than their counterparts in the later eras. Cybertronic doesn't yet exist. White Star are still mostly on Earth. The Brotherhood, while founded in this era, takes time to grow into the monolithic organisation it would become, and most of its early members are loyal to The Brothers specifically. Characters loyal to the Brothers (as described in the *Brotherhood* sourcebook) are a viable option in the *Dark Symmetry Campaign* (the Brotherhood having been founded fifty years previous), but not during *The Fall of von Hölle*. Iconic careers in the rulebook and all sourcebooks are marked with the eras they are applicable for—only those which are available in the Dark Symmetry Era may be taken.

Secondly, technology is quite different in the Dark Symmetry era. Sophisticated technology is widespread and abundant in the years before *The Fall of von Hölle*, and even after the Dark Symmetry starts causing technology to fail, this failure is not uniform or consistent. Technology fails seemingly at the worst possible moments, as if a malign presence is deciding what to corrupt and when, and it may not even overtly fail—a corrupted computer may produce minor errors and faults that lead their users to the wrong conclusions, but nothing occurs to make him think that anything is wrong. The concept of technological corruption isn't one cemented in the minds of humanity for a long time, and while people come to be wary of technology, the widespread abandonment of high-tech devices takes a long time to happen. Thus, even in the *Dark Symmetry Campaign*, sophisticated technology is still widespread, though people regard technology of all kinds with greater scepticism than they did before.



STRAFFAR GATAN 39

BACKGROUND

The player characters are detectives from Luna PD 32nd Precinct Homicide Division sent to investigate a callout to Straffar Gatan 39.

The dark events that take place in Straffar Gatan 39 serve as a prelude to the Fall of Von Hölle adventure, and occur one day after Imperial Conquistadors on Pluto discovered a strange tablet in ancient ruins that unleashed the force of the Dark Symmetry. Many of the story threads presented here link into the larger story, but we've seeded the plot with many threads that you can weave into your own *Mutant Chronicles* adventures.

The mission is ideal for the pre-generated Luna PD characters presented with this adventure: Detective Vance Ryder, Patrolman Vents, Paramedic 'Angel' Kramer, and Freelancers Nix, Tsuyoshi, and Arseni. Should your players want to generate their own characters, they should have some connection to Luna PD, or have some significant attachment that would enable them to be called in to investigate a case for Luna PD.

The adventure is written with a fairly open structure to give the GM control over pacing, as the mission needs to start with a sense of foreboding and build the levels of tension and paranoia, before finally resolving in a deadly confrontation that saves the day... or does it?



ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

The events of this adventure take place in Straffar Gatan 39 (the delightfully named "Punishment Street") the day after the Conquistadors broke the seals on Pluto, and released the Dark Symmetry. The players must battle a rising evil known as a Castigator before it can infect the entire city!

The adventure is built around the growing menace of an evil necrotechnological 'Twisted Marionette', a servant of the Dark Apostle Ilian. The creature is gathering power at the heart of the

tenement, and building a powerful Dark Symmetry antenna to cause fractures in our reality. This will allow dark spires to slip through the fractures and, via the psychokinetic images on the screens throughout the tenement, corrupt the remaining humans, creating additional Malignants and infecting Luna City. What caused the creation of the Twisted Marionette will remain a mystery for this adventure.

The plot of the adventure is loosely broken up into three phases, which represent the various levels of activity and response from the Twisted Marionette. There are four apartments on each of the lower floors. Until the Twisted Marionette is disturbed, the order that the characters visit the apartments is up to them.

As this is a starting game, the GM should start with only one Dark Symmetry point (DSP) for each player character. It is advisable for the GM to save about half of the DSP gained for Phase Three. You'll want five to ten Dark Symmetry points for the final scene if possible.

PHASE ONE: THE CREATURE OBSERVES!

Initially, the Twisted Marionette observes the investigators. They should feel as if they are constantly being watched. This phase is all about building tension—the players know something is going to happen, even if their characters do not yet. Whenever the investigators succeed on an Observation or **Insight test**, they also become aware that the eyes of the presenters on the TV programmes are following them across the room. They should notice the peep holes in the doors of the apartments they pass suddenly darken as if a face were pressed against them... *even for apartments they know to be empty!* Dark Symmetry points may be spent to distract, delay, or unnerve the investigators. Examples include:

- ◆ **1 DSP:** A deafening scream drowns out the Investigators when attempting to question someone. This increases the difficulty of any Persuade or **Command tests** by one step.
- ◆ **1 DSP:** A deranged ganger starts accusing the investigators of spying on him. This should be used as a distraction at a dramatic moment.
- ◆ **2 DSP:** Making the wind outside set the building swaying. Moving around the building becomes a slower, more cautious affair. In combat, all zones within the building for the remainder of the scene become difficult terrain, requiring an **Average D1 Athletics** or **Acrobatics test** to overcome.

WHAT YOU KNOW

- ◀ You have been sent to investigate an incident at **Straffar Gatan 39**, a rundown tenement in the Nines—a particularly nasty part of the Perimeters.
- ◀ Dispatch has received multiple calls from **residents reporting screaming on the third floor**. Dispatch receives calls like this all the time and they mostly go unanswered, but after the sixth call a Patrol unit was dispatched.
- ◀ The Patrol unit visited the tenement. Three adjacent apartments had their doors wide open. **Inside they found**

no signs of struggle or theft, but they did find blood stains in various rooms. They knocked on the doors of other residents but no one claims to have seen anything, though they did hear screaming. Before they could investigate, they had to leave to answer a high priority call in a nearby neighbourhood.

- ◀ Shit flows downhill—straight to you. Your squad is already in **Lieutenant Vordach's** bad books following a recent Officer Involved Shooting.
- ◀ Luna PD Criminal Intelligence suspects that **Sandrine Peterson**, missing

daughter of the senior Bauhauser executive François Peterson, may be hiding out in the building. The Lieutenant makes it very clear that it is in the best interests of your careers that she is found alive and well.

- ◀ Your assignment is simple: **investigate what happened in the tenement.**
- ◀ **The neighbourhood around the tenement is controlled by the Croaks**, a nasty street gang with a reputation for violence and having no fear of cops. They control the drug trade in the Nines.



Life is a cheap commodity in the Nines.

THE NINES

The Perimeters fringe the core of Luna City, deep in the shadows of the mighty corporate towers and downwind of the forges, furnaces and factories in the Industrial Districts. The Perimeters house the unfortunate masses who toil away in factories or eke out an existence on the miserable dole provided by the corporations, hunched up in front of second-rate TV screens that spoon-feed them corporate soaps offering the false dream of a better future. Many never leave their apartments, relying on fast food deliveries, food parcels from one of the charities fostered by The Brothers, and cheap booze to survive. Those lucky enough to have jobs must run the gauntlet of dangerous traffic and local gangs to get to the local Underground stations.

The shouts and noises of neighbours are just one more thing to drown out. When cops turn up it is usually en masse in a raid on a gang drug den. The first thing you learn in the Nines is to keep your head down and look out for yourself, because if things go wrong, no one will help you.

The Nines is a typical district of the Perimeters. Jammed in with little thought, cheap and nasty, most of the buildings in the Nines were never designed to last this long and, over time, the once straight and clean concrete walls have been patched and filled, adapted and mangled as people do their best to turn them into homes.

One of Bauhaus' innumerable, faceless, subsidiaries is building a new freight train

line straight through the Nines to the ports. Somewhere within the Byzantine bureaucracy a finance executive vetoed the plan to tunnel as too expensive and insisted on the far cheaper, subsurface trench and cover construction. Compulsory purchase orders were issued, and the residents in the buildings scheduled for demolition got insultingly-small pay-offs to move. But in many ways, they were the lucky ones. With no care for the lives of the remaining locals, Bauhaus bulldozers brutally hacked the proposed route through the tenements and streets to begin excavations. The neighbouring tenement to the scene of these events was one of those torn down.

STRAFFAR GATAN 39

Straffar Gatan 39, a ten-story tenement and location of the callout, is perched precariously at the edge of a deep excavation. Formerly a typical Nines tenement, a slice has been crudely hacked off—two apartments on each floor are now gone. It is braced with minimal rusting steelwork to protect the construction workers beneath, but this has not prevented subsidence from setting in, leaving it listing at a slight angle. The tenement is under tremendous stress, and entering requires nerves of steel.

Floorboards creak, new cracks appear, and plaster falls off the walls as each bulldozer passes beneath. It is only a matter of time before the whole building is torn down or collapses. Yet, despite this, Straffar Gatan 39 is still partially inhabited. The tenement is dying, dragging everything and everyone inside with it.



You are a detective in the Luna PD 32nd Precinct Investigations Division. It is your job to pick up the pieces and try to figure out what happened after the patrol cops have responded to an immediate crime.

The only law enforcement organisation with jurisdiction over the whole of Luna, Luna PD was founded by Capitol in an act of civic patronage, and brings together seconded investigators from each of the corporations with cops recruited directly from the population.

However, Luna PD is under-funded and subject to the conflicting will of the corporations, so your superiors are often forced to hire Freelancers to work with you. These Freelancers bring a willingness to take on dirty tasks and are preferable to the donated "corporate liaisons" you are regularly forced to work with, who are more meddlesome than helpful.

A sense of doing something that matters without tying yourself to any one corporation is what brought you to Luna PD. Even with all the bureaucracy, collapsed investigations, and corporate interference, most days you do feel like you make a difference. Unfortunately, you have a feeling this is not going to be one of the good days.



PHASE TWO: THE CREATURE GATHERS POWER!

This phase should begin when the investigators have visited one or two apartments, but before they've had a chance to make a clear assessment of the situation. Either once they've visited the crime scene or Abigail Baxter's apartment would be ideal.

Now the Twisted Marionette perceives the players as a potential threat, and makes the programmes on the TVs start to suffer from bursts of static and broadcast complex binaural tones on sub-audible frequencies. The corridors begin to fill with a mist that smells of burning plastic. The investigators must pass an **Average D1 Resistance test** to stomach the stench; those who fail the test suffer one Dread. This combination of the binaural tones and mists quickly start to have an effect on the investigators. They begin to detect movement in their peripheral vision. The important aspect to play up here is: *Can the players trust their own senses?* Dark Symmetry points may be spent to emphasise distractions and a feeling of paranoia. These are in addition to the Dark Symmetry spends from Phase One.

- ◆ **1 DSP:** An investigator separated from the group hears "Yeah, he's expendable" in a voice that sounds like a fellow investigator.
- ◆ **1 DSP:** An investigator catches a sudden movement behind him. Make an **Average D1 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault, which will inflict **1** Mental Wounds on a failed test.
- ◆ **2 DSP:** An investigator sees a frightening face right behind him in a reflection. Make a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault which will inflict **2** Mental Wounds on a failed test.
- ◆ **2 DSP:** The floor creaks, then gives way suddenly. One investigator must attempt a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid falling through the floor to a lower level and taking **1+2** damage to a random location.
- ◆ **1-4 DSP:** Corrupt a piece of equipment that an investigator is using. Roll a number of **1** equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent as a Corruption roll (see page 151 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core book).

This phase is about unnerving the players and preparing them while the creature builds its ability to manipulate them as it seeks to finish its mission.

The Twisted Marionette has created a Dark Symmetry-powered transmission antenna atop the tenement building, and it plans to incorporate both the tenants and the structure, feeding the signal with their pain and fear. This antenna is almost complete, and the link to the Dark Soul has already allowed a single Malignant spore to travel through and begin the process of merging with the Twisted Marionette.

If the investigators attempt to leave the tenement during this phase, they find the entrances and windows sealed by rubble. The only way out is from one of the higher levels (fourth floor or higher) where they can jump to a neighbouring tenement.

PHASE THREE: THE CASTIGATOR STRIKES!

This phase should begin once you feel the players have had their paranoia and fear ramped up, or as soon as the pace begins to slow. The Twisted Marionette merges with the Malignant to create something new and terrifying: a Castigator.

This final phase is the climax of the adventure, when the Castigator makes its move and strikes. The Castigator plans to infect the investigators and use them to infect others while it begins the final power-up of the antenna. When fully charged, the Castigator causes fractures in space via the TVs, radios, and other electrical devices in the surrounding blocks, allowing Malignants to pour through. To complete its plan, the creature needs to feed upon the fear, paranoia, and emotions of the investigators.

SETTING: STRAFFAR GATAN 39

Straffar Gatan 39 is more than just a location in the adventure. It is a character at the heart of the adventure, and its death sets the tone for the events that unfold. This precarious existence provides a number of interesting environmental elements and challenges for the GM to play with during the mission.

- ◆ **A SKELETAL VIEW:** formerly the tenement had six apartments on each floor, but the construction work has torn away a third of the building. From the outside, the investigators get an entire cutaway view of the tenement, including basement, foundations, and the sewers below, covered in places by translucent plastic sheeting. Thick, black rubber electrical cables are strung dangerously down the side of the building, passing in through windows and across corridors, providing an erratic source of additional power whilst creating a dangerous fire hazard. The skeleton of the building is bared to the whole world.
- ◆ **ALL ALONE:** any fire brigade support the investigators call for will gather outside and refuse to enter, or worse they get stuck on the other side of a man-made chasm as the street maps are years out of date. If the building is on fire, they might blast at the walls with high-pressure hoses, adding yet another environmental issue to the mix. This will cause the building to sway under the pressure. Characters moving around the building must move more slowly and more carefully than normal, treating all zones in the building as Difficult Terrain, requiring an **Average D1 Acrobatics test** to overcome.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

According to Luna PD files, the following people live in Straffar Gatan 39, annotated by the patrolmen who passed by the building earlier.

- ◀▶ **BAXTER, Abigail** Religious old later, Apartment 202
- ◀▶ **BEEKS, Clarence and Mary** Apartment 301
- ◀▶ **DIATORRO, Lucius** Tenement Manager, Apartment 101
- ◀▶ **PETERSON, Sandrine** Daughter of Bauhauser executive, François Peterson, Apartment 302
- ◀▶ **VON SAAR, Konrad** Freelancer, Apartment 303

These are the only tenants left in the building; all the other rooms are abandoned.

- ◀▶ **THE GROANS OF IMPENDING DEATH:** the rumbling and creaking of the building enhance the aura of menace and help conceal dark activities within the building.
- ◀▶ **A 'PEA-SOUPER':** pollution from a nearby industrial area, and the rain and humidity have created a thick, choking fog that hugs the streets to waist level, and makes crossing rough ground more challenging.
- ◀▶ **MOVEMENT OUT OF THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE:** because of the damage to local infrastructure, power brownouts and blackouts are frequent and all of the remaining lights in the tenement flicker, causing writhing shadows that are easily mistaken for movement.
- ◀▶ **UNSTABLE STRUCTURE:** any serious firefights, and especially explosions, can cause whole sections of the structure to fall away and drop into the canyon below. Misfortunate combatants may end up falling into the canyon with the masonry.
- ◀▶ **BRINGING THE HOUSE DOWN:** at the climax of the mission, the entire structure begins to come apart, making it a race for survival. Any thoughts of collecting evidence or taking prisoners will have to be abandoned.

- ◀▶ **BLARING TVS:** every apartment has the TV on with the sound turned up. The TVs have no off button, and don't stop even when the power to the building flickers.

The building is divided into numerous zones for the purposes of movement and combat. Each apartment—a single bedroom/living room, with a kitchen area to the side and a small bathroom at the back—is a distinct zone, with the corridor connecting the rooms as an additional zone. The corridors have no particular features, but the furniture in the apartments provides Light Cover (T2 Soak). The walls between, in addition to blocking line of sight, provide Heavy Cover (T4 Soak) from any attacks originating on the other side (attacking a target out of line of sight increases the difficulty of the attack by two steps). The individual floors are identical in layout and features, and characters can move from one floor's corridor to another using the stairwell at one end—though this is Difficult Terrain, requiring an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to traverse quickly during combat, increasing to **Challenging D2** if the character Sprints. The fourth floor differs from the others, and it is described later. Finally, during Phase Three, the entire building is plunged into darkness, increasing the difficulty of Ranged Attacks and Observation tests based on sight by one for any character not using portable lighting or night vision equipment.

THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS...

Read aloud or paraphrase the paragraph below to set the tone and orient the players.

"You weren't even sure it was possible, but the inside of the tenement is even grimmer than the outside. The worn carpet on the floor makes a wet sucking noise with each step, and you can smell the mould, thick in the air. Cracks run up the walls, and in many places chunks of plaster have fallen away, revealing cheap concrete behind, stained with rust from the rebar. Thick, rubber-clad cables are strung across the halls; this cabling lies on the floor in haphazard bundles. The lighting is patchy at best, and even those few bulbs that haven't yet burned out can be heard to fizzle and pop from time to time. Water gathers everywhere—the walls and floor are moist, and a persistent dripping sound accompanies the creaking and groaning of the building. Every so often, the sound of heavy construction—barely audible over the muffled sounds of the TVs in every apartment—makes the whole building shudder, and a shower of plaster dust rains down. Straffar Gatan 39 is a ten-storey tenement, with four remaining apartments on each floor, but only the first three floors are still inhabited. There was once a lift, but hazard tape is strung across the entrance. A single staircase corkscrews around the lift shaft. Worryingly, everything is tilted at a very slight angle. Next to the entrance is Apartment 101, which has a rusted sign affixed to it, the word "Manager" barely legible."



LUNA POLICE DEPARTMENT
INCIDENT REPORT DIAGRAM SHEET

REPORTING OFFICER **Stramm**

BADGE NO. **4473**

DIVISION **Patrol**

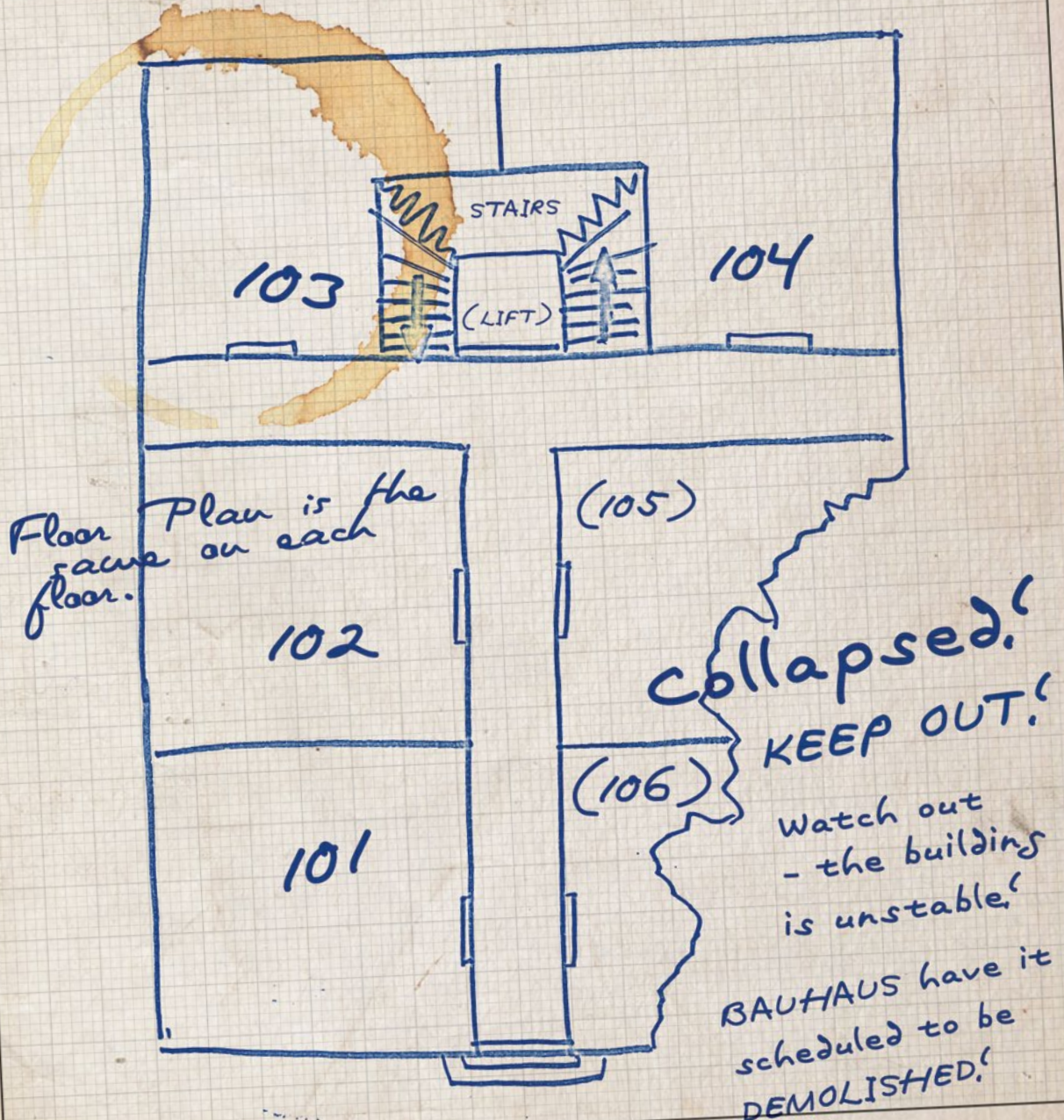
PRECINCT **32**

DESCRIPTION :

**STRAFFAR
GATAN 39**

EVENT CODE **5538-7**

REPORT SHEET
4072



APARTMENT 101: LUCIUS DIATORRO, TENEMENT MANAGER

Working as a building manager and superintendent in return for free rent, **Lucius Diatorro** is far from anyone's concept of a diligent manager. Though his official employer is a Bauhauser housing company, his real employers are the Croaks.

Hooked on cheap painkillers supplied to him by the Croaks, in return he keeps an eye out for their interests and lets them know if anything happens in or around the building that may concern them. A group of snooping investigators definitely fits the bill. He feigns disinterest and lethargy, but as soon as he is given a chance, he phones the Croaks.

PHASE ONE

The investigators have to bang loudly for some time, or kick down the door for Diatorro to bother responding.

Clad only in a stained t-shirt and threadbare boxer shorts, Diatorro slumps in a filthy lounge chair watching a reality TV show on the Capitol Entertainment Network called 'The Giant Eye'. If the investigators watch even a minute or so of the show they quickly realise that it's a comedy 'reality' show where a mysterious prankster called The Giant Eye misleads, befuddles, and confuses ordinary members of the public. At least, this is what it appears to be at first glance. Particularly sensitive or perceptive characters making an **Average D1 Observation test** will notice that the 'pranks' are mean and petty. Between sketches, the TV switches to an image of a giant blinking eye while the prankster addresses his audience. Surrounding the large central TV screen are several smaller screens, but unlike the main TV, these are switched off when the investigators enter.

A discarded pile of fast food wrappers and empty, crushed beer cans surrounds the chair. Diatorro stinks of stale sweat and cheap booze.

If the investigators show their badges, or if they bribe him (1 Asset), Diatorro will hand over the master keys to the building. Otherwise, he's sullen and uncooperative.

What Diatorro knows:

- ▶ **IF ASKED ABOUT THE SMALLER SCREENS:** Diatorro says that they're for the CCTV cameras, but they're all out of order and have been broken since before he became building manager. This is a lie; a **Challenging D2 Insight test** will confirm this. Diatorro uses the cameras to spy on the tenants' movements and activities.
- ▶ **IF ASKED ABOUT THE REPORTED INCIDENTS:** Diatorro will look stressed and swallow a handful of pain pills with a gulp

of stale beer. He says that he can't remember what happened, the incidents must have happened while he was watching his favourite TV show. As a backhanded comment, he says that he respects the privacy of his tenants too much to ask questions.

- ▶ **IF ASKED WHO ENTERED THE BUILDING DURING THE PREVIOUS NIGHT:** Diatorro says that as far as he remembers, no one entered the building. If pressed, he admits that he's not 100% sure, and also that sometimes people get in through the broken windows in apartment 103, which has been empty since Mr MacAskill died.
- ▶ **IF ASKED ABOUT THE BEEKS:** Diatorro breaks wind loudly and simply says "Stuck up couple. Think they're better'n me, but at least they pay the rent on time. Got some relative in the pig – I mean Luna PD." It's obvious that he dislikes them.
- ▶ **IF ASKED ABOUT SANDRINE PETERSON:** Diatorro denies all knowledge—he doesn't know her name. If described, his face takes on a lascivious quality, and his eyes glint unpleasantly. He unconsciously licks his lips, and says that she's a cute girl with a boyfriend who's no good for her. She lives in 302.
- ▶ **IF ASKED ABOUT THE CROAKS:** Diatorro says that they're a local gang, just a bunch of misguided kids. He quickly, and obviously, tries to change the subject and asks why the investigators are here. After they leave, Diatorro calls the Croaks and, once the corridor is clear, he runs down to Apartment 104 and warns the gang members there.
- ▶ **IF ASKED TO LIST ALL THE RESIDENTS:**

Diatorro says "Since they tore out a chunk of the building, most people moved out. Only I live on this floor. That crazy old cat lady lives in 202. 204 is rented by that creep, Von Hölle—he's a scary bastard, something not right about him. 301 is the Beeks, couple of factory schmucks. 302 is that cute blonde and her no-good boyfriend. 303 is some meathead, guy called Konrad who keeps to himself. Fourth floor is empty, 'cept for some squatters. Nobody lives above fourth—most of it collapsed already."

PHASE TWO

As before, but this time the CCTV screens are all on and show looping footage of the investigators' activities so far. However, the images presented show dark figures stalking the group, characters making subtle insults behind each other's backs, and other actions intended to fuel paranoia. Every time they look directly at the screens, they go blank. If they question Diatorro about the images, he looks at the investigators strangely, as if they're going mad—the screens are turned off.

PHASE THREE

All semblance of reality has broken apart by now.

The Twisted Marionette has used necrotechnology and the Dark Symmetry to convert Diatorro into a psychic capacitor to amplify the signal from the antenna.

Diatorro appears to have been consumed by technology. Thick cables run into his eye sockets, mouth, nostrils, and ears. Thick, black, semi-congealed blood leaks out around the cables and drips from their length. The cables join him physically to the TV. The investigators can see the cables writhing and pulsing beneath Diatorro's flesh as they change him. His body is bloated and distorted; his skin is stretched tight and it has turned purple with bruising and swelling.

The TV screens show fragmentary images of violence and the sub-audible binaural tones have become piercing screams that make it hard to concentrate or talk—the GM may spend two Dark Symmetry points her to inflict one Dread on all the investigators in the room.

If the investigators attempt to pull out the cables or attack Diatorro, he bursts like a ripe balloon, spraying everything and everyone in the room with thick, black gore that smells and tastes disturbingly sweet. Investigators who witness this should make a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault, which inflicts $\uparrow 2$ mental damage. Investigators who were within Reach of Diatorro when he 'detonated' increase the difficulty of this test by one step, due to being covered in gore. The cables thrash about and then become still. The actions of the investigators have enraged the Twisted Marionette and the final confrontation becomes imminent.



APARTMENT 103: THE SECRET ENTRANCE

PHASES ONE & TWO

The apartment has remained unoccupied since Mr MacAskill, a factory supervisor for Imperial, died about a year ago. The door to the apartment has no lock, and it swings loosely in the breeze. There are very few cables in this apartment. Close examination shows that the apartment gets a lot of foot traffic, entering through a smashed window where the bars have been crudely cut away. Given that the apartment is next to the Building Manager's, it would be impossible for him not to have noticed the comings and goings. Everything of value has been stripped from the apartment, leaving only a couple of mouldy old chairs. There are remnants of drug paraphernalia amongst the pigeon droppings.

ADVENTURE

PHASE THREE

The Twisted Marionette closes off the *ad-hoc* window entrance to this apartment. The windows are all sealed off by thick, pulsing cables. The choking mist is particularly thick here, reducing visibility to almost nothing, and disorienting anyone who tries to cross the room. Anyone within the room at the start of their turn should make a **Challenging D2 Resistance test** or suffer $\uparrow 2$ damage with the Staggered quality (see page 138 in the *Mutant Chronicles* core book) to the Torso due to choking

APARTMENT 104: THE CROAKS' DRUG DEN

PHASE ONE

A local gang called 'The Croaks' uses this apartment to deal drugs in the local neighbourhood, and has co-opted Diatorro to warn them of any incoming police raids. This scene plays out almost identically whether Diatorro has warned them or not, the only difference is that they are ready to ambush the investigators if they have been warned, and conversely are easier to catch unawares if the investigators reach them first. There are a number of Croaks in the room equal to twice the number of investigators. If there are six or more Croaks, they should be split into two or more Hordes of at least three Croaks each.

If the Croaks attempt an ambush, use the surprise rules on page 122 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book to resolve the attempt. Investigators who attempt to use Acrobatics to enter via the window should be rewarded by allowing them to re-roll one d20 during their first turn of combat, and by holding off on spending DSP to interrupt the investigators while they figure out what's happening. If the investigators treat the entry as a raid, they should be rewarded with a chaotic scene against unprepared foes who cannot benefit from cover during the first round. Investigators who try and burst through the thin interior walls should attempt a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** to come crashing through as a standard action; two Momentum from this test could be spent on the Swift Strike Momentum spend to shoot or strike first.

The GM has a number of options for spending Dark Symmetry points during this encounter.

- ◆ **2 DSP:** At the start of the fight, spend two Dark Symmetry points to declare that the Croaks have set a fire to fill the room with smoke. They're wearing damp rags tied around their faces to protect them from this smoke. Any character not so protected starting his turn within the room must attempt an **Average D1 Resistance test** or suffer $\uparrow 2$ damage with the Staggered quality (see page 138 in the *Mutant Chronicles* core book) to the Torso due to choking. The difficulty of this test increases by one step at the start of each consecutive round.

◆ **2 DSP:** If an investigator uses Reloads liberally, open the room to the elements as the wall crumbles and the wind tears into it. The building shudders, and each character in the room must attempt an **Average D1 Acrobatics test**; failure means that the character stumbles, increasing the difficulty of all Acrobatics and Athletics tests he attempts by one until the end of his next turn.

Either way, this is primarily a combat scene. The Croaks in the apartment fight until half their number are slain, and the remaining Croaks attempt to flee.

If the investigators manage to subdue and capture one or more of the Croaks, the ganger quickly breaks under interrogation (an **Average D1 Persuade test** is sufficient), revealing that the screams on the third floor had nothing to do with them, and the gang's been nervous about the building ever since. When the investigators arrived, they were in the middle of arguing about what to do, with the gang evenly split between leaving and staying. While the Croaks will not help the investigators, each Momentum spent allows the investigators to ask one more question about the building and its tenants. Their opinions are similar to those of Diatorro, but they're less biased against Abigail Baxter, who they say is "harmless, if preachy".

Searching the apartment reveals several bundles of cash in small bills, in several denominations, and a bag of blue pills. The TV, crackling with static and covered in dust, displays The Giant Eye programme, just like in Diatorro's apartment.

PHASES TWO & THREE

The Croaks—even if they'd been slain previously—have been transformed by the Twisted Marionette into hideous puppets, controlled from above by cables hanging from the ceiling. Their skin hangs loose from emaciated frames, as if their innards are slowly being sucked out. The puppet Croaks' movements are jerky and awkward, but their eyes burn with static and their expressions are pure fury. There are a number of Puppet Cloaks equal to the number of investigators, the eviscerated bodies of the other Croaks laying around. When the Investigators first see this horrific sight, they must attempt a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault, which inflicts **↑2** mental damage. The Puppet Croaks attack on sight, lashing out with melee weapons only, and they fight on heedless of pain or injury—the only way to stop them quickly is to sever the cables that bind them to the building, at which point they collapse lifelessly to the ground. An investigator may make a called shot to a cable by spending two Momentum on an attack. On a successful hit, the attack the attack ignores all the ganger's Soak.

While this is going on, the TV screen shows looping images of violence, and periodically emits a piercing shriek that makes it hard to concentrate or talk. The GM may spend one Dark Symmetry point

to inflict one Dread upon all investigators in the room because of this shrieking.

◆ Any investigator who looks too closely at the violent images on the screen must attempt an **Average D1 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault, which inflicts **↑1** mental damage.



THE CROAKS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	7	7	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Cheap light pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+**↑3**, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Cheap Switchblade (melee):** 1+**↑3**, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2
- ◆ **Lead Pipe (melee):** 1+**↑3**, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL RULES

- ◆ **Drugged-Up:** Street Gangers increase their Repercussion range to 19-20.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◆ **Reinforcements:** There may be other Croak gangers in the vicinity, on other floors or approaching the building. For each Dark Symmetry point spent, add a single Croak to the combat, who may join an existing Horde, fight alone, or start a new Horde (if more than one new arrival turns up). Reinforcements appear at the end of the turn, and cannot act in the turn they arrive.

PUPPET CROAKS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	7	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	4	4	4

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Deadened Flesh:** (All 3)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Grasping Hands and Pummeling Fists (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Backlash 1, Stun, Vicious 1

SPECIAL RULES

- ▶ **Braindead**
- ▶ **Cable-Bound:** An attacker may make a called shot to the cable that binds a Puppet Croak by spending two Momentum on an attack. On a successful hit, the attack ignores all the creature's Soak.
- ▶ **Inured to Pain**
- ▶ **Grasping**
- ▶ **Slave to Symmetry (2)**
- ▶ **Unliving**

APARTMENT 202: THE RELIGIOUS OLD LADY

PHASE ONE

The apartment of Abigail Baxter—the 'Old Lady'—is remarkable in contrast to the rest of the building. Clean, tidy, and well-maintained, the apartment seems like another world. When the investigators knock on the door, she invites them in for tea. In her late seventies, Abigail is a retired school teacher from a Capitolian Public Academy.

Pink flower designs cover the flock wallpaper. Like the other apartments, her TV is on, though hers is switched to a channel displaying documentaries and interviews with the Durand Brothers. Abigail knows that sooner or later the building is going to be demolished, but it has been her home for so long that she cannot imagine moving elsewhere. She is one of the residents who called the police, and will immediately mention it when the investigators enter.

Weirdly, despite what Diatorro thinks, Abigail does not own a cat, but she talks to and pets an imaginary cat while conversing with the characters, and there are bowls for water and cat food in the kitchen area.

Abigail does her best to be helpful, and she's easily encouraged to open up about her neighbours (an **Average D1 Persuade test** is sufficient for this). She flirts with the most attractive male character in a harmless and slightly sweet way.

What Abigail knows:

▶ IF ASKED ABOUT WHAT SHE HEARD OR WHY SHE CALLED THE POLICE:

"The noise was terrible. There was awful, awful screaming and banging. In all my years, I have never heard such a sound. All the lights flickered, and the whole building shook. I called the police several times, but no one seemed interested. Then suddenly, everything went quiet. I'm not afraid to admit that I was scared. Whatever happened up there was awful. Truly awful. More tea?"

▶ IF ASKED ABOUT DIATORRO:

"I was always raised to believe that if you don't have something good to say about someone, then you shouldn't say anything at all. I have nothing to say about Mr Diatorro."

▶ IF ASKED ABOUT SANDRINE:

"Young love is so precious, don't you think?" She gives one of the investigators a shy smile.

▶ IF ASKED ABOUT THE BEEKS:

"I don't know Mary, but Clarence is lovely. He always brings my post and deliveries up. Uncle in the police, I think. Do you know him?"

▶ IF ASKED ABOUT VON HÖLLE OR APARTMENT 204:

"There is something very wrong with that man. Why is someone with wealth like him hanging around here? I don't like the way he looks at us. I'm glad he isn't around much."

PHASE TWO

At first glance, the scene is identical, but it quickly becomes apparent that something is utterly wrong. From the front, Abigail appears normal, but as soon as she turns away, the investigators can see that the back half of her body is burned and blackened all the way down

ADVENTURE

to the bone. Wherever she steps she leaves blackened, burning footprints. The burn marks slowly spread, blending into one another. Abigail is completely unaware of her transformation. The room itself is also subtly different. If any of the investigators look at the walls, they notice that the plants in the flock pattern wallpaper are dying before their eyes. If spoke to, she answers the questions as above, though the subtle flirtation seems to take on a creepy, menacing quality.

The overall effect of this encounter should be to unnerve the players further. Should they seek to attack Abigail, she goes down without a fight and makes no effort to resist—she is, after all, a defenceless old lady.

When the investigators see Abigail turn around for the first time, each should attempt a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault, which inflicts **↑2** mental damage.

PHASE THREE

The Dark Symmetry is unable to corrupt Abigail—she's a pleasant individual with few vices, and a strong will—so the Twisted Marionette has chosen simply to tear her asunder and use her flesh as raw materials for its machine. The entire apartment resembles an abattoir, and only tiny scraps of Abigail remain. Almost as disturbing is the fact that nothing else in the apartment appears to have been damaged—it is as if Abigail just exploded silently.

- ◆ **1 DSP:** Spend one Dark Symmetry point for an investigator to see the plants in her flock pattern wallpaper dying and then reforming as his own face. He suffers **↑1** Mental Wounds, with a minimum of one. No one else will see anything.

APARTMENT 204: VON HÖLLE'S APARTMENT

Regardless of when the investigators look here, the room is the same. A single chair faces the TV and, disturbingly, all the windows have been sealed up and painted white. A single bare bulb hangs from the ceiling above the chair. There is a sense of static electricity here that causes the hair on the back of the investigators' necks to rise, and a slight acrid scent of ozone. It is hard to escape the feeling that there is something dreadfully wrong with whoever this Von Hölle man is.

The man himself, however, is not there. There's no sign that he's been home in several days, in fact.

APARTMENTS 301, 302, & 303: SCENE OF THE CRIME

Because all three apartments are the scene of the Twisted Marionette's first attack, they all offer largely the same information. The residents were **Mary** and **Clarence Beeks**, married factory

workers in 301; **Sandrine Peterson**, missing daughter of François Peterson in 302; and **Konrad von Saar**, a Freelancer, in 303.

PHASE ONE

The apartments are identical to the others in the building, though the doors hang open, swinging slowly in the breeze. Police warning tape forms an 'X' over the doorways. The ever-present cables run into these apartments just like all the others. The TVs in each apartment are all tuned to the same channel—Capitol Entertainment Network, and reruns of The Giant Eye.

The apartments are marked with blood stains, but not enough to suggest that the residents were killed.

- ◆ In the Beeks' apartment (301), half-emptied shopping bags lie on the floor, their contents only partially put away.
- ◆ In Peterson's apartment (302), the bath has overflowed and flooded the apartments, though the Patrol officers turned the taps off. Her wardrobe contains a mix of ultra-fashionable clothes, and scruffy street wear. There's a note on the table.

*I very much enjoyed our tea and chat.
Do come and visit me again soon
Abigail*

- ◆ In Konrad von Saar's apartment (303), a Sherman.74 M13 'Bolter' handgun (**Mutant Chronicles** core book, page 212) lies in pieces on a table, apparently part-way through being cleaned and reassembled. It's clear, searching through von Saar's belongings, that he's an experienced Freelancer. A pair of light civilian shoulder pads (**Mutant Chronicles** core book, page 246) hang in the wardrobe. A hidden stash at the base of the wardrobe (requires an **Average D1 Observation test** to locate), contains two knives (**Mutant Chronicles** core book, page 235), and two Reloads for the Bolter. It will take an **Average D1 Ranged Weapons test** to reassemble the Bolter.

It's clear to any investigator who assesses the crime scene (an **Average D1 Observation test**) that the residents are likely alive. Each Momentum spent on this test allows the players to ask one more question about the crime scene, which the GM must answer honestly. A few suggested answers are listed below.

- ◆ Close examination of the carpets indicates that the residents walked out of the apartments of their own free will.
- ◆ The blood stains, judging by the splatter and the quantity, only really indicate a severe nosebleed.

- ◆ There are literally no signs of a struggle or of any violence. Everything about the scene suggests that four people simply stopped what they were doing and walked out of their homes for no apparent reason.
- ◆ The blood drops are mostly within each apartment, but there are a few that lead down the corridor and up the stairs towards the fourth floor.

PHASES TWO & THREE

While largely identical to Phase One, above, the TV screens now show flashing images and snippets of photos of the residents going about their daily business.

- ◆ **2 DSP:** Pay two Dark Symmetry points to intersperse brief images of the investigators running and screaming through the corridors of the tenement. The scenes are unnerving to say the least. Anyone looking at the screens and seeing themselves running and screaming suffers one Dread.

FOURTH FLOOR AND ABOVE: THE CASTIGATOR

PHASES ONE & TWO

The Twisted Marionette seals off this floor with thick bundles of cables that arc worryingly large sparks between them to prevent anyone invading its inner sanctum until it is ready. Any investigator attempting to force their way past must attempt a **Daunting D3 Athletics test**. Failure means that the character either becomes entangled, requiring a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to break free, or he suffers 1+**↑3** damage with the Stun and Vicious 1 qualities from a nasty electric shock. Success allows the character to avoid these consequences, but doesn't allow him to push through the writhing mass of cables.

PHASE THREE: THE SHOWDOWN WITH THE CASTIGATOR!

The Twisted Marionette has marshalled its powers and it is ready for the final stage of its plans. It opens up a fracture to Pluto, where the Dark Symmetry is building its power. This allows the raw power of the Dark Symmetry to blast through, and convert a host body into a Malignant. The Twisted Marionette then merges with the Malignant to form something new: a Castigator.

The interior walls of the fourth floor have been torn down, and rubble lies everywhere. The area is split into four zones—four open spaces, arrayed around the base of the Twisted Marionette's antenna, as displayed on the map below.

The four zones around the edge are all essentially the same—rubble-strewn floors, which require an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics**

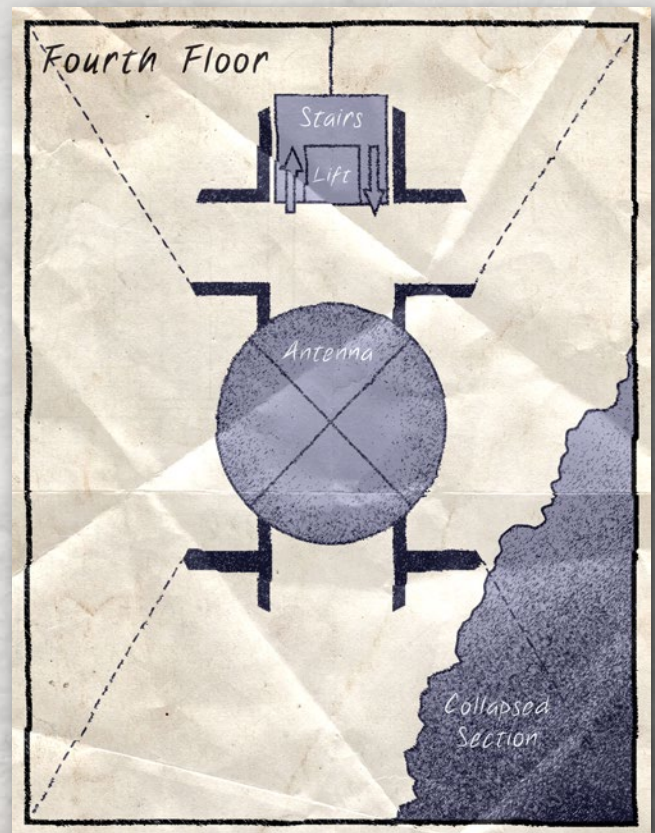
test to cross, and with enough protruding cover and remnants of the old interior walls to provide Light Cover (**↑2** Cover Soak). The antenna in the middle is oddly-constructed, but sturdy enough to provide Heavy Cover (**↑4** Cover Soak against any attacks that pass into or through the Antenna zone). The collapsed section is a particular hazard here, and a Complication may cause a creature or character to slip from the edge, while melee attackers may spend two Momentum to try and shove their target over, forcing a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** to avoid falling off the building.

The fifth floor and up are identical, but the antenna protrudes through a hole in the floor instead.

THE CASTIGATOR

When the players finally venture up to the abandoned levels of the tenement, they enter the heart of the lair, where the Twisted Marionette has dragged Konrad von Saar. It has merged with him to create an ideal vessel for Illian's Malignants and become the Castigator.

The internal walls of the floor have been torn down and big, thick, pulsing bundles of cables writhe in crude mockery of veins. The choking smog is thickest here, and everything drips with oily moisture. The stench of burning plastic and flesh fills the players' nostrils.



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As they enter, pulses of a sickly, blue-green light at the heart of the level are distantly visible to the players. As they approach, they see a crackling energy field surrounding the twisted body of Konrad von Saar. The energy field is completely impervious to the attacks of the players, and any attempts to pierce it are fruitless. Konrad von Saar has been transformed into the Castigator. Convulsing cables pierce his body at his wrists, stomach, thighs, and elsewhere. He seems dead, then without warning, his eyes snap open and he emits a terrifying wail of misery. The Castigator is a horrific, hybrid of man, cables, and necrobionics, all powered by the corruption of the Dark Symmetry.

Standing taller than a man does, the Dark Symmetry has stretched and warped the body of the original host. Its grey-green skin is pierced in multiple places by rubbery cables that spark, and drip black mucus. The face of the Castigator is that of von Saar, but twisted into an unnatural, frozen, rictus grin of death and agony. Powerful bony claws have erupted from Konrad's ruined fingers and toes, and his jaw has become distended and unnaturally large.

Upon seeing the Castigator for the first time, each should make a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault, which will inflict **↑2 Mental Wounds** on a failed test. At this point, the characters may have crossed off enough Mental Wound boxes to result in lingering consequences. See page 141 in the **Mutant Chronicles** core book for details.

When the Castigator attacks, it screams aloud Konrad's last thoughts, now forever trapped in the moment of his death:

"Help me!", "The pain!", "Where am I?", "Why can't I see?", "Please, I don't want to die!"

Attempting to reply or talk to Konrad is fruitless. The barks are merely the repeated echoes of the dead. He is beyond saving, and the Castigator is simply revelling in his final torment.



The Castigator is a horrific, hybrid of man, cables and necrobionics.

With a wet, ripping noise, the Castigator tears free of the cables feeding it, and drops to the floor. Then, abruptly, the energy field and the lights go out, plunging the players into darkness. The hunt has begun.

The Castigator can travel with ease on two legs or on all fours, moving swiftly and silently through the tenement. It moves, hunter-like, to pounce on its target. When not attacking, the Castigator remains unnaturally still and silent, blending into the background of ruin in the tenement. The Castigator is an ambush predator, enjoying prolonging the suffering of its targets, and carefully choosing the moment to attack. When it does, it will dive in and out of the thick choking fog, using it as cover.

The Castigator's obvious attacks are its fearsome claws, bite, or sweep attacks with its long, whip-like cable appendages. However, the real danger from the Castigator is that of infection. Wounds caused by the Castigator infect its victims with necrobionic spores that will slowly consume the host, creating further Malignants.

If one or more Dark Symmetry are generated when the Castigator inflicts damage with its melee attack, the player character struck must pass a Resistance test, with a difficulty equal to the number of DSI generated. If they fail, just smile; it is up to the players to discover what has happened, or deduce the effects. The only way to destroy the spores is with fire. They can lay dormant indefinitely. If the players are infected, they will be lucky to survive if the spores take root (something for the next adventure). If the wound is in a limb, their best bet is to amputate immediately, or they face the same agonising death as Konrad von Saar.

The rules for a Castigator can be found on page 296-297 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core book.

As the player characters are facing the Castigator in its 'home', so to speak, it has a number of potent advantages it can call upon. Using the mystical connection it forged as a Cable Marionette, it still has control over the electronics in the building, and it knows the tenement's layout perfectly. As a result, it has access to the following Dark Symmetry point spends:

- ◆ **VANISH:** By spending one Dark Symmetry point, the Castigator can seem to vanish into the gloom and fog, travelling unseen. As a Standard Action, it makes an **Average D1 Stealth test**, opposed by the Observation tests of anyone else in the same zone. If it succeeds, its turn ends, and it may reappear in any zone in the building at the start of its next turn.
- ◆ **REINFORCEMENTS:** There are other entities of darkness in the building. A malign presence still lingers within the tenement's electrical systems, which can be summoned forth as minor Twisted Marionettes (Troopers) (see page 295 in the **Mutant Chronicles** core book) for one Dark Symmetry point each. Twisted Marionettes cannot leave the floor they appear within—the cables that form them do not stretch that far. Further, the squatters who had been living on the fourth floor can emerge as Malignants (see page 294 in the **Mutant Chronicles** core book), who will arrive for two Dark Symmetry points each. As with all reinforcements, they will arrive at the end of a turn, and cannot act during the turn they arrive.
- ◆ **ENTANGLE (2 DSP):** Cables erupt from the walls and wrap themselves around a player character's limbs, increasing the difficulty of all tests by two steps. Actions that would require no test now require a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** to perform. By inflicting two damage to the cables, requiring a normal attack roll, the cable can be broken and the character freed.

- ◆ **DEATH THROES (3 DSP):** As the Castigator dies, it grabs the last character that inflicted damage against it, and hurls them out of a window. The Investigator must make a **Daunting D3 Acrobatics test** to grab onto something or suffer falling damage, determined by what floor he was on when he departed the building.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

If the investigators destroy the Castigator, its death triggers an overload in the antenna which starts a wildfire in the tenement. The only way out is to leap across a gap to a neighbouring tenement while the building collapses in fire and rubble—this requires a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**, and failure means the character falls, suffering damage based on which floor they've jumped from (1+ \uparrow 2 for each floor above ground level).

Once clear of the building, all the events inside Straffar Gatan take on a nightmarish, unreal quality—nothing that strange and horrifying could actually have happened, right? Fire crews searching the rubble find no evidence of the Castigator, only the crushed remains of the residents, and toxic gases that would cause terrifying hallucinations. The remains of Sandrine Peterson, and of Clarence and Mary Beeks, cannot be found.

What really happened in Straffar Gatan 39 will be almost impossible to prove either way, and unless they work out a good cover story, the deaths of the residents will likely be the last nail in the coffin for the investigators' careers in Luna PD. Of course, disciplinary hearings might well be interrupted by what is to come.

Of course, if any of the investigators were infected by the Castigator, things will go from bad to worse. They've been contaminated by the Malignant Change, described on page 295 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core book. However, because the power of the Dark Symmetry is still spreading, the disease does not take effect as quickly—the GM should make a note of any infected investigators; he may spend Dark Symmetry points equal to the disease's Virulence at any later stage to trigger the disease's effects.

Each investigator receives three hundred experience points for surviving the events of that night.



TO BE CONTINUED IN... "THE FALL OF VON HÖLLE"

ADVENTURE

THE FALL OF VON HÖLLE

OVERVIEW

The investigators are detectives from Luna PD 32nd Precinct Homicide Division who have just survived the terrifying events of *Straffar Gatan 39* who are sent to investigate the disappearances of Bauhauser noble, Sandrine Peterson, and Bauhaus executive Fabien von Hölle.

The dark events that take place in the “Fall of von Hölle” are set immediately after those of the adventure “*Straffar Gatan 39*” and occur two days after Conquistadors on Pluto discovered the strange tablet which unleashes the forces of the Dark Soul. The adventure is written assuming that the investigators completed and survived the events of *Straffar Gatan 39*, and we recommend you start there, but if that is not possible there are a few options listed below if either the group did not play the previous adventure or took casualties.

The adventure should take two to three sessions to complete, though it could easily run to five sessions or more if you are having fun.

In the chaos that followed the collapse of *Straffar Gatan 39*, Bauhaus was quick to place the blame on the investigators and are demanding they face charges. Only two things have saved their badges so far: Luna PD are playing hard ball with Bauhaus, refusing to submit for now, and secondly the whole world is going to hell.

There has been an outbreak of malfunctioning machinery, the entire city is close to falling into chaos, and right now Luna PD needs every cop on the streets. All leave has been cancelled, retired officers are being drafted into active duty, and several small security corporations have been deputised. With everything that is going on, Luna PD has better things to do than punish the investigators for jumped up charges.

The Investigator’s boss from Luna PD’s 32nd Precinct, Lieutenant Vordach, has a hunch that the wider malfunctions are somehow related to the Investigator’s case and—despite the heat he is getting from on high to punish them—wants them to finish what they started. Vordach is enough of a pragmatist to know that it is unlikely to fix the situation, but he hates leaving loose ends, and besides he might be wrong.

Vordach gives the investigators carte blanche to see this through to the end. If nothing else, they might find enough dirt to shift the blame to Bauhaus rather than Luna PD.

NOTE TO YOU, THE MUTANT CHRONICLES GAME MASTERS

“The Fall of von Hölle” is set in the early days of the Dark Symmetry era, but can be adapted to work during the Dark Legion era during a particularly heavy period of Dark Legion activity.

The adventure is ideal for the pre-generated Luna PD characters found in **Appendix 02** on page page 208: Patrolman Mikhail “Vents” de Vent, Detective Vance Ryder, First Responder Angelica “Angel” Kramer, Freelancers—Sato Tsuyoshi, Nicholas “Nix” Cullen & Daniela Arseni. Should your investigators want to generate characters they need to either be in Luna PD or have some strong attachment that would enable them to be called into investigate a case for Luna PD, Imperial or Bauhaus.

The adventure is also laced with a number of plot threads that you can choose to expand into entire new adventures for your group and several of the characters such as Lt Vordach, Jenny Green, and Markus Peterson could become hooks for future adventures.

Also, and this gets said a lot but we really mean it: feel free to adapt this adventure to your own preferences and that of your *Mutant Chronicles* play group. If you do not like a scene, change it. If your players really get into events during Act 2 and go off on interesting side-tracks as they explore the city in chaos, encourage them. The golden rule is simple: have fun!

Remember, *Mutant Chronicles* is a cinematic game. The adventure should be fun and exciting and the investigators are the heroes, always getting into new and exciting scrapes as they resist the foul influence of the Dark Legion.

This adventure is split into three acts: the first is at the Old Town offices of Jaeger Corp, a struggling subsidiary of the Bauhaus Corporation that is one poor financial quarter away from being shut down. The second occurs as the investigators attempt to cross Luna City during the midst of the worst crisis seen by humanity since the exodus from Old Earth. The third part of the adventure takes place at the studios of the Giant Eye, a counterfeit television programme

produced from a hidden floor by a production company that does not exist within the Capitol Entertainment Network tower in the heart of the Ancient Quarters of Luna City.

Many of the story threads link up to the larger story, but we have seeded the plot with many threads that you can weave into your own **Mutant Chronicles** adventures. The adventure is written with a fairly open structure to give you, the GM, control over pacing, as the mission needs to start with a sense of foreboding and then build the levels of tension and paranoia before finally resolving in a deadly confrontation that saves the day... or does it?

THE BACKGROUND: THE FALL OF FABIEN VON HÖLLE

Obviously, key to this whole tragic tale of events is Fabien von Hölle. Von Hölle is a gifted, but emotionally unstable mathematician and physicist. He graduated top of his class at Luna University along with his best friend Erich Strauss. Erich came from good stock and had an excellent understanding of the realities of business, but he needed an ideas guy. That 'guy' was von Hölle. Erich understood von Hölle like no one else and helped him keep it together when things were difficult. When Erich founded the Jaeger Corporation he made von Hölle Chief Technical Officer, and von Hölle's ideas and inventions made them rich.

Jaeger quickly established themselves in the aerospace industry, with von Hölle's bleeding-edge new techniques for interplanetary communications revolutionising the whole industry. It was only a matter of time before they were acquired by one of the Big Four (Capitol, Bauhaus, Mishima or Imperial), but Strauss, ever the business savvy CEO took the initiative and presented a merger deal to the Bauhaus board. Less than three years after founding Jaeger, the coproation was absorbed into Bauhaus.



Jaeger Corp: behind the corporate façade is a company in trouble.

After this high point, things quickly came apart. On the outside Jaeger appears to be a prosperous, formerly freelancer corporation that was acquired twenty-two months ago by Bauhaus, but looks can be very deceiving. Jaeger is struggling and is haemorrhaging money. They have taken two large financial blows recently. The first was the mysterious death of Strauss, which many suspect was a professional hit, and secondly their most recent product launch for a new generation of communication satellites disappeared without trace.

Bauhaus have begun to seriously question the wisdom in their acquisition. If Jaeger cannot turn their situation around soon, Bauhaus is going to pull the plug, shut them down, and sell off any remaining assets. The vultures from Imperial's Murders & Acquisitions Department are already circling...

When his best friend, mentor and business partner Erich Strauss died something snapped in Fabien von Hölle's mind. An interim CEO Markus Peterson (brother of François Peterson who is the father of the missing girl) was appointed, but he and von Hölle immediately clashed.

Von Hölle began working on a new communications system based on the most radical and extreme theories, theories that had been openly mocked in the academic community. The communications system was to allow him to break the ultimate communications barrier: time itself. His plan was simple, if insane: If he could get the system working, he could contact Erich and warn him of his impending death.

Unfortunately, for von Hölle, his research was discovered and the new CEO, Markus Peterson, had no choice but to fire him. Von Hölle swore vengeance, sneaked back in to the offices of Jaeger later one night and stole as much as he could. He set himself up in the tenement at Straffar Gatan 39 in the Nines and continued his research, building an initial prototype antenna on the roof of the building. He hired the mercenary Konrad von Saar to provide protection from the local gangs.

ADVENTURE

Von Hölle's prototype worked, and he was able to establish a communication with the now-dead Erich Strauss, though the stress caused him to black out. Unfortunately, it was not actually Strauss that von Hölle established contact with, but Ilian, the Dark Apostle of the Void. Using the psychic link and fascinated by this man's fragmented mental state and prodigious ability, Ilian took on the form of Erich Strauss in his mind and urged him to continue and improve his research. If he could establish communication to "Erich", then maybe he could make a gateway for "Erich" to travel through. Like a skilful surgeon, Ilian severed the mental connections between his genius and his humanity, flooding his mind with corrupting knowledge of the Dark Symmetry.

His mind stripped of human weakness, von Hölle turned his inhuman genius to the task at hand: he had to save Erich from his prison in the other dimension—he had melded Erich with Ilian in his mind.

With access to the impossible biotechnology of the Dark Symmetry, von Hölle realised that he could vastly increase the power through the use of organic components for his machinery. First to be used was the freelancer, Konrad, but when he discovered that his neighbour Sandrine was related to the bastard who had fired him, von Hölle realised that the universe himself wanted him to make use of her. At first he was going to simply use her organic material, but then he realised it would be so much better if she were a full participant so he kidnapped her and began to brainwash her while he worked on the project.

Quickly it became obvious to him that any antenna he could build would not have the capacity for the strength of the signal he needed to send to tear reality asunder. He needed something, so much bigger.

The answer came to him while watching an endless repeat of an insipid game show on the capitol Entertainment Network. All the apartments in the tenement—throughout most of Luna City—had televisions supplied by the corporations; televisions that could not be turned off. Televisions that would give him access to the minds and bodies of the viewers. He realised that the Capitol Entertainment Network had the two things he needed: the powerful antennas and the host of living components. The only problem was that there was no way Capitol Entertainment Network would let him near their equipment. At least, not knowingly...

So he forged a cunning scheme for a station within a station, and if the investigators do not stop him he will tear open a whole in reality directly to the Dark Apostle, Ilian, in the very heart of Luna City.



FOR THE GM

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

The events of this adventure take place immediately following the conclusion of events in *Straffar Gatan 39*; two days after the explorers broke the seals on Pluto and released the Dark Legion. The investigators must stop the insane plans of a flawed genius driven mad by his connection to Ilian the Dark Mistress of the Void before he can tear a hole directly to the prison of the Dark Legion.

The Fall of Von Hölle adventure is split into three acts each of which revolves around a distinct location:

◆ **ACT 1: Big Trouble in Old Town:** a former bleeding-edge freelancer corporation that has fallen on hard times now that it has been absorbed by Bauhaus. The investigators will have to comb through the remnants of the troubled genius Fabien von Hölle whilst surviving the catastrophic failure of equipment all around them that could spell their doom. If they survive, the information they have gathered—combined with that from *Straffar Gatan 39*—will reveal von Hölle's terrifying plan.

◆ **ACT 2: Luna City Chaos:** linking these two acts together is the chaos that is overtaking Luna City as the Dark Symmetry begins to take hold of the advanced technology whilst corrupting the minds of the weak or insane and leading to an explosion of violence. The investigators struggle to cross a city torn apart by the influence of the Dark Symmetry. Machines and even people behave dangerously and erratically and the very environment seems to turn against them.

◆ **ACT 3: The Giant Eye of Ilian:** a counterfeit television station hidden within a real television station hiding inside the Capitol Entertainment Network tower in the Ancient Quarters. The investigators will have fight, sneak past or convince Capitol security in order to raid the studios of the twisted fake prank show called "The Giant Eye" which is being used as the focus for the plans of von Hölle.

Following the creation of the Castingator in *Straffar Gatan 39*, von Hölle intends to use the television programs of the Capitol Entertainment Network to allow the Malignants of Ilian to possess the viewers, turning vast swathes of the city into the servants of the Dark Legion

Each act should take a single session, so overall the adventure should take two to three sessions to complete, though it could easily run to five sessions or more if you are having fun.

Do not be afraid to take the adventure off in different directions. The way this adventure is written is very action and goal-oriented, but that

THE FALL OF VON HÖLLE

IF YOU HAVE NOT PLAYED THE ADVENTURE STRAFFAR GATAN 39:

◀ From what you can tell a simple missing person's case went badly wrong, a building collapsed and many people died. The Bauhaus Corporation is trying to pin the blame on your fellow detectives who died in when the building collapsed, but Luna PD is not playing ball. It sounds like an attempted political cover-up. You have been called in by Lieutenant Vordach of the 32nd Precinct of the Nines, a tough, no-nonsense detective who has spent his life on the streets to take over the case.

IF THE TEAM TOOK CASUALTIES DURING THE COURSE OF STRAFFAR GATAN 39 AND ONE OR MORE ARE NEW CHARACTERS:

◀ From what you can tell a simple missing person's case went badly wrong, a building collapsed and many people died. The Bauhaus Corporation is trying to pin the blame on your fellow detectives—not all of whom made it out alive—when the building collapsed, but Luna PD is not playing ball. It sounds like an attempted political cover-up. You have been called in by Lieutenant Vordach of the 32nd Precinct of the Nines, a tough, no-nonsense detective who has spent his life on the streets to assist.

IF YOU COMPLETED STRAFFAR GATAN 39:

◀ **THINGS WENT BAD IN THAT TENEMENT:** you saw things, things you would rather forget. When you put down that thing that had

consumed and changed Konrad von Saar, you knew the world would never look the same. As much as you would like to write the whole experience off as a nightmare, it felt more like a harbinger. Something much worse and it seemed to be controlling people through their televisions.

◀ **BAUHAUS WANT BLOOD:** maybe it is to draw attention away from their own problems, but Bauhaus are looking to pin the blame for the collapsed tenement and loss of life on you. Surprisingly though, Luna PD has not thrown you to the wolves. Perhaps it is some sense of loyalty, or more simply that everything is going straight to hell and Luna PD command has bigger problems to deal with. However, you still have an ace up your sleeve: if you can find and bring Sandrine back alive, you would earn a major favour from her father, François Peterson who is a powerful aristocrat in the Bauhauser House Fieldhausen.

WHETHER NEW TO THE CASE OR NOT, YOU KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

◀ **LUNA CITY IS FALLING APART:** machinery is malfunctioning and no one knows why. The advanced designs of Bauhaus seem particularly susceptible and more worryingly, their equipment seems to be involved in ever more fatal 'accidents'. Incidents of violent crime have skyrocketed and riots have broken out in many areas of the city. The television stations are full of hysterical preachers proclaiming the "end times".

◀ **PEOPLE ARE MISSING:** when the bodies were pulled out of the rubble

of the collapsed tenement and were identified three people were missing: Sandrine Peterson, Fabien von Hölle, and Konrad von Saar. There was nothing left of Konrad after you killed the cable creature. However, as best you could tell neither Peterson nor von Hölle were in the building when it collapsed.

◀ **YOUR ASSIGNMENT HAS TWO-PARTS:** Lieutenant Vordach has assigned you the case of finding **Sandrine Peterson**, missing daughter of a senior Bauhaus executive, and renegade Jaeger executive **Fabien von Hölle**, who is a suspect in Peterson's disappearance. Lieutenant Vordach has made it very clear that it would be in the best interests of your careers that Sandrine should be found alive and well and that von Hölle gets nailed to the wall if his is responsible.

◀ **YOUR BEST CLUE:** von Hölle was a former executive with the Bauhaus subsidiary 'Jaeger Corp'. Their offices are in the Old Town district of Luna City. Maybe his offices can offer some clues.



might not fit your group or their playstyle. If you need to slow things down to allow your team to take new avenues of investigation then do so, but remember that the investigators are all that stands between a madman and his plan to unleash a whole new wave of corruption on the city.

As this is a starting game, the GM should start with only two Dark Symmetry points (DSP) for each player character. It is advisable for the GM to save about half of the DSPs gained for Act 3. You will want no fewer than ten Dark Symmetry points by the start of Act 3 if possible, but no more than twenty.



ACT 1 ENVIRONMENT: THE FIRST SIGNS OF CORRUPTION

At the beginning of the adventure, the Dark Symmetry infection of Luna City is slight, but unfortunately, the investigators have become a magnet for its corruption. Maybe Ilian has taken an interest in their actions, or perhaps more worryingly, that they have unknowingly become infected with the Malignant Change, becoming a Dark Symmetry Typhoid Mary

During these scenes the effects of the Dark Symmetry should be disguised as plausible—if unlikely—malfunctions and accidents, with the focus constrained to the most advanced machinery and equipment. The malfunction of an elevator will be a major plot point, but you should not feel constrained to just that. The one hard limitation is that the malfunctioning device must have advanced circuitry, so no malfunctioning wrenches or other simple mechanical tools—advanced technology is the Dark Symmetry's first priority. Possible examples could include:

- ◆ Lights not working properly making things hard to see in the darkness.
- ◆ Computers crashing, fusing, or otherwise breaking.
- ◆ Radios and other advanced communication equipment malfunctioning producing nothing but static or strangely giving the investigators crossed-wires where they hear other people talking about them.
- ◆ Comical, but not dangerous, malfunctions of guns, stun weapons and cars.

This is a good phase for the GM to stock up on as many Dark Symmetry Points as they can to spend later in the adventure. The GM is encouraged to read up on the rules for Corrupting equipment, found on page 150 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book, and to use them with increasing regularity as the adventure progresses.

ACT 2 ENVIRONMENT: THE DARK SYMMETRY TAKES HOLD

Once the investigators have left the offices of Jaeger Corp they should quickly realise that the strange events happening around them are spreading and becoming far more serious. Von Hölle begins bringing his plans online and begins his subversion of the CEN broadcasting systems, dramatically increasing the power and danger of the Dark Symmetry across Luna City.

- ◆ Televisions begin changing channel to the Capitol Entertainment Network "Giant Eye" program and people are unable to change back. **This is an important ambient clue for the investigators.**
- ◆ Complex electronics items become very unreliable, prone to dangerous accidents or malfunctions.
- ◆ Computers begin deleting or altering data in ways most likely to cause anger.
- ◆ Train signalling system malfunctions and cause several train crashes.
- ◆ Traffic lights problems cause massive traffic jams which generate anger and violence.
- ◆ Several aircraft fall out of the sky, crashing to the ground and causing carnage and panic.

The GM should be willing to spend some DSPs to Trigger Environment effect and possibly Inspire Dread as it becomes clear something terrible is happening.

ACT 3 ENVIRONMENT: REALITY TEARS APART

The third act kicks off once the investigators reach the Capitol Entertainment Network tower. The investigators now have less than an hour to stop von Hölle before he completes his terrific plan unleashing the energies of the Dark Symmetry in Luna City. The entire city takes on an apocalyptic tone and many fear the end times have come. Only the broadcast and sermons of the Brothers seem unaffected.

- ◆ Viewers—many unwilling—of the Giant Eye become unable to move or break their attention away from the television show and the increasingly horrific activities being shown. They are beginning the process of being transformed into bio-organic components for the Dark Symmetry and others have started the transformation into Malignants. **This should terrify any investigators who completed Straffar Gatan 39.**
- ◆ A thick, choking, mist forms in the streets around the Capitol Entertainment Network and spreads. The mist reeks of burning plastic and ammonia.

- ◆ Aircraft begin falling out of the sky and high above Luna City spacecraft lose navigation control with many crashing into the surface of Luna as the Dark Symmetry corrupts their systems.
- ◆ Automatic security systems, such as sentry guns, and even regular electronic systems such as elevators become murderous. All across the city sentry guns open up on their people from their own organisation, elevator cables snap sending all the passengers to their deaths.
- ◆ The communication nets are all filled with misleading, dangerous communications, or an unearthly howl.
- ◆ Lunatics and others who have already been corrupted by Ilian, Muawijhe, and the other Dark Apostles go on killing sprees.

The GM should spend their DSPs freely in this third phase, as by this point the Dark Symmetry has a tighter grip upon the city, with devastating consequences.

SETTING: LUNA CITY

Luna City is more than just a location in the adventure. Just like Straffar Gatan 39 was, it is a character at the heart of the adventure and its death sets the tone for the events that unfold. The Luna City chapter in the *Mutant Chronicles* core core book and the Luna City Guidebook are full of details you can weave into the adventure. Luna City is in a moment of transformation, one that will forever change it as technology becomes unreliable and dangerous.

The investigators should feel empathy for Luna City as it attempts to fight off the infection of the Dark Symmetry. Places they know and are familiar with become subtly changed and altered and even the sky takes on a menacing greenish tone. Luna City may fall, but it is going to do so fighting.

Luna City provides a number of interesting environmental and social elements and challenges for the GM to play with during the mission as well as a place to spend your Dark Symmetry points. Themes you may wish to explore and possibly use to extend the adventure could include:

- ◆ **DIVISIONS TORN OPEN:** The division between the corporate elite and the disenfranchised masses as hoarding and protectionism kicks in, the roadblocks go up and the bulkheads come down. You can make this a little less blunt by recasting the conflict between Bauhaus and Luna PD, or even more troubling the breakdown of relations between Luna PD and their historical founder: Capitol. Dark Symmetry points spent to emphasise these decisions cause additional rioting, with corporate and class divisions causing hostilities to flare up between disparate

groups of anxious survivors. These disputes and hostilities may be an incidental background element, or it may result in battles the investigators may want to avoid, depending on how many Dark Symmetry points are spent.

- ◆ **THE BROTHERS:** the seeming oases of calm that are the charitable facilities of The Brothers and their broadcasts. They can become points of light that the investigators can use to catch their breath as they cross the city. The investigators are free to spend their Chronicle Points to establish a nearby shelter, hospice, or soup kitchen run by the Brothers' organisation. These locations allow the investigators to recover one Dread immediately, and gives them somewhere to rest free from the many threats and dangers of Luna City.
- ◆ **STREET LEVEL HEROICS:** In response to all the terrible events happening, heroes are emerging across the city. Ordinary corporate employees or freelancers are organising resistance, bringing peace to the chaos, and helping those who need it most, often while working with their traditional corporate rivals. Mishiman Samurai fighting side-by-side with Imperial Clansmen. Try and balance the rivalries and hostilities with these signs of heroism. In a world seemingly gone mad, where technology can't be trusted, simple human determination and common decency need to win out.
- ◆ **ALL ALONE:** if the investigators call for Luna PD or other kinds of support from central control they will receive auto-playing recordings informing them that all officers are currently busy, or even worse simply static. At its worst, the investigators receive disturbing or contradictory messages—the influence of the Dark Symmetry upon the communication systems.
- ◆ **1 DSP:** The GM may spend one Dark Symmetry point when the investigators attempt to use the radio in order to inflict one Dread, or to force an **Average D1 Willpower test** against a mental assault.
- ◆ **A 'PEA-SOUPER':** the pollution from the nearby Industrial zone and the rain and humidity have created a thick choking fog that hugs the streets to waist level and makes footing treacherous. The fog gets thicker the closer to the Capitol Entertainment Tower the investigator get and offers opportunities for getting lost or bumping into unexpected opposition, or even worse ending up in a confused firefight with other Luna PD cops!
- ◆ **1 DSP:** Whenever the player characters are outside, the GM may spend one Dark Symmetry point to make the fog rise up and become a particular obstacle. This increases the difficulty of all Observation and Insight tests made against a target at Medium or longer range by one.

THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

PROLOGUE: ORDERS FROM THE RUINS

Read aloud or paraphrase to set the tone and orient the investigators:

"Standing beside the smoking rubble that is all that remains of Straffar Gatan 39, the grizzled, cigar-smoking Lieutenant Vordach briefs you: "Bauhaus are trying to bring the hammer down on Luna PD. They are blaming us for everything they can, but it smells like a fit up to me and I don't like it." His briefing is interrupted by a muffled explosion in the distance. It might be your imagination but you can hear far more sirens and alarms than normal in the city. Vordach grimaces and takes a puff of his cigar before continuing, "Look, things are going to hell in the city and I'm not about to waste time screwing anyone over some jumped up corporate BS. Get out there find the missing girl Sandrine Peterson and close the damned case. Also, some Bauhaus executive called von Hölle has gone missing..."

IF THE INVESTIGATORS COMPLETED STRAFFAR GATAN 39:

"He pauses to study your faces, you remember well that strange, empty white room that von Hölle rented in the tenement. Devoid of any humanity it was unnerving"

IF THEY ARE NEW TO THE CASE:

Lt Vordach hands you crime scene photos of a strange, empty white room with nothing but a television and a single bulb. "Von Hölle rented a room in the tenement across the hall from the missing girl."

"Yeah, I thought that might get your attention, and my gut tells me he is involved somehow and is our best lead on the girl." He hands you a manila folder with pictures and printouts. "That is everything we have on Sandrine Peterson and Fabien von Hölle. The way I figure it, the best way we have of getting out from under the spotlight is to get enough dirt on Bauhaus to put them in the firing line instead. Do what you got to do, but get it done. In the meantime I will stall the paperwork on the charges and specs." He turns to leave but pauses, "Oh, one last thing. Something big is going down and the city is going to hell so don't count on any backup—everyone is spread thin tonight, and I have a feeling this is only the start. Go talk to the CEO of Jaeger Corporation, Markus Peterson, and see if he can give you any leads for his niece and this von Hölle guy." He leaves you standing in the smoking ruins wandering just what the hell you have gotten yourself mixed up in."

The manila folder Vordach hands the investigators has the address and details for Jaeger Corporation as well as a short file on Fabien von Hölle.

Once the investigators have read the files it is time to start the investigation and the first place to start is the offices of Jaeger Corporation.

ACT I: THE BIG TROUBLE IN OLD TOWN

Jaeger Corporation is a former bleeding-edge freelancer corporation absorbed by Bauhaus. Jaeger is now falling apart after the loss of its two driving forces: former CEO Erich Strauss and CTO Fabien von Hölle. The investigators will have to comb through the remnants of the troubled genius Fabien von Hölle whilst surviving the catastrophic failure of equipment all around them that could spell their doom. If they survive, the information they have gathered—combined with that from Straffar Gatan 39—will reveal von Hölle's terrifying plan.

The key clues the investigators need to find from this scene is that von Hölle is up to something on floor 192 of the Capitol Entertainment Network and that is most likely where he is right now.

On the orders of Lieutenant Vordach, the investigators head over to the offices of Jaeger Corporation in Old Town to interview the new CEO and investigate the disappearance of Fabien von Hölle.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- ◀ **GREEN, JENNY:** Fabien von Hölle's former personal assistant.
- ◀ **PETERSON, FRANÇOIS:** Bauhaus executive and father of Sandrine Peterson
- ◀ **PETERSON, MARKUS:** New CEO of the Jaeger Corporation.
- ◀ **PETERSON, SANDRINE:** Daughter of Bauhaus executive François Peterson, Apartment 302
- ◀ **STRAUSS, ERICH:** Now deceased former CEO of Jaeger Corporation and close friend of Fabien von Hölle.
- ◀ **VON HÖLLE, FABIEN:** Twisted genius and Heretic of Ilian.
- ◀ **VORDACH, LT. PIERRE:** Investigator's superior in Luna PD.



LUNA POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE FILE

FILED
15th Oct

SUBJECT LAST NAME: von Hölle, Dr.

SUBJECT FIRST NAME(S): Fabien

VITAL STATISTICS:

Height: 1.8m Weight: 80kg
Eye Colour: Blue Hair Colour: Brown (Receding)

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP: Jaeger Corp (Former), Freelancer (Current)

EDUCATION HISTORY: First Class Bachelor of Science, Physics, Luna University; Theoretical Mathematics Masters of Science (Distinction), University of Luna; Doctorate of Philosophy (Advanced Quantum Tunnelling), Luan University; Bauhaus Advancement of Science Fellowship.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY: Chief Technical Officer, Jaeger Corporation (Fired), currently unemployed.

RESIDENCE: Unknown.

KNOWN ASSOCIATIONS/ACCOMPLICES: Erich Strauss, CEO of Jaeger Corporation (Deceased). No living family.

RAP SHEET: No criminal charges.

PROFILE: Dr von Hölle is an outstanding mathematician and theoretical physicist with a specialisation in quantum entanglement communications systems. Former co-founder of Jaeger Corporation who specialise in interplanetary communications systems, von Hölle was fired shortly after the death of his co-founder, CEO and close friend, Erich Strauss. Intelligence gathered indicates that von Hölle's behaviour became unstable and he was let go, swearing vengeance on the new corporate CEO Markus Peterson. After this time he dropped off the grid and not been seen since.

THREAT ASSESSMENT: Low. The security risk presented by Dr von Hölle is primarily focused on misuse of his technical expertise.

No photo on file

PHOTO/SKETCH

PAGE 1 OF 1

Rush per Capt. Harris hand deliver

REPORT ID
493-
2835



REPORT TO BE:



FILED



ARCHIVED



DUPLICATED - AUTHORIZED BY:

INVESTIGATIONS, AND KEEPING THINGS MOVING

The first act of this adventure is primarily investigative, where the goal is to learn as much as possible about von Hölle and his insane plans. Investigative games can be somewhat tricky to run, particularly if the players miss particularly important clues. (see Investigation page 465 in **Mutant Chronicles** core book for more ideas on running these kinds of scenes)

When the characters find themselves in a situation where there are clues to uncover, the important part is to ensure that the characters find at least the most vital clues so that the game can continue moving. Particularly successful investigative work can be rewarded with more details, or better information, but there should always be a minimum level of information that the characters *will* uncover.

In **Mutant Chronicles**, the ideas of 'failing forwards' and 'success at a cost' (as described on page 449 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core book) are of particular value here—a stymied investigation can continue if the characters have alternative ways to find particular clues, or if they have a way of obtaining the absolute essentials at some greater cost to themselves. In particular, when searching a location or questioning a witness, 'success at a cost' can be used to provide the absolute minimum vital information, but the characters suffer a Repercussion in return—either complicating their lives, or adding points to the Dark Symmetry pool.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"The offices of Jaeger Corporation are situated in a comparatively pleasant part of the Old Town district of Luna City in an ageing office tower that has been home to the rise and fall of many freelance corporations. The tower is already ancient and it shows. Its once clean lines have been muddled by repeated alterations, extensions, renovations, and redesigns leaving the tower a hideous chimera of different architectural styles. A hundred and forty stories high it is the tallest tower in this part of Old Town.

"Approaching the front of the building you see that Jaeger only owns the top third of the tower, the remaining floors being let out to smaller corporations and even individual

freelancers. You are slightly surprised their offices are here at all given that they are owned by Bauhaus now you would have expected Jaeger to be moved to one of their towers. You know from the file Vordach gave you that the offices of von Hölle and the new CEO Markus Peterson are on floor 140. The receptionist looks up at you as you approach."

If the investigators present their police badges they are shown to the lift and spend ten minutes rattling up to the top of the tower in a lift that feels more than a little precarious. Once they arrive on floor 140 they are met by Jenny Green, the former personal assistant to von Hölle. She asks if they have heard anything about Mr von Hölle and looks visibly upset by recent events.

THE GIANT EYE RETURNS

Behind Jenny is a television displaying the Capitol Entertainment Network television show **'The Giant Eye'**. If the investigators watch the show they quickly realise that it is a comedy show where a mysterious prankster called The Giant Eye who is only ever seen wearing a hooded cloak misleads, befuddles and confuses ordinary members of the public. At least that is what it appears to be on first glance. Emotionally sensitive or perceptive investigators—those who succeed on an **Average D1 Observation** or **Insight test**—will notice that the 'pranks' are mean and petty. In between sketches, the TV switches to an image of a giant unblinking eye while the prankster addresses his audience.

◆ The Investigators may spend one Momentum from this test to notice that behind the shadowed presenter they can see the numbers '192' and that the pranks seem heavily focussed on malfunctioning machinery and equipment.

192 is the floor number of the studio in the Capitol Entertainment Network tower, but the investigators will need to figure that out themselves.

INTERVIEWING JENNY GREEN

Jenny knows all the information in the hand-outs on von Hölle and Jaeger and can answer questions for the investigators. She knows nothing about Sandrine Peterson. Adapt the following questions and answers to those asked by the investigators:

◆ **IF THEY ASK HER ABOUT VON HÖLLE:** "Fabien... uh Mr von Hölle, was devastated by the death of Mr Strauss—Erich Strauss. They founded the company together and I think Mr Strauss was the only person who really understood Mr von Hölle. Once he died, Mr von Hölle seemed confused and unable to accept he was gone. Then of course, once Mr Peterson, our new CEO, was appointed by Bauhaus things got quickly worse. Mr von Hölle and Mr Peterson don't see eye to eye on things." The investigators can make a **Daunting D3 Observation test**, or a **Challenging D2 Insight test**. A success lets them know that Jenny has feelings for von Hölle, though it is clear they were not reciprocated.

◆ **IF THEY ASK ABOUT THE DEATH OF ERICH STRAUSS:** “Oh! It was terrible! He was at his apartment; he had a heart attack and fell off his balcony. At least that’s what I heard. It was so surprising, because Mr Strauss was super fit. I had no idea he had a heart condition. Fabien, Mr von Hölle took the news so hard. He didn’t think it was an accident.”

◆ **IF THEY ASK WHERE VON HÖLLE IS NOW:** “I wish I knew. After he was... fired,” Jenny looks visibly upset recalling this, “he stormed off and I haven’t seen him since.” The Investigators may attempt an **Average D1 Insight test**, or a **Challenging D2 Observation test**. If either succeeds, they can tell that Jenny is not telling the whole truth.

◆ **IF THEY PUSH JENNY TO TELL THEM MORE:** This requires an **Average D1 Command test**, or a **Challenging D2 Persuade test**. If successful Jenny says the following: “I did see Mr von Hölle once more. I saw him in the office late one night, must have been a couple of weeks ago. He was loading up crates with equipment. When I asked him about it, he said he was just collecting the remainder of his things. There was one weird thing: he was wearing a Capitol suit and had an ID card for the Capitol Entertainment Network. I just assumed he had been headhunted and I didn’t think anything more of it.” She hands

them a lift key with 192 scratched on it. “I also found this. Do you think it is important?” **This is an important clue!**

◆ **IF THEY ASK ABOUT THE EQUIPMENT:** “I don’t know. One of the machines was Mr von Hölle’s new prototype, but I don’t really understand what it does.”

◆ **IF THEY ASK ABOUT VON HÖLLE’S MENTAL STATE:** “Mr von Hölle did begin acting quiet strangely after Mr Strauss’ death. He started talking to himself—I think he thought he was talking to Mr Strauss—and working really late nights on... something. He became obsessed with that horrible Capitol TV show “The Giant Eye”. He would turn up more and more dishevelled for work and he started arguing with everyone. Even me. Eventually Mr Peterson had no choice but to fire him.” **This is an important clue!**

◆ **IF THEY ASK HER ABOUT THE NEW CEO MARKUS PETERSON:** “Mr Peterson is a very good boss.” It is clear that she is in fear of her job and won’t say anything bad about the new CEO.

Once the investigators are done interviewing Jenny she shows them to von Hölle’s old office.



Jaeger Corp: Von Hölle may have left suddenly but he has not forgotten.

THE FALL OF VON HÖLLE

SEARCHING VON HÖLLE'S OFFICE

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Von Hölle's office is a mess. It looks like a burglary has taken place here. It is going to take some digging to work your way through it all. Standing in the middle of the room, looking completely out of place with the chaos, is an executive in a sharp, Bauhaus suit. This must be Markus Peterson, the new CEO."

Immediately obvious to the investigators is that burned into the centre of the carpet is a huge eye! Mr Peterson has not realised it, but he is standing in the middle of it. Markus does not try to interfere with the investigators as they search the room, but he does seem quite distracted.

A successful **Average D1 Observation test** discovers one of the following, and one more for each Momentum spent:

- ◆ A discarded memo pad is covered in highly complex mathematics with the word "Erich" at the centre of the web of equations. A **Daunting D3 Sciences test** reveals the equations to be highly advanced and unorthodox quantum theory.
- ◆ A printed requisition order signed by von Hölle in the bottom drawer of his desk (under some office supplies) for common electrical equipment, control systems, generators, heavy duty cabling, and assorted mechanical apparatus.
- ◆ A blueprint of office space on which someone has written "C.E.N. 192. Should be perfect for your requirements. You will not be disturbed, you have my guarantee." It is signed "A friend." **This is an important clue!**

A **Challenging D2 Sciences test** will discover one of the following items in von Hölle's communications log on his computer, and one additional item per Momentum spent:

- ◆ A rental agreement for an apartment in Straffar Gatan 39
- ◆ A photo of Erich Strauss and Fabien von Hölle at their university graduation ceremony.
- ◆ Messages from 'Operation Looking Glass', which confirm deliveries of surgical equipment to the Capitol Entertainment Network tower.
- ◆ A single diary log (all others have been deleted): "I can still hear Erich's voice in my head. He is full of wonderful new ideas, ideas that will change the entire universe. I must re-establish the link!"
- ◆ 192 is perfect! Those Capitol bastards will never even know I am there! **This is an important clue!**

INTERVIEWING MARKUS PETERSON

Unlike Jenny, Markus Peterson is not one to let others control the interview, and he will do his best to control the conversation by bombarding them with pointed questions:

"My brother tells me that my niece, Sandrine is missing and that you think it is something to do with bloody von Hölle? If anything happens to her I will have your badges!"

"What have you discovered so far? As CEO of this corporation and a Bauhaus citizen, I demand to know."

"What are you going to do about our stolen equipment? Von Hölle stole some very valuable prototypes and we need them back."

"I've formally requested that this case be turned over to Bauhaus Law Enforcement. They should be here any minute!"

Ask one or more of the investigators to attempt a **Challenging D2 Observation test** or an **Average D1 Insight** or **Psychotherapy test**. If they succeed, it is clear that Markus Peterson is an extremely stressed man. He is clearly worried about his job, worried about the company, and worried about his missing niece and so he is responding the way he was taught in business school: to go on the attack as aggressively as possible. They can use this information to get him to calm down and become more reasonable. An **Average D1 Persuade test** will get him to reveal one of the following items, plus one more per Momentum spent:

- ◆ Von Hölle was a loner, quirky and exceptionally intelligent, but completely unstable. Peterson has no idea how the former CEO Erich Strauss put up with him.
- ◆ Mr. Peterson has no idea what Operation Looking Glass is. It was a project that started before his tenure, and he has only just found out about it. All he knows is that it was apparently a cross-venture with someone within the Capitol Entertainment Network, something that would be unacceptable to Bauhaus now that they own Jaeger Corp. However when he challenged them they denied all knowledge, and strangely he thinks they were telling the truth. **This is an important clue!**
- ◆ Jaeger Corporation's key products are specialist communications satellites that offer unparalleled communications. The systems are super-advanced, but unfortunately, the most recent generation have been prone to unexplained failures and faults. Peterson suspects corporate espionage.
- ◆ Jaeger's systems have been suffering from unexplained malfunctions, though he has noticed that Bauhaus in general has been having technical problems and is keen to jump on this detail to show it is not his—or Jaeger's—fault.

◆ Mr. Dawes, another Jaeger researcher, was sent to take over von Hölle's projects within Jaeger, but he has not shown up for work today.

At this point, the investigators should have acquired enough clues to know where they need to go next: Capitol Entertainment Network building, and may have even worked out that they need to go to Floor 192.

It sounds simple, but things are about to take a turn for the worse as they try to leave the offices of Jaeger!

LIFT GOING DOWN!

Once the investigators have completed their search and questioning in the offices of Jaeger it is time to head out. When the investigators enter the lift to leave, the GM may spend one or more Dark Symmetry points to make a Corruption Roll when they operate the lift. The lift mechanism has a Reliability of one, so a total of two or more on a Corruption roll will compromise the lift in some way. Depending on how much Corruption you inflict upon the lift, the effects will become increasingly severe.

If the lift becomes corrupted, the following happens: As the investigators descend in the lift, it suddenly lurches to a stop making a horrific grinding noise as it does so. The lift level indicator will incorrectly display the floor as 192, though it is actually stuck between floors 130 and 129—indeed, there isn't a floor 192 in this building. Von

Hölle is manipulating the Dark Symmetry to attack the investigators but cannot help but reveal some information about his plan as he does so.

Investigators who succeed an **Average D1 Observation test** will notice a distant, small explosion in the lift control mechanism and the sound of a cascade of steel cabling towards the stalled lift. A rain of blown bolts and plating, smash into the top of the lift carriage creating ever larger, and scarier, dents; as if an animal is trying to break in.

The investigators will almost certainly want to escape and will try to prise open the doors. Doing so requires a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** and something sharp such as a dagger to pry the doors open. Unfortunately, when the doors are opened, they are faced with bare masonry and cannot get out that way! At this point, another explosion should sound above drawing their attention to the escape hatch in the ceiling.

In addition, one of the following events will occur based on the amount of Corruption inflicted (after reduction for the lift's Reliability:

ONE CORRUPTION:

◆ Everyone should be able to climb out the hatch easily, but more explosions and massive bursts of electrical overloads at the top of the shaft rain more debris down on the characters. The 130th floor is just above and shouldn't be too hard to climb. The



Even the lifts are no longer reliable in Luna City.

investigators must make an **Average D1 Athletics** or **Acrobatics test** to get to the narrow ledges on the edge of the lift shaft without being struck by falling debris. Complications generated here can be spent to cause minor damage to characters—a single Complication inflicts 1+**↑**2 damage with the Dreadful quality. The investigators escape through the 130th floor doors.

TWO OR THREE CORRUPTION:

- ◆ The emergency speakers in the lift suddenly blare deafening inhuman screaming. Every investigator must attempt an **Average D1 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault. Any investigator who suffers one or more mental wounds is also Dazed until the end of his next action, due to the disorienting sound and the bewildering influence of the Dark Symmetry.
- ◆ The lift then suddenly tilts to one side. If anyone touches the control panel, it sparks, inflicting **↑**2 damage to the character's arm with the Stun quality. The investigators should be able to climb out the top lift hatch easily, but more explosions and massive bursts of electrical overloads at the top of the shaft rain more debris down on the investigators.
- ◆ Investigators must make a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** to get to the narrow ledges on the edge of the lift shaft without being struck by falling debris. Complications generated here can be spent to cause minor damage to characters—a single Complication inflicts 1+**↑**3 damage with the Dreadful quality. The investigators can then reach a maintenance hatch to escape the lift shaft.

FOUR CORRUPTION SUCCESSES OR MORE:

- ◆ The emergency speakers in the lift suddenly blare deafening inhuman screaming. Every investigator must attempt a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault. Any investigator who suffers one or more mental wounds is also Dazed until the end of his next action, due to the disorienting sound and the bewildering influence of the Dark Symmetry.
- ◆ The lift then suddenly tilts to one side. If anyone touches the control panel, it sparks, inflicting **↑**3 damage to the character's arm with the Stun quality. The investigators should be able to climb out the top lift hatch easily, but more explosions and massive bursts of electrical overloads at the top of the shaft rain more debris down on the investigators.
- ◆ Investigators must make a **Daunting D3 Athletics test** to get to the narrow ledges on the edge of the lift shaft without being struck by falling debris. Complications generated here can be spent to cause minor damage to characters—a single Complication inflicts 1+**↑**4 damage with the Dreadful quality. The investigators can then reach a maintenance hatch to escape the lift shaft.

- ◆ Once the investigators successfully reach the lift shaft edges, there is a final explosion above and the bulk of the lift machinery falls from above and smashes into the lift, sending the twisted wreckage crashing 129 floors to ground level. When it hits, the entire building seems to shake! At this point, the last character to leave the lift must make a **Daunting D3 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault—they've barely escaped with their life.

RUNNING THE SCENE

This is a hard scene for players without the Athletics skill. There is a very real potential that a lot of Symmetry dice will be in the GM's hands. This is a good opportunity to save some DSPs for Act 3 when they face off against von Hölle, so do not overspend. Remember that teamwork can be used to help investigators with low Strength and Co-Ordination.

If the investigators were nice to Jenny Green earlier, she comes looking to see if they are okay. If they're struggling, she opens the lift doors at the 130th floor with the help of a colleague and lets down a fire hose that they can climb. In this case, one investigator (the one who was nicest) gets one free success for one skill test.

If an investigator fails any roll they slip and fall, and just manage to catch themselves on a ledge, but smash a body part on a girder as they do so. Spend a Dark Symmetry point to inflict 1+**↑**2 damage to a random body part. Every subsequent round, the investigator may attempt an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to try and pull themselves back up onto the girder. If they fail, they remain dangling, and gain one Dread. Another investigator may walk across the girder to assist them by using Teamwork with an Athletics roll. A Repercussion generated on one of these tests may cause the character to fall at the GM's discretion.

Investigators that fall may pay the GM two Dark Symmetry points or spend a Chronicle Point to catch an exposed beam near a lift door as they tumble down the shaft but suffer 3+**↑**6 damage from the 9 metre fall, to a random body location. If Jenny hasn't appeared to help yet, have her open a nearby lift door, and help the investigator who's fallen, no roll is required.

If the falling investigator isn't willing to pay the GM or spend any Chronicle points, they fall to their death 130 floors below. Start with a new pre-generated investigator, or alternatively start with the same investigator, with a different name sent by Lieutenant Vordach as extra backup, that joins the investigators at the bottom of the lift shaft as a member of the Luna PD called to the accident.

After a long trip down the stairwell with other workers being evacuated, the investigators finally reach the ground floor lobby. If the lift crashed to the ground, the place is a broken mess after the lift shaft wreckage exploded outwards. Police, medics, and fire fighters are arriving to deal with the casualties and the body

of the receptionist is being loaded into an ambulance. On-scene paramedics can provide basic first aid: they have Intelligence 10, Treatment Expertise +2, and an Automated with five doses of Coagulant. In addition, for their trouble, each player character should be awarded one Chronicle Point—they've just struggled for their life against a malicious elevator, so a Chronicle point each is the least they can expect.

ACT 2: LUNA CITY CHAOS

Act 2 sees the investigators come face to face with a city falling apart under the malevolent influence of the Dark Symmetry as they travel across it and switches the tone from investigation to action!

The act places the investigators in mortal danger from catastrophes in three scenes but also gives them the opportunity to display heroism and become the heroes they have the potential to be.

The scenes suggested here can be completed in a single session. If the investigators are enjoying themselves and the epic nature of events takes the adventure that way you can easily extend the act by a session or two making the journey a true test of endurance. Each of the scenes should be an environmental or human challenge, or better yet a mix of the two.

THE SKY IS FALLING DOWN

◀ **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE:** wreckage from two space craft.

◀ **HUMAN CHALLENGE:** a crowd of panicked civilians.

Two spacecraft collide over Luna City, raining fire and debris down on the metropolis below and setting off a chain reaction.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Your journey from the Old Town to the edge of the Ancient Quarters was far harder than it should have been. No Luna PD vehicles were available and you were forced to travel by bus to about a couple of kilometres from the Capitol Entertainment Network Tower. From here on you can see the traffic is jammed solid. You are going to have to travel the rest of the way on foot.

Several hundred metres above your heads you can hear the roar of huge engines. Looking up you see a huge Bauhaus freighter and what looks to be a Mishiman Attack Ship attempting to manoeuvre around each other, though what either ship is doing so low over this part of the city you don't know. You are riveted in place when it becomes clear they are going to have a head-on collision. The pointed prow of the Attack Ship smashes into the skin of the Bauhaus freighter, piercing it like a blade. The impact triggers a series

of explosions on both ships, causing cargo pods, escape pods, and huge chunks of spacecraft to be expelled from the freighter. With a sudden horrific revelation you realise that they are falling towards you!"

The investigators have to run for their lives, while all around them car and truck-sized pieces of the stricken space craft slam into the ground. The street around them transforms from a normal urban scene to that of catastrophe as debris rains down on the cars. The drivers abandon their vehicles and flee for cover along with the pedestrians.

The investigators will need to avoid the initial rain of debris then make it to the cover of the nearest subway station to escape the crash zone. Use this scene as a chance to stock up on extra DSPs. Investigators are encouraged to use group momentum to help those who fall behind during this scene.

This situation is time-sensitive—staying in the area longer than absolutely necessary is hazardous to the investigators' health. The characters have ten minutes before the situation starts becoming really dire, and each minute spent on the scene after this adds one point to the Dark Symmetry pool.

RAIN OF DEBRIS TO THE OVERPASS: This is a straight run for the first safe point and requires a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** while wreckage slams into the ground behind them. Any failed test inflicts 1+[†]3 damage with the Dreadful quality from sprays of shrapnel and rubble churned up by the crash. This test takes a minute, but all the investigators can attempt it simultaneously.

THE OVERPASS TO THE SUBWAY: The subway is packed with rubble and cars, and to get through the investigators will need to make either a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** or a **Daunting D3 Athletics test**. Characters must attempt this one at a time—there's not enough room for more than one person—and each test takes a minute to attempt. Failure means that the character makes no progress, and must try again, requiring another test and another minute. A Complication at this point could cause the character to become stuck, requiring a Difficult D2 Athletics test (his own, or someone behind him) to free him before he attempts to get through the tunnel, or may cause the tunnel to shift somewhat, increasing the difficulty of the tests by one for anyone who hasn't yet traversed the tunnel.

THE SUBWAY TO SAFETY: Once in the subway the investigators realise that the subway network is down—power has failed and they can safely travel down the tracks to the next stop where a stranded train blocks the tunnel going forward.

To escape through the subway requires navigating the crushed mass of people who have fled in here. The best way through is to

calm or direct the crowd with a **Challenging D2 Command test** or a **Daunting D3 Persuade test**, taking a minute. Failure means the crowds remain ignorant of the character's pleas, and another test is required. Alternately, a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** allows the character to slip and squeeze through the crowd. A Complication at this point could cause the crowd to panic, and the resultant crush to cause a **Challenging D2 Willpower test** or suffer a Mental Assault.

BLACK RAIN

◀ **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE:** a ruptured oil pipeline.

◀ **HUMAN CHALLENGE:** school children trapped on a bus.

Mutant Chronicles is a *dieselpunk* setting, but rarely as literally as this: an underground oil pipeline is ruptured in the damage caused by the impact of the spacecraft, spraying thick crude oil and fire everywhere.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"The ground under your feet buckles and you are hit by a hot shockwave as the street ahead of you ruptures. A geyser of fire and thick, black oil roars out. The stench of petrochemicals and burning rubber is overwhelming making you cough and choke. Flaming oil sets fire to anything combustible it lands on, while the unignited crude oil falls like a thick black rain

making everything slippery and hazardous. You quickly realise that you are not the only people caught in the disaster. You see a Luna Public School bus—number 192—smashed against a lamppost. The driver's cab is badly flattened, but you can see the panicking school children banging on the windows. They are trapped inside, but worse still the bus is covered in thick oil. If—when—it ignites it will turn the bus into a flaming inferno! There's not much time."

The investigators will have to act quickly. Although the oil is difficult to ignite, it is beginning to develop a combustible mist of petrochemicals above it. One spark and the whole thing will blow.

The bus is badly damaged by the crash, but fortunately, the children were largely unharmed apart from a few scrapes and bruises, though they are all terrified. The bus driver was not so lucky. The lamp post snapped off, impaled him through the chest, and also warped the door making it unusable.

Warning: The scene is an opportunity for heroism but also for terrible trauma if the children die, so the aim with this scene is to keep the tension ratcheted up, but without tipping over into disaster. At the end of the scene, regardless of the outcome, the characters need to make a Willpower test or suffer mental assault. The difficulty will be Average D1, unless the children die in which case it becomes Daunting D3 instead.



Can the Investigators prevent a terrible tragedy?

ADVENTURE

This situation is time-sensitive—staying in the area longer than absolutely necessary is hazardous to the investigators' health. The characters have ten minutes before the situation starts becoming really dire, and each minute spent on the scene after this adds one point to the Dark Symmetry pool.

At any point during this scene, the GM can spend one Dark Symmetry point to start a fire in the area, or to cause the fire to spread. The fire has no immediate effect other than to illustrate impending doom: once the fire has spread five times, it'll reach the bus. Beyond this, it also poses an impediment—Complications on any actions to move around the area inflict damage proportionate to the blaze—it inflicts 1+ \uparrow 1 damage, plus an additional \uparrow 1 for each time the fire has spread. This damage, naturally, has the Incendiary X quality, where X is the total number of Dark Symmetry points spent to expand the fire.

There are two primary challenges in this scene:

GETTING INTO THE BUS: not an easy task as the crash has caused considerable damage, everything is slick with crude oil, and they cannot use any method that causes sparks. Each of the methods below requires a minute to attempt.

- ◆ Breaking open the windows is an obvious option, requiring an Average D1 Athletics, Mechanics, or **Thievery test** to remove the window cleanly and safely. A Complication attempting this inflicts either two Dread as broken glass showers the children inside the bus, or 1+ \uparrow 3 damage as the investigator cuts himself on the glass.
- ◆ Freeing the stuck door is a **Challenging D2 Mechanics test**, or a **Daunting D3 Athletics test**.
- ◆ Convincing a child onboard to release the emergency exit locks is a Challenging D2 Command task. A Complication here could result in the children becoming even more scared and confused, increasing the difficulty of all further Command, Persuade, or **Psychotherapy test** to interact with the children during this scene.

EVACUATING THE CHILDREN: the eighteen children on board are traumatised and many have minor injuries. They require gentle but firm help to get to safety. A particularly severe Complication here—requiring two or more Repercussions at once—may mean that one of the children is lost: they're irrevocably separated from the group, the investigators lose track of them, or they're caught in the spreading fire.

- ◆ Five of the children are unable to walk easily and will need to be carried free, each investigator can carry one child at a time, and they require a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** to carry them across the oil safely. Failed tests mean the character isn't

completely across, requiring another minute and a further test, though this time with a difficulty of Average D1. Each test here takes one minute, though multiple characters can carry children simultaneously.

- ◆ The rest can be convinced to leave if they are first calmed down with an **Average D1 Command** or **Psychotherapy test** or a **Challenging D2 Persuade test**, taking a minute to convince the children to leave. It takes three minutes to lead the scared children safely from the bus. Succeeding a **Challenging D2 Observation test** reveals a reasonably safe path for them to follow, reducing the time taken to two minutes. A Complication here could result in a child getting lost and having to be recovered, adding an additional minute to the time taken.

All of the skill tests listed above are examples. If the investigators come up with alternative viable plans go with it.

Investigators who successfully save more than half of the children should receive a Chronicle Point each as a reward.

The investigators realise they are only a couple of blocks from the Capitol Entertainment Tower and should be able to make it the rest of the distance quickly.

PREDICTING A RIOT

- ◆ **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE:** the thick smog from the fires
- ◆ **HUMAN CHALLENGE:** stopping Imperial and Mishiman security forces opening up on panicked people

Having survived the crashed starships and saved the children, the investigators are almost at the Capitol Entertainment Tower, but they are battered, bruised, and covered in oil and blood looking almost unrecognisable.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"The city has fallen into chaos, but you have survived everything it has to throw at you so far and your destination is finally within sight. The enormous Capitol Entertainment Network tower looms above you. Is it just your imagination or are the storm clouds converging on the tower? They seem to have a slightly greenish tinge and looking down you can see the small hairs on the back of your hands standing straight up. Now you have become aware of it, you can feel the static electricity in the air. It is not a good sign; time is running out.

"Unfortunately, ahead of you barely visible, through the increasingly choking smog, in what appears to be an attached shopping mall, you can see two groups of security forces facing off against each other. On one side, you see the

colourful and eclectic uniforms of Imperial Gendarmes, and on the other what looks to be a group of Mishiman Samurai who are forming a human wall between the Gendarmes and a crashed lifepod from one of the two ships that crashed earlier. Presumably the Mishiman Attack Ship, though you can't tell for sure from here."

"You are tempted to try and go around and leave them to it, but given the time pressure, that is not an option. They are standing between you and the Capitol Entertainment Network Tower."

The Mishiman Samurai are not, as first expected, surrounding a lifepod from the Attack Ship—it did not have any. They are instead clustered around a lifepod from the Bauhaus ship which they believe contains the captain of the stricken vessel. Mishima are keen to pin the blame on the accident on Bauhaus so are attempting to take the captain and any other survivors into custody. Unfortunately, they were interrupted by forces from the Imperial Gendarmes before they could get in. The Gendarmes are also looking for survivors and also for answers as to what happened and are claiming jurisdiction as the mall contracts the Gendarmes to provide security. Neither side wants to back down, nor are they able to contact their superiors; unless the investigators intervene, things are going to turn violent fast.

Unfortunately for the investigators, both sides recognise them as Luna PD and demand they support their claims. If either—or both—of Tsuyoshi and Nix are present, their factions will call on and expect them to support their claim.

The investigators can try and negotiate, but time is pressing, and the tension is at an all-time high. As soon as they appear to make headway one of the Imperial Gendarmes,—who is being manipulated by the Dark Symmetry—spots a Mishiman Samurai attempting to circle round and opens fire. That one act causes it to kick off as both sides think they have been betrayed, with both sides firing on each other and the investigators!

The only thing that the investigators can realistically do is try and escape, but that means they are going to have to fight their way through a group of four Gendarmes and then three Samurai. Luckily, the thick fog makes sneaking far easier. If they keep their heads down and try to avoid unnecessary conflict, they should be able to escape with only those two fights.

IMPERIAL GENDARME ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	7	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **"Negotiator" handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◀ **Cudgel (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL RULES

- ◀ **Call for Backup!** This group of Gendarmes is far from the only one in the area, and while their communications are intermittent, panicked calls for backup to a fight always seem to get through, oddly enough. A Gendarme may spend his Standard Action calling for backup, immediately adding two Dark Symmetry points to the pool. These should normally be used to bring in reinforcements—an additional Gendarme—within the next couple of turns.



MISHIMAN SAMURAI ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	9	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Sode Battlesuit:** (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 3, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **No. 4 "Windrider" SMG (ranged):** Close, 1+↑3, Burst, Unbalanced
- ◀ **Katana (melee):** 1+↑6, Unbalanced, Parry 1
- ◀ **Wakizashi (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Parry 1

ADVENTURE

ACT 3: THE GIANT EYE OF ILIAN

Act three sees events come to a head as the investigators rush to the Capitol Entertainment Network Tower to stop von Hölle from tearing open a link to Ilian.

Under normal circumstances, it would be almost impossible to get to the CEN studios without high level Capitol clearance, but these are not normal circumstances. Things are chaotic in the Tower.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"The scene that you are presented with as you enter the Capitol Entertainment Network Tower is not what you were expecting. Most of the lighting that normally makes the foyer as bright as day has burned out and that which remains flickers erratically. The huge screens that display the CEN's television shows are showing either static, or far more worryingly a giant eye that appears to be scanning the room. Thick, rubbery cables dangle from the suspended ceiling. An electronic howl fills the air that sounds uncomfortably like a scream.

"Capitol executives, security personnel, and staff are rushing back and forth in a state of confusion. If there is one good side to the evident chaos, it is that you should be able to bluff or bully your way past the nervous looking security who are guarding the lifts. On the downside, if you mess up they will likely start shooting. Outside you hear a series of explosions as wreckage from crashing air vehicles hits the ground."

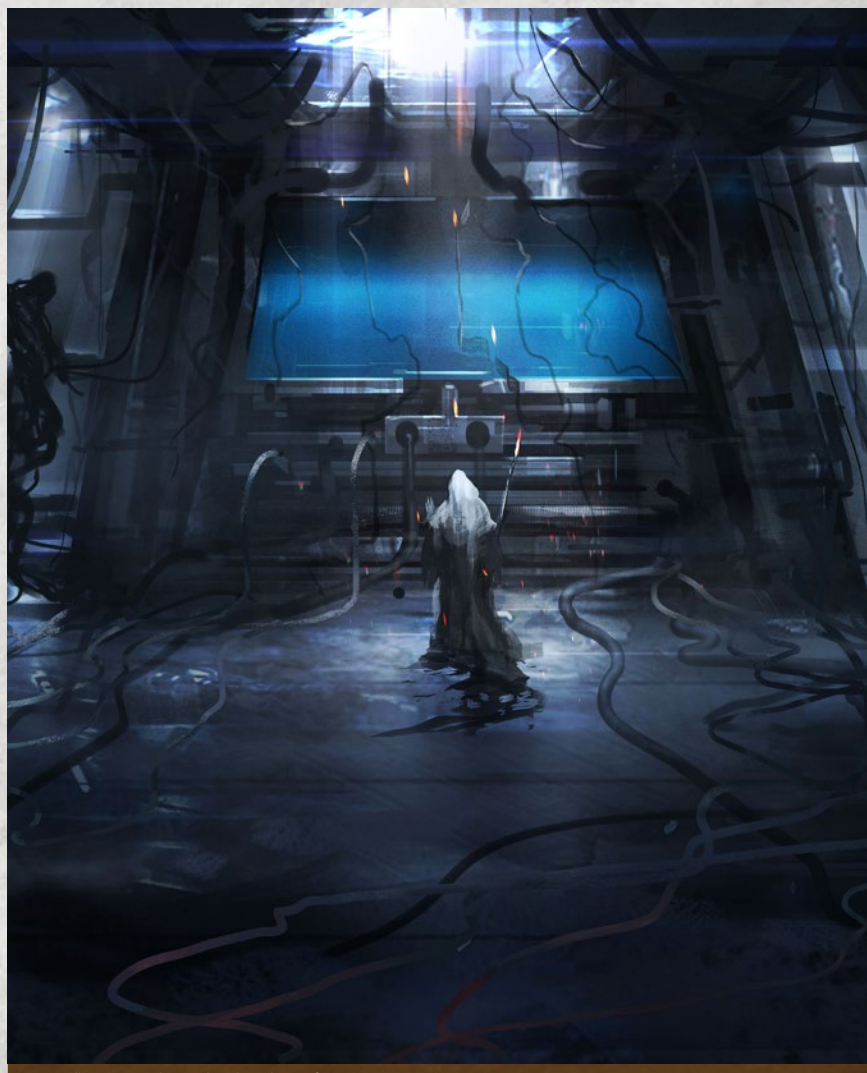
The investigators have a number of options here to get past the scared security guards and into the lifts. A **Challenging D2 Command** or **Stealth test** seem like the most obvious solutions, but whatever approach the investigators decide to use, go with it. The key to this scene is to further

ratchet up the tension. This is your last opportunity to stock up on Dark Symmetry Points for the showdown.

The investigators should by now know that they need to get to floor 192, but if not have them overhear an executive talking to a maintenance worker about how the building is being overloaded by huge power spikes from somewhere between floor 191 and 193. If they mention floor 192, the executive looks at them weirdly and says, "What are you talking about? Everyone knows there is no floor 192 because the architects messed up."

Observant investigators who succeed an **Average D1 Observation test** notice maintenance worker's toolbox is standing unattended next to the elevator and looks packed with potentially useful tools.

The trickiest part here might be convincing the investigators to get in the lift at all: their last experience in Jaeger's offices might have left them very nervous about using any lift. It should be obvious, however, that running up 192 stories of staircases is... impractical, and given the rain of machinery falling out of the sky, flying vehicles are not a viable alternative.



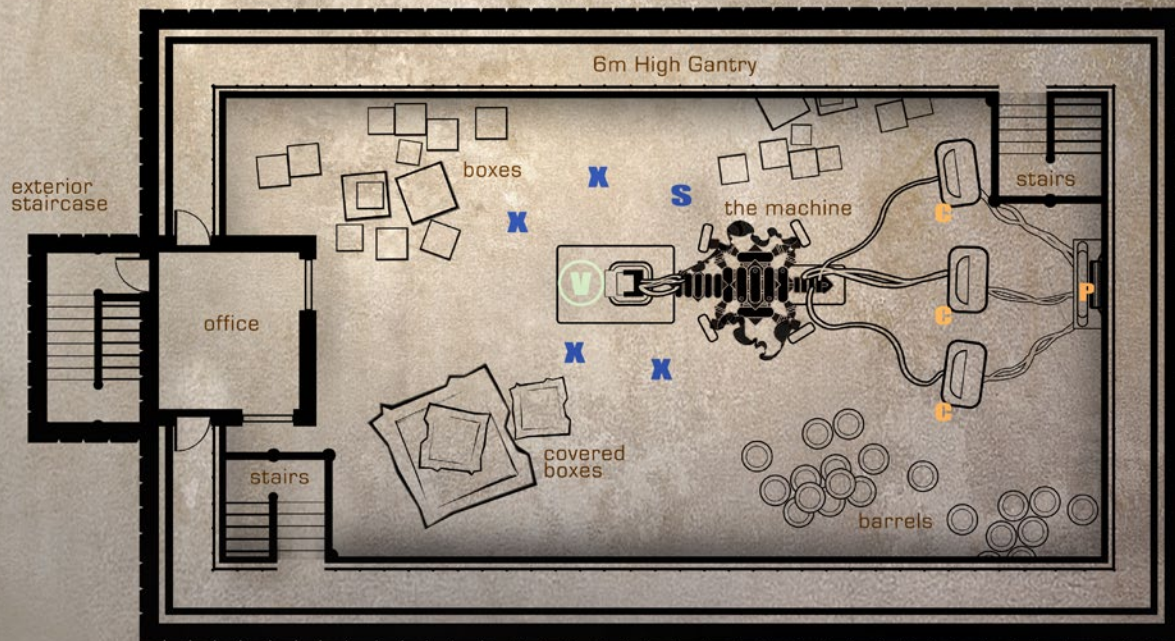
Von Hölle's insanity brings his dire plan to fruition...

THE STUDIO

- V — Von Hölle
- X — Conduit Pods (missing people)
- S — Sandrine
- C — Control Desk
- P — Power

Scale (m)

0 5



When they do make it to the lift, they notice that it has buttons all the way to 200, but is missing floor 192. The lift is an older model, unsophisticated and plain. Though the investigators do not know it, this makes it largely immune to the foul corruption of the Dark Symmetry.

To get to floor 192 it looks like they will need to push the Emergency Stop button between floors 191 and 193 and force the doors open. They should think of this solution themselves, but if they do not, have them make an **Average D1 Education test**.

The ride up is uneventful, though they should hear strange mechanical noises that are unsettling. Think of the sounds a submarine makes as it dives to the limits of its reach.

Once they have stopped the lift, the investigators can force the doors open which requires a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** and something sharp such as a dagger or a wrench from the toolbox they might have found in the previous scene.

Once they prise the doors open they get access to the hidden world of floor 192.

FLOOR 192: GIANT EYE STUDIOS OVERVIEW

Floor 192 is the secret studio of The Giant Eye and the nexus of von Hölle's crazed plan to bring back his dead friend. The Dark Symmetry is incredibly powerful here and the air is thick with its corrupting influence. Edges are razor sharp, the footing dangerous, the air heavy with toxins, and everywhere are piled thick, pulsing, rubber cables that fizz and crackle with the tremendous power they are carrying.

Preparations are complete and von Hölle has begun the steps required to tear open a whole in reality linking the studios with the prison of the Dark Legion! Only the investigators can stop him, and time is running out.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"You have made it to the studio-within-the-studio of the Giant Eye, the show that does not exist, where Fabien von Hölle is carrying out his crazed plans, whatever they might be. Thick, tangled, rubbery cables lie everywhere, and you are reminded of the scenes you saw in Straffar Gatan. The memory is not a good one. The air is thick with static electricity and the stench

ADVENTURE

of ozone and burning plastic that makes you want to gag. You brace yourself for what is to come and step out of the lift."

Let the investigators approach the studio as they choose, you can use the map below to guide you.

The Giant Eye studio is split over two levels, the lower being the studio floor itself—a big walled space with an access corridor running around it, and the upper level housing the Production-Control room, the lighting rigs and gantries. The two floors are connected by a stairwell in the western-section of the outer corridor and another in the north-east corner of the main studio. The production-control room has two other doors that lead out onto the gantry suspended six metres above the main studio, below.

THE GIANT EYE PRODUCTION-CONTROL ROOM

Inside it is filled with lighting and sound controls as well as monitors showing multiple feeds and a mixing desk. The monitors are currently all displaying a giant, inhuman, eye that follows the movements of the investigators in the room. The static charge in the atmosphere is strong and sparks arc across the unshielded equipment.

There are three occupants in the room, each of whom has been converted by the Dark Symmetry into obscene necrobionic machinery. Their bodies are pallid and the smell of decay is strong in the room. Thick rubbery cables puncture their flesh and run into their ruined eye sockets, nostrils, mouths, and ears. The cables pulse and throb as they pump the bodies with a mixture of electricity and necrobionic liquids. The few unconnected cables in the room writhe around, looking for new hosts to interface with.

The sight is horrifying and the investigators must make a **Daunting D3 Willpower test** or suffer a mental assault. The production crew are all beyond saving.

THE GIANT EYE STUDIO FLOOR

There are four main elements to this room:

1. Von Hölle in his control station.
2. Four Malignants of Ilian that possess the bodies of deceased Jaeger operatives.
3. Five Conduits—unwilling human vessels that von Hölle needs to complete his plan.
4. Von Hölle's machine.

The studio floor has huge metal cargo doors that access a cargo lift on the south side of the studio on the lower level that are locked and welded shut, except for the small door built in to the middle of one of the doors which is unlocked. Investigators will have to make

a **Challenging D2 Stealth test** when they try to move out on to the gantry without being noticed, or start moving through the cargo door amongst the crates (an **Average D1 Stealth test**).

More of the thick, rubber cables snake into the room through every air vent, power conduit, drain and window, all tied into the terrifying machine in the centre of the studio floor. Everything is covered in a thin film of an oily, green liquid that irritates the skin of anyone who touches it, causing spots of necrotisation.

Von Hölle has set up his necrobionic communications machinery in the centre of the studio, from where he guides the arcane process like a twisted kind of conductor. He stands in a metal cage that is already crackling with energy and protects him from any direct attack.

THE CONDUIT PODS

Surrounding him and the central console are five people in vertical, clear, plastic tubes with antennas on top. These are his Conduits. The five people are Jenny Green, Markus Peterson, Clarence Beeks and his wife Mary Beeks (the missing residents from Straffar Gatan) and Sandrine Peterson.

Each of the five is unconscious; their eyes are rolled back into their heads, and they're strapped into what looks like some kind of cryopod. The cryopods are in turn linked to the main console by more of the organic cables and also by clear tubes that are full of a green liquid. The cryopods are slowly filling with the green liquid and it is clear that there is not much time left. Already the investigators can see the liquid eating away at the occupant's clothes.

Should the pods be smashed open (a **Dire D4 Athletics test**, or by inflicting damage—each pod has 10 Wounds and a Soak of 5) to "the occupant is incoherent, almost mindless, and while they will recover, it will not happen quickly.

THE MACHINE

The main console is in turn linked to four cameras, which have been altered almost beyond recognition. The machinery has fused with the bodies of the former cameramen. The faces of the cameramen have a melted, wax-like appearance, and their flesh is pierced and threaded with wiring. Rather than recording what they see, the cameras now seem to be emitting a sickly green light that bathes a massive screen on the wall. On the screen a giant, inhuman, eye surveys the scene. If the investigators manage to destroy a cameraman-hybrid, they detonate with the force of a grenade.

The machinery is building in power, and when this is complete, it will tear open a gateway directly to Ilian via the screen. This will also turn the five unfortunate Conduits into a greater form of Malignant. One reshaped by foul necrobionics, forged to serve the Dark Mistress, powered by the Dark Symmetry, and the endless torment of their human hosts. Dedicated to the destruction of humanity and capable

of infecting all they touch with the Dark Symmetry, they would be true weapons of terror.

If the investigators succeed a Challenging D2 Observation, or **Average D1 Insight test** they will notice the four bodies of the men in black jumpsuits are twitching, even though they are clearly deceased. Their bodies are being reanimated by the Dark Symmetry.

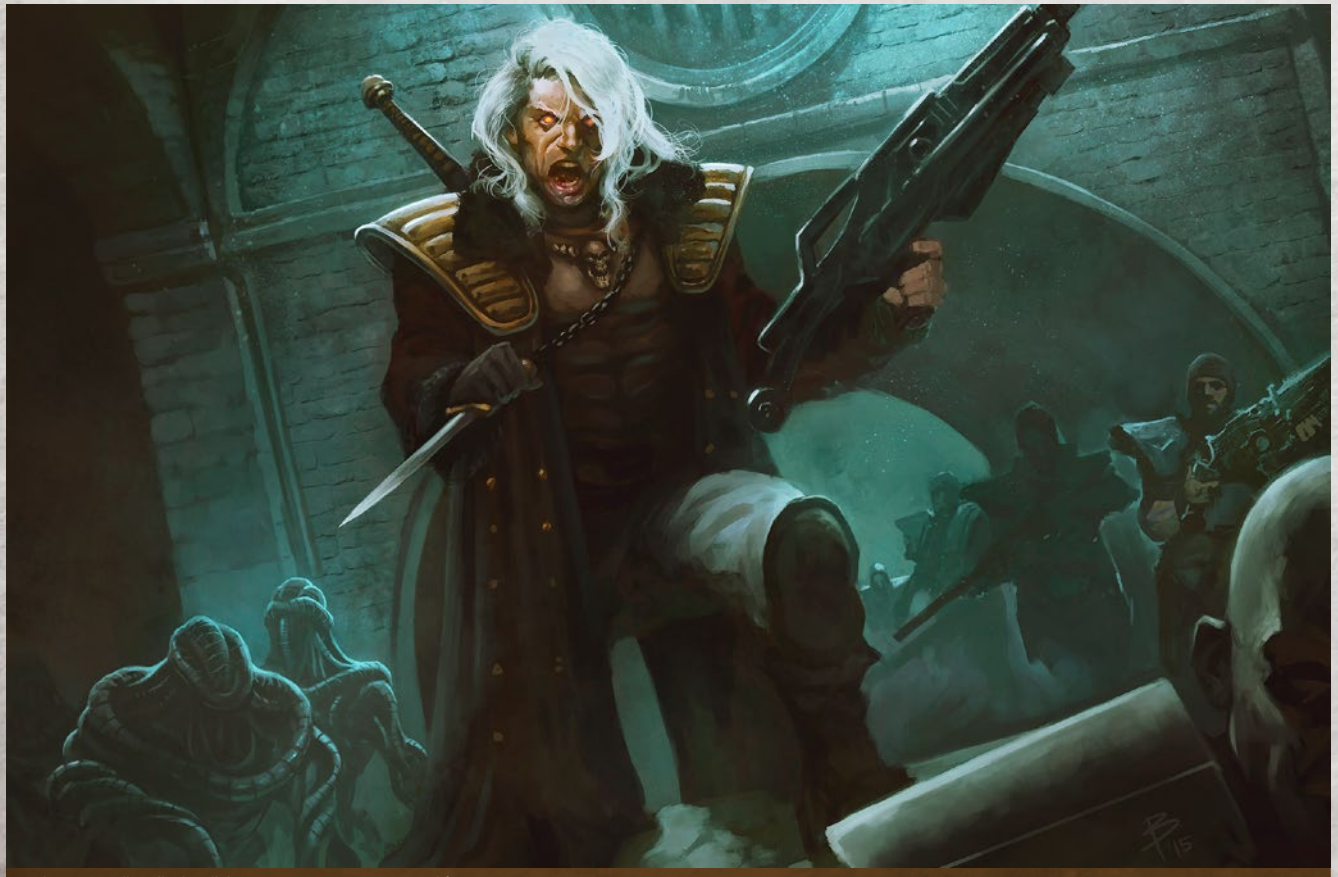
Scattered around the room are the remains of a twenty people, most appear to be in Capitolian suits, while four are wearing black, unmarked jumpsuits. Their faces have the melted wax look of the cameramen, but they also look drained and shrunken, like empty husks. They were the unfortunates conned into working on the Giant Eye or were forces sent by Jaeger to find and eliminated von Hölle. When he first powered up the machine the Dark Symmetry roared through him, and he lashed out with his mind killing the Capitol personnel and turning the four Jaeger operatives into Malignants.

The investigators can ascend or descend to the gantry using one of the two stairwells. One is situated next to the Production-Control Room and the other is diagonally opposite at the other end of the main studio floor. The gantry and lighting rig has an Armour Soak of 2, and each section has 2 Wounds. If suitably damaged it falls to the

ground damaging anyone underneath for 1+**T**3. If an investigator is on the section when it breaks, they must attempt an **Average D1 Acrobatics test** to grab the next nearest intact section of gantry. Failing means they fall to the floor, suffering 2+**T**4 damage.

If an investigator tries to jump from the gantry to one of the piles of boxes, or the remains of the set below, it is a six metre drop. They should attempt a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**; if they fail, the fall inflicts 2+**T**4 damage and they end up prone on the floor below. If they succeed, then they have safely landed on the boxes and can continue with their turn unimpeded.

Scattered across the studio floor are piles of supply crates containing scenery and set elements for The Giant Eye and equipment and cabling for von Hölle's machine. The investigators can use these to attempt to sneak up on von Hölle, and can use them to take cover in the vicious fighting that will follow. The supply crates and barrels all provide Heavy Cover (**T**4 cover Soak). The cables snaking across the floor makes for difficult terrain, requiring a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to cross successfully (increasing the difficulty by one if sprinting)—this is more difficult than normal, as the cables are shifting and twitching with dark energies and malevolent intent.



Foiling von Hölle will take all the Investigators' ingenuity and firepower.

ADVENTURE

ENGAGING VON HÖLLE

Von Hölle is engrossed, but should any of the investigators fail a Stealth test, or damage any of the cables or necrobionic equipment von Hölle will immediately be alerted. If the characters can disconnect one or more of the Conduits before von Hölle becomes aware of them, they earn a Chronicle Point each—they'll need it if they hope to survive the encounter.

Once von Hölle detects the investigators, they have only limited time to free the Conduits or stop von Hölle before the gate is torn open. Opening the gate costs fifty Dark Symmetry points in total—a massive expenditure, but an attainable one given the number of points contributed by the Conduits—if none of the Conduits are freed, and von Hölle isn't distracted, this will take eight rounds at most, though the intervention of the player characters can slow or halt this progress. If they are unsuccessful, the machine makes contact with the Dark Legion and the five Conduits also become possessed by Dark Legion entities. They gain the same powers as von Hölle, and quickly overpower the investigators. It is recommended that you end the game if this occurs as these new enemies can easily overpower and kill the investigators (or worse). Alternatively, heavily armed Bauhaus security arrives, kill anyone possessed, and smash the machine. However, von Hölle is nowhere to be seen.

When von Hölle notices the investigators, the Malignants immediately move to attack them, their broken bodies standing up, moving with a strange skittering across the floor, walls and ceiling with lightning speed.

Von Hölle will pull a knife from his cloak, slash his hand, and point at the nearest investigator, mumbling words that cannot be heard above the noise of the turbine, invoking the dark powers he needs to achieve his aims.

Von Hölle attacks the investigators with his Dark Gifts whilst also attempting to focus on controlling the machine. Unless distracted each round, von Hölle will use his Action in an attempt to open the micro-tear to the Dark Soul. He needs ten actions doing this to open the micro-tear. These actions are in addition to the Dark Symmetry points spent.

If one or more of the pods containing the Conduits are broken and their occupant freed, von Hölle becomes enraged and leaves his electrified cage, to move around the studio attacking investigators with his Dark Lance Dark Gift. He will attempt to take them out, one-by-one starting with the investigator who freed a Conduit.

If the investigators managed to free all five Conduits, the experiment is destroyed and von Hölle is sucked through a micro-tear in reality to face judgement from Ilian herself.

Von Hölle has become a local instance of Dark Symmetry manifestation, acting as both a conduit and amplifier of its

effect. This means that any sensitive equipment carried by the investigators in the studio is more likely to malfunction, both as a result of the ambient power of the Dark Symmetry, and through Von Hölle's knowledge of the True Corruption Dark Gift. This should include grenades, heavy automatics, communications equipment, and other high tech gear. The experimental apparatus is completely unaffected by this as the Dark Symmetry itself is controlling it.

DEFEATING VON HÖLLE

The investigators may attempt one or more the following whilst the Malignants attack:

1. Kill or free three or more conduits, reduces von Hölle's power. Note that one of them is the missing girl Sandrine and killing her is not an option if they want to have fruitful careers ahead!
2. Destroying all three cameraman-hybrids or severing the three heavy duty cables leading to or from the control desk will cut the power completely.
3. Destroying the power breaker on the wall will cut the power completely
4. Cutting power to the machine will sever the connection with the entity controlling von Hölle.

Should one of these occur, von Hölle will lose his Chosen of the Machine and Conduits special abilities, and his Dark Gate and Dark Lance Dark Symmetry spends—they are drawn from his connection to the machine. He will then run for it through the passageways underneath the studio.

NPC STATS

3x CAMERAMAN-HYBRIDS ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	11	6	12
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	6	5	4

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Unfeeling, corrupted flesh: (All 4)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Flailing cable-tendrils (melee):** 1+**T**3, 1H, Reach, Stun, Vicious 1

SPECIAL RULES

◀ **Death Throes:** When reduced to 0 wounds, a Cameraman-Hybrid's power supply detonates, showering corrupt meat and shrapnel everywhere. This kills the hybrid, and inflicts 2+**T**4 damage with the Spread 1 quality to every creature within Close range.

POWER BREAKER ★

While seemingly inanimate, the massive junction box is charged with the power of the Dark Symmetry, and it will fight to defend itself.

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
2	14(+3)	6	4
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
4	3	4	2

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 9

SOAK: Metal Casing: (All 4)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Electrical Discharge (melee):** 2+**T**3, Incendiary 3, Stun, Vicious 1

◀ **Symmetry-Charged Cables (melee):** 1+**T**5, Corrupting, Dreadful, Vicious 2

SPECIAL RULES

- ◀ **Braindead**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Immobile:** the power breaker is fixed to the wall, and it is unable to take any movement actions. It is unable to take the Dodge response action.
- ◀ **Personal Dark Symmetry 2**
- ◀ **Supernatural Physique (3)**
- ◀ **Unliving**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

◀ **Corrupt Machine:** As a machine sustained by the power of the Dark Symmetry, the power breaker has the True Corruption Dark Gift (see page 192 in the *Mutant Chronicles* core book), which it will use to create Twisted Marionettes (see page 295 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book) to fend off attackers.

VON HÖLLE'S METAL CAGE

At the beginning of the scene, Von Hölle is standing within a metal cage wreathed in electrical and sorcerous energies. This provides him with total protection from all external attacks—bullets melt to nothing in the face of the energies surrounding the cage. Attempting to approach the cage requires a **Daunting D3 Acrobatics test**, as energy lashes out towards any who stray too close. Failing this test causes a character to suffer 1+**T**4 damage with the Incendiary 3 and Vile qualities.

Once Von Hölle departs the cage, it no longer poses this threat—the energy settles down when Von Hölle steps outside.

4x MALIGNANTS

Rules for Malignants can be found on page 294 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core core book.

The extraordinary power of direct contact with the Dark Legion is able to transform sapient beings into vessels of pure evil known as Malignants. A brief moment of contact during the experiment was enough to affect the tactical team in this way. Metal



Just when things couldn't get worse, some of the crew have become Malignants.

ADVENTURE

“known”, Von Hölle must have spent at least an hour in that location. The portal can allow one person to enter from either end at a time, moving instantly to the other side, and will remain open for one turn, plus an additional turn for every additional Dark Symmetry point spent.

- ◆ **Disruptive:** For one Dark Symmetry point, a Gate can be created around another living creature, transporting them instantly to any other location within Long Range and line of sight of Von Hölle. One additional living creature within close range of the original target may be transported to the same location for each additional Dark Symmetry Point spent. The targets can avoid this with a Challenging D2 Acrobatics test as a Response Action.
- ◆ **Temporal:** A Gate can be created that extends a short distance forward or backward through time. For six Dark Symmetry Points, Von Hölle may take an additional turn, as a result of travelling back in time momentarily. For six Dark Symmetry Points as a response action, Von Hölle may automatically succeed, with six successes, on any test made as part of a Response action—altering the recent past to spare himself. For three Dark Symmetry Points per turn, Von Hölle may ‘skip’ one or more turns, travelling instantaneously from the present to the immediate future—he vanishes from reality, and cannot be targeted, attacked, or otherwise harmed until he reappears.
- ◆ **Dark Gifts:** Von Hölle has been blessed with the power of the Dark Symmetry, and can employ the following Dark Gifts: Dark Curse, Obfuscation, Symmetry Burst, True Corruption
- ◆ **Dark Lance:** Von Hölle has been granted the power to turn the ravaging power of the Dark Symmetry into a bolt of darkness. When using this ability, spend one or more Dark Symmetry Points. The Dark Lance automatically hits a single target within Close range, inflicting $1 + \uparrow 3$ damage, plus one additional \uparrow per Dark Symmetry Point spent. This attack may be avoided with an Acrobatics test as a Response action, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

At the end of each session of play during this adventure, the GM should award 400 experience points. If they successfully defeat von Hölle, this is worth an additional 200 experience points at the conclusion of the adventure. Saving Sandrine or Markus are worth an additional 100 experience points each.

- ◆ If the investigators finally defeat von Hölle, they have foiled Ilian’s plans for now and saved the lives of tens of thousands of Luna citizens. They have started on the road to greatness, and they have attracted the attention of the Dark Apostle. Ilian now considers them a threat and will likely make their lives far more difficult in future.

- ◆ If they fail, Luna is overtaken by a wave of corruption and new Malignants. Many thousands die, but eventually they are brought under control, but they probably do not mind as they are now dead.
- ◆ If the investigators have saved Sandrine they earn the gratitude of her father Francois, doubly so if they also save Markus. Those favours within Bauhaus could come in very useful to them down the line. They will be commended to Lieutenant Vordach, who is, frankly, rather surprised and impressed that they succeeded.
- ◆ If Sandrine or Markus die, the investigators will find their lives become far harder. They will receive an official reprimand from Lieutenant Vordach, and will find themselves transferred to a more dangerous precinct, or if both die, the investigators are brought up on charges and eventually fired from Luna PD leaving them with no choice other than to take up the life of a freelancer. Lieutenant Vordach does take pity on them though, and will provide a useful source of future “off-the-books” opportunities.
- ◆ If they save Jenny Green and/or the Beeks, they earn their gratitude but unfortunately not much else. There is a potential for future romantic storylines involving Jenny, and with her skill set, whatever happens to Jaeger she is likely to find herself a new role most likely within Bauhaus.
- ◆ The actions of the investigators have attracted the attention of powerful movers and shakers behind the scenes. As they have proven themselves in the fire of combat against the evil forces of the Dark Symmetry, they may find themselves being offered interesting new opportunities.



ADVENTURE



DARK SYMMETRY
CAMPAIGN

TM

J. Zubrocin

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The **Dark Symmetry Campaign** is split into six parts. It starts off in the low key, day-to-day life of a Luna City police department and progresses through increasingly horrific and alien events to an epic climax where the very future of humanity is at stake.

The prime mover of the dark plots that the Investigators will have to uncover is the Capitol Corporation's first self-made trillionaire, Don Stevia. As well as being a successful businessman, Don Stevia is a famous celebrity and the star of TV's *The Deputy* show.

As a member of an ancient cult now under the influence of the Dark Symmetry, Don Stevia wishes to sow fear and loathing throughout humanity. To this end he has masterminded a plot to summon the eggs of the Dark Legion 'Incursids' into this dimension and then plant these eggs inside human carriers. The eggs consume their hosts psychically and physically before hatching into adult creatures. As police officers, the player characters should stumble across clues that could lead them to discover this and they must venture into the underground netherworld beneath Luna City to put a stop to it.

If the Investigators are successful then they will be ordered to transport one of the Incursids to Mars where, supposedly, it will be secured and experimented upon to find its weaknesses. The journey to Mars will be fraught with intrigue and betrayal.

On arriving at Mars, the Investigators are taken to San Dorado's Hyeck District, an area in which a dysfunctional extreme form of free market capitalism holds sway. Betrayed by the people they delivered the Incursid to, the player characters are left to investigate various leads in order to work out what is afoot in San Dorado. They discover that a desperate military effort to strike back at the Dark Soul and its legions is jeopardised by Don Stevia, who has infested a squad of Doomtroopers with Incursid eggs.

In order to discover how to salvage the military effort against the Dark Legion and bring Don to account, the Investigators have to take part in the opening rounds of *The Deputy*, performing well enough to garner an audience with Don at the series' launch party.



Karl Sterling summons the first Incursid egg, the first of many, in his diabolical plan.

Finally, the Investigators have to win a race against time in order to locate the stricken Doomtroopers in the depths of a Dark Legion Citadel. Finding the original mission compromised beyond use, it is left up to the player characters to make the ultimate sacrifice in a last ditch effort to save humanity.

DARK SYMMETRY AND TECHNOLOGY

This campaign takes place during an interesting time for technology in the solar system. Some malignant force, the Dark Symmetry is appropriating technology and perverting its function. The mysterious force is able to control high level computer systems and turn it upon its makers. The pattern of control and break down in the technology is unfathomable and seemingly random but there must be some sort of purpose as machines, just like their makers, turn towards the Dark Symmetry.

At this stage, humanity is increasingly forsaking its high-tech goods and replacing them with less sophisticated but more reliable, lower-tech versions. The Investigators can choose to stick with the older, more advanced equipment but this brings a risk of it simply not working or more sinister malfunctions.

This turning away from high technology has been a gradual process, and not necessarily a completely logical one, by humanity. One piece of technology might suddenly get a bad reputation from a couple of incidents and be avoided, while higher-level tech and potentially more dangerous technologies continues to be used.

The GM should be creative in bringing interesting malfunctions to the game. The investigators should want to make use of the advantages of their advanced equipment

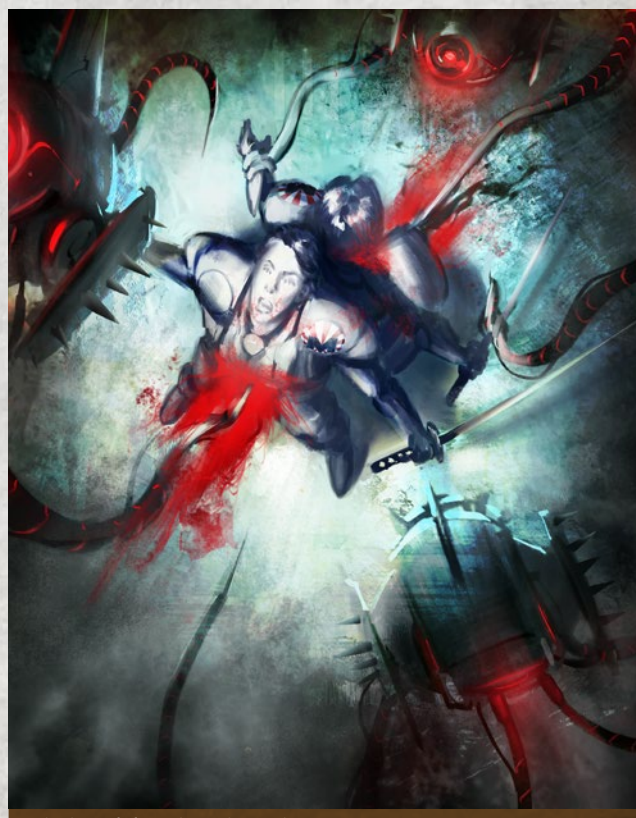
For the most part, characters will have access to the normal range of equipment and belongings in the **Mutant Chronicles** core book. Specific models and versions of items will differ, but the general function of those items will remain. Characters may have devices fitted with Expert Systems (**Mutant Chronicles** core book, page 208) during this period, as such systems haven't entirely been discarded. The only exception to this is Cybertronic equipment—as Cybertronic does not yet exist, its products are not available at all.

Though a hundred and fifty years have passed since technology started failing, society is slow to change. Computer-assisted devices are still fairly widespread, because not all technology fails at the same rate, and not in the same ways; the corruption is creeping, insidious, and cruel, intended to spread fear more than destabilise society. People use technology warily and cautiously, but they can't avoid using it to do their jobs. Technology is not the only thing changing in society. At the start of the adventure, the First Corporate Wars ended more than fifty years ago, and the Brotherhood was founded in its wake. The Cardinal is making many changes to society,

but change takes time and is not always accepted easily. Making matters worse, mankind has come under assault on all borders, and Luna City has become home to millions of refugees from the besieged territories of Mercury, Venus, Mars, and the Asteroid belt. The war hasn't reached Luna, but its effects can be felt far and wide, in the hushed tales and traumatised stare of refugees who've seen all manner of vileness.

The Corporations and the newly-founded Cartel are struggling to maintain order, and Luna PD—which recently came under Cartel authority as a truly neutral force for order—is dangerously understaffed and underfunded for the troubles plaguing the city.

This campaign is set during the Dark Symmetry era, in YC 53. The Cartel and the Brotherhood exist, though only in their earliest form. The Brotherhood isn't yet the system-spanning monolithic institution it becomes, but the earliest varieties of Mystic and Inquisitor are present, albeit in a rougher form. Cybertronic doesn't yet exist, as noted above, and thus Cybertronic characters don't exist either. Whitestar exists, but they haven't yet spread beyond Earth, so it may require some explanation as to why a Whitestar character is present in the adventure. The GM may request certain changes to characters to fit the era—the status of various families and factions in the megacorporations differ between the Dark Symmetry era and contemporary era more than twelve centuries later.



Nobody is safe from what is about to happen...

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

The events of Appetite for Destruction centre on the machinations of a Heretic cult based in the Cheapside district of Luna City run by Karl Sterling, a powerful dark Heretic. This cult is summoning psychic eggs from beyond the known universe, planting them in the bodies of kidnap victims, and then, when they are ready, replanting them in local convenience food.

When alignment of the Dark Symmetry is perfect, Sterling plans to release these infested foods upon the unsuspecting public of Luna City. When the eggs are consumed, they in turn consume their hosts and are then unleashed upon the world as mature predatory aliens.

The key to Sterling's plan is the transference of the eggs to the fast food products and their coordinated distribution. This plan has already gone a little bit wrong as, unknown to Sterling, some of the food products have already been consumed by the public. This gives the Investigators a chance to find out what is happening and to put a stop to things before the full force of Sterling's evil machinations can be felt.

Sterling is using a powerful dark ritual in a temple beneath Cheapside in order to summon the eggs to Luna. He is then using the bodies of kidnapped locals to keep the eggs alive while they become mature enough to survive in plastic-wrapped fast food containers.

The Investigators are working for the Cheapside division of the Luna Police Department. They will come across evidence of this plan as they go about their jobs. They should realise that strange things are occurring and piece together enough clues to lead to the cult, and put a stop to its plans.



CHEAPSIDE

Cheapside is a neighbourhood in the Nines District of Luna City. It is unremarkable amongst the seemingly endless sprawl that surrounds the city, known as the Perimeters. It is largely residential, comprising block upon block of low cost, low quality housing tenements and row houses. This is interspersed with pockets of industrial buildings. Many of these have fallen into disrepair and even those that are still in business seem like sorry, crumbling echoes of a more vibrant past.

Street culture has developed despite the disadvantages of the area and the poverty of the locals. Businesses of all kinds spring up at the street levels of the tenements, and some areas have developed an ambience of their own, which could almost be called attractive. That is the exception, however; generally it is an unrelenting grey concrete sprawl that people only live in because they cannot afford anywhere better.

The Grey Market thrives here, too. Freelancer businesses that are way under the corporate radar can operate and a lot of money can be made despite the endemic poverty. Most of these businesses are at least of somewhat dubious legality. Moreover, there are a number of blatantly illicit businesses in Cheapside. Prostitution is rife in the unlicensed drinking dens. Small time drug dealers hawk their wares there too. However, big-time drug dealing and other organised crime is controlled by a well-disciplined and heavily armed gang known as the Creeps.

From the point of view of a beat cop, it might seem that the district is full of dangers, and people have no respect for the law whatsoever. However, it should be remembered that is an impression given by the type of work they do, and actually, the vast majority of the population of Cheapside are mostly-law-abiding citizens who just want to get by as best they can.

One of the biggest problems in Cheapside, as in many similar districts around it, is the rampant use of the recreational drugs: Fast and Slow. The drug trade sucks money from the area leaving the citizens poor and desperate and enriching those anti-social forces that would exploit them.

LIFE IN CHEAPSIDE BLUES

The Cheapside Division of Luna PD is undermanned and overstretched. The Cartel does the minimum they can to ensure something passes for law and order in this corner of the Perimeters. Only a minority of the force is made up of conventionally trained police officers. Like many of the forces in this area, freelancers from all walks of life can gain employment with the force if they show a willingness to put their life on the line and not ask too many questions (especially, 'Can I have a raise?').

The force is not known for its professionalism and the locals are often loathe to call the police for anything but the most dangerous or unusual events. A lot of police activity, especially above the street-level crime fighting of the genuine beat cop, is more about

perception than reality. Justice is not done, but it is sometimes seen to be done.

The police forces out in the Perimeters are not exactly respected. They are feared by some, and hated by others. Still, there is some pride in the job, not just anyone can get work in Cheapside Luna PD. A man with no prospects, kicking about on the streets, with no money, would not just be employed by the Cheapside PD. They would have to prove that they can shoot straight, and are staying around long enough to make the force's paperwork worth filling in.

Because of the shortage of manpower and the demands of the job Luna PD shifts can be erratic and double shifts are not uncommon. Moreover, as this adventure progresses things get increasingly busy for the Cheapside boys in blue. There is a lot of overtime, and a lack of volunteers means that much of it is mandatory. This is handy for the GM because it means he can call his Investigators into work at short notice and keep them there while the clues, and the bodies, pile up.

Police officers usually patrol in squad cars, in pairs, and are dispatched by radio to scenes of trouble. The GM should split the Investigators into patrol cars like this (if there is an odd number of Investigators have the least experienced or youngest join another pairing for some on the job training). The GM can then send the Investigators to where they are needed. Often, two or more cars might be dispatched, if things look serious. In this way, the GM can make sure all the Investigators are together when they need to be, or split them up and send them to different events if he likes that style of game.

If the investigator group contains a lot of grunts and gun nuts who like to work together tactically and do not appreciate the more subtle side of policing, then the GM can use the Cheapside Luna PD SWAT team. Effectively the Investigators will all sit in the back of an armoured van until they are required to get out and open fire on something.

It can be good to give the impression, at the start of the investigation, of a busy police department in the course of a typical day. Therefore, the GM should mix some of the early investigations with some boring and standard investigations that have nothing to do with the main plot. This will also give the players a feel of place and a grounding in the setting, and they might actually get to care about some of the people they are supposed to be protecting and serving.

GROUP 5

Through political manipulation and the odd bit of blackmail, Cheapside Division of Luna PD is owned, ultimately by Group 5 of Mars through a convoluted agreement with the Cartel. This is well known, but the paper trail leading to the top is intentionally difficult to follow. As

in much of the corporate world, the relationships between various companies are almost unfathomable. Group 5 are well practiced at making money from these relatively small scale local security forces.

Group 5 tries to stamp its mark on Cheapside PD on the ground, but corporate identity only travels downwards so far. Among the higher ranking officers and bureaucrats at Cheapside PD, however, there is never any doubt that the ultimate loyalty must be to the board and the shareholders rather than the people.

Group 5 and a number of other significant companies play an important role in the plot of this campaign and the relevant details are found in **Part Four: "The Deregulation Zone"**, page 136. However, for now it will be all the Investigators can do to keep their noses clean and survive day by day on the mean streets of Cheapside without having to trouble themselves with the sophisticated influences and machinations of their betters.

THE FARM

Cheapside Police Department headquarters is known fondly, and not so fondly, by its officers as the Farm. The building covers two blocks in a busy, central part of Cheapside. It is an imposing sight with its reinforced concrete security fences and the heavy weaponry on its roof. It is plainly very secure, and certainly presents an image of the police as a military force more interested in protecting itself from the people than in being amongst them.

Because of the feeling of law and order that the place imposes, for several blocks in every direction, there is an air of security and safety and the whole area is unusually bustling and colourful for the Perimeters. The police and locals call this the Farmyard and it is about the only vaguely desirable location in Cheapside.

POLICE WATCH COMMANDER: CHEAPSIDE—COMMANDER JACK DICKSON

Jack Dickson is a grizzled old cop who started off on the beat before you were born, and worked his way up the hard way. He is respected by nearly every Cheapside police officer and did not get where he is today by not backing his men. He is a tough, no-nonsense talker, who tells it like it is, except when he is being dry and sardonic.

Modern policing might be more about monitoring expenses and reporting to HR, but Dickson is old school, he has been there, done that, and arrested whoever stole the t-shirt. Ultimately, he is on the side of his officers, and that means not only the corporate outsiders being given short shrift, but also the general public. Cheapside PD should be run by the police for the police, in his view. Dickson might even admit that is not the ideal way of doing things but it is the best he can do in this very difficult job.

COMMANDER JACK DICKSON ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	10	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	-	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads and Ballistic Nylon Overcoat: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Close, 1+ \uparrow 5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters, Unbalanced
- ▶ **Baton (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Getting Too Old For This...** Commander Dickson is a veteran police officer, with long years of experience in the field. There's little he hasn't seen before, but he's past his best now. Dickson may use Command instead of Psychotherapy to help his subordinates recover Mental Wounds or remove Dread—he knows that giving his officers something constructive to do can help them get through the bad days. However, his advancing age means that he increases the Repercussion Range of all Acrobatics, Athletics, Close Combat, and Ranged Combat tests by one.

SHIFT BRIEFING

Right, listen up.

We've had a busy night, so pay attention. First, we've had a couple of fires in the western sections; keep an eye out if you're patrolling that area. Might be more faulty electrics. Might be an arsonist. Might be a coincidence.

There's been a couple of drive-bys between Creeps and outside gangers. Let them kill each other if they want to. Just remember to keep your head down.



Commander Dickson still has plenty of experience and advice to impart to the Investigators.

DARK SYMMETRY PART 01

The Creeps have been active and they're dealing in the open, again. If you see one, book 'em, but don't start a block war. We don't have the manpower, and they do. There's a lot of 'Fast' out there, so be careful. Anyone looking a bit suspicious might just flip out and try to kill you.

There's been a couple of break-ins at medical facilities over the past week. Mostly incompetent, opportunist stuff, but keep an eye out for it.

More missing people. The usual waifs and strays. Looks like something's going on: probably just your standard serial killer, nothing to get excited about. That's irony: get excited.

A new directive from Group 5, our lords and masters: 'As representatives of this company and the wider Capitol family you are required at all times to maintain your professionalism and project a demeanour reflective of our corporate legacy and responsibility going forward.' I trust you will all give that the consideration it deserves.

Have a good one. Dismissed.

ON THE BEAT

A DAY IN THE LIFE GUIDE TO BEING A CHEAPSIDE POLICE OFFICER

If the Investigators are freelancers, used to picking up work as and when they can find it, then life in the Cheapside PD might be a shock to them. They will be required to turn up to work on time and put in an honest day's graft. Regular employment like this can be hard to find out in the Perimeters and should not be sniffed at. However, some people are not cut out for the sort of day to day drudgery that police work might entail.

Some of the events described in this section have little to do with the main Dark Symmetry plot that runs throughout the campaign. The GM should pick and choose which ones he wants to run. It can be fine to miss some of these or to play them all. Sticking to the main plot lines will make the campaign shorter and keep the action more tightly focused. Playing a longer game will ease the players into life on the force. This day-to-day police procedural will bring a sense of the everyday lives of Cheapside folk and the lot of the common or garden police officer. This campaign works with both approaches.

Shift patterns at the Farm are largely unfathomable and seem to be at the whim of the duty sergeant. Suffice it to say that whatever time of day or night, whatever the level of crime, whatever the occasion, the police department will have just too few officers on duty at any one time.

After getting a briefing from the duty sergeant, the officers will be allotted cars, partners, and beats. They will simply go out and drive around their designated area until they see something interesting, or the dispatcher orders them to the scene of a crime.

An arrest is usually followed by several hours of tedious bureaucracy where the officers fill out uncountable forms in triplicate. This is possibly a reason why minor crimes are often overlooked by officers.

Officers are generally lax in this form filling because with the standard of criminal they usually deal with, a bureaucratic mistake will not be discovered during the trial process. This is also the reason why important or wealthy criminals often seem to find a way to get off. The standards of procedure are so low there is nearly always a technical argument to be made for having a case dismissed.

Contacts in the locality are vital for good police work. Most officers know a number of locals who they will chat to regularly. This will give them a good idea of what is going down in the neighbourhood. The closer to the criminal classes these contacts are, the more useful they are. As a result, police often end up hanging out with the criminals socially and having a good network of acquaintances from the criminal fraternity.

This relationship often needs to work both ways, and so doing the odd small favour for known criminals is often considered to be acceptable in the police force, especially if the intelligence the officer gets from such a contact helps to get other low-life off the streets. Many police spend so much time enjoying themselves in the company of criminals that they must end up with a great wealth of criminal intelligence.

DISPATCHER 7

There are a number of dispatchers who convey information to the Cheapside police officers. Nevertheless, there is one in particular who is the subject of much speculation by some of the officers. Her voice is mellifluous and pleasant. Her tones are precise and measured. Her pitch is low and seductive. Many officers find her very attractive indeed.

Dispatcher 7 has become a voice of legend at the Farm. No one knows who she is, but some claim to know her name. No one has ever seen her, though some say they have and describe her in imaginative ways. Dispatcher 7 is the great mystery of the Farm and a subject of much conversation in the canteen. Coincidentally, the vast majority of the Investigators' dispatches during the campaign will be performed by Dispatcher 7.

IN THE NEWS

Throughout the investigations on Luna City, the world will be going on around the Investigators. Newsworthy and trivial things will happen that the Investigators will become aware of. The GM should help to bring a sense of this by periodically dipping into the following list and supplying that news to the Investigators.

CAPITOL SHIPS REFIT: After several years of work, the last batch of decommissioned Capitol warships have returned to service. These vessels had been out of service since the Fall, and have been refitted with systems and technology that is less susceptible to the corruption of the Dark Symmetry. These vessels immediately entered service against the encroaching Dark Legion.

DEPUTY NEW SEASON CONFIRMED: The new season of *The Deputy* reality show has been confirmed. As usual, Capitol's first self-made trillionaire the celebrity tycoon Don Stevia will be in the chair, as speculation surrounds the whereabouts of Vicky Gabboth a previous winner. Is she working on a secret project?

ON THE FRONT! Capitol Freedom Brigades hold the line against the Dark Legion. We have a special report from the front line following our brave soldiers as they fight to regain their citizenship!

IMPERIAL AGGRESSION: Imperial forces on Venus have renewed hostilities against Capitol positions on the Graveton Archipelago, in spite of the ongoing struggle against the Dark Legion. A spokesperson for the Imperial Serenity has condemned these hostile actions as the work of a rogue element, affirming that Imperial remains fully committed to both the armistice established by Cardinal Durand and to the war against the Dark Legion.

CARDINAL DURAND SAN DORADO VISIT

ANNOUNCED: Cardinal Nathaniel Durand is scheduled to arrive in San Dorado next month as part of a tour of Mars. He is expected to hold Mass on the day of his arrival, following by an open meeting with the Capitol Board of Directors. Durand's visit is said to serve as a rallying cry for Capitolian forces fighting against the Dark Legion, and to decry the lingering spectre of corporate greed across the system. Durand's honour guard will be accompanied by a large contingent of reinforcements for the Capitolian armed forces.

HAVE YOU SEEN KARL STERLING: Reported sightings of Karl Sterling have come in from Luna City. The entrepreneur and financial services magnate is famously a recluse in his luxury estate in San Dorado on Mars. However, several people claim to have sighted him in Luna City over the last few months.

MISHIMA MURDER MERCURY MERCENARIES: Mishima have reported their forces on Mercury have put down an attack by mercenaries in the Tambu cavern complex. It is unclear who hired the mercenaries. Imperial have denied any connection, claiming that the attack must be a Heretic plot.

THREE LUNA CITIZENS EATEN BY METAL SPIDER:

Three Luna City Citizens Eaten by Metal Spider?: A huge metal spider seemingly made of scrap electronic equipment emerged from underground, attacking Luna City commuters yesterday. It soon disappeared back into the underground, but three people are still reported missing.

MISSING MINE MYSTERY: Mining Facility X-37 in the Asteroid Belt has gone missing. The entire mining outpost seems to have disappeared. No communications have been heard for several weeks, and when teams went to investigate, they could find no sign of the asteroid.

CHEAPSIDE MISSING CONTINUES: Another Cheapside citizen went missing yesterday in suspicious circumstances. This brings the number of suspected missing persons to 35 over the past 2 months.

VENUS VENTURE VICTORY: Cardinal Durand has announced that agreement has been made for a massive joint-mandate, multi-corporation, peace-keeping force to be established on Venus to counter any potential threat there and to 'work proactively to secure the peace.'

GROUP 5 BUY: Group 5, the Capitol holdings company, has purchased several research and development start-ups. 'We're very pleased with the deal,' said Don Stevia. Shares jumped three points.



The officers of Cheapside PD take their civic duty seriously, and upholding the law in public eateries is one of these duties. If law and order cannot prevail at the local junk food establishments or diners then that would be a sad day. That is the reason that officers will often spend a disproportionate amount of their duty time visiting these establishments, and diligently ensuring their customers are safe and well and making sure these restaurants are running smoothly and safely.

EQUIPMENT

The Cheapside PD have recognisable uniforms and some standard equipment, but money is tight, and the standard gear is often shoddy, a cheap copy, or second-hand. No one wants to stake their life on a cheap copy of Luna PD's standard issue Cartel Arms Piranha handgun, so individuals generally buy a lot of their own equipment. This can lead to police officers looking rather different to their colleagues in the same force, with little uniformity to their appearance. Essentially, as long as you are wearing the hat—or possibly one of the shoulder pads—you are in uniform.

PATROL CARS

The LPD Mark 7 Patrol Cruisers that Cheapside PD use together with the Black Maria support vans have begun to get affected by the rise of the Dark Symmetry as the adventure begins. As time goes on the problems will increase. The more technologically advanced systems on the vehicles are increasingly likely to fail in increasingly spectacular ways. The best (i.e. cheapest) way the PD can deal with these problems is to rip out the technological elements and either bypass them, or replace them with more simple, reliable systems. The mechanics in the station shop can barely keep up with the rates of failure. This is happening so often now that it is becoming a real annoyance for the officers of Cheapside, and has even led to a few patrols leaving the station on foot. The following is a list of ideas for faults that might occur to the Investigators' vehicles during the course of their patrols.

The easiest way to produce these malfunctions is by spending Dark Symmetry points to cause Corruption, following the rules in **Chapter 15: Corruption & Falling to Darkness** of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book. The entries below will list either Malfunction (where the corruption has simply caused the machine to fail) or Malignancy (where the corruption has caused the device to act in a dangerous, even malicious manner) to indicate the severity of the corrupting influence needed to cause such a result.

MALFUNCTION: WILL NOT START

The vehicle simply will not start. No matter what the investigator does to his vehicle the engine will not go. There is no chance of fixing it out on the road and the investigator will need to call the Farm for relief. Repairs will take eight hours of work and a **Daunting D3 Mechanics test** in a workshop.

LPD MARK 7 PATROL CRUISER

RESTRICTION: 4 COST: 19

MAINTENANCE: 4 RELIABILITY: 0

QUALITIES	Exposed, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	215 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	1	
CREW	1 pilot 1 gunner	CARRYING CAPACITY	3 passengers 75 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	9	6	3
MOTIVE SYSTEM	3	5	3	2
WEAPON	2	4	3	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+ [†] 4			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M606 Light Machine Gun (beneath left headlight): Medium, 1+[†]6, Automatic, Spread 1), 6 ammo loads 			
NOTES	<p>Passengers and Crew have [†]4 cover Soak. Vehicle incorporates a computer and cell-phone, and a Basic Expert System (page 208 of the <i>Mutant Chronicles</i> core book) which can assist with Pilot, Ranged Combat, and Mechanics tests, providing one bonus Momentum on such tests. Alternately, it can attempt such tests by itself, rolling against a Target Number of 10. Some LPD Mark 7 Patrol Cruisers have had their Basic Expert Systems removed. This increases the Reliability rating to 1.</p>			



MALIGNANCY: ACCELERATOR STICKS

This is a more dangerous fault. When driving along, probably at some point where the investigator needs to go quite fast, the accelerator suddenly sticks on maximum. The car will speed up to as fast as it can go, for the gear it is in, and the engine will scream. Depending on the situation, the driver will need to make some difficult Pilot tests.

The engine is revving too fast to take it out of gear. If the investigator shuts off the engine somehow, this will also shut off the power-steering and other systems, so controlling it will be difficult, even though the vehicle is at last slowing down.

MALFUNCTION: LIGHTS AND SIRENS

For no reason anyone can work out, the emergency lights and sirens go off full blast. This is of course most likely to happen when the Investigators are doing their best to be inconspicuous.



Luna PD sees it all - but in Cheapside, things get strange...

MALFUNCTION: LOCK OUT

Just when the Investigators need quick access to their vehicle, the locks stick and they are unable to get in. They will need to break in by smashing a window or similar act of violence, or they need to call back to base and wait for help to arrive. Alternatively, perhaps the Investigators get locked in to the car instead, if that would be more inconvenient.

Overcoming the vehicle's locking mechanism requires a **Challenging D2 Mechanics** or **Thievery test**, or a hit inflicting 3 points of damage (the armoured windows have a Soak of 1 for this purpose).

MALFUNCTION: STEERING LOCK

The steering suddenly locks or becomes unpredictable. The vehicle will need to come to a quick halt or risk crashing. Pilot tests to operate the vehicle increase in difficulty by two steps.

MALIGNANCY: FIREBALL

The vehicle suddenly erupts into a fireball. This should probably be done with NPCs in the car, and the Investigators just hear about it. This inflicts 2+[↑]4 damage with the Incendiary 3 quality to everyone in the vehicle, and half that to everyone and everything outside the vehicle but in the same zone. The vehicle is destroyed by this.

CONTACTS

Any decent police officer on the beat knows how important it is to keep abreast of local information. It is always useful to know a few people with their ear to the ground: someone they can contact when they need to know who's who or what's what. Some officers do this by being friendly and charming their way to information, some like to bully their victims with threats of violence or police action, and others simply use hard cash.

Some Investigators will want to have contacts like this established on their beat at the start of the campaign—a character may have a number of contacts and allies gained during character creation, and additional contacts may be obtained by exchanging two of their starting Assets for each contact gained in this way. Some will want to establish those sort of relationships as the game goes on, in the course of roleplay. Either way, here are some sample NPCs who might be appropriate for this sort of role.

CONTACT: JEFF 'THE POSTMAN' BROCK

Brock would sell his grandmother for a few Capitol dollars, which makes him an ideal police informant. He is a very small time drug

FAST AND SLOW

There are three important narcotics in this part of the campaign, Faustus, SLO and Red Pills. Red Pills are described in **Part Four: "The Deregulation Zone"**, page 169.

FAUSTUS

RESTRICTION 3 (ILLEGAL ONLY) COST 3

Faustus, often called Eff or Fast, is a small grey pill which is swallowed or often crushed and taken through a nebuliser. It causes euphoria, delusions, and hallucinations. It speeds up the heart rate, and can lead to palpitations, other heart problems, and sometimes cardiac arrest.

It is known as a fun, party drug, but violence and paranoia are not uncommon. Coming down off it can cause short-lived but terrible lows, and so makes this drug potentially extremely addictive. Because of its effect on the metabolism, and especially on the state of mind, it greatly speeds up the psychotic effects of Incursid infestation. (See **Life Cycle of the Incursid**, page 70) Faustus usage is often called hell-trip, circling, or making a pact with the devil.

Faustus is purchased in self-seal bags of half-a-dozen pills, each of which is a single dose of the drug. A single dose of Faustus lasts for an hour, and increases the difficulty of Awareness—and Mental Strength-based skill tests by one for that time. However, during this time, the character also rolls **↑** at the start of each turn—on a 1 or a 2, the character gains that many additional Response Actions that turn (though these actions cost Dark Symmetry points as normal). For each Dark Symmetry Icon rolled, the character loses one Mental Wound and may take no Response Actions that turn—the hallucinations are too severe.

Once the drug wears off, the withdrawal symptoms inflict the Staggered status effect for the next hour, and cause the character to gain **↑3** Dread. If one or more Dark Symmetry icons are generated by this roll, the character must pass a Resistance test (with a difficulty equal to the number of DSI generated) or become addicted. An addicted character must take an additional dose each day or suffer one Dread. Addiction can be treated, requiring a Medicine test with the same difficulty equal to the initial Resistance test.

SLO

RESTRICTION 3 (ILLEGAL ONLY) COST 3

SLO—Sulphuroolithide-oxycodone, often called Sloth, Slow, or Slippery Slope—is usually taken as a pill but can be turned to powder or even dissolved in a mild acid and injected. It causes relaxation and contentment in the user. It can also be used to achieve a deep concentration or meditation. However, the drug slows the brain and neural responses so that a user appears to be functioning at approximately half the speed of a normal person.

Prolonged use often causes depression and a lack of ambition and the will to do even the most basic tasks. People who OD on SLO and are not given medical attention will die a slow, painless death over many weeks. Because of the slowing of the metabolism and the mis-perception of the passing of time, SLO is sometimes used on space flights to make tedious journeys pass quicker, and for similar reasons its use is rife in prisons.

SLO usage is called a Slow-ride or Slope-surfing.

SLO is purchased in self-seal bags of half-a-dozen pills, each of which is a single dose of the drug. A single dose of SLO lasts for eight hours, and reduces the difficulty of Intelligence—and Mental Strength-based skill tests by one for that time, to a minimum of one. However, during this time, the character acts last during any combat round, and is Staggered.

Once the drug's effects have worn off, the user suffers **↑1** Mental damage. This damage increases by **+↑1** for each dose of SLO taken within the last week. If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons are generated on this roll, the character enters a state of depression and lethargy, and must attempt a Resistance test, with a difficulty equal to the number of DSIs rolled, at the start of each day. Failing this test means that the character gains three Fatigue. This effect ends after three successful Resistance tests.

These two drugs are often used in tandem, each to counteract the worst side effects of the other. This is extremely dangerous, and much higher doses than could normally be withstood can be taken in this way, if the two substances are carefully balanced. Taking the two drugs together is often called Juggling.



dealer and drug addict. He deals solely to support his own habit. He is usually supplied by the Creeps. Occasionally they need to beat him up because he cannot pay for what he has taken from them.

Brock knows everyone, but only from a distance, from the street. No one makes deals with him, no one respects him, and no one, except his customers and the Creeps, really tell him much. He is a useful contact only because he is prepared to give up everything he knows at a low price. His information is not always reliable, but he is usually sincere when he gives it. For a streetwise dealer he has very little guile. Brock himself is not usually reliable because he is usually either up on Faustus, or down on SLO, or Juggling both (see page 57).

Brock will say that they call him the Postman because he always delivers (the drugs, the information, whatever). In fact, it is because he was once bitten by a dog.

CONTACT: LUDO SCHNEIDER

Schneider is a business man with his finger in a good number of pies around Cheapside. He owns a restaurant, a used car business, a goods warehouse, a weapons store, and a number of other places. He is the perfect contact to have if you want to run some sort of illegal operation because he can bring almost any resource you might need. Some of his trade is even legitimate.

Schneider is so protective of his reputation as a respectable businessman that it makes it easy to lean on him. Any cop with some evidence of Schneider's illegal activities would be able to make all sorts of deals if they promise to leave him to his illicit affairs afterwards.

Schneider is not an idiot, and will not cross any of the big boys, but he is only too happy to shop petty criminals and minor drug dealers to protect himself. Schneider sells the Creeps a lot of their weapons and vehicles and knows Foster Gold well enough.

If Sterling's Heretic cult requires any equipment, they can get it from Schneider. Shaun Ritter (see page 64) will usually be in charge of these sorts of deals. Schneider would certainly be happy to tell the police what he knows of Ritter. He can reveal that Ritter turns up occasionally for various supplies. Mostly these are weapons. Recently, he was on the lookout for large amounts of electronic components. He had no idea what they might be used for. He would have made a joke about it, but Ritter is not the sort of customer that you make jokes to. He thinks Ritter might live in the Underground.

CONTACT: SANDRA SUTTON

Pat O'Reilly's is a shady, low-key drinkers' bar. This place is more of a drown-your-sorrows sort of establishment than a celebration venue. It has an eclectic clientele, most of whom live by illegal means.

Sandra Sutton is the owner and can often be found behind the bar. Most people think her name is 'Pat.' Sutton understands the delicate balance between keeping her clientele private and doing her civic duty. She knows what is going on and can answer most reasonable questions the Investigators might have. The main question they must answer is what they can do for her.

Sutton is not stupid, and she gradually cranks up the price for her help. She is also very good at making her information seem like gold, even when it is practically common knowledge. Her favourite strategy is to seduce the Investigators into thinking they are getting a lot from her, when actually she is getting more from them.

Sutton will have a few odd jobs for the Investigators to run, if they want her to help them. The GM should hold the Investigators to any promises they make, too. Feel free to play out the job where Sutton tells the Investigators to drive across town, wait for three hours in a car park, have a contact hand them an envelope, drive to the address on the envelope, deliver it, and then drive back to tell her they have done what she told them to. It is no fun, but it is the price of information.

INVESTIGATION FORMAT

The events of this part of the campaign are designed to be episodic, as part of the everyday life in the police department. They can be mixed and matched to the Investigators and the state of the game. Some are dependent on knowledge and clues from earlier parts and not all of them need to be played at all.

The GM should run the various events from the three strands intertwining them, interrupting investigations into one event with dispatches to other events, and allowing the Investigators to follow up what they find interesting. He should consider dispatching the Investigators separately to different events if they are in separate patrols. However these events are mixed, they will eventually funnel towards interest in Home Made Foods and towards the Underground.

There are essentially three types of event. The Miscellaneous Events are described first and can be played in almost any order. They are designed to be placed almost anywhere alongside the main plot. They serve as good introductions to some of the themes, to flesh out everyday life on the force, and to help pace the events of the central plot.

Secondly, the Red Pill Events should be played more or less as a sequence. They follow a simple, linear route to finding out some information that may prove useful much later in the campaign. However, this sequence is not vital to the campaign and if the Investigators do not follow things through or if lose the trail then this will not matter to the overall plot.

Finally, the Incursid Events are fundamental to the campaign. They form the basis of an investigation that should take the Investigators all the way through this book. Many of the earlier events have clues that can be vital in the later ones. Again, the order that these are played can be varied to suit the state of the investigation and the GM's preferences.

MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS

EVENT: MISSING PERSON – LYDA MILLER

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Missing person report. Lyda Miller. 7013 Down Side View. Routine, proceed.

The Investigators are dispatched to an apartment in the Down Side View tenement, which happens to overlook the Home Made Foods factory. The apartment is on the seventh floor and the elevator is out of order. They will meet Hallam Miller, a slothful, food-stained sort. His apartment is a mess. It has the relevant paraphernalia and a few traces of SLO. This is ample evidence of petty wrongdoing should the Investigators feel like hauling his arse downtown. However, that should not be necessary to get information out of him.

His partner, Lyda Miller, went missing a couple of weeks ago. He did not bother reporting it, because she is a bit flaky. Now his place really needs tidying up. Actually, it is clear his apartment has not been tidied for many months. Lyda is a SLO addict, too. Hallam is under the influence of SLO as he speaks to the Investigators, which means he takes twice as long as he should to say anything. In addition, he does not have anything much to tell them except a vague description that she is a woman of average height and average build, with tanned skin and medium-length brown hair. There are not too many clues to go on and experienced police might just shrug and simply keep an eye out for her.

Lyda is currently being kept alive in a comatose state by Heretics beneath Home Made Foods. The Investigators will probably come across her body later. For now, the main purpose of this encounter is simply to introduce the themes of SLO, and people going missing.

EVENT: DRIVE BY

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Bodies down. Disturbance: suspected shooting. Florence Avenue and Pointer Street. Proceed with caution.

A sports car has been shot up on a side road in the deepest, most dangerous part of Cheapside. The vehicle was driven by a couple of drug dealing gangers from the next district, the Wilson Street Gang. They were recognised by some of the local gang, the Creeps, ambushed, and killed. The car is pumped full of bullets, and the Creeps disappeared into the surrounding tenements as quickly and

silently as they emerged. No potential witnesses are going to want to spill any beans apart from the obvious 'there were a load of guys with guns'. There is a significant amount of Fast (60 doses) in the car and 50,000 Capitol Dollars (25 Assets, if the player characters are unscrupulous and keep the money themselves)

When the police start sniffing around, a couple of minor gangers from the Creeps will keep an eye on things. It will be a **Challenging D2 Observation test** to spot them and a **Daunting D3 Observation test** to track them down, as they will flee through the tenements and backstreets that they know intimately. In any case, standing around watching stuff is not illegal, not even in the Perimeters, so the Investigators might have trouble getting anything on them. If they did catch them and roughed them up a bit, they could learn that they are members of the Creeps, but not much more than that.

Again, this is just a small encounter to insert into the daily routine if required, so the Investigators can get a feel for life on the streets and get a view of the results of the interminable petty gang wars that go on in the Perimeters.

EVENT: DECONSTRUCTION

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Disturbance at construction site on Venice Street. Fatalities reported. Emergency. Please respond.

At top of the range, automated construction machine has been taken over by the Dark Symmetry and is running amok. During a normal day at a busy construction site, the machine suddenly developed a life of its own and began killing whatever construction workers it could lay its claws on.

The BuildBot2000 is the most advanced construction bot ever devised. It can do the work of twenty construction machines and a hundred construction workers. Part crane, part drill, part shovel, part pile-driver, part tunnelling device, part tank, the scorpion-like machine is controlled by an advanced computer. This one had only been on the site for a few days before going out of control without warning.

It has already killed five construction workers and wounded dozens when the Investigators arrive. As the surviving construction workers have run away or hid the machine is now busy dismantling the multi-storey office block it had just been helping to build. However, when the Investigators turn up its attention will fall on them.

This should turn into a straight fight between the massive construction bot and the Investigators using the construction site and some surrounding buildings as the battlefield. There is not much to learn here except to witness the Dark Symmetry and its terrifying effect on sophisticated machinery and blowing stuff up.

CORRUPTED BUILDBOT2000 ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
16 (+2)	14 (+4)	6	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
4	3	4	3

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 15

SOAK: Steel Structure: (Head 5, Torso 7, Arms 6, Legs 6)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Hurled Lumps of Rubble (ranged):** Range M, 1+ \uparrow 5, Munition, Dreadful, Knockdown, Spread 2
- ◆ **Massive Construction Equipment Limbs (melee):** 3+ \uparrow 7, 1H, Knockdown, Spread 3, Vicious 3, Dreadful

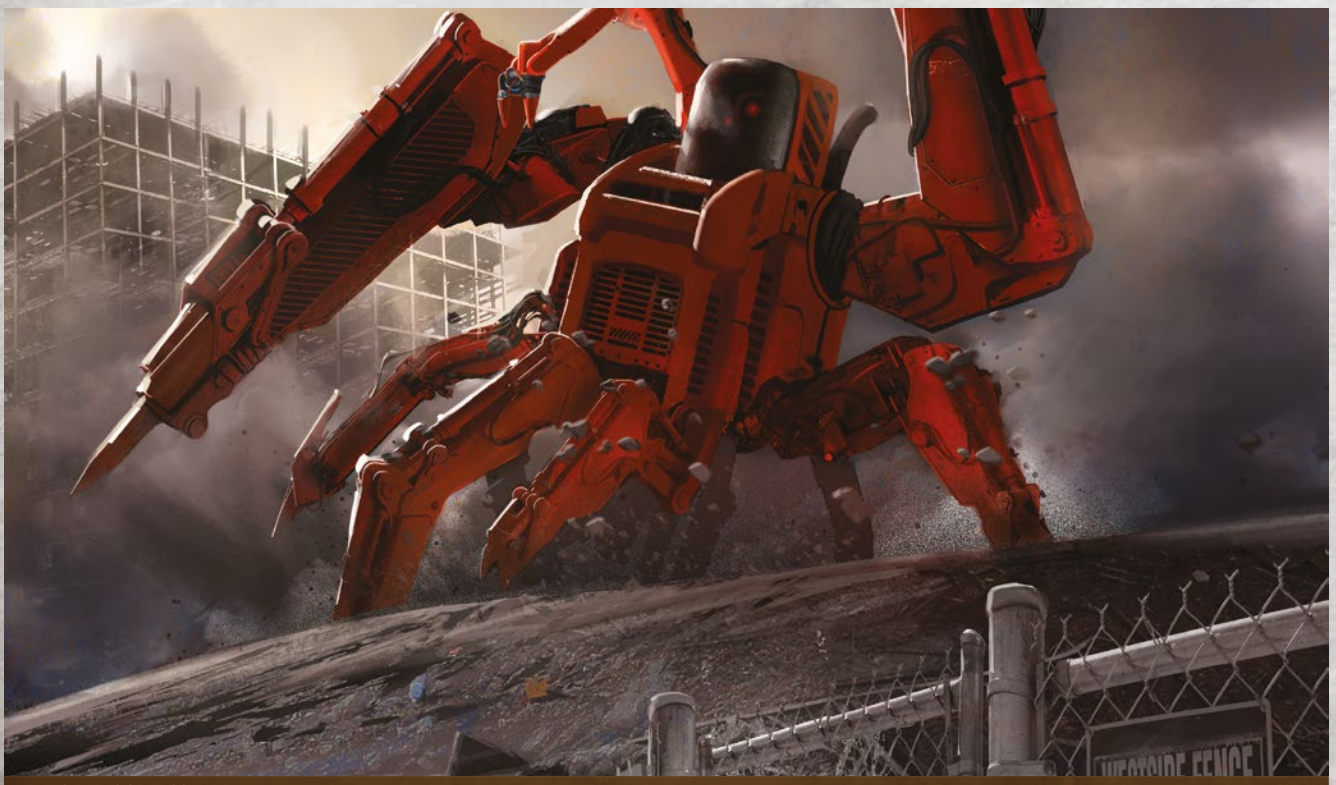
SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Braindead**
- ◆ **Fear (2)**

- ◆ **Grasping**
- ◆ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◆ **Supernatural Strength (2)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Physique (4)**
- ◆ **Cumbersome Machine:** A BuildBot2000 is designed for the construction and demolition of buildings, not the murder of people, and it cannot easily strike individual humans with its massive limbs. All attacks made by the Corrupted BuildBot2000 increase in difficulty by one step, and the target benefits fully from cover.

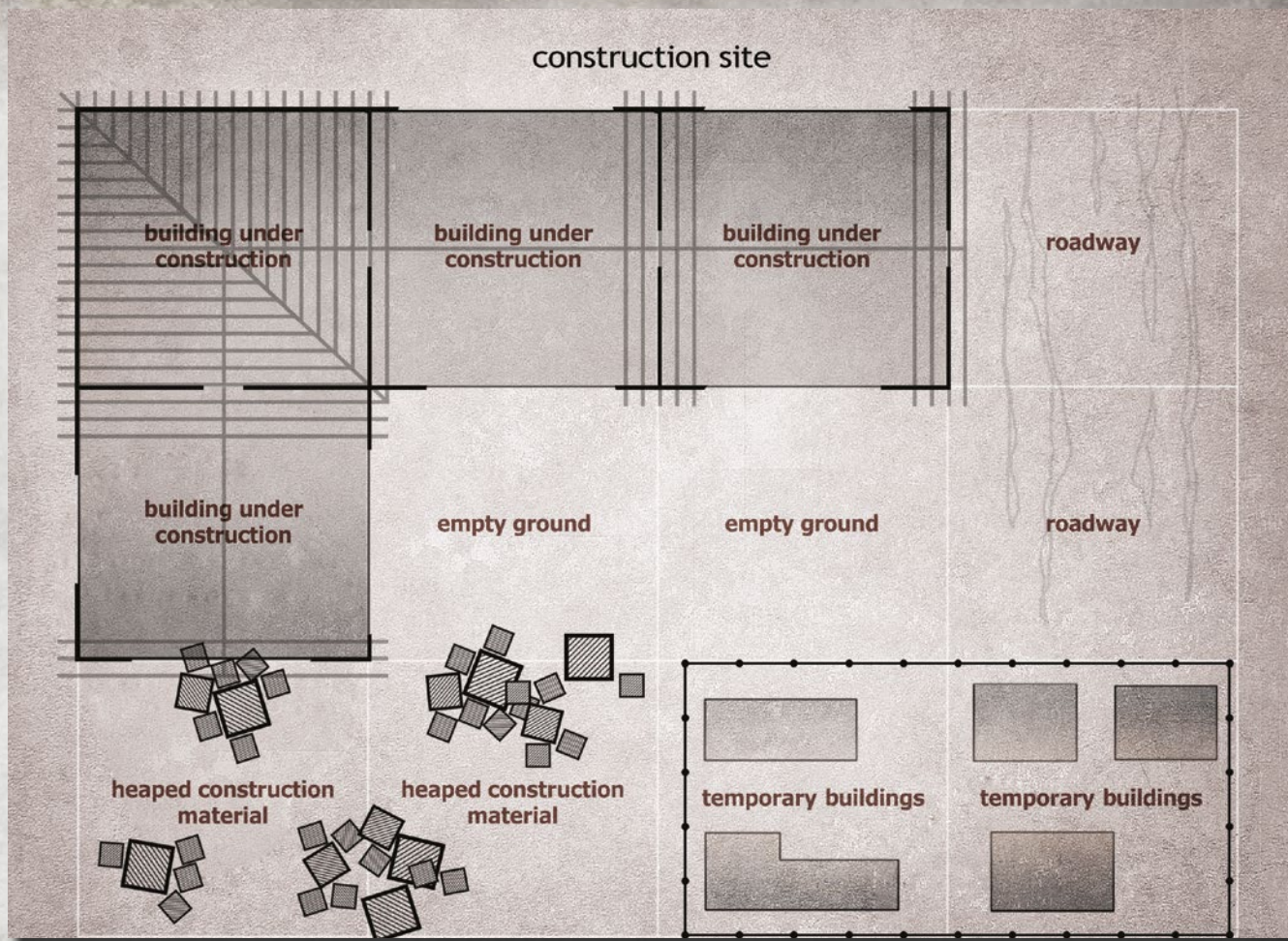
DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Earthshaker:** By spending two Dark Symmetry points, the BuildBot2000 makes all zones within Medium range of itself difficult terrain until the start of its next turn, requiring a Challenging D2 Athletics or Acrobatics test to move through those zones.
- ◆ **Many-Limbed:** When making a Close Combat attack, the BuildBot2000 may spend two or four Dark Symmetry points to make one or two additional attacks. Each attack must be against a different target.
- ◆ **Shatter Structure:** By spending three Dark Symmetry points, the BuildBot2000 may shatter a building within Close Range. This inflicts 1+ \uparrow 4 damage with the Dreadful and Stun qualities on any creatures within that building, and may inflict falling damage if they are on an upper level.



Big Jobs need the BuildBot 2000!

DARK SYMMETRY PART 01



ENVIRONMENT—CONSTRUCTION SITE

The above image depicts a simple collection of zones arranged in a three-by-four grid, representing the construction site.

The four zones marked “**Building Under Construction**” are the skeleton and unfinished floors of a skyscraper being built. There are four storeys completed, enough to be of use during a fight, creating additional layers of zones stacked on top of the ones listed on the map above. These zones all provide Heavy Cover (T4 Soak), and each zone has stairs and elevators leading to the zones above and below. Moving up or down the building via the stairs requires an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics** test. The elevators are designed for machinery, and are too slow for use in combat. For the purposes of line of sight, all the building zones are treated the same—a character on the fourth floor can see and shoot targets on the empty ground outside as easily as one on the ground floor. On the ground floor, there are numerous gaps and open doorways, allowing characters to pass in and out of the structure with relative ease.

Below them, there is a storage area filled with **Heaped Construction Materials**. There are piles of pipework, prefabricated walls, girders,

coils of wiring and similar materials scattered here, providing ample Heavy Cover (T4 Soak) to anyone crossing the area.

Immediately outside the building being constructed are two zones of **empty ground**, which are churned up dirt and gravel, thick with tracks and massive footprints from the BuildBot2000. The rough ground makes it tricky to sprint across, requiring an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics** test to cross the zone without tripping or stumbling. The BuildBot2000 starts within one of these two zones.

Next to the empty ground is two zones of **roadway**. Each zone is empty, and smooth terrain thanks to the thick slabs of concrete that pave it. This is a convenient place to park the group’s patrol car, and can be crossed quickly and easily.

Finally, there are two zones of **temporary buildings** clustered in the corner, separated out by a tall wire fence. The gates through this fence, which link the roadway and the temporary buildings compound, are locked and chained shut. Climbing the fence requires an **Average D1 Athletics** test to cross, while picking the gate’s lock takes an **Average D1 Thievery** test. The buildings within provide

Heavy Cover (T4 Soak), but they too are locked—an **Average D1 Mechanics** or **Thievery test** is needed to circumvent the locked doors and take shelter within. The buildings are a mixture of admin buildings, a mess-room, and a number of storage lockers. The storage lockers contain shaped blasting charges and flammable chemicals, counting as Anti-Armour Grenades and Incendiary Grenades, respectively, with six of each present.

EVENT: MISSING PERSON—ANA GERBER

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Missing child, proceed to 2007 Edmonton Heights. Emergency. Missing female child, aged twelve.

This is another missing person inquiry, but it should appear more urgent and serious than the Lyda Miller one above.

Edmonton Heights is a typical tenement building—run down, squalid in places, infested with various vermin—but like most places in the Perimeter, home to essentially decent people. Clark and Pippa Gerber have three daughters. Their eldest, Ana, disappeared while playing around the vacant lot with her sisters and some other local kids. The parents are of course distraught and will do anything to find their daughter. Clark is out now, with a couple of neighbours, looking for her.

The girl, a fairly sensible twelve year old, witnessed a couple of Heretic cultists making their way back into the underground tunnel network below Cheapside. The Heretics noticed they had been spotted and to keep her quiet, and also because they needed her body for their nefarious activities, they grabbed her and took her to their lair.

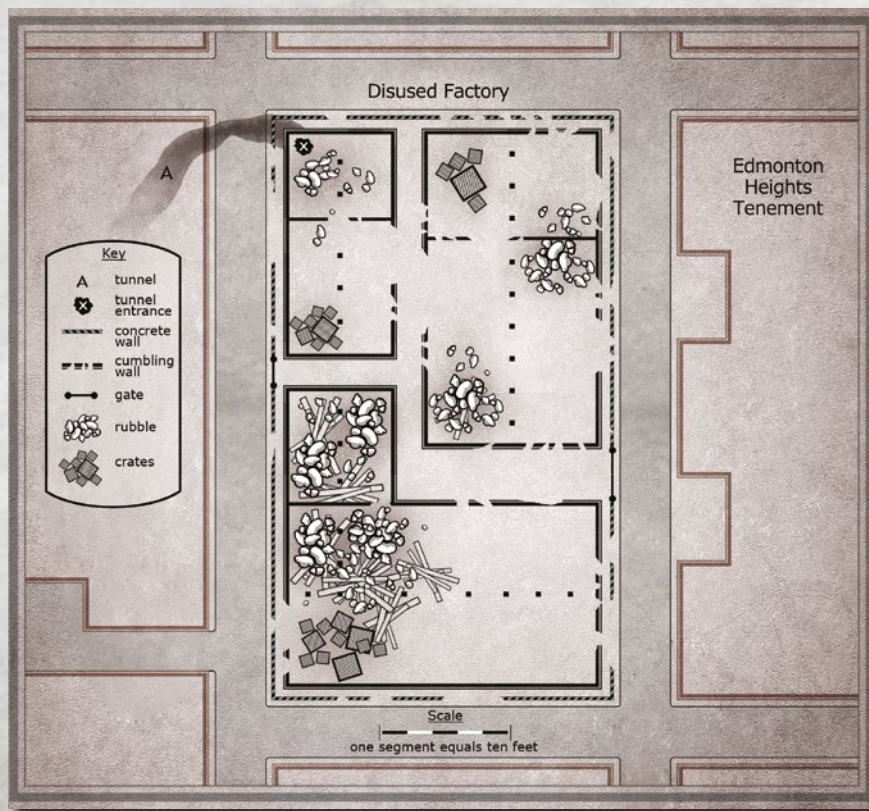
The other daughters have pointed out roughly where they were playing. Their father has searched the area, and is now going door to door asking if anyone has seen anything. No one has seen much, however.

If the Investigators do go to where the children were playing, they might be able to bring their expertise to bear. The area is part of a disused factory site, surrounded by concrete walls with a ruined building in one corner. The area is perfect for playing unobserved and the kids use the factory floor and generally avoid the ruins in the corner. A **Challenging D2 Survival test**, or a **Daunting D3 Observation test**, should make sense of the area and find the relevant tracks. It is clear where the kids were playing and the odd trail away from that area returns back to it, again. However, one of the trails, which fits a girl of that age, can be found leading to the ruins and beyond that, through a gap in some collapsed concrete wall sections. Beyond that, it stops suddenly.

The Investigators will then need to find the tracks of the cultists. They lead into the ruins and through a couple of narrow gaps between fallen girders and concrete slabs. They emerge into a long barren tunnel which seems to have been part of some ancient construction. Perhaps it was part of a transport system or an access tunnel, or simply a covered walkway.

The tunnel is bare and there is not much to aid tracking. The trail they were following dies out after a few dozen yards, but there is no ambiguity as to where they were going, as the tunnel is straight with no branches or exits along the way. The players have found the steam tunnels and sewers of the Underground, which is covered later in **Going Underground** (see page 93).

The underground is huge and difficult to navigate. The Investigators should not really have much chance of finding the Heretic lair at this stage. More likely, they will wander through the Underground, perhaps have an encounter or two, and then emerge unexpectedly into the light of day once more. In any event, the Investigators will have to leave the Underground sooner or later without having found Ana Gerber. This event should introduce the Investigators to the Underground and given them more ideas about people going missing.



EVENT: FIRE FIGHT—CAIT SNELL

Four-Seven. Four-Seven. Suspected Arson at White Heights. Perpetrator at scene. Emergency.

The GM should probably not dispatch the Investigators to this one, because if he does they will arrive with a load of firefighters, who are much better qualified to deal with the problem. Therefore, the Investigators should discover the fire themselves while they are out on a routine patrol.

The Investigators see flames a few blocks away. When they get closer, they will see a couple of bystanders looking up to a third storey window. There is a young lady, Cait Snell, looking out helplessly from the window and smoke is billowing around her. Flames can be seen in other windows of the apartment. Being heroes, the Investigators should want to try to save her. If they do not, then the fire brigade will arrive after several minutes, but Snell will be dead by the time they can get to her.

The GM should let the Investigators work out what the best way to save her might be. The building is climbable but it is a **Daunting D3 Athletics test** without equipment. There are several vehicles nearby, and there are overlooking buildings. They can try to get through the building she is in, but they will have to go through raging fires and dense smoke. Avoiding open flame require a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test**, suffering 1+ \uparrow 5 damage with the Incendiary 3 quality on a failure. Avoiding smoke inhalation requires a **Challenging D2 Resistance test**, suffering 1+ \uparrow 5 damage with the Toxic 3 quality on a failure. Essentially, there are any number of plans that may work, and the Investigators should be left to their own ingenuity to try to work something out.

What the Investigators are unaware of, however, is that Snell is on SLO. She will display the classic symptoms of a slow ride but from their distance, the Investigators will require a **Daunting D3 Observation test** to notice. Any instructions they give her will take much longer to get through to her and to get a response. If they ask her to jump for it or climb, she will not be able to. She is quite helpless and will need the Investigators to grab her physically if they are to save her.

Whether they manage to save Snell or not, the fire brigade will arrive and eventually put out the flames. If the Investigators make a point of finding out, a few hours later the fire brigade will come to the conclusion that the fire was caused by arson. The cause was someone setting fire to a load of flammable chemicals in a janitor's closet in the floor above Snell's apartment. The fire was actually set by Jorge Lopez (see **Event: Flame Warrior—Jorge Lopez**, page 79).

From this event the Investigators will learn about SLO and they will be given a foreshadowing of Jorge Lopez' arson attacks.

EVENT: BREAK IN—JAN D'ANGELO

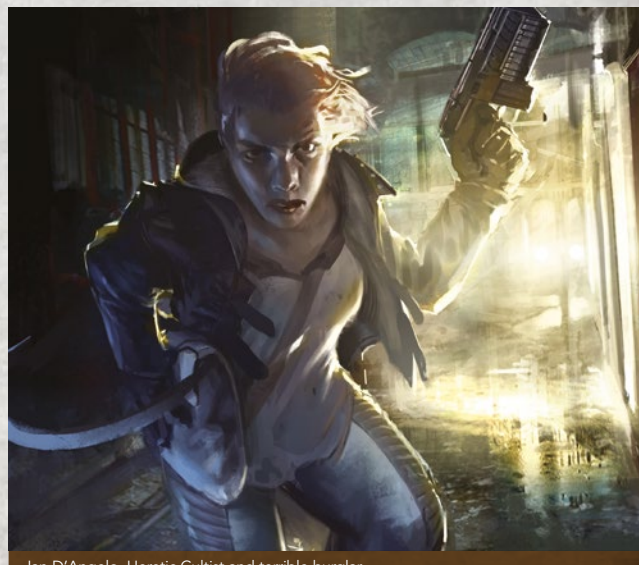
Four-Seven. Four-Seven. Suspected robbery in progress, Cheapside Charity Health Centre. Emergency.

Jan D'Angelo is a member of Karl Sterling's Heretic cult. The cult has been having trouble with their Incursid egg plot. The kidnap victims they are using to incubate the eggs have been dying off too quickly. The Heretics have determined that they need to use immunosuppressants to suppress the bodies' resistance to the alien matter. Therefore, they have sent Jan out to get some. She has done a bit of house-breaking and other criminal activities and she is confident she can go to the local health centre, break in, and take all their immunosuppressants. She is also on Faustus which gives her an inflated opinion of her abilities, but it does make her quick.

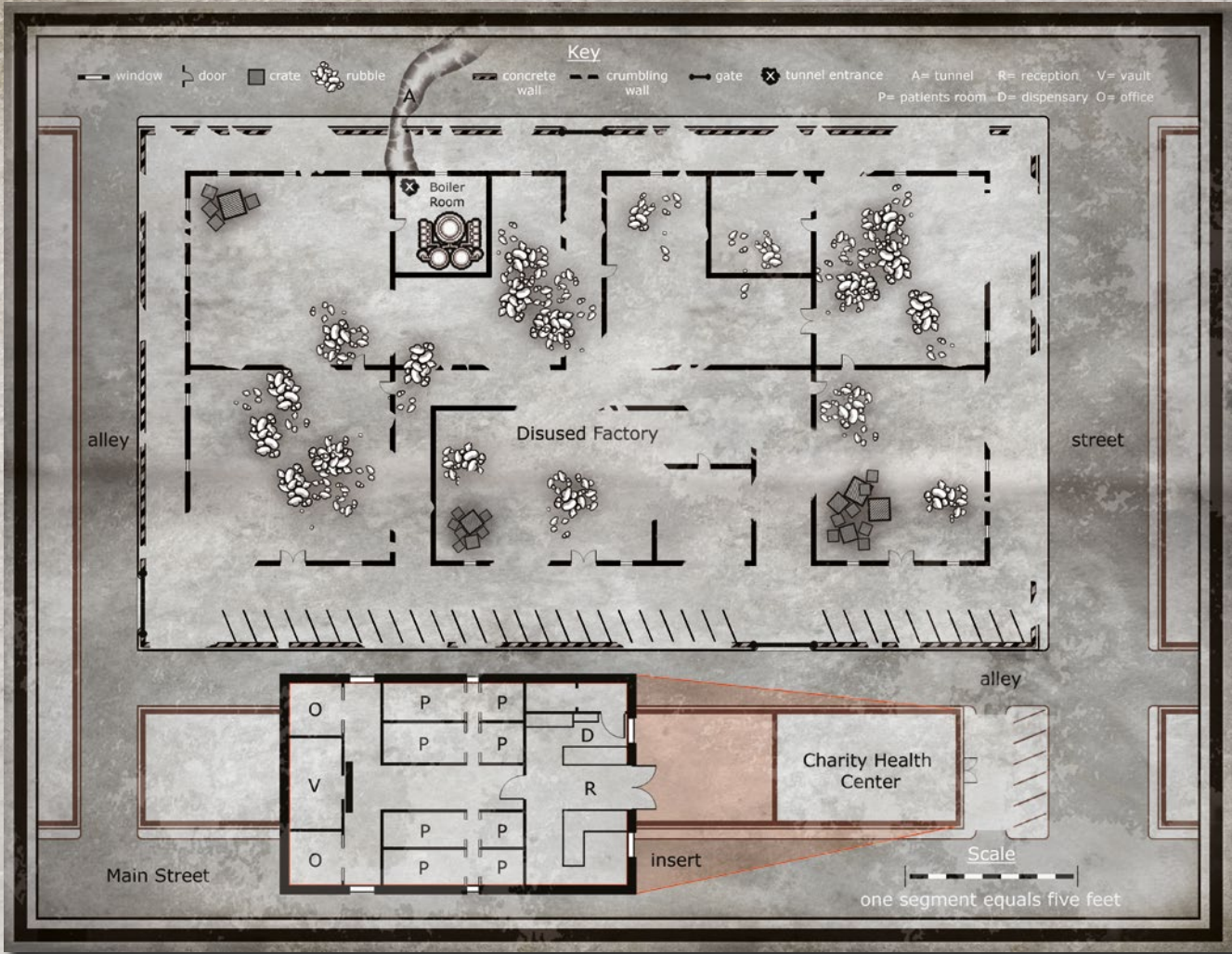
If the Investigators are timely they will arrive while Jan is still inside the drugs vault of the health centre scrabbling around getting as many immunosuppressants into her bag as she can find. She tripped a silent alarm when she opened the vault and so does not realise the police are coming. She will make her way out shortly after the police arrive, even if they do not alert her, otherwise she will react as soon as she hears the police.

Depending on the actions of the Investigators, D'Angelo will probably have to decide between making a run for it and shooting it out from inside the vault. She does not want to be taken alive. Her instinct will be fire a few shots to keep the Investigators' heads down and then make a run for it.

Across the road from the health centre is an old, disused factory. Several of the roofs have caved in and a couple of the walls have fallen. The factory used to make plastic tubes of various diameters,



Jan D'Angelo. Heretic Cultist and terrible burglar.



and lots of coils of tubing are left around the site. In the far corner of the factory, beneath one of the defunct boiler rooms, there is a collapsed flooring section, which can be used to access the Underground. D'Angelo will try to make her escape to the Underground through there.

The encounter is likely to end with a hectic pursuit through the abandoned factory, as D'Angelo tries to make it to the Underground. Once there she is likely to be able to lose the Investigators. There are asphalted areas throughout the factory complex that will be able to accommodate patrol cars, although they will probably need to drive through a rusting fence to get in there. The more direct route is on foot and D'Angelo knows the way well, even in the darkness.

If the Investigators manage to capture D'Angelo, she will give the appearance of a typical, streetwise thief who isn't going to talk. She did the job for some man in a bar. She does not know why he wants the drugs. She was going to meet him in a bar later (but of course he won't turn up).

This encounter introduces one of the Heretics, although the Investigators will probably not discover her links to the Incursid plot at this stage. If the Investigators thwart Jan D'Angelo during this event then the GM should play the next one soon after. This could demonstrate the Heretics' urgent need for immunosuppressants, and supply other clues to their operation.

EVENT: VAN JOB – SHAUN RITTER

Four-Seven. Four-Seven. Suspected armed robbery in progress on the corner of Winston and Marbles, Emergency. Repeat, Emergency.

If D'Angelo fails to get the immunosuppressants, then Sterling will send Shaun Ritter (see page 97) to ambush a supply van as it makes its way through the district. This is a bit desperate, but they need the drugs. The Investigators will be dispatched when they are coincidentally already close to the scene of the crime and arrive while it is still in progress.

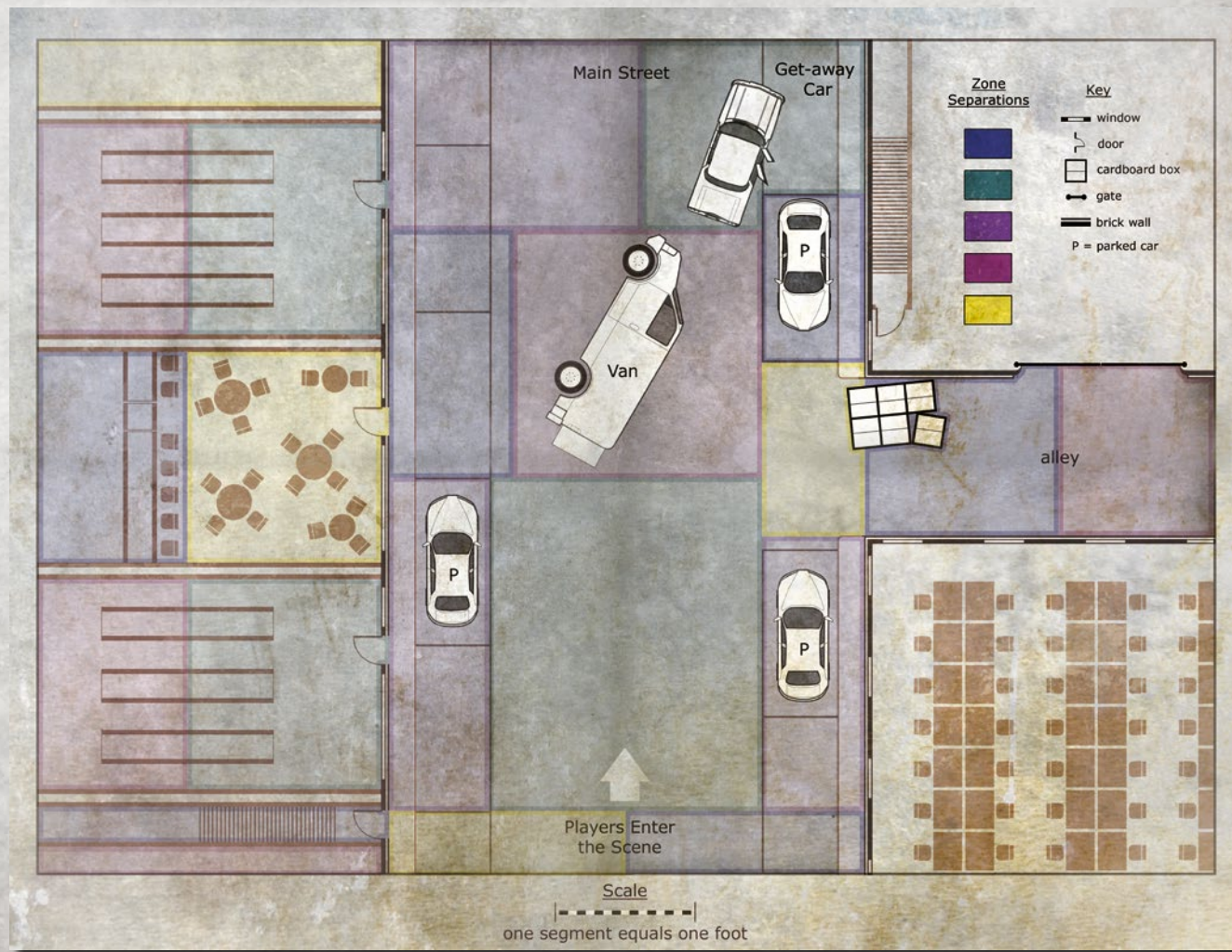
When the Investigators arrive, the van is lying on its side. It has been blown up with a M606 Light Machine Gun and thrown across the road. The driver has been rushed and shot dead. There are four Heretics, including Ritter, wearing nondescript street clothes. The plan is for them to bash the doors in, grab the drugs and then make their escape in their beaten up Loughton Statham car. The Heretics (page 96) have gone to town with some of their equipment, and look armed for a small war. They're wearing Hardback armour instead of their normal listed armour, and are carrying CAR-24 Close Assault Rifles in addition to their usual guns, except for Ritter, who is carrying the aforementioned M606 Light Machine Gun.

The Heretics will get the doors open just as the Investigators drive into view, if they have sped to the scene. Though the van is full of many medical drugs, the Heretics will go for the immunosuppressants, only. This might allow astute Investigators to link this crime with the robbery of the health centre, above.

If the Investigators thwart the Heretics' attempt to get the immunosuppressants then this will set their plan back a bit. The GM should consider that the Investigators have unwittingly bought themselves some time, the distribution of infested foods will be set back, and more bodies will be needed. The Investigators will effectively have more time to spend on other parts of their investigation.

If the Investigators manage to capture the Heretics then they will remain tight-lipped. They will do nothing to jeopardise their Great Calling. Through interrogation, they will gradually reveal that they are part of an underground-dwelling outlaw band who just thought they could get rich quick through robbery. If pressed further they will confess they were tipped off about the immunosuppressants by a sergeant in the Cheapside PD called Dave. This is all nonsense of course, but it should buy them enough time.

If the Investigators make a really good job of their interrogation then the Heretics might eventually agree to lead them to the Underground in search of their gang, but will simply lead them round in circles.



SECOND-HAND LOUGHTON 'STATHAM' ROADCAR

RESTRICTION: 2 COST: 11
 MAINTENANCE: 4 RELIABILITY: 2

QUALITIES	Exposed, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	175 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	1	
CREW	1 pilot 1 gunner	CARRYING CAPACITY	5 passengers 125 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	8	5	4
MOTIVE SYSTEM	2	4	3	2
WEAPON	2	4	3	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑5			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> L&A Mk. XXIII 'Destroyer' LMG (beneath right headlight): Medium, 1+↑7, Automatic, Spread 1), 6 ammo loads 			
NOTES	Passengers and Crew have ↑4 cover Soak			

RED PILL EVENTS

THE RED PILLS

A parallel plot to the Incursid one concerns the 'Red Pills.' Red Pills have been developed by Pig Pharma on Mars and are beginning to be widely used there. For details on the drug see **Part Four: "The Deregulation Zone"**, page 169. Don Stevia has decided to dump a load of Red Pills on Cheapside to coincide with the expected Incursid outbreak. The plan is that the unpredictable side effects of the Red Pills will complement the psychic appetite of the Incursid infant and lead to its quicker development.

Francis Ohaya (page 166) has chosen a young Group 5 agent, Shane Cano, to distribute the Red Pills in Cheapside. At the beginning of the campaign, the only Red Pills in Luna City will be those brought in by Cano and they will be completely unknown to locals except to the odd Group 5 agent.

The effects of the Red Pills should come to the attention of the Investigators as they go about their duties. They might realise that these drugs are previously unknown and dangerous, and so attempt to track down their source. Clues can eventually lead back to Shane Cano, who they might even take alive. In whatever way this part of the campaign ends, it is not vital to the overarching plot. These threads should crop up again in **Part Four: Part Four: "The Deregulation Zone"**, page 169, and help the Investigators then.

EVENT: CHEAPSIDE OVERPASS – KIM PALEO

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Suspected attempted suicide in progress Cheapside Overpass. Female, aged around 20, 5' 4", 110 pounds. Dark hair, blue sweater. Please respond.

Kim Paleo is an attractive young waitress. She was at a party a couple of blocks away, took some Red Pills, and has had an adverse reaction. She is having a very bad time, and she's trying to summon the courage to end it all by jumping off the highest viaduct in Cheapside. When the Investigators arrive, she will be babbling about all sorts of nonsensical things: demons, shadows, monsters, being followed. Though the Investigators may listen attentively for some significance to Paleo's ramblings, it is useless gibberish.

The Investigators will no doubt want to try to talk her down. It will take a **Challenging D2 Persuade test** just to get her attention. She will be incoherent and anxious. It should be evident that she has taken some sort of stimulant, and a **Challenging D2 Observation test** should narrow it down to something like Faustus because Red Pills show similar symptoms.

A **Daunting D3 Persuade test** can get Paleo calm enough to get some sort of sense out of her. With this the Investigators might learn of the party she has been to, and that she has taken 'a new kind of Faustus, a bad Faustus'. She might be coherent enough to convey that her trip is unusual and feels wrong and bad.

Unfortunately, if the Investigators fail with any of their attempts to calm or grab Paleo, she will throw herself off the Cheapside Overpass to her death. She will land in a patch of rough ground beside a highway about fifty feet below.

Whatever happens to Paleo, she has left her handbag lying by the side of the road. As well as the usual personal effects, she has a bottle with a couple of Red Pills in it. If the Investigators do manage to find the party she was at and track down the drugs, then they will discover similar information to that available in the House Party event below.

EVENT: HOUSE PARTY

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Suspected breach of the peace. 4747 Alley Lane Street. Shots fired. Please Respond.

If the Investigators have established Kim Paleo was at a party recently and decide it is worth checking on, then the GM can use this party for hers and the Investigators can turn up in the middle of things. If they did not, however, then they can simply be dispatched as normal to this party a few days later.

There has been a bit of a party going on at this address. It was just the normal sort of party that crops up now and again, with loud

music, drink, and drugs, but this one went wrong. Several of the party-goers know Mark Lucas, a small-time drug dealer. Instead of buying Faustus from him, however, they purchased his new, cheap stuff: Red Pills. Now the scene is one of utter panic and mayhem.

Several of the party-goers are having very bad trips and much is going wrong. Two friends, Roger Blakeney and Serge Mason got into a heated argument and Blakeney shot Mason dead. He has since locked himself in the attic room and is refusing to let anyone in, threatening to shoot himself.

This instigated some other trippers to take weird perspectives on the evening. One, Lena Weiss, has decided to turn the music up as loud as it will go to frighten off evil spirits. She is guarding the sound system with her life, and the music (bad gothic rock) can be heard for several blocks. This has prompted a number of complaints.

One local man, Sid Thatcher from a few doors down, is standing outside the house in his underwear with a shot gun shouting his head off. He is threatening to open fire unless the music is turned down.

Three of the party-goers, having a bad time and hearing the shots have run to a neighbouring house and begged for sanctuary. The old lady living there has let them in, but she is frightened of them. One of them is Jenny Pritchard; her boyfriend is also having a bad time. He seems to think that the lady next door has kidnapped his girlfriend and he is about to try to get her back. This will frighten everyone even more.

One of the party-goers, Griff Parsons, has decided this is all too dangerous for him. He was parked on the drive next to the house, and he's attempting to drive home. Unfortunately, his car was boxed in by about eight other cars on the drive. This has not deterred him and Geoff has spent the last five minutes smashing all the other cars around in his drug-induced, panicked effort to make a space big enough for his car to get away. Needless to say, a lot of the other party-goers are not happy about this.

There are a few Red Pills still floating around the party. Moreover, the rumour that it is the Red Pills that have caused the mess is already going about. Someone will suggest this to the Investigators. Anyone on a bad trip being leaned on by the Investigators to reveal where they got the Red Pills from will give up Mark Lucas' name and someone will know his address.

MARK LUCAS' HOUSE

Lucas is greasy, pale, and thin. He is a small-time drug dealer and addict, essentially selling drugs to fund his own addiction. He dabbles in all sorts of substances but is addicted to Faustus. Lucas bought a good number of Cano's Red Pills and he has been getting rid of them quickly. Because he obtained them so cheaply they are selling well and he has made a lot of money. Because of this, he has been taking a lot more drugs than he normally does.

When the Investigators get to his place, he will be very high, juggling SLO and Red Pills. In addition, he is having a bad trip from the Red Pills. He is very jumpy, agitated, and fearful. Depending on how the Investigators handle approaching him it is quite likely to turn into a fire fight. Lucas' house is littered with all the drugs you could name, and then some. There is especially a large number of Red Pills (several thousand).

If the Investigators take him alive then they will be able to learn that Shane Cano supplied his Red Pills and that he is staying at the Pelican Motel a few miles away. If the Investigators do not manage to take him alive, then there is probably no way to find a link to Shane Cano. He is likely to turn up dead, soon, in any case.

MARK LUCAS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	7	7	6
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+▲2
- ◆ **Slicer (melee):** 1+▲3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL RULES

- ◆ **Drugged-Up:** Lucas suffers a Repercussion on any d20 roll of 19-20, rather than only a 20.

SHANE CANO'S ROOM

Cano has taken a room at The Pelican Motel in Cheapside. The concierge will let the Investigators in for a reasonable bribe, but they could break in easily enough. The place is mostly bare except for several expensive suits, shirts, and ties hanging up neatly and a spare pair of dress shoes. It is plain Cano thinks of the room more as a wardrobe than as a home.

There is a map of Cheapside open on the table. There is a cross drawn on it precisely at the Moxley Road Parking Lot, and next to the cross is scribbled '3am.' This is likely to send the Investigators to the parking lot as quickly as they can, because it should be nearly 3am. If the timing works out differently, but the Investigators have

been acting reasonably quickly, then the GM should change the time and see to it that the Investigators have just enough time to get to the parking lot before the events of "Deal or No Deal?" below. If the Investigators have been excessively slow or cautious then they can arrive late, just as if they had been dispatched there after the fact.

EVENT: DEAL OR NO DEAL?—SHANE CANO

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Suspected shooting. Moxley Road, Parking Lot. Two bodies. Gang on Gang. Please respond.

Shane Cano, having dumped a load of cheap Red Pills on the Cheapside market, has come to the attention of the Creeps. They have tried to frighten him off, but seeing an opportunity, Cano has offered to sell them the rest of his stock. He has decided that he can offload all the merchandise onto the Creeps and that will be his job done. He only has about a third of his stock left, about 3,000 pills.

Cano has agreed to meet a Creep at 3:00AM at the Moxley Road Parking Lot, a little-used, out-of-the-way square of concrete where he will exchange the Red Pills for cash. He does not see any danger, because his price is reasonable and he is not too streetwise. However, the Creeps fear that Cano will continue to dump more cheap goods in the area, and so have decided to do him in as soon as they can.

If the Investigators have followed clues from the House Party event in good time, then they can arrive at the parking lot just as the deal is being done, and intervene or observe as they wish. If they have not got this far due to their own investigations, then they will simply be dispatched to the area an hour or so after the event, and so will only witness the aftermath.

Cano drives into the parking lot at about 3:00AM, exactly on time. A couple of creeps are watching secretly from a building overlooking the parking lot. After about five minutes, a Creeps car drives in and parks across from Cano's car. The Creep, Tag Hunter, has been selected for the job as a rite of passage. He is a younger Creep that has not killed anyone yet. If he gets this right, then that will make him a proper Creep and he will gain the respect of the other gang members. However, he gets it all wrong.

Hunter gets out of his car carrying a brief case containing some scrap metal and walks towards Cano's car and Cano gets out of his carrying a sports bag stuffed with Red Pills. As they meet half way, Hunter suddenly pulls out his pistol and shoots at Cano nervously three times. He wings Cano with one shot and misses with the others. Cano manages to draw his gun and shoots Hunter expertly dead. Bleeding, he struggles back to his car with the pills.

Seeing this, the observing Creeps contact their back-up vehicle, and it speeds to the scene with four creeps inside. The creeps' car gets to the entrance of the parking lot just as Cano is about to drive out. There is a violent collision and Cano's car is pushed into the parking lot's fence and rendered useless.

Shaken up, Cano desperately climbs out of his car and tries to run for it. Bleeding heavily, he only makes a few yards before three of the creeps gun him down in a hail of bullets. As Cano falls, however, his sports bag rips open sending bottles of Red Pills in all directions. The Creeps make a bit of an effort to collect as many bottles as they can, and then seeing the futility of this, give up, and make their getaway, leaving dozens of bottles of pills strewn about the place.

The scene will be found as it is left, with Hunter's body on the ground next to his vehicle, the scrap metal in a briefcase nearby, Cano's car in the fence and his body on the sidewalk surrounded by pill bottles. Given the evidence, something approaching the above account could reasonably be pieced together by clever Investigators.

SHANE CANO ★

Shane Cano is a young Turk at Group 5. He is always enthusiastic to take the riskiest jobs and has irrepressible belief in his own competence. This brash confidence has served him well and he has risen in the ranks quickly. However, Cano's self-belief borders on the complacent and careless. Some people find Cano's 'act now, do not bother thinking about it later' attitude inspiring and follow him willingly. People that are more discerning consider him thoughtless and arrogant.

The Group 5 trouble shooter has been tasked by Francis Ohaya with distributing a batch of cheap Red Pills to Cheapside. He does not know why exactly, but considers it to be some sort of marketing exercise. He had 10,000 pills and has got rid of most of them by the time he enters the campaign.

Despite his impeccable dress and business-like manner, Cano is a ruthless operative and skillful killer. He has little compassion or empathy and has dedicated himself to climbing the corporate ladder for its own sake.

Throughout his time on Luna, Cano will be carrying with him about 50,000 Capitol dollars (25 Assets), his ticket back to Mars, and his corporate ID. The ID is from Handsure Holdings, an obscure Capitol company and bears his real name. It describes him as Executive Officer, Venture Division.

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	6	9



Shane Cano's business deal goes sour with the Creeps.

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	2	1	-	2	1	1	-	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Bulletproof Vest:** (Torso 2)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Piranha Pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+**T**3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+**T**4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL RULES

- ▶ **Murder-for-Hire:** Cano is a skilled killer, favouring a clean kill over a drawn-out battle. When he takes the Exploit Weakness action, his attacks gain the Unforgiving 2 quality.

INCURSID EVENTS

HOME MADE FOODS

Home Made Foods is a famous brand located in Cheapside. Its factory is in the middle of the Investigators' police beat. The brand has recently been purchased by Group 5, though that fact is not well known. They produce two famous food ranges, Eaty-Neaty, and Din Dins.

Anyone bothering to research the ownership of Home Made Foods would need a **Challenging D2 Lifestyle test** to wade through the myriad layers of corporate ownership to find this out. Alternatively, they might simply have heard this news on a **Challenging D2 Education test**, although this would not be backed by any evidence.

EATY-NEATY

A range of energy and health bars for aspiring go-getters and supposed athletes. It is mostly sugar and rubbish but has some high profile athlete and celebrity sponsors and is a product-placement

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

LIFE CYCLE OF THE INCURSID

The Incursid is a parasitical Dark Legion entity from the dark void that relies on the psychic food of human anguish for its nourishment. It has a number of distinct life stages. It starts as an egg, a spherical fleshy black blob little more than 3 or 4 millimetres in diameter. If ingested by an intelligent creature the egg can start to grow. The egg is fed psychically from the thoughts of its host. It thrives on thoughts of destruction, spite, and violence. In an appropriate host, the egg will soon morph into its infant state. If the host is not consumed with sufficient dark thoughts, the egg will simply die and pass imperceptibly from the host's body.

One of the most dangerous things that can happen to an investigator during this part of the campaign is becoming infested with an Incursid egg. An investigator ingesting an Incursid egg must make a **Daunting D3 Resistance test**. If he fails, then he is infested. He will soon have an Incursid infant growing inside him, but is entirely oblivious to this.

If the victim ingests more than one egg then only one will thrive. The metamorphosis into an infant destroys any other eggs in the host's body. Only one roll is required, no matter how many eggs are inside the victim, although the GM may increase the difficulty for exceptional numbers of eggs. A successful roll means that all the eggs will soon die or pass out of the body.

Incursids thrive on violence and destruction, fear and loathing. The GM should consider the recent history of the investigator and his state of mind and award modifiers to the roll to reflect how amenable the investigator might be to the Incursid psyche. A balanced, calm, non-violent investigator might get a reduced difficulty, whereas a mean-spirited, resentful, violent one might have more. Regular usage of drugs like Faustus and Red Pill should contribute to an extra difficulty when rolling to resist Incursid psychic effects, while a bad trip on Red Pill should mean added difficulty on top of that.

The infant state can be of almost any shape. It appears as a vague, black formless thing that adopts whatever shape fits best inside its host's body. Because of this insidious formation and the way the infant hijacks the host body's organs to its own ends, it is impossible to remove the Incursid infant from its host physically. The infant emits chemicals that make its host more prone to dark thoughts and actions. The more violent and destructive and hate-filled the thoughts, and the more creatively they are acted upon, the more sustenance the infant will receive.

The infant has a short span of opportunity for it to make the adult stage. Within a couple of weeks, its host must cause a great deal of appalling and atrocious behaviour in order to feed the creature's warped appetite sufficiently to trigger the change. If the infant does not make it to the adult stage, it will wither and die. Its host has a chance of surviving this, especially if it is large and strong, and the Incursid did not grow to any significant size.

The infant is rather helpless in its host's body. It can emit chemicals which cause mood swings and rages and in this way, the infant will attempt to seduce its host to violence and atrocity. Usually it can sense danger, in a vague way, and will increase the chemicals at those times in order that the host might be better prepared to protect itself.

As the Incursid nears adulthood, it grows throughout the host's body, filling every gap, pushing out and contorting it, disfiguring and discolouring it until it is barely recognisable. Then, suddenly, the host's body is utterly destroyed, leaving only a few bloody remains. In its place is an adult Incursid.

Being infested by an Incursid is treated as a disease with the following effects:

◀ **VECTOR:** Ingestion

◀ **VIRULENCE:** 3

◀ **INCUBATION PERIOD:** six weeks (reduces if the patient is particularly violent or cruel, at GM's discretion)

◀ **SYMPTOMS:** Patient suffers two Dread; patient suffers $\uparrow 3$ mental damage; patient suffers $\uparrow 3$ Corruption.

◀ **INTERVAL:** Days, Acute (5)

The incubation period represents the transition from egg to infant. If the patient loses all mental wounds, the infant Incursid takes a complete hold over the patient's mind and body, and begins its transition to adulthood. This makes the patient into an NPC. If the disease is cured, the Incursid dies, inflicting $1 + \uparrow 5$ damage with the Toxic 5 quality to the patient's torso as its alien form decomposes within its host.

The Incursid adult is a glistening, lithe, six limbed figure looking like it is made out of pulsating obsidian. It is about eight feet long and reminiscent in shape to some earth insects like mantises or stick insects. Unlike its earlier metamorphoses, the adult has no interest

in psychic nutrition, except perhaps a vestigial liking for the taste of fear. The adult only requires physical, visceral nutrition of the same type as its host. It will therefore hunt down and kill as many humans as it can.

The adult is an agile creature, able to climb sheer surfaces, or even walk along some rougher ceilings. It is a consummate, instinctive hunter and is agile and fast. It has good sense of smell and excellent eyesight.

If the Incursid adult kills and eats enough victims, then it will become ready to morph into the mother stage. Towards the end of its adult stage it will become distended and slow from consuming all its victims, and it will then slope away somewhere dark and quiet to change. After a few days the bloated adult body will be a dry husk, which the mother will eat its way out of.

The Incursid mother is the final stage of the life cycle. Unlike the other stages, which are often a race against time for the creature, the mother can remain in such a form for many years. The mother is recognisably similar to the adult, but much more compact. It is about six feet long and about four feet across. The six legs are stubbier, the body is wider and rounder and is covered in a tough, jagged, chitin armour. The head is also rounder and armoured.

The mother hunts occasionally for food, but more often to implant her eggs. Part of her mouthparts is a complex ovipositor. This is prehensile and extremely dextrous. It can be used to deposit an egg in an open wound or orifice. Usually, the mother will grab a victim, taking care to keep it healthy, and then shove the ovipositor down its neck. It will then scuttle off paying no more heed to its potential offspring. The oral delivery method gives the greatest chance of success for the egg, but other methods are not beneath her.



Adult Incursids consume the corpse of their host, leaving little evidence.

brand in every cop's favourite TV show: *Beat Street*. There is a vending machine of the stuff in the Cheapside precinct canteen.

DIN DINS

Din Dins is a range of microwave TV dinners, that even its biggest fans will acknowledge never looks like the product on the wrapper or tastes like it is supposed to. However, it goes down easily and is cheap and convenient. They also do an 'authentic' Mishima 'microwave sushi' sub-range which is marketed by a racist Mishima caricature.

THE PLAN

Heretics are using Dark Arts to summon Incursid eggs from the void. They are eventually implanted within Home Made Foods' products, Eaty-Neaty and Din Dins. These products are then ready to be returned surreptitiously to the warehouse.

At the start of the investigation, very few infested food products are in circulation, and these have been stolen from the factory. However, as the game goes on it will be time for the infested foods to be shipped out. The longer the Investigators take to nail down the source of the strange happenings, and move to prevent it, the greater will be the disaster that befalls Luna City.

EATING THE FOOD

At the beginning of the game, there is no chance of an investigator having ingested an Incursid egg, even if he eats Eaty-Neaty three times a day. However, as the game goes on, there might be a chance that he will eat an infested product. This should depend on the speed of the investigation. The Investigators will have little chance of stopping the infested foods going out until the very end of this section, and Sterling's plan is that all the infested food is distributed as close together as possible in order to cause the greatest mayhem. However, because he doesn't have complete control of the factory, the food will leak out over the course of the investigation. Moreover, because the Investigators are likely to consume it there is a chance they might become infested.

There will be lots of infested food just lying around during various events. There is a vending machine for Eaty-Neaty in the Cheapside police canteen, and most people eat at least the occasional Din Dins. Some people live on the stuff. It should be up to the GM how often the players might have to test for this, and how likely they are to be eating the food.

The chance of infested food rating starts at zero. This can be raised by one by spending five Dark Symmetry points. This can be raised a number of times, but should be done gradually over the course of the investigation, and no more than once per in-game day.

Any time the Investigators consume food that might be infested roll a d20. If the roll is lower or equal to the infested food rating then that food is infested and therefore might infest the investigator.

Working out whether the Investigators eat Home Made Foods products is a more difficult matter. It will arouse suspicion to ask them outright whether they eat certain foods. The GM could work out from their day to day lives and attitudes what sort of chances there might be of them eating the sort of down-market fast food that Home Made Foods makes. However, just telling an investigator that in your opinion he has eaten some food and that food was infested and now he is, is not satisfactory.

The GM will need to use his skills and wiles to make those foods familiar enough to the Investigators that they just might explicitly mention grabbing a bar of Eaty-Neaty while doing their paperwork, or sitting in their squad car with a packet of Din Dins.

Broadly speaking, characters with an Earnings Rating of 3 or higher can afford higher-quality fare than this kind of mass-produced food, though this doesn't mean they're above the occasional snack from a food truck or street vendor.

THE FIRST BATCH

The only infested food at large at the start of the investigation is a couple of crates stolen by a small-time criminal, Leon Kraft. He has already sold some of the product, bartered it, or given it away for various reasons. Moreover, he has eaten a lot himself.

The first inkling the Investigators will get that something is wrong is that various people will start to behave very oddly and dangerously under the influence of the Incursid infant inside them. However, there will be very little to tie the various events together or to act as a clue to what is actually happening until the Investigators go to Kraft's apartment.



A conspiracy claims many lives.

It is up to the GM how long it takes to reach that stage. Any number of the events described below can be played along with other events in the day in the life of a Luna City police officer to show that all is not well. These events might need to be considered retrospectively by the Investigators for them to realise just what danger the city might be in.

Not all of these have Eaty-Neaty somewhere in them, but it should not be immediately apparent quite so soon that there is anything unusual about that.



PERSON INFESTED BY INCURSID INFANT ★

This profile represents an ordinary person—someone with little or no combat training or special skills—infested and controlled by an infant Incursid. Controlled by an alien entity within, one that feeds upon cruelty and fear, the person is capable of greater feats of physical prowess than normal.

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	7	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	2	1	–	3	3	1	–	1	–

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: **Unfeeling Flesh:** (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀▶ **Night Vision**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀▶ **Maturation:** By spending five Dark Symmetry points, the infant Incursid reaches maturity, and bursts from its host's body in a welter of gore and viscera. The host dies immediately, and

an Incursid Adult emerges from the ruined remains. Anybody witnessing this must attempt a Daunting D3 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault.

INCURSID ADULT ★

This profile represents an Incursid Adult during the peak of its fitness and prowess.

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13	10	12 (+1)	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	11	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	–	–	–	–

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: **Chitin Shell:** (All 3)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Razor-Sharp Talons (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, Vicious 1
- ◀▶ **Mandibles (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 5, Gruesome, Vicious 2, may only be used against a grabbed enemy

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Fear (2)**
- ◀▶ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀▶ **Grasping**
- ◀▶ **Night Vision**
- ◀▶ **Personal Dark Symmetry (3)**
- ◀▶ **Scuttling Climb:** An Incursid can climb freely on any surface—sheer walls and ceilings—and contorting itself through tight spaces without regard for the normal structure of a human body.
- ◀▶ **Supernatural Agility (1)**

INCURSID MOTHER ☠

This profile represents an Incursid Mother soon after being spawned.

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
12	10	12	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	7	13	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	3	1	3	3	2	2	–	–	–	–

WOUNDS:

- ◀ Head 4
- ◀ Arms 5
- ◀ Serious 7
- ◀ Mental Wounds 13
- ◀ Torso 9
- ◀ Legs 7
- ◀ Critical 4

SOAK: Dense Chitin Shell: (All 4)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Razor-Sharp Talons (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, Vicious 1
- ◀ **Mandibles (melee):** 2+ \uparrow 5, Gruesome, Vicious 2, may only be used against a grabbed enemy
- ◀ **Ovipositor:** If one or more Dark Symmetry Icons are generated when dealing damage with the Mandibles, the GM may spend three Dark Symmetry points; if these points are spent, the target is infected with an Incursid egg.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Devour:** An Incursid Mother can spend one round devouring the corpse of one creature of the same species as its original host (typically human). It recovers \uparrow 3 lost wounds when it does this. Further, for each Dark Symmetry Icon generated, it moves one step towards maturation, adding one point to the Dark Symmetry pool.
- ◀ **Fear (2)**
- ◀ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀ **Grasping**
- ◀ **Night Vision**
- ◀ **Scuttling Climb:** An Incursid can climb freely on any surface—sheer walls and ceilings—and contort itself through tight spaces without regard for the normal structure of a human body.

EVENT: HOSTAGES—TARA DEEKS

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Suspected murder, and hostage situation. 807 Royal Court Estate. Emergency.

Tara Deeks works in the warehouse at Home Made Foods. She occasionally steals the odd bar of Eaty-Neaty at work, because it is cheaper than buying lunch. Unfortunately for her, she stole a bar infested with Incursid eggs, and now has an Incursid infant growing inside her. The Incursid has made her feelings of resentment towards her family come out in a violent and tragic manner.

Deeks works hard at Home Made Foods trying to make ends meet, often pulling double shifts. She has four children, aged one, two, three, and four. They are obviously hard work and expensive. Deeks' husband, Paul, is unemployed. He tries to make a bit on the side as a wheeler-dealer, but is poor at this and often ends up losing more money than he makes. There is a simmering resentment between Tara and her husband, and the Incursid infestation will cause this to come to a head in an extremely violent manner.

The Investigators get called to her apartment block because she has shoved her husband out of a window of their eighth floor apartment. He is now dead, a stain on the car park below. A witness, Joe Bleau, recognised him and called the police, and so will be able to tell the Investigators exactly where he lives when they arrive. He has already gone up to talk to Tara, but he was told to go away, and she threatened to kill her children. Therefore, the siege situation is already set up for when the Investigators arrive.

Tara has locked herself in her apartment. There is bound to be a bit of a stand-off while she negotiates with the Investigators. She will tell them that she has her four children present and will begin executing them one at a time unless the police stop harassing her.

However, a neighbour will approach the Investigators shortly after this conversation begins to explain that the four Deeks children are all safe and well at her apartment (a few doors down) playing with her kids. The Investigators can check; they are all there, playing happily.

Regardless of how the negotiations go, Tara will refuse to acknowledge that her kids are anywhere but with her in the apartment, and will continue to threaten them. If the police do not go away, she will work her way through her imaginary children shooting at their photos hanging on the wall in the apartment. Once she has got through her children's pictures then she will kill herself.

It will take some sensitive negotiations and a **Daunting D3 Persuade test** if Tara is to be talked down from her desperate threats.

The point of the encounter is to show how utterly inhuman and deluded an Incursid host can become. It should also give the Investigators a tricky psychological situation to deal with if they are not to have another casualty.

The Investigators might learn that Deeks works at Home Made Foods, but this clue is designed to be acted on later. The Investigators should not really have any reason to suspect darker things going on at the factory at this stage. Even if they do pay it a visit, the Heretics should just sit tight until they go away. Deeks has no connection to Leon Kraft.



TARA DEEKS, INFESTED AND ENRAGED ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	7	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	2	1	-	3	3	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Unfeeling Flesh: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4
- ◆ **Ronin Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Kitchen Knife (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Feed Upon Fear**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **'Hostage' Situation:** By spending two Dark Symmetry points, Mrs. Deeks' threats and her obvious rage cause all characters within Medium range to attempt an Average D1 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault.

EVENT: LONE GUNMAN — PRU LARKIN

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Suspected shooting in progress. Enigma Plaza. All units, shooting in progress, men down, Enigma plaza.

Pru is a petty thief, drug addict and all around hoodlum. She has a lot of issues; she is resentful of just about everybody. Nobody really likes her but a lot of people fear her for her unpredictable nature and her martial skill. She used to work as a freelancer but was too unreliable to get regular employment. Recently she has been skulking in Cheapside doing robberies and burglaries to pay for her Faustus addiction.

She knows Leon Kraft, and went round for a couple of beers a few days ago. While there, she saw his stack of Eaty-Neaty and helped herself to a few boxes. It is all she has eaten since then. Pru's general mental state and especially the prodigious amount of Faustus she uses has meant that the Incursid egg inside her has grown very quickly. She is about to go over the edge.

Pru, in her drug-induced, Incursid-influenced state has decided to shoot up Enigma Plaza. The Plaza is a busy low-wealth shopping mall, with a clock tower and some strange water fountain art pieces in the middle, surrounded by stores. It is early afternoon and the place is as busy as it gets. Pru has accessed the clock tower and set up base there. She has all her remaining Eaty-Neaty with her and some bottles of water, so if this turns into a siege she will have food for weeks and water for days.

Pru simply starts firing randomly at shoppers. She keeps going until they all flee, and then will defend herself to the death. There is no real way for her to escape, in any case. The clock tower is a tall, blocky, square affair and has a clock face on all four sides. This gives Pru a commanding position of almost every inch of the square. She has bolted and padlocked the door at the base. There are four storeys of winding stairs to be climbed to reach the clock-face level.

It might be too early in the investigation for an Incursid to appear, but if the GM wishes, he can have Pru's Incursid erupt from the body at an appropriate moment. This will preferably be right after the Investigators have killed her and are about to inspect the body.

PRU LARKIN, EX-FREELANCER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	11	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	6	7	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	2	2	1	-	3	3	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Unfeeling Flesh: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4
- ◆ **M50 Assault Rifle (ranged):** Medium, 1+ \uparrow 6, 2H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Feed Upon Fear**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Create Panic:** By spending two Dark Symmetry points, Larkin fires into the crowd. Choose a zone within Long range; all creatures in that zone must attempt a Challenging D2 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault.

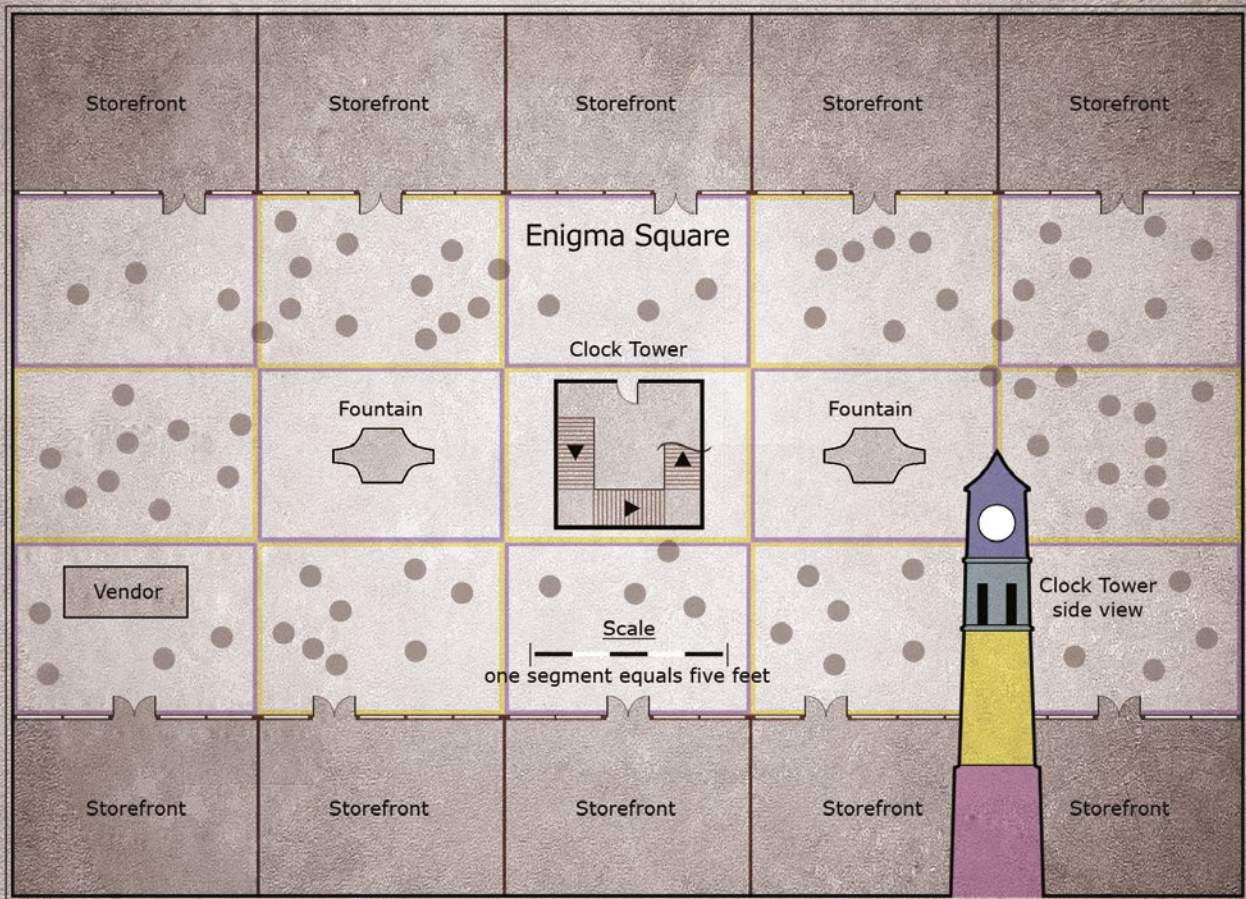
ENIGMA PLAZA

The area is a fairly simple one, with numerous zones that are fairly similar. Along the outer edges of the map are rows of **storefronts**, glass-fronted shops with customers and sales staff within. The reinforced glass and sales displays provide Light Cover (T2 Soak) to anyone in those zones, but the tight confines and milling crowds make it difficult to move quickly, requiring a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to move into or out of the zone.

All around the outside are **crowds**, which pose the largest challenge. Due to their panic, moving from one zone to the adjacent one (a restricted action move) takes an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**, as people rush about, getting in one another's way, and generally being difficult to avoid. If Larkin fires at one of the crowd zones, the terror this causes increases the difficulty of Acrobatics and Athletics tests in that zone by one until the end of Larkin's next turn. The milling, panicking people provide Light Cover (T2 Soak) to characters in a crowd zone, but a character benefiting from this cover gains 1 Dread for each Dark Symmetry Icon generated from these cover dice, as an innocent bystander is slain by Larkin's gunfire.

There are two large water fountains either side of the clock tower, and the crowds have pulled back from these. The bodies of a few dead people—the initial victims—litter these areas, and most other people have pulled back in fright. The fountains themselves are solid, made of aluminium, steel, marble, and granite, and provide Heavy Cover (T4 Soak) to characters in that zone.

The clock tower actually consists of four zones, stacked on top of one another. For the purposes of ranged attacks and line of sight, all of these zones are treated identically—the top floor of the clock tower counts the water fountains as in medium range, for example—but for the purposes of movement, each zone of the tower can only be reached by moving through the ones above or below it. The door at the base is locked tight, requiring a **Challenging D2 Mechanics** or **Thievery test** or a **Daunting D3 Athletics test** to get through. Once open, the steep stairs within mean that sprinting inside the tower requires a **Challenging D3 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**—otherwise, you have to go one floor at a time. The lower floors of the clock tower have only small windows, with no clear lines of fire. The top floor, where Pru Larkin



is waiting, has Heavy Cover (↑4 Soak) against all attacks from outside that zone, and is sturdy enough that each Dark Symmetry Icon generated grants an additional +2 Soak—it would take an excellent marksman to stop her from ground level.

EVENT: GANGER ATTACK—LAMB

Some Investigators will be driving around in their squad car when they are attacked for seemingly no reason. A souped-up Loughton Statham will come out of the traffic and sideswipe the Investigators' vehicle. If the Investigators can check out the driver, he will appear to be having great fun. In a few moments, he will ram the car again, and shout 'die piggies,' or something similar, at them.

MODIFIED LOUGHTON 'STATHAM' ROADCAR

RESTRICTION: 2 **COST: 11**
MAINTENANCE: 4 **RELIABILITY: 2**

QUALITIES	Exposed, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	250 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		2
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	5 passengers	
	1 gunner		125 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	8	5	4
MOTIVE SYSTEM	2	4	3	2
WEAPON	2	4	3	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑5			
ARMAMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L&A Mk. XXIII 'Destroyer' LMG (beneath right headlight): Medium, 1+↑7, Automatic, Spread 1), 6 ammo loads 			
NOTES	Passengers and Crew have ↑4 cover Soak			

Lamb (no one remembers why he's called Lamb) is a member of the Creeps gang. Under the influence of Faustus and an Incursid egg, he has decided he really needs to run the Investigators off the road. He has a handgun, but really, as far as he is considered, this one is all about driving. The GM should try to run an exciting chase scene across town. Lamb will not let up until he or the Investigators are dead.

The general opinion at the station will be that Lamb finally took too many drugs. They will not consider it deliberate provocation by the Creeps. In any case, the police department has no desire to start a war with them as they are probably better equipped and defended than the police are. Autopsies are expensive, and so Dickson will not bother asking for one ("It's a drug death, plain and simple!") but if the Investigators strongly insist then it will take some time, but the autopsy will discover the Incursid infant, although no one will have any idea what it might be.

In this encounter, the Investigators will get to meet a Creep. They will get a glimpse of the effects of mixing Incursids with Faustus, though the significance of that might not be apparent to them at this stage. Diligent officers may wish to follow this up with a visit to the Creep stronghold. Everyone on the force, and anyone else who knows what is good for them, will strongly discourage this.

If they go despite the warnings then the Creeps will be ready for a big fight. Even before the Investigators get to the Creep's block, they will already be surrounded and outgunned. The Creeps will not believe that just a handful of police are bringing the fight to them, and they will be on the lookout for the van loads of support officers. Once they discover that this really is a visit from a few officers, they will be amused.

One of the Creeps will give them a friendly warning to get out now, just because he cannot believe what is happening. However, if the Investigators ignore this too, then the Creeps will open fire with everything they have. They will have dozens of men, and many of these would have excellent vantage points covering all directions.

EVENT: CAT LADY—LORETTA YOUNG

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Proceed to 204 Dieter Lang Buildings. Suspected murder, repeat, suspected murder. Also, ongoing animal welfare issue. Please respond.

A STITCH IN TIME

Kraft gave Loretta a few boxes of Eaty-Neaty because he quite fancies her; practical, if not particularly romantic. Kraft has even asked her out a few times, but she has always refused. Although Loretta would like some sort of relationship she has her mother to deal with. Loretta's mother, Sara, takes up all her time. Sara is bed bound and suffers from a chronic illness. Most of Loretta's money goes towards what medicines they can afford, and most of her time is spent caring for Sara. Loretta saves money by making her own clothes. She has become a handy seamstress and takes some pride in this.

Over the years, Loretta has gradually become increasingly resentful that her life is simply wasting away in this manner. Loretta's life is empty, although her mother has her cats. Sara dotes on her cats, although it is Loretta who must feed them and look after them. Sara seems to give all her love to her cats, and in Loretta's view, none to her. There is one thing Loretta resents more than the unremitting poverty and the constant care of her mother, it is those damn cats, all fourteen of them.

The Incursid egg that Loretta has ingested has skewed Loretta's perception of her mother and her pets even further, and tipped her over the edge. A few days ago, Loretta bashed her mother's head in with a baking tray (a makeshift litter tray). Then she went to work on the cats.

A few moments before the Investigators are called in, a neighbour finds Sara Young's body. It is lying in bed, as usual, but it is surrounded by the flayed bodies of all her cats. The neighbour, Curt Simonsen, fled as soon as he realised what was up and called the police.

The Investigators will need to examine the grisly remains. The mother is a mess, but the skin-jobs on the cats are quite neat work. They could also discover Loretta's favourite chair has sewing equipment and kitchen knives around it, but it is soaked in blood and gore, and so are the needles and other paraphernalia. There are some packets of Eaty-Neaty in the kitchen (one opened and half-finished), although that might not be conspicuous at this stage of the campaign.

The neighbours will wonder where Loretta is, because she usually dotes on her mother. In addition, most of the pictures on the sideboard show the victim with her daughter (and some cats). The Investigators' examination of the room will be interrupted, however, by a scream from down the corridor.



Loretta Young: Crazy Cat Lady and then some.

CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS

One of the neighbours, Slim Landau, who has been milling about in the corridor wondering what all the fuss is about is suddenly attacked by a hideous monster. The monster is in fact Loretta Young wearing a cat-suit made out of the pelts of her mother's fourteen dead cats. Loretta attacks the young man, and using hidden strength from the Incursid infant growing inside her, rips his throat out and then flees.

The cat-suit is well made, and fits Loretta well, but it still presents a horrific sight, covered in blood and guts and made up of every colour and type of cat fur imaginable. Loretta is no athlete, even though she seems to have gained some athletic qualities from the Incursid influence, so her movement is strangely cat-like yet ungainly.

A friend of the victim, Nate Braun, caught a glimpse of the cat monster and he will hysterically tell the Investigators about it. The description is confused and terrified. He will indicate that the cat-monster fled into his own apartment (he had left the door open), and his baby is inside.

Fortunately for the baby fast asleep in his cot, Loretta simply flees through the apartment, out the window and scales the climbable (**Challenging D2 Athletics test**) exterior of the Dieter Lang apartment block. Loretta will stay in Dieter Lang trying to pick off all the neighbours that have ever annoyed her until the Incursid infant matures. The Investigators will probably feel it is their duty to apprehend her as soon as possible.

Loretta, in her unbalanced state, is now in her element. Like a cat playing with a ball of string, she will feel compelled to hunt her neighbours (and the Investigators) and kill them. If she has time, she will play with their bodies for a bit. However, her instinct will be to drag the bodies to her own apartment to proudly show them off to her mother.

LORETTA YOUNG, INFECTED AND DERANGED ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
11		10		10		9	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
8		6		7		8	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	2	2	3	1	3	3	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: **Unfeeling Flesh:** (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+↑4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Fear (1)**
- ◆ **Feed Upon Fear**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Cat-Like Agility:** By spending two Dark Symmetry points, Loretta gains one additional Response Action before the beginning of her next turn.
- ◆ **Claws:** By spending a Dark Symmetry point after hitting with a close combat attack, Loretta's unarmed strike gains the Vicious 1 quality.

DIETER LANG APARTMENT BLOCK

The image below depicts an example floor from the Dieter Lang apartment building.

Each apartment is essentially the same as all the others, aside from the furnishings of the occupants. A long thin corridor runs the length of the apartment, from door to outer wall, with a small window at the far end. Doors to a living area and kitchenette, a bedroom, and a bathroom run along one side of this corridor. Each of these areas contains various furnishings that provide Light Cover (↑2 Soak), and

no line of sight can be drawn between these areas except through open doors. On each floor, the corner apartments have more windows, and thus tend to be rented by slightly wealthier tenants.

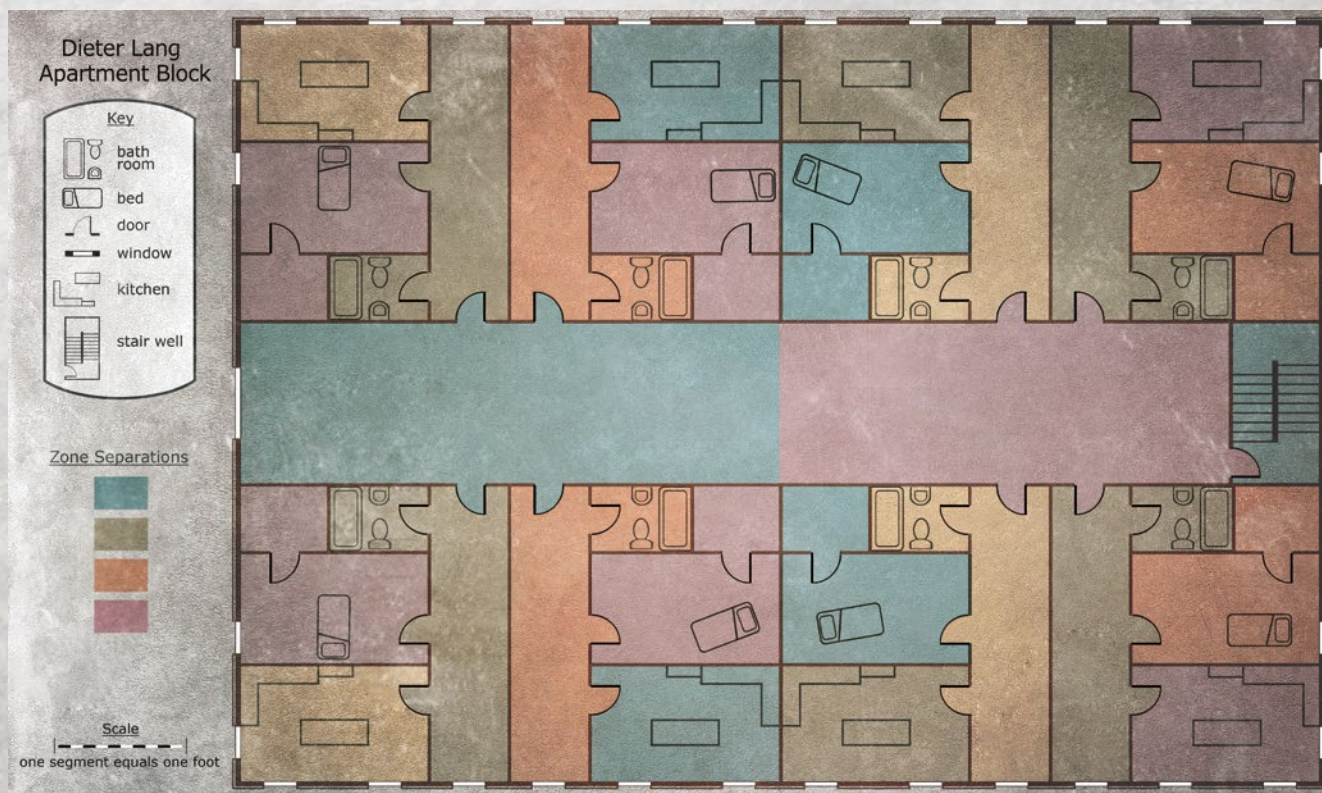
The main hallway is a long open area with windows at both ends. One end is dominated by the stairs, which connect the five floors. Sprinting up or down the stairs requires an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid tripping and falling—this inflicts 1+↑3 damage with the Stun quality.

EVENT: FLAME WARRIOR—JORGE LOPEZ

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Fire reported in Headway House, arson suspected. Please respond.

Jorge Lopez is a balding, wiry old man, who appears to be seething angrily beneath his civilised demeanour. He has an old burn scar across his forehead, which he earned saving lives for the Cheapside Fire Department. He gave thirty years of his life to fighting fires in Cheapside, and now resents every second of it.

Due to corporate restructuring, Lopez recently lost his job. He took this extremely badly and sat at home staring at the TV for many months. Though getting bitter and twisted, he never felt able to do anything about his plight. He bought a few bars of Eaty-Neaty from



Leon Kraft because it's good TV food if you have lost the will to prepare proper food.

Now the Incursid infant growing within him has given Lopez the will to take his revenge. He has already started a couple of minor fires around Cheapside, and they burned well and caused the damage he had hoped for. He will continue setting fires over the course of the campaign, almost every night, in order to spread confusion, cause destruction and, hopefully, death.

The police will not be called to every fire; that will be left to the proper fire-fighters, but they might get dispatched if there is direct evidence of arson. The GM can use the fires, often just raging in the background, to bring atmosphere to the campaign, and give an air of decadence and immolation.

Perhaps a fire occurs near to where the Investigators are investigating another case. Perhaps they catch a glimpse of Lopez silhouetted against one of his fires fleeing the scene. Perhaps a fire erupts without warning in a building the Investigators are currently in, putting them in direct danger, or just adding a complication to their current investigation.

Eventually, having witnessed a number of fires over the course of the game, and the presence of the arsonist becoming a fact of life on the beat, the Investigators should get the chance to confront Lopez towards the latter stages of the campaign in the midst of a burning building. Lopez should be found glorifying in the conflagrations he has caused, turned beyond reason by his Incursid parasite. If Jorge's statistics are needed, use the stats for an Infested Person on page 73.

Perhaps by then he has caused enough death and destruction for his Incursid the morph into its adult stage. If the Investigators can get hold of Lopez' possessions they will find his address, and at his address, as well as all the evidence they need to link him with the arson, they will find the packs of Eaty-Neaty.



Jorge Lopez: 'Burn it down - burn it all down!'

EVENT: PARASOL QUESTIONS

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. Please return to HQ immediately. Repeat, return to HQ immediately. Priority one. Copy. Repeat, priority one, do you copy?

After the Investigators have witnessed an Incursid adult, they will be called individually to report back to the Farm. There they will be met by two stony-faced, plain-clothes agents. The agents will exude a certainty and confidence that might make the Investigators think twice about crossing them and they will not refer to each other by name, simply calling each other 'agent'. The agents will explain they are 'from Parasol' regardless of whether that means anything to the investigator. They will show the investigator into an interrogation suite and begin their questioning.

The Parasol agents will ask a few questions regarding the Incursids and the state of the investigation. The actual questions will depend on how far along the Investigators have got and what they have witnessed. The Parasol agents are rather enigmatic, and it should not

PARASOL

SECURING A FINICIAL TOMORROW

ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Position: _____

Agency: _____

Last contact with relevant phenomenon: _____

Was this physical contact: Y / N

Did you exchange any bodily fluids: Y / N

Body Mass Index: _____

Any Other Details: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY



EZ-HD-23-54-00

PARASOL
SECURING A FINICIAL TOMORROW

MARIA SINGH
+43 020 73155445

FIELD AGENT: Maria Singh

SURVEY NUMBER: Q-245-56901R#23

OFFICE USE ONLY

PROCESSED BY: _____



be clear to the Investigators exactly how much they may or may not know. They try to impart as little information as they can, while gathering information for themselves. That is just a habit of their job. The agents should know everything that the Investigators have put in their police reports (because they have read them) and their questioning should be based on clarifying some of those details.

The questions feel odd. This is down to the Parasol ELISA (Emotive Lead Interrogation and Suggestion Analysis) system. It is essentially a way of gaining insight from emotional and demotic responses. The essential technique is simply to repeat what the interrogation subject has already said, while inserting some emotive red herring. The Parasol agents analyse the responses and gain some insight into the Investigators and the Incursids. If any Investigators wish to resist giving away anything during the interrogation, they should make a **Daunting D3 Willpower test**.

ELISA IN ACTION

Q: *We understand you saw a creature erupting from the victim's stomach.*

A: *Yes, it killed him instantly. It was horrible. The creature was all dark and sinewy.*

Q: *How did this make you feel?*

A: *It was horrible.*

Q: *Did it make you think of your mother?*

A: *What's it got to do with my mother?*

Q: *You say that it was horrible. What horror has your mother ever done to you?*

A: *Shut up about my mother.*

Q: *Did you want the creature to shut up? Were its dark sinews speaking to you?*

A: *What?*

Q: *What did the creature do then?*

A: *It scuttled off...*

Q: *Did you ever scuttle when you were a child?*

If the Investigators ask the Parasol agents about this they might tell them something like, 'the results will go on to make up a qualitative analysis of those known to have encountered alien phenomena'. If pressed further they might offer that, 'they are interested in contrasting resilience to extra-terrestrial encounters to the participant's reported perceptions of childhood attachment'. However, the Investigators should not really get a much better explanation than that.

If the Investigators ask around, they can be told that these are Parasol agents who have recently arrived from Mars. Parasol is a legitimate organisation with full powers of investigation. No one at the HQ has heard of them, or seen them before. They arrived out of the blue, but with all the proper credentials.

There is not much the Investigators can do about this in their current position. They are the rank and file and if they are being investigated, they will have to grin and bear it. If the Investigators decide to do some digging into Parasol, the company is detailed in **Part Four: "The Deregulation Zone"** page 136. However, bear in mind, some of that information will be harder to come by in Luna City.

The purpose of this encounter is to give the Investigators the notion that higher powers are at work here. Someone somewhere is keeping an eye on things. It would not hurt for the GM to stoke the fires of investigator paranoia further.



PARASOL AGENT SINGH ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
9		8		8		10	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
9		9		10		8	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	1	1	-	3	2	3	2	2	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads and Ballistic Nylon Overcoat:** (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Close, 1+**↑**6, Burst, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters
- ◀ **Baton (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Disturbingly Insightful:** Agent Singh has a particular way with people; he is able to glean meaningful information from the tiniest variations in demeanour, speech patterns, and expressions, and from the manner in which certain incongruous questions are answered. When attempting an Insight test, Agent Singh may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add 2d20 to his roll.
- ◆ **Ready for Anything:** Agent Singh has been trained to face a range of bizarre and inhuman threats, and he's more than capable when the situation becomes hostile. He gains two bonus Momentum on all Acrobatics and Ranged Combat tests made when an Incursid is present in the fight.

PARASOL AGENT LEE ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	8	10	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	1	1	–	3	2	3	2	2	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads and Ballistic Nylon Overcoat: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M15 Ironfist (ranged):** Close, 1+ \uparrow 4, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Grenade Launcher with Anti-Armour rounds (ranged):** Medium, 2+ \uparrow 5, Munition, Armour Piercing 2, Vicious 1
- ◆ **Baton (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Neuro-Linguistic Programming:** Agent Lee is extremely adept at provoking the right responses out of people; his calm, careful manner is a deliberate construct to make his words as convincing as possible. When attempting a Persuade test, Agent Lee may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add 2d20 to his roll.
- ◆ **Ready for Anything:** Agent Lee has been trained to face a range of bizarre and inhuman threats, and he's more than capable when the situation becomes hostile. He gains two bonus Momentum on all Acrobatics and Ranged Combat tests made when an Incursid is present in the fight.



EVENT: PARASOL AGAIN

Later, when the investigation is more advanced, Commander Dickson will give a form out to each of the Investigators and insist they fill it in immediately. The Investigators should notice the Parasol logo. They should have been intimidated by the Parasol agents earlier and so now will wonder what the catch is.

The forms are quite straightforward and the point of the exercise is really just to make the Investigators more concerned about their investigation being watched from above.

Dickson will be reticent to discuss it, explaining that the paperwork has just come down from on high and it needs to be done. If pressed he can reveal that it is only the Investigators (and any other officers they have been working closely with) that are required to fill the forms out.

EVENT: THE CREEPS

Four-Seven, Four-Seven. All units, emergency. Large scale disturbance centred on the Dump. Repeat, large scale disturbance. All units respond.

Leon Kraft was addicted to Faustus. He regularly purchased Faustus (and the occasional SLO) from the Creeps and he has recently started getting into Red Pills. The Creeps are a notorious drug-dealing criminal gang in the area. The Cheapside PD know all about them. They own an entire city block—a veritable fortress and drug supermarket. Normally, the police would not dare interfere with Creep business, provided they stick to their established patch. It is an unwritten rule of policing Cheapside.

However, Kraft used a crate of Eaty-Neaty in part payment for some Faustus. It is a handy energy snack for the drug-dealing low-life on the go, and so most of the gang are now infested with Incursid eggs. Furthermore, the development of the Incursid is greatly speeded up as the psychic food it needs to mature is enhanced by the Faustus.

Strange things have just started going on at 'The Dump'—the Creeps' base. A minor argument broke out, the sort of thing that happens five times a day amongst the gangers. This time however, it turned into a gun battle, with five gangers killed. This bloodshed served to stir up the rest of the Creeps into a frenzy. This event is all about fighting mindless violence, with violence.

Some gangers have got into vehicles and are patrolling the area within a few blocks of the Dump. They are shooting every civilian they find. Some have gone on a crime spree, raiding local apartments and tormenting the locals. Some have raided the Faustus supply and have taken massive doses. Some have got together the heaviest weapons in their arsenal and are waiting for the police to arrive.

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

Very soon, the blocks around the Dump will resemble a warzone. The Dump is directly linked to the Underground and there are a number of other entrances nearby. This means Creeps can disappear from the Dump and spring up unnoticed and unexpected in strategic places around their base.

Several police patrols have already been dispatched in response to individual incidents. Those have either been blown up or pinned down by Creep heavy weapons. It is just beginning to filter through to HQ that something exceptional is happening. Every officer on duty is being sent to the area, and they are attempting to contact as many off duty officers as possible, too.

If the GM wants to put the Investigators in immediate trouble, they can be amongst the first to arrive in the area, and will be surprised at how ferociously they are attacked. Alternatively, the GM can bring them in as part of the second wave, giving them a more strategic view of things when they might be able to come up with a more effective plan than simply turn up and be fired upon.

In any case, the area around the Dump will become the site of a pitched battle and the Investigators will find themselves in the thick of it. In addition, the longer the fighting goes on, the greater the chance that Incursids will become sated and change from the infant state to the adult. The GM should spend five Dark Symmetry points in order to morph an Incursid into the next stage of its life cycle, preferably when the Investigators are as close as possible to it. When this happens, the Incursid adult will burst out of its host's body and immediately set about attacking anyone nearby.

ENCOUNTER LIST FOR ATTACK ON THE DUMP

- ◆ Investigators are approaching the area when they come under heavy weapons fire from gangers in good vantage points on surrounding buildings
- ◆ A drug-crazed ganger drives his vehicle straight at the PCs. Despite an imminent right-angle bend, the ganger keeps going at full speed, crashing into a building in a ball of flame.
- ◆ They come across a group of gangers mindlessly tormenting a woman pushing a pram and shepherding a couple of toddlers.
- ◆ Having defeated a group of gangers the survivors flee into the Underground.
- ◆ The Investigators corner the leader of the gangers, Foster Gold. It might be a coup to take him alive, but using him as leverage against the rest of the gangers is doomed to failure, as they are all too far gone to care about their leader.
- ◆ An adult Incursid erupts from a ganger's body just as the Investigators have killed or arrested him.
- ◆ The Investigators break into the Dump's stronghold and manage to capture a huge haul of illegal drugs. Then a grenade goes off in the middle of the vault, and the drugs explode everywhere.
- ◆ Gangers in a firefight with the Investigators gradually begin to ignore the Investigators and end up fighting each other.



The Creeps aren't expecting someone to bring an Incursid to a gunfight.

This event inevitably ends in the total defeat of the gangers. Those that survive the police will not survive the Incursids. Even if the Investigators do not manage to get into the gangers' quarters in the Dump during the fight, their duties will take them there during the clean-up operation. Hopefully, at this stage the Investigators will be wondering about Eaty-Neaty. There is a large conspicuous crate of the stuff in the Dump. If the Investigators do not wonder about this explicitly, then the GM could give them a memory test, a **Daunting D3 Education test**, to see if they can recall the other instances they have seen Eaty-Neaty over the past few weeks, at sites of strange occurrences.

GANG LEADER, FOSTER GOLD ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	11	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	-	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	-

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads and Ballistic Nylon Overcoat: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **No. 4 Windrider SMG (ranged):** Close, 1+↑4, Burst, Unbalanced
- ▶ **Big Knife (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Length of Chain (melee):** 1+↑6, 1H, Reach, Knockdown

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Survival of the Strongest:** Gold is a brutal man, who leads through fear and savage might. He gains two bonus Momentum on all Command and Persuade tests made to intimidate others.
- ▶ **No Mercy:** Gold may re-roll up to ↑2 when rolling for damage. Further, he may spend two Momentum on an attack to inflict one Dread to each enemy within Close range of his target, as his particularly brutal attacks shock and appal his foes.

AVERAGE GANGER ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Rough Ballistic Nylon Clothing and Scrap Metal Plates: (Head 0, Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **No. 3 Ronin handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ▶ **No. 1 Shogun Assault Rifle (ranged):** Medium, 1+↑4, Burst, Unbalanced
- ▶ **Tire Iron (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

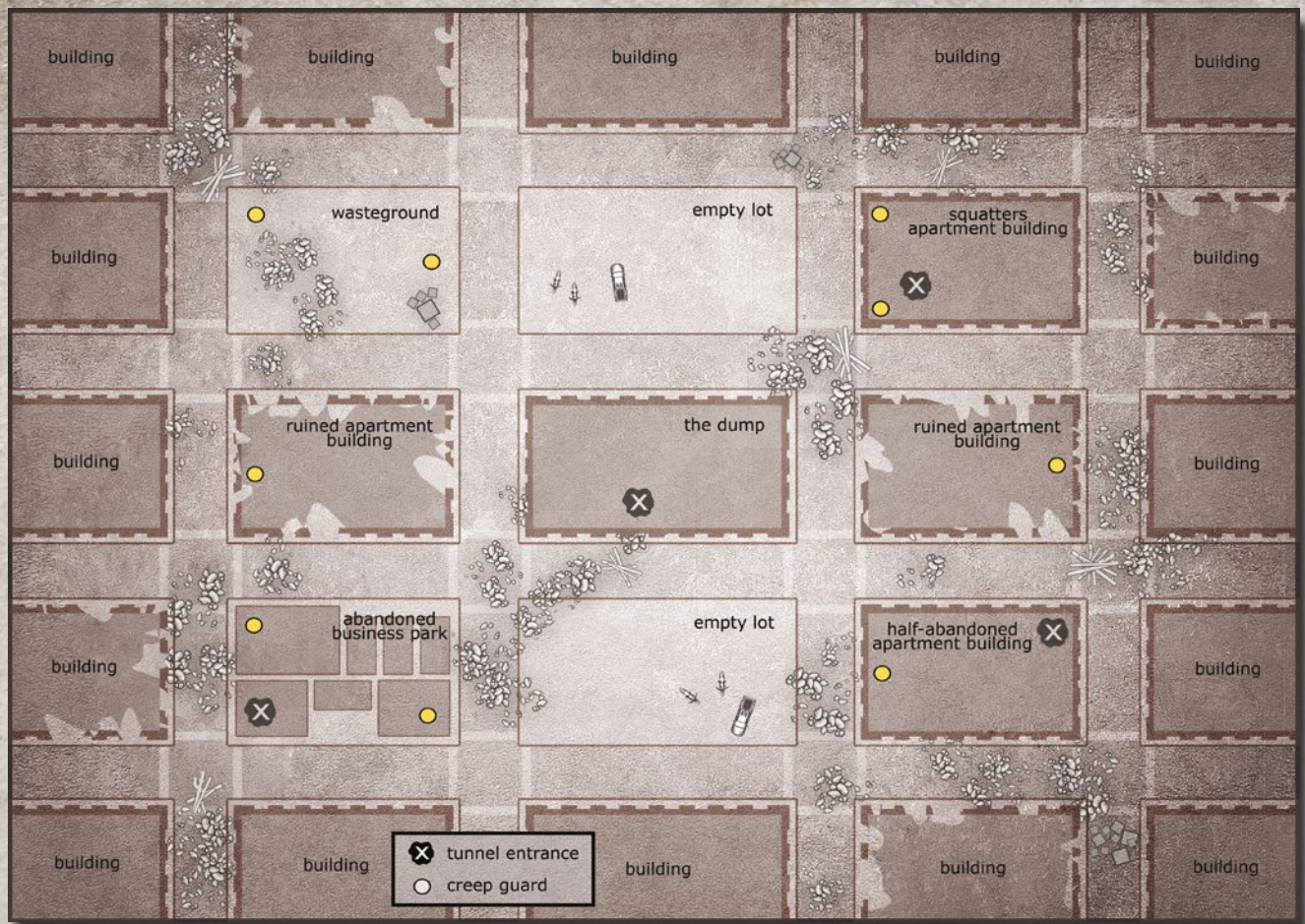
- ▶ **I Need Some Help Here!** A ganger may spend a Restricted Action calling for help. This adds two Dark Symmetry points to the pool. The GM is advised to use these points to bring in reinforcements.

CREEPS' CUSTOMISED RAIDER TRUCK

QUALITIES	Exposed, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	135 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	1	
CREW	1 pilot 1 gunner	CARRYING CAPACITY	6 passengers 150 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	5	7	5	4
MOTIVE SYSTEM	2	4	3	2
WEAPON	2	3	3	2
IMPACT DAMAGE	2+↑5			
ARMAMENTS	• Scratch-built HMG: Medium, 2+↑6, Automatic, Spread 1, Vicious 1, 6 ammo loads			
NOTES	Passengers and Driver have ↑4 cover Soak. Gunner has ↑2 cover Soak.			

CREEPS' CUSTOMISED STREETBIKE

QUALITIES	Bike, Wheeled			
CRUISING SPEED	135 kph	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	3	
CREW	1 pilot	CARRYING CAPACITY	1 passengers 15 enc	
LOCATIONS	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURAL DAMAGE
HULL	3	3	2	1
MOTIVE SYSTEM	1	2	2	1
IMPACT DAMAGE	1+↑5			
ARMAMENTS	• Handlebar-mounted SMG: Close, 1+↑4, Burst, 2 ammo loads			
NOTES	None			



The Map consists of a number of buildings in a simple grid pattern, separated by rubble-strewn roads. The roads on the above map are unlabelled. All the Roads function the same way: other than the wasteground and the empty lots, they're the only terrain on the map that allows vehicles—cars, trucks, and motorcycles don't readily fit inside the buildings. The poor condition of the roads, and the piles of rubble, wrecked cars, and strewn garbage, mean that it counts as difficult terrain for ground vehicles, requiring an **Average D1 Pilot test** to navigate the worst of it.

The gangers keeping lookout have M606 light machine guns (Range M, 1+**T**6, Automatic, 2H, Spread 1) instead of their assault rifles, and they will not hesitate to open fire on anyone they see. Other gangers, arriving as reinforcements from any of the buildings with an Underground tunnel (using the normal Reinforcements Dark Symmetry Spend) are armed normally. Several buildings have a tunnel leading to the Underground, which the gangers use to move between the buildings secretly. Treat the Underground as an additional zone beneath street level, which can only be accessed from zones with Underground tunnels (as noted below), and which counts as adjacent to all zones with Underground tunnels.

The buildings at the outer edge are dilapidated and partly abandoned—the few remaining tenants are gang-members, drug addicts, and similar lost souls. These buildings, like the ones in the middle, are six storeys tall, with each storey as an additional zone stacked directly on top of the 'ground level' zone. The GM may choose to sub-divide these zones into smaller zones representing individual rooms if combat gets particularly close-quarters and intense, but this is not strictly necessary. Characters in buildings gain Heavy Cover (**T**4 Soak) against attacks from outside the building. Gaining access to the upper floors is by stairwells—the elevators have long since broken down. Sprinting up or down the stairs requires an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid tripping and falling—this inflicts 1+**T**3 damage with the Stun quality. The Half-Abandoned Apartment Block has a single ganger keeping lookout on the top floor, and there is a drug dealer's den in the basement with a tunnel to the Underground. The Squatter's Apartment Block has a pair of gangers keeping lookout on the top floor, and there is a tunnel to the Underground on the ground floor, in a heavily-fortified apartment.

The wasteground used to be a park, but it has been overlooked for so long that it can barely be called than any longer. Strewn with garbage,

scrap metal, and other detritus, the zone grants Light Cover (T2 Soak) to any characters within it. However, that same detritus means that the zone is difficult terrain, requiring an **Average D1 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to enter, cross, or leave the zone. At the start of the scene, there are two gangers in this zone, keeping watch.

There are two Empty Lots in this area, to the north and south of the Dump. These lots have been kept mostly clear, mainly because they serve well as parking space for the Creeps' vehicles. There is a truck and two bikes in each lot. The empty lots have no natural difficult terrain or cover, though characters can hide behind parked trucks and gain Heavy Cover (T4 Soak) so long as the vehicles remain.

Two Ruined Apartment Blocks flank the Dump to the east and west. These buildings both contain a single ganger as a look-out, stood on the roof. These buildings follow the same rules as the buildings around the edge of the map, but they are partly collapsed. This reduces the cover Soak to T3, and means that the building is dangerous terrain—all movement within requires a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics** or **Athletics test**, or the character falls afoul of the unstable structure and suffers 1+T4 damage with the Stun quality as they fall through gaps or are clipped by falling rubble.

The Abandoned Business Park consists of several low industrial buildings, forming a small factory complex. The buildings themselves were abandoned years ago, and the machines that filled them were torn apart and sold as scrap soon after, so the empty shells of the buildings stand dormant. These days, the Creeps use the buildings to store stolen vehicles, and the largest building has been converted to a garage and chop-shop. The buildings and heavy machinery grant all characters in the area Heavy Cover (T4 Soak). There are two gangers in the area keeping watch. Underneath one of the buildings, in a partly-collapsed basement, is a tunnel leading into the Underground.

The Dump is the hub of all the gang's activities in the area. The gang's leader, Foster Gold, can be found here, as can five other gangers on lookout. It is treated as a normal building (as noted above) in all ways, and has an Underground tunnel in the basement. The dump is more heavily-fortified than the other buildings are, so each Dark Symmetry Icon on the cover dice grants one additional Soak.

EVENT: SIGNPOST—SALLY KRONKL

If the Investigators are having trouble working out that Eaty-Neaty has been at the heart of every strange happening, or they cannot find anyone who can link Eaty-Neaty to Leon Kraft then the GM could play this encounter.

Kronkl is a simple, homeless, old lady who just manages to get by selling whatever she can find around the streets. She pushes a cart that has dozens of bags on it. Most of them are full of useless

rubbish, but sometimes she has the occasional saleable item. She did a couple of favours for Kraft and so Kraft gave her a few boxes of Eaty-Neaty.

Kronkl has set up a makeshift store by the side of the road (just across from the railroad) showing her wares. She is selling Eaty-Neaty for half price and she has made a great big sign saying 'It's Eaty-Neaty. If you're on the beat, it's Eaty-Neaty.' This is similar to a famous Eaty-Neaty ad featuring stars from a popular police-based entertainment show.

Essentially, if the players are stuck, have the Investigators drive up and down a road a few times past a great big sign saying 'It's Eaty-Neaty.'

If the Investigators talk to her then Kronkl will be happy to tell them that Leon Kraft gave her the food to sell, and that he is a generous friend. She knows where he lives and she won't even be suspicious that she is being asked about all this.

EVENT: THE DISTRIBUTOR—LEON KRAFT

LEON KRAFT

Leon Kraft is a small-time hustler, well known to the boys in blue of Cheapside for selling stolen or counterfeit goods to people in bars. He did a deal with Ratty Challis at Home Made Foods and managed to get a couple of crates of Eaty-Neaty on the cheap. He has shifted a few boxes around the neighbourhood and also eaten so many himself he is now a bit sick of them.

The Eaty-Neaty is of course infested with Incursid eggs and Kraft has an Incursid infant growing inside him. Every infested foodstuff at large at the start of this adventure is down to Kraft's deal with Challis. So every encounter with Incursids during this investigation should be traceable back to Kraft and from there back to Ratty Challis at Home Made Foods.

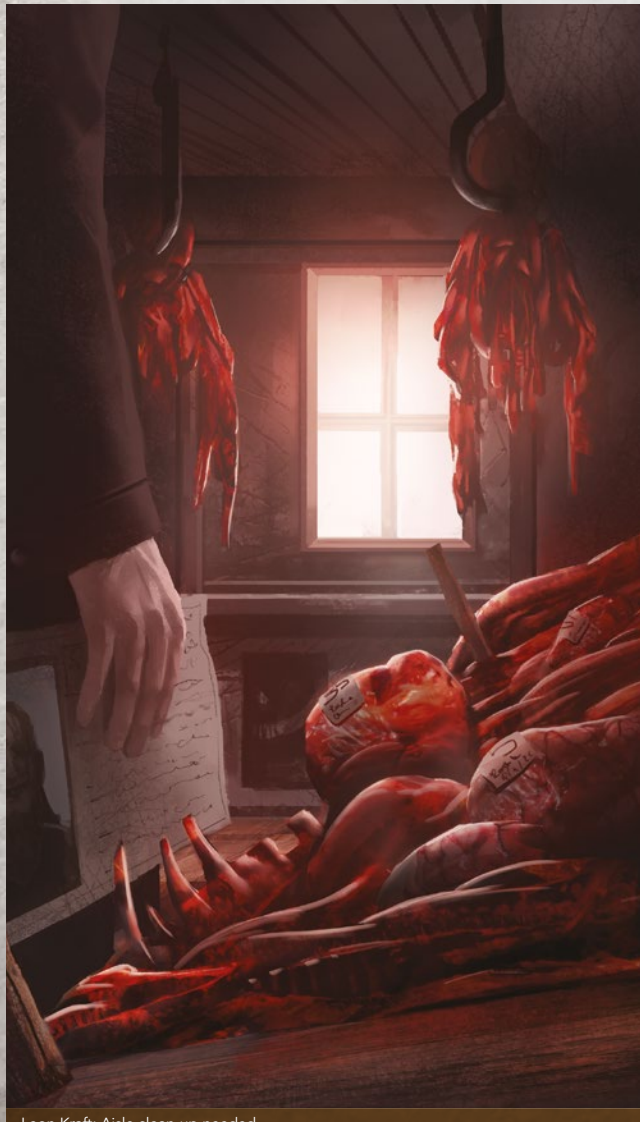
Any realisation about Eaty-Neaty should lead to Leon Kraft. Anyone being asked where they got the stuff will be able to give Kraft's name and address. He is just a dodgy trader, not an underworld hood, so most people will not be too worried about giving his name up to the cops. Kraft's apartment, 204 Underwood Lofts, is a shoddy building a few blocks from Home Made Foods.

Under the influence of his Incursid, over the last couple of days, Kraft has decided to open a new store, bringing all his entrepreneurial skill to the enterprise. Kraft has murdered a number of his friends and neighbours. He has carefully cut their bodies up into 'joints,' wrapped them, weighed them, labelled them and priced them up. He has arranged the furniture in his apartment into an approximation of a supermarket aisle, and along this aisle he has stacked all the parts of his victims.

This was enough to release the Incursid, and when Kraft went to his lock up to get some more sticky labels his Incursid morphed into an adult and killed him. This happened very recently, and the first visitors to Kraft's apartment since he created his grotesque store will be the Investigators, probably making enquiries about Eaty-Neaty.

The whole bizarre, though in its own way impressive, supermarket of human body parts should require any visitors to make a **Daunting D3 Willpower test** if they wish to search the apartment or suffer a mental assault.

Beyond the mad supermarket aisle is the rest of the apartment and Kraft's personal effects. There is not much here of interest except hanging from a bent nail stuck in the wall is Kraft's spare key to his lock up. Conveniently, the address of the lock up is on an old label which is still tied to the key, 'Harbour Bend Lock Ups #13.'



Leon Kraft: Aisle clean-up needed.

THE LOCK UP

Investigation into Kraft, or clues in his apartment, should reveal the location of his illicit warehouse about twenty blocks away. Harbour Bend Lock-Ups is a row of storage units that have been salvaged from a mostly disused factory site. The old walls and roofs are crumbling, but the new metal doors to each unit are strong, and have just been given a lick of bright yellow paint.

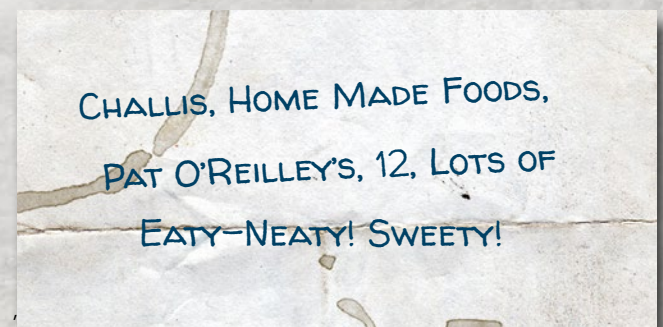
Kraft's body is there having been destroyed by his Incursid. The adult Incursid is lurking in the lock-up and will attack. If the Investigators are slow, then the GM could have the Incursid leave to find prey nearby, but it returns to the lock-up to rest. Therefore, if the Investigators do not find the lock up through Kraft, they can find it through being called to investigate a body close by.

The lock up is crammed full of crates and boxes of all Kraft's recent schemes (including some Eaty-Neaty). There is any number of illegal and stolen items here. Little of it is of much use or value, however. Kraft is small time. The only apparent way in is through the wide, sliding doors at one end. However, the roof at the other end is damaged, and the Incursid is able to get in and out.

There is a desk near the middle of the room which Kraft uses for what little paperwork he does. In addition, near to the chair, smeared across the floor, is what little remains of Kraft's body. His features are still recognisable, however.

The Incursid has made a home in the rafters above a suspended ceiling, so there will be no sign of it from the ground, except through the odd hole in the aged ceiling tiles. However, the creature has plenty of room to manoeuvre above the ceiling, and looking through the holes, it is able to see almost everywhere in the lock up. As soon as the Investigators arrive, the Incursid is able to watch and stalk them and choose its moment to crash through the ceiling and attack. The Incursid will fight ferociously, but if it becomes badly wounded it will attempt to flee back into the roof-space, and then through the hole in the roof at the back of the lock up.

Among the poorly-organised paperwork on the desk is a note that Kraft recently scrawled.



HOME MADE FOODS FACTORY

The trail should eventually lead to Eaty-Neaty which everyone knows, as it is a famous local product, and is made just down the road at Home Made Foods. If the Investigators want to go and have a look around, officially, getting a warrant is trivial. The factory folk are generally innocent, but wary of the police, like any sensible citizen. Some workers are part of the Heretic conspiracy and as soon as the Investigators start sniffing around they will report back to Karl Sterling.

Simon Parker, the factory manager is a secret Heretic cultist under the sway of Sterling. Under him the other cultists in the factory are smuggling some of the factory produce down to a Heretic temple in the Underground. Once the food has been adulterated with Incursed eggs it is smuggled back into the factory. The plan is to release the adulterated food in one go in order to cause as much mayhem and infest as many victims as possible.

The reason Parker is able to do this undiscovered is that many of the factory workers are also cultists. Parker has been able to fill a lot of the higher ranking position in the factory with Heretics, either by simply sacking workers and replacing them with Heretics, or introducing them to Sterling and having him infect their minds with the Dark Soul, blackmailing them. In some cases they have willingly joined.

Strange things have been going on at the factory, but it does not matter too much to the cultists that their operation is almost to end soon. Once the adulterated foods are shipped out that will be the end of their mission. They will not need to stay secret after that.

There is enough infested food on site already to cause major disruption, but Sterling is biding his time and hopes to create even more. The food is ready to go and just waiting for his word, but Sterling is naturally greedy and will always want more. If he does see that his defeat is inevitable then he will attempt to give the order for the infested foods to go out. But it is in Sterling's nature that this could well be too late, especially if the Investigators make an effort to cover this sort of action.

SIMON PARKER

Mr. Parker is the site manager for the Home Made Foods factory. He is responsible for the day to day running of the factory, and the highest authority on site (the only Home Made Foods director not on Mars). Parker has recently been recruited by Karl Sterling into the Heretic cult. He is convinced of the worth of Sterling's plan and is doing his best to put it into operation at the factory. His authority is the reason that the Heretics can use the factory with impunity, and can bring the food in and out without causing too much suspicion.

Unfortunately, Parker is a nervous, cautious man and not particularly suited to the life of a scheming cultist. He is so worried about the

situation that he is wracked by indecision, and spends a lot of time creeping about the factory furtively, despite having every right to be there. This annoys Sterling, but killing Parker would severely risk the scheme at this stage, and so he tolerates his timid approach.

Parker has a number of Heretics on site who he can call on for more nefarious activities. Nevertheless, he is the legitimate factory manager, so he can call on all the work force, to a certain extent, quite legitimately.

If the Investigators enter the factory legitimately, as police officers, then Parker will not want to meet them. He will try to fob them off with an innocent middle manager. If the Investigators insist then he will feel obliged to talk to them and will appear extremely nervous.

His instinct will be to try to remove any interfering Investigators through legitimate means. He will go through the proper channels, contacting the police and making a formal complaint, trying to leverage his Capitol credentials in that Capitol organisation. Ultimately, Chief Dickson can arrange a meeting where Parker and the Investigators can thrash out their differences, or the Investigators can confront Parker with any evidence they have. Unless the Investigators are convincing, it should end with Dickson warning them to take it easy (although he might reveal the opposite view once Parker has left).

The GM should play it by ear, but the orders come to Parker directly from Sterling. Sterling feels that sooner or later Parker is going to let him down, so he needs to work out how to act against the Investigators before this can happen.

Parker looks the businessman. He is fastidiously dressed, neatly groomed, and always courteous. He has a confident manner when talking about his business or to his employees, but he is soon out of his depth especially among less sophisticated folk.

SIMON PARKER, BUSINESS MAN, MANAGER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	7	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	3	2	1	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: **Ballistic Nylon Overcoat:** (Head 0, Arms 0, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Slicer (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Businessman:** Parker has plenty of experience convincing people to buy things they do not need, and he is practiced at running a business efficiently and effectively. He may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add 2d20 to a Persuade or Lifestyle test.
- ◀ **Nervous and Paranoid:** However, Parker's nerves often betray him when confronted about his more illicit activities. His Repercussion range increases to 18-20 on all tests when attempting to lie or conceal his Heretical activities.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Heretic:** Parker has been drawn into the life of a Heretic, and has been blessed with the Dark Curse and Symmetry Burst Dark Gifts.



RATTY CHALLIS

Note that the Investigators do not need to get all the clues leading to Challis in order to want to investigate Home Made Foods. That is one of the most direct ways in, but Investigators could well think Home Made Foods is worth a look, without getting anywhere near hearing Challis' name.

Ratty Challis unwittingly sold infested crates to Leon Kraft. He is a simple warehouseman trying to earn a bit on the side. He will deny everything and is streetwise enough not to blab everything he knows to the first police officer who asks him. However, as far as he is concerned, this was a petty job for a few Capitol dollars. If the police start to get heavy, and he realises he may have got into something a lot more important than he thought this will scare him, and thinking it might be linked to organised crime or worse he will clam up even more.

Unfortunately, for Challis, whether he talks or not, the cultists in the factory will have noticed him talking to the police and will see him as a threat to their schemes. They will rush back to inform Sterling and he will immediately order Challis' death. Not long after the Investigators interview Challis, the factory Heretics march him up to the highest accessible point of the factory, a gantry halfway up one of the chimneys, and throw him off.

If the Investigators ask any of the factory workers about this, when they inevitably turn up to investigate his death, they will be told that Challis was a bit spooked by the police arriving so heavy handed and interrogating him in such an aggressive way that he committed suicide.

TYPICAL FACTORY WORKER, ALSO RATTY CHALLIS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	10	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	7	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Heavy Overalls: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Wrench (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 4, 1H, Stun

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀ **Heretic:** There are numbers factory workers who have been drawn into a life of Heresy, and they have been blessed with the Dark Curse and Symmetry Burst Dark Gifts.

WORKERS UNITE

Whatever reasons the Investigators have for sniffing around Home Made Foods, if they concentrate their efforts there, then sooner rather than later, the Heretics are going to decide to get rid of them. They will simply hope the Investigators do not find anything interesting at first, but if they continue to look then enough reports will get back to Karl Sterling that he will give the order to destroy the Investigators.

The Heretics, led by Shaun Ritter if he is still alive, will manipulate the Investigators ('Bill wants to talk to you, I'll take you to him' should do the trick) so that they end up in a remote part of the factory. They should be led to a warehouse depot directly beneath a storage container held up by a crane. At the signal of one of the workers, the container will be dropped on the Investigators. Anyone caught underneath will die. It should take a **Daunting D3 Observation test** to notice the trap in advance. In addition, it will take a **Daunting D3 Acrobatics test** to avoid the container once it begins to fall.

There are a number of factory worker Heretics around and so any survivors will be set upon by them. There will be about twice as many Heretics as Investigators. They will attack the Investigators with their Heretic powers, spanners, iron bars, and other appropriate factory-related objects. If the Heretics lose, they will panic and flee. Moreover, they will flee towards the maintenance shed and the entrance to the Underground tunnel (see **Undercover**, below).

DARK SYMMETRY PART 01



Ratty Challis has his employment terminated by Home Made Foods.

If the workers win and take some of the Investigators alive, then they will bring them to the temple to use them as Incursid egg incubators.

UNDERCOVER

The Investigators might adopt a more low key approach to their investigation of Home Made Foods. How they get into the factory and in what role will be up to them. However, the factory is not hiring at the moment and jobs are valuable in the poverty stricken unemployment black-spot that is Cheapside.

If they are sensible then they should be able to pass as anonymous workers and be able to keep an eye on the comings and goings. However if they try to go through official channels to get some undercover agents on the ground, then this will mean negotiating with Simon Parker. He will allow it of course, as he is one of the Heretics, the undercover Investigators will effectively be at his mercy.

The actual movement of Eaty-Neaty and Din Dins through the factory, to the temple and back, is always done surreptitiously. Although the Heretics control the factory, the vast majority of employees are not in on the cult's plans and it would be risky to do things in the open. One or two of the factory employees have got wind of unusual things happening, but they consider that this is most likely about organised crime and the best thing is to just keep their head down and ignore it. They do not want any trouble; they just want to pick up their wages at the end of the week.

If the Investigators do stay under cover and keep their wits about them then they might notice the Eaty-Neaty being moved around. Occasionally, as and when required, a fork lift truck takes a pallet of food to a little-used maintenance shed in a corner of the Home Made Foods factory compound, where it is unloaded.

The shed actually contains an entrance to the Underground that has been widened and made more easily accessible by the Heretics. They have also created a convincing false wall in front of it that would take a **Challenging D2 Observation test** to notice from a distance or in dim light.

The shed is used to store the unloaded food temporarily while gangs of Heretics make the arduous journey down into the Underground, carrying the crates. It takes about an hour to get a crate down to the temple and to bring an infested crate back to the factory.

Once all the new crates have been taken underground and replaced by infested

crates, the fork lift returns and brings the pallet back to the warehouse. If anyone ever asks what is going on with all this, they are simply told, 'health and safety checks'.

TIDYING UP

It is assumed that the Investigators will trace the source of the disturbances back to Home Made Foods and from there to the First Bank building in the Underground (see **Part Three Journey to Mars**, page 106). Even if they are able to deal with the forces of the Dark Symmetry both in the factory and in the Heretics' base there will be much clearing up to do afterwards.

There may be many Heretics running free after this part of the campaign, but the Investigators priorities should be stopping the Incursid threat. If the Investigators have been paying attention then they should know about Eaty-Neaty and the threat it represents. They should take steps to deal with this. As soon as things start to go wrong for them, the Heretics may attempt to ship out as much of the infested food as they can. It might require a coordinated effort to contain this and the Investigators may have to appeal to Commander Dickson or even higher authorities to get this done. If the Investigators are not swift and clear about the steps that need to be taken then there is a chance that the Incursid menace could spring up again.

By the end of this part of the campaign, the Investigators should have developed an aversion to Home Made Foods products. The GM should play on this by bringing these products into the game later. If the Investigators are looking for food, especially if they are particularly hungry then they should be offered Eaty-Neaty or Din Dins. Even if there is no reasonable way that the product could be infested, the Investigators will still have trouble forcing it down.

DIN DINS INFESTATION

Every encounter with the Incursid has blatant links with Eaty-Neaty. This means the Investigators might think that recalling Eaty-Neaty is enough to stop the infestation. However, there should be smaller clues throughout that Din Dins is infested as well. Therefore if the Investigators do not get this recalled, even if they bring a halt to all food production at Home Made Foods, then a shipment of Din Dins will go out, to a nearby district and all hell will shortly break loose there.

The Investigators may be called in to help with this, as they are now the experts. It will also give them a chance to see what mayhem they have effectively caused by their incomplete conclusion.

SERVING SUGGESTION

If the GM feels like sending the Investigators on another Incursid related investigation before the events in Part Three, then the following can work. Unknown to almost everyone, a small, luxury food brand Excusite was using Din Dins in its Luxury Luncheon food packs. Luxury Luncheon is a high end convenience food marketed with style and sophistication to aspiring business-folk. Actually, it is simply Din Dins completely repackaged and sold for about five times the price. Batches of Din Dins are delivered quietly to Excusite's premises up-town, and paid for in cash.

Even after all the trouble in Cheapside has been quashed, there could be Incursid-related outbreaks in much posher areas of town. Once the similarities are noted, the Investigators will be brought in as the acknowledge experts and competent Incursid trouble-shooters. It could be fun contrasting the low-down, pragmatic policing methods learned on the streets of Cheapside with the sophisticated lifestyles of the well-heeled.

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GOING UNDERGROUND

OVERVIEW

This section deals with the subterranean network that lies beneath Cheapside and the Heretic base hidden within it. The base is located in the ancient, dilapidated remains of an old bank HQ. The Investigators will probably have realised that a lot of their clues have been leading underground. There it is difficult to find what you need to find, or even know where you are going. It is best that the leads do finish in dead-ends during the early part of their investigation. However, towards the end, it is desirable to have the Investigators find the Heretic temple in the First Bank building.

If they pursue Heretics from the factory, then the Heretics will do their best to lose the Investigators and they will have the advantage of home ground and being comfortable in that environment. If they follow them surreptitiously, then the Investigators will still need to do well to keep on their trail, and are still likely to run into Argle (see below) who will at the very least delay their pursuit. Taking a prisoner and forcing him to guide them might be the best way to be sure of finding the First Bank building. The Heretics will not want to betray their master, but on the other hand, directing the Investigators straight into the heart of the temple is a very efficient way of recruiting incubators for the Incursid eggs.

More likely, the Investigators will blunder around in the Underground not really knowing where they are going. They will risk many dangerous encounters, but fortunately there are also a number of encounters where, if played right, they might get the help they require to find the Heretic base.



THE UNDERGROUND

Luna City has grown up over many centuries, accommodating waves of settlers. The growth was phenomenal and layer after layer of city was laid down. Often the previous elements were destroyed but just as often remnants of previous structures have survived and were simply built over. Add to that the many underground structures that were inhabited before terraforming was complete, the countless mines that were carved out under the city in the search of precious resources, and the underground transport networks that have been created, then it is easy to see that beneath the surface of Luna City

there is a whole new world. The poorest of society have often had to find shelter in these underground complexes. Criminal gangs, mutants, and any others who wished to hide from the light of normal society have found a home in the strange subterranean landscape.

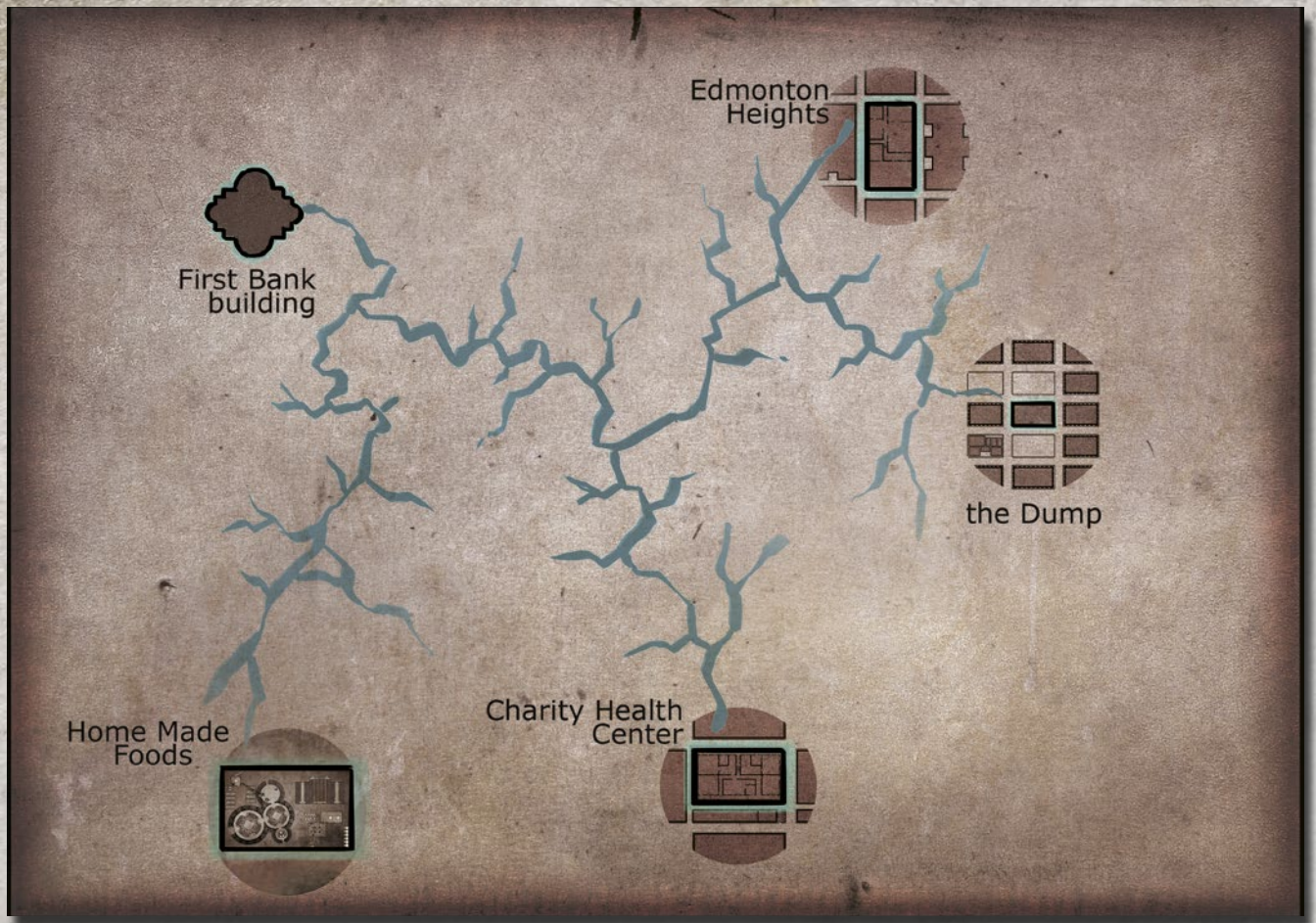
The Underworld is a conglomeration of great ancient skyscrapers now entirely underground, in-filled with waste, derelict transport systems, high speed underground railways, abandoned mines, ancient, monolithic stone buildings from the first waves of settlement, and more recent light and airy, composite buildings. If anything, the underground world hidden from the majority of Luna City residents is at least as diverse as the surface landscape.

The sublevels beneath Cheapside are no exception, and the Investigators should come across and need to explore these structures during the course of their investigation. The Creeps can access the Underground from the Dump and often use it to move around untroubled by the forces of law and order, though even they can be hesitant to delve too deeply down because of the legends of monsters that lurk in the darkness. The Incursid Heretic cult have made their base in the board room of a long-defunct banking HQ. They use the Underground to move secretly between their temple and the factory.

Although the great circle line does not have a station in Cheapside, its route cuts through the district and any navigation within the dark depths here sets its course by the proximity to the Great Circle Line. The noise of the brutish trains gives a rough indication of how far one may have strayed from the line. Moreover, the tight tunnels of that railway give you almost no chance of survival if you are using them when one of the trains comes.

Gangs of homeless have made their homes in areas of the Underground, not too far from the surface. Many gangs have scratched out a surprisingly sophisticated civilisation down there, despite their poverty. They stick together and share what they can, and protect one another from outsiders. Often these gangs just want to be left in peace, but sometimes they have more sinister motives.

Mutants who might be killed if they were discovered by the surface folk make their way into the Underground to survive. They might wander alone or meet others of their kind and form communities. Some of these communities have grown over time and several settlements of mutants might be considered cities in their own right. The mutants below Cheapside, however, are small bands usually numbering no more than a few dozen.



KARL STERLING

Karl Sterling is a member of the Invisible Hand (see **Part Four: "The Deregulation Zone"**, page 135). He has been sent by Don Stevia to deliver the Incursids to Luna City. When dabbling in heresies as a member of the Invisible Hand in his younger days Sterling always imagined himself as a powerful sorcerer. Now, he is lost to the Dark Symmetry, and his wish has been fulfilled. Though he has immense power he has always remained subservient to the will of Don Stevia.

Don Stevia discovered the secret to summoning the Incursid eggs to this dimension in his ancient tome, the Codex Umbrarum. Through deciphering alien prophesy, he realised that the summoning must occur in a specific location on Luna, in an area now known as Cheapside. He copied the relevant page of the codex onto human skin and sent Karl Sterling to Luna City to prepare the way.

Sterling had been a hugely successful merchant banker for Capitol in his early days and moved in high-powered circles. He was gradually seduced into an interest in Heretical secrets by Don Stevia's manipulations many years ago and they formed the Invisible Hand together. He is still unaccountably subservient to Don Stevia.

Despite his massive wealth and huge power, Karl Sterling gradually retreated into himself, and became a recluse. Even though he was never seen, his financial empire grew and he seems to have had an uncanny knack for making shrewd judgements on the economy. His fame as a financial genius and industrial entrepreneur was only eclipsed by his fame as a recluse. 'I just saw Karl Sterling' is a hilarious and often repeated joke on Mars.

In his time as a recluse Sterling's skin has grown pale, his face drawn. His hair is lank and unkempt and his fingernails have grown long and ragged like claws. It could even be that Sterling became a recluse to hide his appearance.

Recently, in complete secret, under orders from Don Stevia, Karl Sterling came to Cheapside to sniff out the location for the Incursid summoning. His instincts led him underground and he spent many months shambling through the Underground below Cheapside scouring that dark and forgotten world. As he went he began recruiting the denizens of the underworld to his cause and creating a cult to himself and to his dark gods.



Sterling eventually found the location for the summoning. It was a long-abandoned ancient banking HQ, despite the ravages of time and the ruins all around it, the boardroom was still intact and strangely unaffected by time's passing. The 'First Bank' building is now Sterling's cult's base. Sterling needs his army of minions to make sure the eggs, when they are summoned, can survive and be placed in Home Made Foods products without detection.

He is an egotist who believes he is chosen because he is one of the very few great enough and talented enough to perform the wishes of the Apostle. He is autocratic and cruel. His imagined greatness has gone to his head, and he demands complete obedience from his followers. Now that he has built his cult, he sits in his temple and broods and plans, ordering his minions to his whim. He dreams of becoming a Nephrite in the service of the Apostle.

Those that fail him are often simply murdered (or, more recently, used to sustain the Incursid eggs). His current right hand man is Shaun Ritter, but if he lets him down, then Sterling will have no hesitation against in turning him into Incursid food.

Sterling pulls all the strings of power from his throne in the underground temple and therefore relies on information that he gets back from his fawning minions. This means that he cannot have a truly accurate picture of what is happening beyond the cult's base. This should be taken into account when the GM determines what sort of action might be taken against the Investigators once the Heretics realise they are on their trail.

Karl Sterling is able to bring the Dark Soul directly to his victim simply by touch. If Sterling's hand touches a victim over his heart, then his palm print is burned forever as a lurid scar across his chest, and the power of heresy burned forever across his mind.



Sterling's followers are dedicated to their Dark Cause and totally loyal to him.

KARL STERLING, HERETIC SORCERER ☠

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	9 (+1)	8	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	11	14 (+1)	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	3	3	-	-	4	3	2	2	3	2

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ Head 4
- ◀▶ Arms 5
- ◀▶ Serious 7
- ◀▶ Mental 15
- ◀▶ Torso 8
- ◀▶ Legs 6
- ◀▶ Critical 4

SOAK: Wards of Dark Sorcery: (All 3)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Accursed Knife (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1, Vile

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ Fear 1
- ◀▶ Supernatural Physique 1
- ◀▶ Supernatural Mental Strength 1
- ◀▶ Personal Dark Symmetry 3

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀▶ **Heretic Sorcerer:** Blessed by Ilian, Sterling has considerable dark powers, and few mortal beings can stand before his power. Sterling has the following Dark Gifts: Corrupt Device, Dark Curse, Sense Weaves of Power, Symmetry Burst, Dark Ward, Dimensional Flensing, Swift Portal, and Harrowing of the Void.
- ◀▶ **Touch of Corruption:** Sterling may spend Dark Symmetry points when touching a creature to channel the power of the Dark Soul directly into them. For each Dark Symmetry point spent, this touch inflicts \uparrow 3 Corruption Damage. Attempting to do this in combat requires an unarmed attack.



DARK SYMMETRY PART 02

THE HERETICS

Sterling has built his Heretic cult up from scratch out of the poor and unfortunates he has come across scraping a living down in the Underground. When Sterling finds someone he feels is right for the cult, he opens their eyes to the truth and burns his mark upon their heart, and through the power of his Mistress they see that truth. From that moment the Heretics become loyal to Sterling and only him. They obey him without hesitation or fear, for they realise they have found their calling and they realise their salvation is at hand.

All Heretics wear dark red robes with deep, impenetrable cowls. They have nondescript street clothes too, for when they need to pass among people on the surface. They all have Sterling's palm print burned into their flesh over their heart. This is Sterling's mark, and marks them as his servants.

Most of the cultists live in the First Bank building, and many of those work there too, tending to the Incursid eggs or serving the needs of Sterling and the community. Some guard the building and some scavenge in the surrounding area. Some cultists live and work on the surface, especially those who work at Home Made Foods and have been specially recruited to help with that part of the operation.

Though the cultists generally appear as normal folk, they can be identified by their manner by those familiar with that. They seem to have a complete lack of interest in anything that happens which is outside their mission. They might even ignore someone completely in the course of their duties. Moreover, they possess an implacable determination to get their cult duties done as well as possible. This single-mindedness could betray them to someone on the lookout for these traits.

SAMPLE HERETIC ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	2	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Reinforced Hooded Robe, Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads: (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Accursed Dagger (melee):** 1+**T**4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1, Vile

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Single-Minded:** These Heretics are utterly devoted to their cause, driven by a twisted sense of duty and a fervent need to please their masters. The Heretics may re-roll all dice that do not generate a success on a Willpower test. Further, they cannot suffer mental damage or Dread.
- ◆ **Personal Dark Symmetry (special):** While individually they only possess a small amount of power, these Heretics have learned to focus the connection they have to their brothers-in-darkness, gaining more power when they act as a group. A lone Heretic has Personal Dark Symmetry 1, but when acting as a group—a Mob or a Squad—the Heretics pool their power, increasing the group's leader's Personal Dark Symmetry by one for each additional Heretic in the group.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Dark Gifts:** As anointed servants of the Dark Soul, these Heretics have been blessed with the following Dark Gifts: Dark Curse, Symmetry Burst, and Dimensional Flensing.



SHAUN RITTER

Shaun Ritter is Sterling's right hand man, and therefore the second most powerful man in the cult. He is proud of this, and does not really realise that he only has as much power as Sterling gives him, and for as long as Sterling gives him it.

Ritter used to make a living as a prize fighter among the homeless communities of the Underground, a very brutal and dehumanising existence that few survive for long. Ritter affects the manner of a hulking bully, but actually, he is not interested in bullying for the sake of it, only to get what he wants. In addition, he finds he usually gets what he wants without resorting to violence.

Although not the brightest, Ritter is diligent in carrying out Sterling's orders. He is loyal to Sterling above all things, and he will lay down his life to defend him. Ritter looks every inch the powerfully-built, old warrior that he is. He is missing part of one ear, and a lurid scar cuts his face in half. His intense gaze can intimidate all but the most stout-hearted souls..

SHAUN RITTER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
12	11	10	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	7	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	1	1	1	1	-	2	1	1	-

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Light Civilian Shoulder Pads: (Head 1, Arms 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Brass Knuckles (melee):** 1+**T**6, 1H, Knockdown, Stun, Vicious 1
- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+**T**5, 1H, Knockdown, Stun
- ◆ **Aggressor Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+**T**4, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Brutal Brawler:** Ritter is a skilled combatant, and he is as deadly with his bare hands as many warriors are with a blade. When attacking with an unarmed strike, he may reduce the cost of the Disarm Momentum Spend by one, and he may spend one additional Momentum to grab an item dropped when he successfully disarms a foe. When spending Momentum for the Called Shot benefit on an attack made with the Unarmed Combat skill, each point of Momentum shifts the hit location roll by up to two points. Finally, when he makes a successful Unarmed Combat attack, he gains the Knockdown and Stun qualities (included above) on the attack, and may re-roll up to four **T** from the damage roll.
- ◆ **Single-Minded:** Ritter is utterly devoted to their cause, driven by his loyalty to Sterling and his own lust for power. He may re-roll all dice that do not generate a success on a Willpower test. Further, he cannot suffer mental damage or Dread.
- ◆ **Personal Dark Symmetry 2**

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Dark Gifts:** As anointed servant of the Dark Soul, Ritter has been blessed with the following Dark Gifts: Dark Curse, Symmetry Burst, and Dimensional Flensing.

ARGLE

The voices in Karl Sterling's head whispered to him as he scavenged and rummaged through the Underground, picking through



Ritter and Argle

humanity's detritus, that he would find the tools required to serve his dark masters. Sure enough as he travelled through the darkness, he was set upon by this hulking monstrosity.

Argle is some sort of massive humanoid thing fashioned by the Dark Symmetry. Through no comprehensible design, Argle has turned gradually from human to his present hideous form. He was once a mere man lurking in the shadows ready to murder for whatever little his poor victims might give up. Gradually he found it hard to rid himself of the memory, or indeed the flesh, of his victims.

Argle's past victims linger about him like so much rotting flesh, quite literally. His hideous form has grown huge, and it is made up of all the victims Argle has murdered over the past forty years or so. He is utterly tormented, and not able to show himself on the surface, any more. He continues to shamle through the dark places hoping to stumble upon more victims. He will then kill them and their bodies will become part of his body.

Therefore, when Argle stumbled upon Karl Sterling a few months ago, and was about to consume him too, when he recognised some

sort of authority in him. He knew that he must obey Sterling, and that perhaps Sterling was the reason for his entire existence.

Now, Argle patrols the Underground around the First Bank building, an effective guard for the Heretic cult. He recognises the cultists instinctively by their psychic mark and lets them, and their prisoners, pass. Woe betide anyone else who wanders haplessly through the Underground around the First Bank building.

ARGLE ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
14 (+1)		12 (+2)		6		6	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
5		4		13		4	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	1	1	-	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1

WOUNDS: 11* (see Consume, below)

SOAK: Mutated Necrotic Flesh: (All 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Slam (melee):** 2+**↑**6, Stun
- ◆ **Twisted Maw (melee, grabbed enemy only):** 2+**↑**6, Gruesome, Vicious 1, Vile

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Consume:** Argle absorbs the flesh of those he consumes, growing in mass and might with every victim. Argle may spend a standard action to devour the remains of anyone he has killed. If he does this, he gains five Wounds immediately, which may take him above his normal maximum.
- ◆ **Fast Healing (2)**
- ◆ **Fear (2)**
- ◆ **Inured to Disease**
- ◆ **Inured to Pain**
- ◆ **Inured to Poison**
- ◆ **Grasping**
- ◆ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◆ **Noxious Odour:** Argle is surrounded by the rank odour of the decaying flesh that hangs from his bones. This pungent stink is further saturated with the vile power of the Dark Symmetry, causing it to unman those who stray too near. A living creature within Close range of Argle at the beginning of its turn must attempt an Average D1 Resistance test or suffer one Dread.
- ◆ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Strength (1)**

THE SUMMONING

THE FIRST BANK BUILDING

Sterling's Heretic cult has made its base in the ruined First Bank building below the surface of Luna City. There are many old buildings toppling around it, roads and railways, rubble and rock crowding onto it, so the exteriors are hard to discern, they just merge into the surrounding ruins, but much of the interior of the upper floors have survived the hundreds of years it has been submerged. Essentially, six or seven floors of the building serve just as well as the day they were built, save for the stultifying atmosphere and the eternal darkness. The rooms are now dimly lit by candles created from industrial waste fat.

The heart of the building is Sterling's throne room. This looks like it could have once been a prestigious corporate office. The portraits of long forgotten CEOs still hang here as if they might be Sterling's ancestors. The room is guarded by at least four cultists who brandish submachine guns and ceremonial halberds found in an ancient museum.

Below the throne room is the summoning room. This used to be a grand boardroom. The long, polished table still survives and it is being used for all the bodies that are incubating Incursid eggs. These bodies lie there, barely-alive, lacerated, and part-dissected exposing flesh and organs so that eggs can be placed within them. The bodies are of people who have gone missing from Cheapside, waifs and strays from the Underground, and any other humans the Heretics have come across. If the Investigators bother to search through their missing persons reports and compare them to these unfortunates then many cases will be solved.

In the centre of the room is a black-blue pool of swirling aether, about one yard across. The pool is surrounded by dozens of pieces of electronic equipment, with cables and wires branching off in all directions. This is one end of a psychic gateway to a distant galaxy that Sterling has created from pieces of technology and alien rituals. He has put the electronics together in a nonsensical way that only his madness can comprehend, but it works nonetheless. Needless to say, one strike from a heavy or pointed object and this finely balanced and unfathomable device will never work again.

Every few minutes a point of light appears at the centre of the gate. This point of light is actually an Incursid egg. A cultist will take the egg and carry it to one of the bodies on the table; he will then place it upon the gaping wounds and open organs of the body to keep it alive. When the eggs get to the stage that they can survive for a while outside their host's body, the egg is taken to 'fulfilment'.

Below the summoning room is fulfilment. This is the area where the eggs are introduced into the food products. Many Heretics work here carefully removing the packaging from Home Made Foods products and inserting a single egg into the foodstuff, before repackaging it. Inside the sealed packaging of the ready-meals, the eggs can persist for a few weeks. The room has many crates of Eaty-Neaty in it, but also has a number of crates of Din Dins. Lots of already adulterated foods are stacked in one corner, awaiting cultists to come with new food, and to bring this food back to the factory.

Below these levels are the living quarters for the majority of the cultists. The corporate cubicles have become monastic cells. They are Spartan and functional. There is almost always a few Heretics down here doing chores, and often it is quite busy.

The main way into the First Bank building is through one of the windows which happens to join to a relatively well trodden subterranean route. This entrance leads into fulfilment and it is always well guarded. The other way in is through the main entrance to the building, which is many levels below, and then scaling the precarious and damaged stair well. This little-known route is not guarded.



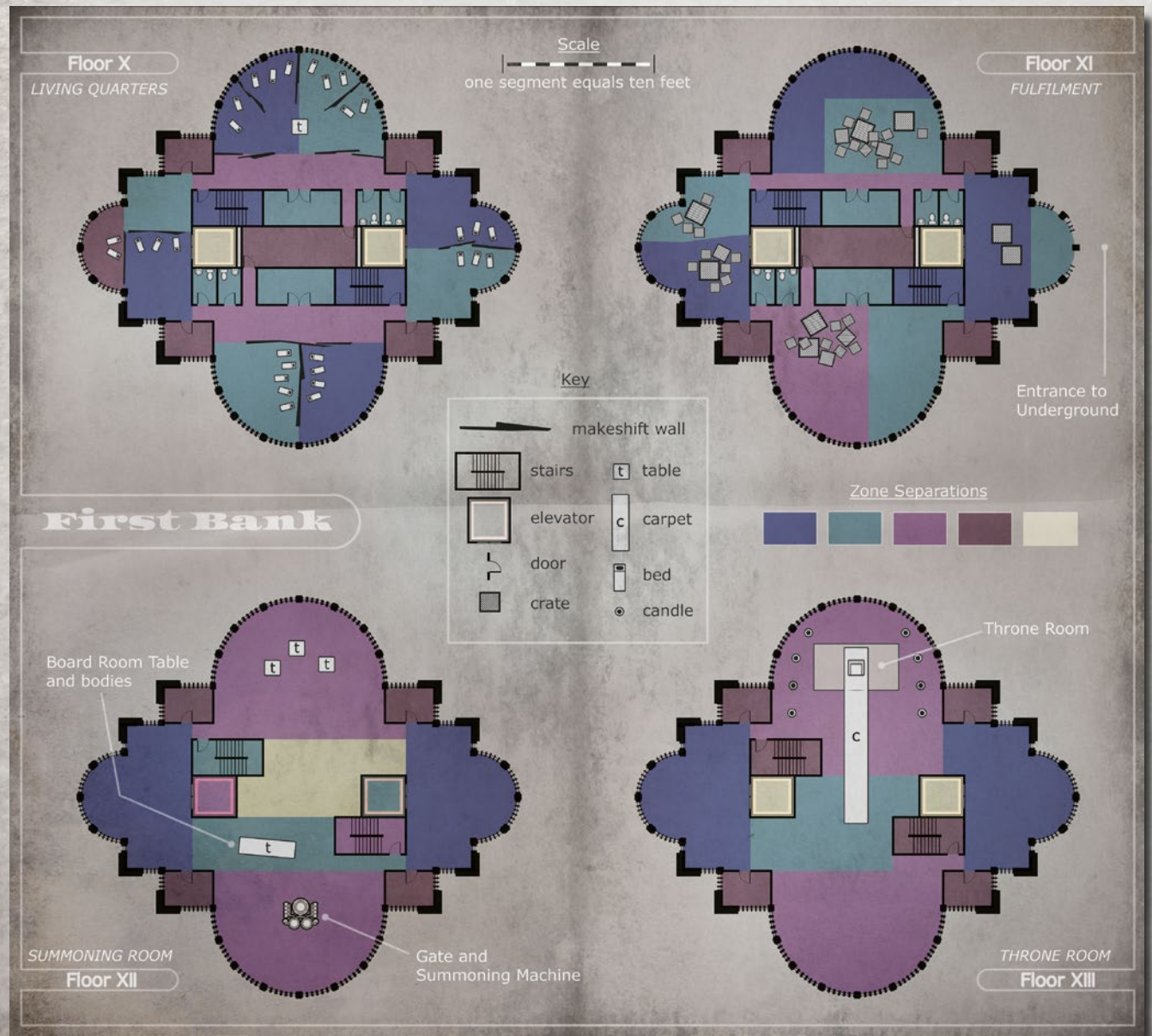
EXPLORING THE UNDERGROUND

The Underground provides a shock to the senses for those used to the surface world. It is remarkably cool with a generally constant temperature. The air is quiet and still, once you move away from the surface noises. It could be said to be pleasant.

The ruins of many eras slump side by side surrounded by the detritus of the city above, most of it is unnavigable, but routes through the ruins can be found, and occasionally a building will be intact, remarkably preserved, almost as if it were still in use. Sometimes the spaces are vast despite being underground, sometimes tight, and claustrophobic.

Nature is reclaiming the world, however, and water courses through underground channels or down tall buildings and collect in pools. Sometimes the sewerage of the city above finds similar routes and creates areas of poisonous wasteland where even the air is too foul to breathe.

Sometimes the quiet is shattered by the vibrations and booming of an underground train, these bring smells and diesel fumes, but then are gone as suddenly as they appeared. The Underground lines can be used for travel, as they are wide, straight, and easy going. However, once a train approaches a traveller will need to find an access chamber, or side tunnel, quickly, as there is no surviving being in a main tunnel when a train speeds through it.



The parts of the sublevels relevant to this adventure are mapped and discussed here and comprise just a tiny portion of the area, however, it is possible the Investigators will find themselves exploring deeper into this world and perhaps getting lost into the process. If so, then here are a number of encounters that they could face.

MYTHS OF THE UNDERGROUND

If the Investigators talk about using the Underground, or even meet folk from there, then everyone has an opinion or a story to tell about what can be found down there. The GM should use the opportunity to tell the Investigators a few of these to show the sort of fear and distrust normal folks have of the underground.

BEAST

There is a legend of a many-headed creature who lives below Cheapside. It is said to skulk in the shadows and if anyone should get lost in the Underground and if the creature were to find him, then it will kill him and eat his body, but save his head. It will stick its victim's head on its body because you can always do with a fresh pair of eyes to help you down in the darkness. This also brings another mouth to feed, and so makes the creature even more voracious.

CULT

There are rumours of a mysterious cult of robed figures who scour the Underground searching for children and other helpless people. If they find them, they carry them off and feed them to a monster they have chained up in their dungeon.

METAL MONSTER

There is a creature made of computers that lurks in the depths. It strikes without warning and kills instantly. It squirts printer ink at you in order to blind you and then bytes you into little bits.

TRAVELLERS

There is a band of travelling folk who spend their whole lives wandering through the Underground. They trade with anyone they meet; swapping things they have made for useful items you might have. Do not trust them because you always get the worst of the deal, for they are such canny traders.

In addition, because they cannot have children, they must steal the children of the surface folk. They come up to the surface at night, and grab babies from their cribs, leaving false, monstrous babies in their places.

ARGLE

The monster Argle (see page 97) is now under Sterling's control and has been ordered to patrol the underground area around the Heretic base. Investigators trying to get to the First Bank building, especially through obscure routes, are quite likely to stumble upon him.

However, who is to say there are no other monsters in the Underground similar to Argle? Who is to say that if the Investigators wander further through the Underground they will not encounter a similar creature?

MUTANTS

Those who appear to have been touched by the Dark Soul or some other strange affliction often shun humanity and try to find safety in the Underground. Like homeless communities, they often come across like-minded people and band together. Sometimes they are nomadic, moving through the vast underground, discovering its dangers, and hidden treasures. Sometimes they make their homes in abandoned buildings. Living in fear, they defend their homes tenaciously and are intolerant of strangers. They usually make sure their home building is close to a route to the surface, ensuring that in times of desperate need they can come out at night and scavenge or steal what they require.

TYPICAL MUTANT ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	10	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	9	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	3	1	1	-	2	1	-	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Scrap Metal Armour: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Scratch-Built Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+♣5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Lead Pipe (melee):** 1+♣4, 1H, Stun
- ◆ **Slicer (melee):** 1+♣4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Twisted Physiology:** The mutants of the Luna Underground have a distorted, aberrant physiology, which has a number of effects.

Roll **↑** whenever the mutant attempts an Acrobatics, Athletics, Resistance, or Stealth test. The mutant gains the total rolled as Bonus Momentum on the test. If a Dark Symmetry Icon is generated, the tests difficulty increases by one step instead.

- ◆ **Fear 1**
- ◆ **Inured to Disease**
- ◆ **Inured to Poison**
- ◆ **Night Vision**

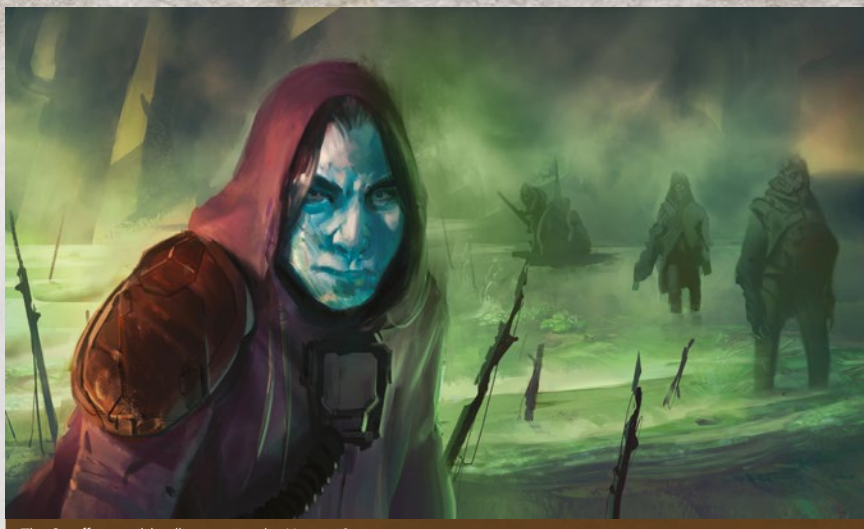
TOXIC POOL

As the Investigators are navigating the underground, they come across a foul pool of waste that has accumulated over the centuries. They are clearly below some awful polluted area, which for many years has been draining into this pool. Who knows how many different pollutants, or different surface sites have contributed to this terrible blot.

The Investigators should need to get to the other side of the pool. There are piles of rubbish and various scrap items littering the shore. The Investigators realise they must use their ingenuity to make a vessel from the various scraps at their disposal to cross the pool.

Occasionally the surface of the pool bubbles and sends out splashes of toxic and corrosive matter. In addition, the gas that is released is fatally poisonous. More poisonous gloop falls regularly into the pool from an overhead tributary, causing waves to crash against the shore. Some sort of shape can be seen in the liquid, beneath the surface. Is it just useless scrap, or the impossible: a living being?

Touching the foul liquid in the pool inflicts $1+\uparrow 4$ damage with the Toxic 4 and Vile qualities. It takes ten minutes, and a **Challenging D2 Mechanics test**, or a **Daunting D3 Survival test**, to cobble together a suitable raft from the scrap and flotsam around the edge of the pool. Each Momentum spent reduces this time by one minute. Guiding the raft across the



The Scruffs: possible allies against the Heretics?

pool takes an **Average D1 Athletics** or **Pilot test** and a further ten minutes; again, each Momentum spent reduces this time by one minute.

The GM may spend three Dark Symmetry points to cause a gas bubble to emerge from the toxic waste near the Investigators. Each investigator on the raft must attempt a **Daunting D3 Resistance test**; failure means that the gas inflicts $1+\uparrow 4$ damage with the Stun and Toxic 4 qualities. The character guiding the raft may attempt a **Challenging D2 Pilot** or **Survival test** to try and pull the raft out of the way. If this is successful, it reduces the difficulty of the Resistance test by one step, plus an additional step for every two Momentum spent.

MIND THE GAP

Luna City is criss-crossed by a huge network of underground railways. Some are chugging, and local, stopping every few hundred yards, never picking up much speed. Some go many miles between stops and reach prodigious speeds.

If the Investigators find one of these underground lines then, provided it is going in the direction they want, they will be able to travel quickly. The huge drawback to this, however, is that if a train comes along, the Investigators will only have a few moments to find an alcove or breach in the tunnel, or quickly become little more than a stain on the front of the boiler.

These train tunnels can be very useful. Some travelling communities know the routes very well and all the best places to get into and out of them, making travel around the Underground relatively quick and safe.

If the Investigators choose to travel along the underground rail lines, the GM may spend three Dark Symmetry points to declare that there is a train inbound. The buzzing of the tracks and the sound of the train itself become obvious when the train is nearby, which gives the Investigators about three minutes to respond to the incoming threat. There are two steps to avoiding the train—the first is to identify a suitable alcove, access tunnel, or breach to hide in, and the second is to reach it in time.

Identifying an alcove takes an **Average D1 Observation test**, requiring one minute. Success means that the character has found a space suitable to secure one person. For each

Momentum spent, the size of the space found increases by enough to secure one additional person. Two Momentum may be spent so that the test does not take any time. Failure means that the character must try again. Characters do not have to test individually—they can pool their efforts and assist one of the group, or even choose not to test so they can focus on getting to safety once a space has been found.

Once a space has been found, it takes an **Average D1 Athletics test** to reach it, requiring one minute. Success means that the character has gotten to the space he has chosen. For each Momentum spent, he may assist another character into the space, so long as that space has enough room. As above, characters do not have to test individually—they can pool their efforts here, or simply rely on the assistance of a particularly successful test.

As noted above, the whole situation takes three minutes. Resolve the first minute's actions for all characters all at once, describe the train getting closer, and then resolve the second minute's actions for all characters, and so on until all three minutes have passed. If a character is still not in a safe space after the third minute, when the train arrives, then the character manages to avoid the worst of the impact, but is still clipped by the high-speed train and thoroughly shaken by the close call. The train's near-miss inflicts 2+**↑**5 damage with the Dreadful and Mind Breaker qualities.

THE SCRUFFS

The Scruffs are a group of Underground dwellers, currently living below Cheapside. They are nomadic, but find temporary homes, scavenge an area for a while, and then move on. They were living close to the First Bank building until recently, when they bumped into Sterling and his Heretics.

They will have some useful information for the Investigators, if they bother to talk to them and show them some respect. They can tell the Investigators that several of their number were convinced to stay with the Heretics and work for them. This was entirely out of character and the change was so abrupt and absolute that the Scruffs can think that the only possible explanation is magic. In addition, the Heretics kidnapped several of their number and brought them to the First Bank building, never to be seen again.

The Scruffs now hate and fear the Heretics and are moving on to find somewhere better to live. They do not believe they have the power to act against the Heretics on their own. However, they will be out for revenge. If the Investigators can convince them they know what they are doing, then at least one of the Scruffs will be willing to act as a guide for them. He will have an excellent knowledge of the tunnels in the area and ideas for different routes and avoiding Argle. He might even have knowledge of the lower, little-known route into the First Bank building.

TYPICAL SCRUFF ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	9	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	2	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	2	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: Salvaged Protective Clothing: (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Makeshift Carbine (ranged):** Medium, 1+**↑**4, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Unforgiving 1
- ◆ **Scrap-pick (melee):** 1+**↑**5, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Untrained:** The Scruffs have little experience with battle, and are reluctant to fight unless absolutely necessary. They increase their Repercussion range on all tests by one when in combat.
- ◆ **Run and Hide:** Scruffs gain one bonus Momentum on all Athletics and Stealth tests made when trying to avoid a fight.

THE BATS

If the Investigators have got lost in the underground, or they are straying too far from where they need to go, then it might be worthwhile having an encounter with a band of belligerent Underground folk. The Bats are a particularly violent gang of Underground dwellers, warring with any other groups they find and taking what they can get. Sometimes they raid the surface in large numbers, killing and stealing whatever they can, and then disappearing back, deep underground before anyone realises what has happened.

If the Investigators bump into them then they will fight hard. They will see that the Investigators have a lot of useful stuff and they will want it. The thing about the Bats is that they have been living in this environment for many years and they are skilled at taking advantage of it. They will know narrow back alleys and short cuts. They will feel at home in the darkness, and be used to the light levels. They attack fearlessly, having little to lose. However, if they are defeated they will melt back into the underground as quickly as they came.

One advantage of meeting the Bats might be that if the Investigators can take a prisoner, then whomever they capture will prove to be a useful guide. Moreover, the prisoner will be as loyal as they require for as long as he needs to be, until he gets the chance to stab the Investigators in the back.

TYPICAL BAT WARRIOR


ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	7	7


FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	1	2	-	2	2	1	-	1	1


WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: Bone and hide armour: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Rough Hunting Bow (ranged):** Medium, 1+4, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Unforgiving 1

◀ **Hunting Knife (melee):** 1+4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

◀ **Crude Axe (melee):** 1+5, 1H, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Night Vision**

◀ **Crude Armaments:** The weaponry of the Bats are primitive, and they are not particularly effective against armour designed to protect from gunshots and chain-blades. Against an attack from a Bat Warrior's weaponry, a character counts any Soak he has as one higher. A character with no Soak gains no benefit.

◀ **Raiders:** The Bats are practiced raiders and ambushers, skilled at arriving suddenly, killing and stealing as they please, and leaving as quickly as they arrived. A Bat Warrior gains one bonus Momentum on Stealth tests, and he may always take the Disengage action as a Restricted Action.

A WEB CRAWLER

Since the Fall, most of the technology on the surface has been destroyed or decommissioned, but in the Underground, some of it has lain dormant for many years, and it has become corrupted by the Dark Symmetry.

One computer control system for a now-defunct skyscraper's air conditioning system was infected with the Dark Symmetry and managed to design a way for itself to crawl around the Underground.



The Bats lurk in ambush, greedy for the Investigators gear!

There it managed to find other bits of technology and integrate them into its systems. Now it is a veritable Frankenstein's monster of computer parts, crawling through the darkness in search of more technology. Whenever it comes across humans, it only desires to destroy them.

Evolving rapidly in the harsh conditions, the machine has become a technological terror. It has superb night-vision, can move across ceilings or along sheer surfaces as well as it can move on the ground and it is almost silent except for the faint whirring of cooling fans. Sometimes however, it needs a few minutes of inactivity in order to reboot itself.

GARGANTUAN TECHNO-SPIDER

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13 (+1)	15 (+3)	11	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	7	5	3



FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	3	2	1	3	3	1	1	-	-	3	1

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 9** ▶◀ **Torso 14**
- ◀▶ **Arms 11** ▶◀ **Legs 12**
- ◀▶ **Serious 13** ▶◀ **Critical 9**
- ◀▶ **Mental 5**

SOAK: Steel and Plastic Construction: (All 4)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Steel Claws (melee):** 2+5, Armour Piercing 2, Reach, Vicious 1
- ◀▶ **Electrified Cable Tendrils (melee):** 2+4, Spread 1, Stun, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Arachnid Automaton:** The techno-spider's form and structure does not even slightly resemble a human being. It resembles some bizarre spider-like monstrosity constructed entirely of twisted electronics, with six legs and a pair of clawed forelimbs. When rolling to determine hit location against the techno-spider, use the following hit locations:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1-2 Head | 16 Front Left Leg |
| 3-5 Right Arm | 17 Middle Right Leg |
| 6-8 Left Arm | 18 Middle Left Leg |
| 9-14 Torso | 19 Rear Right Leg |
| 15 Front Right Leg | 20 Rear Left Leg |

- ◀▶ **Fear (2)**
- ◀▶ **Grasping**
- ◀▶ **Machine Tyrant:** Any Twisted Marionettes created by the techno-spider's abilities are connected to the techno-spider itself, and will move with it.
- ◀▶ **Monstrous Creature**
- ◀▶ **Night Vision**
- ◀▶ **Scuttling Climb:** The techno-spider can climb freely on any surface—sheer walls and ceilings included—and is able to reconfigure and alter its form to move through tight spaces easily.
- ◀▶ **Supernatural Physique (3)**
- ◀▶ **Supernatural Strength (1)**
- ◀▶ **Unliving**
- ◀▶ **Virtually Silent:** The movements of the techno-spider are almost entirely silent unless it chooses otherwise, with only the faint whirr of cooling fans to belie its presence. It gains two bonus Momentum on all Stealth tests to go unnoticed.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◀▶ **Creature of Symmetry:** The gargantuan techno-spider is able to employ several Dark Gifts as a creature of Darkness. It may use the Obfuscation, Symmetry Burst, and True Corruption Dark Gifts.
- ◀▶ **Lashing and Whirling:** One to three Dark Symmetry points can be spent to allow the techno-spider to make one additional attack per point spent. One Dark Symmetry point can be spent to allow the techno-spider to attack any creature within Close range, rather than only those within Reach.

ENDING IT

There are three vital elements to Karl Sterling's summoning of the Incursid eggs: the ritual described on the human skin, the summoning machine that he created, and Karl Sterling's own power. Even if the Investigators manage to shut down Home Made Foods and stop any more of the infested food from getting out, the danger is not over.

The Investigators need to captured or killed Sterling in order to put an end to his threat once and for all. The least they should do is destroy the summoning machine and the rest of the dark temple. If Karl Sterling is still free, and if he still has his page describing the dark ritual, even if the summoning machine has been destroyed, then he may be able to start his work all over again.



JOURNEY TO MARS

OVERVIEW

Previously in this campaign the Investigators would have spent some time as police officers in Cheapside and gradually uncovered a plot to infest Luna City with Incursids. For thwarting the plot, the Investigators should have come through with a degree of respect and notoriety, at least in Group 5, the company that runs the Cheapside police department, and owns Home Made Foods.

Somehow, during Part One, Group 5 attained an Incursid mother. Whatever the Investigators were doing during the worst of the Incursid outbreak, they were not able to prevent one of the adults morphing into a mother. This likely happened away from the Investigators and entirely unknown to them. Unless the Investigators were amazingly competent, there would have been any number of opportunities for this to occur during the campaign so far.

In this part of the campaign the Investigators, because they handled the previous part so well, get the job of transporting the Incursid mother from Luna City to San Dorado. They receive a ship, the Pandora, and a crew, and are made responsible for delivering the Incursid. A number of things are ready to go wrong on the voyage and a number of encounters are supplied to make the journey eventful.

The capture of the Incursid mother and the mission to get it to San Dorado is top secret in Group 5, and known as Project Ladybird.

GRIMBLY WORLD

The Investigators get rewarded for their success (or otherwise) in part one by getting sent by Group 5 on an all-expenses-paid, four week vacation to Grimbly World, Luna City's top resort. It is not actually necessary to run this vacation section, if the GM does not feel the Investigators reasonably deserved it. There are a couple of plot related events but these can be inserted into any mission or down time at this stage. However, nothing disturbs a player more than getting something for nothing and having an easy time of it, and so even the fun of a vacation should contribute to the air of impending doom.

Promoted by its novelty figurehead Grimbly Grumble, Grimbly World is a vast vacation complex near the centre of Luna City with luxury eight star hotels. There are casinos, spas, and extreme sports, simulations of the Seventeen Wonders of the Earth, famous entertainers, and virtual man-hunting: every activity a vacationer

might possibly want. People save for years to be able to afford a week at Grimbly World and then do not stop telling everyone how great it was until they can afford to go again. This should be a genuinely exciting award for the Investigators (unless they are jaded freelancer types). The GM should ask what sort of stuff each investigator wants to do during the vacation, and if at all possible, those activities will be available.

However, a couple of minor events will happen during the vacation. Firstly, during a hydro-facial or lo-grav ski session the investigator with the best medical-type skills will be approached by a stranger identifying himself as a Parasol agent. He will be told that the Investigators will shortly be ordered on another mission with a medical angle. He will be told that Parasol are very interested in the subject of that mission and that Parasol would appreciate it if the investigator could make relevant medical observations, every day for the course of the mission. He will be told, however, not to let anyone else know he is doing this.

He will be given a small notebook for the purpose and reminded that Parasol has oversight of Cheapside PD and other Group 5 missions and it is the investigator's duty to comply. At the end of the mission, he will be approached by another Parasol agent who he should return the notebook to. The investigator will have no idea what this is about, but hopefully once they get their next mission, all will become clear.

During the vacation, the GM should ask for the occasional **Daunting D3 Observation test**. If it is passed, then the investigator should catch a glimpse or just get the feeling of someone observing him from a distance, or perhaps of him being followed. There is no need to run a pursuit or confrontation with the observer at this stage, this is just to let the Investigators know they are being watched, and to add to the air of intrigue. In fact, it will undermine this whole encounter if the Investigators are able to catch and interrogate those watching them.

Note that it is not necessary to the campaign to insert these subplots surreptitiously. The GM can take the player aside and have him become an agent of Parasol behind the backs of the other players, or he can run that section in full view of the other players. If the party is one that does not thrive on a bit of internal intrigue and a few secrets behind the other players' backs then the GM should simply set these sub-plots up out in the open, or omit them altogether. The secrecy and going behind Investigators' backs is just an option for people who like that in their games.

The main point of this encounter, apart from showing the Investigators that there are higher powers keeping their eyes on them, is for Parasol to achieve some sort of leverage over the investigator which it could use in part three of the campaign.

PROJECT LADYBIRD

After their vacation, the Investigators might expect to go back to Cheapside for more of the same dangerous, underpaid, disrespected police work. However when they arrive, Commander Dickson greets them all warmly and makes sure everyone has coffee and snacks. He even offers round Eaty-Neaty to show how unperturbed by recent events he is. Then he shows them into a conference room where Thaddeus Lukic is waiting for them, flanked by two bodyguards.

Lukic introduces himself to the Investigators as an executive officer of Group 5. He is impeccably dressed in an expensive and very up-to-date Capitol-style, Bauhaus-made suit. He flashes the Investigators a bright, but plainly insincere smile and shakes each of them firmly by the hand, while telling them how great it is to meet them.

Lukic then nods at one of the bodyguards to run a short film he has prepared especially for the Investigators. The film starts off as a typical Capitol commercial, with happy families consuming Capitol goods in the sun, to pleasant music. It seems to be cut from a public information film designed to encourage settlement on Mars.

Then that part of the film is interrupted by a message from Capitol's first self-made trillionaire, Don Stevia. Don Stevia thanks the Investigators for their efforts on behalf of Capitol and reassures them that he will look forward to working closely with them going forward. He smiles pleasantly directly into the camera. The Investigators might get the impression that this film was recorded especially for them, although they are not mentioned by name.

Next, a thin businesswoman is shown sitting demurely behind a huge wooden desk. Her name, Gwendolyn Kipp, appears on the screen and she smiles sweetly. Then Kipp bitterly snaps at the screen, 'Pay attention. I didn't send this film half way across the solar system to have you ignore me when I'm talking to you. Pay attention. We are Capitol. And we do things the Capitol way. Got it? This is Lukic. He's your new boss, and you'll do everything he says, or I'll have your balls, got it? I'll have your balls.' With that, she cups a bony hand and squeezes it with relish. 'Welcome to Capitol.'

Finally, the film goes back to more music and photogenic families cycling through corn fields superimposed with the Capitol logo.

Agent Lukic looks on approvingly during the film, and when it is finished asks the Investigators to follow him. His preferred method of communication seems to be walking quickly while talking over his shoulder to those trailing in his wake. He makes his way to his helicopter on the roof of the Farm and beckons the Investigators aboard.



Thaddeus Lukic: 'And we're walking...'

Lukic will reveal that Group 5 have captured one of the creatures and that it is too dangerous to keep in Luna City. He would like it taken to San Dorado on Mars where it can be analysed and defences against another potential invasion can be researched. This is partly the truth, but Group 5 also have other plans for the Incursids. For more details on Group 5 and this plot, see part Four.

The Investigators will no doubt have lots of questions like, 'Why?' and 'Why don't you do it yourself?' Lukic will deal with them as best as he can, and he is quite the smooth talker. He should reassure the Investigators that time and manpower is tight and that the Investigators genuinely are the best people for the job. They have proved that by the exemplary way they dealt with the Incursids earlier.

If they need further persuading, Lukic can explain that as employees of Cheapside Police Department, the Investigators are technically employees of Group 5 in any case, and that the company has every right to change the specifics of their work contracts without consultation or notice. So the Investigators are actually under contract to do this very job, right now, whether they like it or not.

It should be made very clear to the Investigators that this is a top secret mission. Lukic will tell them that he believes rival corporations and even freelancers would go to great lengths to capture the creature, or just to sabotage the journey. Therefore, it is vital that none of the crew of the Pandora reveal the nature of their cargo to anyone. If pressed on this, Lukic will wave it away as 'the wicked and unfathomable machinations of rival corporate bodies.'

THADDEUS LUKIC ☹

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
6	6	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	10	13

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	4	3	2	1

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 2**
- ◀▶ **Arms 3**
- ◀▶ **Serious 5**
- ◀▶ **Mental 10**
- ◀▶ **Torso 6**
- ◀▶ **Legs 4**
- ◀▶ **Critical 3**

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Overcoat: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 2, 1H

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Master Manipulator:** Lukic is skilled at bending people and situations to his desires. Few people can withstand his cunning or the subtle spell of his words. Lukic rolls 5d20, instead of 2d20, when making a Persuade or Command test.
- ◀▶ **Holds all the Cards:** Lukic has an Earnings Rating of 10 and 70 Assets on hand. He is supported by a veritable army of assistants, subordinates, and armed security. He gains four bonus Momentum on all Willpower tests due to his certainty and confidence. Further, if he has sufficient time to prepare, he can gain up to three additional NPCs to provide assistance on any task or test. As a matter of pride, he will not use assistance to assist Persuade or Command tests.

SECURE AREA 52

The helicopter will land at Secure Area 52. It is more of an annexe to the Masterville Communication Centre rather than an integral part of the complex. The security is tight, with many guards standing ready and many guns pointing at the Investigators as they make their way towards the cell. Some Investigators might sense that Lukic enjoys this show of strength and he is relishing the power of being surrounded by so much firepower and military might.

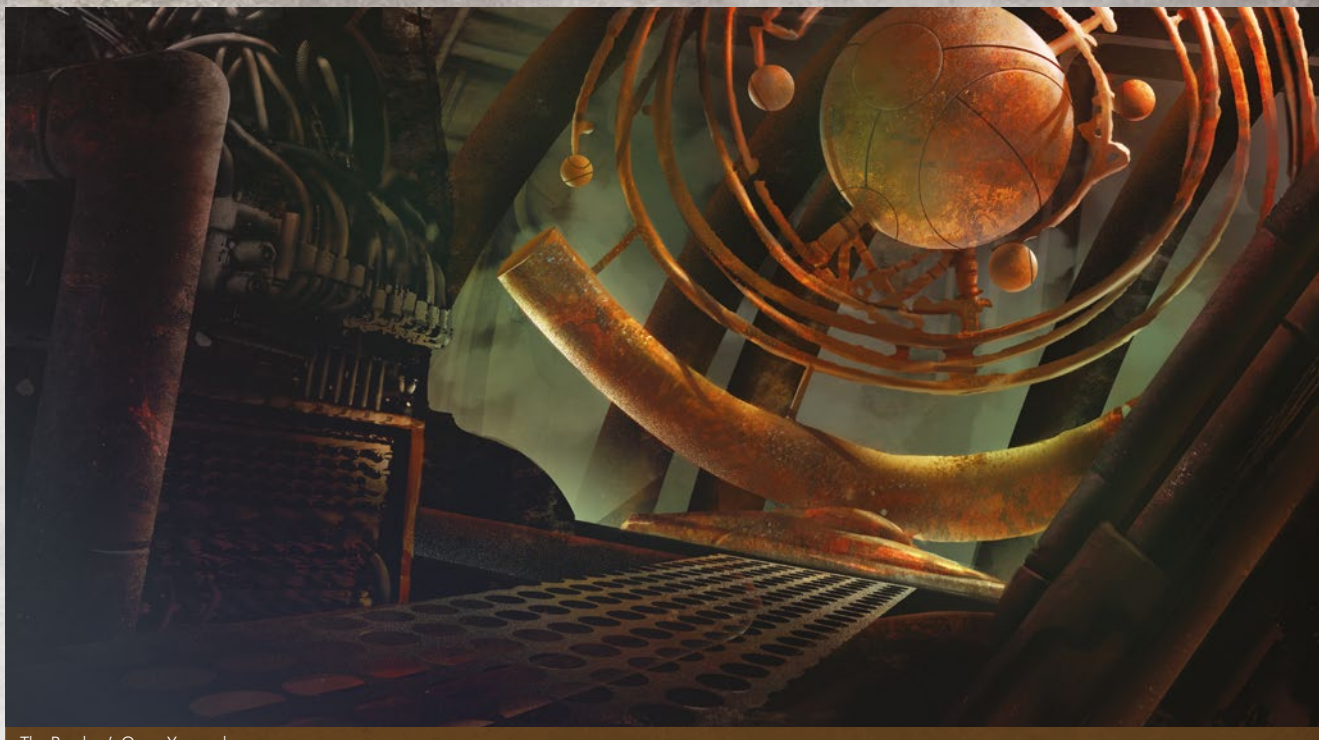
After two different elevator trips and countless security gates, Lukic and the Investigators will arrive in a large hangar-like room. It is almost entirely bare, except for the number 52 plastered around liberally like some sort of commercial branding. At the centre of the hangar, the Investigators will see an Incursid mother, looking as menacing as any mother they have seen. The first impression is that the creature is free to roam the hangar and even approach Lukic and the Investigators.

After a moment, though, the Investigators will notice that there are several layers of clear glass-like material between them. There are in fact three concentric circles of state-of-the-art clear plastic shielding keeping the mother in the centre of the hangar. The mother will see the Investigators and make a perfunctory lunge at them, distorting the shielding slightly, but even the Incursid knows that this is futile. Lukic will show off his captive to the Investigators like some proud new father.

He will explain that the creature had become trapped in a collapsed building (during whichever event gave the Investigators the most trouble), and Group 5 were able to extricate it and imprison it. It was quite badly wounded, but has prodigious powers of recovery and as they can see, it is now fighting fit.



DARK SYMMETRY PART 03



The Pandora's Orrery. You are here.

THE PANDORA

Next, Lukic will take the Investigators to the Pandora. It is an old space vessel, sitting atop the Secure Area 52 complex. The Investigators would have probably noticed it when they flew in. They will be able to see it is undergoing some hurried refitting. Lukic will give the Investigators a whistle-stop grand tour of the vessel, dodging workers and showers of sparks, snaking cables and ducting as the fitters rush to get it ready.

The Pandora dates from before the Fall. It was once a state of the art exploration vessel intended to join the rush to colonise the outer system. However, it became an early victim of the Dark Symmetry and it was laid up many years ago. Now it has had virtually every element of high technology ripped out, except for some of the underlying infrastructure, and has been refitted with more stable systems.

The Pandora's sophisticated state-of-the-art navigation computers have all been ripped out and replaced with analogue systems as a precaution against the Dark Symmetry. The navigation room is now situated in one of the old laboratories because the old navigation room is too small to fit all the new, primitive equipment. It is crammed with clockwork devices, and sprawling valve computers. At its heart lies what is essentially a giant orrery. The room gives the distinct impression that interplanetary navigation these days is more art, or even luck, than science.

The Investigators will be told they need to take the Pandora to Kittyhawk spaceport in San Dorado, and from there they will be picked up and transported to a top security medical research facility in the Hyeck District that has been specially prepared to house the creature. If the Investigators are in any doubt the navigator, Hanson Lane, will assure them that they are in safe, experienced hands (he looks about fifteen years old). In addition, as evidence that the route is all planned out, he can show the Investigators a hand-written sticky label marked Luna City, on one of the pieces of the orrery, and a similar one marked San Dorado on another.

The most important feature of the Pandora is its main cargo bay. This has been reconfigured with heavy metal plates to form three square cells, one within the other. This is reminiscent of the three transparent concentric circles in Secure Area 52, but the dull metal and square design lends it an altogether more industrial air. Each cell is separated by a security gate, and final cell has some narrow windows in its walls, allowing observations to be made. There is also a system whereby foodstuffs can be dropped into the cell, using a mechanical trap door and a repurposed cargo crane.

Lukic will then take the Investigators to the bridge where he will introduce them to Captain Marie Yates and explain that they are now in her capable hands. This ends up sounding more like a threat than an introduction. Lukic will make it very clear that the Investigators are responsible for getting the Incursid mother to its destination in San Dorado in good condition, and that failure to do this will not be tolerated in any way whatsoever.

THE PANDORA

RELIABILITY: 3

QUALITIES	Ship			
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	90 days	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY	1	
CREW	1 commander (Crew 2) 1 pilot (Crew 1) 2 gunner (Crew 1) 1 engineer		PASSENGERS	10
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE
	ENGINE	3	3	3
	HULL	4	4	4
IMPACT DAMAGE	WEAPON	1	2	2
	3+↑4			FUEL LOADS
ARMAMENTS	• 2x Defensive Battery (Range Close, Automatic, 1+↑3, Point Defence, Close Quarters)			
NOTES	Vast cargo hold. Six Reloads for each Defensive Battery			

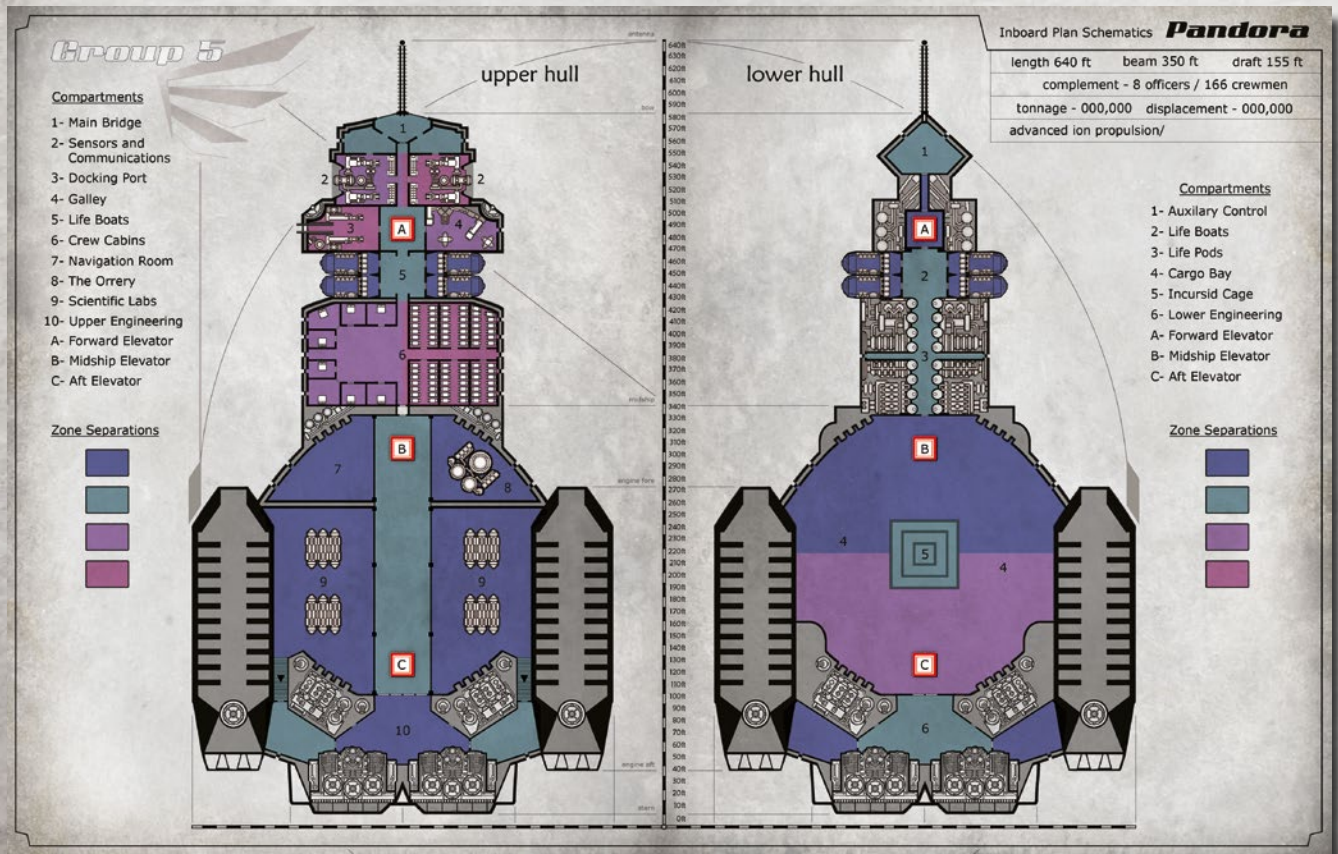
THE CREW

The GM should put together a crew for the Pandora. If the Investigators have any useful skills, then these need not be duplicated by the NPC crew. This will give the Investigators things to do to make themselves useful during the journey. Although this crew might have a captain (Yates), she is only in charge of the ship itself. It will be made clear that the Investigators have complete control and complete responsibility for the mission itself. There should not be too many NPC crew, enough to run the ship competently, but not so many that the Investigators feel like useless or anonymous passengers.

In addition to those mentioned below there are a number of other crewmembers on board the Pandora. There should be a number of engineers and general crew to keep the ship in good condition during the journey and to act as cannon fodder should that required.

CAPTAIN MARIE YATES

Yates is a hardened, grey-haired, old space dog who has made more voyages than she cares to remember. She resents her commission on the Pandora, however. After a life time in the service of Capitol she was happy to see out the rest of her time with the relatively cushy job of piloting transports from Luna City to lunar orbit and back again.



The truth is Yates has lost her nerve. She lost most of her crew when her vessel developed a mind of its own over Venus several years ago. She managed to set it on a crash course with the planet surface, and get some of her crew into escape pods. She was cleared of wrong doing, and in fact praised by the enquiry, but she blames herself for the disaster and she has almost come to the end of her tether.

There is little chance that the Investigators will hear about Yates' problems; none of the rest of the crew knows about it, and Group 5 think that she has made a full recovery and will be just as good again, in a crisis. But the fact is if things go wrong on the space flight, Yates will not be reliable. She will become increasingly withdrawn and her decision making will become increasingly poor.

If it comes down to a power struggle between Yates and the Investigators for command of her ship then, provided the Investigators are reasonable and attempt to do things vaguely legally, she will be relieved to hand control over to them. If they do things heavy-handedly then it will be Yates' duty to defend her command with all the force at her disposal.

CAPTAIN MARIE YATES ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	10	7	13

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	-	-	2	3	1	1	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Protective jumpsuit: (Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M516S Shotgun (ranged):** Close, 1+↑7, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1
- ◆ **Stunner (melee):** ↑3, 1H, Nonlethal, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Captain on Deck:** Captain Yates is an experienced and competent spacefarer, who is trusted by her crew and who knows the subtle ways of operating a spacecraft. When making a Space test, she may re-roll any d20s that do not generate a success on the initial roll—the second roll stands. Further, she gains three bonus Momentum on all Command tests while on board a spaceship.
- ◆ **Stared Too Long Into The Void:** Yates has experienced many unpleasant things operating vessels since the coming

of the Dark Legion, and she lacks the resolve she once had. Yates always has one Dread, and increases the difficulty of all Willpower tests against Mental Assault by one step.

FIRST OFFICER BIFF DERNBACH

Dernbach is a tall, powerfully built veteran from the Freedom Brigades. He joined his brigade to gain Capitol citizenship and then stayed on to serve it out of loyalty to Capitol. He is originally from wherever one of the most easily annoyed Investigators is from and will spend the entire voyage telling him why Capitol is better than there.

As Dernbach is responsible for security on the ship, he is feeling like a spare part in the company of the Investigators. The Investigators will implicitly outrank him on any issue to do with security, and he resents this terribly. He has little to do but to obey the Investigators' orders but will do this in an as literal and as narrow a way as possible, even to the point of jeopardising the mission.

If one of the Investigators is a proper grunt then Dernbach will take it as his personal mission to out-grunt him. This will involve telling stories of all the battles he has been in, getting out his biggest weapons and stripping them down as quickly as he can, blind folded, casting aspersions on rival regiments, and snarling intimidatingly.

Once the going gets tough, however, and Dernbach is required to fight alongside the Investigators, then he will come into his own. He will cooperate with the Investigators and become an effective member of their team, provided there is some actual danger. In addition, because of his desire to prove himself Dernbach could try to impress the Investigators too much and an ill-advised suicide mission might appeal to him.

Dernbach should be played as an annoyance to start with, but this should turn to grudging respect and then self-sacrifice. If the Investigators need to take control of the Pandora from Captain Yates then which side Dernbach takes, will depend on how far along this narrative he has come.

FIRST OFFICER BIFF DERNBACH ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
11	10	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	7	10	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1



Welcome to the Pandora's Bridge.

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Heavy Military Shoulder Pads and Ballistic Nylon Jump-suit: (Head 1, Arms 3, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M516S Shotgun (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**6, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1
- ◆ **P-60 Punisher Handgun (ranged):** Close 1+**T**5, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ◆ **Punisher Sword (melee):** 1+**T**6, 1H, Parry 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **A Proper Soldier:** A veteran of the Freedom Brigades, Dernbach is tough, determined, proud, and fierce. He may re-roll up to three **T** from any damage rolls he makes in combat, and gains one bonus Momentum on all Resistance and Willpower tests he attempts.
- ◆ **Surly until the Fight Begins:** Dernbach is thoroughly uncooperative, particularly to other soldiers who don't share his regimental affiliations. When attempting to interact with Dernbach, all Command and Persuade tests increase their Repercussion range by two outside of combat. Further, all characters with military backgrounds (other than the Freedom Brigades) must re-roll one successful d20 on any Command or Persuade test to interact with Dernbach (if there are no successes on the initial roll, then no re-roll is needed). In combat, these penalties are ignored, and Command or Persuade tests made to interact with Dernbach gain one bonus Momentum in combat instead.

DOCTOR JUSTINE SMITH

As well as being responsible for the wellbeing of the crew, Smith has been given responsibility for the Incursid mother. She has no real idea what this might entail, other than ensuring the creature gets fed regularly and staying on the right side of three inches of tempered steel. She has the job of carrying out regular observations on the creature, but these can be only the most cursory of checks.

Smith is also (three months) pregnant. The irony of the similarity between the nature of her monstrous charge and her condition is not lost on her. She has of course been informed of the Incursid's fecund violence, and she has already begun having nightmares.

Smith will be generally helpful to the Investigators. She has no issues with the mission except she wants it over with as quickly as possible. As the officer responsible for the creature's quarantine, technically Smith is able to give the order to flush the entire cargo deck with vacuum. This will kill the creature. Smith will not volunteer this information except perhaps if the mission goes so wrong it looks like the best idea available. This action would be directly against the orders the Investigators have been given.

DOCTOR JUSTINE SMITH ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	6	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	10	9	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	2	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	3	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Overalls: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Scalpel (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Medical Professional:** Dr Smith is a skilled physician and surgeon, and well-versed in a range of conditions and ailments. She may roll one additional d20 on any Medicine or Treatment test that generates at least one success. Further, whenever she performs first aid on a character, she restores two wounds per Momentum spent rather than one. Her med-bay has twenty-five doses of Coagulant on-hand at the start of the journey.
- ◀ **Pregnant:** Dr Smith is three months pregnant, and between this and her fear of the Incursid she's tending to, her sleep is disturbed and not as restful as it should be. Dr Smith always has one Dread due to tiredness and nightmares.

NAVIGATOR HANSON LANE

Lane is a mathematical wiz and boy-genius. He is not really that young at twenty-five, but his boyish features and happy demeanour gives the impression he should still be playing with model spaceships, not navigating one through the unforgiving void.

Lane is hard-working and good at his job. He has been ordered to navigate the vessel Kittyhawk in San Dorado and that is what he intends to do. The Investigators might get other ideas but Lane will stick to his guns unless over-ruled by Yates or seriously intimidated by the Investigators.

Space navigation, since the Fall, is very difficult and requires constant minor updates to stay on course. This will keep Lane busy in the lab for most of the voyage. If the GM wants to throw a spanner in the works then killing off Lane will certainly do that. That would make it very difficult for the Investigators to land where they have been told to, however, and so the GM should think carefully about the consequences of this.

NAVIGATOR HANSON LANE ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	6	9	11
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	12	8	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	-	2	2	1	1	1	-	3	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Overalls: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◀ **Slicer (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀ **Pilot-Navigator:** Lane is an exceptional pilot and navigator, a prodigy at both the practical and theoretical elements of space flight. He may roll 4d20, instead of 2d20, for all Space tests, and he may re-roll any dice that does not generate a success on any Sciences test that relates to astrophysics, stellar navigation, or mathematics.
- ◀ **Busy Flying the Ship:** Lane cannot be disturbed, as guiding the ship through space is a complex process requiring constant adjustments. As he is needed to keep the ship on-course and ensure it arrives in time and intact, all Command or Persuade tests to convince him to do something else increase in difficulty by three—he knows what he needs to do, and any deviation from that can't be tolerated.

KRISTINE MANTEL

Kristine Mantel, a naïve idealist, has been looking to strike a blow against the corporate hegemony for some time. She has conspired with like-minded people in a small way since she was a student. However, she has never been able to make the difference she wishes for. The limit of her activism so far has been the odd protest march or sit-in. Nevertheless, she is determined that one day she will make her mark for freedom.

She is moderately well known among some of the protest groups of Luna City and therefore has a few allies to call upon, some in responsible corporate positions. She met Gary Steele of Group 5 during a 'Redistribute Now!' workshop when she lived on Mars, and has kept in touch. She currently works as a chemistry teacher.

Recently Gary Steele contacted her again to tell her of what he knows of Project Ladybird. He has urged her to do what she can to stop it. He has told her that if the monster is allowed to land on Mars then he fears it could mean the end of civilisation on that planet. They have agreed that the creature must perish in space during the journey to Mars and Mantel sees no other option but for her to carry out that mission.

Mantel has managed to finagle her way on board the Pandora as a maintenance co-worker second class. Her duties are all very low

level: cleaning and general up-keep. However, this does give her access to almost anywhere on the vessel (apart from the quarantine section, of course).

Now that Mantel is on board she keeps her head down and carries out her duties. She is playing things by ear, looking for an opportunity. She keeps an eye on what is going on, perhaps even starting the odd conversation with other crew or one of the Investigators to get more information, although she is careful not to draw too much attention to herself.

Attractive, enthusiastic and earnest, Mantel is determined to succeed in her mission, even if it means losing her life. In fact, none of the plans she has considered so far give her much chance of survival. If she speaks to Investigators, it is possible she might try turning them to her point of view, and she is persuasive enough to put up a good case for her cause.

Mantel does carry upon her person a hard copy of an incriminating letter from Gary Steele. Should the Investigators find this, it might contain enough information for them to track down the mysterious Gary S (See **Part 04: The Deregulation Zone** page 132). Mantel's presence on the Pandora is important to the Sabotage event, below.

KRISTINE MANTEL ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
11	10	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	1	1	2	2	-	2	1	2	1-2

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Overalls: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◆ **Wrench (melee):** 1+[†]3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **Not Exactly a Technician:** Mantel is more knowledgeable than she lets on. Though no corporation hires completely uneducated people to work aboard spaceships, Mantel has broader knowledge than most people might ordinarily expect from someone hired to perform routine maintenance aboard a transport ship. Mantel gains one bonus Momentum on all Mechanics and Sciences tests relating to chemistry and explosives.

◆ **Saboteur:** Mantel has been hired to eliminate the Pandora's Incursid cargo, but she's still waiting for her moment to strike. Unless she believes that she can trust the Investigators, she will not approach them, and she'll avoid interacting with the crew beyond the normal duties of her cover as a maintenance technician. If the player characters approach her, she increases the Repercussion range of Persuade tests to lie by one.

Zachbird is on. I had it confirmed earlier today by Frida herself, and she's pretty much effective chairman these days. There is no one else I can rely on. I firmly believe this might be a real threat to the entire population of Mars. Corporations should not be able to behave in such an irresponsible way.

I have heard the Pandora will be leaving MCT soon. Hopefully you will have enough time to prepare. I have no idea how you can deal with it. That will be up to you. Hopefully we can meet when you get to Mars.

Yours for a sensible mixed market!

Gary S.

CARLY REES

Carly Rees is one of the crew of the Pandora. The GM can place her wherever she might be required by the Investigators. The point of her inclusion is that she is a drug addict and so might let the Investigators down at a crucial moment. In addition, although she has had no contact with Incursids, her addiction to Faustus is bound to remind the Investigators of what they have recently been through in Cheapside, and leave them wondering. Of course, the GM could decide that Rees is infested by an Incursid after all, and use her character for the Incursid Infestation event.

Rees is a drug addict but competent at juggling SLO and Faustus through her work and sleep periods. She has managed to get away with this for several tours of duty, but is becoming increasingly frayed. When she is off duty, she is usually dead to the world on a deep SLO trip. Augmenting that with Faustus for her work shifts is tricky. Sometimes she appears level and competent. If she were to over-do the Faustus then she will appear edgy and nervous, or under-doing it, sleepy and lethargic. Rees is generally intelligent and smartly attired and does not appear as the stereotypical addict.

CARLY REES ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	7	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	11	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	1	2	-	1	-	1	-	2	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Overalls: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

◆ **Pocket Knife (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **Drug Addict:** Rees is addicted to both SLO and Faustus, and while her use is carefully controlled so not to interfere with her job, it is a delicate balancing act. Roll **↑** whenever Rees appears in a scene; if a Dark Symmetry Icon is rolled, then Rees has under- or over-used Faustus this shift (determined randomly). In either case, it requires a Challenging D1 Insight test, or a Daunting D3 Observation test to notice her erratic behaviour. The difficulty of these tests is reduced by one step if the characters have encountered her before and she has not shown signs of her addiction. For each successive scene Rees appears in, the number of **↑** rolled increases by one. There is no additional effect if multiple Dark Symmetry Icons are rolled.

FOGGY

Foggy is the Pandora's ship's cat. She is a lithe calico animal with a habit of getting into nooks and crannies where she is not wanted. She seems to be able to move anywhere on board, through long-forgotten access tunnels and ventilation shafts. No one in the crew really owns her, but several of them bother to make sure she is fed

and watered. No one can really remember when she came aboard; the crew all vaguely think she has always been there.

Foggy can be used to build the tension, making strange noises at unfortunate moments, or distracting the crew at important times. In addition, with the right sort of build-up, there is no way the Investigators will not suspect her of being infested with Incursid eggs at some point. This can be played up, and it might even be true. If she were infested then she would go through several days of being extremely catty before attacking the crew. Of course, she can go through several days of being extremely catty, anyway, because she is a cat.

FOGGY, SHIP'S CAT ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
4	8	11 (+1)	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	4	9	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	3	2	1	1	1	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Claws (melee):** 1+**↑**2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Feline Agility:** As a cat, Foggy may use Acrobatics instead of Athletics when climbing.
- ◆ **Supernatural Agility (1)**
- ◆ **Tiny Creature:** Far smaller than a person, Foggy can fit into spaces too small for a human to fit and move across surfaces too fragile for a human to cross. However, her tiny stature means that she increases the difficulty of all Strength-based tests by one step.
- ◆ **Wilful and Independent:** Like all cats, Foggy acts with a haughty disdain towards the humans around her, allowing them to feed and water her, and using them for warmth and comfort, but otherwise content to roam the ship alone. Whenever a Repercussion is generated on an Observation test, the GM may use Foggy as a complication, having the cat dash out or begin hissing as if threatened.



TAKE OFF

The journey from Luna City to San Dorado should take about two weeks. As the Pandora takes off, the players will see the grey disc of the moon disappear behind them before turning their attention to the tiny orange dot of their destination.

Shipboard life is fairly boring. Even if the Investigators are diligent about inspecting the ship and the crew and keeping an eye on everything they can think of, there will still be hours to kill. The GM should let the first week pass largely uneventfully and perhaps the Investigators will start to think that the trip will be an easy one. However, below are several events that can occur during the voyage. The GM need not use all of them, but can select the ones that will test his players the best. He should also consider playing some of them concurrently. Two or three of the events occurring at once should be much more interesting, and testing, than simply presenting one event after the other.

For example, the Haunted Ship plot lines can run throughout the journey, bringing an air of unease and uncertainty to the crew and making other encounters more difficult. Then the Pandora can be rammed by the Heretics on board the Sword, as the actions of the Pandora make the defence even harder than it should be. If the Investigators survive they will need to get to Fuji Station to repair their ship, and the machinations on Fuji Station can be further complicated when one of the crew members becomes infested with Incursid eggs and Kristine Mantel takes that opportunity to blow up the Pandora. Really, the idea is to play things by ear, running the encounters together in a way that suits the themes of the game and challenges the Investigators just the right amount.

EVENT: HAUNTED SHIP

The Pandora was manufactured shortly before the Fall as a long range colonisation and scientific exploration vessel. It was



The Pandora plunges into the void between worlds

developed at the pinnacle of Capitol scientific achievement, and was one of the most advanced ships humanity had ever created. This meant it was extremely susceptible to the corruption of Dark Symmetry and the ship was soon retired.

Recently it was pulled out of the scrap yard and refitted. All its advanced systems were junked, all its computers, sensors, and control systems were scrapped, and in its place, much more rudimentary machines were installed.

However, much of the electronic infrastructure, the supposedly harmless minor components like busses and cables, and physical systems as basic as door locking devices and air filters, were left in place. Only the higher systems, those that had proved to be dangerous and potentially with a mind of its own, were taken out.

Unfortunately, for the crew of the Pandora, this infrastructure is still susceptible to the Dark Symmetry. As the vessel takes off, cables begin to twitch. Old sensors blink on. Power courses through long forgotten relays. Wires snake through access ducts meeting other systems and refashioning themselves. The entire ship's basic infrastructure comes to life, with a malignant instinct to destroy its crew.

Essentially, the Pandora becomes the GM's playground. The Dark Symmetry allows the GM to have the ship react in any way he desires in order to make life for the crew as difficult as possible. This should start out as minor malfunctions and progress to seemingly random attacks.

It should progress to the killing of one of the crew. This will give the Investigators a whodunit to consider, but the unexplained phenomena and the increasingly unpredictable behaviour of the vessel should worry them. Then, the attacks can begin in earnest with the ship making a concerted effort to rid itself of its crew.

Note that the Incursid mother has been quarantined behind brand new steel walls with physical locks worked by hand and isolated from the rest of the ship. Therefore, even if the Dark Symmetry were aware of the presence of the Incursid, it would not be able to help it escape.

The Dark Symmetry within the ship is confused and only semi-sentient. The ship should act more like a horse flicking flies away with its tail than some strategic genius with a considered plan for picking off the Investigators.

The easiest way to produce these malfunctions is by spending Dark Symmetry points to cause Corruption, following the rules in **Chapter 15** of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book. The entries below will list either Malfunction (where the corruption has simply caused the machine to fail) or Malignancy (where the corruption has caused the device to act in a dangerous, even malicious manner) to indicate

the severity of the corrupting influence needed to cause such a result. Due to the size of the ship, the vessel's Corruption should reset to 'zero' after each event is played out—the energy disperses and the malign energies become dormant. However, the vile influences on the ship do increase in potency as time progresses—after each event, the ship's Reliability is reduced by one, to a minimum of zero, allowing increasingly severe events to transpire.

MALFUNCTION: HEARING THINGS

Strange things are heard over the Pandora's internal communications. Early on in the voyage, an investigator might hear another investigator asking him to come to certain room. When the investigator arrives there is no one there, or whoever is there will deny having called. This can happen several times over the first week of the voyage. It should leave the Investigators wondering what is happening, and not entirely trusting their ship or its crew.

The GM can make a note of some of the things that the Investigators say to each other over the communicators. In addition, he can then give these messages out again, many days later, as if the ship has remembered them, or it has taken days for the message to get through. When the crew have a crisis, it will then be time to disrupt any crew coordination with more of these ghost messages.

In addition, once the ship's newly found sapience (counting as a Malignancy) gets into its stride it can make up messages wholesale, using the voices of the crew, mixing and matching words it has heard. It can do this to sow fear or confusion, or to inform the Investigators exactly what it is going to do with them. The GM may use these messages as justification for spending Dark Symmetry points to inflict Mental Assault—the GM may spend one to three points, and require a single character to take a Willpower test or suffer Mental Assault, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent.

MALIGNANCY: SUCKING VACUUM

One of the airlocks in the ship suddenly opens without any warning. A whole section of the ship is evacuated. The air is ripped out and any loose equipment is lost. Any Investigators in that section will need to act quickly in order to avoid being expelled from the craft. Most (if not all) of the NPCs in the section will not be able to save themselves.

The Investigators caught in the vacuum should have to make **Daunting D3 Acrobatics tests**, or similar, in order to avoid getting sucked out into space. Then they should have to get to safety within a couple of minutes or begin to suffer the effects of vacuum exposure (see page 129 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book).

MALFUNCTION: SYSTEMS DOWN

The doors to one section of the ship inexplicably lock, the lights turn off, and the life support systems stop. This happens for only a matter of seconds, and then, just as inexplicably, all systems return to

normal. This can happen a few times, enough to let the Investigators know that their ship is distinctly unreliable, and perhaps inspire them to look for the cause.

MALIGNANCY: SPACE WALK

Minor repairs are required to a sensor array on the Pandora's exterior. This involves getting into a space suit, leaving through an airlock and tethering to the side of the ship, while making the repair. If an NPC does this job then the Investigators will catch a glimpse of him as he tumbles past through the void, mysteriously untethered, and about to die.

If an investigator attempts the repair then, during his efforts, external plates will suddenly rip away from the ship, requiring a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** to avoid taking damage and being thrown from the ship. If the investigator is hit by the plate then the part of the ship he is tethered to will fail requiring him to make a **Daunting D3 Acrobatics test** to grab onto something or end up drifting helplessly in space.

This event should probably be played before the Investigators lose all faith in the Pandora and become entirely fearful of doing anything aboard the ship.

MALFUNCTION: WAKE UP

A sleeping investigator is tapped lightly on his shoulder as he is sleeping. If he does not respond immediately, he is then more forcefully tapped. No doubt, he will wonder who is trying to wake him. When the lights go on, however, he will find himself alone. He might notice with a **Challenging D2 Observation test** that a loose cable is swaying slightly at the end of his bed.

MALIGNANCY: MISSING CREW

One of the crew members will not turn up for her shift. This will probably be an anonymous, minor crew member, say Jane Dolman a maintenance engineer. However, it could be one of the already named NPCs who the Investigators have come to know. The crew will look for her and word will go round asking where she is. However, there will be no sign at all of her. It will be as if she simply disappeared. The fact that this is never resolved, and Dolman's body is never found, should lend itself to the mystery of the situation. Although, eventually it should be clear enough that she was destroyed in some way by the Pandora itself.

MALIGNANCY: SHOCK HORROR

Parts of the ship become electrified with no warning. This can be foreshadowed with a couple of minor electrical discharges during the more mundane parts of the voyage. However, the full attack will work best when there is some urgent activity required on board. When the Investigators need to get to certain parts of the ship the way will be made hazardous by electrified deck plates or doors. Alternatively, if certain pieces of equipment are required, then

they will become electrified, harming the user, and rendering the equipment out of order.

Touching an electrified item inflicts 1+**↑**3 damage with the Dreadful and Stun qualities. This increases to 1+**↑**5 damage with the Dreadful, Knockback, and Stun qualities for devices that are hard-wired into the ship's internal power. A character who properly grounds himself—heavy-duty rubber protective gear or similar—gains 3 Soak against electrocution.

MALIGNANCY: CABLE CREATURE

If one of the Investigators is rooting around in a confined space, perhaps looking for the source of previous Dark Symmetry-caused faults, he can be attacked by this writhing mass of electronic components. The GM spends one to three Dark Symmetry points, and wires tangle around the investigator's limbs and drag him through access ducts towards the bowels of the ship, while doing constricting damage. He would need to win an Athletics test to get himself free, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent. Alternatively, this technological malice can manifest itself as a Twisted Marionette (see page 173).

If the Investigators come to the conclusion that it is the legacy technology remaining in the Pandora that is causing all this trouble then they will need to work out how to deal with it. The problem is that much of the infrastructure is still integral to the every-day running of the ship. It is a **Dire D4 Sciences test** to determine which systems are most vulnerable and to figure out how to remove them. Even if the Investigators (and crew) are able to work it out, it will take many hours to remove the relevant systems, and the Pandora will fight back, using the events shown above—particularly those marked as Malignancies.



EVENT: INCURSID INFESTATION — GAV WILLIAMS

Somehow, one of the crewmembers has become infested with an Incursid infant. Perhaps it happened while the Incursid was being brought aboard. Perhaps it was during one of the feeds. Perhaps the crewmember just got curious about the Incursid and wanted a closer look. Perhaps he just got unlucky with some Eaty-Neaty. However it happened, the crewmember will begin to go through the mood swings and urges described in **Part One**. For the sake of this description, the crewmember is Engineer Gav Williams, but the GM can select one of the other crew NPCs or even Foggy the cat if it will help the story, and twist the Incursid effects to suit that character.

Gav Williams has been an engineer for his entire career, twenty or so years. He has always loved the mechanical and powerful machines. During that time, he has seen the old technology, much superior technology, be replaced by increasingly inferior engines

and equipment. This was acceptable to him, as he understood the reasons behind it, and he always did his best to keep up with the new Capitol doctrine in regards to what was safe. Still, it nagged at him a little.

Now the Incursid parasite is inside him this has become a bigger deal. Suddenly he sees what a waste the years since the Fall have been. He has had an epiphany as to the reasons behind the Fall and to its solution. There is not enough human contribution to the mechanics of space travel, not enough physical flesh running the ship's engines.

The first step in rectifying this is to murder Chief Engineer Lechkov, and plug his organs into the main drive systems. He can do this off-camera, as a fait accompli before the Investigators get wind of his plan. In the privacy of the engine room on a deserted shift, Williams murdered Lechkov with a spanner, and then began extricating his organs from his body. He has assigned the various organs to different engine systems based on the mad, unknowable scheme of his disturbed mind. Thereafter, he will begin hunting down other members of the crew (including the Investigators) and murdering them in a quest for more parts for his engine.

If Williams manages to kill five victims and introduce them to his new engine layout then this will be enough psychic nutrition for his Incursid to morph into an adult. The adult will be able to sense the mother on board, and it will then attempt to free it. If the adult is given free-range of the ship and manages to kill and eat a good proportion of the crew, then it in turn will morph into one nasty mother.

ENGINEER GAV WILLIAMS, INFECTED BY AN INCURSID ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	7	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	3	2	-	3	3	1	-	3	2

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: Unfeeling Flesh: (All 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+**↑**4
- ▶ **Spanner (melee):** 1+**↑**5, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ▶ **Night Vision**
- ▶ **Desecrated Engine:** Williams, spurred on by the darkness coming from the larval Incursid, has turned the engines into some vile amalgam of flesh and metal, equal parts functioning machine and shrine to the depravity of the Dark Soul. Though the engine still works, it now draws upon the Dark Symmetry, and weaves that power into the ship. This reduces the ship's Reliability by one. Further, anyone who sees the engine must attempt a Daunting D3 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault. Williams never strays far from his creation unless he's hunting for 'parts'. As noted above, the desecrated engine is complete once five people have been killed and their remains integrated into the machine.

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ▶ **Maturation:** By spending five Dark Symmetry points once the desecrated engine is complete, the infant Incursid within Williams reaches maturity, and bursts from his body in a welter of gore and viscera. The Engineer Williams dies immediately, and an Incursid Adult (see page 73) emerges from the ruined remains. Anybody witnessing this must attempt a Daunting D3 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault.

EVENT: SABOTAGE—KRISTINE MANTEL

Kristine Mantel spends the first week or so of the journey to Mars looking for potential opportunities to sabotage the Pandora. She is bright and resourceful. She might decide to try to get to know one of the Investigators if she thinks that will help her mission. It is not clear what the best way to sabotage the Pandora might be. This will depend on the precautions taken by the Investigators and also other events on the journey. If Mantel thinks on her feet, she might be able to use one of the other events to her advantage.

Mantel is a chemistry teacher, and so one thing that will occur to her is to collect some of the chemicals used routinely aboard the ship and make some sort of explosive device with them. This will mean a bit of sneaking around with various substances and finding somewhere to store them. However, as a crew member she should manage this without arousing too much suspicion.

If Mantel decides that blowing up the Pandora is her best bet then it would probably not suit the campaign to have the ship destroyed utterly. It will be better to have the Pandora damaged in some way that makes subsequent encounters more difficult, or that forces the crew to head for Fuji Station.

If she is able to get access to the Incursid, it might suit her to let the creature loose and then hope it will kill all the crew, and therefore make the ship crash (or fly through space indefinitely). This might



El Min: Pirate chief, Captain of the Sword, and visionary of the Dark Symmetry.

mean her death, but that is something she is prepared to accept if she cannot think of anything better. She considers that as a last resort she can always climb into a life-pod and hope to get lucky.

Mantel is essentially a good person, if naïve, and believes she is doing the right thing. Even though her mission is in direct opposition to the Investigators, her relationship with them could get interesting. Her contact, Gary Steele, is potentially a useful ally for the Investigators in Part Three. However, their relationship with him might depend on how they interact with Steele in this section. If the Investigators were to learn of Kristine's ideals and the reasons behind her mission, then they might have some sympathy with that. On the other hand, if they notice her jeopardising their mission, they might just shoot her and not bother asking any questions.

EVENT: THE CULT OF DAMOCLES – EL MIN

The Cult of Damocles is essentially just a mindless pirate band. This cult of feral raiders roams space in the ship 'Sword' in search of cargo vessels it can pillage and crews it can either convert, destroy, or eat. The almost uncontrollable band is bound together through the force of will of the charismatic Heretical figure of El Min.

EL MIN

El Min guides his force through space, trusting to visions sent to him by godlike beings from beyond known space. Upon hazarding across another space vessel, if it is sufficiently undefended, the cult of Damocles strikes mercilessly. Although El Min is operating to some sort

of grand plan, his crew are oblivious to this. All they wish for is violence and destruction, and so far as they are concerned, El Min has led them to this. As soon as he fails to deliver, they will no doubt turn on him.

However, El Min is being guided. His visions are genuine. Higher forces are helping him. Recently El Min has received visions. He sees three boxes floating through space, one within another. At the centre of the inner-most box, there is some sort of prize creature. He has seen the signs. He has seen himself bring destruction upon mankind with the creature at his side. He has seen the chaos it can wreak, if only it could be set free.

El Min was sent the knowledge of how to find the creature. For many days, he has guided the Sword seemingly randomly through space, with only his faith as a compass. He has promised his men that soon they will find their biggest prize and their biggest fight. Sure enough, just as his dark gods promised the Sword has come across the Pandora. Now El Min realises that this is the moment his whole life has been leading towards. This is when his gods will show themselves to be true and he will be entirely vindicated.

EL MIN ☠

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	11	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	7	11	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	2	1	1	2	-	2	1	2	-

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 4** ▶▶ **Torso 8**
- ◀▶ **Arms 5** ▶▶ **Legs 6**
- ◀▶ **Serious 7** ▶▶ **Critical 4**
- ◀▶ **Mental 11**

SOAK: Heavily-Armoured Spacesuit: (Head 3, Arms 3, Torso 4, Legs 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Cruel Axe (melee):** 2+↑6, 2H, Gruesome, Vicious 2
- ◀▶ **Scrap Launcher (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑7, 2H, Spread 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◀▶ **Unnatural Bloodthirst:** El Min is a deadly foe, driven by an unnatural lust for death and destruction. His followers don't truly know the magnitude of his craving for destruction. Whenever El Min kills an enemy within Close range, he immediately adds one point to the Dark Symmetry pool.

DARK SYMMETRY SPENDS

- ◀▶ **Servant of Darkness:** El Min is empowered by the power of Algeroth, who is fuelling the pirate's bloodlust to inhuman proportions. El Min knows the following Dark Gifts: Black Fire, Dark Curse, Heightened Prowess, and Painless.

EL MIN'S PIRATES ▲

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
10		10		9		7	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
8		7		8		7	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Crude Shotgun (ranged):** Medium, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1

- ◀▶ **Makeshift Club (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Knockdown, Stun
- ◀▶ **Cruel Axe (melee):** 1+↑7, Unbalanced, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Raiders:** The pirates are practiced raiders and ambushers, skilled at arriving suddenly, killing and stealing as they please, and leaving as quickly as they arrived. A pirate gains one bonus Momentum on Stealth tests at the start of combat when ambushing.
- ◀▶ **Berserk:** El Min's pirates are heedless of harm and peril, driven to madness by their desire for slaughter. A pirate may choose to gain one, two, or three bonus Momentum on any Close Combat test made to attack. However, if he does so, then any character that attacks the pirate (in close combat or at range) before the start of his next turn gains an equal amount of bonus Momentum.

SPACE BATTLE

The Sword is an odd design, created by unbalanced pirates from an old mining vessel. It is essentially a pointed blade with an engine. Its one mode of attack is to ram an opposing ship as hard as possible to penetrate its outer skin. The point of the ship then opens up like a tricuspid beak allowing the pirates to pour out.

THE SWORD

RELIABILITY: 1

QUALITIES	Ship, Rugged				
INTERPLANETARY RANGE	50 days	COMBAT MANOEUVRABILITY		0	
CREW	1 commander (Crew 1) 1 pilot 1 engineer (Crew 2)		PASSENGERS	60	
DAMAGE	LOCATION	SOAK	SURFACE DAMAGE	SYSTEM DAMAGE	STRUCTURE DAMAGE
	ENGINE	2	3	3	3
	HULL	3	4	4	4
IMPACT DAMAGE	3+↑5		FUEL LOADS	6	
ARMAMENTS	None				
NOTES	<p>Ramming Prow: When the Sword takes a Ramming Speed action, its Impact Damage gains the Armour Piercing 2 and Vicious 1 qualities. It does not gain these qualities when it is the target of a Ramming Speed action, or in any other situation where Impact Damage is used. Immediately after a Ramming Speed action, the Sword's passengers begin boarding the target vessel, as described above.</p>				

This should happen to the Pandora. If the Investigators get no warning of the impending attack, the ship will lurch suddenly, potentially throwing everyone off balance and the excruciating noise of grinding and buckling metal will echo throughout the ship. The GM can decide exactly when and whereabouts in the Pandora the Sword penetrates, somewhere there are some Investigators, and perhaps close to the Incursid might be good choices.

The pirates should spring from the nose of the sword like demented savages. They are barely dressed, covered with body paintings and piercings. They favour primitive or makeshift weapons, blades made from sharpened deck plates or pieces of machinery as clubs. There should be about as many pirates as crew of the Pandora. Unless the Investigators can funnel the Heretics into a single defensible space, they will break out and soon pitched battles should rage all across the Pandora. The pirates will be able to pick off the defenceless crewmembers with cruel abandon.

El Min will support his warriors with his dark powers. It should be quite apparent to the Investigators who the leader is, and how much he is helping them with his Dark Gifts. The pirates are mindless combatants, and so getting rid of El Min should leave them disorganised, though they will still fight aggressively.

RESOLUTION

If the Investigators manage to repel the pirates then they may have a problem. Some of the less frenzied pirates may make their way back to the Sword and attempt to escape. This is potentially a disaster for the Investigators, because that will leave a giant hole in the side of the Pandora. If some Heretics do attempt this, then the Investigators should be given a warning, the opportunity to realise the implications of such a retreat, and the chance to prevent it.

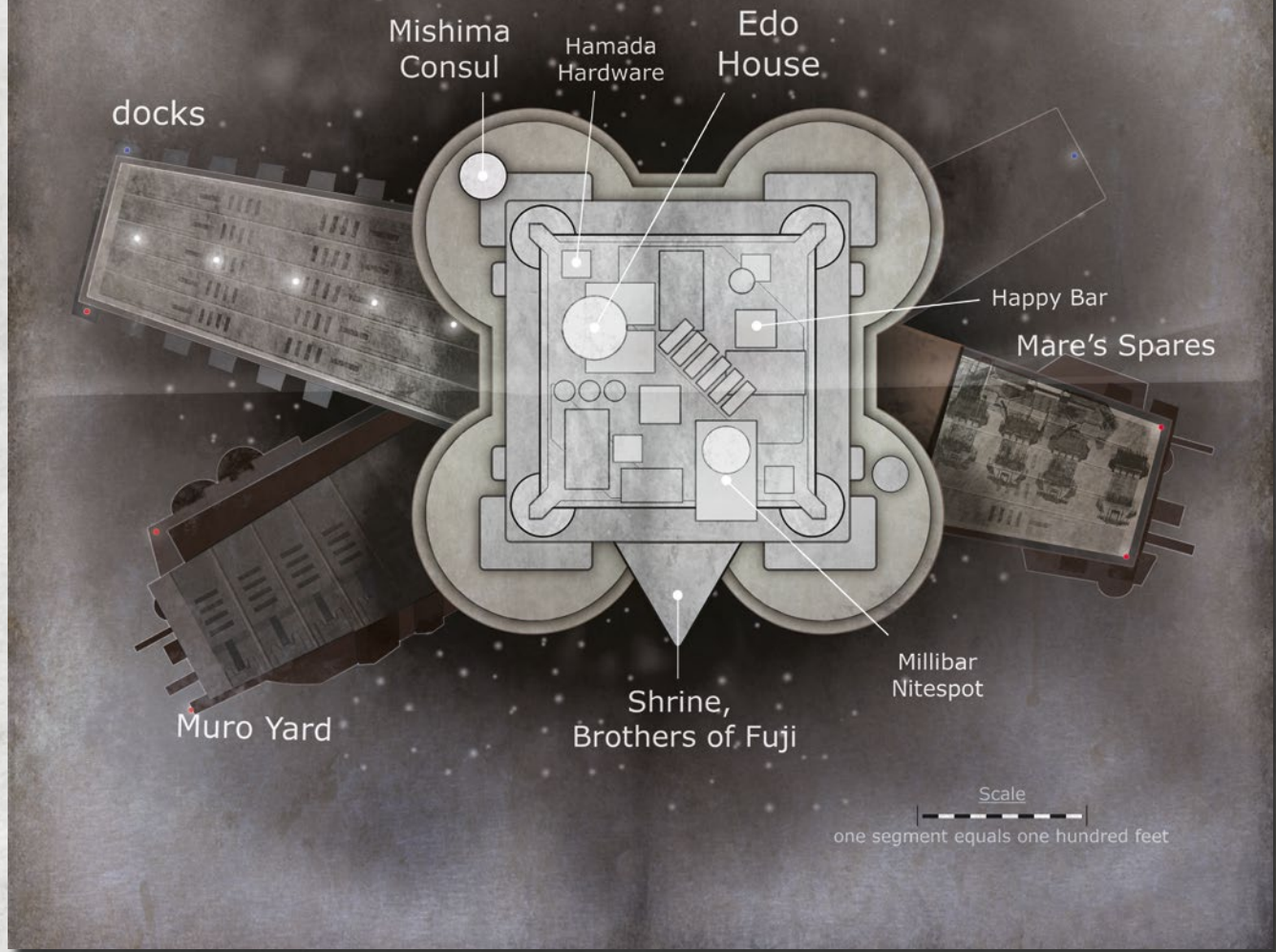
If all the pirates are defeated then the Investigators will still have the problem of an enemy spaceship stuck in the side of the Pandora. It will need removing before any atmospheric manoeuvres can even be considered. It might even be unstable enough to need addressing as soon as possible. The obvious solution is to nurse the Pandora along to somewhere like Fuji Station (see below).

If El Min is victorious, then he will organise his rabble, to take control of the Pandora, and the voices in his head will tell him to bring it to San Dorado as planned. The pirates will attempt to pass as the Pandora's legitimate crew until they find the right moment to set the Incursid free. El Min will also nominate some of his band to accept the gift of Incursid eggs into their bodies.



Fuji Station: not all alone in the night.

Fuji Station



If the pirates are successful, but El Min dies, then they will just fly off to continue their random pillaging of the solar system. If any prisoners they have taken refuse to convert to their way of life, then they will be slain in all sorts of terrible ways.

EVENT: FUJI STATION

The chances are that over the course of the journey to Mars, the Pandora will suffer some serious damage. This could happen from internal sabotage, attack from Heretic vessels, or the ship itself rebelling against the crew. This damage should mean that the ship can barely continue, and it certainly won't be able to enter Martian atmosphere. This will be an opportunity for one of the higher-ranking crew members to mention Fuji Station. As luck would have it, the

station is not too far away. Similarly, the Pandora's crew could be depleted so severely that more manpower would be required to keep the vessel safe. In this case, too, a trip to Fuji Station would be the best solution.

Fuji Station, situated somewhere vaguely between Earth and Mars, used to be a secret Mishima military space station. Since the Fall, however, and a Dark Symmetry inspired disaster there, it was all but abandoned. Since then Mishima-associated freelancers have taken it over and turned it into a sort of deep space way-station and truck stop. Now it serves civilian, freelancer, pirate, and any other sorts of space travellers. Even the military still visit if they need urgent supplies. The station has become a bastion of free thinking and private enterprise, or from a slightly different perspective, a hive of villainy.

The old Mishima military base has been removed wholesale leaving a huge, echoing shell. Over the years, this was gradually filled by a makeshift shanty town of buildings made of scrap, old space vessels and shipping containers. This place gives the impression of a poor, industrial suburb of one of the great cities, suddenly uprooted and stuffed into a giant hangar, in space. The station has a population of about 500, with about that many again passing through at any one time.

Mishima still officially controls the station but that corporation's actual power there is almost negligible. The other corporations like to keep an eye on the place, too, and there will be agents from most of the corporations on the station, going about their normal lives as bounty hunters, miners, traders, or space crew. These people will be interested in the Pandora if rumours of its unusual cargo happen to spread.

Fuji Station has a couple of scrap and repair yards, the impressive and reliable shipyard, Muro Yard, and the dubious-looking Mare's Spares. It has several blocks of hotel and lodging quarters, all much alike and best described as perfunctory. It also has a selection of bars and cantinas which cater to all the things a space ship crewmember might want on a short stop-off on a long journey.

There are also a good number of potential crew, who, for whatever reason, have found themselves on the station looking for a job. In addition, if the Investigators are desperate for crew, many of those on shore leave will defect to the Pandora for the right price.

The Pandora will be in such a state that it is in urgent need of spare parts that hopefully can be found on Fuji Base. Alternatively, at the very least, there should be bits and pieces there that can be jury-rigged into adequate repairs.

EVENT OVERVIEW

Part of the point of this encounter is that the Investigators should have to work out how best to get the repairs done, who is best to deal with, and what deals to make. Usually credit is arranged for representatives of the corporations or large freelancer companies that require repairs. Therefore, this should not be a concern for the Pandora's crew. Unfortunately for them, the Pandora will be refused credit. Therefore, unless the Investigators are carrying considerable amounts of money on them, the Pandora will not be able to afford these repairs. Even if the Investigators are carrying lots of money, the repairs should probably cost more than they have, simply to make their visit more challenging. If the Investigators insist on trying to pay for repairs, they have a Restriction of 4 and a Cost of 30.

The Investigators should have to sacrifice something to get what they need, whether this involves becoming indebted to certain factions or having to double cross them, or fight for them. They could contact Capitol and wait for the relevant money, or equipment

to arrive, but this will take time, and factions on board Fuji Station will be moving against the Investigators promptly.

The docking of the Pandora might appear like a run-of-the-mill event for most of the Fuji Station occupants. However, for those in the know and with an eye for the main chance, there will be enough tell-tale clues to arouse their greedy interest. They will then subtly question the crew and the Investigators in order to work out what the Pandora's secret might be. Even if the Investigators do not let the cat out of the bag, the regular crew might, and it will not be long before the main powers of Fuji Station decide that the Pandora has something to hide, and smell an opportunity to profit.

In order to get their ship repaired and be on their way as soon as possible, the Investigators will have to interact with and make alliances with these factions. They will need to tread carefully and make wise decisions because if things go wrong they could get themselves arrested or have their vessel seized.

MISHIMA CONSUL

Situated close to the dock yards, the Mishima Consul ostensibly controls the station. Actually, it is little more than a pointless bureaucracy. All arrivals and departures at the station need to be registered at the consul office. The office demands to be informed of the full travel itinerary, crew manifest and cargo details of any vessel. This will be made clear to the crew of the Pandora when they arrive. In truth, however, though this is not well known among more legitimate vessels, this can be safely ignored. In fact, any instructions from the Mishima Consul can probably be ignored. The office just does not have the manpower or inclination to enforce any consequences.

JIRO SHIGI—The Mishima Honorary Consul Jiro Shigi is a little, weasely bureaucrat never happier than when he is filling in forms, but never more out of his depth when trying to enforce the rules and regulations that he serves. Shigi will make it clear that every captain that lands on Fuji Station must ultimately answer to him. Ultimately, he is powerless to insist. He has a couple of clerks in his employ, but they are no more impressive than Shigi, and no more able to assert the letter of Mishima law.

SERINA TAKA—The most powerful person on Fuji Station is the beautiful, elegant Serina Taka. It is rumoured she is over one hundred years old, but a strict and expensive regime of 'youth-giving' therapies means she barely looks thirty. She is always flanked by her four stylishly dressed female body-guards. Taka owns many of the businesses operating on Fuji Station, most notably the Edo House and Muro Yard.

She has a number of contacts and spies operating throughout the station. They will have the wherewithal to find out as much as possible about the Pandora. This will soon lead Taka to realise that the Pandora might hold a valuable secret and then she will summon the Investigators to an audience.

EDO HOUSE

By far the most luxurious and expensive of the drinking dens of Fuji Station, the Edo House caters to most needs. Boasting the best floor shows for several million miles in any direction (not that there is much competition) the place has gained notoriety among space-faring folk. Many a crewmember has blown his entire voyage's pay-packet during just a few hours stopover at the Edo House.

The staff of the Edo House also make a lot of money, on Taka's behalf, by selling SLO to people who just want their space voyages to pass pleasantly and quickly.

MURO YARD

Muro Yard is by far the bigger of the two yards on Fuji Station, and it gives by far the better impression. It is tidy and relatively clean and the mechanics give the air of competence. The spare parts of various types are arranged in an orderly and logical manner, and the ships currently getting fitted out all look reasonably space-worthy. Repairs here cost a good deal higher than at Mare's Spares. In addition, looking at both yards it is difficult to think of a reason why one might choose that one over this, except for the expense.

SERINA TAKA ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	8	7	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	11	12	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	1	-	-	2	2	4	3	2	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Tanto (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **I Know People:** Taka may re-roll one d20 on any Lifestyle tests, and may obtain a favour from any person in a position of power on the station with a Challenging D2 Lifestyle test. She will only do this to aid a player character if they are able to offer her something of equivalent value.
- ▶ **Ruthless Manipulator:** Taka knows how people think, and how best to get them to think what she wants them to think. Taka may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add 2d20 to a Persuade test to deceive or intimidate a person.

- ▶ **Eyes Everywhere:** Due to her network of informants, Taka knows everyone long before they meet her, if they ever do. Taka gains three bonus Momentum on all Insight tests.

TAKA'S BODYGUARD ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	10	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	9	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	-	1	1	2	2	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 7

SOAK: **Bulletproof Vest under Ballistic Nylon business suit:** (Arms 1, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Ronin Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+ \uparrow 4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ▶ **Katana (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 7, Unbalanced, Parry 1, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Bodyguard:** The bodyguards reduce the difficulty of the Defend Other response action by one step. They gain two bonus Momentum on Observation tests made at the start of combat to avoid being ambushed. Finally, when seizing initiative during combat, they pay only one Dark Symmetry point.
- ▶ **Deadly Blade:** The bodyguards are skilled combatants, experts with a long blade. When making a close combat attack, they may re-roll two \uparrow on the damage roll. Further, their lethal skill means that their attacks gain the Vicious 1 quality (included above). Finally, they may spend one Dark Symmetry point when targeted by a ranged attack to replace Parry 1 with Full Defence 1.

TYPICAL EDO HOUSE EMPLOYEE ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	8	9	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	1	1	-	2	2	3	2	2	2

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◆ **Poisoned Blade (melee):** 1 + \uparrow 3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2, Toxic 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◆ **Pretty Poison:** The staff of Edo House are graceful, subtle, and pleasant, always careful to make their customers feel at ease. However, when threatened, they can be very deadly indeed, for they are highly proficient in the subtler deadly arts. Employees of Edo House may re-roll one d20 on all Persuade tests, and may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add an additional 2d20 to a Persuade test. However, their skill at poisoning increases the difficulty of Resistance tests to resist poisons they administer by one step. They may spend one Dark Symmetry point to generate one Dark Symmetry icon automatically when rolling for damage with a poisoned blade.

TAI HANDA

Tai Handa is Taka's biggest rival on Fuji Station. He owns several businesses too, including Mare's Spares, and the Happy Bar. He is obsessed with Taka and tries to thwart her at every opportunity. He

might not be that interested in the Pandora or the Investigators until he learns that Taka is interested, then his will go all out to get a piece of that action. Handa must be careful how directly he opposes Taka, however, as he has a lot less manpower and many fewer resources than she does on Fuji Station.

Taka is short and fat, bordering on the round. He would make a comical picture, except for being a ruthless gangster who would be happy to see someone killed for the mistake of laughing at his appearance. When he gets angry, his cheeks glow red and sweat pours from his brow. When this happens, his minions know to try to keep out of his way, or risk being senselessly picked on.

In Handa's world, the hierarchy of patronage and respect is all. An investigator must behave impeccably if he is to gain an audience with Handa. On the other hand, if the Investigators are summoned by him, he will expect them to acquiesce immediately and drop whatever they are doing.

Handa will try to use whatever it is the Investigators are up to, against Taka. He will learn that Taka is interested in them, and that will be all he requires to attempt to make the Investigators a better offer. After the Investigators have interacted with Taka, Handa will approach them and insist that they do whatever deal they made with her, with him instead. This should put the Investigators in a sticky spot.



Despite her charm, Serina Taka is one of the most dangerous and ruthless people on Fuji Station.

HAPPY BAR

The Happy Bar is inaptly named. It is host to dour space crew lamenting their lot as they waste their brief space voyage intermissions, and hard-nosed freelancers looking for work. The place is as unfriendly to strangers as one might imagine, and it is not unusual for a newcomer, especially one with a big mouth or asking too many questions, to get involved in a brawl, or even fire fight.

The Happy Bar is a good place to hire some muscle or to find a buyer or seller of illicit goods. Tai Handa is often here, in the corner surrounded by bodyguards talking to business allies. The quickest way to die in Fuji Station is to approach Handa's table without being invited.

MARE'S SPARES

This is a dump of a repair yard, being strewn with all sorts of bits and pieces in no particular order. The alarm bells should immediately ring for any knowledgeable engineer that this is not a good place to get the Pandora fixed, but if the Investigators do not have access to Serina Taka's Muro Yard then this might actually be their best bet.

The staff-members here are slovenly and uncaring. Almost any question will be met by a scratch of the head and an intake of breath while they work out just how badly they can get away with fleecing the customer or how long they can delay actually doing any work. The one ship currently being repaired looks like it should have been scrapped years ago. As one of the Investigators walks by, one of its parts falls off.

TAI HANDA ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	10	6	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	10	10	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	2	1	-	-	3	2	2	3	1	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **'Airbrush' Shotgun (ranged):** Close, 1+**↑**6, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1
- ◆ **Straight Razor (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Honour and Etiquette:** Handa is a strong believer in the importance of etiquette, respect, and correct behaviour, and he will

not tolerate those who act improperly in his presence. Further, he has little patience for those who joke about his appearance or make light of him in any other way. All Persuade and Lifestyle tests made to interact with Handa increase their Repercussion range by three.

- ◆ **Rule through Fear:** Handa's ruthlessness drives his minions to utter loyalty. Any NPC loyal to Handa reduces the difficulty of all Willpower tests by one, to a minimum of one. Further, Handa may spend one Dark Symmetry point to add 2d20 to a skill test taken by one of his subordinates.

TYPICAL HANDA'S HOODLUM ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
11	8	9	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	6	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-

WOUNDS: 4

SOAK: **Bulletproof Vest:** (Torso 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **P-60 Punisher Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+**↑**5, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ◆ **Brass Knuckles (melee):** 1+**↑**5, 1H, Vicious 1
- ◆ **Cudgel (melee):** 1+**↑**5, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Brute Force:** Banda's thugs are savage, unrelenting brutes. Few people escape their attentions without broken bones. The thugs may re-roll up to two **↑** when rolling for damage with a close combat attack. In addition, they gain two bonus Momentum when attacking any enemy that is currently stunned or prone.
- ◆ **Grasping**
- ◆ **Ignorance:** Banda's thugs are aggressive dullards, never required to think about much except their next target and their next cut of the profits. Their loyalty comes as much from the fact that they have never considered an alternative as from their fear of Banda. Command and Persuade tests made against one of Banda's thugs increase in difficulty by one step.
- ◆ **Scare:** Banda's thugs are particularly intimidating, and know just how to dissuade an enemy from fighting back. By attempting an Average D1 Persuade test, they may force an enemy within Close range to make an Average D1 Willpower test or suffer a mental assault. For each Momentum spent, he may force one additional enemy within Close range to make the test.

THE MILLIBAR NITESPOT

The Millibar is the most happening spot on Fuji Station. It has live music and karaoke and is always busy. It might not be the ideal environment for clandestine meetings with corporate agents and guns-for-hire, but it is popular with your common-or-garden space crew.

If the Investigators arrange a meeting with any of the independent agents on Fuji Station, the chances are it will be here. It is hard to work out the exact details of an illicit deal when shouting to be heard over the sound of a drunk spaceship captain singing the latest hit song, but it might need to be done. The nightclub (and it is always night in space) has the sort of drug scene that the Investigators will be familiar with from their time in Cheapside.

JACK STELLAR

If the Investigators are having trouble picking their way through the rival factions of Fuji Station or need some guidance then Jack Stellar can introduced himself to them. He is a square jawed, self-confident sort of character with a charm and easy manner which seems to make people want to trust him. In fact, Stellar is so personable and good-looking that any discerning investigator might just take an instant dislike to him.



Jack Stellar: double, triple, or quadruple agent?

Stellar is actually an agent for Capitol posing as a freelance bounty hunter. He hangs out mostly at the Happy Bar but has his ear to the ground all over Fuji Station. Once he realises that the Investigators are operating on behalf of Capitol he will be open about his allegiances. Stellar will not be able to solve the Investigators' problems. He does not have money or much pull with either Taka or Handa, but he will be able to guide them through the etiquette on Fuji Station and give them a decent idea of who is who and what is what.

On the other hand, Stellar could just turn out to be an agent for Taka or Handa posing as an agent for Capitol in order to get into the Investigators' good books. In that case, the information he gives will be biased towards his patron. He will also use his cover to try to get the inside story on the Pandora's cargo. On the third hand, Stellar could turn out to be an agent for Handa or Taka posing as an agent for Taka or Handa posing as an agent for Capitol. Alternatively, he could turn out to be an agent for Mishima posing as an agent for....

Stellar can be used to make things as simple or as complex as the GM needs them to be in order to challenge the Investigators just the right amount when navigating their way through the intrigue of Fuji Station.

JACK STELLAR ★

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
9		8		9		11	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
8		10		9		11	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	2	1	-	2	2	3	2	1	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Medium Military Shoulder Pads and Ballistic Nylon Overcoat: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **M13 Bolter (ranged):** Close, 1+ \uparrow 6, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters
- ▶ **Shock Baton (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 5, 1H, Dreadful, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Deceptive:** Stellar lies as easily as most people breathe. He rolls 3d20 instead of 2d20 when making Persuade tests to lie, and all skill tests (using any skill) to try and discern his true intentions or motivations increase in difficulty by two steps.

◆ **Sow Doubt:** Stellar's lies and half-truths are so convincing that they can cause a person to doubt their own motivations. On a successful Persuade test, he may spend one Momentum to inflict one Dread on his target. He may spend one or more Dark Symmetry points when inflicting Dread to inflict an additional ↑ Dread for each Dark Symmetry point spent.

FELIX SCHULER

Schuler is a small time wheeler-dealer who hangs out mostly at the Millibar Nitespot and the Happy Bar. He genuinely knows or knows of nearly everyone on Fuji Station. He will make himself known to the Investigators and offer his services. For a (quite high) price, he will offer to introduce the Investigators to whomever they might need to meet. He can also give them the lowdown on station politics.

While he interacts with the Investigators, Schuler will be constantly probing to find out what exactly their cargo might be (provided the Investigators have not let this slip already). This questioning might be pretty obvious to anyone who is paying attention. Schuler is not as subtle a man as Jack Stellar is.

In fact, Schuler is also a Mishima agent, and a good ally of Serina Taka. Schuler's Mishima contacts might not be too relevant to the situation on Fuji Station, because Mishima's influence is not strong here, despite appearances. Nevertheless, Schuler will not be afraid to leverage real and imagined Mishima contacts to manipulate the Investigators.

Schuler will however report much of what he knows about the Investigators to Serina Taka if he thinks he can make some capital out of it. He will also be keen to inform the Investigators of Taka's influence, playing up her importance (though she is very important in any case) and playing down Tai Handa's.

FELIX SCHULER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	7	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	2	3	2	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **MP-105 machine pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Burst, 1H, Close Quarters, Spread 1
- ◆ **Slicer (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Probing Questions:** Schuler knows that the best way to get information from people is to ask questions. If you ask the right questions, people may even divulge secrets they don't wish to share, without even realising it. Schuler gains two bonus Momentum on all Persuade tests when attempting to get someone to reveal information. However, he isn't always as subtle as he thinks he is, so the Repercussion range on his Persuade tests increases by two.
- ◆ **Introductions, for a Price:** Schuler has an extensive network of contacts, and is willing to give access to that network... at a cost. Buying an introduction from Schuler is an acquisition with a Restriction of 2 and a Cost of 10. Schuler's network of contacts is extensive, but not as extensive as he makes out—a Challenging D2 Insight test can discern whether or not he's being truthful about having a particular connection.

HAMADA HARDWARE

Hamada Hardware is a relatively small, cluttered store near the docking bays of Fuji Station. It is remarkable for the sheer amount and the eclectic nature of the goods on sale. The store buys and sells and it looks like there might be at least one piece of equipment from every ship that has ever passed through Fuji Station here. Essentially, if the Investigators need some reasonable piece of personal equipment, or a tool, or weapon, the GM should consider it available here. Because of the distance from any competition, however, the Cost will be at least double what it might cost in a large city.

THE SHRINE OF THE BROTHERS OF FUJI

Built into the very superstructure of the space station out of pieces of spaceship thrusting into the void, the Shrine of the Brothers of Fuji is like some sort of cubist fantasy space church. This is the only place for millions of miles to seek sanctuary from a hostile universe, or to sit in simple contemplation during a brief shore-leave.

BROTHER MICHAEL

Brother Michael attends to the itinerant flock. He was once a violent pirate who saw that he had been called to a higher mission. Brother Michael is clearly tough and brawny, and it is not hard to imagine him as the pirate he once was. Though he brings an air of calm and contemplation, he also brings a steely determination. Occasionally a flash of the old ruthlessness can be glimpsed behind his pious demeanour.

Should Brother Michael learn what is on board the Pandora things could get tricky for the investigators. Brother Michael will demand that the monster is killed and utterly destroyed. He will act

immediately to see that this demand is met and he will not be put off by the Investigators.

If the Investigators do not acquiesce, then the Brother can call upon the Mishima Consul and also request Serina Taka bring her weight to bear. He can also raise a mob. If he called upon the good folk of Fuji Station then many of them, say fifty or so, will march unquestioningly to his call.

BROTHER MICHAEL ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	9	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	8	13	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	3	2	1	1	2	-	2	2	1	1

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Armoured Vestments, Medium Military Shoulder Pads: (Head 1, Torso 2, Arms 2, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **P-60 Punisher Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+↑4, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown, Vicious 1
- ▶ **Punisher Sword (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Parry 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Reformed Pirate:** Michael, though he now walks a righteous path, is still extremely knowledgeable about the criminal underworld. If questioned about it, he can grant two bonus Momentum to the next Thievery test a character attempts. However, he will only grant this information to those who he believes are trustworthy.
- ▶ **Student of the Art:** Brother Michael has studied the Art of the Light under Brotherhood Mystics, and while he is hardly the most powerful Mystic, even a small amount of power is extremely valuable. Brother Michael has Mysticism Expertise +1, Mysticism Focus 1, and knows the following Spells: Barrier, Blessing, Cloak of Doubt, Compel, Contempt, Impel, and Succour. The spells Cloak of Doubt and Compel can be found on page 26 of the Brotherhood sourcebook.

PROBLEMS

However the Investigators and the rest of the crew of the Pandora approach Fuji Station in regard to their secret cargo, they are bound to arouse suspicions. If anyone reveals the true nature of their cargo

then that will be the worst case, but keeping it secret will also cause problems. The most likely turn of events will be that Serina Taka tries to make a forceful move for the cargo and Tai Handa will react to that. There are plenty of other characters on the station who will have a vested interest in this conflict and will try to play the Investigators off against one of the other factions.

No one on Fuji Station is the Investigators' friend, although many might pretend to be. The Investigators stumble into the middle of a cold war between the various factions on the station, and the opportunity to use the Pandora's cargo for gain is likely to tilt the balance of power and cause a hot war to break out. The Investigators can be victims in this conflict, or if they do well, they can become power brokers.

Soon after the Investigators have landed on Fuji Station they will get into a conversation with one of Taka's agents. The agent will be plausible and charming. If the Investigators end up at Edo House or Muro Yard then it will be easy enough to play this, but wherever they end up there should be an opportunity to have one of Taka's contacts talk to them. The agent will pry into the Investigators' business but will manage to be subtle about it. Even if the Investigators are impeccable about not revealing their cargo, these agents will get some information, or at least some sort of suspicion about it, from the other crew of the Pandora. The GM should give the Investigators a chance to explore Fuji Station for a while. It should take several days for the ship to be ready, in any case. If the Investigators decide to buy spares from or get their ship repaired at Muro Yard, this will play into Taka's hands. Or, if they use Mare's Spares, this will give Handa a similar opportunity. These choices will affect how Taka and Handa go about manipulating the Investigators in their squabble with each other.

After the Investigators have had time to organise the repair of their ship, and maybe relax a bit, one of Taka's bodyguards will come to see them and tell them that Serina Taka wishes to see them. The Investigators best bet will be to go with the bodyguard immediately, no questions asked. Any reluctance or messing around will make things harder for them, generally. This plotline relies on the Investigators choosing the Muro Yard to repair their ship. If they should choose Mare's Spares instead, events will need to be rejigged slightly but the main thrust of the plot can stay the same.

Taka will receive the Investigators in her luxurious corner of Fuji Station. The sudden change from utilitarian, industrial surroundings to Taka's strangely chic and exotic boudoir should knock them out of their stride, slightly.

Taka will very graciously welcome the Investigators to 'her' station and wish them a pleasant stay. She will then inform them that unfortunately no credit can be offered to accommodate their repairs. This is unusual, and it should strike the Investigators as odd. However, she will hope that some sort of agreement could be negotiated, if

there were anything on the Pandora that could be bartered instead. The Investigators will know that the Pandora has no payload except the Incursid, and so they will be in a bind. Unless they offer to hand over the Incursid, there is bound to be an impasse, and Taka will offer them time to think things over. She will also offer the Investigators an evening at the Edo House as her guests.

The Investigators can leave to enjoy the Edo House and consider other solutions. They should end up at Mare's Spares at some point looking for an alternative place to get the Pandora repaired, but even if they don't they will be approached by a couple of hoods and invited to talk to Tai Handa.

Handa will explain that he can easily get the repairs done, but he is interested in what they and Taka had been discussing. He will want to know because he is interested in any way to thwart Taka. This means he is prepared to undercut Taka's price for repairs. The GM should keep in mind that despite his obsession with Taka, Handa is a tough gangster and will want to make whatever he can out of the deal. This will mean him keeping his cards close to his chest and trying to play the Investigators off against Taka.

At this point, if they have not met him before, Jack Stellar should make himself known to the Investigators and offer to help them navigate through the fraught politics of Fuji Station. The chances are, however, that Stellar is merely an agent of Taka or Handa attempting to manipulate the Investigators to his advantage.

Felix Schuler will also try to get in on the act. It might be worthwhile having Schuler approach the Investigators offering, for the right price, to tell them what is really going on. He will arrange to meet them somewhere private later. When the Investigators turn up they will find him dead, either shot by Handa's goons or stabbed by Taka's bodyguard.

SOLUTIONS

Instigated by the arrival of the Pandora, a serious clash between Taka and Handa is inevitable. The Investigators should find themselves in the position of having to trade something with Taka or with Handa in order to get their ship space-worthy again. The fact that they are not able to trade any of their cargo should arouse suspicions even more. Taka and Handa will both be intrigued as to what is really on board the Pandora and anxious that they should get it before their rival.

Sooner or later, one or both of the factions will learn what the cargo really is. Taka will certainly be interested in a biological weapon that Capitol is anxious to get its hands on. She will be prepared to impound the Pandora and demand a ransom from Capitol, although she will put it in terms that are more diplomatic. This will give Handa the opportunity to move against Taka that he has always wanted.

The Investigators will return from the Edo House, or wherever they have been spending their time, to find the Pandora surrounded by Taka's private militia. They will not be allowed on board, although they will be treated very politely. The Investigators will be given free range of the station, but it should be clear they are being watched and they will not be allowed near the Pandora.

Once Taka openly opposes Capitol in this way, Handa will decide that he can throw in his lot with the crew of the Pandora and expect Capitol's protection in return. Therefore, he will offer to work with the Investigators to defeat Taka. This plan must be left for the Investigators to come up with, but they need to defeat Taka's soldiers and take back the Pandora long enough for Handa's slacker workforce to repair it.

Handa will probably need some sort of guarantee of Capitol's protection and he will not want to be left on Fuji Station at Taka's mercy while waiting for his help to filter through corporate bureaucracy. So if he is to let the Investigators leave on the Pandora he will need to be left in a position of strength on Fuji Station, preferably with Taka gone.

If it turns into an out and out gang war between the two factions then Taka can call on about twenty-five militia and about that many additional station personnel prepared to fight for her. The advantage the personnel will have is that they are unknown to the Investigators, and many to Handa's gang, and so can crop up at unexpected moments: visitors to the Edo House be warned. In opposition, Handa can call on the ten hoods under his direct control and another 5 or so agents. He might also be able to recruit a few freelancers, especially if the Investigators have the money.

THE INCURSID STRIKES

If Taka, or indeed Handa, manages to take full control of the Pandora without having done any deals with the Investigators, then they will no doubt wonder what the mysterious cargo of the Pandora actually is. They are likely to open up the cargo bay to see what lies inside. If it suits the GM they can do this so recklessly that they release the Incursid mother. Depending on what the Investigators are up to at the time, this will likely result in the Incursid getting rid of all the militia and then running amok through Fuji Station.

If Brother Michael hears about the Incursid mother then he will attempt to mobilise the entire space station against whoever is in possession of it. There will be a proper 'pitchforks and torches' monster hunt involving as many of the populace of the station as he can muster.



THE DEREGULATION ZONE

SUMMARY

The journey from Luna to Mars reaches its end and the Investigators are due to deliver the captive Incursid to the Martian offices of Home Made Foods. Whilst they may well now suspect that their clients are not all that they seem to be, the truth is more complicated still.

The employees of Home Made Foods have certainly been up to no good, but in the end, they have been the unwitting stooges of their new owner, Don Stevia, the head of a secretive club of executive-salary cultists called The Invisible Hand. Whilst Home Made Foods have been dabbling with the malign and dangerous force of Dark Symmetry in a reckless spirit of research and development they have not been witting servants of the Dark Soul and its Apostles.

By the time the Investigators reach San Dorado, Don has decided that the staff of Home Made Foods have played their part in his plans and probably know too much. Through his private police service, he sets about liquidating the company, murdering its employees in the process.

Provided they survive the welcoming committee Don has arranged for them, the Investigators can attempt to work out what's going on by following various leads. Investigating the offices of Home Made Foods reveals a site of devastation and slaughter which, for some reason, local police forces are reluctant to investigate. Looking into the affairs of Parasol Financial Services may turn up a few clues, and if they dealt fairly with his contact in the earlier part of the adventure Gary Steele may well furnish the Investigators with the information needed to work out the villains behind all the trouble.

During this period, the Investigators will also notice a significant ramping up in the military efforts to thwart the Dark Legion and hear of campaigns against the alien forces in other parts of the solar system. A related issue is the clandestine creation of a special squad of Doomtroopers, tasked with a mission to infiltrate a Dark Legion Citadel with a forlorn hope of ending the threat once and for all. Whilst the mission these Doomtroopers are to undertake is top secret, The Invisible Hand have found out about it and are making efforts to compromise it. Investigators may learn some of the facts surrounding these activities, but won't understand their significance at first.

More routes of enquiry become open to the Investigators, but they had better be careful about keeping their profile low as EZ Emergencies—a local police, fire, and rescue service—is owned by Group 5 and makes for an effective paramilitary force.

Should they prevail the Investigators may well learn that Don Stevia, CEO of Handsure Holdings, director of Group 5 and untouchable luminary of Capitolian high society, is also the prime mover of The Invisible Hand. Mere mortals such as themselves are unlikely ever to come within striking distance of this man, and attempts to defame him will almost certainly result in their own ruin. However, they may be able to meet him if they decide to take part in his prime time ruthless elimination game show, *The Deputy*.

MARS AT WAR

Although it would be easy to forget it in the Hyeck district, Mars is at war. Dark Legion forces assail humanity all across the solar system, and at this point only a few bastions of civilisation are strong enough for life to carry on as normal. For the most part, the megacorporations are on a war footing, with soldiers being ferried to the front lines to try and keep the enemy away from the major cities. So desperate is Capitol that they're drafting personnel from the Capitol Security Services to fight alongside their regular army. This, amongst other effects, has allowed private security firms to step in and take up the slack in maintaining order.

The GM should remember that the war is ongoing, and while most citizens in Capitol would rather not think about it, it's pressing on their minds as they go about their business.

THE HYECK DISTRICT

The action in this section of the adventure takes place in a quarter of San Dorado known as the Hyeck District. The Hyeck District has been set up in recent years at the behest of numerous lobbyists who have bought significant influence with the less democratic institutions of the Capitolian ruling order. It lies within the lawless and dilapidated part of San Dorado known as the Sprawl, though it is well protected from the surrounding chaos by (privately owned) high walls and gun towers.

The purpose of the Hyeck District is simple; to provide a space for those who wish to experiment with deregulated business and uninhibited free trade. Whilst a spirit of laissez-faire capitalism informs much of Capitolian business and society, those companies who operate in the Hyeck District take it to its ideological extreme.



Hyeck District: Not the most scenic area of San Dorado, but necessary for capitalism to flourish.

Prominent amongst those businesses located in the district are the mighty Atlas Corporation, which owns a number of different concerns, including a bar, a nightclub, a private police force, and a chain of stores selling intoxicants. The CEO of Atlas is Gwendolyn Kipp, a ruthless and hardnosed businesswoman who is one of the prime movers behind the creation of the Hyeck District. Whilst Atlas is technically a subsidiary of Capitol it has won such wealth and influence that the president and his aides have decided to allow Gwendolyn this indulgence (sure as they are that she will fail and act as a warning precedent for future entrepreneurs who might have the same notions).

LAW IN THE HYECK DISTRICT

When it comes to crime against property and person, most residents of the Hyeck District obey much the same laws as other residents of Mars. However in order to benefit from the protection of the police and legal counsel they must either take out appropriate insurance policies or make premium one-off payments to one of the local private police forces. These are:

◆ **EZ EMERGENCY**—A well-equipped and trained force who often prioritise work for Group 5 and have a reputation for providing their other customers with perfunctory service. Effectively a private army for Don Stevia and his interests.

◆ **ATLAS: MUGGED**—Dedicated to tackling street crime. A customer of Atlas: Mugged carries an alarm which they may press if accosted. Rapid response units will head to the signal and assist their customer if need be. Many people wear an official Atlas: Mugged badge in the hope that it will deter attackers.

◆ **FAIR COP**—A budget policing agency aimed at tackling domestic violence, break-ins, assaults, and other crimes against the person. Fair Cop officers are effectively self-employed and usually provide their own weaponry, armour, and transport.

◆ In addition, pretty much every large corporation in Hyeck District has its own security force and there are always a number of unlicensed private Investigators available for hire.

By and large, the Capitol Security Service and the Bureau who police the wider Capitolian society leave the Hyeck District alone. They would only enter the district if someone who had committed a crime elsewhere took refuge there or if consequences of unregulated business practices in Hyeck District were causing breaches of regulation elsewhere in San Dorado (for example, a drifting chemical smog causing clean air regulations to be violated in a neighbouring district).

In terms of criminal acts, the degree of crime in Hyeck District is similar to elsewhere in San Dorado, though it affects the poor to a far greater degree. Criminals in Hyeck District know that wealthy residents can afford rapid response policing and tough legal consequences.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY IN THE HYECK DISTRICT

A number of private surgeries operate in the Hyeck District and in general, you get what you pay for. Even the more expensive and professional physicians will tend to recommend unnecessary procedures in the hope of add-on sales. Someone looking to have a bullet wound treated will have to stoically refuse repeated offers of pre-emptive appendectomies and tonsillectomies, circumcision, or cosmetic enhancement.

Ambulance or first aid services are provided by those who have purchased insurance, or they can be called when required much like a Taxi.

ROADS, DRAINS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Every aspect of life that is normally managed by the public sector is dealt with by private concerns in the Hyeck District. In practice, businesses in the same proximity tend to band together in an informal consortium to pay for the upkeep of their shared environment. In a few places lack of cooperation, trust, or money does mean that things have fallen into a general state of dilapidation.

One aspect of life in the Hyeck District that will almost certainly have an impact on the Investigators is that tolls are levied on those who use the roads and pavements. Sometimes the owners of the business aside the road own it (and may allow free access in the hope of attracting custom). Other sections of road are run as a private business in and of themselves. There are toll booths of one sort or another at the corner of most of the blocks in the district. The tolls are not expensive, but there is a great quantity of them (Restriction 0, Cost 1 to pass a toll booth, though official ID may see this fee waived with an **Average D1 Command test**)

Quite where Investigators may be asked to pay for the privilege of using a particular stretch of road or pavement is left up to the GM as a potentially helpful fudge factor. If he feels he wants to delay or divert the Investigators, then having to deal with toll booths and payments can be a reasonable way to do this. EZ Emergency troopers and other antagonists at large in the district have standing arrangements allowing them unimpeded travel.

The GM should make the fact of the tolls a reality for the Investigators, but should not impose them monotonously. On any given journey from A to B within the district there should be at least one toll, but not more than three.

If the Investigators get fed up with the tolls, they can buy a pass from an agency on the high street. These cost 5 dollars for a day, and they are displayed on the front windscreen of a vehicle owned or hired by the bearer. If such a pass is purchased it allows one pedestrian or one vehicle to move about the public areas of the district without having to pay tolls (a pass for a day is Restriction 1, Cost 2)

Another way to avoid tolls is to take public transport or hire a cab. However, note that if a SanTax cab is hired with the intention of "following that car" the SanTax cabbie will deliberately, but covertly, lose sight of anyone they are asked to tail. Partaking in such subterfuge isn't normally good for business.

DRUGS IN THE HYECK DISTRICT

The manufacture and sale of drugs in the Hyeck District is legal and deregulated.

Whilst the district has not been operating for such a length of time so as to make any analysis of the long term effects of legalizing drugs, the pattern seems to be that more people become casual users, but heavy use and addiction are comparable to other parts of Capitolian society.

The best and worst of approaches are evident throughout the district: some companies make efforts to produce clean products with minimal side effects and addictive properties. Other companies just do their best to make drugs with massive highs and hugely addictive substances, and damn the consequences. Generally, the safer stuff is more expensive, sold in high street shops, and carries testimonials from reputable users and insurance companies. A large store on the High Street called Atlas Drugged sells all manner of intoxicants, from the sedate and safe to the criminally reckless.

The most popular drug in the district are simply known as Red Pills, and the Investigators may already know a little about them if they investigated the production of illegal drugs thoroughly whilst they were on Luna.

Detailed information on Red Pills is given on page 169. In short, they are popular party drugs with stimulant effects and some occasional nasty side-effects.

No one knows who manufactures the Red Pills. They are distributed by various agents throughout the Hyeck District. Marketing is mostly viral, with celebrities, media figures, and news broadcasters well paid to drop positive mention of the pills into conversations. Word of mouth marketing also takes place, and young actors are employed to wander about the Hyeck District's coolest venues loudly discussing what a great night out they had whilst blitzed on Red Pills, or how discriminating use of the drug has really helped spice up their love life.

WHO OWNS WHOM?

In this section of the adventure, the Investigators will be looking into the backgrounds of various companies in order to work out who is behind all the murder and mayhem. This can be confusing as different companies, organisations and individuals have varying degrees of real and perceived influence. This list provides the GM with a quick reference of the most pertinent players.

DON STEVIA

Capitol's first self-made trillionaire Don Stevia's life makes for a classic rags to riches story and he is a living embodiment of the Capitolian dream, having defected from Bauhaus in his impoverished youth and then ascending the corporate ladder as a result of hard work and an innovative spirit. Not only is Don among the wealthiest people on Mars but he is also one of its brightest star celebrities, fronting a number of different prime time television programs. It seems that every other night he appears as a talking head on network news features on business or politics. People on Mars talk about Don Stevia's latest projects the same way they talk about the weather: everyone has an opinion. "Will he ruin another bank this year?" "Can he really sell Martians on a third 44-hole zero-gravity golf course?" "Who's he going to fire from *The Deputy* this week?" "With all that money why can't he afford a better toupee?"

Don Stevia is the Frater Senior of The Invisible Hand, the man who first proposed the creation of the Hyeck District, Chief Investor in Group 5, and the CEO of a dozen concerns including Handsure Holdings.

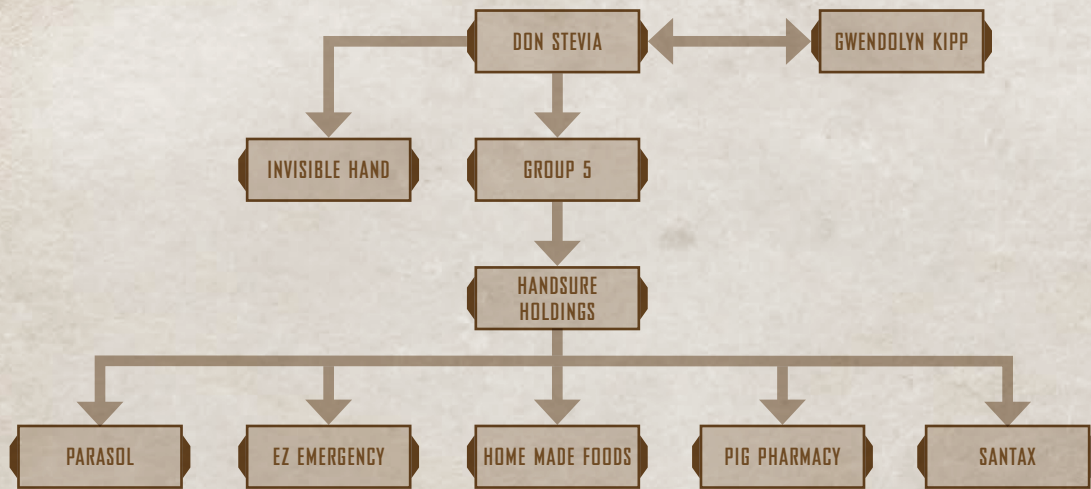
THE INVISIBLE HAND

The Invisible Hand are a secret fraternity of rich Capitolians who believe that life would be a more exciting and profitable for them were the Dark Legion to gain an even stronger foothold upon the solar system. Some of them are out and out worshippers of the Apostles whilst others merely see the increasing threat as an opportunity to make more money. Clearly, such people



Don Stevia: Philanthropist, Trillionaire, TV celebrity.... and Heretic.

BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS



would face the full force of the Inquisition were they to make their intentions plain, and so they operate as a secret society dedicated to working themselves into positions of power and trust. Such is the paranoia and corruption inherent to the individuals who make up The Invisible Hand that they even hide their identities carefully from one another. The only member of the cabal who features in this adventure is Don Stevia. As far as he is concerned he is the senior member ("Frater Senior"). He believes that there are four others and that they are all male, but even he can't be sure.

GROUP 5

Group 5 is simply the name given to the companies that are controlled by Handsure Holdings. Despite their apparent impact on the events of this adventure, the practical reality is that Group 5 doesn't really exist except on paper.

HANDSURE HOLDINGS

Due to the lack of regulation in the Hyeck District wealthy investors who do business there can invest in a company shortly before carrying out a significant deal with them, wait for the stock to improve as a result of such business, and then sell their shares. As they are informed ahead of time about Don Stevia's business transactions, this is how Handsure Holdings makes most of its money. It also owns majority share in EZ Emergency, Parasol Financial Services, Pig Pharma, SanTax, and, just recently, Home Made Foods.

Handsurre Holdings employ few staff, and those who work for it are effectively personal assistants to Don Stevia. It is a small business catering to an exclusive customer base. Even those with an interest

in Group 5 may not realise that Handsure Holdings effectively controls the consortium.

PARASOL FINANCIAL SERVICES

A large banking chain with a number of outlets around Mars. To outward appearances, Parasol controls Group 5 and most people who trade with the consortium will end up dealing with the company as part of the process. The firm's central office has recently relocated to the Hyeck District. Group 5 accounting, resources, credit control, and public relations are all managed through Parasol.

Parasol pride themselves on providing the very highest in customer service and seek to gather psychometric data on each of their customers in order to tailor their services to individual personalities.

Project Ladybird is managed by employees at Parasol's head office, though most of the people who work for the company know nothing about it.

EZ EMERGENCY, PIG PHARMA, SANTAX AND HOME MADE FOODS

These companies are effectively controlled by Handsure Holdings, though they are used in various ways. SanTax is run much like any regular taxi firm, whilst Pig Pharma engage in hideous experiments to fuse Dark Symmetry with the sale and manufacture of psychotropic drugs.

The executives of such companies, whilst powerful individuals, are effectively at Don Stevia's beck and call, and these companies

are all merely fronts of one sort or another. Together they provide Don Stevia with a small private army (EZ Emergency), a legitimate and clean business (SanTax), and unethical avenues of research and development that he can plausibly deny having any working knowledge of (Pig Pharma and Home Made Foods).

THE FORLORN HOPE

A squadron of Doomtroopers has been sent to Mars on a mission to infiltrate a Dark Legion citadel. This is to be a one-off mission of an experimental nature, using the theorised rift in the citadel to transport the squad to Nero itself. There they will destroy a specific creature whose death has been hypothesized to cause the rifts to close and seal off the Dark Legion from their source of power..

This is pretty much a one-way mission, and those who have volunteered to make up the squad are reconciled to losing their lives in the most hideous manner imaginable. Still, they are Doomtroopers, the best of humanity's fighters, ready to sell every inch of ground with the gore of a thousand Necromutants. With the pitched battles being fought across the solar system as the Dark Legion's forces press against all fronts, it is only a matter of time before a grisly end for most Doomtroopers, so they are honoured to be the ones to take the fight to the Legion's homeworld.

The Doomtrooper squad has been compromised, a number of them have unwittingly eaten Incursid eggs smuggled in to the training base canteen by Don Stevia's agents. Unless the Investigators find out about the state of the squad, work out its purpose, and assist them in achieving their mission they will kill one another in the citadel. Humanity's best effort to stem the tide of Dark Legion forces will have been for naught.

Most of these Doomtroopers will be out of the Investigators' reach during this section of the adventure, but they may cross paths with Gunther "Deathlock" Klinski.

THE DEPUTY

The Deputy is a popular TV series in which a dozen or so aspiring business people compete in a series of pointedly humiliating challenges and interviews in the hope of winning a high salary placement in one of Don Stevia's myriad business concerns.

As the Investigators arrive at San Dorado the latest series of *The Deputy* has just wound down, and preparations are being made to film next season's show. The show even has a theme that may be of interest to the Investigators, as Don Stevia is looking for his next deputy to head up a new private security firm and those with experience of policing are encouraged to apply.

The Investigators should come to realise that a good way to get to Don Stevia is to take part in his show, and may also work out that

some of the losers from previous shows may have met Don and be willing to dish the dirt on him.

WHAT'S DON'S GAME THEN?

Why would a rich Capitolian throw his lot in with the Dark Legion? The GM may like to consider his history and motivations though this is covered in brief because it is unlikely to be of much pertinence to the Investigators.

Don's introduction to the forces Dark Symmetry was little more than occult fascination as a nihilistic adolescent, though he did garner genuine insights and achieve some early degree of wealth and power as a result.

As he aged, Don began to fear the encroachment of the Dark Legion, and instead tried to figure out a way to stem its spread and save himself. Whilst effectively a Heretic in every conceivable way, he now believes himself to be acting in the best interests of humanity, even though he is inflicting incredible suffering in order to do so.

Don realises that the forces of Dark Symmetry derive satisfaction and nourishment from the pain and fear of sentient beings. He believes he can generate enough distress so as to sate the Dark Soul. To this end, he sponsors a number of projects and operations that result in suffering. One such operation is Pig Pharma. The drugs and medicines it produces have disturbing, humiliating, or painful side effects. As reward for the nourishment such efforts have provided it, the Dark Soul has gifted Don with the preternatural insights necessary to stay ahead in business and to produce innovative products and services that make subtle use of Dark Symmetry in a controlled fashion.

Don believes military action against the Dark Legion to be reckless. He thinks the Dark Legion could easily summon enough destructive power to snuff out humanity if it was motivated to do so. As such, he believes that his strategy of appeasement is the course worth following, and he has been involved in the subversion or ruin of a number of military efforts on Mars.

In the end, the really frightening thing about Don is that he may well be right.



THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE

THE KITTYHAWK SPACEPORT

Read the following to the Investigators:

Retro rockets whine and the Pandora shudders as it enters the Martian atmosphere and descends towards the vast complex of airfields that make up the Kittyhawk Skyport. Air traffic is dense and the Pandora is forced to make a number of passes over the area before it is finally assigned to a suitable dock. Most of the traffic is made up of freighters, shipping raw materials from the Skyport or delivering cargos to be unloaded. A number of ships bearing the logos of concerns belonging to Bauhaus or Mishima can be seen thronging the skies. There are also a lot of military craft amongst the arrivals, bulky and heavy-laden troop transports and lethal-looking air support craft.

If the Investigators ask the GM about the pertinence of the military traffic, have them make a **Challenging D2 Education test**, reducing the difficulty by one step if the character has a military background. If the test is passed, the GM should tell them that the military traffic is somewhat more prevalent that would normally be expected.

One of the Pandora crew alerts you to the fact that you will be landing shortly, and that a car is waiting to take you and the Incursid to a Group 5 warehouse on the outskirts of San Dorado. The Pandora sweeps down onto a Kittyhawk runway and lands with a barely perceptible bump.

DELIVERING A DEAD INCURSID

It may be that the Investigators decided that the Incursid was too dangerous to deliver alive to their contacts on Mars. If the Incursid is dead then it will be noted that the Investigators should still deliver the corpse to San Dorado. If it is not only dead but also destroyed then they will be called on to make a report and explain to their contacts what happened to the creature.

The GM will have to adjust later events accordingly if the Investigators have killed, ditched or otherwise gotten rid of the Incursid. However, it should not remove the immediate motivation to travel to San Dorado, as whatever the Investigators have done the message that their employers here will want them to account for their actions and provide additional information will remain much the same.



Julia waits to greet the Investigators and their cargo.

A LIFT FROM SANTAX

Read the following out the Investigators:

Standing at the bottom of the stairs leading to the spacecraft is a pretty young woman with long fair hair dressed in a rather old fashioned cabby's uniform of double breasted suit and peaked cap. The badge pinned to the fabric over her left breast reads "Julia" and she bears a placard with your names emblazoned on it in neat black ink.

Behind Julia, parked to one side of the runway, is a large stretch Vinciano-Traffaux. With a two-tone paint scheme in racing green and cold cream, it is one of the most impressive automobiles you have ever laid eyes on. A large cogwheel in burnished brass is incorporated into the radiator grill and the whole vehicle speaks to the finest precision engineering that the workshops of Bauhaus can attain. Inside the seats are upholstered in plush cream leather and a large rear compartment is more than big enough to house the captive Incursid.

Somewhat incongruously, a large yellow plastic pyramid has been placed on top of the luxury car. It reads "SanTax-Taxi and Tax Free!"

If the Investigators declare that they are looking more closely at the taxi, they find a discrete but visible Group 5 logo on the car if they pass an **Average D1 Observation test**.

For her part, Julia is friendly and professional. She has been briefed that the Investigators are transporting a hideous creature and whilst her expression is one of fear and distaste, she helps them load it into the back of the vehicle. She then makes sure the Investigators are seated comfortably in the back seats before climbing into the front and driving towards the outskirts of San Dorado.

For the purposes of transport, the Incursid will have to be goaded into a large portable metal box, similar to the sort of cages that are used to move people's household pets during car journeys, only larger and much stronger. This job is left up to the Investigators though the crew of the Pandora will provide them with Zappers if they don't have better goads themselves. For its part, the Incursid will not put up much of a fight provided the Investigators remain calm whilst guiding it towards the box.

Given that it has been incarcerated in triple layers of steel whilst on the Pandora, Investigators may feel that it is somewhat dangerous to transport the Incursid in nothing more than a sturdy cage. They will be assured that the rear of the taxi has been specially reinforced so as to effectively provide a separate cell, and that if the Incursid does somehow manage to break free during the trip to San Dorado they will just have to take care of it before it can cause any mayhem.

WITH THE RADIO ON

It takes about two hours to drive from the Spaceport to San Dorado. Julia drives to San Dorado in silence unless the Investigators engage with her. She will make polite and professional talk to them if they do so.

If the Investigators request it, Julia will turn the radio on. She will leave it tuned to a music channel playing a mixture of driving MOR rock and forgettable bubble-gum pop, but if they ask her she will tune it to a station that includes news programs, and even the music channel will broadcast occasional snippets of news. Most Capitol news stations concentrate largely on irrelevant stories about celebrity gossip and scandal, though if the Investigators state that they are paying attention to the radio they will hear the following items a number of times during their journey.

"Stay tuned to Station Cap One for breaking news regarding the next nail-biting season of The Deputy. Don Stevia is offering this year's winner an astonishing five million credits with which to set up his or her own business in the unregulated Hyeck District. That's right—you heard me—five million! Don has dropped hints that this year's competition will be tightly focussed on a particular service, but he isn't spilling the beans just yet. He's promised that as soon as he's ready to talk he'll be phoning us at the studio to let loyal listeners of Cap One be the first to know the news!"

"Cap One—Mars' most popular radio station!"

"Looking for a fun night out in San Dorado? Then why not pop along to Atlas Frugged—the hottest nightspot in the Hyeck District! Groove on down to the hip new sounds of in-house band Bechdel and the Patriarchs, rock out to platinum sellers Tinnitus Inducing Wail, or experience a scorching set by Cap One's very own DJ Daisy Distortion! Thanks to the unregulated trade permitted in the Hyeck District pretty much every intoxicant you can imagine is available over the bar, and a variety of short-term health insurance policies can be purchased at reception."

"C-C-C-Cap One! Are we in league with unholy forces—because our ratings are just profane!"

"And now time for Cap One's Ligger of the Week award. Given to the San Dorado celeb who has been seen downing the most booze at the craziest parties and shacking up with the freakiest of partners. It's a shocker folks—second week running—Gunther Klinski! Is there a nightclub or wine bar that hasn't played host to this wild party animal in the last few weeks? If so, we want to know! People are asking a lot of questions about this man. Where does he get the stamina? Can he really be more promiscuous than Trudy Nine

Thousand? Is this a new San Dorado record for how many Red Pills one person can pop in a night? Just what is he famous for again? Gunther Klinski—Ligger of the Week!”

“Cap One—Winning the War of the Airwaves on the World of War!”

If the Investigators don't want to listen to the radio don't worry—there are plenty of opportunities for them to hear this sort of thing later on in the adventure.

ARRIVING AT THE HYECK DISTRICT

Read the following to the Investigators:

Julia guides the taxi through the tall gates in the wall that separates the Hyeck District from the surrounding sprawl. You have heard that this area of San Dorado is famously rough and lawless, though the Hyeck District is distinct from the barrios and slums that surround it. Tall skyscrapers dominate the skyline and a thousand neon hoardings display adverts for all manner of products.

If the Investigators want to ask Julia about the Hyeck District she is able to give them any of the information from **The Hyeck District** section on page 132 with a couple of exceptions. She will not have a bad word to say about Gwendolyn Kipp or the Atlas corporations, nor will she cast aspersions on the professionalism of any company affiliated with Group 5 or the Hyeck District. Therefore, if she asked about how law and order are handled in the Hyeck District she will mention EZ Emergency, but will not claim that they are biased in favour of Group 5.

Whether or not the Investigators question Julia, she drives to a large unmarked warehouse to the west of the district. Read the following to the Investigators:

Julia takes a route leading away from the district centre and along a rough and bumpy road that runs parallel to the surrounding walls. She pulls up outside a large warehouse and presses a couple of keys on her dashboard. A short tone sounds and Julia states loudly and clearly “Hi there, we have arrived.”

The tone sounds again and for a second Julia looks confused, then the large shutters that block the entrance to the warehouse give a rumble and a shudder, and begin to rise. Julia returns her hands to the wheel and begins to manoeuvre the taxi into the warehouse.

The Investigators may well find this an ominous welcome, and if they mention to the GM that they are readying equipment or weaponry, they should be allowed to do so within reason. Julia is concentrating on her driving so as not to notice such things.

If the Investigators try to interfere forcefully with Julia, at this point she will panic and drive at speed into the warehouse, reasoning that the fastest way to find help will be to rendezvous with the Group 5 people she assumes are waiting inside.

DELIVERING THE INCURSID

Read the following to the players:

The taxi backs up into a large empty space surrounded by gantries, ladders, and scaffold. A bright spotlight snaps on, bathing you in dazzling magnesium glare. A voice calls out from above.

“You made it then! Many thanks for your efforts! We’ll be taking you to a nice hotel to get washed and rested in just a minute. Few things to sort out first. We are expecting you to have a notebook on you, is that right? Who has it?”

(Wait for Investigators to respond).

“OK. Please step out of the vehicle and unload the creature.”

Julia turns to you. She looks confused and a little frightened. “Erm—I think he means you guys, right?”

Inside the warehouse are a group of six men—five troopers and a squad leader. They are employees of EZ Emergency, though they are acting undercover for this mission. They are equipped with light body armour, a light handgun, and a zapper. They stand on a gantry about fifteen feet above the floor of the warehouse, accessed by ladders to the right and left of the taxi. They are in a loose formation behind the spotlight.



EZ EMERGENCY TROOPER / SQUAD LEADER



ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	7	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	-	1	1


WOUNDS: 3 or 6

SOAK: Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads, Bulletproof Vest: (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Sherman M8 "Slingshot" Pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Stunner (melee):** 1+3, 1H, Dreadful, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Just Doing My Job:** These security officers are well-paid, and tend to receive substantial bonuses when required to perform actions which are dangerous, or which are morally or ethically dubious. The kind of person who would lose sleep over such activities tend to find other lines of work quickly, silenced by punitive non-disclosure agreements. EZ Emergency Troopers reduce the difficulty of Willpower tests by two steps, to a minimum of zero, which may remove the need for a test. They also increase the difficulty of Command or Persuade tests made to convince them to disobey orders by two steps.
- ◆ **Necessary Force:** These security officers may re-roll up to two  on any damage roll they attempt. They may spend one Dark Symmetry point to re-roll any d20s which do not generate at least one success on a Close Combat or Ranged Weapons test, though the new result stands.

The EZ Emergency Troopers are part of a unit that has been tasked with clearing up some loose ends. They intend to kill the Investigators, the Incursid, and Julia too. However, they have orders to observe how the Incursid performs in close combat, and to that end, they wish to set it on the Investigators before they carry out the killings.



Few things are more dangerous than releasing a caged Incursid.

PARASOL

SECURING A FINACIAL TOMORROW

Please record below your best impression of the creature's performance in combat.

Did creature take initiative and attack as soon as it was freed? Y/N

Describe your impressions of the creature's speed:

Describe your impressions of the creature's strength:

Describe your impressions of the creature's aggression:

What sort of injuries did the creature inflict prior to being killed?

How many casualties did the creature cause before being incapacitated? _____

Did the apparent attitude of the creature's victims seem to affect its own behaviour?

Did the sight of the creature evoke any memory of your being bullied at school or poorly treated by your parents? _____

Imagine that one of the victims was a sibling or close friend. How does that make you feel?

In your opinion, how might Parasol make better use of social media?

Please record any other observations you feel may be useful:

Once complete return this form to Frida in accounts.

DATE: _____

PROCESSED BY: _____



If the Investigators exit the taxi and seem cooperative, read the following:

The voice calls to you again. "Please remain by the taxi. Good. Now unload the creature."

The Investigators can do this by opening the boot of the taxi. If they don't, Julia will operate an automatic system which opens the boot.

If the Incursid is still in the same container provided to the Investigators when they embarked on their journey, and if they haven't added any sort of extra security or padlocks of their own, then one of the EZ Emergency troopers will have a remote control device that unlocks the container once it is removed from the taxi. The captive Incursid will be freed at this point and will immediately attack the nearest targets, which will almost certainly be the Investigators. Hungry and in need of some aggressive stimulation after its long journey, the Incursid fights fearlessly and ferociously.

The EZ Emergency troopers are ordered to hold their fire as long as the Incursid is engaged in active combat. They are there to monitor the effectiveness of an Incursid mother in battle after all. However if the Investigators kill the Incursid or attack the EZ Emergency troopers they will start to shoot.

If the Investigators have had the foresight to change the locks on the container during their journey then the EZ Emergency troopers will be unable to set the creature onto the Investigators, and after trying to open the box remotely for a minute they will become frustrated and simply open fire.

It is hard to see the EZ Emergency troopers whilst they are hidden behind the glare of the spotlight that they have trained on the taxi. Either the Investigators can climb the ladders to the level of the gantry which takes a Standard Action and an **Average D1 Athletics test** or they can try to draw a bead on their assailants despite the blinding glare of the spotlight. Shooting the troopers in spite of the blinding light increases the difficulty of the test by two steps. Alternately, a character may try to shoot the spotlight, requiring a Challenging D2 Ranged Weapons test (or Heavy Weapons test, as appropriate for their guns). The spotlight has four wounds and two Soak, and will stop working if reduced to zero wounds.

The EZ Emergency troopers have ditched anything that might identify them. They carry no identification and use equipment that cannot be traced back to EZ. However, observant Investigators may find some clues as to their affiliation.

All the troopers have a slightly pale patch on their inner forearms. This is where the trooper ID tattoo they usually carry has been erased. Of course, the Investigators have no way of knowing this at the moment but if they make note of the strange pale patches

they may put two and two together when they get more information on EZ Emergencies. These patches are easy to miss, so even if the Investigators declare that they are searching the bodies they will only notice on a **Challenging D2 Observation test**. An **Average D1 Treatment test** can identify them as the result of laser tattoo removal, but can't gain any other information than that at this stage.

The squad leader also has a feedback form bearing the parasol logo. This is stuffed clumsily into one of his front pockets along with a ballpoint pen and is found automatically by any Investigator taking an interest in his body.

Julia will remain in the taxi throughout the fight. She does not know what is going on and as far as she is concerned, the Investigators are as likely to be a threat as the men in the warehouse are. She will attempt to escape as soon as she gets an opportunity. If she is not allowed to escape, she will defend herself if anyone tries to get into the taxi. She is armed with a light handgun that she keeps in the glove compartment.

Whilst Julia is an employee of Group 5, she is innocent of any actual wrongdoing. If the Investigators do not accost her she may even come to reflect on this episode and realise they were treated poorly. More information on what Julia might do to assist the Investigators is given in the section **Investigating SanTax** on page 148.

JULIA, EXPERT DRIVER ☆

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	8	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	-	2	2	1	-	1	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Sherman M8 "Slingshot" Pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+↑4, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+↑2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Expert Driver:** Julia is an extremely skilled driver, and while she seldom gets to use her full skills, she's an accomplished racer, and has taken a number of advanced driving courses in

A SUGGESTED ORDER

The Hyeck District is presented as a sandbox and the Investigators could navigate their way through in a number of ways. The following order of events is suggested as the most satisfying and comprehensive way to tackle the investigation. The GM should regard this as the default order but adapt appropriately if the Investigators have other ideas as to the priority of their investigation.

1. The Investigators are at the warehouse having been double-crossed by those they thought to deliver the Incursid to.
2. The Investigators make their way to the Home Made Foods building, encountering various odd aspects of the Hyeck District as they do so (see **Onto the Streets of the Hyeck District** on page 146). If they didn't listen to the radio earlier they should hear similar news items from billboards and speakers placed throughout the district as they make their journey.
3. If the Investigators show interest, investigating SanTax is an option that could fit well here (see **Investigating SanTax** on page 148).
4. As the Investigators near the Home Made Foods building, they are passed by some speeding EZ Emergency trucks. They then investigate the burning building (see **Investigating Home Made Foods** on page 148).
5. The Investigators move on to investigate the employees of Parasol. Gary Steele would be the best person to talk to initially. He should prepare the Investigators for discussing matters with Frida Williams. The Investigators may also like to talk to Agents Lee and Singh, but this is optional and they should be able to get any info they can get from Lee and Singh elsewhere (see **Investigating Parasol** on page 152).
6. As an optional lead, the Investigators may like to talk to Gwendolyn Kipp, though she is unlikely to be much help (see **Investigating Gwendolyn Kipp** on page 162).
7. Likewise trying to contact Don Stevia personally at this point is not going to lead anywhere (see **Investigating Don Stevia** on page 163).

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her spare time. Julia has Pilot Expertise +4 and Pilot Focus 1-3. Further, she may re-roll one d20 when making a Pilot test, but must accept the new result, and she reduces the difficulty of any Pilot test made to drive a ground vehicle through difficult terrain by one, to a minimum of one.

- ◆ **Innocent Bystander:** Julia has nothing to do with the agendas and schemes of her employers—she's just a driver. She's completely uninvolved, and not at all ready for any of this. She increases the Repercussion range of all Willpower tests she attempts by one.

INVESTIGATIONS

The Investigators have a number of different leads at this point and will probably want to go looking for more information. Whilst the GM is encouraged to use the Hyeck District as a sandbox, there is a rough recommended order to the leads.

The players should already have open leads to the following at this point:

- ◆ **PARASOL** (for a variety of reasons, most obvious being that they are an important part of Group 5).
- ◆ **HOME MADE FOODS** (because they have obvious connections to the Incursid).

Looking into either of these companies at this point is likely to provide the Investigators with plenty of opportunity to uncover useful information. If the Investigators have not worked out that such leads may be of interest it may be good to get them to review their recent experiences out loud in order to figure out who might be worth talking to.

In addition, they may have the following leads if they have been observant.

- ◆ **ATLAS/GWENDOLYN KIPP** (because Gwendolyn Kipp is a known sponsor of their mission).
- ◆ **GROUP 5/DON STEVIA** (also a known sponsor of their mission and head of Group 5).
- ◆ **SANTAX** (if they noticed that the taxi carried the Group 5 logo).
- ◆ **RED PILLS** (if they realise the link between the drug trade on Luna and the marketing of Red Pills on Mars).

However, unlike the companies above, the Investigators will not find following these leads too helpful. Don Stevia is not an easy man to contact, SanTax have little knowledge of the bigger picture, and Gwendolyn Kipp is something of a red herring. The GM should be willing to accommodate the Investigators if they make early efforts

to contact such people, but to keep the plot moving forward it would be best if they were funnelled towards a more rewarding line of inquiry.

The following companies are also fairly obviously involved, though it will be better for the Investigators to have investigated Parasol and Home Made Foods first.

- ◆ EZ Emergency
- ◆ Pig Pharma

Once the Investigators have chased these leads then they should have gathered that Don Stevia is at the centre of something sinister, and should have some knowledge of the following:

- ◆ Handsure Holdings
- ◆ *The Deputy*
- ◆ The Doomtroopers

The Investigators may find leads to such things early on, and could bypass interesting parts of the plot if they begin to chase them straight away. For this reason the GM is encouraged to be careful about how he reveals clues of such things to the players, and flexible about utilising bits of the adventure that the players bypass elsewhere.

Alternatively if the Investigators were to do something like chase an early lead to The Doomtroopers it may be best to even force some of the other aspects of the story on them, such as having them arrested by EZ Emergency troopers, or led past the burning Home Made Foods building.

RUNNING THE INVESTIGATION

The GM should be aware that the next section of the adventure involves only a few combat encounters and that the Investigators will quickly find themselves arrested and outgunned if they approach matters head on. The GM should feel free to remind the Investigators that whilst they might be members of a police force they are a long way out of their jurisdiction.

It should also be clear to the Investigators that they may spook their intended quarry if they cause a fuss whilst interviewing lowly henchmen.

So for instance, if the Investigators caused Agents Lee and Singh undue distress whilst interviewing them at Parasol they may well alert Frida Williams to their presence. If the Investigators rough up Francis Ohaya then the guards at Pig Pharma will be alert to their presence, and so on.

If the GM feels the need to steer the Investigators away from too violent or heavy-handed an approach he should feel free to make a

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- At this point the Investigators should overhear a news broadcast about the next season of *The Deputy* and of a massive military effort taking place against the Dark Legion on Venus (see **Taking a Break and Marking Time** on page 164).
- The Investigators inadvertently bump into Gunther Klinski outside a nightclub (see **Taking a Break and Marking Time** on page 164).
- The Investigators should now have enough information to track down the Hyeck District's primary distributor of Red Pills, Francis Ohaya (see **Chasing the Red Pill Supply** on page 166).
- One way or another Francis provides information leading the Investigators to the producers of Red Pills, Pig Pharma (see **Investigating Pig Pharma** on page 168).

This list includes reference to all the sections that follow, and only excludes one avenue of inquiry which is if the Investigators decide to investigate EZ Emergency. This is because investigating EZ Emergency is optional, could be included pretty much anywhere, and yields little information for a great deal of risk. As such the Investigators should not be encouraged in that direction but it is covered in **Investigating EZ Emergency** on page 167.

little more use of Gary Steele. This is the one character in the Hyeck District who sympathises with the Investigators and will be happy to offer them advice.

Provided the Investigators make careful investigations then Gary will behave as written (see page 153). However if they are getting themselves into trouble he could find them, give them a dressing down for their lack of care and consideration, and drop helpful hints about how to proceed. These could be hints such as pretending to be their own assailants when talking to Frida Williams or staking out Francis Ohaya's place rather than attempting to raid it, and so on.

The GM may also wish to threaten the players with an increase to the Dark Symmetry pool if they continue to be loud or lacking in subtlety. A single point added to the pool as a consequence for making a lot of noise or a big, obvious disturbance can be a suitable deterrent, as well as indicating how the characters' unsubtle acts give their enemies more time to prepare and muster strength.

REALISATIONS THE INVESTIGATORS MUST COME TO BY THE END OF THIS SECTION

The GM should ensure that the Investigators have noted the following things before continuing the adventure.

- ◆ A squad of Doomtroopers is about to undertake a vital mission into the depths of a Dark Legion Citadel.
- ◆ This mission, if successful, could effectively win the Dark Legion War for humanity.
- ◆ The mission is not likely to be successful, because the Doomtroopers are hosts to developing Incursids that will hatch during the execution of their mission.
- ◆ The location of the Citadel is top secret.
- ◆ One of the few people to know the location is Don Stevia, who is clearly utilising Dark Technology and Gifts and who is ultimately responsible for the Incursid infestation.
- ◆ The only way to come into contact with Don is to attend the launch party for *The Deputy*.
- ◆ The only way to attend the launch party for *The Deputy* is to partake in the first episode.

It is vital that the Investigators make note of these things so that by the end of this section they are motivated to ensure that the Doomtrooper mission does not end in failure, that they realise they need the location of the Dark Legion citadel from Don, and that the only feasible way to see Don is to go through with applying for *The Deputy*.

If the Investigators are not clear on any of these issues it may be best to ensure they get the message through talking to Investigators that do have a keener understanding of the situation, or a more apparent motivation to see things resolved.

Gary Steele is one such NPC, as is Eva Junge. Using such NPCs to talk through the situation could help the Investigators come to their own conclusions about what is going on. They could even give the Investigators explicit instructions if they are really thoroughly stuck.



ONTO THE STREETS OF THE HYECK DISTRICT

Once the Investigators have dealt with matters in the warehouse, they will surely find themselves wandering the streets of the Hyeck District. The encounters listed here can be used to give a flavour of the place.



Personal protection from street crime for a fair price - if you're paid up with Atlas: Mugged.

ATLAS: MUGGED

As the Investigators wander down one of the Hyeck District's back streets a man pursues another man down the road and chases him into a dingy alleyway. A man in an old fashioned police uniform, with trousers that flare at the hips and a spherical sheer black motorcycle helmet picks at his fingernails with a toothpick. He is standing nearby but is conspicuously ignoring the demands for money with menaces that now echo from the alley. He wears a silver badge showing a naked and muscular man bearing up a massive globe on his shoulders.

If the Investigators show any interest, the man gives them a smile and says: "Hey there, if you want help should that sort of thing happen to you pop along to Atlas: Mugged, our office can be found on the high street. Personal protection from street crime for a fair price."

The man in the alleyway is genuinely being mugged, and will certainly appreciate the assistance of the Investigators if they provide it. The nearby policeman is rather put out by this though. "How are we going to make an honest dollar if you provide the service for free," he asks any do-gooders.

INSURANCE AGENT

A man wearing a loud yellow suit and aviators with purple lenses approaches the Investigators as they walk around near the centre of town.

"Hey, ain't seen you before. You guys new to the Hyeck District? I'm just here to make sure you're happy with your cover—are the ambulance crews going to know to look after you first if there's an accident? Planning on catching the view from the top of the Atlas Building? Break your neck without one of my policies and they won't pay a dime. See that street cleaner there. He could take it on himself to empty his slops all over your shoes, but get a policy from me and we'll see you wearing a fresh pair in time for the dance. You do a job for someone who doesn't pay? We got a policy for that too!"

Insurance hawkers like this man are all over the Hyeck District. They basically provide short term cover (most of their policies cover no more than a 24 hour period) for the sorts of accidents, contaminations and breakages that standard business regulations would account for in other parts of the solar system.

In practice, they rarely agree to pay out or bring anyone to account, though they will make sure that their customers are recognised by the local emergency services. Once the time period is up they no longer recognise their former customers, so if becomes hopelessly hooked on a product whose retailer fails to advertise as addictive (something which happens quite a lot in the Hyeck District) the policy will only cover for a treatment program if the addiction process is developed, diagnosed and reported in the period of time covered by the policy.

In short, whilst cover can be bought for practically anything, proving that insurance is owed for something is a difficult and arduous process and the burden of proof is always on the customer. In addition, given the lack of regulation in the district, the insurance sellers see no need to make their customers aware of this prior to purchase.

More professional insurance brokers do exist. They typically have offices in the High Street but they are expensive and take a long time to draft policies with plenty of small text.

HOT DOG STAND

A roadside booth on the High Street displays a banner reading "Milton Feedman—San Dorado's Hottest Dogs!" For just a Dollar, customers receive a fluffy white bun and a juicy pork sausage with optional additions of cheese, chili, onion, and mustard.

Milton is a gregarious and generous proprietor who provides each customer with a reward card. Not only are his hot dogs great value but he gives his customers a free hot dog after their tenth visit. He also sells confectionary and soft drinks, at somewhat inflated prices.

A Pig Pharma Red Pill is used as an ingredient in each of the hot dogs, making them mildly addictive stimulants. The pill has other side effects. For more information refer to page 169.

Milton is a garrulous man who knows a lot about the goings on in San Dorado. If asked about goings on in the Hyeck District he is willing to talk to Investigators provided they have shown interest in his wares. He could advise the Investigators where to go if they wanted to meet Gwendolyn Kipp (he suggests meeting her at the Atlas Frugged nightclub but warn the Investigators that she doesn't suffer fools gladly and that unless they have some sort of business proposition for her she will likely dismiss them). He has no strong opinions about Group 5 with the exception of EZ Emergency who he will bemoan as biased, claiming that they only respond with any efficiency to problems that effect Group 5 interests.

If he is queried about where he gets his Red Pills from Milton will deny all knowledge, but if he is intimidated or tortured he will provide details that might lead to Francis Ohaya (see page 167). However, the GM should ensure that the Investigators do not receive this information until they have exhausted other leads (so if they come to Milton for this information early on then it may be better to give them the name of some intermediary dealer who could be found in the Parasol building, for example).

HOARDINGS

Virtually every large vertical surface in the centre of the Hyeck District is occupied by some sort of advertisement. Some of these are interactive devices that spring to life as people wait for lights to turn green or for public transport to turn up.

The GM can make use of these to foreshadow events or provide clues to the Investigators in the form of advertisements for companies or events that have pertinence to the plot. Alternatively, he could use them to distract the Investigators with pointless info or red herrings if they are progressing faster than he might like. The interactive boards in particular are susceptible to the corruption of the Dark Symmetry, their electrical components making them vulnerable to malign influences. They have a Reliability of one, and will start to produce misleading imagery, corrupted propaganda, and subliminal messages if they become corrupted.

The radio station Cap One commissions a lot of time and space on these boards, so if the Investigators missed the news items earlier in the adventure they could be aired in heavy rotation as they wander around the city.

INVESTIGATING SANTAX

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

SanTax is another company that the Investigators have strong initial leads to:

- ◆ SanTax is a part of Group 5.
- ◆ Julia may have escaped from the fight at the warehouse; if so the Investigators may think she set them up.

THE SANTAX OFFICES

SanTax operations are run from a modest office located at the Centre of the Hyeck District. From here, SanTax cabs can be hired. The taxis are very cheap provided you only want to travel to other locations in the Hyeck District and don't mind sitting in a cramped and dirty cab. Trips to more distant locations cost a lot more, as the fare include the taxes SanTax has to pay when not operating in the Hyeck District.

The office itself consists of little more than a spacious and comfortable waiting room and a rather cramped and untidy reception kiosk. The kiosk is manned by a couple of staff who take calls, welcome visitors, and book the cabs.

If asked pertinent questions the staff are able to provide the following bits of information:

- ◆ SanTax is a part of Group 5.
- ◆ Don Stevia is an important member of the Group 5 board.
- ◆ Parasol handles SanTax's accounts.

If the staff are overpowered or bribed, the Investigators might be able to log on to their computer on an **Average D1 Sciences test**. The computer gives very little information but does provide some

clues as to certain people's recent movements if the Investigators decide to perform a relevant search.

Most people who move about in the Hyeck District use SanTax from time to time, and if the Investigators ask for the following names they can find the pertinent information:

- ◆ **Gary S:** There are three people named "Gary S" in the system. A Gary Smith takes rides all over town, mostly from the Atlas building to his apartment near the northern wall. Gary Skelly sometimes hires a cab to take him to Atlas Frugged on a Friday night. Finally, a Gary Steele makes regular trips from an apartment block at the southern end of the district to the Parasol head office and back again. He also regularly attends the Atlas Frugged nightclub on a Friday night.
- ◆ **Don Stevia:** Is far too wealthy to need the services of a cab firm regularly, but he has occasionally taken a cab between the head offices of EZ Emergency and Parasol.
- ◆ **Gwendolyn Kipp:** Takes taxi journeys all over the district, but mostly between the main office of the Atlas Corporation and her apartment in uptown San Dorado.

JULIA

If Julia abandoned them at the warehouse earlier the Investigators could find her by looking through computer logs of employees and passing an **Average D1 Sciences test**. Whilst Julia does not know much of importance, she does feel guilty about leaving the Investigators to their fate and if they ask her for leads, she will suggest that the person who booked the cab might know more. She doesn't know this information but says it can be found on the computer in the SanTax office.

If the Investigators look for this information on the SanTax computer and pass a **Challenging D2 Sciences test** then they find out that a Frida Williams from the Parasol accounts department booked their cab.

GARY SMITH AND GARY SKELLY

If the Investigators make efforts to track down and interview either of these men then they turn out to know absolutely nothing of consequence to the adventure.

INVESTIGATING HOME MADE FOODS

The leads that the Investigators have to Home Made Foods should be obvious.

The Home Made Foods main office can be found in the crowded and run-down west side of the Hyeck District. Read the following to the Investigators as they make their way to the office.

From up ahead you hear the sound of several sirens and three large police vans speed up the street towards you. They look heavily loaded but they move fast turning down a road leading to the centre of the district. The vans are gloss black and have the legend "EZ Emergency—The Police, Fire and Ambulance Service with low, low prices!" emblazoned on the side in yellow lettering.

The Investigators can follow the trucks to the EZ Emergency head office if they wish, though this is a bad plan, as they will miss the opportunity to investigate the Home Made Foods building, as it will burn to the ground whilst they track the EZ Emergency troopers.

Tailing the trucks requires that the Investigators are in a vehicle and that they pass a **Challenging D2 Pilot test**. Even if they succeed, they will run into a toll booth on their journey. If they have purchased some sort of permit to use the roads freely then they can pass through, but if not they will have to pass a second **Challenging D2 Pilot test** in order to catch up with their quarry.

The EZ Emergencies trucks pull up at the EZ Emergency headquarters on the high street. The troopers, of which there are eleven in total, pile out of their trucks and prepare a stretcher. They carry a wounded man out of one of the trucks and into the headquarters. Investigators observing this will notice that the man has a series of letters and numbers tattooed on the inside of his right forearm.

If the Investigators wish to investigate further see **Investigating EZ Emergencies** on page 167.

If the Investigators resist the distraction of the trucks and continue to the Home Made Foods building, read them the following:

The Home Made Foods building is a three-storey restaurant and warehouse. The first storey is clearly intended to make a welcoming impression on potential customers, with lots of large windows through which can be seen comfortable seating and a great many potted plants. Wide escalators provide access to the upper floors and a number of fast food bars can be seen. Thick smoke billows over the counters and flames can be seen licking at the windows on the first floor.

Don Stevia has ordered Home Made Foods liquidated now that he has gathered enough information on the performance of the Incursids. When the Investigators arrive at the office, the staff of Home Made Foods have just been killed by EZ Emergency troopers who have also set fire to their records.

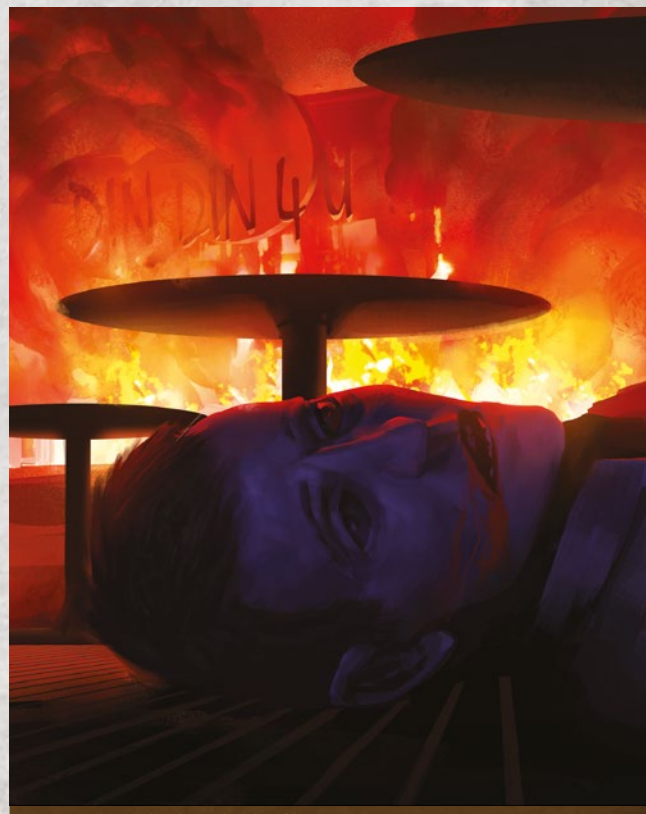
If the Investigators are to gather any information from the scene, they will have to act fast as the fire spreads quickly. Within twenty minutes of the Investigators arrival, the blaze will be such that anyone in the building will have to leave it or start taking damage.

Each minute the Investigators remain in the burning building once the blaze has reached this point, the heat, smoke, and collapsing structure will collectively inflict 1+**T**5 damage with the Dreadful, Incendiary 3, and Toxic 2 qualities, ignoring Soak from armour. A character can attempt a **Challenging D2 Resistance test** to avoid the worst of this, reducing the damage inflicted by one, plus an additional one per Momentum spent. Characters who take additional measures to protect themselves—a wet cloth to fend off heat and smoke, using fire extinguishers or water supplies to clear their path, and so on—may be able to make other tests to reduce the damage in place of their Resistance test.

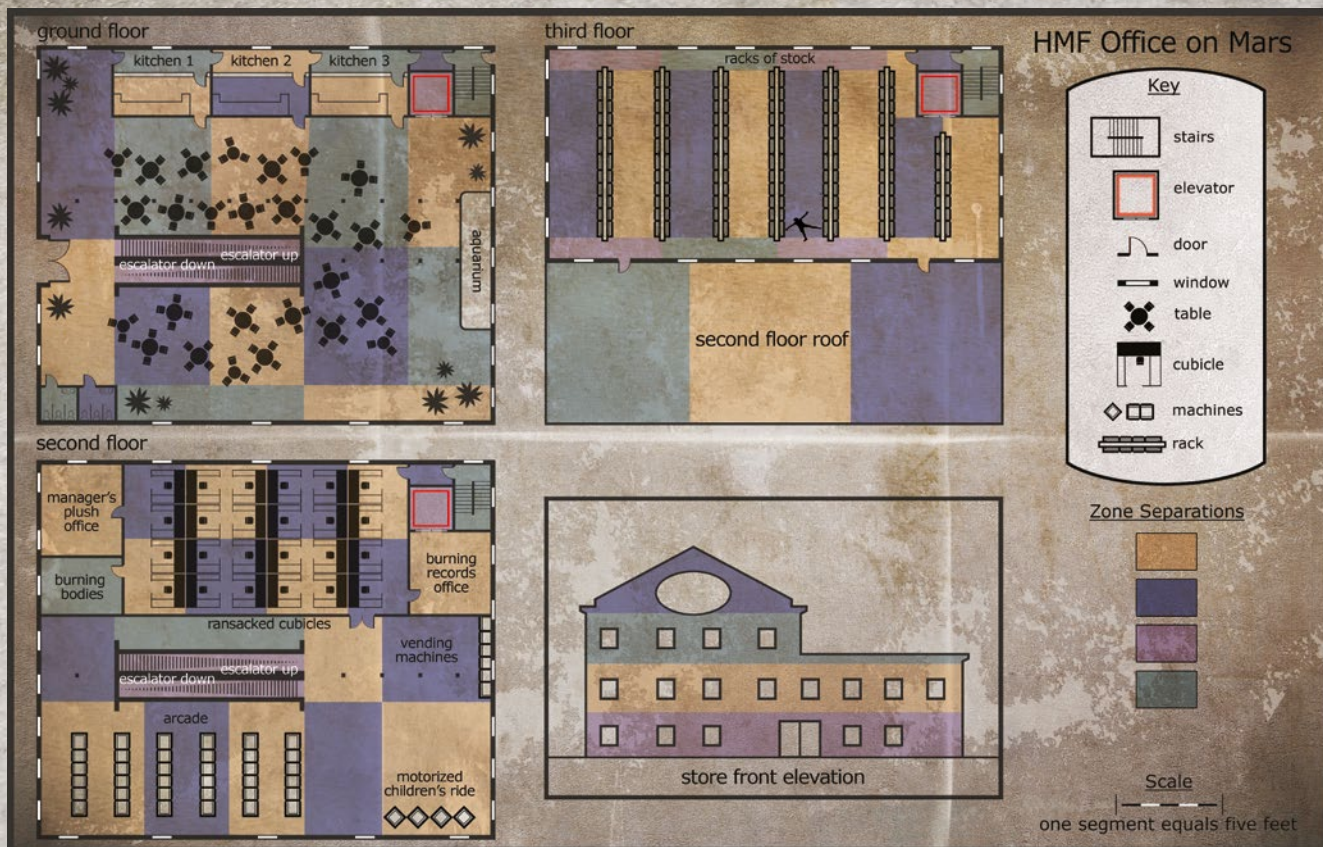
Within half an hour of the Investigators arriving at the scene, the entire building will be consumed.

If the Investigators decided to follow the trucks belonging to EZ Emergencies they will probably miss their chance to explore the building—it'll have burned down by the time they get back.

If the Investigators try to call EZ Emergencies or another sort of emergency service to deal with the blaze they will be told that help is on the way, but it will take over twenty minutes before any sort of fire engine appears and even then the firefighters deal with the blaze in a relaxed fashion, acting too slowly to prevent the fire from consuming the building.



Home Made Foods is being liquidated by Don Stevia in every sense.



INSIDE THE BUILDING

If the Investigators act quickly they can explore the office and may find some important clues.

The building has been occupied by Home Made Foods for a couple of months. It was planned to be the flagship outlet on Mars and provides plenty of seating and choices of meal for interested customers, as well as office space and stock rooms for the business side of things.

The ground floor is occupied by a large food concourse. Most of this area is taken up by a rather grand escalator, which is far larger than it needs to be given the number of customers the place is expected to serve, but it does look impressive. The base of the escalator is surrounded by a number of sturdy circular white plastic tables and red pleather chairs.

The décor has a Venusian feel, with a number of large potted plants arranged around the room. On the wall opposite the main entrance is a large marine aquarium filled with bright corals and a number of colourful tropical fish. To the right of the door are customer toilets.

A short distance from the seating area are three fast food outlets, each consisting of a bar over which customers can order food, and a kitchen in which it is prepared. One of the bars is marked Din Dins 4 U, another is marked Food of Love (and carries on the theme by

claiming to be top quality Venusian cuisine) and a third is yet to be furnished. Fires have been set in some of the kitchen areas of these outlets, and the bodies of some of the Home Made Foods staff that were working here have been laid down near the spreading flames. Those involved in the killings plan to blame the destruction of the building on fires that began in these kitchens.

If the Investigators investigate the outlets and look into the kitchens, they can see the dead bodies, but will have to pass a **Challenging D2 Resistance test** in order to examine them; failure means that the investigator can't tolerate the heat and smoke long enough to get a good look at the remains.

If the Investigators look closely at the bodies, they will determine that the cause of death is nothing to do with the fires, but multiple gunshot wounds instead. If an Investigator passes a **Challenging D2 Treatment** or Ranged Weapons test, they will determine that the sort of weapons used were light handguns.

Escalators run from the centre of the concourse up to the first floor. Most of this floor is given over to a large airy space in which can be found amusements aimed at extracting more money from visiting customers. There are a number of arcade machines and video games consoles here, some mechanical rides aimed at younger children, and a few Eaty-Neaty vending machines.

The staff only area consists mainly of an open plan office filled with cubicles. These have been ransacked and the computers and papers which were taken from them have been piled into the records office and set on fire. The staff were corralled into one of the other offices and then gunned down. This room has also been set on fire. Another office, a plush well-furnished space clearly intended for senior management, is empty.

If the Investigators enter the room with the burning paperwork, they can try to find some clues but will have to pass a **Challenging D2 Resistance test** in order to grab any pertinent evidence; failure means that the investigator can't tolerate the heat and smoke long enough to reach the evidence. A number of files and books are near the burning pile and if an Investigator announces that they are looking for something pertinent to the Incursid they should be called on to make a **Challenging D2 Observation test**. If this is passed, they can find a folder marked "Eaty-Neaty Luna-Year End Report". Likewise, if an Investigator announces that they are looking for something pertinent to the buyout of Home Made Foods by Group 5 have them make a **Challenging D2 Observation test**. If this is passed, they can find a brochure marked "Welcome to the Group 5 Family".

If the Investigators enter the room with the bodies in it, they will have to pass a **Challenging D2 Resistance test** in order to examine them; failure means that the investigator can't tolerate the heat and smoke long enough to get a good look at the remains. Like the corpses on the floor below, they have been shot.

A staircase leads up from the staff only section to the second floor.

The second floor is a large warehouse filed with boxes of ingredients for the food outlets on the ground floor.

If the Investigators search this area they can find the corpse of a young woman laid behind a pile of crates of microwavable sushi. During the raid, one of the staff from the floor below grabbed a gun and fled up here. She shot the first EZ Emergency trooper who chased her before being gunned down in turn.

The peaked cap of the man she shot is clutched in her left hand. It is a black peaked cap with the letters EZ embroidered on it in yellow thread.

READING THE REPORT

If the Investigators rescued the file from the room with the burning evidence they can read through it once they get to safety. It is a rather large and boring rundown of the sales of various Eaty Neaty products on Luna, projected trends and statistical analyses.

However, there are also some pages that might be of interest to the Investigators. One of the charts is headed "Instances of Contamination" and gives a rundown of the number of Eaty Neaty

products that have had to be destroyed due to inclusion of insect parts, rat hair and other contaminants.

A note at the bottom of the table states:

Rumours of contamination by alien organisms have not been included in the table above. Anyone asking questions about such matters should be referred to Maria Torvile in public relations and any details they provide should be recorded and passed on to Frida Williams in the Parasol accounts department.

Maria is one of the corpses in the first floor office, though Frida is still very much alive.

Another page that may be of interest to the Investigators is that dealing with major accounts. Home Made Foods have been doing roaring business throughout the Hyeck District and Greater San Dorado in recent months, and organisations that have bought in bulk from Home Made Foods recently include the Atlas Corporation, Parasol, Pig Pharma, EZ Emergency, Capitolian Army Canteens, Cartel Ration Supplies, and Mars-based supermarket chains affiliated with each of the great corporations.

READING THE BROCHURE

The brochure "Welcome to the Group 5 Family" is mostly filled with wide panoramic shots of the Hyeck District, the reception room in the Parasol Building, EZ Emergency Troopers working their beat, and SanTax cabs thronging the streets.

A note has been inserted into the brochure. It reads:

Hi there, it's a pleasure to have you on board. Hopefully you had a productive meeting with Frida. Come and talk to me any time if you have any issues.

My door is always open!

Gary Steele.

A page towards the middle of the brochure lists the Group 5 family.

Handsure Holdings

"Your Investment is in Safe Hands!"

A premium financial service catering exclusively to the most successful business men and women on Mars.

Parasol Financial Services

The Hyeck District's own ground-breaking bank, now opening its first outlets in Greater San Dorado and beyond.

EZ Emergency

Our very own police, fire and ambulance service.

SanTax

Taxi! And tax free! Our SanTax cabs can see you transported in style for an affordable price.

On the last page of the brochure is a letter of welcome. It contains a lot of vapid and optimistic business talk and is signed "Frida Williams, Head of Accounting, Parasol," and "Don Stevia, CEO, Handsure Holdings". Thumbnail photos of Frida and Don looking very serious and important are shown.

CALLING THE POLICE

Perhaps the Investigators will be naïve enough to assume that enlisting the help of local police forces might be an appropriate thing to do at this juncture. If so, they are due to be disappointed. All the various police forces in the Hyeck District have been paid money to look the other way in regard to the burning building, and will take an inordinately long time to turn up and do anything about the fire.

If EZ Emergency are called, they will arrive when the building is nearly completely consumed by the fire. They will subject the Investigators to a long and hostile interview and if the Investigators admit that they were in the building, the EZ Emergency troopers will try to insinuate that the Investigators were responsible and will confiscate anything they picked up.

If another police service is called, they will arrive late, make perfunctory investigations, and assure the Investigators that they will follow up leads—which they will not.

INVESTIGATING PARASOL

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

Parasol is the most likely place the Investigators will want to start looking. They have several leads to here already which include:

- ◆ Kristine Mantel was affiliated with Parasol through her contact, Gary Steele.
- ◆ Agents Lee and Singh, a pair of Parasol employees, quizzed the Investigators about the Incursid on Luna.
- ◆ Feedback forms bearing the Parasol logo have been carried by assailants and mention Frida Williams.
- ◆ Frida Williams' name was also on a report that could be found in the burning Home Made Foods building.

PARASOL HIGH STREET OUTLETS

Whilst Parasol are far from the largest bank on Mars they do have a large number of outlets. There are a number of Parasol outlets in the Hyeck District itself, and more can be found throughout San Dorado and beyond to other Megacities controlled by Capitol.

However, these high street outlets will not provide much in the way of additional information to the Investigators. If asked relevant questions, any employee of a Parasol street branch can give the following information.

- ◆ Parasol is a part of Group 5.
- ◆ Don Stevia is an important member of the Group 5 board.
- ◆ Parasol's headquarters can be found in the Hyeck District.

Other than that most branch employees are fairly innocent (or ignorant) of what it is their employers get up to, and have even less knowledge of Group 5's wider concerns.

HEAD OFFICE

Parasol's head office is found almost smack bang in the centre of the Hyeck District, nestling in the shadow of the enormous Atlas Building. It is a large multi-storey building with numerous departments dedicated to various financial services. Parasol is well guarded by up to a dozen security guards who have the same equipment and profiles as EZ Emergency troopers.

The reception desk is manned by Yazhau Han, a pretty young girl with a sheer black bob and a wide and easy smile. It is set in a spacious area, tastefully furnished in a blue-grey theme, and decorated with large Venusian indoor plants. If the Investigators have to wait here, they can relax in comfortable armchairs. A large TV screen set into one of the walls plays a constant reel of adverts for Parasol's various products.

TALKING TO YAZHAU

The receptionist is open and friendly and knows a fair bit about Parasol going on. Provided the Investigators don't alarm her by suggesting she's involved in anything unsavoury or illegal, she will be happy to answer questions about the nature of Parasol and its relationship to Group 5.

If asked pertinent questions she is able to provide the following bits of information:

- ◆ Group 5 consist of SanTax, Home Made Foods, Parasol, Handsure Holdings, and EZ Emergency.
- ◆ Group 5 was created in recent years to manage Don Stevia's interests in the Hyeck District.

◆ Don Stevia rarely visits; mostly his time is spent managing the production of *The Deputy*.

◆ Parasol handle the accounts of the other parts of Group 5.

◆ Parasol are very interested in psychometrics as a way of improving their customer service.

She knows Gary Steele, Agents Lee and Singh, and Frida Williams and she will confirm that they work for Parasol and have offices in the building. She will be happy to direct the Investigators to Gary or the agents, but won't let them disturb Frida without a good excuse.

GARY STEELE

The Investigators may have the name "Gary S" from meeting Kristine Mantel earlier. She may have given them his name if she thought they might be won over, or they may have found clues leading to him on the note she carried. Gary is a whistle-blower who has caught wind that Parasol are involved in trafficking an alien life form. He does not know much about the details of the plot but he has some knowledge that might be useful to the Investigators provided they ask him the right questions.



Gary Steele.

If Yazhou is asked if a "Gary S" works at Parasol, she will think for a moment and then suggest that the Investigators are "probably referring to Gary Steele who works in corporate acquisitions".

Alternatively, if the Investigators have an idea that someone in Parasol must have helped arrange for Home Made Foods to be brought into Group 5, either because of clues they found at the Home Made Foods building or just as a result of putting two and two together, Yazhou will check her computer and confirm that it was Gary Steele who headed the buyout.

Gary is very keen to talk about his discoveries and speculations regarding Project Ladybird, and in talking to him, the Investigators could get a better understanding of what has been happening around them. However, he is justifiably paranoid and winning his trust might be difficult, especially if he comes to learn that the Investigators harmed Kristine in any way.

He is a romantic who sees himself as an agent provocateur, overtly working for Parasol, Group 5, and the Hyeck District whilst secretly dedicated to throwing a spanner in the works. He sees his insight into Project Ladybird as his best chance to do the most damage, and so he is actively looking for allies.

If the Investigators are diplomatic in their approach to Gary, mentioning in a polite and discrete manner that they are trying to bring the people behind Project Ladybird to justice or that they think wealthy Capitolians are involved in immoral and illegal activity, then he suggests they meet up and talk things over a cup of coffee in one of the Hyeck District's better (and smaller) cafes. He will also be keen to help them if they mention they have had trouble with EZ Emergency.

If the Investigators don't anticipate Gary's attitude and take a more direct approach to interviewing him they won't get very far, as he remains tight-lipped and denies any knowledge of Project Ladybird. However, he does have certain tells that might clue the Investigators into how to deal with him more effectively.

◆ He really doesn't like Agents Lee and Singh, Gwendolyn Kipp, Don Stevia and Frida Williams, and a conspicuous look of contempt crosses his face if their names are mentioned.

◆ He defends the actions and opinions of his friend, Kristine Mantel.

◆ He does not defend the philosophy behind the creation of the Hyeck District and will even complain about it if someone extolls it to him.

◆ He will say that the situation the Investigators are in "sounds awful" and that "someone should really do something about it".

◀ He has the general demeanour of the socially liberal middle class, with some radical convictions but lacking in courage and opportunity to act on them.

If the Investigators don't take the hint and adopt a softly-softly approach with Gary they will effectively alienate him, and if they mention they killed his friend Kristine he will be very angry, and may even be moved to violence if they are callous regarding her death.

If Gary does provide the Investigators with an interview they will find that he has little solid information, however he does speculate with some accuracy about much of what's going on. Gary will ask the Investigators to explain what has occurred to them since arriving, and depending on what information they provide, he will offer some potentially useful insights.

So if the Investigators mention what happened in the warehouse he will say:

Why would Project Ladybird go to all the trouble of transporting the Incursid here and then just squander it by setting it on you like that?

(Waits for Investigators to provide input).

They really do seem more interested in getting an idea about the creature's performance than keeping it in their possession.

If the Investigators mention the interviews they underwent with Agents Lee and Singh, or the feedback form they found in the warehouse, he will say:

These tests seem to place undue importance on people's emotional response to the creature, or its reactions to their emotional responses. What do you think about that?

(Waits for Investigators to provide input).

Could it be that they're trying to construct a predictive model of how emotional states contribute to the creature's performance, or its development?

His responses to more direct questions run along the following lines:

How did you find out about Project Ladybird?

I was tasked with acquiring the rights to the Home Made Foods brand for Group 5. Around that time, Agents Lee and Singh started discussing the existence of Incursids with me. Now I ought to make it clear that they never talked about the creatures as anything other than a threat to be understood and controlled, for all I know they may even be dedicated to

the eradication of such monstrosities. Then, when I heard one of them was being shipped to Mars, I thought things were going too far.

Who burned Home Made Foods?

I have no idea, but it would certainly seem that someone's trying to cover his or her tracks.

Why would EZ Emergency burn Home Made Foods?

I don't know, but they're part of Group 5, just like Parasol.

Do you know Frida Williams?

She's one of Parasol's most senior accountants. She handles the Group 5 account and related matters. I don't know much about her, though when I arranged for the takeover of Home Made Foods I had to pass everything by her. She's good at her job but we didn't get on. Basic personality clash.

Who's in charge of Group 5?

Group 5 is just a name for a portion of Don Stevia's business empire. As far as I know, Frida runs it day to day, though it'll be to his instruction. To be honest, I think he leaves things pretty much up to her, he just provides the investment these days. He spends most of his time playing golf and doing The Deputy.

Who else is part of Group 5?

To be honest, I'm not entirely sure. I have been involved in the acquisition of Home Made Foods, as you know, and EZ Emergency, Parasol, and SanTax were all set up in the last couple of years. I'm not sure anything else is part of the umbrella; though a company called Handsure Holdings sometimes gets mentioned in the older files. I have no idea who or what they are.

Isn't Gwendolyn Kipp involved as well?

I don't know. Group 5 is Don's business, but seeing as there's no regulation or accountability when it comes to Gwendolyn she may well have a hand in too.

Note that Gary can also provide the Investigators with assistance if they get into trouble with EZ Emergency. This is covered in the section **Investigating EZ Emergency** on page 167.



GARY STEELE, ARMCHAIR REVOLUTIONARY ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	10	9	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	4	4	2	1

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **M8 "Slingshot" pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Unarmed (melee):** 1+↑2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Corporate Acquisitions:** Steele is, as his job title suggests, quite capable of negotiating the ruthless world of corporate finance. He's extremely skilled when it comes to handling large quantities of personnel and corporate assets, and familiar with the way the corporate world works. Were he inclined to exploit that skill he'd go far indeed. If the characters can convince Steele that they are trustworthy and working towards the same ends, he may choose to assist them, with the weight of his influence providing assistance on Command, Persuade, or Lifestyle tests, exactly as if he were present—rolling 1d20 against the relevant skill and adding any successes to the character's test. However, after the first time this is used, the Repercussion range of any test he assists increases by one—name-dropping can only get you so far if you overuse it.

Gary is a short man with a slight build; he wears spectacles with thick black plastic frames and keeps his brown hair short and spikey. His arms are covered in tattoos depicting anarchist symbols and iconography. These are a legacy of his youth and he is now somewhat ashamed of them, and keeps them covered for the sake of his professional persona. He speaks quickly, with a light and feminine inflection.

The Investigators may show an interest in his relationship with Kristine. They met nearly a decade ago on Luna and enjoyed a brief romance. Whilst their mutual affection faded somewhat, they continued to share a correspondence and mutual dreams of anti-establishment trouble making.

FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH GARY

It may well be that the Investigators establish a good relationship with Gary and then consult him further pertaining to information they uncover during subsequent investigations.

Where Gary does have something to say about information given later in this adventure a sidebar like this will explain what insights he'd share with the Investigators. If no such sidebar exists in a given section it indicates that Gary has no knowledge on the matter and any opinions or speculation he does give will be general and possibly misleading.

Obviously if the Investigators have such information by the time of their first meeting with Gary, he will be happy to discuss it then and there. So, if they have the Participant Vital Stats from Frida Williams office (see page 156) he will have some speculations about it, but if they ask him about the goings on at Pig Pharma he has no useful information.

The Investigators can contact Gary two more times after his initial interview with them, after which too much attention is drawn to him and he disappears. All the Investigators can find out is that the Parasol receptionist claims he "was taken off by some EZ guys to help with some enquiries" if she is asked about him. No one else knows anything and EZ denies all knowledge.

AGENTS LEE AND SINGH

Agents Lee and Singh work for Parasol's Market Research Department. They are much easier to get in touch with than Frida Williams, but on the other hand, they know a lot less about the big picture. If the Investigators ask Yazhau to get them in touch with Lee or Singh, she will provide details of how to get to their office without asking any awkward questions.

Lee and Singh are dimly aware that there is something fishy going on, however they don't know the details, and, unlike Gary Steele, they are more interested in toeing the line and earning their employer's trust in the hope of promotion.

As far as they are concerned, the Market Research they perform is merely being used to improve Parasol's tailoring of their products to individual customers. They have compiled their research now and would be happy to talk over its implications, so the Investigators are in luck if they want to gain some insight into the analyses Lee and Singh performed on them earlier. However if the Investigators do mention the attack, or ask about Frida or any other sensitive information they become tight-lipped.

Lee and Sing will be surprised to see the Investigators, as they expected them to deliver the Incursid and return to Luna. They will take it in their stride if they learn about the attack on the Investigators, but won't speculate openly as to a likely cause (though they suspect that such a betrayal was probably ordered by Frida).

Pertinent information they are able and willing to give is only offered as a response to a straight question, and runs along the following lines:

What was all that testing stuff on Luna about?

Here at Parasol we pride ourselves on a high level of customer service tailored to individual personalities. Our call centre staff not only know the details of their customer's accounts, but how they like to be spoken to, whether or not they respect formalities, and what sort of small talk they like to make.

On acquiring Home Made Foods for Group 5 and learning of the existence of the creature, we soon correlated the manifestations with consumption of certain Home Made Foods produce.

Given our experience in market research, we were despatched to see if we could discover any commonalities.

It seemed to us that development of the creature tied in closely with the mental state of the host, and that stress and anxiety might lead to a shorter gestation period, or a more powerful adult organism.

The tests we ran on you and some other participants were designed to see if childhood traumas in nearby humans might correlate in some way to the development and attitudes of the creature.

What were your findings?

Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest a link. Nothing significant—but a creature embedded in an individual with unresolved traumatic memories might develop faster than normal.

Did you do any other tests?

We looked at how physique of the host might contribute to the development of the creature. We looked at how traumatic experience during the gestation period influenced the process and we compared personality of the host to manifestation of the Incursid.

And what did you conclude?

The ideal host is a grown adult, but the younger the better. Early 20s or so. The stronger and larger the host is, and the more aggressive they are, then the larger the resulting Incursid. Traumatic, painful, or irritating experiences that occur to the host, or to those in the vicinity of the host, during the gestation period seem to nourish the growing organism.

Can we study your reports?

Certainly not—they are the Intellectual property of Group 5!

Come off it—surely such matters don't apply here.

We can assure you that we have the requisite insurance.



FRIDA WILLIAMS

Frida is a complex character who behaves in a way that may seem counter-intuitive. It is important that the GM understand her approach to the situation and her likely responses to the Investigators. Through dealing with Frida, the Investigators may find out some important information that helps develop their investigation, but it is important that they don't come by such things too easily.

Frida is one of the few employees of Parasol who has a comprehensive understanding of Don Stevia's plans. As such, she is aware that she is culpable of collusion in crimes against humanity and very wary of talking to strangers about anything to do with Home Made Foods, weird alien creatures, or her relationship to her boss. It is important to note that Frida is not herself a Heretic, nor does she know much about the nature of the Dark Soul. She is just aware that her boss is dabbling in alien techno-sorcery and this has no impact on her considerable loyalty to him and his cause.

Even if they do manage to confront Frida, the Investigators will not have an easy time getting any information from her. She is ex-military, is armed at all times, keeps her cards close to her chest, and is one of the toughest and most unpleasant characters the Investigators will meet during this section of the adventure.

Frida believes Don Stevia is acting in the best interests of humanity by utilising the powers of the Dark Soul in an effort to keep it sated as opposed to unleashing its full force. Frida is willing to die for what she sees as a worthy cause, and if she believes that Don is at risk of serious investigation as a result of the inquisitiveness of the

Investigators she will even go so far as to use her own demise as a distraction.

Because of her dedication and justifiable paranoia, she will not be an easy person for the Investigators to talk to. If the Investigators are looking to talk to Frida, they will either have to come up with a convincing cover story or force their way in.

The most straightforward ruse that the Investigators could employ in order to talk to Frida is to pretend to be the very same EZ Emergency troopers that were sent to waylay them at the warehouse when they arrived in the Hyeck District. In order to pull this off they will have to meet the following criteria:

1. They will have to approach the main reception desk and ask for "Frida in Accounts".
2. They will then be asked what they want to speak to her for. The expected answer will be a euphemistic nod to the assault in the warehouse. "We have just conducted some business for her on the west side of town", "we've been clearing out a warehouse for her", or "we have some important feedback regarding a delivery from Luna" are examples of the sort of thing that could work here. "We've just killed the chumps from Luna" or "we're here about the monster" will raise the alarm. If the Investigators say something evasive like "we've information for her ears only" the receptionist will give them one last chance to say something more meaningful. If they continue to evade they arouse suspicion.
3. Provided they don't raise the alarm, the receptionist will ask them for their ID number. This is the number on the top of the feedback form that they may have found at the warehouse, EZ-HD-45-92-00.
4. As an optional extra, if the PCs suggest that they have a handbook on their person that Frida will want to investigate it will help their case (either by ameliorating the need to raise the alarm to a more moderate situation in which suspicions are raised, or by ameliorating a situation in which suspicions are raised into one where Frida accepts the Investigators as legitimate).

If the Investigators act so badly as to have her raise the alarm, the receptionist presses a button beneath her desk and politely asks them to wait for Frida to see them. After six minutes, a squad of six EZ Emergency troopers arrives and attempts to place the Investigators under arrest.

See **Investigating EZ Emergencies** on page 167 for a discussion of EZ Emergency trooper equipment and tactics in such situations.

If the Investigators arouse suspicion they will be given the directions to Frida's office, however when they get there they will find that the door is flanked by two Parasol security guards (same equipment and profiles as EZ Emergency troopers). Furthermore, Frida has prepared for trouble and has armed herself with a powerful handgun (a Bauhaus HG 12).

If the Investigators do not arouse suspicion then Frida does not arrange for any security and leaves her handgun in her desk drawer.

However, even without her gun Frida is not defenceless. At all times, she keeps a Blue Pill (see page 170) in a small glass capsule that is kept pressed between her teeth and her inner cheek.

If the Investigators continue to keep up the act of behaving like EZ Emergency troopers Frida takes the feedback form from them, peruses it for a short while and then encourages them to talk in more detail about what went on in the warehouse. In particular, she is interested in the attitude of the victims and the nature of the Incursid. As she does this, she adds marginal details to the form in red pen.

Provided they give a convincing performance, Frida thanks them with a chilly smile. She then takes a file from the shelf near her desk marked "Ladybird", places the feedback form inside, and replaces the file back on the shelf. She thanks the Investigators again, and asks if there is anything more she can do for them. It should be clear at this point that she wishes them to leave. If the Investigators want to say anything else to Frida they have to be careful not to alarm her, but provided that the Investigators are polite and undemanding she might reveal a few hints along the following lines:

Excuse me miss, but who were those people in the warehouse?

The people you have helped save Mars from today were a cabal of Heretic terrorists. We have had word that a group of them were on their way from Luna, hoping to undermine our military efforts to strike back at the Dark Legion.

Does that have anything to do with that creature?

Indeed it did! No more thanks to your efforts. Their organisation is planning to unleash such beasts on the people of Mars just as they did on Luna.

Why didn't you want any of them taken in?

The members of this particular cell were deemed utterly disposable by their superiors, and we heard rumour that they were fitted with biomechanical devices that could have wreaked havoc if they had been captured alive. With these foot soldiers gone the cult on Luna will have to make moves

to replace them in the field, and our agents in Luna city will be able to gather more information as a result.

Will Don know about our efforts today?

(She smiles at such a suggestion) Rest assured those who have headed this project are more than grateful for your efforts.

So what now?

Return to the EZ headquarters and resume your usual roles. If we have more news regarding this sort of thing, we'll know who to trust.

If the Investigators become aggressive or demanding with Frida, or ask too many questions that they should either know the answers to (such as "what shall we do with the bodies" or "do you want to see the corpse of the creature"), or ask questions which they have no business knowing the answers to ("what's in that file" or "can you confirm Don Stevia's involvement") then Frida will raise the alarm by pressing a discrete buzzer placed under her desk. She will try and stall whilst a group of six security guards arrive, and on their arrival, she will try to grab her gun and help disable the Investigators.

FRIDA STALLING

If the Investigators drop the pretence of being EZ Emergency troopers and ask Frida more direct questions about Project Ladybird and related issues she may try and trick them by providing misleading answers. However, this will just be a stalling tactic used in order to keep the Investigators occupied whilst she presses the alarm button mentioned earlier.

Such a conversation may go along the following lines:

Look Lady, we're not really with EZ. We're the people your friends tried to kill back there!

I'm sorry; there must be some kind of misunderstanding here.

Oh, I don't think so. We were just told to deliver that creature; we've nothing else to do with it!

Well then at least you can sympathise with our efforts to eradicate it.

You didn't just want to kill it though; you wanted to see how it performs!

We thought you were Heretic agents here to deliver a dangerous alien organism. Based on our understanding do you not think it just that we employ a bit of dramatic irony in

setting the creature on those who we thought sought to set it on us? Imagine you were in our shoes.

You're just trying to work out how it performs aren't you?

Only in order to better understand it, in order to better eradicate it.

Rubbish, you're planning to set them on someone aren't you?

We will be doing no such thing, now be gone before I call the police.

And so on ... basically, Frida denies any wrongdoing either on her behalf, Don Stevia's, or Parasol's. When the security arrives, she tells them in no uncertain terms that the Investigators are harassing her and to eject them from the premises.

FIGHTING FRIDA

The Investigators may decide to take an even more direct and aggressive approach to tackling Frida, either by accosting her in her office or trying to waylay her on her way from work or whilst she is at home.

Frida is more than happy to meet violence with violence. Whilst she doesn't carry much in the way of offensive weaponry, she is a highly adept fighter and employs apt tactics and relentless ferocity. If there are EZ Emergency troopers or Parasol security guards in the vicinity, they will back Frida up without question unless she begins to employ Dark Gifts.

If the fight looks to be going her way Frida will be somewhat restrained, hoping that she and her allies will be able to subdue the Investigators and control the situation without risking the exposure of any of her dealings with Incursids or Dark Symmetry.

However, if it looks like the fight is going badly or if the Investigators start making certain facts of her plans public she will try to act in such a way so as to draw the blame for the strange goings on onto herself rather than risk implicating Don Stevia. To do this she will take the Blue Pill whereupon she will begin to manifest Dark Gifts. She will use those Dark Gifts against the Investigators, all the while giving villainous monologues for their benefit (and the benefit of any bystanders) along the following lines:

"You fools! You've ruined everything! Setting the Incursid on you was to be the masterstroke of my plans, for once it had consumed the bodies and souls of two more mortals it would have entered its final phase. Now all my plans for the dominion of Mars are come to naught. You may think you stand between the Dark Soul and its ultimate victory but I will have my revenge! Revenge!"

At this juncture, any EZ Emergency troopers or Parasol security guards who are involved in the fight will become very confused. Sure, Frida is the person they are paid to protect but on the other hand they are not Heretics and aren't willing to have any truck with those who employ Dark Symmetry. Therefore, the second Frida uses the Dark Gifts she has access to as a result of taking the Blue Pill, any security or police who are on her side become confused and stop fighting unless they need to for self-defence.

For her part, Frida then fights fiercely until she is killed. Her last words will be:

"You! You may have defeated me, but the Dark Soul will find new servants. You will never defeat the Dark Soul."

Of course, this whole clichéd villain act is merely a way of providing Don Stevia with some plausible deniability. Seeing as it is Frida's name on all the paperwork.

FRIDA WILLIAMS, GROUP 5 EXECUTIVE ☠

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	9	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	9	13	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	-

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 3** ▶◀ **Torso 8**
- ◀▶ **Arms 4** ▶◀ **Legs 6**
- ◀▶ **Serious 7** ▶◀ **Critical 4**
- ◀▶ **Mental 13**

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Tailored Business Suit: (Arms 1, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **HG-12 Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+**T**5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◀▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+**T**4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◀▶ **Surprisingly Deadly:** Williams is a trained killer: agile, skilled, and deadly. In spite of her business-like manner, she is more than able to defend herself in a confrontation. During the first round of any combat, all of Williams' attacks gain the Vicious 2 quality, due to the surprise of her combat ability.



Frida shows the power of the Blue Pill.

- ◀▶ **Agile Combatant:** So long as Williams uses at least a Restricted Action to move during her turn, the difficulty of ranged attacks against her increases by one step.
- ◀▶ **Utter Determination and Absolute Loyalty:** Williams' devotion to her employer is unwavering, and she will not back down under any circumstances. Any attempts to make her betray Don Stevia or turn against Group 5 in any way increase in difficulty by three steps, She similarly gains three bonus Momentum on all Willpower tests against intimidation, fear, or other forms of coercion.

Frida is a middle aged lady of average height. She is slightly overweight. She has mid-length straight hair that is dyed bright red and wears horn-rimmed spectacles. Her wardrobe is mostly black with some accessories in leopard print. She is a nasty individual who typically talks to people in a sarcastic and domineering manner, but who can turn on a deal of superficial charm when it suits her for business purposes.

BREAKING IN TO FRIDA'S OFFICE

If the Investigators notice Frida storing information in the Ladybird file, their best next move may be to wait until she leaves for the night, then break into her office, and steal the file.

In order to break into her office the Investigators will have to find a safe place inside the Parasol building to hide until Frida leaves. A

toilet or cleaning closet could serve for this purpose, or they could wait inside Gary Steele's office if they have made contact with him.

Patrols of two Parasol Security Guards will pass by regularly, but provided the Investigators keep their heads down, or give plausible excuses, they won't attempt to arrest them or eject them from the premises.

At 5pm, Frida leaves her office and travels home to her apartment. The Investigators could then break into her office by passing a **Daunting D3 Thievery** or **Mechanics test**. Once inside they have ten minutes to search the area for clues before a security patrol passes by.

THE LADYBIRD FILE

If the Investigators overpower Frida Williams or break into her office when she is elsewhere they are able to obtain the Ladybird file.

The Ladybird file contains numerous copies of the sort of feedback forms and psychological tests that the Investigators are familiar with by now. It also contains two sub-compartments.

The first is marked "Forlorn Hope" and details the vital statistics of twelve individuals. These individuals are unnamed. Ten of them are male and two are female. Their ages range from 20 to 37. They are all tall and well built.

Two of the males are marked with red ink as a "perfect subject". It should be noted that they have a history of issues relating to the management of their tempers, including "insubordination", "committing crimes such as assault and battery and domestic violence", and "displaying a marked degree of aggression in the field". They are also noted as having rough upbringings, involving abandonment in one case and being made a ward of social services in another.

Another five of the men and one of the women are marked with red ink as being a "fair subject". They are variously described but all seem to have either committed minor offenses relating to violence at some point and/or having experienced a notably traumatic experience during their childhoods.

The other individuals are not labelled as anything. Their records are clean of any known criminal activity, mention of violence, or problematic upbringing.

Whilst it makes no explicit mention of the military, reading in between the lines it is obvious that the twelve people are soldiers. Each of them seems to be a brave and accomplished soldier, and they have all been honoured in a manner consistent with a high degree of accomplishment within the military organisation with which they served.

If an Individual wishes to know what sort of unit the subject was a part of, they can make an educated guess if they make a **Challenging D2 Education** or **Insight test**. The Ladybird File Details (see page 161) summarises the various subjects and the information the Investigators can associate with each one.

The mix of elite combatants from different corporations means that the Investigators may well surmise that the subjects are a squad of Doomtroopers, which is correct. If they don't come to such a conclusion by themselves, the GM may like to hint at that conclusion.

The twelve soldiers are a specially selected military unit who have been chosen and trained to undertake an almost suicidal mission into the heart of a nearby citadel. Don Stevia has received word of this mission though his contacts in The Invisible Hand, and has decided to put a stop to it.

Several of the Doomtroopers, the perfect subjects and the fair subjects, have been fed Incursid eggs. Agents from Home Made Foods made sure of that as they worked delivering food to Cartel and Capital military outfits. Don plans for these Incursids to mature during the mission to the citadel, thus thwarting the mission and serving his own tactics for keeping the Dark Soul at bay.

The second compartment is marked "Lifecycles".

This is filled with statistical analysis of the development of Incursids. A great deal of effort has been put into recording the details of those who consumed Incursid eggs, their vital statistics, their histories of trauma or violence, and discussion of traumatic or violent events that occurred to or around them as they incubated the developing Incursid.

It should be clear to the Investigators that anyone who had made a close study of such data would be able to build a good predictive model of how long it would take an Incursid to develop in a subject whose history of violence and trauma they knew a lot about.

OTHER FILES IN FRIDA'S OFFICE

The other files in Frida's office all relate to important accounts held by Parasol. If the Investigators mention that they are looking through such files for anything pertinent they can find a file labelled "Group 5 Account".

Reading through this file is something of a mammoth task, and the Investigators will have to study it for a total of six man hours in order to figure out any meaningful information. If they attempt to skim-read the file, they should be called upon to make a **Challenging D2 Education test** in order to glean relevant information.

If the test is passed or the Investigators put in the time needed to read through the file in detail they can gather the following facts:

- ◆ Group 5 consist of two companies that aren't named in the file as well as Parasol, SanTax, Home Made Foods and EZ Emergency.
- ◆ It seems that all the companies run at something of a loss aside from Parasol and the companies not named in the file.
- ◆ The unnamed companies are only discernible through expenditures and profits that can't be allocated to the other companies.
- ◆ It seems strange that SanTax and EZ run at such a loss.
- ◆ One of the unnamed sources of revenue doesn't seem to require much in the way of expenditure or asset.
- ◆ The other has had quite a lot of equipment and materials put into it. These include top of the line laboratory equipment, fodder, and medicine bought for farm animals.



ASKING GARY ABOUT FRIDA WILLIAMS OR AGENTS LEE AND SINGH

Gary can make some pertinent suggestions about how the Investigators should go about convincing the receptionist to allow them to see Frida, especially if they show him the feedback form from the warehouse.

He can tell them where her office is but he will suggest that they might be able to get more information if they speak to her face to face.

If shown the Participant Vital Stats he will ask the Investigators if they have any idea why such things might be pertinent. If they haven't guessed that such people are candidates for Incursid infestation, he will raise the possibility.

If the Investigators wonder why particular interest was paid into how Incursid's developed in young, big, and strong people he will point out that such people might make good soldiers.

THE LADYBIRD FILE DETAILS

#	SEX	NOTED AS...	HISTORICAL NOTES	ADDITIONAL INFO WITH TEST...
1	M	Fair subject.	Neglected upbringing.	Imperial Clan Special Forces.
2	M	Perfect subject.	Abandoned as child. Violent criminal history. Aggressive soldier.	Capitol Free Marines.
3	F		Nothing of apparent pertinence.	Bauhaus Etoiles Mortants.
4	M	Fair subject.	Noted as having committed a number of minor but violent criminal acts.	Mishiman Samurai
5	M		Occasional insubordinate behaviour.	Imperial Special Forces.
6	M	Fair subject.	Noted as insubordinate and requiring treatment for anger management.	Mishiman Samurai
7	M	Fair subject.	Some history of violence. Considered effectively rehabilitated.	Imperial Wolfbanes.
8	F	Fair subject.	Overly zealous attitude to combat.	Capitol Infantry.
9	M	Perfect subject.	Taken from abusive parents as a child. Many disciplinary problems relating to violence and criminality. Often reported AWOL.	Bauhaus Venusian Rangers.
10	M		Minor aggressive tendencies as a youth.	Bauhaus Etoiles Mortants.
11	M	Fair subject.	Reports being bullied as child and often brooding on thoughts of revenge.	Imperial Special Forces.
12	M		Nothing of apparent pertinence.	Capitol Infantry.

INVESTIGATING GWENDOLYN KIPP

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

Because she appeared in a video clip that the Investigators watched during their journey to Mars, they might assume that Gwendolyn is involved with what's going on.

The fact is that she is not. Don thought that a fellow Capitolian trillionaire would help give his operation a gloss of authority (and knew that Gwendolyn's brash manners may well help distract people from his own involvement). He paid very well for her to appear and she is mercenary enough to perform such roles with no questions asked provided the profit is sufficient. However, she is a friend of Don's and viciously biased in her belief that a rich man should be able to do what he wants with his money. If it negatively impacts the lives of the poor they probably had it coming. On the other hand she is a business rival of Don's, and would dearly like to know more about his plans so that she can adapt her market strategies to suit.

As such, she is not exactly disapproving of his actions, and if some Luna police types come to her expecting her to oppose her friend in his corporate endeavours they will find her less than helpful.

'INTERVIEWING' GWENDOLYN

The GM could use Gwendolyn as a red herring. If the Investigators are generally making good time in closing in on Don and his operation then perhaps by confronting them with Gwendolyn might throw them off the scent for a while. On the other hand, if they are lost and in need of some direction it is probably best not to confuse them by adding Gwendolyn into the mix, and if they make efforts to meet her it is probably best to ensure that such a meeting goes smoothly and to the end of removing her as a suspect.

Gwendolyn can be found in the penthouse office of the Atlas building throughout the day, and at the Atlas Frugged nightclub most nights. She is the closest thing the Hyeck District has to royalty, and so the Investigators will find it pretty much impossible to get to her. She is surrounded by a squad of at least 6 bodyguards at all times and if she were to be accosted in a public space pretty much everyone in the vicinity would rush to her aid in the hope of winning her notice and approval. The Bodyguards have the profiles and equipment of EZ Emergency troopers (see page 141).

The only way to garner an audience with Gwendolyn is to be strictly truthful and straightforward. If the Investigators present themselves to the Atlas reception, or to one of her bodyguards at the nightclub, and announce that they are the individuals who helped transport the Incursid from Luna to Mars and that they wish to talk to her about their subsequent problems—then she will grant them an audience.

Such an audience will be subject to certain stipulations. The Investigators will have to submit themselves to a frisking and turn



Gwendolyn Kipp is the closest thing the Hyeck District has to royalty.

over all weapons or potentially offensive equipment (Gwendolyn's bodyguards are very good at identifying and confiscating anything that could be used to hurt their employer or record her conversation).

If the Investigators submit to this, they will be provided a private audience with Gwendolyn, either in her penthouse office or in an exclusive VIP suite in the nightclub.

However, what will transpire is that she isn't particularly interested in providing information or assistance to the Investigators, but concentrates on asking them questions, and getting them to divulge information of their own. The only reason Gwendolyn would express opinions of her own would be because she thought it might help winkle more information from the Investigators.

A typical exchange with Gwendolyn might run along the following lines:

Frankly we think you're involved in the destruction of Home Made Foods, do you know anything about that?

Don't be moronic! What on Mars would lead me to profit from the ruin of a petty fast food outlet? Do you know how much I make a minute?

THINGS GWENDOLYN LIKES TO SAY

Greed? Greed is great.

Ah, Parasol, do you know I once considered making a present of Parasol to my niece on the occasion of her majority?

I've a lot of respect for Don; his daily earnings are like a telephone number. He might even make a player someday.

You clearly know nothing about asset stripping.

And what will happen if we don't allow people to liquidate their acquisitions ruthlessly? They'll run off and join Imperial, that's what!

See these shoes? Diamonds on the soles. Bauhaus of course, and bespoke. Who made yours?

The superior individual is motivated by a desire to beat others.

I am entirely without pity because no one has ever pitied me.

Hysterectomy at age sixteen—best thing that ever happened to me.

THINGS GWENDOLYN WANTS TO KNOW

- ◀▶ Who did the things the Investigators are referring to?
- ◀▶ When did they happen?
- ◀▶ How might it possibly profit the people doing it?
- ◀▶ How do the Investigators hope to profit from their own involvement?
- ◀▶ How might Gwendolyn turn the situation to her benefit?



Erm, no. How much?

I could buy the equivalent of Home Made Foods every 47 seconds. What do you know about the destruction of Home Made Foods?

Well, we were there.

When was this? Who do you think was responsible? Why? Did you take anything from the premises?

Therefore, her interactions with the Investigators will be limited to asking them quick fire questions and boasting luridly about her own largesse.

The Investigators may find it increasingly frustrating that Gwendolyn refuses to perceive any possible threat to her own wellbeing. This is partly an ironclad optimism on her part, she simply believes that she will be able to weather any storm that comes her way and even relishes the challenge. It is also part of her personal philosophy that individuals of greatness should be unencumbered in their attempts to exercise their will, so even if she were convinced that Don was a Heretic she would consider it fair play.

PROFITING FROM A MEETING WITH GWENDOLYN

The GM should be very strict when it comes to the Investigators dealing with Gwendolyn, she is a steely and cold woman who they simply won't be able to shame or cajole into assisting them. Her attitude to their plight and those of other people who have suffered at the hands of Don is utterly without pity.

However, there is one tack that the Investigators could take that might earn them some kind of assistance from Gwendolyn.

The first is to offer her their services as agents of industrial espionage. If they were to adopt a line of argument such as "Don's plans will come to affect you personally, and we can provide proof" she will pay them a little more heed. If they show a little entrepreneurial spirit, she will be even more impressed. In such an instance, she would be willing to see them equipped with the best armour, weaponry and spy equipment money can buy.

INVESTIGATING DON STEVIA

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

The Investigators may guess that Don has something to do with the situation due to his appearance on the video that they watched whilst on their way to Mars.

Don is also the CEO of Group 5 and various people can confirm this to the Investigators during the course of their investigations.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH DON

Unfortunately, for the Investigators, Don is effectively out of touch for this section of the adventure. He is deeply embroiled in preparations for the upcoming season of *The Deputy*.

The GM should be careful about revealing information about Don to the Investigators. On one hand, they do have to go and sign up for *The Deputy* at some point in order to progress to the next stage of the adventure. On the other hand, if they do so too soon it could mean that they sit on their laurels and wait for *The Deputy* to begin rather than following their other leads and forming a more comprehensive picture of what is going on.

Therefore, if they ask after Don early on in their investigations it may be best to stall them by having people say things like "he's pretty busy with other things these days, but he does occasionally drop in to visit his business interests in the Hyeck District—perhaps someone at Parasol could help you".

Only once they have made inroads to other leads should people start saying stuff like "Don is wrapped up with *The Deputy* at the moment. Unless you're involved in *The Deputy* you aren't going to find it easy to talk to him until it's all over".

Of course, most people who work for or with Don are not going to suggest that interfering busybodies actually sign up with *The Deputy* simply in order to collar him. So the receptionists at Don's various businesses, Frida Williams, Gwendolyn Kipp, and other such people will simply state that Don is too busy to deal with the likes of the Investigators.

On the other hand, Gary Steele and Eva Junge will point out that signing up for *The Deputy* could result in a good chance of meeting the man himself.



TAKING A BREAK AND MARKING TIME

The Investigators should be allowed to investigate the leads described earlier without the additional distraction of further plot developments. However once they have made initial enquiries regarding Home Made Foods and Parasol, and if they seem set on investigating Pig Pharma, then they should be made aware of some important developments.

BIG NEWS!

At some point in the day, Don Stevia reveals to the DJs of the Cap One radio station his plans for the next season of *The Deputy*.

Read the following to the Investigators if they are anywhere near an interactive hoarding:

The nearby hoarding blazes into life, displaying a picture of the Cap One logo in bright red and yellow. The DJ's voice echoes throughout the surrounding streets.

*Cap One—San Dorado's most popular news station! We've got big news for you people. Capitol's most famous self-made Trillionaire, Don Stevia, has just announced the theme of the upcoming season of *The Deputy*, and boy—it's a doozy!*

He's looking for anyone with experience relating to corporate security to compete in setting up a new business right here in San Dorado! Peak physical fitness, knowledge of the law and the ability to take a boardroom barracking are essential skills for anyone wanting to be a candidate for the show, and whilst previous experience in military units or police forces isn't required, if you don't know how to manhandle a mugger or shoot down an assailant this series just isn't going to be for you.

*The makers of *The Deputy* are getting filming started right away, as the early rounds of the programme will feature a ruthless new elimination challenge. Anyone can join in. Just turn up at the foot of the Kirkwood Bunker at 9am tomorrow morning and be prepared for some strenuous physical activity.*

Don Stevia promises some heavy attrition in the day to come, but those who make the cut will go on to compete in the upcoming series.

Stay tuned to Cap One for more exciting updates!

MORE BIG NEWS!

Shortly after revealing the theme of this year's *The Deputy*, the news stations reveal more breaking news:

We bring urgent news of fighting breaking out all over Venus. A major push against the forces of the Dark Legion. For more information, make your way to the nearest Cap One outlet! The cheapest news in San Dorado.

If the Investigators are interested then there are a couple of places in the Hyeck District where people can pay to sit and listen to the news in what looks like a waiting room. If the Investigators spend time here, they will hear all the previous news stories given in this section (the award of Ligger of the Week to Gunther Klinski, the new season of *The Deputy* and so on) as well as more details of the military efforts on Venus.

Read the following:

A burst of rousing trumpet calls issues from the speakers and a DJ announces: "War! War on the Dark Legion! We have reports of a major assault on the forces and citadels of the Dark Legion all over Venus! Bauhaus forces are leading the assaults on a number of citadels in and around the equatorial jungles and we are told that cooperative support is being provided by military units belonging to the other great corporations. This is an unprecedented effort by the armies of humanity to strike back at our infernal foe."

"All across the Solar System there have been reports of armies mobilising. Forces that have been on the defensive for long years are mustering together to confront the forces of the Dark Legion as one. At the heart of this, the Brotherhood are coordinating the war effort. Mystics are acknowledged to be advising military commanders and Inquisitors have been spotted amongst those leading the assaults on Citadels on Venus. The Cardinal himself has been seen not far from the front lines in the Venusian Equatorial Jungle. It seems that representatives from every faction of humanity are engaged in the struggle, Bauhaus units supported by Imperial raiding parties, Capitolian platoons accompany Mishiman battlesuits. This is an unprecedented level of effort and cooperation, and whatever the outcome, this day will go down as the start of the most dramatic chapter in human history."

There follows a great deal of analysis and reports of individual battles. Whilst the Cap One reporters and pundits are clearly and understandably biased in favour of counter-Legion assaults there is a growing sense, as more reports come in, that the actions are not producing results. One of Cap One's more sober pundits even goes so far as to say:

"If this is any sort of victory we are winning here then it is Pyrrhic in the extreme. Whilst a great deal of damage is being wreaked on Dark Legion forces and citadels, it is not clear what long term goals are being met or whether they are worth the obvious cost. The casualty figures that are being reported are staggeringly high, and we can assume they are optimistic readings and that the true cost is higher still."

He is shouted down by his co-hosts, who claim that the effort must be worth it and that any problems are due to the Bauhaus led nature of the assault. If and when Capitol's forces make a more committed assault, they say, things will obviously improve.



AN APPARENTLY UNRELATED EVENT

This event occurs after the Investigators have been to Parasol, and may well seem innocent enough at the time it occurs. Read the following to the Investigators as they are passing by the Atlas Frugged nightclub on the High Street.

As you are passing the nightclub, there is a flurry of activity by the door. A bevy of Bouncers is working as hard as they can to eject a huge man from the premises. As you approach, they finally prise his hands from the doorway and throw him, with unceremonious force, down the steps and onto the pavement.

"You!" Says one of the Bouncers, smoothing down his rucked-up tuxedo as he does so. "You show your ugly mug round here again and you'll get a proper pasting, you hear me? You're nothing but trouble. A disgrace!"

The man reels and lurches on the pavement, clearly he is worse for wear. He stands nearly seven feet tall and is broad and muscular. Scars crisscross his face and he has the square-jawed look of a born fighter. A short and portly man with slick backed black hair, a friendly face and a long trench coat made of iridescent material scampers down the steps to join him. "Gunther! Gunther! Are you OK? We must try and settle you down Gunther; you'll get yourself into trouble if you carry on like this!"

"It's prolly one too many of those li'll red pillz whass dun for me," Gunther slurs in a Venusian accent, "they dun mix too well wiv Bauhaus brand schnapps and siss pints of Marshunn beer!"

The Investigators may well guess that the man is the Gunther Klinski, who has been going AWOL from the Doomtrooper training facility. He'd be dropped for the mission if it weren't for the fact every available Doomtrooper is on Venus preparing for the final assault led by the Cardinal.

Gunther is a member of a Doomtrooper squad who have been tasked with a mission that will probably lead to their certain death. He has also been infected with an Incursid egg. He is subject Number 9 on the list the Investigators may have found in the Project Ladybird file in Frida Williams' office, and the little man in his company is actually a Group 5 agent tasked with preventing him from getting too angry or traumatised prior to his deployment.

The Investigators may guess some of this, but they will have no real chance to confirm such suspicions as the little man hails a SanTax taxi and rides off to another nightclub with Gunther. It is important that Gunther and the little man evade any attempts to follow them at this point, as they will reappear later in the adventure.

If the bouncers are asked about Gunther's behaviour they will say he was very drunk and pestering some of the girls in the nightclub before attempting to start fights with anyone who dared complain about his behaviour. They have no idea who either Gunther or the little man are.

ATLAS FRUGGED

The Investigators may well decide to enter Atlas Frugged as a result of the above encounter or just because they like the idea of spending some time in the club. It is a fairly exclusive venue so they will have to dress for the occasion and spend 10 credits on a ticket (Restriction 0, Cost 1).

Red Pills are available over the bar in Atlas Frugged, as well as a variety of drugs and intoxicants from all over the solar system. If the Investigators decide to stake out the tradesman's entrance for deliveries of Red Pills they may well see Francis Ohaya dropping off a box at the GMs discretion (see page 167 for more details on Francis).

Note that pretty much everyone in the club will have an opinion on the recent military escapades on Venus and the theme of the new season of *The Deputy*. People may think that discussing such matters makes for a good ice-breaker, and so will launch into conversation with the Investigators by asking their opinions on such matters.

CHASING THE RED PILL SUPPLY

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

The Investigators may have found some Red Pills when investigating the drug supply on Luna; they might link the effects of the two drugs or simply be suspicious thanks to the prevalence of mentions of Red Pills on the street. They may have consumed a pill themselves, or something spiked with a pill.

THE RED PILL SUPPLY

Tracing the Red Pill supply is not particularly hard, but it could take some time. Generally speaking, street distributors or those who sell the pills over the counter at nightclubs will buy them in bulk from high street dealers.

The High Street dealers, such as Atlas Drugged, will get their supply from the only known wholesaler. A man called Francis Ohaya who lives to the western end of the Hyeck District in the Fountainhead apartment block, room 248.

Getting this address for Francis will necessarily involve bribery, threats, or trickery. If the Investigators could convince a High Street dealer that they have an idea for promotion of Red Pills that would benefit all parties they might be given the address, but otherwise it's going to involve a significant show of force or an expensive finder's fee.



Francis Ohaya: Pusher and Pig Pharma Rep.

Approaching the building the Investigators may note that it is guarded around the clock by a patrol of six EZ Emergency troopers who sit in one of their black trucks outside the apartment. The Investigators can either stake the building out and wait for deliveries (which is wise of them) or attempt a full frontal assault.

If the Investigators are clever and observe the comings and goings at the apartment without attracting attention to themselves they won't have to wait too long before an unmarked white van arrives and unloads several boxes which are then taken into the apartment. The boxes are second hand. Originally, they contained feed, drugs, and equipment used in the farming of pigs.

If the Investigators follow the van back to its site of origin, it travels to the eastern side of the Hyeck District and enters a stockyard used for farming and slaughtering pigs. This is the site of Pig Pharma, see page 170.

If the Investigators decide on a full frontal assault they will find themselves set against a squad of six EZ Emergency troopers.

Francis Ohaya is a portly man of about sixty with a large grey moustache and neatly parted brown hair. He has an odd way of talking, for whilst his voice is monotonous and soft, his language is harsh and peppered with bitter invective. He is a distinctly insecure man, but postures and swears in the hope that such dramatic display will compensate for the fact that he has all the charisma of a condescending-yet-sheepish zombie. If a fight of any sort breaks out around him, he will attempt immediately to flee. If allowed to escape he will make his way to the EZ Emergency building where he can expect backup and support. He is deeply craven and will attempt to ameliorate any violence that looks likely to come his way by apologising profusely for any offence he may have given and even complaining that his overworked heart might give out if he is placed under undue stress.

Francis also has a Blue Pill on his person. He is frightened to take it, but if he is cornered, he will.

FRANCIS OHAYA, DRUG WHOLESALER ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	8	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	2	2

WOUNDS: 5

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

◀ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+†2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

◀ **Utter Coward:** Ohaya has absolutely no stomach for violence, and he's completely worthless when a fight threatens. He increases his Repercussion range on all tests by three when in combat. If Francis is cornered and interrogated, he knows much the same about the general situation as Frida Williams.

If he is asked about taking a shipment of Red Pills to Luna, he will confirm that he did such a thing about seven weeks ago.

He says the pills are manufactured beneath a pig farm on the outskirts of the district.

ASKING GARY ABOUT RED PILLS

Gary knows nothing about the manufacture, supply, or effects of drugs.

At the GM's discretion, and only if the Investigators are really struggling to come up with ideas of their own, Gary might suggest to them that drugs which provoke feelings of fear or aggression might connect to the development of the Incursids.

INVESTIGATING EZ EMERGENCY

The Investigators should be aware that investigating a private police department is likely to be a tricky thing to pull off. There is also the fact that, at the end of the day, there isn't much to be discovered about EZ Emergency beyond the obvious: that they are part of Group 5 and sometimes provide goons to assist with nefarious activities.

The main EZ station is found on the High Street, not far from the Parasol building. There are around twenty EZ troopers there at any one time, with access to three trucks (which could service as ambulances with a few quick alterations), an armoured transport, and a fire engine. As well as the officers there are around ten paramedics, a couple of doctors, some call centre staff and a receptionist.

An armoury at the station contains light armour (bulletproof vests and medium military shoulder pads), zappers, and light machine guns for all the officers.

The fire and ambulance service provided by EZ is very perfunctory. In practice EZ tend to respond to calls to deal with serious crimes, fire, or injury by providing an appropriate first response but handing over as soon as possible to more professional outfits from greater San Dorado.

The reason for this is that EZ are effectively a paramilitary force dedicated to providing muscle for Don Stevia as and when he needs them.

If the Investigators make careful enquiries at the front desk they can discover that EZ Emergency are part of Group 5, that Don Stevia is the CEO of Group 5 and that Parasol handle their accounts.

It should also be noted that each EZ Emergency trooper has a semi-permanent tattoo on his or her inner right forearm as a method of identification. Each of these tattoos is a code beginning in EZ-HD (EZ-Hyeck District) and then three pairs of digits separated by dashes.

Therefore, of course, the code EZ-HD-45-92-00, which the Investigators may have picked up from the warehouse, is a legitimate EZ ID code.

GETTING ARRESTED

It may be that the Investigators are overpowered by a squad of EZ Emergency troopers called to deal with them by people at Parasol or elsewhere. In such an instance they will have their equipment confiscated and be taken to a holding cell in the EZ Emergency building. On one hand, the Investigators will receive excellent first aid from their captors and will be treated fairly well.

On the other hand they will have lost all their equipment and have no obvious escape route.

GARY STEELE AND EZ

In the advent of capture, the Investigators will be rescued by Gary Steele, either because they have already made his acquaintance or because he has heard on the grapevine that there are people looking into Don Stevia, has heard that they have been arrested, and has decided to take the radical step of springing them from prison himself.

Gary will approach the EZ Emergency reception, identify himself as a long term employee of Parasol, and will say that he has been tasked by Frida Williams to pick up and transport the Investigators.

The employees of EZ Emergency, who are used to giving up certain prisoners on Frida's say-so, will pass the Investigators over to Gary.

However, Gary is being cautious and he will not risk arousing suspicion by arguing that the Investigators' possessions be returned to them. He will only argue that their money be handed over "so that we can properly account for it".

Gary will drive the Investigators back to his apartment where he has a small stock of modest equipment, handguns and other cheap but useful items as the GM sees fit. He will be angry with the Investigators for being so stupid as to take on a private policing firm, and is terrified about what will happen to him as a consequence.

Shortly after springing them from prison, some EZ Emergency troopers will arrest Gary and pass him over to the managers of Pig Pharma.

The Investigators will probably need to re-equip in order to have a fighting chance later on the adventure. Gary may well suggest to them, if they are desperate for funds, that Gwendolyn Kipp might be interested in sponsoring anyone willing to undermine one of her business rivals.

INVESTIGATING PIG PHARMA

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

Leads to Pig Pharma are scant, the company are very secretive, and most people in the Hyeck District presume that they are little more than a stockyard. Leads include:

- ◀ Kristine Mantel was affiliated with parasol through her friend Gary Steele.
- ▶ The white van that leaves packages for Francis Ohaya heads back to the stockyard.

PIG PHARMA

Pig Pharma are the one element of Group 5 that directly embody Don Stevia's attitude to appeasing the Dark Legion forces through the application of terrible human suffering. They deal in torture, death, prolonging of agony and spreading of fear. They also produce some of the most innovative and successful pharmaceuticals for sale on Mars.

The operations of Pig Pharma are so shocking that aside from Don Stevia and Frida Williams the only people who know about its practices are its employees, who are either committed Heretics or wretched enslaved abductees.

A lot of Pig Pharma's products and treatments are aimed at slowing the progress of painful and terminal conditions based on the twin notions that such products are viewed as helpful by wider society, whilst also leading to a net increase in suffering.

However, it has recently developed two products designed with the aim of harnessing dark Symmetry and putting it to practical effect. One of these is the recreational drug known as "The Red Pill" and the other is "The Blue Pill", which allows the user to gain access to Dark Gifts temporarily.

THE RED PILLS

Pig Pharma Red Pills are big business in the Hyeck District, and they can be bought over the counter at bars, nightclubs, confectioners, and chemists.

The pills have a mild stimulant effect and evoke feelings of well-being and euphoria in those who take them. They combine well with the effects of alcohol and are a popular drug at parties and nightclubs. They are mildly addictive, though the symptoms of physical withdrawal are minor. Unless someone becomes a very heavy user withdrawal occurs about 24 hours after consumption of a pill, amounts to little more than a nagging desire to take another pill, and disappears after another 24 hours. The pills are massively popular.

Red Pills are bought in packs of six doses, with a Restriction of 4 and a Cost of 6. Inside of Hyeck District, where the law is more relaxed, the Restriction is reduced to 1, and the Cost is halved. When a character takes a dose, roll $\uparrow 3$. The character recovers Dread and Mental Wounds equal to the total rolled. However, if one or more Dark Symmetry icons are generated by this roll, the character must pass a Resistance test (with a difficulty equal to the number of DSI generated) or become addicted. An addicted character must take an additional dose each day or suffer one Dread. Addiction can be treated, requiring a Medicine test with the same difficulty equal to the initial Resistance test.

The effects of the drug last for four hours. During that time, the character gains one bonus Momentum on all Personality-based skill tests. After that effect wears off, the character gains one Dread which cannot be recovered until 24 hours after the drug was initially taken, except by taking another Red Pill.

Five percent of the red pills that Pig Pharma produce are spiked with an active ingredient derived from the company's experiments in applied Dark Symmetry and designed to have a powerful and disturbing effect on the user. This effect varies wildly in terms of how long it takes to manifest, its duration and the feeling experienced by the user.

To work out the effect of this second ingredient roll a D20 every time a character takes a pill (or eats or drinks something spiked with a pill). If the result is a '20' then the second ingredient is present. Roll a D6 three times on the table below to determine how long the drug takes to have an effect (the "delay" column), how long the effects last for (the "duration" column) and what sort of sensation is experienced by the user (the "effect" column).

The varied nature of the Pills' effect is a result of their method of manufacture, and so far has had the added benefit that few people correlate the consumption of the Red Pills with the odd side effects.

RED PILL EFFECTS

ROLL	DELAY	DURATION	EFFECT
1	1D6 hours	2D6 minutes	Fear
2	3D6 hours	4D6 minutes	Pain
3	6D6 hours	6D6 minutes	Panic
4	1D6 days	1 hour	Despair
5	2D6 days	D6 hours	Fear and Panic
6	D6 weeks	1 day	Pain and Despair

FEAR

The character experiences a number of frightening visual hallucinations and may even believe themselves to be assailed by Dark Legion forces. Make a **Daunting D3 Willpower test**. If the test is passed the character is able to assure themselves that it is "all in the mind" and suffer no debilitating consequences. If the test is failed, the character suffers a Mental Assault. Mental damage and Dread inflicted cannot be recovered until the duration has passed.

PAIN

The character is subjected to shooting pains in the chest and kidneys. Make a **Daunting D3 Resistance test**. If the test is passed, the character manages to withstand the pain. If the test is failed, the character suffers $1 + \uparrow 3$ Fatigue, which cannot be recovered for the duration. Painkillers will moderate the effect.

PANIC

The character's heartbeat begins to speed up and intensify, and a feeling of impending emergency dominates their thoughts. Make a **Daunting D3 Willpower Test**. If the test is passed the character manages to keep calm despite their racing heart. If the test is failed, the character increases the Repercussion range of all skill tests based on Coordination, Intelligence, or Mental Strength by two until the duration has passed. However, the character may re-roll one d20 on any Awareness-based skill test, though the second result stands.

DESPAIR

The character experiences a profound and sudden depression. Thoughts of personal inadequacy, ugliness, guilt, and futility become nagging obsessions. Make a **Daunting D3 Willpower test**. If the test is passed, the character refuses to let their bad mood effect their interactions with others. If the test is failed, the character increases the Repercussion range of all skill tests based on Awareness and Personality by two until the duration has passed.

Combinations of effects require two tests and the results from failed tests are cumulative.



How can I help you? You want the Red Pills... or the Blue Pill?

Because of its effect on the metabolism, and especially on the state of mind, it greatly speeds up the psychotic effects of Incrusid infestation (see **Lifec Cycke of the Incrusid!** on page 70).

THE BLUE PILLS

Unlike the Red Pills, the Blue Pills are not for public consumption. They are rare and finely balanced drugs that are custom made for Don Stevia, Frida Williams, Francis Ohaya, and a couple of Don's contacts in The Invisible Hand and other Heretic groups.

Taking a Blue Pill allows the user to gain temporary insight into the power of the Dark Soul. The user can even manifest Dark Gifts for the period in which they are under the influence of the pill.

The effects of the Blue Pill are not entirely predictable. The user is given temporary insight into the Dark Soul and the experience is frightening and confusing.

The first effect is predictable. A distorting field shrouds the user, they look for all the world as if they are being perceived through a heat shimmer.

PERSONAL SHIELD: The shield provides \uparrow 4 additional Soak against all damage, which stacks with armour worn and the effects of Cover.

PERSONAL DARK SYMMETRY: The character gains the Personal Dark Symmetry (3) special rule, as described on page 273 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book.

The other effects of the Blue Pill vary from round to round as the user gains temporary insight into the Dark Soul and channels what they hope will be an appropriate ability. Where applicable these abilities are cumulative with the personal shield.

Roll D6 on the Blue Pill Effects table (page 171) to determine the ability. All of these effects are considered to be Dark Gifts for all purposes.

THE PIG PHARMA COMPLEX

The Pig Pharma property is on two levels. The upper level just looks like a stockyard for the farming of pigs. It consists of a high fence running around a large muddy field and a couple of sheds for the pigs to sleep in. Another, smaller shed to the side of the complex contains tools and feed. A couple of labourers work the field, either feeding the pigs or clearing up the worst of their waste. The whole thing looks fairly innocuous, even the pigs seems to enjoy a fairly relaxed and well fed free-range existence.

Anyone observing the stockyard and passing an **Average D1 Education** or **Survival test** is able to tell that the farming operation is

BLUE PILL EFFECTS

ROLL ABILITY GRANTED

- 1 Dark Awareness:** The character gains the Sense Weaves of Power Dark Gift (page 161 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book)
Creeping Chill: The air around the character becomes preternaturally cold and daggers of frost creep along nearby surfaces. The character may spend one or more Dark Symmetry points to intensify this chill to harm enemies within Close range. All these targets must attempt Resistance tests, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry points spent. Failure means that the character suffers 1+ \uparrow 4 damage with the Dreadful and Stun qualities. This damage ignores armour and cover, but not Soak provided by supernatural powers.
- 2**
- 3 Phantasmal:** The character fades from reality to a degree, becoming akin to a ghost. The character gains the Incorporeal (4) special rule (see page 272 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book).
- 4 Sheet of Blade Flame:** From the character's hands, a torrent of swirling black flame rages forth and engulfs an enemy. The character gains the Black Fire Dark Gift (see page 163 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book).
Hell-Shriek: The character emits a piercing shriek that pummels the body and agonises the mind of those who hear it. The character may spend one Dark Symmetry point, to make an attack with the following profile: Range C, 1+ \uparrow 6, Mind Breaking, Spread 2, Stun, and Torrent. This attack uses the Willpower skill. The character may spend additional Dark Symmetry points to add one point of bonus Momentum to the attack per Dark Symmetry point spent.
- 5**
- 6 Malfunction:** The character gains the Corrupt Device Dark Gift (see page 160 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book).

a very inefficient one. Unless the farm is subsidised in some manner there is no way that the small number of pigs being farmed here could support the money needed to buy such a place and keep it running.

On a **Challenging D2 Observation test**, the Investigators can also discern a thin stream of white smoke emanating from a tin stack attached to one of the pig sheds.

However, if the complex is studied for any length of time the Investigators may notice something odd. Every now and then people arrive at the farm and enter the tool shed. Then they seem to stay there. The farm really only needs a couple of people to work it, yet on a normal day nearly a dozen people will enter the property and vanish into the tool shed. If the Investigators keep watch for a really long period of time they may notice that these people reappear again towards the end of the day.

Investigators may also discover something about Pig Pharma if they follow the white van which makes deliveries of drugs to Francis Ohaya. The van will travel about the Hyeck District as the two delivery men within visit stores and buy cheap feed and medical supplies for both animals and humans. They then arrive at the pig farm where the labourers unload the van and carry the boxes and bags of food and medicine into the tool shed.

The delivery men then head home for the night, but will arrive again next morning to pick up boxes of Red Pills to take to Francis. If the Investigators accost the deliverymen they do not have information of worth, they are a pair of rather ignorant men who know little

more than they are very well paid to transport boxes of pills from the farm and do some necessary shopping for the people and pigs who live there.

Of course, the pig farm is just a front, and the real operation goes on underground.

The Investigators may get a clue to this if they enter the pig shed with the billowing smoke stack, as they will find inside that a tin chimney runs from the floor to the ceiling, so presumably whatever is causing the smoke is underground.

The entrance to the underground chamber is in the tool shed. If they enter the shed and shift about some of the bags of feed and boxes of medical supplies the Investigators can find a trapdoor that, once opened, reveals a steep stepladder leading down to an underground facility.

If the Investigators descend the ladder, read the following to them:

You find yourself at the bottom of the ladder in a large and dimly lit chamber. Great ropes of twisted biomechanical matter hang from the sagging ceiling. They reach down into small partitioned cells. The air is close, humid, and stale. There is an appalling stench of faeces and urine.

Squeals and moans fill the air. The black ropes attach themselves to pigs, dozens of pigs. They pulse and quiver, pumping in swill at one end, and sucking up excrement at the other. The pigs

are all kept tightly bound, enmeshed within the coiling rope and held still by the tight confines of their individual pens.

Some of the pigs, you realise, aren't pigs. There are naked and filthy men and women here too, trapped by the same mechanism.

For a second the whole room seems to shudder. It's as if the whole mechanism has taken a great breath. The ropes and coils stretch and then compress, forcing another load of swill into the mouths of the pigs and people trapped in the pens.

Manacled and wretched looking people stumble along the walkways between the pens; they pause by each captive and tap a reservoir, a bulging blister of fluid near the mouth. A gloop of pus-like liquid falls from the blister and into a plastic container carried by the wretch.

At the rear of the facility, you can see a large shed that has been erected. Over the glop and drip of the workings overhead, you can hear people's voices and the whirring of a gas extractor. Two guards with light body armour and machine guns flank the entrance to the shed.

The Investigators may be able to escape the notice of the guards if they haven't given them reason to fear an investigation and have been stealthy in their approach. In order to do this they will have to meet the following criteria:

1. They have not made such repeated use of Gary Steele that others have noticed and abducted Gary.
2. They made their way here without alerting either Frida Williams or Francis Ohaya to their intentions.
3. They announced that they were taking care to descend the ladder quietly and passed a **Challenging D2 Stealth test**.

If the guards have been alerted they will open fire on the Investigators immediately. If not then they are deep in conversation with each other and do not notice the Investigators. This gives the Investigators time to take up positions of their own choosing and attack the guards in their own time.

There are three people wandering around the walkways collecting the pus-like liquid from the blister-like reservoirs near each captive's mouth. They are down and outs who have been abducted and enslaved by the chemists and guards who work here. They will neither help nor hinder the Investigators.

There are a total of 44 pigs and five captives, or six if Gary Steele has been abducted. The human captives are all people who have crossed

Don Stevia in some way. They are willing to help the Investigators if freed, though they are in terrible shape and have no weapons.

However if the biomechanical rig that attaches to the people is interfered with in any way the Investigators may find themselves in trouble. A Twisted Marionette makes up an integral part of the rig, so if an Investigator makes an effort to free a captive read the following:

There is a loud and mechanical shrieking noise, and the entire room shudders violently, sending dust and dirt cascading from the ceiling. With a slick, wet movement individual coils and cables begin to retract from the extremities of the rig, pulling together to form a mass of writhing coils that gathers in the centre of the ceiling before dropping to the floor. The pool of black and greasy coils slithers and writhes for a second before rising up in a vaguely humanoid form. It looks about itself and then glides towards you with clearly malicious intent.

Obviously, the appearance of the Twisted Marionette also alerts the guards to the presence of the Investigators.



Pig Pharma's facility is maintained and guarded by a Twisted Marionette.

TWISTED MARIONETTE ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
13	9 (+2)	12 (+1)	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	7	5	3

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	2

WOUNDS: 9

SOAK: **Steel Construction:** (All 4)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Lashing cables (melee):** 1+↑5, Reach
- ◆ **Electrical discharge (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Munition, Stun, Torrent
- ◆ **Power tools (melee):** 1+↑5, Armour Piercing 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ◆ **Night Vision**
- ◆ **Personal Dark Symmetry (2)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Agility (1)**
- ◆ **Supernatural Physique (2)**
- ◆ **Symmetry Tyrant:** Twisted marionettes created by the creature's True Corruption Dark Gift are always Troopers, and they always form a squad with the Twisted Marionette as the Commander.
- ◆ **Symmetry-possessed Technology:** The marionette is essentially just energy possessing electrical and technological systems, and it is unconcerned about the machines it inhabits. It is also tethered to its physical location, and it cannot move out of its zone. Losing all of its wounds merely disables the physical shell, rather than eliminating the possessing force, which is somewhere else entirely. A thick bundle of cable tethers the twisted marionette to a nearby power supply—targeting this cable increases the difficulty of the attack by one step, but it means that the attack ignores Soak.
- ◆ **Unliving**

DARK SYMMETRY SPEND

- ◆ **Creature of Symmetry:** A Twisted Marionette is able to employ several Dark Gifts as a creature of Ilian. The Twisted Marionette has the Obfuscation, Symmetry Burst, and True Corruption Dark Gifts.



PIG PHARMA SECURITY ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	7	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	1	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	-	1	1

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: **Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pads, Bulletproof Vest:** (Head 1, Arms 2, Torso 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **CAR-24 Close Assault Rifle (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Burst, 2H
- ◆ **GL-240 Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Medium, 2+↑5, 2H, Blast (Close), Anti-personnel grenades
- ◆ **M606 LMG (ranged):** Medium, 1+↑7, Automatic, 2H, Spread 1
- ◆ **Baton (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Necessary Force:** These security officers may re-roll up to two ↑ on any damage roll they attempt. They may spend one Dark Symmetry point to re-roll any d20s which do not generate at least one success on a Close Combat or Ranged Weapons test, though the new result stands.
- ◆ **No Hesitation:** When these security officers open fire, they do so without reservation. They don't hold back, and they don't try to conserve ammo—there's plenty of it on hand. Each Pig Pharma Security trooper has the Personal Dark Symmetry (3) special rule, but it may only use those points to generate Reloads.

PIG PHARMA CHEMISTS ▲

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	7	7	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	10	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	-	1	-	2	1	1	-	2	2

WOUNDS: 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **M8 "Slingshot" pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+ \uparrow 3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ▶ **Slicer (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 3, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Untrained:** The chemists have little experience with battle, and are reluctant to fight unless absolutely necessary. They increase their Repercussion range on all tests by one when in combat.

ENSLAVED CAPTIVES \triangle

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
6	5	6	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	7	6	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 2

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Feeble Defence (melee):** 1+ \uparrow 2, Backlash 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Feeble and Malnourished:** The captives have little fight left in them, and they're barely in any state to defend themselves. They increase their Repercussion range on all tests by three.

If a firefight does start, the three chemists in the shed will arm themselves with handguns and attempt to shoot any intruders through the windows. The guards and chemists are all zealous cult members who would sooner die than reveal any information regarding Don Stevia or Group 5. If the Investigators do manage to subdue and disarm one of these men, they will be able to get no information from them other than misleading lies.

Inside the shed, there is a sprawling chemistry lab. It seems that the gloop collected by the manacled wretches is distilled, dried, treated and the variously packed into either Red or Blue Pills.

If the human captives are released they will be traumatised and in need of first aid, clothing and a decent meal before they can begin to make coherent sense. There will be five human captives here

unless the Investigators have brought so much attention to Gary Steele that he has been abducted. If so, he will be the sixth captive.

PETE BELLE'S TESTIMONY

"I think I was the first of those who are still alive to be placed into the mechanism. Four months back I was one of the chemists who were responsible for synthesising a new designer drug. Red Pills they called them. The idea was that they would harness some sort of psychic energy derived from pigs—cutting edge chemistry it was. I knew it was illegal but I didn't think it was immoral or anything. I was happy enough when they were using pigs to make the gloop needed for Red Pills, but by the time talk moved to using human captives I'd seen enough. I tried to leave the Hyeck District but I was picked up by a group of EZ Emergency goons and shipped back here. I don't know what that thing was on the roof, with all the cables."

In truth, Pete is hiding a few things. He is something of an occultist and was initially interested in the program as a way of worshipping the Dark Soul. He does know about the Twisted Marionette, but also, he really did quail at the thought of using human captives and is now a genuinely reformed character. He knows that the Brotherhood and members of polite society are not likely to see it that way though, so he is keeping his history of occult activity as quiet as possible.

VICKY GABBOTH'S TESTIMONY

"Don't you recognise me? Two years ago, I was one of the most famous faces in San Dorado. I'd just won the fifth season of The Deputy and Don Stevia and I were getting on like a house on fire. For a year, I worked for him and things couldn't have been better for me, big pay check, celebrity lifestyle. Then he asked if I could help set up this new business for him. Handsure Holdings it was called. It was going to be like an exclusive bank, just Billionaires and businesses, that was what it was going to deal with. To be honest the thing wasn't even much of a business, it was just a little office on the High Street of the Hyeck District with a cubicle for me and a private office for Don. He used it to buy Parasol and EZ and set up Group 5.

One day I went into his office and saw something I suppose I shouldn't have done. He had this big book and he was scanning it into his photocopier. It was an odd sight, cause whilst he was doing it he was wearing this red dressing gown and mumbling all these weird words. I was taken aback. "Oh Vicky," he said, "I thought you'd gone home."

When I left the office some EZ Emergency guys were waiting for me, they sprayed me with some sort of knock out gas and when I woke up I was here, stuck in that horrible machine."

DARK SYMMETRY PART 04

HOSHI LING'S TESTIMONY

"I was once an agent for Home Made Foods on Luna. When the company hit problems, a group of us came here to enter into negotiations with Don Stevia. He made us a lot of very impressive offers but it all seemed too good to be true. My colleagues were keen to press on, but I advised caution. I wanted to appeal to some contacts of mine in Luna once more before we signed on the dotted line with Don. I went to bed in my hotel and then I woke up in here."

BOB FOX'S TESTIMONY

"It's all down to the office of the president himself. You see that jumbled up creature made of pipes and gunk? It fell from the ceiling and tried to throttle you. That's the true form of our president! This is his stage one of forming a one-system government together with the Shogun of Mishima and the King of Bauhaus. Soon everyone will be in one of them machines making magic gloop for our corporate overlords. Everyone!"

Unfortunately, Bob's experiences have left him thoroughly insane and his testament amounts to nothing more than a red herring. He was simply a homeless man who was picked up and tasked with gathering psychic gloop, but he tried to run away from his post and was interred in the mechanism as punishment. The other captives will be able to confirm this for the Investigators.

EVA JUNGE

Eva Junge is a special case, she is a member of the Cartel military strategic command, and knows a great deal about the Doomtrooper patrol and their mission. She also has some insight into Don Stevia's plans to compromise the mission.

Eva will be a useful person for the Investigators to talk to as she can confirm most of their suspicions regarding what Don Stevia is up to with the Incursids and the twelve people in the Project Ladybird file (or, if they haven't any suspicions, she can explain why they should have suspicions).

As soon as she is released from captivity and given a chance to recover from her ordeal, Eva will request that she speak to the Investigators in private about "a matter of extreme urgency". She will also want to involve Vicky Gabboth and (if he is present) Gary Steele.

Her initial explanation runs along the following lines:

"Listen, I don't know for sure that I can trust you people, but I owe you my life and if you're as set against the operation here as you seem to be then I suppose we're on the same side. Can you tell me who you are, and what your dealings with Group 5 are about?"

CAPTIVES SUMMARY

- ◀ **PETE BELLE:** A cultist chemist with a conscience.
- ◀ **VICKY GABBOTH:** A previous year's The Deputy winner who has since fallen out with Don.
- ◀ **HOSHI LING:** An executive for Home Made Foods who opposed the merger.
- ◀ **EVA JUNGE:** Member of a military unit on a secret mission.
- ◀ **BOB FOX:** A slave who misbehaved.
- ◀ **GARY STEELE:** If he is here then the Investigators will know about Gary already. If the Investigators help clean these people up and interview them they can find out a lot of information about what Don Stevia has been up to.

CAPTIVES AS REPLACEMENT INVESTIGATORS

If any of the Investigators lose their lives during the fight in the warehouse, some of the captives they released could make for good replacement Investigators, as they possess the motivation to see Don Stevia brought to justice.

Eva Junge is the most obvious one of the captives to replace a dead Investigator, as she has a military background that would suit in the upcoming adventure. If the party of Investigators is quite small, it may be worth incorporating her into the party as an NPC even if no replacement Investigator is required at this time.

She listens to anything the Investigators have to say about themselves, and is encouraged to learn that they are from Luna and affiliated with law enforcement.

"I must ask you, has there been any news of military activity recently?"

If the Investigators admit that war against the Dark Legion has broken out on Venus Eva will continue. If not, she insists that they find a news outlet (such as the waiting room run by Cap One of the

High Street) and listens intently to the news. Once she has taken it in, she will explain more to the Investigators.

"Look, the war on Venus is nothing more than a distraction, OK? It's a ruse enacted in order to get the Dark Legion to commit resources to that theatre and drop its guard on Mars.

"I know this because I am responsible for this plan.

"I'm one of the Cartel's top military tacticians.

"The pundits are right; the war on Venus is wasteful. Deliberately so. The real goal is being pursued by a small but highly trained squad of Doomtroopers who are due to use the Violence on Venus as cover for their own infiltration of a Citadel here on Mars.

"There are twelve of them, and I believe them to have been fatally compromised.

"In planning the operation, only a select few senior military and Capitol business leaders were involved to arrange diversionary efforts here on Mars in support of the mission. It transpired that at least one of the people I was talking to is a Heretic and a traitor. What's worse is that he is the man I had tasked with identifying a suitable Citadel to attack. He made a good case for possessing the acumen needed to make such a decision and, fatefully, I left it in his hands.

"Shortly after that meeting, I was waylaid by a gang of people not far from the centre of this district. They knocked me out with a zapper and when I came to, I was bound within that machine.

"The man is Don Stevia. You must find him and find out which Citadel the

Doomtroopers have been assigned to attack. I will help you if I can but if he sees me with you, he will know what you know. I don't think there's anyone else I can trust. I know this man has powerful allies in Capitol's government and business sectors. There's no one we can trust. Will you help me?"

Once she has given her speech Eva will listen to any responses and ask questions about the experiences of the other people involved. She will encourage everyone to share as much information as possible.

Vicky Gabboth will point out that there is one way in which the Investigators could gain an audience with Don Stevia. They could enter into the upcoming season of The Deputy. As she explains:

"The Deputy follows a fairly tried and tested format. Don sets up some initial challenges for the first day in order to weed out the no-hopers and provide his viewers with an entertaining first show. You can expect a bit of ritual humiliation. Then he chooses his aspirants from those who didn't drop out and gets the new season underway. He always throws a launch party at the end of the first day, and typically, he likes to mingle with only minimal security. It's his one chance each year to present himself as a man of the people, you know.

"If you were at this party you could have a chance of getting him on his own and finding out where this Citadel is."

The Investigators may well feel that going through The Deputy process is a rather convoluted approach, after all couldn't Eva just find out what is going on by establishing contact with her friends in the military. The problem here is that Eva's recent ordeal has left her increasingly paranoid and she no longer trusts anyone besides the Investigators and those with whom she was imprisoned (truth be told she barely trusts them either). If they try to convince her to go back to the military, she will agree to do so on condition that they attempt to reach Don via The Deputy. She will add something along the lines that:



Despite their terrible condition, Eva and the prisoners are eager to help.

"You may have caused something of a stir during your time here, but my face is known by every goon and traitor on Don's payroll. Insane as it might seem, our best chances of getting the information we need in time is for you to go on TV."



INVESTIGATING HANDSURE HOLDINGS

WHAT LEADS MIGHT THE INVESTIGATORS POSSESS?

Handsurre Holdings is an obscure business that is unknown even to most employees of Group 5. Nevertheless, the Investigators should have some leads:

- ◆ Shane Cano on Luna carried an ID that referred to the company.
- ◆ They may have found reference to Handsurre Holdings in Group 5 brochures.
- ◆ Vicky Gabboth's testament.

THE HANDSURE HOLDINGS OFFICE

The Handsurre Holdings office is a small section of the third floor of a rather pokey building that lurks on one of the narrower streets that run perpendicular to the High Street.

No one will answer the buzzer and the door to office is locked. Investigators will have to break it down or pick the lock in order to gain entrance.

Inside the office is largely bare and dusty. It feels like no one has been there for months.

The office consists of two rooms.

The first room is a large but Spartan space that the Investigators enter as they walk through the front door. There is a cubicle in the space. Papers relating to the acquisition of Parasol and EZ Emergency are pinned to the walls of the cubicle but there is little else in there. A desk in the cubicle has some stationary and papers scattered on it, but nothing of pertinence.

The other room is behind another locked door. This room is plush and well furnished, it was Don's office, and whilst it doesn't contain any sign that would directly identify it as such, it does speak to his immense wealth and gaudy tastes: large hardwood table with golden inlay, throne-like chair for the boss, deep shag carpet and a small chandelier.

On the table, there is a large paperweight, clear crystal finely cut into the shape of a hand.

Along one wall are some office equipment, a photocopier, and stationary cupboard. A large book bound in blood red pleather is prominently displayed in the cupboard, the Codex Umbrarum.

CODIX UMBRARUM

It is a book Don found whilst wiling away the hours in the occult section of his college library as a young man. It contains a number of articles and essays written by occultists and magicians of past ages. Most of it is incomprehensible and pretentious rubbish, but there is a genuine magical rite described in the pages, a method by which a mortal practitioner can petition the Dark Soul to cause the eggs of Incursids to manifest corporeally.

The Investigators may well recognise the ritual from the copy Karl Sterling referred to in the earlier part of the adventure. Sure enough, the layout is the same, and there is a photocopier in the office.

MOVING ON

By this point the Investigators should have exhausted their leads in regard to Group 5 and the Hyeck District, and be looking into applying for the new season of *The Deputy*.

Before they can attend the first trials for the show, they will need to spend the night somewhere. There are plenty of hotels in the Hyeck District, or they could head to another part of San Dorado to find a place to stay.

News stories about the military efforts on Venus continue to dominate the airwaves during this period. Throughout the solar system, more conflicts and skirmishes are being reported. Whilst events are somewhat confusing and military spokespersons are tight-lipped, it does seem clear a major effort to bring war against the Dark legion is being made all across the system. After Vicky and Eva have finished their discussion about the implications of what was found at Handsurre Holdings Eva takes her leave of the PCs, she explains that they should meet up in the morning before travelling to the set of *The Deputy*.

"I have some things to check out before we make our final plans. If Don has discovered them we may be more compromised than we realise, but if he hasn't we will have a definite edge on him and his plans. There is a bar in the sprawl to the north of San Dorado, right near the edge of the city. It is called the Imperial Palace. Meet me there at seven and I will be able to tell you more."

Having given this speech Eva disappears into the night.

THE DEPUTY

SUMMARY

In order to get close enough to important movers and shakers, including the villainous Don Stevia, the Investigators will have to sign up as contestants for his game show, *The Deputy*. Only by passing the initial challenges will they be invited to meet him at a party held to mark the start of the next season.

Whilst the focus of this section of the adventure is mostly light hearted, the Investigators will come to learn more of Don's involvement with a plot to thwart a group of Doomtroopers as they attempt to enter a citadel and sever the links between Nero and the real universe.

MEETING WITH EVA

In the morning the Investigators should make their way to the northern edge of the San Dorado sprawl to meet Eva at the Imperial Palace, a small clapboard shack of a dive listing heavily to the left.

Eva meets the Investigators inside the bar. She has brought with her a number of small electronic devices, gas grenades, zappers and some HG-12 handguns.



A bizarre form of Dark Legion biotechnology is the Doomtroopers target.

"Our primary support network has been compromised by Don and his agents, but a small safe house I had arranged for has remained loyal. This is fortunate, as I have been able to secure some technology and weaponry that could prove useful in your upcoming mission. The Doomtroopers have been tasked with journeying to the centre of a Citadel and travelling through to Nero, a planet we understand to be the realm of the Dark Soul. There they expect to find a creature which looks much like this."

Eva pushes forward a photograph depicting a strange and humungous creature. It has a long fang-filled snout topped with a prodigious nose.

"The creature's brain is small but vulnerable, and inflicting catastrophic damage should sever the links between our universe and that of the Dark Soul."

"Of course, we don't wish to lose our intrepid heroes in an alternative universe. These devices are trans-dimensional beacons. They attach to the user's belt and can be activated by flicking this switch."

She indicates a large black switch on the side of the device. Each one is protected from being accidentally pressed by a clear plastic cover.

"Should you find the Doomtroopers to be compromised beyond capability then you must journey to the centre of the Citadel yourselves, destroy this creature, and then use these devices to return home. The charge in the devices is only enough to allow for a single use, so take care of them and do not interfere with them until the time comes to use them. Good luck to you all, the future of the universe depends on your heroism today."

Eva then produces a number of passports.

"They will require picture ID in order for you to take part in The Deputy, and I have taken the liberty of finding you some to use. There is a photo booth at the local train station so you can fill them in there before catching a train to the Kirkwood Bunker."

It ought to be noted here that the electronic devices are nothing more than hoax items. Eva assumes that the Investigators will not

be up for undertaking a suicide mission. The devices are no more than a desperate hoax on her part. They are actually effects for distorting electronic music worn by guitarists onstage. They have had all identifying markers removed and so cannot be identified without a thorough investigation.

Eva raided a small hotel on the edge of the sprawl for the passports. She murdered the previous owners and hid their bodies in the San Dorado sewer system to ensure that the likelihood of the theft being quickly reported was reduced. If the Investigators ask where she got them, she lies and tells them that the passports were created by her outfit for just such an eventuality. The passports are matched to the gender and age of the Investigators, though the Investigators will also have to remember to use their new names if they want to pull off a convincing attempt at their new identifications. Eva has also been clever enough to acquire the passports from people who are visiting Mars from Luna, so the Investigators' accents and backgrounds will present less of a problem.

The GM may choose whatever names he thinks suitable for the passports, though a short list is presented here for GMs in a hurry:

PASSPORTS FOR MEN

Yemi Pugachev
Fred Bourdin
Ferdinand Demerara
Stan Weyman
Arnaud Guerra
Steve Head

PASSPORTS FOR WOMEN

Frances Klalin
Wilhemina Tipton
Hau Mulan
Kim Radford
Debbie Simpson
Joan Pope

The passports have a blank hole where the photo should be, and provided the Investigators acquire new photos from the train station and match them up according to gender then the passports will be good enough to serve as ID when registering for *The Deputy*.

JOINING IN WITH THE DEPUTY

The Investigators should know from new broadcasts that, in order to join in with the new season of *The Deputy*, they need to present themselves at the foot of the Kirkwood Bunker at 9am.

The Kirkwood Bunker is a titanic military installation, a hollowed out mountain bristling with missile tubes and gun turrets. Somewhat incongruously, it is also the site of a large TV studio owned by Don Stevia. The studio uses abandoned workshops and munition stores as effective studio spaces and the transport network that served the military is also useful for getting cast, crew, and equipment to a variety of Martian locations.

Read the following to the Investigators as they approach:

The hollow mountain rises above as you approach. Whilst you have heard many stories recently about the military activity on Venus, the Kirkwood Bunker seems dormant for the most part. A couple of larger gun emplacements can be seen slowly angling from side to side, panning the skies for possible assault from the air.

A large crowd can be seen milling around the base of the tower. As you join them, you discover that only a few of them are actually here to compete in the show. Many of them are well-wishers here to cheer for their friends and offer them last minute advice and shouts of "good luck". The media are also out in force, with many news station camera crews and paparazzi photographers trying to get a good shot of the new aspirants.

The Investigators should be allowed to make last minute preparations before the production crew call for the competitors to make their way to the front and present their identification to the registration desk. There they will be provided with a receipt for their upcoming work before being led into a large waiting room.

HAND OVER YOUR WEAPONS

Before the Investigators are allowed to participate in any of the tests arranged for the show they will be expected to hand over all guns and melee weapons that they carry.

The GM should also review the forthcoming tests and decide for himself if any other items of equipment carried by the Investigators are likely to give them an unfair edge. For example, a grappling device may well spoil the fun of the upcoming chase sequence. Such items will also be confiscated by the production crew at the GMs discretion.

The Investigators are searched thoroughly, using metal detectors and an extensive pat-down—they aren't strip-searched unless they put up a fuss or otherwise make themselves a nuisance. Concealing an item from the normal search is a **Challenging D2 Thievery test**, with one bonus Momentum for each rank of the Hidden quality the item has. A character may only attempt to hide a single item, and any investigator who attempts to cause trouble increases the difficulty of this test to Dire D4, as the security team arranges a strip-search instead, and it's much harder to hide an item when you're naked.

TEAM NAMES

Before the series of tests that aspiring deputies are put through can begin, teams need to be formed and named. Read the following to the Investigators:

A young man in a large and puffy black jacket jogs up to you. The words "DEPUTY CREW" are printed on the shoulder and back of the jacket in large bold capital letters. He scans the crowd of aspirants vaguely, clearly taking instruction from an unseen director through his earpiece. "OK guys!?" He shouts at you, half question half instruction. "We're going to need you to form teams guys, so I want to see you gathered up in groups of six, OK, groups of six."

The groups will be the teams that compete against one another in the upcoming tests. If the Investigators number less than six they will have no problem finding nearby NPCs to join them making up the number. These NPCs will be an even mix of pathetic no hopers and ambitious go getters.

PATHETIC, NO-HOPER CONTESTANT ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
8	9	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
2	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: Hardback armour: (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

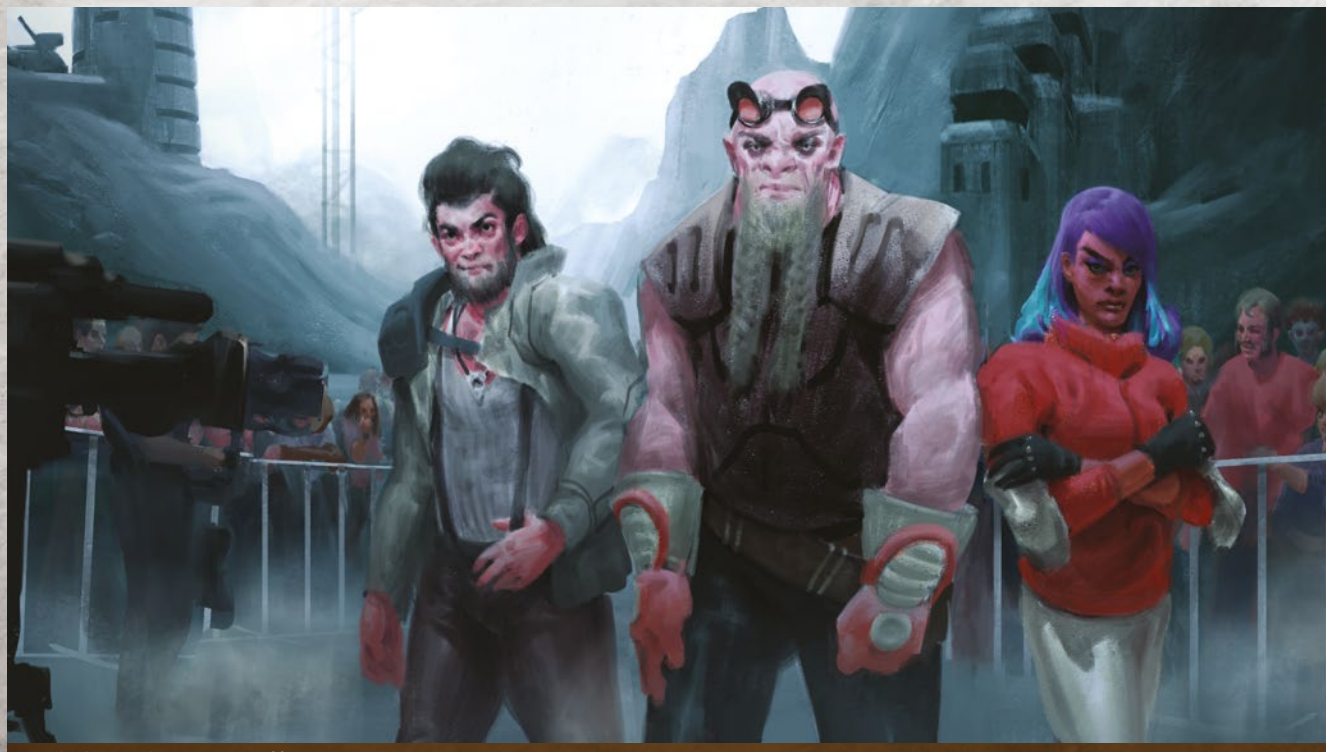
ATTACKS:

- ▶ **M8 'Slingshot' pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+**↑**3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ▶ **Baton (melee):** 1+**↑**3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Pick one of the following:

- ▶ **Unthinking Thug:** The contestant is a brutal, violent sociopath, competing on the premise that unrelenting violence is both pleasing to the audience and likely to eliminate his rivals. The contestant may re-roll one **↑** on any damage roll. However, he also increases the difficulty of Observation, Insight, and Stealth tests by one step.
- ▶ **No Stomach for Violence:** The contestant is competent, but lacks the grit and killer instinct needed to be truly successful. The contestant increases the Expertise of all his Fields of Expertise by one rank. However, he also increases his Repercussion range on all tests made in combat by three.



Everybody wants thier 15 minutes of fame.

AMBITIOUS, GO-GETTER CONTESTANTS



ATTRIBUTES							
STRENGTH		PHYSIQUE		AGILITY		AWARENESS	
8		9		8		8	
COORDINATION		INTELLIGENCE		MENTAL STRENGTH		PERSONALITY	
9		7		8		8	

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
1	-	1	2	1	-	1	1	2	1	1	-

WOUNDS: 6

SOAK: **Hardback armour:** (Head 2, Arms 2, Torso 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **M8 'Slingshot' pistol (ranged):** Close, 1+3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters
- ◆ **Baton (melee):** 1+3, 1H, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ◆ **Enthusiastic:** The contestant is eager and driven, with a positive attitude that either energises or infuriates others. His eagerness and drive means that he may add one bonus d20 to any test he attempts, but increases his Repercussion range by three on any test in which he uses this bonus d20.

A BIT OF COMPETITION

If the GM has a large number of players, he may well consider it more fun to split them into opposing teams.

This may involve some jiggery-pokery to ensure that by the end of the exercise both teams have performed similarly and so end up being put through to the next round of *The Deputy* together. It will also be best to alternate which of the two teams takes on a particular task first so that the nature of the tests isn't always revealed to the first team to perform them.



If there are more than six Investigators, then the GM should change the required team size so as to allow all the Investigators to operate together.

The runner waits for a moment whilst the aspirants form into their groups of six. "OK guys now listen up!" He shouts. "I want you all to come up with a name for your teams OK? Something nice and punchy, you're meant to be a group of tough security guards right? So something a bit fierce and dramatic, OK?"

The group should then come up with their own team name. The runner comes around with a clipboard and takes the names of each of the team members and the team name they have chosen.

Other teams consisting entirely of NPCs choose the names Beta Force, Squad Win, Zenith Security, The Knack Unit, Martian Synergy, The Supreme Six, Mars: Squad of War, The Throw-Down and The Deadly Half Dozen.

THE TESTS

There are four tests that are squeezed into one rather hectic day.

- ◆ **THE WEAPONS TEST**—a simple test of marksmanship.
- ◆ **THE OBSERVATION TEST**—the Investigators will be led to believe that this test is a simple matter of fingering a suspect criminal; in fact, it is intended as a humiliating chase sequence.
- ◆ **THE BANK RAID TEST**—the Investigators will be tasked with foiling a raid on a bank.
- ◆ **THE BURNING BUILDING TEST**—the Investigators will be asked to rescue someone from a burning room.

The production crew know about the nature of the tests, but they will not be drawn into discussing them with the Investigators or any other participants. If the Investigators try and bribe staff to divulge more information about the upcoming programme the GM can choose to give the following rumours depending on the sorts of success the Investigators have:

"The weapons test is pretty much as it seems, it's just shooting guns at targets really."

"Oho! It's not worth my job to tell you anything of that sort, but I can tell you this, get ready to run in that observation test!"

"The bank raid test will make you sick."

"The burning building test has a little twist, in that you won't be able to go out the same way you came in."

DROP OUTS

After each round of the competition, it is announced that the two teams who performed the worst have been eliminated.

- ◆ After the first round, it is announced that The Throw-Down and Zenith Security have been eliminated.
- ◆ After the second round, it is announced that Beta Force and Martian Synergy have been eliminated.
- ◆ After the third round, it is announced that Squad Win and The Deadly Half Dozen have been eliminated.
- ◆ After the fourth round it is announced that The Knack Unit and The Supreme Six have been eliminated, with the result that Mars: Squad of War and whichever teams the Investigators are involved with will be going forward to participate in the upcoming season.

COFFEE AND BISCUITS

Between each test the Investigators are led back to a small green room containing some comfortable chairs and a large barrel of hot water. A small table is stood next to the barrel; on the table can be found tea, coffee, sugar, milk, an array of biscuits, and some paper cups. The water is slightly too cold to make really good tea.

INTERVIEWS

Between each test some members of *The Deputy* production crew will enter the green room and attempt to interview the Investigators as to how they think they did and what they could have done better.

The interview team consist of Stella Gupp, an attractive young lady with a blonde beehive hairdo and expensive taste in accessories, and Bern Hartigan, a gruff and compact cameraman.

Typically, Stella will burst into the Green Room at a moment when the PCs are in conversation about what might possibly be going on and will loudly and confidently address them by name. She tends to oscillate between asking vapid questions and bestowing sugary compliments. A typical example of her sort of spiel:

"So here we are now with Fred Bourdin of (team name)! Fred's just completed a gruelling test of marksmanship. How do you think it went for you there, Fred? We noticed you missed an easy shot there early on. Your heart must've been in your mouth! Have you handled a Deathlockdrum machine gun before, Fred? Well, you looked like you were born to it! (Team name) are now third on the leader board after that performance! You must be pleased with that, Fred?"

THE WEAPONS TEST

This is a straightforward competitive test in which the Investigators are led to a firing range, given a choice of weapons, and then asked to fire at various targets. The teams should nominate their best marksman to represent them during this round of the competition. Read the following to the players:

The runner in the puffy black jacket enters the green room. "OK guys are you ready? Do any of you need the toilet?" He asks. "OK, we're going to need just one of you to come and take part in our first test, and it's a test of marksmanship, OK? So which one of you reckons he or she is the best when it comes to firing a gun?"

If the group contains an ambitious go-getter NPC, they will be keen to have a go, but will admit that they have had no real experience with shooting guns under pressure and will defer to Investigators with more experience.

The test is split into two separate rounds. Targets in each of the rounds are figures made out of clear ballistic gel, each the rough size and shape of a human adult.

ROUND ONE—The contestants are asked to shoot with a Deathlockdrum machine gun at a target 50 metres away. Each contestant is given a full clip and is scored according to how many times they can hit the target within a time frame of 30 seconds. In game terms, each contestant must inflict as much damage as possible to the target with a single turn's action. Each contestant is handed a CA-138 Deathlockdrum autocannon with three Reloads. The target is at Medium range. Characters may not use the Deathlockdrum's integral grenade launcher—only the main autocannon barrel may be used.

ROUND TWO—The contestants are asked to shoot with a Mephisto Sniper Rifle at a target 150 metres away. Each contestant is given six rounds and is scored according to how many times they can hit the target within a time frame of a minute. In game terms, each contestant must inflict as much damage as possible to the target in two turns. Each contestant takes an Exploit Weakness action during his first turn, and then fires. Each contestant is handed a Mephisto Sniper Rifle with a single Reload. The target is at Long range.

After the test, the shooter is led back to the green room to join the others, and discuss how things went.

THE "OBSERVATION TEST"

The next test that the Investigators have to perform is the Observation Test. As far as they know, the test merely calls for them to recognise and apprehend a potential threat from amongst a crowd

of innocent bystanders. In reality, the situation is designed so as to subject them to an exciting chase involving a series of humiliating slapstick episodes for the amusement of the watching TV audience.

In order to partake in this part of the test the teams are driven to an area of the San Dorado sprawl. There they are offered some tea and biscuits before the runner in the puffy black jacket arrives to give them their instructions.

“OK guys, what’s going to happen now is that a number of people are going to start walking along this street. This is going to be a test of your powers of observation. One of the people is going to be an anarchist terrorist, and it’s going to be your job to pick him out and apprehend him. There will be no need for violence, all you’ve got to do is spot the guy, catch the guy, and lay your hand on his left shoulder. You got that?”

Provided the Investigators are clear on their instructions the assistant director nearby shouts “Rolling! Action!” and dozens of people begin to make their way up and down the street near to the Investigators.

The Investigators (as well as any NPCs who are part of their team)

should be called upon to make an **Average D1 Observation test**. Whatever the result of the test read the following:

A man wearing sunglasses, a red beret, and a long black trench coat walks with a confident and arrogant air towards you. You can clearly see the shape of a large machine gun bulging beneath his billowing coat.

This is a good point to spend two Dark Symmetry Points to make the man go first, and then ask for the order in which the Investigators will chase the actor playing the terrorist.

The man sees you moving towards him, drops his weapon, and darts into a narrow side alley running perpendicular to the street. As you turn the corner, you see him speeding away as fast as his feet will carry him. There are a number of pools of slimy green stagnant water on the surface of the alley.

This sequence consists of a number of skill tests, representing different sections of the chase. Once the Investigators have determined their initial order, this is the order in which they will act from then on. In order, each investigator attempts the required skill



The pools are deeper than they look.

test. In many cases, failing a test pushes the character to the end of the list. There is no particular penalty to being last, but for the fact that only one person can catch the 'terrorist', and that will be the first one to pass the final skill test in this scene.

The pools are deeper than they look, having been dug in the alley by the production crew. In order to try to catch up with the terrorist the Investigators will have to pass a **Challenging D2 Athletics test**. However if an Investigator fails this test, they fall over into one of the pools and find themselves covered head to toe in a film of sticky green algae. Such Investigators will also find themselves at the back of the line.

The man turns another corner and scampers down another stretch of narrow alleyway. He ducks underneath a curving pipe that vents a thick cloying smoke intermittently.

The Investigators should be called on to make a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** in order to keep pace with their quarry and slip under the pipe. Failure means the character is pushed to the back of the line. They can also make a **Challenging D2 Education test** to work out when the next gout of smoke is due to erupt from the vent. Those who fail the test are smothered in hot soot and increase the difficulty of all subsequent tests made during this test.

You chase the man onto a busy factory floor. He dashes across a walkway in between two sets of machines. Factory workers are pushing large flatbed trolleys about, preventing you from keeping up with your quarry.

The Investigators can leap over the trolleys by passing a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test**. Those who fail find themselves at the back of group.

The man spots a possible escape route. A small door is in the wall, separated from the rest of the factory floor by a wide pool of stinking chemical effluent. The smoking liquid in the pool glows with a sickly green inner light and a pall of thick vapour rises from the surface. He deftly balances on a narrow plank that has been placed over the pool and shimmies across with practised ease.

In order to catch up with the terrorist the Investigators will have to pass a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** in order to shimmy across the narrow plank. Those who fail topple into the chemical effluent (which is actually just harmless water made to look noisome through the addition of luminous green dye and dry ice effects). Whilst they suffer no further ill effects they will certainly make a comical sight flailing around in the gunky green water, and several cameras are placed so as to get a good view of this humiliating episode.

The first of the Investigators to make their way across the plank will be able to put their hand on the terrorist's shoulder, at which point he turns and smiles.

The Investigators will hear a voiceover pronounce, "Congratulations on a job well done!" before giving the team name and the name of the Investigator who caught the quarry. "Could this be this year's winner of *The Deputy*? Stay tuned to find out!"

The Investigators are then led back to the green room for more coffee and biscuits before the next test.

SABOTAGE

Prior to the next test, one of the groups who is competing with the Investigators will try and sabotage their equipment. The group are Squad Win, who are trailing down at the bottom of the leader board by the time of this test.

Squad Win consists of Greg MacGregor, Bertha Heyman, Bill Jones, Joanne Well, Ali Da, and Louise Ponzi. They will have completed the Bank Raid test before the Investigator group are due to start theirs (if there is more than one Investigator group then Squad Win will only attempt to sabotage the first group to undertake the test).

The sabotage attempt takes the following form.

- ◆ Squad Win, having completed their test and not having done too well, will hang around the studio as the area is made ready for the next group to undergo the test. This is the Investigator Group.
- ◆ The production crew have warned Squad Win to clear the area but they have negotiated with the crew in allowing them to engage in a little smack-talk before the next round begins. The crew have decided that a little inter-competitor bitching will make for good television, so they have allowed it provided Squad Win say nothing about the nature of the test.
- ◆ In fact what Squad Win hope to do is distract the Investigators and the production crew whilst one of their own team interferes with the paintball guns that the Investigators are going to use in the upcoming test.

THE BANK RAID TEST

This test is another one designed less to be an accurate measure of performance, but more as a way of providing the audience at home with an anarchic and slapstick episode. The Investigators will be asked to watch over the busy main reception area of a bank and asked to prevent a band of robbers from stealing anything from the bank.

The slapstick will come from the fact that whilst the Investigators are armed only with air rifles that fire paintballs the robbers will be equipped with some interesting non-lethal weaponry. Each bank robber has the profile of an EZ Emergency trooper and carries the following equipment.

BOKE GRENADES

These grenades, designed for crowd suppression by Capitol R&D, release a gas with a powerful emetic effect. The gas is dense and forms a cloud that only spreads a short distance from the point of impact. Boke Grenades have a range of Close and the Blast (Close) quality. A creature hit by a Boke grenade must pass a Difficult D2 Resistance test at the start of each of its turns. If this test is failed, then the creature may not act that turn due to nausea and vomiting. Three successful Resistance tests will end the effect. This effect is a poison, and thus creatures with an immunity to poison are unaffected.

RAINY DAYERS

Instead of guns, the bank robbers carry large black umbrellas. An Imperial invention, each of these conceals a sniper rifle in the shaft (in this case, the rifle has been adapted to fire paint pellets). The umbrellas can be opened and when they are, the ballistic nylon fabric provides excellent protection from bullets. The Rainy Dayers are only rarely used, but anyone with experience of the Imperial military should make a **Challenging D2 Education test** (characters with experience of Imperial intelligence services, such as ISC Agents of various kinds, reduce this test's difficulty by one step). If passed they are aware of rainy dayers and recognise the umbrellas as weapons before they are deployed.

RAINY DAYER PAINTGUN

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
M	-	Semi-Automatic	4	2H	3
QUALITIES		Hidden 2			

BALLISTIC SHIELD: A character using a Rainy Dayer as a weapon or a shield gains an additional \uparrow 2 Cover Soak from the ballistic cloth canopy.

ZAPPERS

These small hand held taser can be used in close combat to render an opponent unconscious.

RESTRICTION: 1 **COST: 3**

ZAPPER

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
-	\uparrow 4	-	1	1H	2
QUALITIES		Nonlethal, Incapacitate			

INCAPACITATE: For each Dark Symmetry icon generated, the target must attempt a Resistance test, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons generated. If this test is failed, the target falls unconscious.

The Investigators will be equipped with rifles that fire paint pellets, and given a few minutes in the rifle range where they performed the earlier test to familiarise themselves with the weapons. They are also given goggles to wear with a warning that the paint balls can damage exposed eyes.

PAINTGUN

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	-	Semi-Automatic	3	Unbalanced	4
QUALITIES		Ammo (Spread 1)			

Paintguns don't deal damage. The brightly-coloured paint leaves a clear mark upon armour and clothing to indicate a hit, and these hits are the most important part—a character hit is immediately taken out of the test. To represent this, only Soak provided by cover can protect a character from hits caused by a paintgun, and cover will negate a hit so long as one or more points of Soak are generated by the \uparrow rolled. If multiple hits are inflicted—such as by the Spread X quality—then Cover Soak must be determined for each hit.

Read the following to the Investigators:

The runner leads you into a large television studio dressed to look like the interior of a high street bank. A large laminated desk and a screen of security glass separates you from three extremely photogenic bank tellers. Tables, chairs, and potted plants also decorate the set.

"OK guys!" The runner shouts. "In a minute a group of customers are going to come through those doors and start interacting with the staff in the bank. However, you have been tipped off that there is to be a bank robbery today, so be on the lookout for armed men, and try and take them down before they get to you. If you're hit with a paintball, that's it—you're out. So make sure you chose good positions, cover each other, and identify the crooks as soon as you can. Try not to hit any civilians in the crossfire, every dead civilian means you lose serious points so be careful. OK! Good luck guys!"

However, before you have a chance to pick up an air rifle or scout out the set there is a commotion among the production crew and six of your competitors muscle their way onto the set with serious expressions, swaggering like prize-fighters.

These are the members of Squad Win, who have convinced the production crew to let them have a quick round of belligerent banter with the Investigators before they begin their trial.

If the Investigators have been showing interest in their rivals throughout the process they will know that these people are members of Squad Win and that they are currently at the bottom of the roster. If they don't perform relatively well in this particular round they are likely to be dropped out of the competition.

Greg MacGregor attempts to intimidate the PCs whilst the rest of his team attempt to work their way into positions from which they can sabotage the guns. Read the following to the players:

The group walk up to you and stand in a loose semi-circle around your own group. One of them, a large and fleshy man with a liberal scattering of freckles on his doughy face, leans in towards you and launches into a threatening diatribe. His breath smells of vomit.

"Look, you Moonfolk ought to just give up and head back to your satellite. We're Martian born and bred, from the mean streets of the San Dorado sprawl, and we barely made it through this task alive, so how are some low-gravity weaklings like yourself going to fare."

The group spreads out, some of them working their way around you, leaning on the table by the paintball rifles.

The Investigators should be allowed to respond. If they claim to be taking a closer look at the group who have just arrived they may spot on an **Average D1 Observation test** that three members of the group, two of the men and one of the women, have vomit stains on their clothing. This is because they suffered from the effects of Boke Grenades during their test.

Whether or not the players respond another member of Squad Win, Bertha Heyman, dishes out another boastful speech, during which Joanne Well tries to empty the ammunition hoppers on the paintball guns.

Another member of the group, an attractive and willowy woman with a brunette bob haircut, shoulders her way to the front of the rival group. She stands in front of you with hands on hips. There is a spot of what looks like vomit on the lapel of her coverall.

"Pains me to see you losers even attempting to go through with this. You cockamamie Luna types just don't have the stones on you to prevail against a group who are Martian-born and bred. We are Capitol. Competition and exceptionalism are in our blood and in our upbringing. Get ready to eat our dust you no-hope satellite-dwelling dim bulbs. Think you got what it takes to beat a bunch of proper Martians? Well get ready to wake up and smell the coffee, buster!"



Everybody stay cool! This is a robbery!

If the Investigators state that they are keeping a careful eye on the group as this sort of thing is going on, then they are allowed to attempt **Challenging D2 Observation tests**. Any Investigator who passes such a test will notice that a short and plump girl with thick black plastic rimmed glasses has picked up a couple of the air rifles and emptied the contents of their ammunition hoppers into a large coverall pocket. If this is brought to the attention of the production crew then Squad Win will be reprimanded and the ammunition will be replaced.

If the Investigators lose their temper with Squad Win, a scuffle may break out. Squad Win consist of four Pathetic No-Hopers and two Ambitious Go-Getters (see page 181). The production crew will film the scuffle for a couple of rounds before moving in to break the contestants apart and warn them not to fight in future.

If the Investigators do not suspect that Squad Win's belligerent behaviour is part of a distraction and do not observe Joanne Well fiddling with the guns then they will be at a distinct disadvantage in the upcoming test. Three of the six guns supplied to the team will be very low on ammunition. A fully-loaded paintgun has three Reloads. The unloaded ones have only one Reload.

Canny Investigators may check their weapons in good time before the action starts, and if they notice that their guns are nearly empty and alert the production crew, then the test will be delayed until the guns are fully loaded. However once the test is underway any shortfall will not be accounted for.

At this point, the test gets underway. It may be best to show the players a sketch map of the area in which the test is due to take place. The Investigators should be allowed to study the map and chose positions for themselves, though they are not allowed to move any of the furniture. Most positions do provide a modicum of cover.

The teller booth zones are one long contiguous space, protected from the rest of the bank by a thick sheet of armoured glass, which blocks attacks entirely—at least from paintguns, which lack the penetrative power to break the glass. There's a locked door at one end that allows staff access into and out of the teller area, and there are three staff in this area, one in each zone.

The three hostages zones are empty but for a few ropes to keep the queues orderly, and the hostages themselves—two or three in each zone. Moving into Reach of a hostage allows a character to use them as cover (†2 Cover Soak), and a single hit onto the hostage (if the cover provided blocks an attack) takes them out of the fight as a casualty. The security booth is mostly windows made of armoured glass, and a character cannot be attacked from outside the booth while he is within it. However, he can't attack out of the booth either. There's a door at the back of the booth, facing the door into the teller area.

The entrance zone has little cover—a chair and a plant, which collectively only provide Soft Cover (†2 Cover Soak)—and contains a pair of hostages, which can be used for cover as noted above.

The sturdy table zone is dominated by a large, heavy oak table. This is too heavy to move (an **Epic D5 Athletics test** might shift it slightly), which provides Heavy Cover (†4 Cover Soak). There are two hostages in the area.

The waiting area is a comfortable space for customers to wait for managers and financial advisors, and thus doesn't provide too much cover. The chairs and plants collectively provide Soft Cover (†2 Cover Soak), and there are no hostages currently in that space.

Once the Investigators find positions for themselves read out the following:

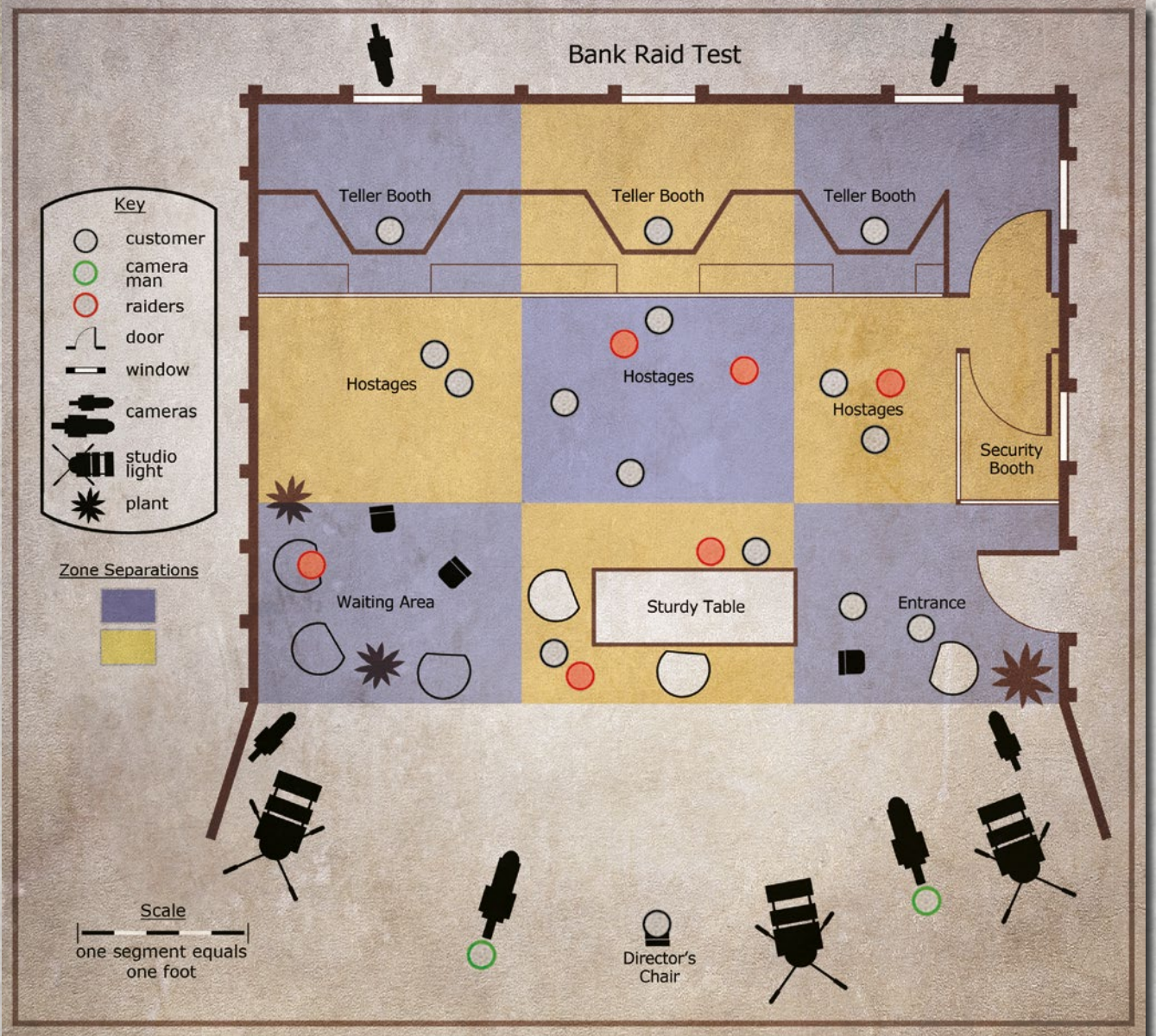
The assistant director shouts "Rolling! Action!" and a group of eighteen customers enter the bank. None of them is armed. Some of the customers sit on chairs, browse through brochures, others lean on the table, and fill out forms. About fifteen of the customers line up at the desk and begin to interact with the tellers. The customers all wear business suits, protective goggles, and gas masks.

At this point, the Investigators should be asked if they are taking any actions. The GM should accommodate their ideas but the only really pertinent action is to scan the customers to see if any of them might be the robbers. Any Investigator who announces that they are paying special attention to the customers should be called on to make a **Challenging D2 Observation test**. Those who pass will notice that six of the customers are all dressed in the same way, old fashioned business dress with bowler hats and large umbrellas.

Three of these people wait in the queue, one leans on the table and two occupy chairs.

The Investigators should be allowed one combat round after the customers take their positions, then the bank robbers unfurl their umbrellas and begin to shoot. Two of the bank robbers sat in the chairs will hurl boke grenades before using their Rainy Dayers. The customers are wearing gas masks, and thus they are not affected by boke grenades.

Tactics employed by the bank robbers mostly involve using regular customers as human shields and employing boke grenades from protected positions. The actors play fair when it comes to being hit by paint balls, and will 'play dead' after a single hit. Investigators who wish to carry on despite being hit by a paint ball may be able to hide the effects by passing a **Daunting D3 Stealth** or **Thievery test**. If they fail the test, they will be restrained by production crew, told off, and warned not to cheat again lest they be disqualified.



THE BURNING BUILDING TEST

The fourth test takes place on a set rigged up like a burning office block. The Investigators are tasked with locating a helpless victim who is trapped in the burning building and transporting her to a marked safe zone. They will be told to do so within a certain time, after which the building will be consumed by fire to an irrevocable degree.

The victim is fairly easy to locate, so this might make for a fairly uninteresting finale. However, the drama is introduced by having a large filing cabinet collapse just as the Investigators reach the victim. With the filing cabinet blocking the obvious route, the

room is transformed into a burning maze. This means that whilst entering the room and locating the victim are easily achieved, exiting the room is made much harder, and hopefully the rising panic of the participants as they try to escape in time will make for good viewing.

The flames erupt from strategically placed gas pipes and present no real danger to those involved in the test unless they are interfered with (in which case crew are on standby to ensure that the participants are ticked off for their irresponsible behaviour, that the flames are turned off, and that no one gets seriously hurt). The set is also constructed from flame-retardant materials, so the risk of the area actually catching fire is minimal.

So the test does not really represent the dangers of entering a burning building, no one will be seriously burned and poisonous, suffocating fumes are pumped out of the area by extractor fans.

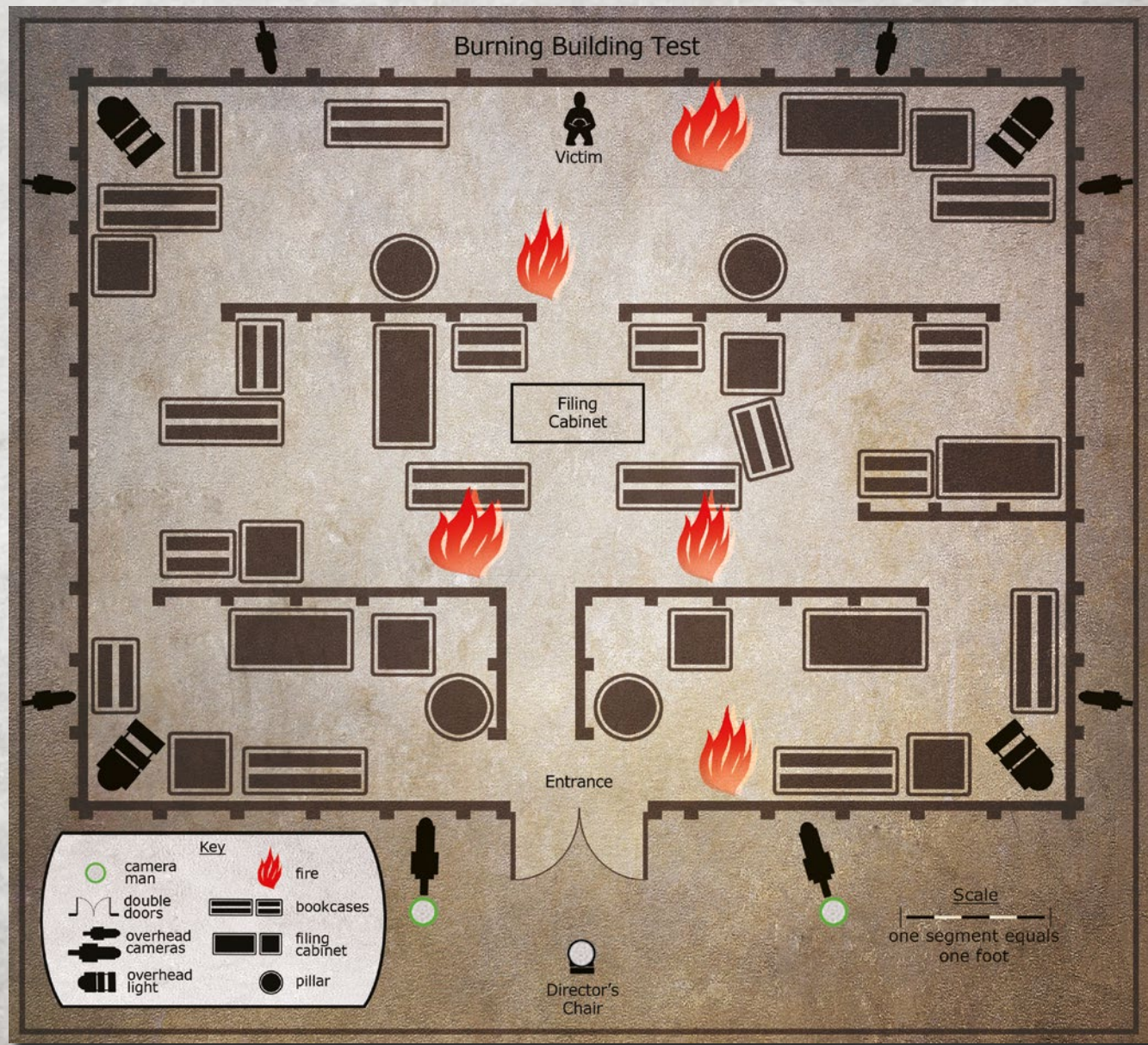
Of course, the participants in the show are not told about how safe the set is, and that the time limit for exiting the room is effectively indefinite. The production crew hope that the resulting panic will make for good television.

Read the following to the Investigators:

The runner arrives at the green room and hands each of you a gas mask to wear. He then leads you up to the next studio.

He stops by a pair of large heavy duty doors. You can see the flicker of flames through the windows in the doors.

"Alright listen carefully guys! This is a dangerous test so please follow our instructions and be very careful. Inside this room is a young clerk who is overcome by the fumes caused by a sudden blaze. It's your job to locate this woman and stretcher her out of there. This is a race against time guys, the flames will spread, and if you're still in there when the sprinkler systems are triggered it's going to mean a serious penalty to your score, do you understand?"



If the Investigators are clear on their instructions, they are given a stretcher and a countdown from ten begins to sound over the public address system.

Once through the doors the Investigators should find it easy to locate the clerk. She is slumped on the ground by the furthest wall and is visible to them from their own point of entry. However once they pass the point marked "filing cabinet" on the map a large and heavy filing cabinet will collapse and block off their exit.

When the filing cabinet collapses read the following to the Investigators:

There is a huge roaring noise and the room is bathed in a fierce wash of flickering orange light. The fires you can see around the room grow much brighter and you can even feel the heat of them against your skin.

Getting the victim onto the stretcher is not a difficult task provided two of Investigators are free to lift the victim and carry the stretcher. However, the Investigators will have to be careful not to go too near any flames as they take her out. If they do look set to blunder into one of the fires then the production crew will cut the gas supply to that particular fire rather than let anyone get burned, so this test is actually far less challenging than it seems and is really nothing more than a race against time. The sprinkler system will not go off at all. There's simply no need for it.

However, if the Investigators mention that they are trying to hurry in order to make up lost time they should be forced to make a **Challenging D2 Athletics test** every time they try to get the stretcher around a corner. If the test is failed, the victim (who is a competent stunt woman) rolls off the stretcher and has to be placed back on. The GM should make it clear to the Investigators that time is passing and the flames getting higher every time they dawdle or lose their victim, and the show's producers do adjust the height of the flame spurts so as to make it look as if the fires are spreading.

If the victim is dropped twice, she will pretend to come round and begin to panic, babbling incoherently about smoke, fire, and death. This hysteria can be contagious, and if the Investigators get to such a situation, they need to pass an Average D1 Mental Strength test or suffer a mental assault.

THE PARTY

After the tests are complete the Investigators will be invited to a lavish party, marking the wrap of the first show and the commencement of the new season. After the Investigators finish the fourth test they will be left for a while in the green room before the final results are announced. They will have their equipment returned to them at this stage. As this is Capitol, it would not be considered too outrageous

to attend the party with a discretely worn handgun, though any Investigator who plans to attend the party wearing combat armour and waving a machine gun will be told that they are in strict violation of the dress code.

Once the Investigators are told that their team were one of the highest scoring teams, they will be led to a room high up in the Kirkwood Bunker, a lavish reception area adjoining one of the landing pads near the summit of the mountain. Read the following to the players:

The room is decorated in lavish fashion, with silver silken streamers and bunting bedecking the walls and huge trestle tables groaning under the weight of piles of food and drink. One of the assistant directors pops the cork off of a bottle of sparkling white wine and proceeds to messily and noisily fill a pyramid of glasses with the sloshing booze. The production crew seem happy and relaxed, letting off steam and congratulating each other on a job well done. Mingling in the crowd you can see the men and women who played the parts of the bank raiders, customers, and terrorists throughout the day. Many of them come over to tell you what a good job you did, and to give their best wishes for the season ahead.

Only Stella Gupp and Bern Hartigan seem to remain on duty. Stella spends the party pulling people to one side and grabbing quick interviews and vox pops.

The GM may like to have Stella interview the Investigators, asking them how they feel to have made it this far and what they plan to do in the shows to come. Within a short while, Don Stevia arrives.

"OK guys!" The runner calls to you. "Don's hover car is due to dock any second now. If you could all line up to the side of the window here, so that he can enter without delays. Don't worry; you'll all get a chance to talk to him later, but for now if you could just stand aside!"

There is a hubbub as people clear the way for Don, and you can see the arrival of a large and sleek black hover car with the legend "STEVIA" printed on its chassis in large yellow letters. The hover car alights on the landing pad and three heavily armed security men jump out and take up positions around the vehicle. At last Don Stevia steps out of the car, one hand clasped to the top of his head in an effort to prevent the winds from whipping away his bleach-blonde toupee.

He enters the room and begins to mingle, congratulating the assistant director and other important members of the crew. After a while, the atmosphere relaxes, and the party starts up again.

GETTING TO DON

There are two ways to get to Don, either by asking for a private audience or simply by overpowering him publicly.

The best way is for the Investigators to come up with some kind of reason to talk to Don alone. A business venture or suggestion as to how to manage aspects of the forthcoming season would work. Don's guard is down and so he would be happy (if only for the sake of a PR exercise) to slip in to a side room and spend a couple of minutes talking to his new acquaintances. In such an event one of his bodyguards would join him whilst the others waited by the door.

The Investigators may prefer simply to waylay Don at the party. In this case, they will have to fight off his bodyguards as well as members of the opposing team, who will automatically align themselves with Don. The crew are unarmed and of uncertain loyalty, so they will scatter as soon as there is any trouble, vowing to summon help from the military who are stationed around the Kirkwood Bunker.



Don Stevia: You're fired.

The bodyguards use the same profile and equipment as EZ Emergency Troopers on page 141. The opposing team use the profiles of Ambitious Go-Getters on page 181.

Don himself will not take much of an active part in the fight. He is a cowardly, overweight, and aging man with no talent for gunplay or fisticuffs.

As soon as Don is charged with controlling assets such as Pig Pharma and attempting to subvert the military efforts to thwart the Dark Legion he caves in the most appalling craven fashion, weeping and wailing and saying that he knows he has done wrong but begging the Investigators to spare his life and reputation. He will immediately and honestly answer all questions put to him with the following exceptions:

- ◆ He denies all knowledge of any network at a level higher than Group 5—simply saying that he worked alone. He claims to know nothing of an invisible hand.
- ◆ He claims to be acting in the best interests of humanity, and says that if the Doomtrooper mission were to succeed it would hand an easy victory to the Dark Legion. "Our efforts in this universe amuse the Dark Soul, and whilst the war is confined to this theatre it will never act in such a manner as to wipe us out. If we travel to alternative universes, then it will see us as a threat to be dealt with. Permanently!"

Despite these objections, he yields up any other information the Investigators ask for. He is unprepared at this stage for such an interview, and seeks to prevent the crew (especially Stella and Bern) from recording and transmitting anything that might compromise him, so he is actually motivated to deal honestly with the Investigators provided they promise to keep things discrete and spare his life.

As for the location of the Citadel, as a matter of fact he has just come from the forward staging base surreptitiously checking to make sure his plans were in order, and to ensure that the Doomtroopers had not succumbed to Incursid infestation before entering the citadel. Therefore, the coordinates for the Citadel are stored in the navigation computer of his hover car, which he will happily provide to the Investigators as a method of transport provided they promise to spare his life. Furthermore, the Investigators can learn from Don that the Citadel in question has been partially demolished by artillery fire, and that the Dark legion forces defending it have been heavily depleted.

His final words to the Investigators, whether they leave him alive and well at the party or kill him, will be "Save the Doomtroopers if you must, but I beg you not to disturb the Dark Soul. Let it lie. Let it lie!"

THE CITADEL

SUMMARY

During their time on Mars, the Investigators will have learned that a Doomtrooper patrol has been given a mission to enter a Citadel not far from San Dorado.

The Investigators should come to the realisation that the Doomtrooper patrol tasked with entering the citadel is on a very important mission. If they are successful, they will put an end to the Dark Legion's assaults on the real universe and the threat they pose to humanity.

RUNNING THIS PORTION OF THE ADVENTURE

Unbeknownst to them the Investigators are destined to sever the link between the alien world of Nero and the universe that they are used to. This severance places them into a time frame which to them seems over in an instant, but which is, in fact, seven hundred years in length.

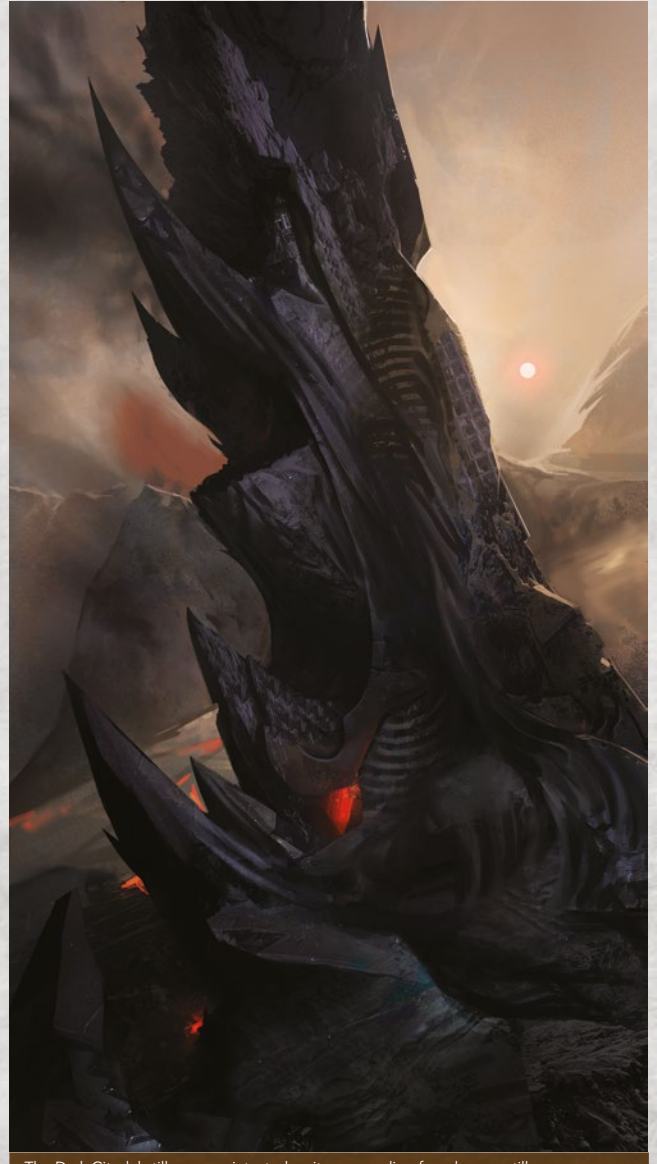
Obviously, this is quite a major occurrence to deal with in the framework of a game, and the GM should keep several things in mind when running this section of the adventure.

The Investigators are entering a Dark Legion Citadel without support, an action that many would deem suicidal. Whilst much of the Citadel has been destroyed by artillery fire and breached so as to allow the Doomtroopers to enter, it is still a dangerous environment filled with all manner of foes and traps.

However, a squad of Doomtroopers has entered before them, and together with actions by the Capitolian military, they will have slain a number of the inhabitants that once infested the citadel.

However, there is a further twist here, because many of these same Doomtroopers have been infected with Incursids which are primed to develop at a critical moment during their mission.

The GM is encouraged to instil an atmosphere of trepidation and foreboding to this section. As a matter of fact, the dangers ahead of the Investigators are not insurmountable, but they should feel as if they are about to meet up with something very nasty at almost any point in their journey through the passages of the Citadel.



The Dark Citadel still appears intact, despite a pounding from heavy artillery.

The entire Citadel is one massive Tainted Location—indeed, few locations are as corrupted as a Citadel. The entire area thus counts as corrupted to **Stage 3: Vile Animus** (see page 153 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book). This means that whenever one of the Investigators gains one or more Dread, he gains one additional Dread. Further, the entire location is considered to have the Feed upon Fear special rule, granting the GM one Dark Symmetry point whenever an investigator suffers one or more Mental Wounds.

THE DOOMTROOPERS

A squad of twelve Doomtroopers entered the Citadel shortly before the arrival of the Investigators. By now, many of them are dead, overcome by the inhabitants of the Citadel or eaten from the inside by their Incursid parasites.

The GM should make note of where these Doomtroopers are and what sort of state they are in. Note that this table correlates to the table found in the Ladybird Project file in Frida Williams' office (see page 156).

The main areas are summarised as follows, though the GM is encouraged to flesh these out further:

- 1. THE HANGAR**—the Doomtroopers have cleared this area. It is the entrance to the citadel and there are signs of a fight here.
- 2. THE GUARD ROOM**—the Doomtroopers have cleared this area. The corpses of dead necromutants can be seen.
- 3. THE BLOCKED PASSAGE**—the Doomtroopers have managed to trap some Necromutants behind a rockfall. If the Investigators are careless, they might set them free.
- 4. THE TUNNELWAY**—a long and fairly featureless stretch of passage that may yield some surprises.
- 5. THE HOSPITAL ROOM**—the site of a Necrochamber, filled with corpses of human soldiers from which some useful supplies may be salvaged.
- 6. THE INCURSID INFESTATION**—another stretch of passageway wherein some of the Doomtroopers met their end. Lurking Incursids may ambush the Investigators here.
- 7. THE ARMOURY**—a large chamber used to store munitions for the forces of the Dark Legion. The surviving Doomtroopers may be found fighting a desperate last stand in here.
- 8. THE PORTAL**—through which the Investigators may travel to Nero.



THE DOOMTROOPERS

#	SEX	NAME	NOTES	PREVIOUS MILITARY UNIT
1	M	Dirk McGregor	Died from delivering an Incursid at point 6 on map.	Imperial Clan Special Forces.
2	M	Randy Law	Died from delivering an Incursid at point 6 on map.	Capitol Free Marines.
3	F	Astrid Proll	Fighting in the armoury (point 7 on the map). No Incursid.	Bauhaus Etoiles Mortants.
4	M	Yao Hung	Died in battle with Necromutants in the Guard Room (point 2 on the map). The developing Incursid he was carrying was killed at the same time.	Mishiman Samurai.
5	M	Bob Crabbe	Died in battle with Necromutants in the Guard Room (point 2 on the map). No Incursid.	Imperial Clan Special Forces.
6	M	Han Ch'ien	Died from delivering an Incursid at point 6 on map.	Mishiman Samurai.
7	M	Alasdair Fogg	Died from delivering an Incursid at point 6 on map.	Imperial Wolfbanes.
8	F	Trudy May Bang	Died from delivering an Incursid at point 6 on map.	Capitol Infantry.
9	M	Gunther Klinski	Fighting in the armoury (point 7 on the map). Yet to succumb to his developing Incursid.	Bauhaus Venusian Rangers.
10	M	Andrine Hoff	Fighting in the armoury (point 7 on the map). No Incursid.	Bauhaus Etoiles Mortants.
11	M	Markus Mainwaring	Fighting in the armoury (point 7 on the map). Yet to succumb to his developing Incursid.	Imperial Clan Special Forces.
12	M	Chip Ewing	Fighting in the armoury (point 7 on the map). No Incursid.	Capitol Infantry.

THE CITADEL



- 1- The Hangar
- 2- The Guard Room
- 3- The Blocked Passage
- 4- The Tunnelway
- 5- The Hospital Room
- 6- The Incursid Infestation
- 7- The Armoury
- 8- The Portal



ARRIVAL

Read the following to the Investigators:

The hover car speeds over the surface of Mars, veering through red mountain passes and heading towards the north. The shape of a stricken Citadel rises above the horizon line. The Citadel is a red peak like the mountains within which it nestles, but more slender and sharper. Its jagged extremities are like shards of broken bone, with points more acute than the most sheer mountain ridges. It has clearly recently been the target of a massive bombing campaign, rents and fissures in the Citadel walls belch smoke and fire and the whole massive structure looks precarious. Much of the western facing side of the Citadel has collapsed entirely and torn sections of the superstructure lie scattered about the base.

Around the base of the citadel are a network of trenches and barricades, and regiments of Dark Legion armed forces can be seen dug into emplacements and strongpoints, exchanging fire with surrounding Capitolian forces.

A large breach has been opened up in the side of the Citadel about a third of the way up from the base. It seems that some missile may have found its way into a hangar for Dark Legion air support. Corrupted planes can be seen piled in a jumble of wreckage on the floor of the hangar, but there is enough space there to land the hover car in relative safety.

THE HANGAR

The only practical way to enter the Citadel is via a wrecked Hangar. Read the following to the Investigators.

The hangar is a huge space, more than half of which is in the open air. The hangar was always partially open, allowing fleets of Dark legion aircraft to depart if need be. It has been shelled so heavily by the forces of Capitolian military that a great rent has been torn in the side of the citadel above the hangar.

The walls of the hangar are composed of great black coils of ribbed ducts and slime-coated connective material, stretchy but tough, like the ligaments that attach muscle to bone in an animal's body.

Wrecked aircraft are arrayed around the hanger. Before the shelling, they may have been arranged in neat rows but now they are scattered about like broken toys in the playroom of an unruly child. Once, they were proud military vehicles belonging to the air forces of the great corporations, but they have long since been captured and corrupted by Dark Technology, their sleek patterns obscured by odd biomechanical growths.

A dark tunnel leads into the citadel, with walls covered in the same spiralling cable and ligature that covers the walls of the hangar.

A stale breeze issues from the tunnel, warm, humid, and rotten.

There is nothing in the hangar aside from the wrecked aircraft, though the GM should play up the area's spooky aura and unwholesome feel. Gobbets of lymphatic fluid will drip from the ceiling and strike the Investigators on the head and shoulders. Noises made by Investigators moving about or talking will echo about in weird amplified distortions.

From this point forth, the text describes the route taken by the Doomtroopers. The Citadel itself is a much larger and more complicated structure than the descriptions to follow might lead the GM to believe. However much of the structure has been destroyed by artillery fire from the Capitolian military, and is either inaccessible due to cave-ins and collapses or missing entirely.

The GM should give the Investigators the impression of a much larger structure as they explore the citadel, describing additional nooks and exits to them as they explore. However if they try to investigate such turnings they will soon find themselves forced to go back to avoid an unsafe or demolished area.

THE GUARD ROOM

A little way further down the spiral passageway is a small and rocky room that is accessed only after passing a strange kink in the passageway. Read the following to the Investigators as they approach the room.

You make your way up a dark, dank tunnelway leading from the hangar further into the citadel. Ahead of you is sharp twist in the passage. Bullets and shell casings litter the floor around you.

Before the Doomtrooper assault, this kink in the passageway provided the inhabitants of the Citadel with a neat defensive position from which to fire at any invaders. This guard room has now been overrun. Once the Investigators move up the passage read the following:

You enter a small compact room, lined with the same spiralling, sinew-enmeshed cables you saw in the hangar. Corpses litter the floor. Many of them are dressed in the uniforms of the Capitol military forces, and they seem to have been dead for weeks given their advanced state of decomposition. Many of them still grasp machine guns and knives. A couple of more recent corpses can also be seen, wearing the heavy duty combat armour of the Doomtroopers.

The corpses of the Doomtroopers Yao Hung and Bob Crabbe can be found here. They clearly died after succumbing to a number of wounds inflicted by the fire of Necromutants. Their combat armour is shattered and useless though they do have salvageable Deathlockdrum machine guns should the Investigators wish to loot the bodies. Yao Hung was carrying the customary paired swords of a Samurai, but both Katana and Wakizashi are chipped and corroded to the point of uselessness.

If the Investigators wish to search the bodies for more information they will notice that Bob Crabbe has tattoos on his arms depicting the insignia of the Imperial Special Forces and that Yao Hung carries the emblems of a Mishiman Keiretsu.

On a successful **Daunting D3 Observation test**, or a **Challenging D2 Treatment or Medicine test**, the Investigators may also note that some of Yao's wounds do not look typical for a human. There is insect-like chitin and ichor mixed in with the torn blood and flesh. Yao was carrying an Incursid that had nearly fully developed at the time of his death.

THE BLOCKED PASSAGE

As the Investigators move further up the passageway they come to a side tunnel that has been blocked by fallen rocks. Read them the following:

As you make your way further inside you come to a junction in the passageway. The fork to the left is clear but the way to the right is blocked by a jumble of rubble and rocks. You can hear faint clattering sounds and weak cries coming from behind the rockfall.

In fact, the rockfall was created by the Doomtroopers. The area behind the rockfall served as a small barrack room for Necromutants, and a group of them was trapped in there by a detonation set off by the Doomtroopers. If the Investigators work at clearing any of the rocks, they release a group of four Necromutants who immediately turn on their rescuers.

Rules for Necromutants can be found on page 302 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core book. In this area, the Necromutants present are Elites, rather than Troopers.

THE TUNNELWAY

From the point of the blocked passage until the hospital room there is a long and narrow passage that spirals in to the centre of the Citadel. The Investigators can make their way down the tunnel without incident, though at four points the GM should have them pause whilst he makes a secret roll. Whilst the results of these rolls do not produce any sort of dangerous situation, the GM should use them to build up tension as the Investigators get closer to the climax of the adventure. A little bit of theatre along the lines of the following may help build tension:

GM: (Rolls dice, studies result) "Ooh, lucky, nothing too bad this time, but a slimy gobbet of liquid gathers and falls from the ceiling, splattering Georgie's coat with thick creamy goo."

THE HOSPITAL ROOM

This small chamber to the side of the main passageway is full of hospital equipment, gurneys, blood bags, pain killing drugs, and gauze. The Dark Legion make little use of such items for their own benefit but do occasionally resort to crude first aid in treating their more important soldiers or patching up a captive in order to prevent them from succumbing to wounds before they have proved useful. The main purpose of this room, however, is to repurpose dead human soldiers so that they can join their number to the Necromutant hordes fighting for the Dark legion.

The Doomtroopers have cleared the area, and the corpses of several Necromutant orderlies can be seen lying on the floor of the hospital room. In addition, there is a large pile of human corpses stacked

against one of the walls of the room. Some of these have been dragged into weird vats, undergoing the slow process that will turn them into Dark Legionnaires.

The Investigators could make use of some of the items in the room if they haven't brought first aid kits of their own. Enough supplies can be gathered from here to make up three basic medkits, one paramedic medkit with three doses of Coagulant, twelve doses of strong painkillers, and two doses of Stasis.

At the GM's discretion, there can be useful weapons or items of equipment found on the dead corpses. These will be equivalent to a soldier's standard-issue gear, and as most of the soldiers here are Capitolian, this means that the salvageable gear will be things that a Capitolian infantryman will carry: an M50 assault rifle, reloads for such, etc. A character who thinks to try and recover dog tags from the dead can find 2d6 such tags, and gains a Chronicle point for their honourable act.



THE INCURSID INFESTATION

It was at this point during their trek through the tunnels that a number of the Doomtroopers succumbed to their Incursid parasites. Dirk McGregor, Randy Law, Han Ch'ien, Alasdair Fogg, and Trudy May Bang all met their ends here when the Incursids that they carried matured and burst out of their bodies. Read the following to the players:

THE TUNNELWAY

D6 ROLL	RESULT
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1	Stumble: An Investigator chosen at random stumbles and falls to the floor. Thick black gunk covers their hands and clothes and proves impossible to remove completely.
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2	Voices: The Investigators can hear distant voices. If they pause to listen they can discern that the words are in English but seem to come from no particular direction.
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3	Gobbet: A gobbet of viscous liquid falls from the ceiling to splatter on the Investigator who was second in line. The liquid is thick and creamy white. It has no apparent source.
---	---

4	Corpses: There are a number of Necromutant corpses here, riddled with massive bullet holes.
---	--

5	Rumble: There is a loud rumbling sound and then for a second the walls of the passage seem to compress, closing in on the Investigators. A rush of warm air emanates from the centre of the Citadel, blasting the Investigators with a humid and foul-smelling wind. The tunnel walls seem to shake and strain, but then return to normal.
---	---

6	Shadows: The section of the passage is lit by strange bioluminescent globes that seem to grow from the ceiling, and which throw up odd shadows. For a second a shape is glimpsed in the distance, the form of a shambling monstrosity, but when the Investigators strain to look closer, it seems to be nothing more than a fleeting shadow.
---	---

Lying on the floor of the passageway ahead are four corpses. They wear combat armour and their Deathlockdrum machine guns lie by their sides. They seem to have taken horrific wounds, as if hit by explosive ammunition. Their torsos are shredded to mincemeat and shattered shards of armour are scattered all over the floor.

If the PCs suspect that the reason for the deaths might be related to the maturation of Incursids and take appropriately cautious measures then they will be able to spot the creatures nestling in nooks and crannies in the passageway wall on a successful **Challenging D2 Observation test**. If not then the Incursids will launch a surprise attack as the PCs move past the area or stop to inspect the bodies.

The number of Incursids here is equal to one plus the number of Investigators to a maximum of 5. So if there are three Investigators in the party at this point then the number of Incursids will be (3+1) four.

Any disparity between the number of bodies and the number of Incursids can be explained by suggesting that those who died were not all killed during the hatching process, but were killed by adult Incursids or their Doomtrooper colleagues before their own Incursid reached maturity.

Due to their ideal hosts—aggressive, puissant people during the prime of their lives, in a stressful environment—the Incursids that emerged here are stronger and more powerful than those that the Investigators may have encountered previously, and use the following profile.

ADULT INCURSID IN PEAK CONDITION ★

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
14	11	13 (+1)	13
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
6	6	11	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE											
COMBAT		FORTITUDE		MOVEMENT		SENSES		SOCIAL		TECHNICAL	
EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC	EXP	FOC
3	3	2	2	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-

WOUNDS: 8

SOAK: Chitin Shell: (All 3)

ATTACKS:

- ▶ **Razor-Sharp Talons (melee):** 1+**T**6, Vicious 1
- ▶ **Mandibles (melee):** 2+**T**6, Gruesome, Vicious 2, may only be used against a grabbed enemy

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- ▶ **Fear (2)**
- ▶ **Feed Upon Fear**
- ▶ **Grasping**
- ▶ **Night Vision**
- ▶ **Personal Dark Symmetry (4)**
- ▶ **Scuttling Climb:** An Incursid can climb freely on any surface—sheer walls and ceilings—and contort itself through tight spaces without regard for the normal structure of a human body.
- ▶ **Supernatural Agility (1)**

THE ARMOURY

This is a large room that served the Citadel as an Armoury. It is currently the site of a fierce battle between the remaining Doomtroopers and some of inhabitants of the Citadel. A couple of the Doomtroopers involved in the fight are carrying Incursids that are on the verge of maturation. The Investigators may be able to anticipate this.

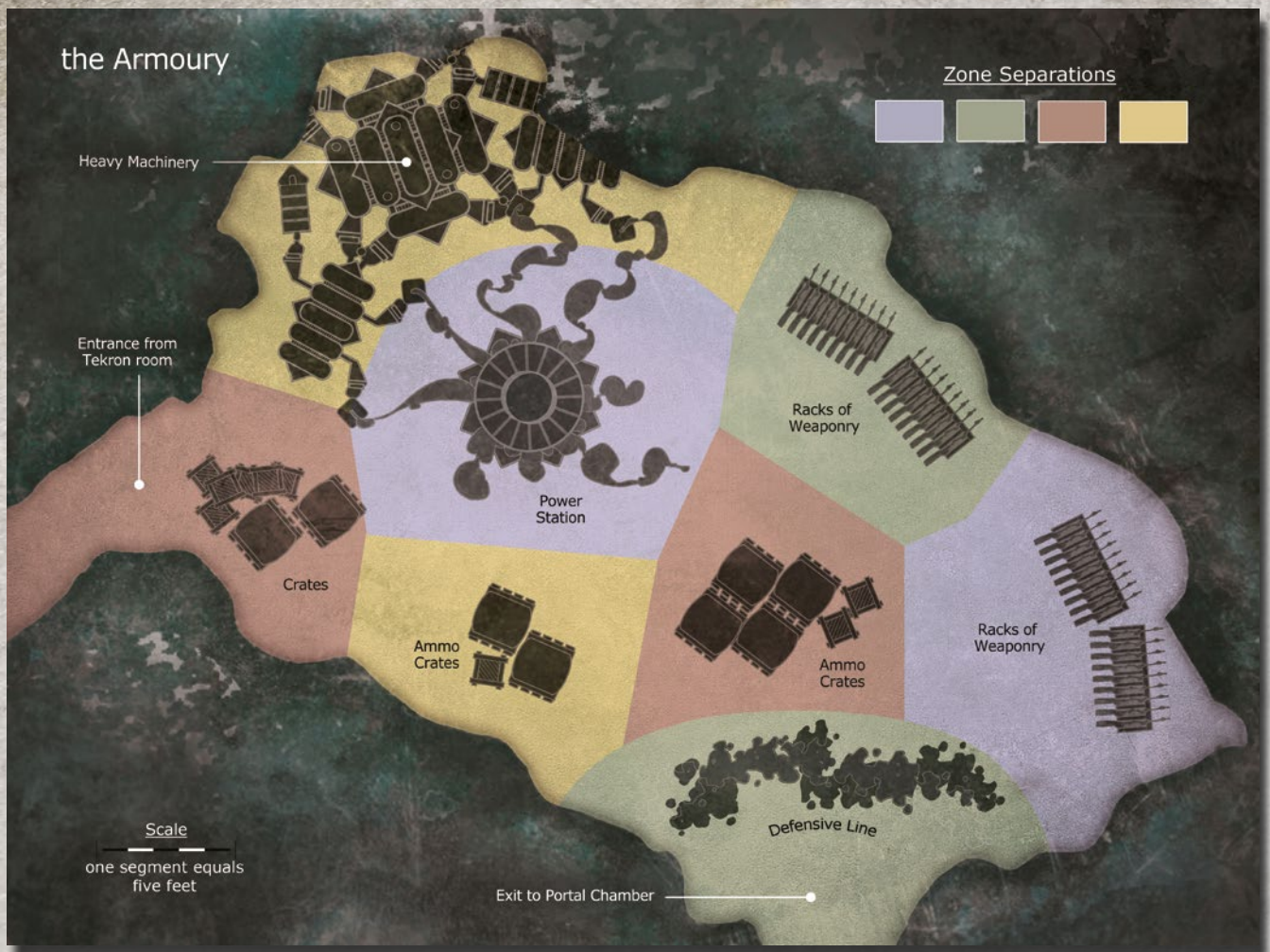
- ▶ **Astrid Proll of Bauhaus**—Not carrying an Incursid.
- ▶ **Gunther Klinski of Bauhaus**—Carrying a developing Incursid.
- ▶ **Andrine Hoff of Bauhaus**—Not carrying an Incursid.
- ▶ **Markus Mainwaring of Imperial**—Carrying a developing Incursid.
- ▶ **Chip Ewing of Capitol**—Not carrying an Incursid.

The Investigators are likely to have bumped into Gunther Klinski previously. Read the following to the Investigators:

You have entered a wide and tall chamber, ringed with lines of dark brown plate that resemble the marks left by the lapping of some volcanic tide, or the year by year growth of some ancient chitinous sea creature. There are weapons and missiles stacked around the room, twisted examples of dark technology, the outlines of the weapons obscured and elaborated by horny growths and pitted corrosion.

In front of you are five soldiers, hunkered down by an overturned ammunition crate. They are clearly in desperate straits. Two of them are wounded and bleeding, unable to fight more. The other three are pinned in by incoming fire.

On the other side of the room are a group of hideous Necromutants, also taking cover behind a pile of upturned crates and heaps of their own dead. The Necromutants seem to be in no hurry to close with the Doomtroopers; instead, they grind them down through attrition. From a passageway opposite to the one you just passed through, more



Necromutants arrive to take up position by those already here.

As you watch one of the Doomtroopers seems to have some kind of fit, he begins to shriek and writhe, clawing at his armour and yanking off his helmet. You recognise him. He was the man who you recently saw being ejected from the Atlas Frugged nightclub. His eyes bulge in pain and panic and thick frothy spittle erupts from grimacing lips.

The Doomtroopers are hard pressed, and they will soon perish unless the Investigators save them. Andrine Hoff and Markus Mainwaring are wounded, and they will not be able to continue the fight unless they're provided with first aid. Furthermore, Markus is carrying an Incursid which is on the verge of maturation. Gunther Klinski is also host to an Incursid which is about to mature. Astrid Proll and Chip Ewing are still in fairly good shape, though they are both low on ammunition.

The Doomtroopers are hunkered down behind stacks of ammunition crates and corrupted machinery at the Entrance from the Tekron

Room. The crates provide them with Heavy Cover (♣4 Cover Soak), but the zone is otherwise an unenviable position.

To the northern corner of the cavern, there's a large collection of heavy machinery, used for some bizarre and profane purposes by the Citadel's owners. The machinery provides Heavy Cover (♣4 Cover Soak) for any characters in the zone, but the strange bladed protrusions and corrupted technology mean that creatures entering or leaving the area must attempt a **Challenging D2 Acrobatics test** to avoid the blades—failure means that the zone inflicts 1+♣4 damage with the Dreadful and Vicious 1 qualities.

The power substation channels power through and into this section of the Citadel. This tree-like bundle of cables stretches from floor to ceiling, and it is studded with bio-mechanical growths, crystalline protrusions, and bulky machinery. Attempting to enter or leave this zone requires an **Average D1 Acrobatics test** to avoid electrical discharges, which inflict 1+♣3 damage with the Corrupted (X) and Stun qualities to any who fail the test.

Racks of weaponry dominate the north and east walls of the chamber. These weapons are the necrotechnology of the Dark Legion—vile mockeries of human weaponry adorned with barbs and spikes, and which are anathema to the human spirit. The racks provide Soft Cover (♣2 Cover Soak), and contain dozens of Kratach and Belzarach assault rifles and ammunition for them. Dark Legion troops may resupply in these spaces, spending a Standard Action and adding two Dark Symmetry points to the GM's pool.

Stacks of ammo crates dominate the middle and southern edge of the armoury, filled with bullets and shells. The crates are thick-walled, sturdy objects, able to provide Heavy Cover (♣4 Cover Soak) to anyone within.

The defensive line is at the far end of the room, before the exit to the portal. The barricades are a mixture of necrotechnological structures and piled up ammunition crates, providing Heavy Cover (♣4 Cover Soak) to creatures in the area. Further, as a fortified position, each Dark Symmetry icon generated on those Soak dice adds +1 Soak to the total rolled. Due to the portal chamber behind them, all Dark Legion reinforcements must arrive in this zone. This location is where the Necromutants begin the encounter.

The initial number of Necromutants is equal to the number of Investigators plus five. These will be split as evenly as possible

into squads, with a single Necromutant Elite commanding several Necromutant Troopers (see page 302 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book). Therefore, if there are three Investigators in the party at this point then the number of Necromutants will be (3+5) eight, which will be split into two squads of four.

Without the intervention of the Investigators, the situation would resolve itself according to the Doomtrooper Demise Table..

WHAT CAN THE INVESTIGATORS DO TO HELP?

The Investigators can help in four ways. They can kill Necromutants and Incursids, supply Astrid and Chip with fresh ammo or weapons, sedate Gunther and Markus, and treat Andrine's injuries.

Killing Necromutants is obviously the most direct way to assist the Doomtroopers. If the Investigators reduce the number of Necromutants down to 4 or less then they cease to become much of a threat to the Doomtroopers and Chip will not be automatically shot dead by them on turn eight. If the Incursids are killed as soon as they develop, they will also be neutralised and incapable of killing Astrid on turn nine.

The Necromutants, for their part, split their fire evenly between the Investigators and the Doomtroopers. If only one squad of Necromutants remains, their attacks should be directed at the



The Doomtroopers make their last stand, but the true danger for some of them lies within.

DOOMTROOPER DEMISE

ROUND # DOOMTROOPERS

- 1 Chip Ewing lightly wounded by incoming fire.
- 2 Gunther Klinski dies as a mature Incursid bursts from his body.
- 3 Chip Ewing runs out of ammo.
- 4 Markus Mainwaring begins to have a fit as his Incursid matures.
- 5 Andrine Hoff succumbs to his wounds.
- 6 Astrid Proll runs out of ammo.
- 7 A mature Incursid erupts from the body of Markus Mainwaring.
- 8 Chip Ewing is shot dead by Necromutants.
- 9 Astrid succumbs to attack by Incursid. All Doomtroopers dead.

NECROMUTANTS

- A Necromutant is shot by Astrid Proll and another is shot by Chip Ewing.
- The newly hatched Incursid scuttles away from the Doomtroopers and hides under a rack of weapons.
- Two more Necromutant Troopers enter the room, joining existing squads where possible.
- A Necromutant is shot by Astrid Proll.
- A Necromutant Trooper enters the room, and joins an existing squad.
- Two more Necromutant Trooper enter the room and join existing squads. The newly hatched Incursid attacks Astrid.
- Begin to fan out throughout the Citadel until it is under their full control.

Investigators. If there are two or more squads remaining, only roll those attacks that target the Investigators. The Doomtroopers will automatically suffer the fate described in the table on the next page.

Necromutant reinforcements arrive as described. If the fight reaches round 10 then the increasing attention drawn to the fight means that one Dark Symmetry point is added to the GM's pool at the start of each new round, which the GM is encouraged to spend on reinforcements and Reloads for the Necromutant forces.

This pattern repeats itself until the Investigators leave the armoury and make their way into the portal to Nero.

At the GMs discretion, other creatures known to be subservient to Algeroth may be substituted for a Necromutant. This should be done carefully however, as the Investigators will not be able to complete their mission if they are all wiped out. If they're having a particularly tough fight, substituting Undead Legionnaires is entirely fitting. If they're slaughtering the Necromutants, a pair of Praetorian Stalkers may emerge from the darkness, a Razide, or an Ezoghoul. The GM should use his judgement with regards to these different reinforcements.

Supplying Astrid and Chip with new ammunition or weapons is an obvious way to help. If Chip is given a new weapon, his death is

postponed by two rounds and he kills another Necromutant during that time. If Astrid is given a new weapon, she kills the Incursid that attacks her and slays another Necromutant before being shot dead.

To sedate Gunther or Markus the Investigators will have to pump them full of sedative drugs if they brought some with them or acquired some from the Hospital Room—Stasis would be perfect for this. Provided they are knocked unconscious then the Incursids that they are playing host to will not be able to complete their maturation. Gunther and Markus could even be conceivably saved if they were kept calm or sedated long enough in a serene environment that offered the Incursids no psychic nutrition. That is supremely unlikely to occur, but at least the Investigators can postpone the arrival of the Incursids for the immediate future by dosing the men with sedative drugs.

Whilst heavily wounded, Andrine could be patched up to the degree that she could fight again with the help of a medkit and painkillers. If so, he will not die in turn five but will shoot dead another two Necromutants before being fatally wounded in turn nine.



DOOMTROOPERS AS REPLACEMENT INVESTIGATORS

If Investigators have fallen in earlier parts of the Citadel, or perished in combat in the armoury, it may be convenient to allow one of the Doomtroopers to join in with the Investigators' mission. After all, the task of journeying to Nero via the portal and destroying the creature was originally planned to be undertaken by the Doomtroopers, and they are keen to complete their mission at any cost.

If the group have a spare player at this point then they could be given a new Investigator in the form of either Astrid Proll or Chip Ewing (see **Appendix 01**, page 205). If this is the case, then the character should not be suffering from any previous injuries or shortage of ammunition and the player can obviously decide how they act during the firefight. If the Doomtrooper in question is noted as automatically killing Necromutants this will not occur.

There may be something of a problem in that the Doomtroopers are committed to the completion of their mission but have not been equipped with the rift-travel devices that Eva Junge supplied to the Investigators earlier. Of course, the reason for this is that no such devices exist and the PCs have just been given fraudulent mock-ups. Seeing as the Doomtrooper is prepared to sacrifice himself or herself in order to complete the mission this should not be a problem.

In the event that one of the non-Doomtrooper Investigators asks a Doomtrooper Investigator about the devices then it may just be simpler to say to the Doomtrooper Investigator that they have never heard of such things but they are determined to complete their mission regardless.

THE PORTAL

This is the section of the citadel that links with Nero. As the passageway reaches the centre of the citadel, it becomes less real, less solid. More organic and ectoplasmic.

The Necromutant attacks cease once the Investigators leave the armoury. Read the following to the players as they near the centre of the Citadel:

The black and snaking coils of cable begin to merge into the walls of tunnelway, which takes on a new hue and texture as you move down the tunnel. The walls become grey and

smooth, covered in a sticky mucus which reeks of blood and bile. The walls of the tunnel smooth out, becoming one with floor and ceiling until you find yourselves walking down an entirely circular passageway. A slow-moving steam of effluvia courses by your feet and ridges of cartilaginous reinforcement ring the tunnel walls.

Suddenly there is a great convulsion, for a second the walls quiver and contract, pressing in on you before relaxing. There is a moment of peace.

This will be the last time the Investigators get to make actions for a while. Once they have decided what to do read the following:

There is a great groaning rumbling sound, like gurgling of the indigestion of a humungous and dyspeptic beast. The walls close in on you once more, they convulse, and waves of muscular contraction begin to force you forward, the walls squeezing and pushing, crushing the air from your lungs and forcing foul bile into your eyes, nostrils, and mouth. Just as you feel in the verge of suffocation they relent, and you find yourselves dazed and bruised but alive, floundering in the filth and slime of the tunnelway floor.

Then the walls come in close once more, and again you are forced through the passageway in a jumble of soaking bodies.

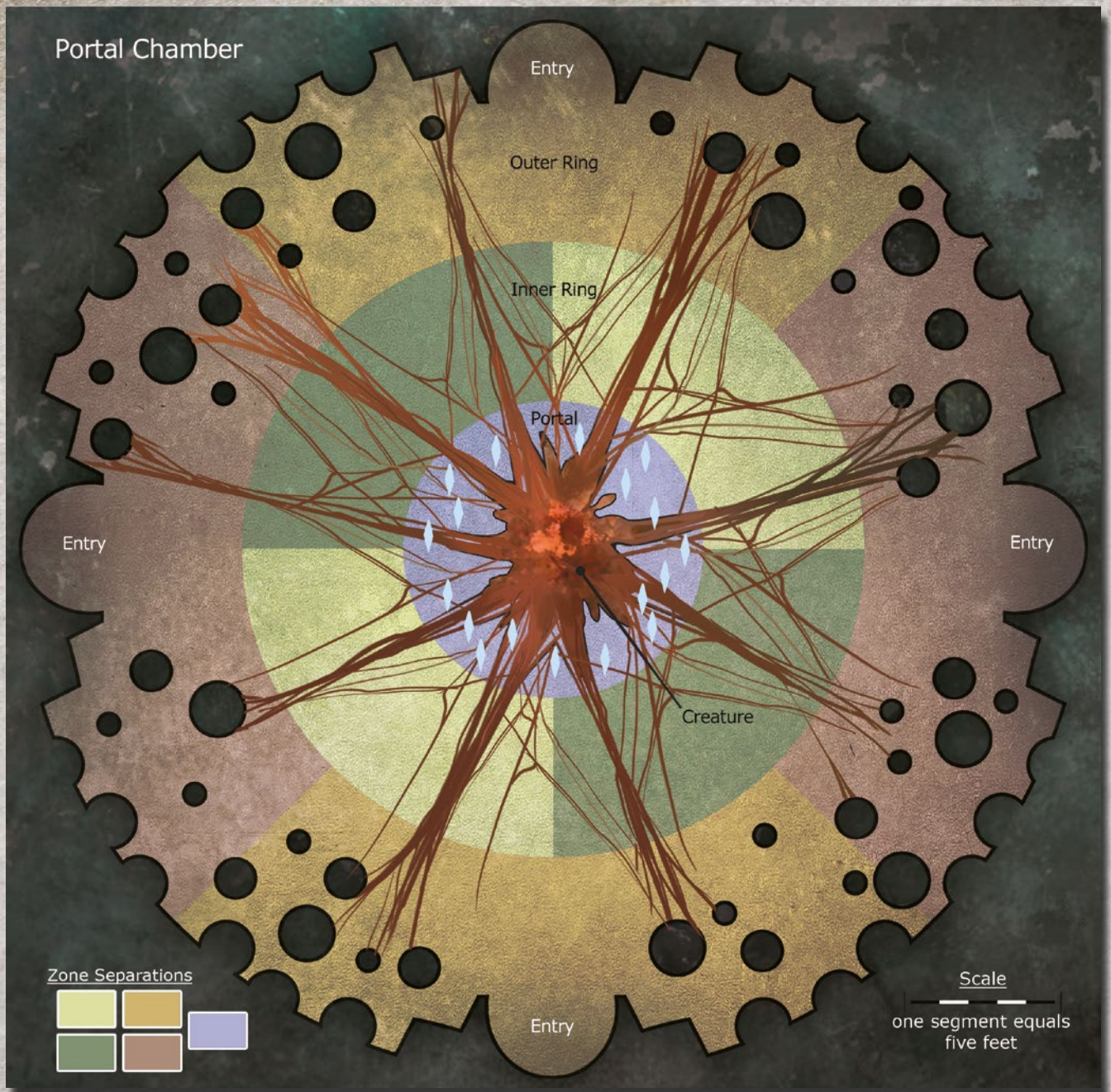
THROUGH THE PORTAL

Read the following to the Investigators:

With a muscular spasm, the tube spits you out, dropping you onto a shining hard black surface. Translucent gobbets of viscous matter stick to your hands and bodies in great shivering gobbets.

The vaulted chamber is a massive dome, consisting of walls made by the twisting together of many winding cables, each one the thickness of a tree trunk held in place by the same sort of sinews that you observed on entering the Citadel.

In the centre of the space, held in place by giant pale ligaments which stretch from the sides of the room and attach themselves to its pulsating body, is a huge creature with skin like polished obsidian and a great, distended head. The creature is mostly maw, its muzzle some thirty feet in length. It slobbers, drools, and passes a long thin tongue over its sharp and crowded teeth. It has cavernous nostrils, each one large enough so that you could crawl straight through were there an opening at the other end. Yet it is without eyes, without ears, its vast head seemingly wholly devoted to the senses of scent and taste. The creature's brain presses against the flesh behind



DARK SYMMETRY REINFORCEMENTS

DARK SYMMETRY POINTS SPENT

REINFORCEMENTS

1 per Trooper

One or more Necromutants (Trooper) or Undead Legionnaires

10

One Nephrite of Algeroth (may only be called in once)

2, plus 1 per Trooper

One Centurion or Necromutant (Elite) and up to 5 Undead Legionnaires or Necromutants (Trooper)

2 per Elite

One or more Ezoghoul, Razides, or Praetorian Stalkers



The portal-beast, a creature of dark science and vile sorcery.

the huge hinge of its jaw, sulci, and gyri making an embossed fingerprint pattern against the taut black skin where the skull should be.

It raises its head and sniffs, and then extends a long red rope of tongue, not at you, but towards the sides of the room where you can see a thousand visions, each one dancing airborne like a mote in the sunlight of an almost breezeless day. They are each of them little windows into reality, slowly swirling around. Sometimes one will diminish and then wink out of existence. Sometimes a new one will blossom from nothing.

Each one shows a different scene, but each scene is, in one way or another, a depiction of pain, fear, or confusion. Some windows depict the soldiers of the armies of humanity locked in desperate conflict with the forces of the Dark Legion. Others show fights between people, scuffles on the streets of San Dorado, or muggings down in the lowest levels of Heimborg. Still others show more minor, mundane pictures of pain. An adolescent gazing with self-pity in the mirror, a lover's quarrel, a child alone in the dark.

The creature slurps and sniffs, its tongue laps up against a vision of violent turmoil; Bauhaus soldiers and Necromutants locked in bloody struggle in the jungles of Venus. The creature slobbers over the image and as it does so, the vision becomes brighter and larger, gaining definition, becoming more real.

You can hear shouts and the sound of marching feet echoing from the passageways and tunnel mouths that surround the massive domed chamber.

The area is divided into two rings of zones around the central portal. The outer ring is a mess of pillars, divided into four zones. Each zone grants Heavy Cover (T4 Cover Soak) to characters within. Each of the outer ring zones connects to a passageway in the outer wall of the chamber. The player characters enter through the north-most passageway into the zone at the top of the map.

The inner ring is open ground, and the zones there are empty, with no cover or difficult terrain.

The central zone is the creature that controls the portals: the Investigators' objective.

The Investigators should follow their instructions to shoot the creature. If they delay or take too long to destroy the energy shield then matters should become more pressing as each round the GM gains five Dark Symmetry points; if spent on reinforcements, they emerge from the adjoining tunnels and attack the Investigators. Also remember that the entire Citadel is considered to be a Tainted Location with a Vile Animus (page 153 of the **Mutant Chronicles** core book), and thus the GM gains one additional Dark Symmetry point every time one of the Investigators suffers one or more mental wounds (as well as the other effects of being in a tainted location). The table on page 202 provides some example reinforcements, and the accompanying Dark Symmetry point costs, for this scene.

For its part, the creature is not violent; it is simply a biomechanical organism tasked with creating new portals between Nero and the real universe. It sniffs out areas of particular negative human experience and reinforces the link between such areas and the Dark Soul. Eventually rifts in reality, or even new Citadels, will form in those areas which have received the attentions of the creature.

Despite being large, the creature is supremely fragile, though it is protected by a powerful psychic energy field. The Investigators will have to destroy the field before their weapons can wound the creature.

The creature has four Wounds, and is incapable of taking actions, even Response actions. Its shield provides it with 4+**↑**6 Soak. Each Dark Symmetry Icon rolled damages the shield, causing one of the **↑** to be lost. However, it also forces the attacker to attempt a Willpower test, with a difficulty equal to the number of Dark Symmetry Icons generated, or suffer a mental assault from the backlash.

Once the creature has been reduced to zero Wounds, read the following:

Your shot tears through the thin membrane covering the creature's brain, reducing it to pulverised mush within an instant. The effects on the creature are catastrophic, as clearly its head is supplied with a generous supply of bloody ichor which now sprays around the room in great gouts of oleaginous liquid. Its limbs quiver and shake and it lets loose an ear-splitting screech. Then, it falls silent and still, hanging limp and lifeless in its enshrouding bonds of ligament and sinew. The echoing shouts and footsteps rescind into nothingness.

You suddenly feel very strange, aware for the first time that you aren't just on an alien world, but in an alien universe. A weird physical and psychological discombobulation, as all the physical constants your bodies have evolved to take advantage of are just a fraction off the mark, as if you're deep underwater and yet in a vacuum and freezing and yet burning

all at once. Suddenly a wash of extreme pain suffuses every limb, cramping and contorting you with fiery agony.

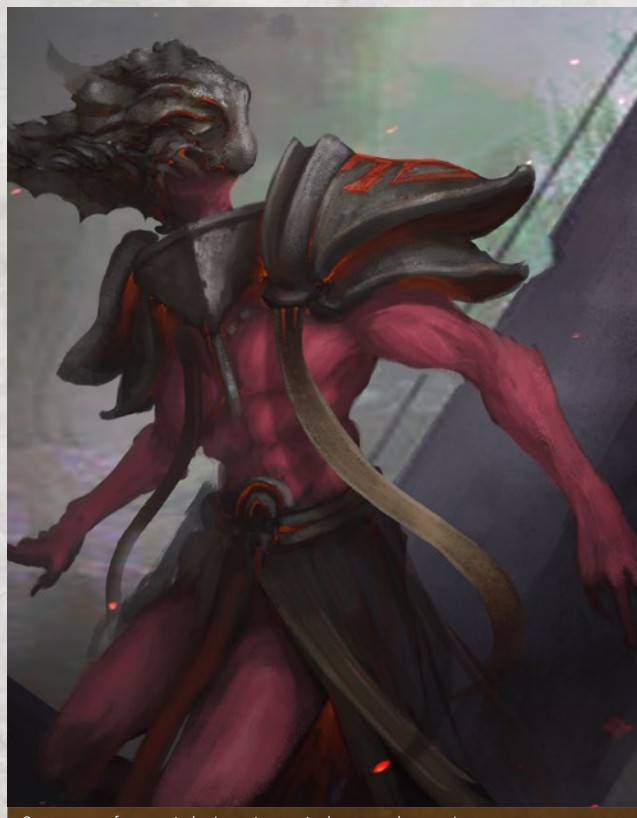
Each investigator must attempt a **Daunting D3 Willpower test** or suffer a Mental Assault—these are the psychic death-throes of the portal-creature.

The Investigators may well turn to the devices that Eva Junge gave to them at this point. They are useless of course.

The swirling visions dim and wink out of existence, the body of the creature hanging in the chamber liquefies, it's matter becomes quicksilver flowing to the ground and evaporating at your feet, leaving the white and spikey bones of its twisted skeleton held up by sinew now become frayed leathern strapping. You feel a strange stillness, dust gathering on your clothes and skin that reappears as quickly as you can wipe it off. Cracks appear in the walls of the chamber and the whole room seems to list to one side.

You feel very strange indeed, and then something even stranger occurs ...

... And in order to find out what that is you will have to wait to the next instalment of the campaign.



Strange new foes await the Investigators in the next adventure!

DOOMTROOPERS

The following characters may be used as replacements for any Investigators lost during **Part 06: The Citadel**, page 192. Included is details on various Doomtrooper armour and armaments.

ASTRID PROLL, DOOMTROOPER WARRIOR

ALLEGIANCE: Bauhaus

FAVOURS: A contact in the Brotherhood who owes a favour.

BACKGROUND: Born to a disgraced middle-class family in the Graveton Archipelago, studied at a military academy after her family's name was cleared of its dishonour, and joined the Etoiles Mortant soon after graduation, gaining great acclaim in military service against the Dark Legion. Nominated for the Cartel's Doomtrooper programme as a Warrior—a close assault specialist—three years ago.

LANGUAGES: Bauhauser, Luna Patois.

TRAITS: Unsympathetic to the Poor

CHRONICLE POINTS: 2

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
10	9	10	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	12	6

SKILLS

- ◀ **Acrobatics** Expertise 2, Focus 1-2
- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Close Combat (Signature)** Expertise 4, Focus 2
- ◀ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Insight** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Lifestyle** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Mechanics (Signature)** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Mysticism** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Ranged Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 1-2
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Stealth** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Willpower (Signature)** Expertise 3, Focus 2

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑2), Ranged (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head** 3
- ◀ **Arms** 4
- ◀ **Serious** 6
- ◀ **Mental** 12
- ◀ **Torso** 8
- ◀ **Legs** 6
- ◀ **Critical** 4

SOAK: Guardsman Mk III armour: (Head 4, Torso 5, Arms 4, Legs 4).

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **P60 Punisher Handgun (ranged):** Close, 1+↑5, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Knockdown
- ◀ **PC-606 Hellstorm SMG (ranged):** Close, 1+↑6, Burst, 2H, Ammo (Armour Piercing 1, Vicious 1), Vicious 1
- ◀ **Punisher Short Sword (melee):** 1+↑6, 1H, Parry 1
- ◀ **Dagger (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Subject of Bauhaus**
- ◀ **No Mercy**
- ◀ **Deflection**
- ◀ **Riposte**
- ◀ **Sniper**
- ◀ **Clear Shot**
- ◀ **Stubborn**

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 4)

Basic, well-worn clothing, some of which is new; small suburban apartment in a quiet part of town; several sets of military dog tags; military fatigues, Guardsman Mk III armour, P60 Punisher Handgun plus two Reloads, PC-606 SMG plus two Reloads, Punisher Short Sword, dagger.

CHARLES "CHIP" EWING, DOOMTROOPER MARKSMAN

ALLEGIANCE: Capitol

FAVOURS: Alliance with a Capitolian politician.

BACKGROUND: Raised by a middle-class family in Burroughs, in southern Mars, but raised on the streets after a Dark Legion raid slaughtered his family. He enlisted into the AFC and was trained as airborne cavalry. Nominated for the Cartel's Doomtrooper programme two years ago.

LANGUAGES: Capitolian, Luna Patois.

TRAITS: Never Give Up,

CHRONICLE POINTS: 2

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
9	11	10	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
10	7	8	7

SKILLS

- ◀ **Acrobatics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀ **Close Combat** (Signature) Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀ **Heavy Weapons** (Signature) Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Persuade** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Pilot** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Ranged Weapons** (Signature) Expertise 4, Focus 3
- ◀ **Resistance** Expertise 1, Focus 2
- ◀ **Survival** Expertise 2
- ◀ **Treatment** Expertise 1
- ◀ **Willpower** Expertise 2

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑1), Ranged (+↑2)

WOUNDS:

- ◀ **Head 4** ▶ **Torso 8**
- ◀ **Arms 5** ▶ **Legs 6**
- ◀ **Serious 7** ▶ **Critical 4**
- ◀ **Mental 8**

SOAK: HFMPs-101 Doomtrooper Armour: (Head 4, Torso 5, Arms 4, Legs 4).

ATTACKS:

- ◀ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1
- ◀ **Modified CA-138 Deathlockdrum (ranged):** Range M, 2+↑9, Automatic, Unwieldy, Armour Piercing 1, Spread 1
- ◀ **Deathlockdrum Grenade Launcher (ranged):** Range M, Munition, Damage and Qualities as Grenade
- ◀ **Chain Bayonet (melee):** 1+↑6, Unwieldy, Vicious 2
- ◀ **SR-50 'Manstalker' Sniper Rifle (ranged):** Range L, 2+↑7, Semi-Automatic, Unwieldy, Unforgiving 3
- ◀ **Combat Knife (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀ **Citizen/Shareholder of Capitol**
- ◀ **Self Sufficient**

- ◀ **Sniper**
- ◀ **Clear Shot**
- ◀ **Precise Targeting**
- ◀ **Rain of Fire**
- ◀ **Big Boom**
- ◀ **Steady Arms (Deathlockdrum)**

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

A few nice suits of clothing, including a number of patriotic ties; memorabilia from the last presidential election; a modest apartment in a decent part of San Dorado; military uniform; HFMPs-101 Doomtrooper Armour; Piranha Handgun and one Reload; CA-138 Deathlockdrum Autocannon and three Reloads, SR-50 'Manstalker' Sniper Rifle and two Reloads; Combat Knife

DOOMTROOPER ARMOUR

All of the Megacorporations produce forms of armour which are reserved for use by Doomtroopers. As much as anything else, this is good advertising—the Doomtroopers are lauded as heroes across the Solar System, and making it easy to identify which Doomtroopers are from which corporation is a valuable way of ensuring that everyone knows that corporation's contribution to the war. It would be utterly debilitating to be seen as not contributing to the survival of humanity.

Access to Doomtrooper armour is limited only to Doomtroopers embarking upon a mission, and it cannot be purchased normally. Many Doomtroopers choose to wear armour they're more familiar with, often the armour they wore in a previous tour of duty with their corporation's military, but the option to use a custom-fitted suit of Doomtrooper armour is always offered.

Bauhaus manufactured a specific version of their top-of-the-line Guardsman Mk III armour for Doomtrooper use. The armour is designed with space for individual wearers to customise the armour with personal heraldry (Bauhauser Doomtroopers without their own family heraldry are given the opportunity to establish their own), and has a significantly thicker breastplate.

GUARDSMAN MK IIID

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Bauhaus	4	5	4	4
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
7	5	-	-	

Capitol make a heavy-duty version of their Tortoise Mk 1 armour for Doomtrooper use, but many Capitol Doomtroopers favour the same armour they used during earlier service to the Armed Forces of Capitol.

HFMP5-101 DOOMTROOPER ARMOUR

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Capitol	4	5	4	4
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
8	4	-	-	

Imperial make a more advanced version of their Mk III Heavy Combat Armour, which is both more durable and lighter than its more commonplace counterparts are. Imperial Doomtroopers naturally favour this armour, as its similarity to the other forms of Imperial-designed armour makes it an easy adjustment to make.

MK VI DOOMTROOPER ARMOUR

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Imperial	4	5	4	4
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
8	4	-	-	

The heaviest non-powered armour manufactured by Mishima, *Unmei* armour—named with a Mishiman word for fate or doom—lacks the support mechanisms of the battlesuits worn by other elite samurai. These systems, while valuable, are susceptible to the corrupting influence of Darkness, and they're thus too great a risk to wear when fighting in the heart of a Citadel. While most non-powered Mishiman armour is worn without a helmet, *Unmei* armour is commonly worn with an ornate, demon-faced helm.

UNMEI ARMOUR

FACTION	SOAK			
	HEAD	TORSO	ARMS	LEGS
Mishima	4	5	4	4
ENCUMBRANCE	RELIABILITY	RESTRICTION	COST	
6	3	-	-	

DOOMTROOPER ARMAMENTS

Cartel Arms was established when the Dark Legion War began, to supply arms to inter-corporate forces such as Luna PD and the Doomtroopers. Its iconic armaments are massive man-portable autocannons like the Deathlockdrum, and the ubiquitous Punisher Combo, but there are many other Cartel Arms weapons in circulation.

The weapons made available to Doomtroopers are some of the most potent armaments developed by humanity. Many of these items can be found in the *Mutant Chronicles* core book, such as the P60 Punisher (page 215), the Piranha handgun (page 215), the Mephisto Sniper Rifle (page 223), the CA-451 'Gehenna' Puker (page 229), the CA-138 Deathlockdrum Autocannon (page 233), the Mk I Nimrod

Autocannon (page 233), the ASH-88 Chainsword (page 236), and the Punisher Short Sword (page 237). However, there are a few rarer items that are detailed here.

CARTEL ARMS CA-50 AVALANCHE HANDGUN – CARTEL

RESTRICTION: 3 **COST: 7**

This weapon was designed by Cartel Arms for clandestine operations and guerrilla warfare, and while they're normally issued to Special Agents and other Investigators, they're a useful sidearm for Doomtroopers, particularly those trying to move unnoticed. It fires high-calibre ammunition, giving it considerable stopping power. The weapon includes an integral silencer, making it an invaluable tool for covert killing.

CA-50 AVALANCHE HANDGUN

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	1+↑4	Semi-Automatic	3	Unbalanced	3
QUALITIES	Close Quarters, Unforgiving 1				

INTEGRAL SILENCER: The Avalanche has an integrated silencer, which follows the rules on page 263 of the *Mutant Chronicles* core book.

CARTEL ARMS PC-606 HELLSTORM SUB-MACHINE GUN – CARTEL

RESTRICTION: 4 **COST: 6**

The PC-606 is a large, robust sub-machine gun that is designed to fire proprietary armour-piercing explosive rounds. Cartel Arms designed this weapon in-house for the Doomtrooper programme, where that kind of excessive firepower is necessary. The heavy, powerful rounds mean that the rate of fire is considerably lower than other weapons of comparable size, but proponents of the weapon boast that it can match a light autocannon's firepower at close range. Its only drawback is that the ammunition is volatile and reacts violently to misfires.

PC-606 HELLSTORM

RANGE	DAMAGE	MODE	ENC	SIZE	RELIABILITY
C	1+↑5	Burst	3	2H	2
QUALITIES	Ammo (Armour Piercing 1, Vicious 1), Vicious 1				

UNRELIABLE: If more Dark Symmetry Icons are generated by a damage roll than the weapon's Reliability rating, the weapon catastrophically misfires, and it cannot be used until repaired.



PREGENS

VENTS—LUNA P.D. ROOKIE (BAUHAUS)

Mikhail “Vents” de Vent is a Luna-born Bauhauser, and a relative newcomer to Luna P.D. He isn’t, however, quite the ‘rookie’ his colleagues imply—before joining Luna P.D., he spent seven years in Bauhaus’s own civic security forces, the BLEUs, learning the trade. His transfer to Luna City’s neutral police department, and his continual push for a chance at the detective’s exam, have led to “Vents” being partnered with Detective Ryder, to either ‘show him the ropes’ or knock the enthusiasm out of him. Keen-eyed and good with people, Vents is a good cop and a promising recruit, but a little too principled and proactive for some.

Bauhaus, Working Middle, Luna City, Technical “On The Job” Training, Police (Beat Cop) ×3

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
7	8	8	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	9	7	8

SKILLS:

- ◀▶ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Close Combat** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Lifestyle** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Mechanics*** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Observation*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀▶ **Persuade*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀▶ **Pilot** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Treatment** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Willpower** Expertise 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 3**
- ◀▶ **Arms 3**
- ◀▶ **Serious 5**
- ◀▶ **Mental 7**
- ◀▶ **Torso 7**
- ◀▶ **Legs 5**
- ◀▶ **Critical 3**

SOAK: **Ballistic Nylon Clothing, Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pad:** (Torso 1, Left Arm 1, Right Arm 2, Legs 1))

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **M13 “Bolter” (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, Unbalanced, Armour Piercing 1, Close Quarters, Reliability 2
- ◀▶ **Baton (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Stun

TALENTS

- ◀▶ **Citizen/Subject of Bauhaus**
- ◀▶ **Natural Engineer:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Mechanics test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Charismatic:** The character’s Influence bonus is increased by ↑1
- ◀▶ **Naturally Charming 1:** A successful Persuade test yields one additional point of Momentum.
- ◀▶ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Toss the Room:** The character can identify all the important clues in an area quickly, requiring a D1 test to search within Reach, or a D2 test to search within Close range.

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

Basic urban survival kit, basic repair kit, modest wardrobe of respectable clothing, small apartment in the centre of the city, mini-torch, uniform, heavy civilian shoulder pad, M13 Handgun (+2 Reloads), leather jacket, baton, Medkit, 10 assets.



ADVENTURE

VANCE RYDER—LUNA P.D. DETECTIVE (CAPITOL)

Ryder is tough. That's the first thing that most people say about Vance Ryder. A veteran detective, his gut instincts, determination, and resilience have kept him in the service for longer than most. He often refers to an "old war wound" that plays up when danger's close—an injury picked up during his youth when a training exercise gone catastrophically wrong cost the lives of six of his fellow draftees. He dropped out of the military before completing boot camp, and he still carries around the tags of friends lost that day.

Capitol, Working Lower, Luna City, Teenage Draft, Police (Beat Cop), Luna PD Detective

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
9	9	8	8
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	9	6

SKILLS:

- ◆ **Athletics** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Close Combat** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Education*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◆ **Observation*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◆ **Persuade** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◆ **Pilot** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Ranged Weapons*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◆ **Resistance** Expertise 2
- ◆ **Survival** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Treatment** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Willpower** Expertise 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

- ◆ **Head 4** ◆ **Torso 8**
- ◆ **Arms 4** ◆ **Legs 6**
- ◆ **Serious 6** ◆ **Critical 4**
- ◆ **Mental 9**

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Trenchcoat, Heavy Civilian Shoulder Pad
(Torso 1, Left Arm 2, Right Arm 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Piranha Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑3, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Hidden 1, Reliability 3
- ◆ **Dagger (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◆ **Citizen/Shareholder of Capitol**
- ◆ **Sniper:** When making an attack with a ranged weapon, re-roll 1 ↑. The new result must be accepted.
- ◆ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◆ **Quick Survey:** The character may spend one Momentum from an Observation test to recognise the reason the test was made. If this occurs immediately prior to combat, the character may add +1d20 to any skill test made during his first turn.
- ◆ **Disciplined Student:** If the character generates at least one success when attempting an Education test, he may immediately roll an additional 1d20 and add the result to the skill test.
- ◆ **Hardy:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new result.

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

Several sets of military dog tags, basic well-worn clothing, a small suburban apartment, basic urban survival kit, heavy military shoulder pad, armoured trench coat, radio, Piranha Handgun (+2 reloads), dagger, 7 assets.



TSUYOSHI—FREELANCE BODYGUARD (MISHIMA)

Sato Tsuyoshi is, if the rumours are correct, a very dangerous man. A towering, broad figure, Tsuyoshi has spent his life beneath the heel of men claiming themselves his better. Years spent in the service of monolithic Keiretsu and vainglorious Samurai, have made him bitter, and ill-disposed to those who flaunt their power over others. Several years working as an enforcer for a criminal empire—once perceived as a way to escape the injustices of the social order—gave him a reputation as a criminal thug, which he has tried to escape by emigrating to Luna.

Mishima, Unemployed Underclass, Heritage Foothold, Grew Up On The Streets, Military (Basic), Triad Enforcer

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
11	9	9	7
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	7	8	5

SKILLS:

- ◆ **Acrobatics*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◆ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◆ **Close Combat*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◆ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Persuade** Expertise 2
- ◆ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◆ **Resistance** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Stealth** Expertise 1
- ◆ **Survival*** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◆ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Unarmed Combat** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◆ **Willpower** Expertise 1, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Melee (+↑2)

WOUNDS:

- ◆ **Head 4**
- ◆ **Arms 5**
- ◆ **Serious 7**
- ◆ **Mental 8**
- ◆ **Torso 8**
- ◆ **Legs 6**
- ◆ **Critical 4**

SOAK: **Bulletproof Vest:** (Torso 2)

ATTACKS:

- ◆ **Tambu "Airbrush" (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, 2H, Knockdown, Spread 1, Reliability 1
- ◆ **Two Daggers (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

- ◆ **Unarmed Strike (melee):** 1+↑4, 1H
- ◆ **Brass Knuckles (melee):** 1+↑5, 1H, Vicious 1

TALENTS

- ◆ **Citizen/Vassal of Mishima**
- ◆ **Hardy:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new result.
- ◆ **No Mercy:** When making a close combat attack, a character may re-roll up to 3 ↑. The new results must be accepted.
- ◆ **Deflection:** The character does not need to pay a Dark Symmetry point in order to take a Parry Response Action.
- ◆ **Riposte:** After successfully executing a Parry Response Action, the character may immediately pay a Dark Symmetry point to make a melee attack against the foe he parried.

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

Battered hip flask, basic threadbare and dirty clothing, a single room in a dilapidated tenement in the slums, Bulletproof vest, basic Medkit, Tambu "Airbrush" Shotgun, two daggers, brass knuckles, 5 assets



ADVENTURE

NIX-FREELANCE MARKSMAN (IMPERIAL)

Nicholas "Nix" Cullen is a myth, but a convincing one. Whatever the truth of him, he is a deadly shot and quiet as a ghost when he wants to be. He does not have the build or physical stature to be military—he is too slight, too slender—but his skills are clearly Special Forces level. Regardless, Luna P.D. is not too picky when it comes to freelancer support, so he is a regular associate.

TRAITS: Imperial, Working Middle, Heritage Hotspot, Military Academy, Intelligence Operative, Blood Beret

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	7	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
9	7	10	8

SKILLS:

- ◀▶ **Acrobatics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Athletics** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Close Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Education** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Heavy Weapons** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Insight** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Linguistics** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Mechanics** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Observation** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Pilot*** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Ranged Weapons*** Expertise 3, Focus 3
- ◀▶ **Stealth*** Expertise 3, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Thievery** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Willpower** Expertise 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑2)

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 2** ▶▶ **Torso 6**
- ◀▶ **Arms 3** ▶▶ **Legs 4**
- ◀▶ **Serious 5** ▶▶ **Critical 3**
- ◀▶ **Mental 10**

SOAK: Ballistic Nylon Clothing: (Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Aggressor Pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑6, Burst, Unbalanced, Close Quarters, Reliability 1
- ◀▶ **SR-50 Sniper Rifle (ranged):** Range L, 2+↑7, Semi-Automatic, Unwieldy, Unforgiving 3, Reliability 3

◀▶ **Dagger (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 1

TALENTS

- ◀▶ **Citizen/Kinsman of Imperial**
- ◀▶ **Sniper:** When making an attack with a ranged weapon, the character may re-roll up to 3 ↑. The new result must be accepted.
- ◀▶ **Clear Shot:** The character reduces the penalty for firing at range other than the weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of zero.
- ◀▶ **Precise Targeting:** When spending Momentum for the Called Shot benefit on an attack made with the Ranged Weapons skill, each point of Momentum shifts the hit location roll by up to two points.
- ◀▶ **Scout:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Stealth test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

Mini-torch, modest wardrobe, small apartment in the centre of the city, Aggressor handgun (+2 Reloads), fake ID, disguise kit, SR-50 Sniper Rifle (+2 Reloads), dagger, ballistic nylon clothing, 9 assets



ARSENI-FREELANCE TECH (BAUHAUS)

Daniela Arseni was an up-and-coming mechanical engineer for a small Bauhauser off-shoot, until the Homebuilders decided to reclaim the little splinter company. Destitution loomed, and crime was the only way out. Tool-making and engineering work for hire brought her into contact with numerous criminals across the city, and a few years in prison only confirmed that there was no way back. In an effort to redeem herself, she has taken to contracting for Luna P.D., her criminal record giving her few alternatives when it comes to honest work.

Microcorp (Bauhaus), Working Middle, Luna City, Technical Pre-Career Training, Technical (Repairman), Criminal (x2)

Chronicle Points: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	ABILITY	AWARENESS
7	9	8	10
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
8	10	6	8

SKILLS:

- ◀▶ **Acrobatics** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Close Combat** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Lifestyle*** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Mechanics*** Expertise 2, Focus 3
- ◀▶ **Observation*** Expertise 3, Focus 2
- ◀▶ **Pilot** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Space** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Stealth** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Survival** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Thievery** Expertise 2, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Willpower** Expertise 1, Focus 1

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑2)

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head** 3
- ◀▶ **Arms** 4
- ◀▶ **Serious** 6
- ◀▶ **Mental** 6
- ◀▶ **Torso** 7
- ◀▶ **Legs** 5
- ◀▶ **Critical** 3

SOAK: None

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Ronin Pistol (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑5, Semi-Automatic, 1H, Close Quarters, Reliability 1
- ◀▶ **Pocket Knife (melee):** 1+↑3, 1H, Armour Piercing 1, Hidden 2

TALENTS

- ◀▶ **Under the Radar**
- ◀▶ **Natural Engineer:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Mechanics test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Greasemonkey:** When attempting a repair, each point of Momentum spent to reduce the repair time divides the time taken by four, rather than halving it as normal.
- ◀▶ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Life of Crime:** When the character generates at least one success on a Persuade or Education test to relate to or interact with the criminal element, she may immediately roll one additional d20 and add the result to the skill test.
- ◀▶ **No Mercy:** When making a close combat attack, the character may re-roll 1 ↑. The new result must be accepted.

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

Basic urban survival kit, mini-torch, modest wardrobe of respectable clothing, small city-centre apartment, basic tool kit, breaking and entering kit, "Ronin" pistol, pocket knife (slicer), 7 assets.



ADVENTURE

'ANGEL' KRAMER-LUNA P.D. MEDIC (CAPITOL)

Angelica 'Angel' Kramer is overqualified. Medical school was better than Kramer's parents could have hoped for her, but the price of it was beyond their ability to sustain. Years of training collapsed from under her as her and her parents' ability to pay for tuition faltered, then failed. So, rather than becoming a doctor, Kramer became a paramedic—she had more medical training than most first responders did, and working 'on the front lines' inspired her more than the few other medical fields still available to her. Joining Luna P.D. as a field medic was a logical extension of that, and she maintains the highest patient survival rate of any medic in the force.

Capitol, Working Lower, Luna City, Post-Graduate Technical/Scientific, Medical (first responder) (x2), Police (Beat Cop)

CHRONICLE POINTS: 3

ATTRIBUTES			
STRENGTH	PHYSIQUE	AGILITY	AWARENESS
6	7	7	9
COORDINATION	INTELLIGENCE	MENTAL STRENGTH	PERSONALITY
7	11	10	8

SKILLS:

- ◀▶ **Athletics** Expertise 3
- ◀▶ **Education** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Lifestyle** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Mechanics** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Medicine*** Expertise 2, Focus 2
- ◀▶ **Observation** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Persuade*** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Pilot** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Psychotherapy** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Ranged Weapons** Expertise 2
- ◀▶ **Resistance** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Science** Expertise 1
- ◀▶ **Survival** Expertise 1, Focus 1
- ◀▶ **Treatment*** Expertise 3, Focus 2

DAMAGE BONUSES: Ranged (+↑1)

WOUNDS:

- ◀▶ **Head 2**
- ◀▶ **Arms 3**
- ◀▶ **Serious 5**
- ◀▶ **Mental 10**
- ◀▶ **Torso 6**
- ◀▶ **Legs 4**
- ◀▶ **Critical 3**

SOAK: **Ballistic nylon work uniform:** (Torso 1, Arms 1, Legs 1)

ATTACKS:

- ◀▶ **Punisher Handgun (ranged):** Range C, 1+↑4, Burst, 1H, Close Quarters, Knockdown, Reliability 3

TALENTS

- ◀▶ **Citizen/Shareholder of Capitol**
- ◀▶ **First Responder:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making a Treatment test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Ration Meds:** When using a dose of Coagulant from a Medkit or Automated, each load adds two Momentum to the Treatment test, instead of the usual one.
- ◀▶ **Empathic Healer:** When the character passes a Treatment test, each Momentum spent allows the target to recover two Light Wounds to the hit location of the healer's choice.
- ◀▶ **Physician:** The character may re-roll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll when making a Medicine test, but must accept the new result.
- ◀▶ **Sharp Senses:** The character may re-roll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.

EQUIPMENT (Earnings 3)

Work goggles with one cracked lens, well-worn clothing, a small suburban apartment, basic urban survival kit, Laboratory (personal), ballistic nylon work uniform, hospital-grade medical kit, Punisher Handgun.



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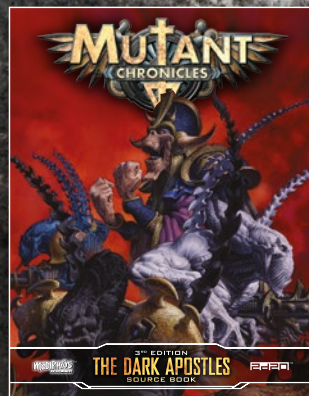
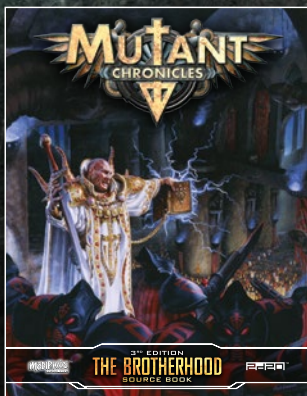
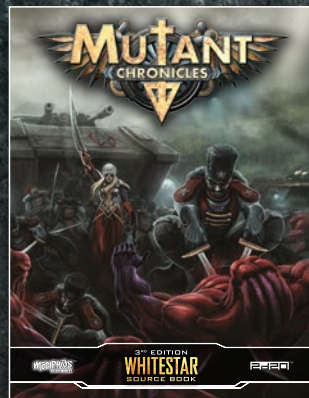
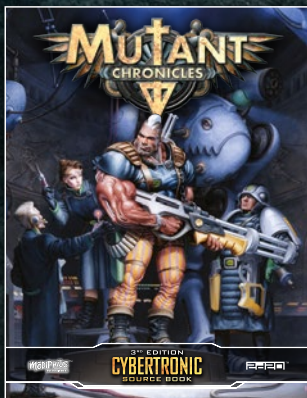
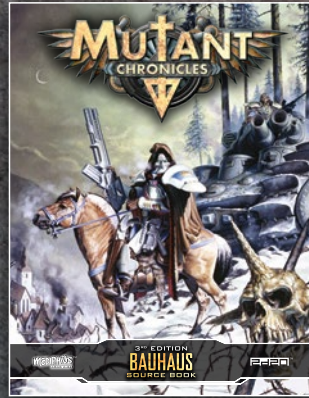
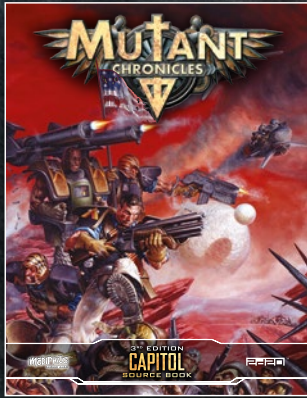
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