

The Zen Cadet presents



THIS SCENARIO IS SUGGESTED FOR MATURE GAMERS ONLY.

A Scenario for

Hunter: The Reckoning

A World of Darkness Game

By Nimrod Jones

>>WEB EDITION<<

<http://www.zencadet.com>

Important note on Printing

Due to the method used for filling out the character sheets, when printing please ensure that you have selected "Print comments" from the Print Options dialog box.

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PLAY-TEST REPORT (28/02/04)

Play-testers:

Stuart Taft..... Sebastian Matthews
James Wax-Edwards..... Brian Rostow
Gareth Lewis..... Marcus Ajello
Beric Joyce Luke Sharp
Justin Ellis Aron Wakowski
Alan Gowing..... Jack Valentine

Running time: 5 hours 35 minutes

Timing of the Scenario

For the web edition the timing issues I had trying to make the scenario work for a convention is not an issue if you are running this at home and have potentially more time on your hands. However, it is worth knowing the expected length of the game. Reading out the prologues and then with everyone reading their character backgrounds, reading up on their powers, rules and Conviction explained for anyone who has never played **Hunter: The Reckoning** before, and any other questions, it was an hour before we actually started the story.

From this point, with all the different sub-plots, it was quite tricky to get very far with each one. Although, running the play-test, I realised where a lot of the problems were and have written up a prompt sheet for the Story-teller.

When I ran this at Conception 2004 I ran it over an 8-hour double slot (twice!) and people had enough time to get a real feel for prison life before the action really kicked in. It's recommended that this be run at a comfortable pace (i.e. it's better to run this as a two-parter if you are pushed for time than to try to rush it). More on how to run the scenario is detailed in *Running the Scenario* which takes this play test into account, while it is aimed at convention running it should still serve you well as a guide to pacing.

Print or photocopy at least two, but preferably four, copies of *The Truth Is Out There*. Four people need to read these and a lot of time was spent waiting for everyone to read this before we could start play. In the interests of space I've only provided this once. Get more. Because it is likely that some players will be sitting around waiting their turn, this is the opportunity for them to catch up on some reading. If you want to start a little sooner, urge the Vanguard players to read just the summary first. They can read the rest when they have a little more time.

Use the Word

Something I deliberately dropped into my introduction that the players found particularly useful was a brief explanation of the Hunter Code. Be sure to do this. In passing I mentioned that while other hunters do not show up with second sight, the hunter code is the most common way of identifying each other because only hunters understand it. When Aron took a leap of faith and mentioned his confusion with Gary, they identified each other by

marking out the sign for "imbued/ally" (a plus sign cross with dots at each end and in the middle). Sebastian tested Jack by leaving the same sign on Jack's bunk where he could see it.

It should be pointed out that for Aron this is all completely new to him. He knows the symbol, but doesn't know why. The Vanguard are the first hunters he's consciously had contact with.

It's possible that from this, Aron's player may want to try doing what the play-tester did here also. Try contacting Jason.

Whatever Happened to Jason?

Yep, this one was sprung on me and I realised that while I had effectively written Jason out of Aron's story, I hadn't really done so enough.

It's down to you how you choose to run this depending on when in the story Aron decides to try contacting him.

In the play test, after Faith's first visit to Aron and his discovery that the Vanguard were like him he wanted to ring Jason. He wanted to get him to draw the same "imbued" sign on a piece of paper to see if he recognised it, to see if Jason, also, had become a hunter in the same process, additionally, perhaps, to make see what he can do.

I allowed prisoners to use the phone, you may decide that you want to prohibit this. When Aron rung, I had Jason answer. You may decide he's out. However, I found that in the conversation with Jason I could use it to convey some information about ghosts (like the fact that they can possess people, and about anchors). This is, of course, providing the player asks for the right information.

Here's what Jason's been doing for the past five years. Jason was imbued as a Visionary. One of the first web-sites (as hinted in the prologue) he found was Brian's, but he hasn't bought into that and is still trying to figure out what the big picture is. He's found some other hunters that he's now been working with. You can make up some names and details if you wish, but Jason probably won't risk talking about them too much over the phone. Indeed, Aron might rightly suspect that this is what's been keeping Jason busy and unable to visit him at all. He's been caught up in the hunt. Aside from provide some useful information, and maybe *begin* to try pulling a few favours and so forth for Aron, Jason has no further real practical use in the game.

It was only in the play-test that this ever came up, but you never know...

Sub-plots Dying Prematurely

Be sure to keep everyone involved in *something*. If a sub-plot dies too early in the game, think up something else for them to get mixed up in. Caught in the cross-fire of an argument, or perhaps just looking the wrong way at Demarco or Chico. In the playtest, the BGF barely came up. Here's a way to do that. This is especially important if you are running this as a double or extended slot.



“The Stanford Redemption”

Incarcerating the Vanguard

When Sebastian Matthews and the Vanguard were introduced as some wacky NPCs in my two part **Mage: Technocracy** game, *One of Our Agents is Missing*, they were only intended to provide a bit of comic relief and the route to the only bit of combat in Part One. A group of crazed and misguided alien conspiracy nuts that believed that the vampires they were hunting were actually aliens. It tied in nicely as a bluff with the whole aliens theme that was developing for the **Technocracy** story and their last action was to show the agents an alien spacecraft submerged in a lake.

They were, however, among the most popular characters for anyone who read the scenario and for those who played it. So I thought it would be cool if those characters stepped up and took centre stage.

For a convention game, typically with six player characters, I didn't want to have to force two extra characters into their ranks when the team worked fine with just four. Therefore, rather unusually for most games, the two additional characters are characters that might normally be regarded as NPC material. I also wanted them to be a challenge to play.

The Stanford Redemption marks the Vanguard's second adventure written for a convention, and follows what happened to the Vanguard at the end of *Oh, Daddy Dear*, in which they were arrested by the police for aiding and abetting a fugitive and most likely a number of other charges.

Hunter: The Reckoning is a game about real people suddenly finding themselves able to perceive monsters and having to fight them. About the struggles of normal people who are faced and forced to confront things beyond their understanding. It is not about kick-ass comic book style alien hunters like the Vanguard in their debut. I have tried to keep both the mood and atmosphere of a genuine **Hunter** game while maintaining some of the quiriness that makes the Vanguard. This mostly lies in their twisted interpretation of what's actually going on. I've tried to make the Vanguard a little darker and more desperate and it should be stressed that as kooky as their take on everything is, they genuinely believe it. Like any true conspiracy nut, even if it makes the more supposedly level-headed of

us weep in fits of laughter, they morbidly believe it to be true. Or, at least, as true as their current understanding of the Truth is.

This scenario challenges their Truth by presenting them with something they have never encountered before. The attempt to make it fit into their conspiracies rests solely on the players. Let them run riot.

Theme

As the title of this scenario suggests this story is about redemption, but it is also revolves around the concept of a nemesis. Retribution and downfall in the face of ones own worst enemy. For Faith it is herself, for the Vanguard it is (hopefully) Jack Valentine.

Importantly is the theme that not every monster needs to be supernatural. Prison is an unpleasant place filled with unpleasant people. While the inmates of Stanford Penitentiary are having their emotions charged by spectres, this does not mean that they would otherwise be nice and happy people. These are monsters against which the Imbued's Edges are impotent, as are the true villains of this story.

Mood

Despite the originally comic book tone of the Vanguard when they made their debut, the mood for this scenario is far more in keeping with a regular **Hunter** game. Here, the regular roleplaying rules of setting are thrown out of the window. The characters do not have access to their equipment, to their methods of research, and the Vanguard are particularly handicapped by their lack of access to the sunglasses that represent the trigger for their Second Sight. Hatred courses through every crack and crevasse of the prison, the dark force within feeds and spurs on this negative emotion to make it stronger.

Running a good prison game is possibly just as difficult as writing a half-decent scenario to make it work. While prison might be boring, the game should not be. This is very freeform and the horror should be as subtle as you can make it for the most part — at least until nearer the end.

Running the Scenario

This is not your typical linear scenario. In fact, this is anything *but* a linear scenario, and there are two ways to run it. The preferred way would be to run it as a long game — around 8 hours or two sessions. The other method, which while it may still be enjoyable, won't necessarily soak in enough of the ambience and intricacy of the setting and enjoy a better-paced game, is to do a quick and dirty single evening game.

I provide a little guidance for both, here.

Setting the Mood

In either case, it's important to set the tone of the place well. The place is only five years old yet it already has the feel of an old prison. Inside it always seems poorly lit, filled with dark corners, heavy shadows. There is an every pervasive odour of damp in places, in others of rotting, in some the ever-present smell of urine and faeces, and so on. There always seems to be either something dripping somewhere, or some faulty electrics buzzing. In certain places, heighten the drama of a moment by having a flickering fluorescent strip, perhaps just when Vaughn's beaten body is about to be discovered.

From the moment of their arrival there is a pervasive air of tension, hatred and violence. Be sure they pick up on it. This is a bad and dangerous place to be.

Uncut: The Double Feature

This is the preferred method of running the game, you can really take your time with this and let the sub-plots play out as needed. Really let the intricacies and prison politics play out and get the players mixed up in as much as possible. Invent new sub-plots if needed.

With this method it is far easier to create smoke on the horizon and the growing tensions. It's much easier to show the brutality of the place and create the tension and unease.

Part One: Life on the Inside

For the first part, keep everything completely mundane. There are, apparently, no signs of *anything* supernatural for the most part. The climax is foreshadowed by the nature of prison. It's dark, horrible, probably only barely passing any hygiene regulations, and even that's dubious. Have the players learn about the prison politics through discovering it for themselves. Have them learn who the corrupt prison officers are (i.e. Officer [Lieutenant] Fiske) and the not so corrupt (i.e. Officer [Captain] Tressel) by observation and by finding out what their reputations are by those that have been inside a bit longer.

Time needn't pass on a day to day basis. They could go about their business and you could tell them that a week passes in which this is all they managed to get done. Life in prison is slow. These moments of downtime also allow for any items that they might be

trying to acquire through fixers to possibly arrive. This allows for other plans to be carried out over time (especially if they are trying to build something, for example, to help them escape).

If things seem to be moving a little too quickly for your likes, you can always hinder them with some kind of intervention or setback. Perhaps Jack plans to cause a riot to cover an escape attempt on his part. He's decided to shank Pancho (or someone else) and use this to instigate problems. But then a guard discovers his shank and confiscates it, sending him to the hole for a day or two. If players do something stupid enough to get them sent to the hole then the quick passage of time means they won't be out of play for too long.

At appropriately dramatic moments, or even when they're completely not expecting it throw in the early sightings of Faith. A great time would be when they are in the middle of something else and can't take a pause to react to what they saw. Did they really see her, and what does it mean?

Let theories run wild. Knowing they are playing a game about the supernatural, the players will be looking for signs of what they're doing here of who the monsters are. It's somewhat meta-gaming, and you may wish to remind them that they don't necessarily have any reason to suspect anything. However, this kind of paranoia can work to your advantage having them suspect everyone and anyone they come into contact with can certainly help build the tension, especially when they are finding no apparent evidence of this.

It's best to leave Faith's first glimpses until as late as halfway through, to nearing the last hour. Keep the sightings far apart so that they (as a group) almost have time to forget about her before she appears again.

End the first part with Faith in Aron's cell. You may choose to leave it on a note of suspense having just read out the box of her appearance, or you can leave it just after their first contact and with the rattling pipes in the wake of her departure. The former allows for a suspenseful cliffhanger, while the latter allows you to pick up the second part the morning after with the characters meeting over breakfast to talk about it. Choose whatever best suits you.

Part Two: Death on the Inside

Now the supernatural has revealed itself, now the players know that Faith haunts the prison and that there is some other evil lurking here. Be careful of anyone who is familiar with the World of Darkness who might meta-game, saying that Faith might be the evil. Anyone who knows **Wraith: The Oblivion** or has played **Hunter: The Reckoning** before might well have reason to suspect *out of character* that this is the case, but ask them to justify on what grounds their character might suspect this. Jack is the only person who has had experience with ghosts and he doesn't bother getting to know them well enough to know of their split personas — as far as he's concerned they should all be destroyed.

If they've been burning through their Conviction somewhat in the first part for whatever reasons, then you might choose, if you're feeling generous, to put them back to their starting Conviction once they learn about Faith. Now they have their proof that there are, indeed, supernatural (or alien) forces at work.

In the second part, drop the long periods of downtime. Game goes from day to day as the various major subplots start to reach their possible climaxes, and tensions reach snapping point. Now the evidence of the supernatural is becoming a bit more obvious, now Faith makes her further appearance(s) to Aron.

Eventually, about half way into the session, work in a situation where Faith can snap and the riots begin. Spend as much of the rest of the session in combat and chaos until their final escape. If it ends a little early, fine.

Abridged: The Quick and Dirty

If you are just looking for a single evening filler and don't want to be all night about it, then here are some guidelines based on the play-test that you may want to consider doing slightly differently.

It will still most likely be an hour before this story starts, so you'll want to keep things absolutely as tight as possible. Don't allow the players (or yourself) to dawdle. Skip as much or as little time as the tighter story demands. Drop whatever elements you feel aren't needed, so long as everyone remains involved in some degree with something. For example, you might decide to drop Pietro from Luke's personal story, but keep some of the gambling so Luke can still potentially get into trouble through that route and if nothing else, the player has some fun playing out one of Luke's Flaws.

The remaining three hours of game-play is suggested to run as follows:

Hit the Cells Running (The Beginning)

In the week that we skip ahead to in starting the story they have done more than just learn the rules of prison and settle down into their daily drudgery. They've had time to find the pulse of the prison. Provide them with thumbnails of the structure of the prison (leave out any real details and politics, just let them know who's who). Tell them who the dominant gangs are (i.e. the three listed), tell them that O'Kearney is generally considered an independent to go to instead of the gangs and has some good standing as a convict (as opposed to regular inmate). Identify the fixers (Cassidy, Elroy and possibly O'Kearney) and basically provide them with enough information to get going and dive right into the politics straight away. You may decide to give all of this information to Aron by default, his three major contacts being the fixers identified above. For the others you could call an Intelligence + Streetwise (difficulty 7) roll to learn some or all of the above. Let them detail some of the stuff they've wanted to do in that downtime and either let it happen or make some ap-

propriate rolls so that things are already moving when they start.

You may decide to explain in downtime the beginnings of some of the background story arcs, such as the beginnings of Vaughn's road to suicide. Whatever you feel is appropriate to get them into the story running.

Keep Faith's sightings down to just Jack (in her hideous angry ghost form) and either Marcus or Luke.

Don't be afraid to use the prison officers to abruptly end the scene. They won't necessarily have a lot of time to chat and plot over dinner when they are being hustled back to their cells or back to their duties. Likewise, half an hour in the yard might feel like literally 5 minutes. You get the idea.

They're Coming Outta the Goddamn Walls!

About an hour into play (which will likely be about half way through your evening) run the scene where Faith appears in the cell.

This marks the turning point for the story. Now the supernatural has become more evident. Really play up the tension. Keep the sub-plots going but now maybe step it up a bit. Have fights breaking out at random hindering their plans. Perhaps Sebastian is trying to get something out of the workshop, but a fight breaks out and everyone is sent back to their cells. Sebastian might not have the opportunity to get what he needs. Or perhaps the Warden decides to randomly toss some cells and finds some contraband the players have gathered. Anything to keep the tension up.

Now they see the dark forms of some of the officers possessed by the "evil" (remember only one at a time for the moment), ones that they've seen as clean in the past, perhaps.

In this hour of play the players should start finding patterns. Make Faith's second revelatory appearance fairly close behind. This is the hour for what supernatural investigations they can carry out in earnest.

Bjg Badaboom!

Allow a whole hour from Faith being consumed again by her dark side and starting the riots. Combat can take a long time and a lot will happen here, especially with riots and Jack vs. Aron and the Vanguard.

If you look at the endings carefully (mostly the ones involving Wilson escaping and Jack living) you'll spot opportunities to cut to the end scene a little sooner. Perhaps they see Warden Wilson escaping and there is nothing they can do to stop him. Perhaps you decide that the Vanguard doesn't have an opportunity to kill Jack and you skip to him getting away.

All of the possible endings are dramatic and if you are pressed for time the players won't complain if you skip any further gameplay.

Storyteller Scenario Prompt Sheet

Aryan Brotherhood of MA

A white only prison gang.

STRANG: 45-year old skinhead. Fancies himself as a philosopher; heavily tattooed, head of the ABoM.

CASSIDY: Short tempered, fixer. The brain behind the ABoM.

The BGF (Black Guerrilla Family)

A black only prison gang.

CHIKAE: A white-hating, Strang despising wildcard. Often exploited by Elroy. Has rivalry with Demarco.

ELROY: Friendly fixer. A mediator, manipulator, and somewhat more tolerant than most BGF in dealing with non-blacks.

DEMARCO: A trouble maker. With his posse he goes looking for a fight to pick. Has rivalry with Chikae.

The Latin Kings

A Latino only prison gang.

TITO: Overly inquisitive pre-initiate. Still needing to shank someone as his rite of passage.

PANCHO: Late-forties brick shit-house covered from head to toe in elaborate tattoos, scarred face. Usually silently striding around, is considered the hardest man in Stanford.

CORTEZ: This Mexican is actually NETA undercover here to perform a hit on Pancho.

Independents

CHIN-MAE: A Korean forger. Looks after the library, can usually be found painting or drawing. Prison librarian, knows the law, and potential source of information concerning other inmates and even concerning the Man.

DONOVAN O'KEARNEY: Old-style boss-man inside. Works a protection racket inside and works as an independent fixer.

PIETRO: Rival from Luke's past, blaming him for being inside.

The Man

WARDEN JACOB WILSON: Faith's father and a generally devious and cold-hearted warden.

OFFICER TRESSSEL (CAPTAIN): A total indiscriminate bastard. Totally uncorrupted, in the mortal sense, but an utterly vicious piece of work.

OFFICER FISKE (LIEUTENANT): A totally corrupt (in both senses) and sadistic officer.

Characters	Int.	Percep.	Wis.	Virtue	Conviction
ARON	2	2	2	3	5 (3):
BRIAN	4	3	3	3	3:
JACK	2	2	3	6	5 (4):
LUKE	2	2	2	3	3:
MARCUS	2	4	2	2	4:
SEBASTIAN	2	2	2	5	4:

Use above table for use with reactive second sight and Conviction tracking. Numbers in parenthesis indicates normal starting Conviction where the value at start of story is greater.

Forewarn: Roll Wits + Vision (diff. 7). Non-combat = no. turns before event happens, combat = turn before grants no successes in initiative or towards defensive action.

Foresee: Have Sebastian and Brian roll for their Foresee at the beginning of the session. They can use this edge once in a single slot game, twice in a double-slot game.

Remember: Sebastian & Jack must roll for Nightmares after each night's sleep! Willpower, difficulty 7.

Subplots

Jack O'Shank

- O'Kearney coerces Cliff to shank Jack.
- O'Kearney contacts Jack and offers him protection in return suggests Jack should shank Pancho
- If Jack doesn't go along with it or stalls for time, O'Kearney sends Tito after Jack hoping that Pancho will follow.

An Old Rivalry

- Pietro starts to pester Luke first threatening him with the Dads.
- Pietro continues to poke his nose into Luke's life and generally make his life tough, even blackmailing them into letting him in on their escape plan if he learns of it.
- Failing all else, Pietro turns to O'Kearney to arrange a shank.

The Only Way Out

- A prisoner, Vaughn, gets into trouble with Demarco.
- Later he's found beaten and is taken to the infirmary.
- Wilson makes his announcement about not punishing the guilty.
- Insisting he didn't snitch, Vaughn is in fear for his safety.
- After the Warden ignores his pleas for help, Vaughn hangs himself in his cell.

The Aryan Bystander

- A bystander from Sebastian's path points him out to Strang who strikes up a conversation with him. If Sebastian is too brash he'll make enemies.

Dirty Secrets

- Marcus stumbles across some P.O.s "torturing" a prisoner.

Gambling

- Luke gets in over his head with his gambling addiction.



04:00	—	Wake up call for those working in the kitchen, although most other prisoners wake at this time also simply because of the commotion.
06:00	—	Everyone out of bed. Anyone who isn't already out of bed needs to now get up, take their showers, and get their breakfast.
07:30	—	Prisoners gathered together for the first count of the day. The guards count the prisoners to make sure no one has escaped.
08:00	—	After the first count everyone is back in their cells and most other assigned tasks start. Laundry is gathered, workshops start.
08:30	—	The cells are generally left open and there are recreation rooms, people are allowed to use the gym.
10:00	—	The library opens.
11:00	—	Laundry duties finish.
12:00	—	Lunch, followed by exercise in the yard.
14:00	—	Back inside.
15:30	—	Exercise in the yard.
16:00	—	Second count of the day, back inside.
17:00	—	Workshops close.
17:30	—	Dinner.
21:00	—	Final count and the start of lockdown. Everyone back in their cells, some will go to sleep (esp. those who need to be up early).
21:30	—	Lights out. Everyone to sleep now.
~22:30	—	The sobbing usually starts at around this time, give or take up to 30 mins.
~02:00	—	The pipes usually rattle at about this time, give or take up to an hour.

Virtues and Edges

Hunters have special powers called Edges. The Vanguard have their own explanations as to the nature of these. Spending Conviction activates these Edges; without Conviction a hunter cannot use one of his Edges and he is as vulnerable as a normal mortal. Other hunters see the visual effects of these edges, but in general mortals and supernatural creatures do not.

Hunter: The Reckoning details the Edges but Jack's Edges are detailed in **Creedbook: Wayward**. Since this book was always in high demand you may have difficulty finding it now that it's out of print if you don't already have it. Therefore, I shall include the relevant information needed to play Jack. Likewise, everything else you need to run this game you should get from the main rulebook.

TRIGGERS

The triggers, as indicated on the character sheets, represent the methods used and associated with the activation of a power. Normally no two hunters use the same trigger to activate their powers, but with the Vanguard the use of the sunglasses (noted on the sheets as "Shades") have sometimes become commonly associated triggers.

Although it is not normally necessary for a trigger to activate second sight, all of the Vanguard associates its activation with the wearing of the sunglasses that Sebastian found. Unfortunately, they don't have their sunglasses. See *6.1: Eyes Wide Shut* (p. 29) for more details.

DEVIANCE

This isn't war. This isn't some sort of intellectual exercise open for debate. Monsters are not sad, sympathetic creatures. This is the last desperate struggle to survive in the face of utter evil. Half-measures won't do. There is no ethics, no room for squeamishness. The monsters and all the other scum have to be destroyed, every last one of them. No matter what the cost. Even if it takes every last drop of blood of every person on Earth, it'll still be a bargain. At least there'll be none of *them* left.

Working with other hunters is fine, so long as they don't slow you down. Some of them talk a good fight, but when it comes to burning down a project to get the rats inside, they lose their stomach for it. That means you avoid revealing too much about yourself or your plan to anyone. You never know when an "ally" might turn out to be monster-friendly. They don't understand that you have become more than human to *win*. That makes everyone else window-dressing. When the war is over, the monsters will be gone — and all the criminals, sinners and unbelievers with them. Look out for yourself first. You have no one else to turn to.

● IMPART

By simply concentrating Jack can "open the eyes" of hunters near him, activating their second sight as if switching on a lamp. Those affected by this sudden "gift" have no idea how this phenomenon occurs, or who or what causes it — only that it happens without their own volition. Unfortunately, some hunters presume that with second sight comes the standard defenses, but it doesn't. Unless Jack shares this information, they'll have to learn this the hard way.

System: Roll Perception + Vision, difficulty 6. Each success activates the second sight of one other hunter. Jack chooses which hunters receive this benefit, and who does not. Each hunter must be within 30 yards.

Using Impart costs one action and can be performed by a Wayward once per scene. The benefits last for the remainder of the scene, even if recipients move beyond 30 yards from Jack.

●● FOREWARN

In short, this is a kind of danger sense. Jack has a sudden feeling that something bad is about to happen. He doesn't necessarily know what it is, but he has a slight advantage in being able to prepare himself for trouble.

System: This ability is always "on" ready to warn of trouble. In game mechanics, the Storyteller makes a secret roll of Wits + Vision, difficulty 7, as a reflexive roll when danger is imminent.

The edge activates in one of two ways, with separate benefits. In a non-combat situation — when a threat does not involve an imminent attack, such as a crumbling wall, or a bomb about to go off — for each success gained by the Storyteller, Jack detects the danger for about a turn before it presents itself.

In the case of impending combat the Storyteller rolls *in the turn before the attack will occur*. Any successes are added to Jack's initiative in the next turn *or* are added to the dice pool of a reaction roll such as a dodge, block or parry. You choose whether Jack stands ready for action — you gain extra initiative — or he automatically prepares to defend himself — you make a dodge, block or parry.

Danger sense does not indicate the kind of danger that's impending — simply that something is about to happen. How Jack reacts is down to you, and it could well be useless. For example, trying to parry a toppling wall.

The Storyteller decides whether Forewarn is able to anticipate threats posed to others around Jack, but you can't confer the effects to others to give them bonuses.

●●● ENRAGE

Jack can "share his spirit" and instill a sort of berserk bloodlust in other hunters, forcing even pacifists to do gory battle with whatever raises their or Jack's violent overdrive, their minds red with fury. Even hunters with the best of intentions may be lost to this power, "wak

ing up" in a room full of bodies — those of monsters and people alike.

System: Roll Manipulation + Vision, difficulty 6. For each success achieved, Jack may effect one other hunter within six yards (18 feet) to be affected by a berserk rage.

This rage forces other hunters to act violently against "the enemy" (how that is interpreted is left up to the players and the Storyteller). All players of affected characters may make a Willpower roll, difficulty 7, to resist the effect and must *exceed* the total number of successes gained on your edge roll to do so. The subject may move outside of six yards and still lash out afterwards.

An affected hunter must attack the nearest perceived enemy with the most lethal weapon or power at his disposal over a number of turns equal to the total number of successes achieved in your edge roll. Each attacker also gains a number of bonus dice on all attack rolls equal to the successes gained in your roll. So, if you achieve five successes on your Enrage roll, all five affected hunters attack the enemy for five turns and gain five dice on all attack rolls in that time.

Once the turn is over, each affected hunter suffers a number of bashing levels (which are unsoakable) according to the number of successes you got on your edge roll:

1–2 successes = 1 level

3–4 successes = 2 levels

5 or more successes = 3 levels

Jack is not affected by his own power and does not take any damage associated with its use. The power cannot be used to infuriate regular humans, bystanders or monsters. For use with this power, the term "enemy" typically refers to whoever Jack considers a foe.

Patrons

An important background is worth further explanation. Luke has this at a very low level, Marcus has this at a slightly higher level while Jack has this at the highest level, communicating mostly in his nightmares.

This represents the fact that the Heralds still communicate with the hunter, still sending him visions, messages or whatever. Contact rarely makes sense, and can sometimes be rather unpleasant, such as Jack's splitting headache visions.

For this story, Luke's background in Patron will not come into effect, and the same can probably be said for Marcus, unless you find yourself in a pickle and need a way out. For Jack, however, it is almost ever present. Not quite constantly, but contact is so frequent that it could happen at any time. For the most part they speak to him nightly in his Nightmares, but when they want to press the point, they send him visions followed by crippling pain. Think Doyle and, later, Cordelia in *Angel*, but without the "so-and-so's in trouble, go!" part of it.

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

The crux of what makes the Vanguard is their ideology in what is going on in the world. Their misguided slant on the nature of the creatures they fight. Everyone involved with the Vanguard should familiarise themselves with this concept and are free to add their own twists into the story where they feel it's appropriate. Those playing Aron & Jack should not be given this information as it will make for better roleplaying when someone tries to explain it to them.

Pod People from the Moon

The enemy takes the form of parasitic creatures that burrow into the base of the brain and take control of the body. The host actually dies but the parasite has access to the host's memories meaning that the walking corpse is able to fool those around him. However, the parasites have a weakness: they are vulnerable to sunlight. The theory runs that they are from the dark side of the moon and are thus not used to exposure to sunlight. Likewise, they prefer the cold to the heat, so sources of heat, like fire, will cause them to panic and flee.

An obvious flaw with this theory is that there is no permanent dark side of the moon. The Vanguard theorise that they may have originated on another of the solar system's moons, one that does not expose its dark side, or even from deep within the ground on an alien terrain. They are in orbit within both the Earth's and the Moon's shadow in black ships that cannot easily be seen in the night sky. Either they cannot be detected by any Earthly means or the government is already under their influence. Sebastian, certainly, is convinced that the pod people have infiltrated the highest levels of the government and are controlling the population. Blocking them from seeing the Truth: that aliens walk among us.

What is their purpose? An all out invasion is not the answer. The invasion has already happened. They are controlling us and shaping our society so that we become mere cattle and slave labour for their own goals. The pod people are in league with the Grays, they are perhaps the experiments of the Grays. After centuries of cloning, the Grays are trying to save their dying race by creating a hybrid with mankind using their DNA. It is possible that the pod people are a result of their early experiments. However, it is flawed. Apart from their dependence on darkness and the cold, they must also replenish their existence by preying on the blood of humans. The process of taking over the brain kills the host body and they must keep the body supple with fresh blood, keeping the semblance of life.

Yes, they're all familiar with the legend of vampires, but it is the Vanguard's firm belief that the aliens must have landed in the Middle Ages or earlier. Angels and demons, dragons flying through the sky, these are the primitive interpretations of the invasion as these aliens landed and placed themselves within mankind.

The Masters of the Universe

Carefully studying reports of alien abductions revealed that the Grays are not the pod people's ultimate masters. The Grays are the servants of the Reptilians, working to save their species because the Reptilians do not wish to lose their slave labour. They are the masters of the universe. Is there any link to the dinosaurs? Maybe, maybe not. One theory is that the Reptilians wiped out the dinosaurs in an intergalactic war for the domination of the planet Earth, and that the Reptilians took the primate survivors to be their servants, cloning them into the Grays. Implications of this is that the Reptilians have been influencing society from as early as Syrian times in which the Syrians and the Babylonian mythologies indicated that mankind was created by the gods to serve them. These gods were possibly aliens creating a slave race.

However, some time in the past there may have been more than one species of ruling aliens. For in Egyptian times Reptilian gods were being given a bad rap. This might have been the tide of change: a rebellion among the Grays' ancestors who escaped, and broke away from the Reptilian breeding program. These were to become the aliens known as the Nordics who still look very similar to the human-like primates they evolved from. Still waging their cosmic war against the Reptilians and their doomed servitors, the Grays.

Whether or not such an ancient influence on our planet is true, one thing is certain. They are certainly responsible for shaping much of the later part of this last millennium. It is possible that during the civil war that broke out the different races left Earth, some theorise that the Nordics may have stayed behind, guiding mankind to their evolutionary potential. But that was cut short during the Dark Ages when the Reptilians returned with the Grays' latest experiment: the Pod People.

The Shackles of Invasion

The invasion is not imminent, it has already happened. They're already here; they have been for centuries. Only now they cannot hide it, people are beginning to see the Truth!

They inhibited mankind's evolutionary progress, yet enhanced their scientific development. It only took a century or so for them to lay the foundations of the Renaissance and shortly after the Industrial Revolution. The speed of mankind's scientific progress could not have been achieved without some form of outside influence by forces that were more advanced than the masses could possibly imagine.

They re-designed the Church in the Middle Ages to help hide their existence and to shape the Western world into the way they wanted it. In the East they used other methods of control. Wars, witch trials, political assassinations, the aliens, as a means of keeping their existence a secret, carefully controlled all of these

events. Today, and long before the knowledge of electricity and computer technology was public knowledge, they control the masses with hypnotic transmissions through technology. The television, the radio, mobile phones, computers. Brainwashing techniques are the simplest, but what stops us from seeing them, what really stops mankind from evolving to their full potential are the transmissions from their secret bases, hidden within the carrier waves of television signals, floating through the air on radio waves and microwaves, controlling our brains. Tin foil hats? These are not enough to stop them! Not while we can see their mind control!

The Blinding Light of Truth

Wear sunglasses. One day, Sebastian stumbled upon a batch of sunglasses. When he put them on, he saw the light; he saw Them walking around him. Whoever made these sunglasses knew the Truth. Whoever made these sunglasses is trying to help mankind stand against their aliens that war over their planet. It's time for humans to take a stand and save their planet against the invaders!

Freed from the shackles of slavery, the minds of those who see the Truth (whether it be a glitch in the transmissions due to other freedom fighters or putting

on a pair of special sunglasses) take sudden evolutionary leaps, unleashing the previously hindered potential of the human species. These leaps provide them with a means of standing up against their freakish alien powers, the might of human spirit!

Increasingly so, the Vanguard are beginning to suspect that they are not alone in their mission, that there are other forces, perhaps the Nordics, guiding mankind towards fighting these aliens. Whoever they are they have clearly hacked into the source, sending messages and warnings, giving all that see the Truth the ability to understand a common language. In the moment of Awakening the transmissions that would otherwise be dulling that 90% of redundant brain is suddenly imbued with the knowledge of the alien form of writing, known as the Word. A language with which to seek others who have seen the Truth, who have heard the Messengers, who have suddenly evolved so that they may liberate their planet, so that they may unite in their struggle.

It is clearly these same Messengers — Heralds of Human Liberation — that are responsible for the creation of the sunglasses, that are responsible for hacking into the alien mind-control transmitters and imbuing the Vanguard with the knowledge of the invasion, and are the ones that can provide all the answers.

Alien Conspiracy Facts Summary

- Pod people are parasitic aliens that burrow into the brain of a human, accessing their memories, keeping the corpse in a semblance of life.
- Pod people are vulnerable to sunlight because they come from the dark side of the moon, perhaps originally from some other sunless region. For the same reason they prefer cold, so the heat of fire can cause them to panic.
- Pod people can be killed by exposure to sunlight, burning, decapitation (severing the spinal cord so that parasite cannot control the body), or just kicking seven kinds of unliving shit out of them until they turn to dust, explode, rot or otherwise cease to move.
- The parasites breed by laying little eggs through their bite. Sometimes these eggs are just carried and gestate within a human slave that can be saved by exposure to UV light, otherwise they will, one day, become a pod person.
- Pod people are an experiment in alien and human DNA hybridisation by the Grays.
- The Grays are the servants of the Reptilians.
- The Reptilians are at war with a bunch of aliens called the Nordics, possibly what the Grays once were; they broke free of Reptilian servitude.
- The Reptilians have possibly been influencing Mankind's history since the beginning.
- The aliens have been hindering human evolution since at least the time of the Middle Ages when the stories of vampires became most popular, along with demonic possessions and visions of angels.
- The aliens are subduing the masses through transmissions carried on television, radio and microwave signals. Tin foil hats are not enough to protect you from them since the eye still acts as a receiver for these signals.
- The Heralds of Human Liberation, the Messengers, are some other force (possibly human, possibly alien) that is hacking into the Reptilian transmissions.
- Edges are the subdued potential of human evolution spontaneously manifesting by the interruption of the signals upon the human either deliberately or accidentally by the Messengers, other alien hunters or other means as the aliens' hold on this planet weakens and more are exposed to the Truth.
- The Word is a secret code transmitted by the Messengers to allow the Believers to gather together and fight for the liberation of their planet.

Prologue: Monster Hunting Criminals

The news headlines finished and anchorwoman Stacey Walters put on her serious face as a picture of a rather formidable looking bald-headed bearded man appeared in a box floating in the top right corner of the screen.

"Multiple killer Jack Valentine pleaded guilty today of all charges. Demonstrators outside the city courthouse demanded a trial by jury so that Jack Valentine could receive the death penalty. Mitch Gilmour reports."

The picture cut to a ruggedly handsome blonde outside the courthouse with protestors behind him demanding justice.

"It was drama today in the courtroom when Jack Valentine dismissed his lawyers who were pushing for an insanity plea and instead pleaded guilty on all charges at today's hearing.

"Jack Valentine made the headlines last month with his horrific arrest which resulted in the murder of city Mayor Jeffrey Olsen, seven police officers and all nine of his hostages including Olsen's family and men who police now believed to have been his own accomplices.

"After killing his accomplices Valentine demanded to speak with Jeffrey Olsen. When the mayor was brought onto the scene Valentine surprised even the S.W.A.T. teams when, from the shop he'd barricaded himself inside, he fired a rocket launcher at the mayor, killing him, seven police officers and seriously injuring over a dozen more. Before S.W.A.T. teams could react Valentine had executed the mayor's family, including his thirteen-year-old daughter, Stephanie. Valentine did not resist arrest and seemed co-operative as he was led to the police car.

"Reports have stated that since his arrest Valentine has been quiet, reserved and has not spoken much prior to the hearing. However, today displayed a very different side of Jack Valentine."

After footage of last month's crisis and devastation over Mitch's narrative summary the reel finally cut to courtroom footage of Jack Valentine in his orange prison outfit addressing the court.

"Plead insane?" he was screaming to his cowering lawyer next to him as bailiffs ran to his side in case he started lashing out. The judge's gavel could be heard pounding in the background. "*You're* insane if you think that I'm going to claim that. I want the world to know," he said now to the courtroom at large, looking straight at the camera at times. "I have rid the world of evil. Monsters who live on us like parasites. Those who would consort with them, or keep the demons bound to this world are guilty by association. I killed them. I killed the monsters. I would do it again and again until the world's eyes are open to the corruption in the underbelly of the United States of America. It is time for the puppets to cut their strings and strike deep into the hearts of the puppet masters."

Aron turned off the television set as he heard a knock on the door. He seemed uneasy, lost in his own thoughts the news on the television only really serving as white noise in an attempt to drown out his own thoughts.

Aron opened the door to his friend Jason.

"Dude," said Jason, just as on edge if not slightly more so. "We're fucked."

"Jesus Christ," said Aron. "Where the fuck have you been?"

"Trying to figure it all out, dude, trying to figure it all out" said his friend. Jason darted into the living room and started pacing back and forth almost immediately, biting at his fingernails. His normally loose blonde dreads tied back. The normally easy-going surfer was a bundle of nerves.

"What the fuck happened last night, man? What the fuck is going on?" cried Aron.

"Okay, first the good news," said Jason. "Sit, sit," he added, motioning.

Aron sat on the edge of his armchair. Jason paced a little more, sat on the sofa and was immediately back up and pacing again as he talked. "Okay, the good news is I don't think we're insane. Unfortunately this means we weren't hallucinating."

"So you're telling me that we really did see Gary?" Jason looked at him silently. "Gary's fucking dead, man," Aron insisted.

"I know, I know. And we both saw the - " Jason didn't need to finish the sentence. Both had the experience burned cleanly in their mind. "Look, this is pretty whack, but I think we're not alone."

Aron looked at him in disbelief.

"There are others it would seem," Jason continued. "Others who have seen things, others who have heard voices in their heads and stuff."

"Yeah, and they're in fucking looney bins," Aron burst out.

"No, no, seriously, dude. I did some searching on the net. It took me ages until I could finally figure out – you know – what to search for and what to ask about in the chat rooms. But I think I got some leads. I found a couple of websites, but they got some very contradictory information."

"No shit, it's the Internet," Aron interjected and then sighed with a degree of resignation. "Okay, so what do you have?"

"Well, I found one site saying that these are demons and we're facing the end of the world. And then I found another saying these are aliens and we're facing a full-scale alien invasion."

"You're telling me Gary is an alien?" said Aron. "Or a demon?"

"I dunno, dude," Jason replied, finally sitting down. "But we gotta do something, man."

"I know. I know," said Aron, rubbing his brow. "I dunno why the hell it's gotta be us, but look this is Gary we're talking about. He was a pal. I refuse to believe that Gary is an alien or a demon."

"It might not be willingly," said Jason. "I mean, from what that alien invasion website says Gary's body might just be a host to the invaders."

"Like a body snatcher?"

"Yeah, or if its not an alien then a demon might have possessed him. I mean, dude, its that or Gary's gone to the dark side."

Aron was silent for a moment. "No," he said eventually. "This is Gary we're talking about."

"Yeah, but – what if?" said Jason.

"I've never been a religious man," said Aron. "But if there's an afterlife then Gary deserves to rest in it. Not – not walk around when he's supposed to be dead."

"Well, I think we'd better find out why he's back," said Jason. "You know, whether he's evil or not."

There was a loud knock on the door and the two men jumped slightly.

Aron got up and answered it. Two plain-clothes cops were at the door.

"Aron Kowalski?" said the one after showing him his badge.

"Yeah," said Aron, cautiously. "What's this about?"

"You're under arrest for the murder of Faith Wilson."

The detective slammed his fist on the table.

"Tell us what you did with the body, you sick son of a bitch," he said. Aron's experience as a young kid in these interrogation rooms kicked in. This was the Bad Cop.

The Good Cop said, "The blood on the shirt we found at your place matches Faith's DNA so we know you did it. If you admit it now then you can avoid the death penalty."

"I told you," said Aron, somewhat tired and exhausted by now. "That's not my shirt."

"So you keep saying," said Good Cop.

Bad Cop leaned forward and from a file produced a photograph. It was a picture of him, Jason and Gary last year when they were at the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. That was where Gary... Aron didn't want to think about it. He had to concentrate on the shit he was in right now. Gary would have to wait. Aron looked at the photo again and noticed that in it he was wearing a shirt just like the one they found with the bloodstains.

"Yeah," he said. "I used to have a shirt like that but I lost it about three months back or something."

"Around the time that your girlfriend went missing," growled Bad Cop. "Pretty damned convenient."

"She wasn't my girlfriend," said Aron. "She was my wife. We got married behind her father's back. I told you before – when she went missing I was inside for that phoney drugs rap you guys put on me. When I came out I figured she'd just left me without saying anything."

"We checked on that, Aron," said Good Cop. "Truth is she went missing just before you were sentenced. You're going down." Great! Good Cop wants to trade places with Bad Cop.

"Give it up, scumbag. We found the shirt at in your house," said Bad Cop, still determined to keep the role. He slammed his fist on the table again. "Tell us what you did with the body, you little punk!"

Prologue: Incarceration

Five years later...

The prison truck turned off the main road and wound its way up the narrow path towards its destination.

"Aw, man," said Luke. "I can't believe they're sending us to Stanford."

"What's wrong with Stanford?" asked Brian.

"What's right with it?" interjected a black convict sitting next to them. "It's had more accidental deaths in the last three years than anywhere else in America. It's been under investigation six times and they've still managed to dodge the bullet."

"But I thought this place has only been open a few years," said Brian.

"Man, you never quit doing your research do you," said Luke. "How the hell do you do that?" Brian shrugged.

A young man at the back of the bus giggled to himself slightly, and then noticing everyone looking at him seemed to settle into an uneasy silence.

Sebastian, meanwhile, had remained quiet and now leaned close to Marcus to speak to him in a hushed voice.

"Marcus," he whispered. "You see that tattooed man a few seats down from us?"

Marcus nodded.

"Do you know who that is?"

Marcus shook his head.

"That's Jack Valentine. He made the headlines shortly after - " Sebastian paused and merely continued the sentence with a single word, " - Slim." Marcus wasn't sure how to respond and did what he did best. He listened.

"He killed Boston's mayor and their family claiming that they were monsters."

Marcus looked at the silent man as he gazed out of the window, and finally he spoke.

"A believer?"

"Worth finding out, wouldn't you say?" replied Sebastian.

The bus pulled into the forbidding looking prison surrounded by forest, the watchtowers rising high with armed guards atop of them.

"Well," said Luke. "Here we are. Welcome to Stanford State Penitentiary. Welcome to hell."

1: In the Shadows of Stanford

Before running this scenario it is important to understand what is happening at Stanford. This scenario is very freeform and there is little to no actual plot as such. Most of the tension should come from the PCs interaction with the others prisoners and each other. However, inmates and guards who have been here for some time have been touched and influenced by the forces at work here. What follows are suggested moments, but if better ones inspire you then run with them. The supernatural story should very slowly be revealed and even then it is entirely down to the players how they choose to proceed. This scenario attempts to anticipate some possible outcomes, but the Storyteller should be prepared for anything.

1.1: Five years ago...

Aron Wachowski is the lynchpin in this story (therefore, it is advisable that the Storyteller is familiar with his back-story). A troubled teenager in and out of juvenile reform centres, he found it difficult for him to attempt to go straight when he turned old enough for prison. Returning to his father, who owned a construction company, he got work building the new Stanford Penitentiary. He worked under a fake surname to hide his past.

While there he and the warden's daughter, Faith, fell in love. Warden Wilson didn't approve of the match, but the two secretly married. Then Aron was arrested on a phoney narcotics rap. He never found out who set him up, but in truth it was Warden Wilson's weight that made it happen. He then used this as leverage to try to make his daughter stop seeing this criminal. She then told him that they were married and in a fit of rage he killed her. Terrified of what he had done he buried her body in the foundations of the prison. Faith had one of Aron's shirts and he splashed it with Faith's blood and waited. Wilson hired a man (now his chief guard) to plant the evidence to frame Aron.

Although Faith's body was not found Aron was convicted but not given the death penalty.

1.2: The Darker Side of Faith...

That was not the end of Faith, however. It was about a year after her death before the manifestations began which was shortly after the prison became operational. Each night her sobs would echo through the wards. But she began to change. The presence of such negative emotions such as hatred and the company of violent criminals turned her and fed her. In order to manifest, in order to stay in this world she would feed from the emotions of those around her. Bound to the prison, surrounded by negative emotions she began to seek such pain further. A darker side began to emerge, a darker side that thrived on pain, suffering and misery. The intensity of the emotions that were distilled in her from the inmates was periodically fed back to both inmates and the guards. Stanford Penitentiary soon gained a reputation. Those who walked in would never leave alive.

Sooner or later everyone at Stanford would become violent, sooner or later everyone came to blows with The Man.

1.3: Faithless...

Faith has very much lost herself in the hate, the pain and the suffering. Only in the darkest hours of the night, when all are sleeping does she now manage to find herself again, but all she does is cry. She weeps for what she has lost, but she weeps harder because she cannot remember what that was, just that she has lost it. When hatred and the desire to inflict suffering do not consume her, she is aware that there is something horrible, that there is a "dark entity" that stalks the corridors. She doesn't realise that she is the "dark entity". She fears it, because she fears herself, but more importantly, she fears learning what she has lost. Her split-ego knows the truth and protects her from it by taking from her the memory of her death; it ever seeks to corrupt the prison to get back at her father.

The arrival of Aron starts to empower Faith to start the process of overcoming her darker side, it gives her the strength to fight a battle she isn't even aware of. It is overcoming this ignorance of this conflict within her that is part of the story of this scenario. If the players choose the path of redemption, it is in this that Aron can guide her. It is for this reason that he is a Redeemer. Finding a way to bring her father to justice will be difficult, but this is very much her unfinished business.

1.4: Bringing Faith to the Players...

And this is the most important thing to remember about Stanford: it's haunted. In her spectral form, fuelled by anger and hate, Faith brings pain when she can. She has a subtle influence on all the inmates, heightening in them their propensity for violence. The Storyteller is encouraged to play on this with shadows and movements and the suggestion of something else at times. Be aware that Jack Valentine always has his Second Sight active and therefore be wary not to make the mistake of having Faith do something obvious too soon while around Jack until much later in the story. Most importantly, however, is to also remember that not every act of violence or villainy needs to be guided directly by Faith. She plants the suggestions and the desires, but they act upon it. After all, it is not by her influence that she made her father murder her and frame her husband. The activities of the prison gangs below are real. They are all real prison gangs with the exception of the Aryan Brotherhood of Massachusetts, which is a fictional splinter group from the very real Aryan Brotherhood. Their propensity for violence and causing suffering (beyond what is described) is where Faith's dark side wallows and intensifies.

2: Cellmates

If you are playing around a table in which this is possible, have everyone sit opposite their cellmates so that they are facing each other for interaction, or just sitting next to them. The cellmates are as follows:

Sebastian Matthews with Jack Valentine

Brian Rostow with Aron Kowalski

Luke Sharp with Marcus Arjello

This is an opportunity to roleplay their frustrations or making acquaintances with new people (where applicable). In short, allow the players an opportunity to get into character. You may orchestrate this as you wish, whether it be a free-for-all where you let everyone chat with their respective cellmates all at once, or whether you jump from cell to cell allowing everyone to roleplay without the distractions of other people talking next to them. The latter also creates an audience for each vignette of roleplaying, and perhaps some of the slower readers a chance to catch up while the attention isn't on them. Allow this to go on for as long as you like before moving to lights out. When it's ready to close this scene, read or paraphrase the following:

With lights out came the obligatory round of jeering between inmates and even with the guards, both from old and new alike. Once all had settled down and the block was quiet, once all had been dark for some time and snores began to rumble through the night, somewhere someone was crying. Sobbing gently in the night.

In their separate cells, Marcus and Aron were awakened during the night by water pipes rattling through the block. After several minutes they finally stopped and those awakened by the noise could once again return to their slumber.

A slumber that for some was filled with tortured and fevered nightmares.

As the two characters with the Merit: Light Sleeper, Marcus and Aron are woken by this apparently innocuous event. Both **Sebastian and Jack suffer from the Flaw: Nightmares so after each night**, be sure that they roll Willpower (difficulty 7). If they fail the nightmares have got the better of them that night and they have a +2 difficulty to any Attribute or Ability score when dealing with monsters.

Prison Maxims

- **Do your own time:** The fundamental prison maxim. Don't bother other prisoners or pry too deeply into their affairs.
- **Drink plenty of water and walk slow...:** "The water will keep your system flushed and you're going nowhere fast." Time moves slowly, but there are consequences to every action.
- **Its mind over matter . . . They don't mind and you don't matter:** An official action that lacks any logic. Officers do not care and a prisoner does not matter.
- **There are no secrets in the penitentiary:** In prisons, rumour and gossip circulate fast.
- **You're in prison now:** The reality of the situation.

3: Life on the Inside

Read or paraphrase the following:

A week passed in which the new inmates learned the rules and were assigned their duties.

Each night there was the crying from one of the cells. Each night the rattling of the water pipes woke several inmates.

By day, the inmates pursued their allotted activities and mingled in the yard on their breaks.

Sebastian and Aron have been assigned to woodshop where they are being taught how to make furniture as part of an outside contract. Brian helps out with the book rounds and in the library. Luke and Jack find themselves together in the cafeteria helping to cook the food for the other inmates. Marcus is down for working on laundry.

The timetable for the days goes as follows:

04:00 — Wake up call for those working in the kitchen, although most other prisoners wake at this time also simply because of the commotion.

06:00 — Everyone out of bed. Anyone who isn't already out of bed needs to now get up, take their showers, and get their breakfast.

07:30 — Prisoners gathered together for the first count of the day. The guards count the prisoners to make sure no one has escaped.

08:00 — After the first count everyone is back in their cells and most other assigned tasks start. Laundry is gathered, workshops start.

08:30 — The cells are generally left open and there are recreation rooms, people are allowed to use the gym.

10:00 — The library opens.

11:00 — Laundry duties finish.

12:00 — Lunch, followed by exercise in the yard.

14:00 — Back inside.

15:30 — Exercise in the yard.

16:00 — Second count of the day, back inside.

17:00 — Workshops close.

17:30 — Dinner.

21:00 — Final count and the start of lockdown. Everyone back in their cells, some will go to sleep (esp. those who need to be up early).

21:30 — Lights out. Everyone to sleep now.

~22:30 — The sobbing usually starts at around this time, give or take up to 30 mins.

~02:00 — The pipes usually rattle at about this time, give or take up to an hour.

4: People on the Inside

Due to the nature of this scenario, it would be impossible to detail specific events that would occur throughout the entire scenario since it is not linear. Therefore, this section details a bit about who some of the other key inmates are, the "politics" and so forth, so that you can run with any form of interaction the players decide to get themselves into.

The next section details some possible ways to bring these characters into the game and ways to get the PCs tangled up in these things.

4.1: The Aryan Brotherhood of Massachusetts

The name says it all for what this white prison gang stands for. Members display many white supremacist, neo-nazi characteristics and ideology, but often state their goals as simply "getting high and getting over," or making their stay in the prison as comfortable as possible. Most members are originally apolitical, doing time for custody crimes such as robbery.

Most of the trouble that the Brotherhood is involved in is, unsurprisingly, in connection to the BGF (see below) and other racial gangs.

The AB does, however, sometimes lend moral support to black groups in an effort to encourage possible prison disturbances and sometimes utilises black associates to buy and sell drugs to elements of the black prison population.

Identifiers and symbols include Shamrock clover leaf, initials "AB", swastikas, double lightning bolts, the numbers "666", known to use Gaelic (old Irish) symbols as a method of coding communications.



Membership in the AB has traditionally come from white male inmates and a life-long allegiance is a requirement. Strang and Cassidy have the last say on the matter in Stanford. A "Blood in, blood out" oath must be taken and often a "hit" or significant act of violence is required before full membership is earned. Candidacy for membership may last a year or more.

Main activities of the AB are centered on drug trafficking, extortion, pressure rackets, and internal discipline. Prison activities include introduction of contraband, distribution of drugs, and getting past facility rules and regulations. Traditionally, targets have been non-gang inmates and internal discipline

STRANG

The 45-year-old skinhead Strang is very much the figurehead of the AB of MA although he lets others be the

most vocal to non-Brothers. Once, they were part of the larger Aryan Brotherhood, but recently they splintered away because Strang felt that the AB had become a little too complacent. He very much sees himself as a leader and a revolutionary, sometimes lost in thought as he plots to rid America of the non-white menace — starting with Stanford Prison. He prefers to delegate to his followers the tasks he needs doing. His charismatic personality means they tend to do as he instructs. That, and if they fail he has been known to, quite without warning, beat them to death with his bare hands. Built like a body-builder he can often be found in the gym pumping iron when he's not in the workshop. Sometimes he can be found in the library, trying to find books that will justify his ideology.

CASSIDY

The somewhat slimmer built Cassidy is less of a right-hand man to Strang, and as much an equal in the Brotherhood. Other Brothers, including Strang, sometimes forget this. Cassidy has more subtle ways of reminding them who is *really* in charge. Where Strang's twisted philosophy makes him the figurehead of the Aryan Brotherhood, Cassidy's more practical mind makes him the brains. He is frighteningly effective at obtaining nearly any kind of item someone is looking for and he enjoys the wealth, status and power that is granted him for this ability. It's with good reason then, that he tends to frown on other fixers on the inside. While he has established an uneasy truce with some of the more established or better protected, there are many that are on his hit list. Whether it's because they are stealing his thunder, or because they supply to non-Whites, or maybe just to make them an example to assert his authority. Cassidy often targets most new fixers that enter Stanford first. If he likes them, he tries to recruit them. If he takes a dislike to them, he tries to subdue them. If they piss him off, they're dead. If they're not white they piss him off.



4.2: The BGF (Black Guerrilla Family)



The BGF is the most politically oriented of the major prison gangs. They were formed in 1966 by former Black Panther George L. Jackson as a Marxist/Maoist/Leninist revolutionary organisation with these goals: eradicate racism, struggle to maintain dignity in prison, overthrow the United States government. The group is extremely antigovernment and anti-official. This mentality is often depicted in their symbolism. BGF has a very strict death oath that requires a life pledge of loyalty to the group.

Most of the trouble the BGF gets involved with includes the Aryan Brotherhood of Massachusetts (see above).

Identifying symbols include an antigovernment/anti-official mentality often depicted in conjunction with the initials BGF. Cross sabres and shotgun are also used as is a black dragon overtaking a prison or prison tower (as depicted above).

Black street gangs are often recruited into the BGF when they end up in prison and they keep very close ties with them on the outside. Lifelong allegiance is a requirement and a death oath must be taken.

CHIKAE

A prominent member of the BGF, Chikae has a hatred for the white man that make many white supremacists look like liberals. He hates Strang (see above) with a passion, and is often finding ways to cripple them and even to shank him. He remains somewhat unaware that Strang is merely a figurehead and is only dimly aware of deals and alliances with the Brotherhood, and any black man with sense would keep such dealings secret from Chikae and his friends. Discovering evidence of such an alliance has caused Chikae in the past to shank even fellow members of the BGF.

Chikae is often regarded as somewhat of a loose cannon within the organisation. However, his presence and activities are tolerated because he is also effective. Elroy (see below) recognises this, often using this young hot-blood to unwittingly do his dirty work. Chikae is known for being a loose cannon, and the BGF have, on more than one occasion, used him to shank an enemy and then deny knowledge leaving him to take the fall.

Chikae is so easily manipulated by Elroy that he doesn't realise how he's being played.

Chikae has a rivalry with Demarco (see below).

ELROY

By complete contrast to Chikae, Elroy is a very friendly and approachable man. He makes friends and is called on a lot to settle disputes peacefully. More than anything he promotes dignity in prison and solidarity with one another. He doesn't like the supply of drugs by the Brotherhood any more than Chikae, but rather than leap to violence, he takes the more diplomatic path when he can. When that fails he uses Chikae in such a manner that he can throw up his hands and still keep face as being a cool, calm and diplomatic kind of guy.

Naturally, it should be clear that Elroy has a lot of influence and is somewhat Machiavellian in his scheming. Very few people see this in him, and he would keep it that way. He is always happy to help and ready to chat. He is often regarded as an ambassador for the BGF since he often initiates dialogue with potential new recruits. He's also the one most likely found speaking "openly" and "freely" with non-blacks.

Elroy is also a fixer, and has been targeted by Cassidy on a number of occasions, which has made him painfully aware of who the real power is in the ABOM.

DEMARCO

Demarco and Chikae often come to blows with each other in which Elroy finds himself mediating. Partly this is due to a personality clash but mostly because they were rivals on the street. Chikae has been inside for longer than Demarco, so often presumes his territory upon him. Unfortunately, Demarco is rebellious as always, refusing to subdue to Chikae having joined the BGF mostly for the protection they offered and because he believed in their ideals.

Demarco and many of his posse came in together and still hang out together in a tight knit group within the BGF. He is one of the most vocal members of the group and is always shooting his mouth off against any he takes a dislike to, but always manages to maintain an optimism and boundless energy.

When he first came inside, and before he joined the BGF he and Chikae got into a fight. Even as the guards tried to break things up Demarco was still shooting his mouth off landing him in solitary.

Demarco never backs down from a fight and is often viewed as somewhat restless, always seeking the next "adventure", even inside. He'll pick a fight with someone if he thinks it'll keep things interesting.

4.3: The Latin Kings

Founded in the 1940's by a small group of Hispanic in the Chicago, Illinois area, the purpose of the organisation was to help the Hispanic community achieve a better way of life by preserving the Hispanic culture and promoting education. However, the Latin Kings have evolved into a nation-wide criminal organisation.

The Latin Kings have a strong line of communication and support between members incarcerated and those members on the outside.

The Latin Kings' formal name is Almighty Latin King Queen Nation (ALKQN) and a part of the People Nation.

Latin Kings use the logos ALKQN, ALKN, ADR, LK, a 5-pointed crown and a 5-pointed star. Their colours are black and gold (yellow is use in place of gold). Black represents death and gold represents life. Their beads are black and gold in a sequence of 5 black followed by 5 gold. Some sayings used are "Amor De Rey" which means "Love of The King" and "Black and Gold Never grow Old". Depicted above is the handshake of the Latin Kings.



The Latin Kings are the most prominent Latino gang in Stanford Prison and the Mexican Mafia (EME) doesn't appear to be very active here. However, there are rumours that NETA also has a covert presence in the prison. There have been a few Hispanics sighted with the NETA tattoo on their hands, but there has been no proof that they have an active residence.

They are rivals of the Latin Kings and have clearly kept their presence fairly quiet. When a Latin King is killed suspicion usually falls on someone else, which would be exactly how NETA prefers to work.

TITO

A new, potential recruit for the Latin Kings, he's yet to prove himself. Typical initiations include carrying out a shank on someone (see below for more potential story hooks with Tito). Young and eager to prove himself, Tito was a hood on the streets doing small crimes, mostly jacking cars and selling small amounts of dope. He's been in and out of prisons for a while, but always for short spells.

This time he's likely to be inside for a little longer than usual. He stole a car while high with some friends. When the police tried to stop him he led them on a high-speed chase so reckless it's done the rounds on police video reality shows the world over and made the headline news in several states. Even after he finally got out of the battered Mercedes (now riding with no tires, the fuel tank seconds away from exploding from the sparks *and* facing the wrong way in traffic) he still wouldn't give up easily. He jumped over the barrier and ran across four lanes of heavy traffic while his buddies were

arrested, escaping into the nearby forest. Police helicopters tracked him with infrared to a small cabin where he held hostage a honeymooning couple. When the police finally brought him out he broke one officer's nose and cracked another's ribs before they finally cuffed him and dragged his now heavily beaten body back to a squad car.

Now in Stanford he is keen and eager to prove himself. Oftentimes he gets a little more inquisitive than, perhaps, he should be which can sometimes lead to him getting in trouble.

PANCHO

By many in the Latin Kings, Pancho is considered the grand master. He's been transferred from prison to prison for years in an attempt to find the place that will finally put this troublemaker to rest.

Even in his late-forties, this Latino can still hold his own, built like a brick shit-house, covered nearly from head to toe with elaborate tattoos, his face is scarred with the war wounds of both the street and prison. No one remembers what he's in for, and many speculate since he never talks about it.

Pancho is usually silent and introspective, although that doesn't stop him striding putting the fear of god and the Latin Kings in any he is near. Next to no one argues with Pancho, and when Pancho speaks, next to everyone listens.

The arrival of Pancho three months ago has been a major coup for the Latin Kings, giving them more weight and more ground. Pancho is a bulldog and has represented a shift in power. With Pancho around as muscle, the Latin Kings have started to take some small control of the drugs trade within Stanford. Naturally this has made him an enemy of both the AB and the BGF who would both prefer to see Pancho shanked, but so deep seated is their hatred of each other that they refuse to work together to achieve this. Past attempts on Pancho's life have led to the poor sap making the attempt to lose his own life, and the wrath of the Latin Kings. Since the last attempt by the BGF a truce was settled between the two that there would be no more attempts on his life, although Cassidy is ever seeking a way to bring him down without the trail leading back to him.

CORTEZ

This quiet Mexican arrived on the bus with the PCs. He quickly identified himself as a Latin King, but is actually NETA. There are very few NETA in the prison and he deliberately got himself put in prison to come to Stanford to try and kill Pancho. He's keen to try killing him without drawing attention to himself. If discovered that he is with NETA he'll be dead in seconds. If manipulation fails, Cortez has worked as a hitman before.

4.4: Independents of Note

Not everyone of note at Stanford belongs to a gang. Some are unaffiliated villains or merely keep their nose clean but have gathered a reputation.

CHIN-MAE

No one knows exactly why this Korean is inside, although it's clear that it is to do with his outstanding skill as a forger. Some rumours say that he had forged papers that led people to believe that he was the CEO of a powerful multinational corporation. He then used his position to liquidate the branch and abscond with millions that he immediately invested in secret. These same rumours say that when he finally gets released he will have a fortune waiting for him and he'll just vanish. Others say he was just caught making passports for illegal immigrants. Either way, this quiet and often cryptic Korean is respected by many inside as the go-to guy for any forged documents they might need. He is often found painting or drawing pictures of the most exquisite beauty (although not everyone can appreciate his legal artistry). He is also in charge of the prison library. He's often overlooked by many and he is very observant. If any should think to ask, they can learn a lot about the key figures in the prison, although Chin-Mae is, naturally, very careful who (if anyone) he shares this information with.

DONOVAN O'KEARNEY

Descended from a long line of Irish mobsters, until five years ago Donovan O'Kearney had it easy in Boston. Mayor Olsen was seen as an upright man, and idealised by many, but in truth, Olsen was in O'Kearney's pocket from day one. It had been his money that got O'Kearney elected and it was his money that had kept him in power. Olsen's spin-doctors were the best in the business — O'Kearney had seen to that.

Then some lunatic on the rampage with a rocket launcher murdered Olsen and his whole family. His successor didn't appreciate his predecessor's arrangement with local business tycoon, Donovan O'Kearney. This was the floodgate the FBI had been waiting for. O'Kearney struggled to find something on Olsen's successor, but wasn't quick enough before he found himself behind bars for a string of crimes including extortion, blackmail, money laundering, drug trafficking, arms dealing, tax fraud and counterfeiting. The DA threw the book and the whole library at him.

It has taken him some time to finally get himself safely respected and regain his dignity, but Donovan O'Kearney is a prison gang unto his own. He has his heavies, he has his own contacts, and he will happily trade, ally and betray the other prison gangs so long as he maintains some degree of control over them and, more importantly, The Man. This is where O'Kearney has cornered the market. As corrupt as many of the guards are, they rarely tolerate prison gangs. However, O'Kearney is not in a gang, he's just trying to make his life in prison as comfortable as possible. Therefore, he's

managed to pull quite a bit of clout with the screws. If someone wants to arrange a blind eye (or just a blind spot in security), O'Kearney is the man to deal with The Man — and always at a price.

Of course, the arrival of Jack Valentine has finally presented O'Kearney with an opportunity to achieve retribution for his incarceration. This is the man that destroyed his empire even though he is certain Valentine wasn't aware of this fact.

A strong believer in the adage "keep your enemies closer", O'Kearney is keen to learn why this lunatic went postal on Olsen and his family — and then to exact his vengeance and have him killed. But perhaps not before pitting him against Pancho. He's certain that he can get considerable payment from both the AB and the BGF for this service. (And this is where Donovan smiles like every great gangster while holding his cigar just inches from his mouth... and maybe, if he feels amused enough, laughs a little to himself in a self-congratulatory manner at his own genius.)

PIETRO

Of the Vanguard Luke has done his share of time on the inside. Pietro is someone he would have hoped not to run into again.

Pietro used to work with Sammy "One Shoe" (see Luke's background), much in the same capacity as Luke did. They began as friendly rivals and would hang out together. Then someone started spreading malicious rumours about Luke that implicated him as doing Pietro wrong. Rather than attempt to substantiate these rumours Pietro set Luke up to get caught by the police, and thereby remove him from the equation. Now, Luke was old enough to do time and that's what happened. Luke was guilty of the accusations, but if Pietro hadn't tipped off the police he wouldn't have been caught. Luke learned of this on the inside, but decided to rise above it and not retaliate. When he finally got out he tried to go straight.

Pietro, meanwhile, had been exposed as a rat, and Sammy was none too happy. Pietro began to feel a lot of pressure from many of his former allies, Sammy was pulling his weight on account of his stitching up Luke like he did. Finally, Pietro, himself, was set up to take a fall, shortly before Luke was due for release.

His fall, however, was a lot more serious and for a lot longer. Pietro was framed for murder and he's sworn to get even if and when he can.

Pietro has, until now, kept his nose pretty clean and has avoided problems with the gangs. He has had occasional dealings with Cassidy, Elroy and O'Kearney in order to obtain a few personal items, but has otherwise kept his head down.

This is about to change with the arrival of Luke.

4.5: The Man

Not all the trouble on the inside comes from the inmates. The prison guards here can be just as bad and just as corrupt. Here are a few key guards worth mentioning.

WARDEN JACOB WILSON

The man in charge, and Faith's father. He doesn't often mingle with the prisoners, but likes to keep a close watch on those who step out of line. In Stanford it's quite a tricky distinction between those that the Warden keeps his eye on, and the usual trouble that goes on. Often it comes more of a power trip. Those who pose any real problem are either overlooked by the Warden, or "befriended". For instance, Warden Wilson makes no attempt to personally deal with Pancho, but befriends Donovan O'Kearney. In the case of the latter, both believe they are playing each other in a power game. The jury is still out on who controls the real power.

Wilson often chooses someone he knows he can make an example of. He goes through the process with everyone, even Pancho, of showing his power. He has grown quite methodically cold in how he deals with the genuine troublemakers, which has made Stanford such a violent place to be.

Of course, Wilson does not tolerate gangs (at least, officially), and does not tolerate troublemakers. He prefers everyone to play nicely and not give anyone a hard time. At least, that's the party line.

(See *The Only Way Out* for a story line can be used to illustrate Wilson's callousness.)

OFFICER TRESSEL (CAPTAIN)

He is generally considered a total bastard. Trying to do anything as obvious as bribe him is asking for him to deliver you a beating. He could happily go toe-to-toe with any of the prisoners and is generally considered by all — even the most feared, like Pancho — as someone not to cross.

He is universally despised, but is the one officer who's never given a hard time — at least not by anyone who has been for Stanford long enough to know that Tressel is not afraid to use physical force to put a prisoner in his place nor to do it publicly. While other officers use cruel methods of torture and humiliation in dark corners to gain power (see *Dirty Secrets*, below), Tressel only needs brute force.

Despite this prisoners and the gangs have a strange kind of respect for him because he is, at least, honest. He is indiscriminate in who he deals his authority to. He doesn't take sides and he's always just when he deals out his discipline. In short, Officer Tressel is dependable, and not likely to suddenly turn a blind eye when a prisoner most needs a guard to actually be watching their back.

When Officer Tressel looks down on a prisoner and treats him like scum, he can take comfort that Tressel treats everyone like scum and looks down on all prisoners.

OFFICER FISKE (LIEUTENANT)

Almost the polar opposite of Officer Tressel, Fiske is totally corruptible, self-serving and viciously cruel on a power trip. He is usually at the forefront in terrorising the non-affiliated prisoners (i.e. not in a gang or under O'Kearney's aegis) and often turns a blind eye if he gets something out of it, or just generally doesn't like the victim.

His contempt for the prisoners differs from the contempt held by Tressel in that Fiske believes that the prisoners serve as a tool for his power trip. Tressel holds contempt because they are all criminals and he's got the shitty job of keeping them in line.

Fiske takes deep-seated hatred in those he victimises and he is just one step away from committing outright murder to those he takes a disliking to. There is no logic to Fiske's hatred, and it is impossible to predict who he will target and why. Gang-members are about the only ones who are likely to give Fiske any hassle, and even then most of them prefer to play it safe most of the time.

Fiske is one officer, in particular, who is quite firmly in O'Kearney's pocket. While Fiske despises the Latin Kings and the BGF he tactfully leaves them be for the most part, but likes to throw his weight around with them every now and again, reminding them of how much he dislikes them. He is not afraid to throw insults at them. He is generally indifferent towards the Aryan Brotherhood, which leads many (some guards included) to think that he might also have deals with them. If this is the case, however, he keeps this very quiet, although he's generally considered by all as unashamedly racist.

5: Doing the Time

The above NPCs provide a number of story hooks available for the GM to fill in the time that the PCs are there while the Faith story unfolds. Since it is primarily about the characters, if they are generating enough story amongst themselves the appearance and involvement of these NPCs can be minimised.

However, here are some plot-hooks that can and in some cases *should* come into play. Those without a clear resolution are left open as either constant threats or for the player to devise some means of ending it of their own design.

Remember, these stories are the side-plots. These hooks are presented as complications and depth of detail to the overall story. These can be used in ways presented or opportunities seen by the Storyteller, to weave the players together for the main story. They also serve as distractions to the main story. The players may find themselves, for instance, looking for answers in the wrong places.

5.1: Jack O' Shank

O'Kearney (see above) wants to see Jack Valentine suffer, but he's also a long-term planner. He doesn't expect either him or Jack to be going anywhere in a hurry. He's recognised that the arrival of Pancho has shifted the balance of power in many ways, and he is eager to set it straight. The gangs are wary of attempting to take him down, and O'Kearney is careful not to draw too much attention, since he is keen to establish himself as an apparently neutral party.

O'Kearney operates by gathering information and intelligence and testing the water. Those who do his dirty work are often coerced into it so that if they take a fall, he isn't implicated.

His first testing of the water is to gauge Jack Valentine. The poor sap O'Kearney coerced into this was actually on the bus that brought Jack in with them (the black convict from *Prologue: Incarceration*) called Cliff.

Cliff was a gang member on the outside, but he cut a deal for a reduced sentence, yet still they sent him to Stanford. Cliff feels he's been screwed, but since those he shopped received the death penalty he can't afford to protest too loudly. Cliff is on thin ice with a lot of people and should there are a few members of the BGF who were friends with the guys Cliff shopped. O'Kearney has learned about this and has offered him protection from the BGF on condition that he shank Jack Valentine. If Cliff succeeds then O'Kearney will keep his word, if he fail then O'Kearney claims innocence in the matter and will not help Cliff.

The attempt on Jack's life happens after maybe a week inside (cover this with as much downtime as necessary according to how you feel you need to pace the game with the players).

Of course, with Jack's "danger sense" (remember it is always active), Cliff doesn't really stand a chance. If Jack reacts violently, beating Cliff to a pulp, let him.

O'Kearney has arranged that the guards are either not present or choose to interfere until Cliff has had enough of a pounding to put him in hospital. If Jack doesn't pound the guy into a pulp, then Cliff will keep trying (he's got a lot riding on his succeeding in this task).

Cliff inevitably fails and O'Kearney is not far behind with some words of warning to Jack, offering to protect him from elements that might pose a threat to him inside. O'Kearney strings him along with whatever lies he thinks Jack might buy. O'Kearney can be a cocky guy, too. If Jack proves to be a hard sell, he'll explain that there are certain people on the inside that benefited from Mayor Olsen being in power and have ended up inside because of him. They would very much like to get even, but he could be a friend to Jack. He could let him know who the threats are, so he could be prepared, or even make a pre-emptive strike.

If Jack starts to go along with it, after a few days or a week or as much time as you feel fitting, he proposes shanking Pancho.

He explains to Jack a little about Pancho and that he's generally regarded as the toughest guy inside. Pancho is untouchable on account of the prior attempts on his life leading to the other guy losing his life. If he can take down Pancho he'll be sending a message to everyone inside and to all his enemies not to mess with him. If he can do *that*, then he will have certainly gained the respect of the gangs and perhaps even gain their protection by proxy, or at least their limited favour.

If Jack goes along with this plan let him devise his own method of taking down Pancho. O'Kearney can help him only in attempting to control the guards, but he can make no promises.

Of course, Jack can do some investigating of his own if he wishes (with or without the help of the Vanguard). Trying to discover whom Cliff was working for, for example.

They can use whatever routes they feel appropriate. Cliff will either be in the infirmary or in solitary after trying to kill Jack. In either case, Cliff doesn't come out alive. In the infirmary he dies of internal bleeding (or so the report goes), in solitary the story runs that he had an epileptic fit and swallowed on his tongue. They found him dead in the morning in either instance.

O'Kearney might suggest that Cliff was working for the BGF, or even as a patsy for the AB. Both parties, of course, deny this. The AB tries to recruit Jack while the BGF (most likely Elroy) might be persuaded to, for a price, reveal what they know about Cliff. They don't know that Cliff was trying to kill Jack on behalf of O'Kearney. For the right price, Elroy might offer to find out. On the last part, Elroy doesn't offer a price. It's down to Jack to suggest something satisfactory.

If Jack either succeeds or doesn't go along with the plan (or does too much digging around before carrying it out), O'Kearney seeks to just settle the matter. He would have liked to use Jack against Pancho (a win-win situation regardless of the result), but failing that chooses another method. Using his connections among the Latin Kings he has heard that they are looking to initiate a new

recruit (Tito, see above). Using Tito against Jack is also a win-win situation for O’Kearney. If Tito should succeed, the Latin Kings will be in his favour and Jack will be gone. If he fails and Jack kills him or hurts him too badly then the Latin Kings as a whole will likely seek retribution.

Of course, with Jack’s “danger sense” any attempt on his life is almost guaranteed to fail since he cannot be taken by surprise.

5.2: An Old Rivalry

Pietro isn’t happy to see Luke, and decides that he wants to give Luke a hard time, or even to ultimately see him shanked. He’ll start with general mouthing off, and giving Luke a hard time when he can. Perhaps even resorting to bullying slightly if he thinks he can get away with it.

Pietro’s not homosexual, but he’ll happily turn Luke over to the prison fags in order to make him suffer. **The Dads** (as they are known) may already have their eye on Luke and can present a serious threat to Luke. Pietro taunts Luke with this danger. *Warning — Be sensitive to the players’ limits of taste before including any kind of prison-rape scene in the game. If you do decide to include it, there is also no need to be unnecessarily gratuitous. Rape is a humiliating and degrading experience — prison or otherwise.*

Have Pietro pop up at all the worst times, always sticking his nose into Luke’s business, always looking for and waiting for a way to give him a hard time.

If Pietro learns of any kind of escape plan, he’ll change his tactics. He wants out as much as the next man, and while he could make Luke suffer by stitching him up to The Man, he blackmails them into letting him be involved otherwise he *will* snitch. Of course, if he for a moment suspects that Luke is going to try pulling a fast one on him by leaving without him or stitching him up when they finally get out, he’ll snitch. Pietro, however, isn’t a fool. He knows that snitching will put him in bad stead with everyone else. Much rather he’d let O’Kearney know and try to arrange for Luke to be shanked — for whatever price O’Kearney sets him.

5.3: The Only Way Out

One side story you may wish to introduce to illustrate Wilson’s callousness involves a young hotblood who has been newly transferred into Stanford with the PCs. **Vaughn** starts out a little cock-sure, getting into trouble for sassing back at a guard. Warden Wilson makes a very public display of coming to speak with him in his cell.

Due to his history with Wilson, this storyline is best suited for Aron, but you could disseminate various portions of this to anyone, especially if Aron is doing too good a job of keeping his head down. At least, until later when he finds Vaughn. Alternatively, if Aron is busy creating his own storyline preparing for an escape, give this to Marcus instead.

For anyone making friends and keeping their ear to the grapevine, one might hear that Vaughn has bought himself trouble with Demarco for some off-hand remark he said to one of Demarco’s friends. On top of that, the Dads (see above) have taken an interest in him and have been making their interest known. Vaughn is under a lot of pressure.

After Vaughn is found beaten up by Aron (or Marcus) and is taken to the hospital-wing, Warden Wilson tries to find out who did it, but Vaughn isn’t speaking. He’s not a snitch. He doesn’t want that trouble, too. However, Wilson recognises weakness and sees that he can use Vaughn to make an example.

Later that day, Wilson makes a public announcement along the lines of: “I will not punish those responsible, but I issue a warning, if any more harm comes to Mr. Vaughn, I *will* come down heavily on those responsible. I will not tolerate violence inside these walls.”

The implication in that statement is that Vaughn has actually snitched, but that Wilson has simply decided not to act on it. Some of the inmates may accurately guess that Wilson is bluffing and doesn’t know a thing, but aren’t so sure.

Of course, when Vaughn is released from the hospital the next day (or the day after depending on the pace of the game), he approaches Aron (or Marcus), having heard what Wilson said, insistent that he didn’t say anything, insistent the Warden’s trying to set him up for some reason.

The Warden dismisses any claims made by Vaughn or anyone on his behalf, that he is in danger, and that same evening (or at any other appropriately timed moment) Vaughn is found hanging dead in his cell after he misses a count.

5.4: The Aryan Bystander

Before he met up with Brian and Marcus, Sebastian still fought the good fight against the alien incursion. At one incident, he managed to identify a Bystander, a failed Imbuing. Sebastian, at this point, was not choosy about who he knew, he was looking for believers. However, he couldn’t persuade this guy to join him in his struggle.

Now, that same Bystander (still not completely understanding what he saw that night) is part of the Aryan Brotherhood of Massachusetts and recognises Sebastian. He mentions to Strang that this guy is an active bigot, fighting to keep the aliens out of America (see where this is going?).

Play this cleverly. Strang approaches Sebastian, with a small following, perhaps in the yard and begins speaking to him along the lines of knowing what he fights for and respecting it. Engage the player in conversation about aliens. Of course, Strang means the very human type of aliens (non-whites that should be expelled from America), while Sebastian might well get carried away talking about his believed extraterrestrial aliens.

If Sebastian starts spouting off about the Vanguard’s theories about extraterrestrial, Strang merely nods and agrees that these are interesting ideas. Indeed, there is

the theory that the Nazis got to the moon back in 1945 just before the end of the war. Strang may even believe some of this, however, his racist mind will twist what Sebastian says.

Strang liberally reads between the lines and believes that he has found someone who could well ready their cause, but just needs better guidance. Play it as you wish, play it subtle, play it clever and let Sebastian act accordingly. If Sebastian acts too brashly if and when he decides to stop talking to Strang because he realises that he speaks for the Aryan Brotherhood, Sebastian might make an enemy. Let it play out. This could either be a threat, or just some interesting roleplaying between two minds with differently twisted and misinformed views of the world around them.

5.5: Dirty Secrets

It's not just the inmates that cause problems. The corruption runs deep and even the guards are susceptible to the influences towards extreme acts of violence and hate.

Part of this is apparent in the fact that the guards can be bribed to turn a blind eye or not ask too many questions. Part of this is manifest in those who go along with the Warden's cruel and unfair disciplinary schemes and displays of power. But then there are the parts that exhibits in the cruelty, torture and degrading acts some of the prison officers perform on select inmates. Any who are not gang-members or under the protection of O'Kearney are most likely to fall victim to the predatory persecution of the Stanford Penitentiary officers' transgressions of the Eighth Amendment rights prohibiting cruel and unusual punishment.

These infractions of personal rights usually take place in secluded places, such as parts of the laundry room, where the other prisoners can't see. There are usually at least three guards together, although sometimes just two. Any who walk in on it and admit make themselves known, or admit that they have done so are likely to be in for more punishment. The gangs have a blind-eye policy regarding this, but if the victim as anything to offer them as a member they often look to recruit from there as a form of mutual protection.

Here is an opportunity to bring Marcus into some of the darker side of Stanford Penitentiary. He can accidentally walk in on a trio of guards torturing (for no apparent reason) a prisoner. He could be someone Marcus hasn't seen before, or you could establish his presence earlier on, perhaps seen disrespecting one of the guards (who is now the predominant antagonist).

How does Marcus react to this? If Aron is being kept suitably busy, then if Marcus later finds Vaughn, this lends itself to another possible culprit.

If Marcus makes it known that he saw this, he'll be targeted by the guards for this kind of punishment. How will he react? How far will he go? Let it play out.

5.6: Chin Wagging

Meanwhile, Brian has been helping in the library. There he gets to know Chin-Mae. If he gains his confidence Chin-Mae can be a fount of information on all the gangs and other prisoners, including some of the dirty secrets concerning the warden and some of the other guards.

Indeed, if Brian has Chin-Mae confiding in him enough, he could share information regarding Faith Wilson. This is especially useful, if Aron's player is being cagey sharing information, as a way of disseminating the necessary information to the Vanguard.

6: Finding Faith

So with all the filler stories above, here is the main plot (as much as there *is* one). Much of this has already been detailed in *1: In the Shadows of Stanford*, but here are the specifics about the specific manifestation of Faith that triggers the actual story of the scenario.

When running these scenes, you should be careful not to cram them in all at once. This story, just like the subplots, should be interspersed throughout the session. Everything else should not go on hold after Faith's first appearance. Indeed, the whole point of the scenario is about how Faith is making Stanford such a hideous prison fuelled by her own hatred. The majority of the subplots all pivot around this one fact.

In short, this is the "subplot" where all the supernatural stuff happens.

6.1: Eyes Wide Shut

It's suggested that reactive Conviction spending is used for this scenario. In other words, players may react to last minute forewarnings of the supernatural about to happen (see p.133 of the **Hunter** corebook).

There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, it lets the players relax a little and not waste Conviction unnecessarily. Secondly, it lets Faith be quite close to the players without them necessarily knowing it. Remember, however, that Jack is the exception since his second sight is *always* active because he's a Wayward. Thirdly, this is the only way the Vanguard can activate their second sight. The Vanguard had a reliance on their special sunglasses to act as a trigger for their second sight. This isn't to say that they can't activate it, it's just that they became so reliant on how to activate it without the glasses that they've almost forgotten how. This scenario acts as a re-discovery of their ability to see the monsters without the glasses — although Sebastian has *never* seen monsters without glasses since the glasses were a catalyst during his Imbuing.

This means that if and when the Vanguard players come to activating their second sight it's as a reflexive action. If they fail, they fail and in the panic won't be able to muster up the ability to defend themselves from the horrors.

If, however, they come up with a feasible means of explaining their second sight without the sunglasses allow a Willpower or Primary Virtue roll (difficulty 7) to

see if they can truly convince themselves of this truth. If they succeed, they discover they can bypass the shades and use their second sight as normal.

Jack is the other way that the Vanguard may have their second sight activated (and the cheapest way since it costs them nothing!), but whether Jack does this for them is down to his player. Remember: if Jack triggers their second sight, they won't necessarily know that it was Jack that did this unless he tells them. Considering his trigger ("Don't you see?") characters with Awareness might get a chance (Int + Aware, diff. 8) of realising that Jack caused them to "open their eyes", but this really depends on how obvious Jack makes it. Seeing him pointing into thin air, saying "Don't you see?" and then suddenly seeing the ghost that's there is kind of a give-away. Whereas, Jack merely muttering it under his breath in a frustration as an indirect question might not be so obvious and they probably won't notice this.

Aron could probably be treated the same as the Vanguard on account of the fact that he had only just Imbued prior to being imprisoned and hasn't since had a chance to really know whether or not what he saw during his Imbuing was real or a hallucination. He still hasn't even really used his Edges, although they are marked on the character sheet. Therefore, when Aron uses his Edges in the scenario, treat them as if these were the first time he'd ever used them. Bluster he may have used without realising that he's done so, so it's fine for him to use Insinuate before he's used Bluster.

However, since Aron doesn't have the misconception that his sight is linked with a pair of sunglasses, after Faith appears in his cell (see below) you may allow him to use his Conviction to activate his second sight as normal. Be sure to make this clear to the player at the conclusion of the scene.

For greater impact for scenes such as 6.2 *A Glimpse of Faith* and 6.3 *Aron Finds Faith*, it's best that reactive Conviction spending to activate second sight be done in secret by the Storyteller. In other words, until they come to consciously spend Conviction (most likely when they come to risk it on an Edge) they discover just how much they *really* have left.

Be careful using this method. As Conviction lowers so their desire for the Hunt lessens. In the interests of fairness the Storyteller should probably never spend a character's last point of Conviction on their behalf, but should that happen, remember that this represents a very strong lack of desire to be involved in the Hunt. Prison has finally broken them. He is reminded of his frailty as a human, and is swamped and drowned by the hatred he is surrounded by. If he loses all his Conviction due to a botch then this should be amplified.

How you, as the Storyteller, deals with this, is down to you. Normally, a character would have to wait for a new story or session to return to their Starting Conviction rating. However, aside from the usual ways of gaining Conviction stated in the **Hunter** corebook (pp. 138–9) here are a few ways of renewing someone's lost Conviction in game.

Be sure the player realises exactly how their character's attitude has changed so that they can really play it up. If another PC can roleplay a good enough speech in an attempt to bolster his morale you can award the character a point of Conviction back. If that character has the Patron background they may receive as many points up to their Patron rating or their Starting Conviction whichever is *fewer*. E.g. if Marcus lost all his Conviction and Sebastian needed to give him a motivating speech to get him back on his feet he would only gain three points, although his Starting Conviction is four he only has three points in Patron. However, if Jack lost all hope and was given the same morale boosting speech he would gain four points of Conviction because he has a Patron rating of five. PCs without Patron can only achieve one point in this way. While it should be roleplayed, if the player giving the motivational speech can't do a satisfactory job, you may allow a Leadership roll (variable difficulty) to determine the success.

Characters with Patron also have another advantage that their Patron can attempt to bolster their Conviction either while they sleep or in place of a reactive roll to activate their second sight. The chances of this happening is dependent on how strong their Patron is and should only happen once in the scenario. The Storyteller should secretly roll the value of their Patron (Luke 1, Marcus 3, Jack 5) against a difficulty of 8. If successful the Patron gives them a boost to their Conviction up to the number of successes rolled or to their Starting Conviction, whichever is fewer. So once again, if Jack's Patron attempts to bolster his lost Conviction then even if the Storyteller rolled all successes he can only have his Conviction boosted to four.

In truth, it is less likely that Jack will actually feel the same way about losing all his Conviction as the others since he doesn't require it in order to have his second sight active (although he still needs it for other defences such as against mind control, etc.).

6.2: A Glimpse of Faith

This should be dealt with carefully and in true ghost story style. Be sure not to overuse a prelude to Faith's appearance too much. The crying and the pipes rattling are regular enough that catching actual glimpses of her prior to her manifestation to Aron should be kept to the minimum.

With the exception of Jack, all sightings of Faith should be accompanied with a reactive activation of second sight (in the method described above). Seeing a woman standing in a window won't scare anyone, but to see a woman standing in the window and *know* that she's "wrong" has far more foreboding for the story.

Faith should probably only be seen by two or three of the PCs. These could be Jack and one of the Vanguard (except Brian, and possibly not Sebastian). Her manifestation to Aron can be handled in a couple of ways. You can have him glimpse her momentarily early on. He knows that she looks wrong, but doesn't realise who she is (see below for some examples on *how* Faith should manifest). Or he could, actually, recognise her so

long as he's left with the possible impression that it was all in his mind. Alternatively, the first time Aron sees her could be when she manifests to him in his cell (see below). Go with whatever seems most dramatic and on how much time you have left in the game. Additionally, if anyone describes her to Aron before her manifestation to him, he won't necessarily recognise the description. It was five years ago and the description is second-hand and vaguely seen at best. However, when he sees her in his cell, it all comes back to him.

In all these glimpses the PCs are seeing something that no one else can. She is not manifest properly; they are seeing her disembodied form across the shroud.

You could also pre-empt what Faith explains to Aron when she manifests by having another sighting (most likely with Jack) not of Faith as she's seen by Aron (and most likely the Vanguard), but in her spectral form. When Jack sees her, he could see something dark, drenched in blood, slightly shrivelled, a form too distant to make out many details, but surrounded by a black aura of thorns, the distant echoes of screams in his mind. And then the image is gone.

Faith in her gentler guise appears as she was in life when Aron saw her last. She is wearing summer clothes (although it's now colder weather). She has a red cardigan over her shoulders, the sleeves tied at the front. She wears a white dress with blue dots speckled all over it that puffs out a little from the waist down. Her hair is long and straight, tied up with a blue bow somewhat reminiscent of Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*. Her blue eyes have a grey haze over them, her skin is pale almost milk white.

How much detail you give depends on the nature of the sightings and how long she is seen for. Here are some possibilities:

- While in the yard she is seen from inside the building looking out. At first one might think she is a visitor, but then as the brain catches up and the hunter realises that there is something wrong about her there's also the realisation that she's looking out from the cellblocks. A distraction, like someone bumping into him or turning to ask another if they can see her, takes his eye from her. When next he looks she is gone.
- While in a busy place, perhaps the yard, perhaps somewhere else, the hunter (here might be a good one for Aron) sees Faith looking straight at him. Then someone passes in front of her and impossibly she is gone.
- Looking outside, perhaps from a cell, a solitary figure is seen standing in the empty yard, her back to the prison. She stands motionlessly looking at apparently nothing. When the hunter finally looks away for whatever reasons she is gone. A variation on this might be that she is seen somewhere the hunter can get to, but getting there takes him out of sight of her for a moment and when he gets there she's nowhere to be found.

Even attracting the attention of other hunters, Faith should only be seen by one PC at a time and never so close that any can interact with her in any way.

6.3: Aron Finds Faith

This, really, should be considered the beginning of the supernatural story in the scenario. Glimpses of her are merely preludes and foreshadowing to this.

In terms of timing this should probably happen no later than halfway through the scenario, but no sooner than at least an hour of game play.

As the snores began and the inmates settled down for the night, the sobbing started up as usual. Every night someone had been crying softly. Every night, driving the misery of this place into the hearts and souls of everyone. No one liked it, but it touched all in such a way that none could ever bring themselves holler for quiet. But this time, for Aron, the sobbing seemed closer than before. He woke and with a start realised that someone other than Brian was in his cell.

She sat on the floor, leaning against the wall furthest from the bunks.

She wore that same white dress with the blue dots; she wore that same blue bow in her hair. She looked exactly the same as the last time he'd seen her. The last time he'd seen his wife.

"Faith?" said Aron quietly in disbelief.

The only thing he didn't recognise was the red cardigan she had wrapped around her shoulders. But then, with a slight queasiness as he saw some of the colour drip to the floor, he realised it wasn't a red cardigan. It was the shirt the police had found with her blood on it; it was the same shirt now soaked red with blood the patterns so faintly visible beneath.

She looked up at him, her skin so pale that it was as milk. Her normally beautifully deep blue eyes glazed with the grey-ness of death. Her black mascara ran down her cheeks from crying.

Treat Aron to an automatic success in activating his second sight instinctively (i.e. deduct a Conviction point). From this point on he can use Conviction normally.

At some appropriate point in (what will hopefully be) their conversation, Brian quietly stirs and wakes. He doesn't get an automatic success to activate his second sight. Roll as normal. If he should fail then he stares in frozen terror at the apparition. If he botches, rather than have him scream in terror and scare away an important exposition moment, he is frozen in terror in a now warm, damp bed. If he succeeds he may act accordingly.

Aron may speak with Faith normally or use Insinuate. It doesn't matter, she speaks freely with him either way. She cries now to see him as he is probably crying to see her. Trying to hug him he feels a cold shiver down his spine as her arms pass straight through him.

If Brian begins to act hostile towards her, the player should be reminded that his Creed is Vision, not Vengeance.

Faith speaks more of how lonely she's felt and how happy she is to see her beloved husband again, of how afraid she's been without him but won't offer any information unless asked. Here are some points about Faith and what she can offer.

- If asked how she died she begins crying even harder. Eventually she explains that it was some time before she realised she was dead, and she can't even remember exactly how. It's like a terrible nightmare that only comes to her in her darkest moments. It's like a haze, a fogged memory. Like a lot of her memories.
- She cries because she is so terribly alone and so very afraid.
- She is afraid because there are monsters in the prison. Not just the monsters behind bars, but other monsters. There is an evil that lurks in Stanford, an evil that brings hatred, pain and suffering to all. It preys on them and she has been hiding from it for as long as she can remember. It is a horrible, ugly, nasty, terrible thing and she is afraid that it's coming to take her to Hell for her wicked life.
- She doesn't know why she should be dragged to Hell, but that her life must have been wicked or else she wouldn't be stuck here in this prison. She wouldn't be suffering like this. Perhaps she is already in Hell, perhaps the evil is the demon that is to persecute her for all eternity.
- She hates her father. She never used to and she can't remember why she hates him but she hates him with a passion. At the mention of her father Faith suddenly turns nasty, filled with venom in her talk of her hatred for him. Go far enough for Aron (and Brian) to realise there's been a slight personality shift. And then, just as suddenly as it came, it goes. Suddenly she begins weeping again, her voice is back to its former softness.

To conclude the conversation she suddenly feels so afraid that she gets up and runs out of the cell — through the wall. When moments later, and somewhat earlier than normal, the pipes rattle, it shouldn't be too much of a lateral leap of logic to figure that this is connected to Faith. Perhaps it's the monster she spoke of?

This is where we can now see why the cells are PCs are put in the cells they are in. Brian is a Visionary. Seeing Faith he is less likely to react in a hostile manner. He'll want to figure out what she is, how does a ghost fit into his alien invasion theory? Does it? Or does he simply accept it's a ghost. While Sebastian sometimes takes a somewhat Visionary approach, he's an Avenger and,

like Marcus, is more likely to act hostile or, more importantly, is likely to use Trail, which is not appropriate at this time. Jack would try to destroy her on sight (and possibly Aron, too, when he tries to defend her). Luke is the one most likely to not react violently, but Brian makes the most sense here.

Now, the Vanguard can get involved, offer to help Aron figure this out and so forth.

Let them play it out as they feel, work out what they want to do and so forth. It is unlikely that Aron will want destroy Faith, he should want to protect her and everyone most likely will be looking for the evil presence.

Jack, if he has seen Faith's dark side, is the one most likely to be of use here. He's actually seen the creature, although remember when Jack catches his first glimpse there should be no hint that the form he saw was Faith, and no reason to suspect otherwise. Jack sees the same as everyone else, it's just that for story drama he saw her spectral form on that occasion.

6.4: Fuelled by Hate

From this point on evidence of the supernatural influence can gradually be more obvious. Jack's always active second sight shows him that many of the people around him have been touched by something, but until now there was no way to tell what. Now, things can get a little more obvious. For the others, allow the occasional reflexive activation of second sight, but don't be too hasty. Give Jack a moment or two to allow him to choose whether he wants to use Impart.

A dark force clearly possesses a nasty guard, perhaps while beating a prisoner, guiding his hand.

The same dark force possesses one of the prisoners during a brutal brawl in which he clearly enters a rage, attacking with total all consuming hatred, perhaps even going so far as to demonstrate animalistic viciousness, like biting off an ear from the already bloody and beaten victim.

These could and probably should be incorporated into the climaxes of some of the subplots. It is not this dark force that is directly responsible for the acts themselves, but the force clearly feeds of the negative emotions and takes the opportunity to make a bad situation worse.

Play around with it and allow yourself to become more obvious in its effects. Any attempts by the hunters to scare off the force succeed, for now. While without determining any anchors (see below) the ghost cannot be permanently destroyed, it would rather not be banished to "limbo" while it waits to recuperate. Find opportunities to just play on the presence of an evil force fuelling the increasing violence.

6.5: Faith Returns

The more Aron is near her, the more Faith begins to remember, and the stronger Faith gets over the hate-filled monster in her.

Find opportunities for Faith to re-appear. Now that she knows that Aron can see her and that he's not scared of her she likes to come and see him when she can. Keep an eye on Aron's Conviction rating, be sure not to needlessly wear it down with pointless visits. Each visit needs to advance the story; it's merely down to you where you find those moments.

One such moment could be while Aron is alone in the showers; suddenly he sees a trickle of blood run between his feet in the water below. He turns to find Faith standing watching him, smiling sweetly. The blood is dripping from the shirt around her.

She enjoys being with him, but her emotions are temperamental. When she is reminded of something sad, she cries and weeps profusely. When she is happy (which should be very rare) she is loving and caring and sweet. When she is angry, she enters a foul rage (later she'll get so angry she switches fully to her spectral form, but be sure that while in this fits of anger her dark side is manifesting, she doesn't fully switch... yet).

She is sweet and happy to be with him. She tells him how happy she is that they are together again. That he can keep her company now and that when, eventually, he dies here (like most often do) they will be together forever. Make it sound romantic (from her point of view), but with that obvious taint of menace (from his).

She reveals that the more she thinks of Aron, the happier she becomes and the clearer her memories. She remembers the way he used to touch her, she remembers the smell of the flowers he used to bring her. She remembers the exhilaration when they secretly got married. Play on a few little sweet moments she remembers. All of these are hints that perhaps, if questioned, she might remember her death. Indeed she does, but obviously, while happy she won't want to think about it.

Questioned she becomes sad again, revealing that, indeed, she can remember a bit more now. She'd decided to tell her father about the marriage. He was angry with her. They started arguing and he insisted that they get the marriage annulled. He wouldn't let her leave, he grabbed her arm and she hit him. He hit her back and she fell backwards onto the desk. Pain in the back. Somehow she's slipped and the letter-opener has slipped into her back, into her spine. She might (if not getting too angry yet) lift the shirt wrapped over her shoulders and reveal the source of all the blood – a stab wound in her back. She passed out from the pain, he must have thought he killed her.

The last thing she remembers is coming to and looking up from a hole with her father standing over her and wet concrete falling onto her, falling onto her body until there was darkness.

At this point there is a momentary personality switch. She becomes bitter and angry, she uses profanities towards her father. Things start escalating until just as suddenly as she switched, she becomes all smiles again. She tells Aron that all of that is neither here nor there, because no he's with her. Forever.

7: Escape From Stanford

Eventually, things need to meet a head. All the subplots need to reach a head, and the supernatural plot needs to take over. In the end, all the subplots are just there as complications because when things really get busting they all fall by the wayside. But how does this happen?

Well, in part this is down to you, the Storyteller, to discover in play, depending on what directions and actions the players are taking.

The important thing to remember is to maintain a steadily rising level of hatred, violence, anger and general unrest in the prison. Use this sympathetically to the pacing of the scenario. In other words, use it to heighten the drama and the tension, like a pot about to boil over. In prison slang, create the "smoke on the horizon" throughout the scenario so that when things pop, it all makes sense.

Use the dynamics between the prison gangs to create a tension point, naturally, here some of the PCs are caught in the middle of this. Make the most of it.

Fights could break out completely out of the blue, right next to where the PCs are sitting, planning their next move. These fights could be completely unrelated, but maintain the level of danger and tension, hatred and violence, and keep escalating it.

Be careful that Faith doesn't appear when Jack is around until you are ready to light the fuse. Chances are he'll get be the fuse to the powder keg of the prison riot to come. Having Faith meet Jack (especially if it's in the company of the others, or even just Aron) and see what happens.

It's in Jack's nature to do something about her, it's in his nature to not have any sympathy for her and to simply see her as a creature that needs to be destroyed.

7.1: Faith's Anchors

Through use of Discern, Sebastian might establish that Faith never leaves the prison. More to the point, through use of Pinpoint either Sebastian or Brian is able to determine that her weakness are the bonds that keep her tied to this world. With three or more successes, they have a vague sense of where these objects are.

Provide the information in whatever means you feel appropriate, however, her anchors are as detailed below, the extra detail is for Storyteller only to understand the connections:

- **The prison itself** — her undiscovered body encased in the concrete foundations
- **Her father, Warden Wilson** — she originally sought to bring him to justice somehow, her shadow, however, decided to achieve this by turning Stanford prison into the most corrupt and violent prison. The intention to eventually build up a catalogue of crimes that will land him on the other side of the bars.
- The last one is slightly nebulous since it comes and goes, therefore is very weak and should possibly only be revealed a high number of successes. Faith holds onto **her love for Aron** to

keep her here, but every now and again she loses control and her shadow takes over again. At that point the link is gone, but severing it completely will certainly make it more difficult for Faith to ever get control again.

7.2: Deuces Wild

What the PCs do with the above information is down to them. Jack's experience with ghosts might tell him to turn destroy them. He's already done it once before. This provokes him into a situation where he is likely to try killing Aron if he learns of the latter, try killing Warden Wilson and might even contemplate burning down the prison and creating a riot to also make an escape.

If Jack tries to harm Aron in any way then that's your catalyst to initiate the final conflict. If any of her other anchors are put in danger, that can become the catalyst. Or even if Jack just sees her and openly starts attacking.

However it starts, Faith needs to get pushed over the edge. It may well be that the mere presence of Jack's passionless rage at the supernatural is enough to tip the balance.

This is the big important switch. This is not just her darker side scratching that the surface, this is her total switch to an angry ghost, her dark side manifest. The point at which every hunter (especially Aron) should realise that the evil she spoke of is herself!

The changeover should be quite dramatic two. Suddenly she howls and blood begins to stream down her front. As Faith, the wound in her back didn't go all the way through to the front, but in reality it did. Now as her shadow emerges, it does that. Blood begins to stream from her hairline and rapidly she is covered in blood. A black aura surrounds her; the room seems to get colder and even a little darker as it stretches beyond her like the shadow of a giant, rapidly growing thorn-bush. Her eyes fill with darkness, there are the distant echoes of pain, suffering, screaming and shouts of rage and anger.

One of her first actions needs to be using Summon Angry Ghosts. For the purposes of the story there is no need to roll, and the Pathos spent should be considered automatically regained by the riots about to be instigated. In two rounds (or sooner if you need to protect Faith), seven angry ghosts appear. They are the ghosts of some of the worst and most violent criminals to have died in Stanford. Three stay and fight the hunters for as long as necessary to protect Faith while the others set about instigating a riot.

Let's pause for a moment: "Hey, isn't that putting her own anchors in danger? That's endangering the Warden and the prison. That makes no sense." Yes, it does make sense. The level of hatred and violence in the prison is a reflection of her emotions. Things have been escalating because Faith has been forced to remember why she was a ghost, something she forgot and had become just an angry ghost, feeding on general hate and violence. But the malice inside her has been growing now, become more focussed. She's rediscovering her *reason* to hate.

Being attacked (especially if Aron has – willingly or even unwilling – betrayed her) is stirring her to being the angriest she's ever been. This is reflected in the instigation of all out violence throughout the prison.

Use the riots as a dramatic tool, also. It shouldn't merely be happening in the background. It intrudes on the battle, complicates the fight. Puts the hunters in serious danger as they get wrapped up in it all trying to fight the ghosts while defending themselves from the violence around them.

You could even turn things up a notch by having an angry ghost (or even Faith) possess one of the rioters (best to make it someone they've crossed paths with before — perhaps Pancho) and turn on them. The possessed human is supernaturally stronger and therefore far more deadly than a normal rioter. Additionally, it protects the ghost since any harm dealt is given to the host body while it can still try to kill the hunter. Once the host is dead the ghost just slips out of the body and can keep attacking; perhaps even slipping into yet another body if it has enough Pathos left. Cleave, however, harms both the body and the ghost. The possessed body has 10 health levels and receives no damage penalties.

Use whatever tricks in the book you can think of so long as you follow these basic rules:

1. *Be dramatic* — Use whatever trick makes the most dramatic sense at that point in time.
2. *Apply Common Sense* — While the spectres' Pathos has a considerable boost with the riots, making it a bit of a picnic, it does not provide them with a limitless supply. Hitting the hunters with power after power after power is not dramatic, and it's not fun. While I'm not limiting the ghosts to specific powers, use some degree of sense that they will only have a limit number of tricks they can throw at the PCs in this duration. After all, the max their Pathos can be is 10 at any one time.
3. *The Summoned Ghosts Are Mooks* — Treat them as such. It's okay for these guys to get trashed and they should, ideally, be dealt with before Faith.
4. *Aron is an Anchor* — Don't forget that Faith, even if he betrayed her, should still be protecting Aron from harm where possible. If Aron dies it should be at Jack's hands, not those of an angry ghost.

7.3: Escape Dust

What this scenario really boils down to, is to engineer the escape of the Vanguard from prison so that they can have more adventures — but it shouldn't end the moment the walls are breached with them running out of prison when it all starts burning down.

The deuces (the prison's riot squad) are trying to control the situation, but the prisoners are winning (not just because they have supernatural aid). Eventually, whether by the players' help, or just because of the riots, the prison catches fire and the sprinkler systems malfunction (tampered with by an angry ghost).

Faith attempts to make her escape by riding Warden Wilson's body. He's trying to make his escape in his car

(driven by some anonymous prison officer). She's not taking control of it, just riding it to safety. After all, he's one of her anchors. If Wilson is killed (let him remain immune to anyone but the PCs) then there is only one person Faith can latch onto: Aron. So long as he has his Conviction active she cannot possess him in any way. Therefore, she creates for herself a temporary anchor in one of the fleeing prisoners.

Jack and the others may well be fighting between themselves also and therefore there are a few possible outcomes here.

In any one of these instances, read the endings only when you feel it's appropriate. Most likely it will be as they make their escape. Allow for a bit of time for them to react to Warden Wilson's possession and see what happens, read as appropriate from below.

Remember, this is, in truth, Aron's story, so in any of the circumstances where Aron is killed, the conclusion should be read fairly shortly after.

In all cases, you may have to adapt the text slightly to fit exactly what is happening.

Jack is dead, Aron lives

Read or paraphrase the following if Warden **Jacob Wilson is still alive**:

The prisoners poured out of the broken gates, pounding on the warden's car as it squeezed it's way through them, indiscriminately running over anyone that got in its way.

Aron could see the warden's fearful face looking out at the end of his career, as if superimposed on top of it he could see Faith, smiling to herself.

Maybe she's found her peace in finally destroying her father's career; maybe she's too far-gone to leave it at that.

At least with what freedom he had now as a fugitive he'd have a chance to find out if she was still worth saving, and maybe clear his name.

Read or paraphrase the following if Warden **Jacob Wilson is dead**:

As the prisoners poured out of the broken gates, Aron walked to the warden's dead body.

"Where to now, Faith?" he said to himself quietly, looking around at the stampeding prisoners.

He looked at the tree line where the prisoners were now escaping into the world. One of them, a Puerto Rican youth Aron didn't recognise, turned and looked back with a smile on his face. As if superimposed he could see Faith smiling at him. Aron wondered if he'd see her again. The prison was destroyed and her father was

dead. What else does she have to hang on to?

He hoped deep down that she might still have love for him. If that was the case then she might return to him and he can save her, help her move on.

Aron smiled to himself.

"See you soon," he whispered to the wind.

Aron is dead, Jack gets away

If Aron is killed and Warden Jacob **Wilson is still alive** then Jack should get an opportunity to try killing Wilson. If he fails, then it'll probably be because Wilson has managed to get his car clear of the prisoners and drive away to freedom. Therefore, read or paraphrase the following:

The warden's car broke through the fleeing prisoners, indiscriminately running them down when they got in the way, but soon it was away to freedom.

Jack ran after it as much as he could, but it was too fast. Looking back at him from the rear window, was Jacob Wilson with Faith's angry face staring back at him.

"It's not over yet," he whispered to the wind. "I'm gonna finish what I started."

If both **Aron and Jacob Wilson are dead** then all of Faith's anchors have been destroyed. Read or paraphrase the following from the moment the last of them is killed:

Faith stood over the body and looked up. She opened her mouth to speak, but instead there came a scream of utter fear. Her body became ravaged as though hit by a storm of thousands of tiny shards of glass, dark hands came from all around her, pulling her into a darkness from which emanated what sounded like the terrifying tortured screaming of ten thousand souls in hellish agony. Faith's form was now ragged and torn as the thin shadowy hands enveloped her completely and the echoed screaming reached a crescendo which suddenly popped into an eerie silence as she vanished completely from this world into whatever damnation was awaiting her.

A shiver ran down the spine of each of the Vanguard.

Allow the Vanguard the decision whether they're going to let Jack get away. This can be a simply yes or no, out of character question at first. If they say "no", then let them act as appropriate in character. If they say "yes" then read or paraphrase the following:

"See ya soon," said Jack as he turned, smiling, and then ran for the tree line.

"Damn it," said Brian. "Are we going to let him get away?"

"I don't think this is the last we'll see of Jack Valentine," said Sebastian, watching the fleeing figure. "But right now we're better off as far away from him as possible." He turned to the others. "Come on, let's get outta here."

Both Aron and Jack are dead

Aron, here, has most likely killed by Jack, and Jack most likely was killed by the Vanguard. In the case that **Jacob Wilson is still alive** read or paraphrase the following:

The prisoners poured out of the broken gates, pounding on the warden's car as it squeezed its way through them, indiscriminately running over anyone that got in its way.

Inside the car the Vanguard could see the warden's fearful face looking out at the end of his career, looking back at them standing over the body, and as if superimposed on top of it they could see Faith, crying.

Maybe she's found her peace in finally destroying her father's career, maybe she's too far gone to leave it at that.

"Come on," said Sebastian. "Let's get outta here."

If both **Aron and Jacob Wilson are dead** then all of Faith's anchors have been destroyed. Most likely you will have read the appropriate part of "Aron is dead, Jack gets away" above, and then the players have decided to attack Jack. If for some reason this is not the case then go back and read the part for if Aron and Jacob are both dead. If Jack is also dead at this point then this is how the scene ends.

Both Aron and Jack live

Here we get to a tricky ending. It is unlikely at this point that Jack and the others are getting along, so this ending is difficult to predict how this might occur. However, if you are left with this outcome, here are some possible ways to end it (although you may find yourself doing some heavy adapting).

Read or paraphrase the following if **Jacob Wilson is still alive**:

The warden's car broke through the fleeing prisoners, indiscriminately running them down when they got in the way, but soon it was away to freedom.

Jack ran after it as much as he could, but it was too fast. Looking back at him from the rear window, was Jacob Wilson with Faith's face, as if superimposed, staring back at him.

"It's not over yet," he whispered to the wind. "I'm gonna finish what I started."

"See ya soon," said Jack, turning to the others, and then he ran for the tree line.

Aron watched the car disappear down the road.

Maybe she's found her peace in finally destroying her father's career, he thought to himself. Maybe she's too far-gone to leave it at that.

At least with what freedom he had now as a fugitive he'd have a chance to find out if she was still worth saving, and maybe clear his name. But he'd have to make sure Jack didn't get to her first.

"I don't think this is the last we'll see of Jack Valentine," said Sebastian, watching the fleeing figure. "But right now we're better off as far away from him as possible." He turned to the others. "Come on, let's get outta here."

Read or paraphrase the following if Warden **Wilson is dead** — it's assumed that this is being read after Jack has presumably killed him:

As the prisoners poured out of the broken gates, Jack looked up from the warden's dead body.

He looked around at the stampeding prisoners. Over at the tree line, where the prisoners were now escaping into the world, one of them, a Puerto Rican youth he didn't recognise turned and looked back with a smile on his face. As if super-imposed he could see Faith smiling at him.

"It's not over yet," he whispered to the wind. "I'm gonna finish what I started." He turned to the others. "See ya soon," he said and then ran for the tree line.

Aron watched the Puerto Rican disappear into the trees and wondered if he'd see Faith again. The prison was destroyed and her father is dead. What else does she have to hang on to?

He hoped deep down that she might still have love for him. If that was the case then she might return to him and he can save her, help her move on. But first he'd have to protect her from Jack.

"See you soon," he whispered to the wind.

8: Epilogue

Chief U. S. Marshal Tucker Vance sat in his office after a hard day. It had been one of those tough days. He could do with some rest.

"Just ten more minutes," he said to himself, looking at the clock. He'd spent too much time recently away from his family. Finally, things were settling down and he could go on vacation and spend some quality time with them.

A knock on the door an exasperated marshal opened it. He was a young lad, just started working for him.

"What do you want?" Tucker asked, flatly.

"Sir, we got a major fugitive situation," he said, slightly out of breath from running.

Tucker swung around on his chair. "Well? Are you going to tell me more or do I have to hit a prompt or something?"

If Warden **Wilson escaped and Jack lived** continue with the following:

"There's been a breakout at Stanford State Penitentiary," said the young marshal.

"That's one hell of a lot of escaped convicts. Who's the warden?"

"Jacob Wilson, he was found dead in his home."

This isn't good, Tucker thought to himself. That vacation's gone right out the window.

"Well, come on, son, stop standing around. We got us some fugitives to catch."

If Warden **Wilson escaped and Jack died** continue with the following:

"There's been a breakout at Stanford State Penitentiary," said the young marshal.

"That's one hell of a lot of escaped convicts. Who's the warden?"

"Jacob Wilson, we're trying to get in touch with him, but no one knows where he is."

This isn't good, Tucker thought to himself. That vacation's gone right out the window.

"Well, come on, son, stop standing around. We got us some fugitives to catch."

If Warden **Wilson died** at the prison continue with the following:

"There's been a breakout at Stanford State Penitentiary," said the young marshal. "And they killed the warden."

This isn't good, Tucker thought to himself. That vacation's gone right out the window.

"Well, come on, son, stop standing around. We got us one hell of a lot of escaped convicts to catch."

Brief Glossary of Prison Slang

Prison slang is very rich. This brief glossary offers a few choice terms that can add colour to your roleplaying.

AB: Aryan Brotherhood, a white prison gang.

Ace: a puff of a cigarette, as in "Bust me down with an ace"

Ace-Duce: Best friend.

Adjustment Centre: The A.C., a segregated control unit. The name was developed during the prisons adopted language reflecting treatment of prisoners. In theory, the unit was to provide an intensive program. In practice, such units remained (and remain) "the hole."

Ain't Right: A situation, person, or object of dubious correctness as in "Some-thin' ain't right with that Cat-J."

All Day: A life sentence, as in "He's doin' all day . . ."

Ass Betting: Gambling without any funds or means of paying back one's loses.

Ass Out: A prisoner who has does not have anything coming or who has disrespected officers to the point where they do not give him anything.

Attitude: The display of annoyance, hostility, contempt, courage, or an unbroken spirit toward others.

Attitude Adjustment: The need for drugs. Also, a physical act by officers, including use by electric shock (taser, stun gun).

Badge: A correctional officer.

Banger: A knife. Also called a burner or a shank.

Beef: A disciplinary charge, as to "catch a beef."

BGF: The Black Guerrilla Family, an African-American prison gang that originated as a revolutionary organisation influenced by George Jackson.

Billies: White men.

Bird: Someone who is a fool or idiot. Also, a prisoner sings like a bird (rat). One who escapes from prison.

Birds on the Line: Warning that someone is listening to a conversation.

Blade: A prison-made weapon, a shank. To "blade up" is to cut someone up.

Blanket party: Throwing a blanket over a despised prisoner, so he or she can't identify an attacker.

Blickey: AIDS, as in "He or she has the blickey."

Blickum: Generic term used as a substitute for other words. As in "He got a 72 hour blickum" substituting for lockdown. "Jont" may be used in a similar way.

Blind: Area where correctional officers cannot see, as in "Let's go to the blind."

Bling Bling: Officers are coming.

Blood In, Blood Out: To enter a prison gang by committing a stabbing, to leave by being the victim of a stabbing.

Bomb: Paper rolled tightly together that is lit and used to heat items.

Bone Crusher: A particularly large prison weapon (shank).

Boss: An officer -- some say in it is "sorry son of a bitch" spelled backwards.

Box: 1) A carton of cigarettes. 2) A quarterly package containing personal items sent from the outside.

Brass: High ranking administration.

Brew: Homemade alcohol; "pruno."

Brick: A carton of cigarettes

Broadway: The first floor of some tiers. A wide area where prisoners come and go -- and occasionally may be housed if the prison is particularly crowded.

Buck Horn: Hand rolled cigarette.

Buck Master: One who makes homemade alcohol. See "pruno."

Bug: A crazy person.

Bull: Guard.

Bull Dog: A prisoner who uses fear and intimidation to get something from a weaker person.

Bum Rap: A bad charge.

Bumpin Ya Gums: Talking excessively.

Burn rubber: Exclamation meaning "Get lost," "Leave me alone!"

Burnt Up: To get into trouble or to receive a disciplinary report.

Bus Therapy: The practice of transferring prisoners from one institution to another, to keep them from away from their property, visits, and other contacts. Particularly used in the federal system. Also known as "diesel therapy," "grey goose therapy," or "round robin."

Cadillac: (1) Coffee with cream & sugar, smooth, rich and creamy. (2) A fish line. (3) A cushion job or enjoyable work on the inside. (4) The best. (5) On officer's term for a vacant cell.

Cappin': Talking about one's family, relatives, or girlfriend in a disrespectful way.

Cap: The amount of marijuana that fits into a chapstick cap.

Catch a Square: To get ready to fight, as "You'd better catch a square, punk." Derives from the corners in a boxing ring.

Catcher: Sexually passive or submissive, often victimised

Cat-J: A prisoner who needs mental health treatment. Sometimes referred to as a "J-Cat."

Cat Walk: Walkway above yard or tier where officers patrol. Officers in the area, as in "cat walk front to back."

Cellie: Cellmate.

Chalking: To run interference with officers while another prisoner is breaking a rule.

Checking: A fight. When it happens in the fields, it is generally sanctioned by officers. When it happens in the building, it is generally testing to see whether someone new is going to ride or to be a punk.

Cheese Eater: An informer.

Chin Check: To hit someone in the jaw to see if he will stand up for himself.

Clavo: A stash or collection. "He has a huge clavo of jelly-beans."

Click up: To join a gang.

C.O.: Correctional Officer.

Convict: A prisoner with traditional values. One who has pride and respect, who maintains integrity, who is not an informant, whose word is good. A convict is different from an inmate.

Convict Boss: A prisoner given authority in a prison system.

Cop Out: To inform on someone.

Copping Deuces: 1) To contradict one's self, 2) To change one's mind, to the sore displeasure of another.

Corner: "A corner is defined by who a man hangs out with. That's his corner. Lot's of times, even a loner is hooked to a certain corner, so within that you've got 'strong corners,' 'weak corners,' etc. Once you know all the corners, where they are, and what their guidelines are, then you get an easy feel for the pulse of a prison." — Dannie Martin, *Committing Journalism*.

Count: The institutional count, repeated at different times in the day. Everything stops while prison staff make sure no one is missing. May be referred to as the "count time."

Crimey: Best friend or co-defendant.

Daddy: A dominant prisoner who protects or uses a weaker homosexual partner. A homosexual.

Deuces: A squad of correctional officers, usually called in to control a riot. "The C.O.'s just dialled the deuces."

Dipping in the Kool Aid: Trying to enter a conversation when a person has no business doing it.

Dis: Disrespect.

Dog: Homeboy or friend.

Dog House: Lock up.

Dope Fiend Move: A sleazy manoeuvre.

Drop a Dime: To inform on someone. "He dropped a dime on his bunkie."

Dry Snitch: a prisoner who talks about something important to another prisoner in front of an officer.

Ducat: Prison passes for movement in the institution. Assignments for jobs, cell changes, sick-call, and other prison programs. Trust fund withdrawals for canteen draws.

Due Process: In prison, very little process is due. Under federal constitutional standards, the prison may not even be required to follow its own rules.

Ear Hustling: Listening to conversations going on over the tier (eavesdropping).

Escape Dust: Fog.

Eyeball: To give a long disparaging look at an officer.

Fence Parole: Escape.

Fish: A new prisoner.

Fish Line: A line used to pull items from one cell to another. A "fishing pole" refers to an item used to facilitate this line, such as a rolled up newspaper.

Fix: To be given a favour or served with more food than other prisoners. As in, "Fix me up."

Flat Time: To serve one's time without parole.

Flavours: Brand name cigarettes or cigarettes received from outside the canteen.

Floor Wet: Call to warn others that officers are coming.

Four Minute Job: Shower.

Free Pass: Let off by prison staff without making a further report.

Free World: The outside. Also mass made cigarettes - as opposed to hand-rolled.

Galboy: A person who plays a female role in a homosexual relationship.

Gang Jacket: Validated as being a gang member.

Gate Time: When the doors to the cell are opened so that one can get in or out.

Getting Rec: Going to the recreational yard or harming someone for no reason

Getting Buzzed: Tattooed.

Gladiator Fight: Fighting set up for the benefit of others. A gladiator school may refer to a facility that engages in this practice.

Good Lookin' Out: Thanks a lot.

Goon Squad: The security squad that handles special assignments, a task force of officers.

Green Light: To be a target for death.

Grey Bar Hotel: Prison.

Hack: A correctional officer.

Head Running: Talking.

Heat: Close surveillance.

Heat Wave: A prisoner who is under constant suspicion and brings that attention to those around him.

Heart: Strong, honourable convictions. "The dude had a lotta heart."

Heart Check: Assigning a prison gang member a hazardous "mission" (such as a murder) to see if he's still down with the gang.

Herb: A weak prisoner.

Hit a Lick: 1) Come into a good sum of money. 2) To masturbate.

Hog: A prisoner who is willing to fight, who will not back down.

Hole: Solitary confinement, segregation, disciplinary detention cells.

Homeboy: Another prisoner from one's hometown or neighbourhood. Homie.

Homes: 1) General greeting or expression used between various prisoners. 2) One's cell. Prisoners returning to the cell may be "going home."

Hootch: Homemade (or cellmade) alcohol

Hot Water: Warning that officer is coming.

House: Cell.

House Tossing: An officer who has taken a prisoner's belongings and tossed them to the floor, perhaps stepping on them.

Hung Up: A prisoner who tries to kill himself by hanging in his cell.

Ink: Tattoos.

Inmate: Just another prisoner. It may be a derogatory term to refer to a prisoner who does not have the values of a convict. A new prisoner who does not know the code of the prison system.

Inmate Fund: An account where all the prisoners "official" money is stored and used to buy commissary items. The Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF) is the trust account that is to be used for the benefit of all prisoners (such as renting movies, buying new recreational equipment), and is generally funded through surcharges applied to various purchases and activities.

In The Car: To be in a tight circle of friends, "You're right with me, or, whatever I got, you got." Prisoners who lift weights together.

Iron Pile: Weights. Also, "pig iron."

Jail: A county facility for pretrial detainees or prisoners serving short terms (less than a year). Distinct from prison.

Jam Up: Ask a prisoner about something.

Joos: Cigarettes.

Jolt: A long sentence.

Juice Card: Privileges afforded a prisoner based on an officer's favour. As in, "He's on the phone again, must have a juice card."

June Bug: A prisoner who is considered to be a slave or footman for others.

Kamikaze Move: A hit in front of an officer.

Keep It Real: Don't lie.

Kicking It: 1) Sleeping with someone. 2) Hanging out with a friend.

Kick Rocks: Go away or leave alone.

Kite: Notes or letters. Any message passed to a prisoner. To "shoot a kite" is to send a message.

Lettuce: Prisoners who go out to gang rape.

Lifer: A prisoner serving a life sentence.

Lockdown: The policy of confining a group of prisoners or an entire prison to cells. This is generally done in response to unrest or emergency -- although some lockdowns are instituted for extended periods of time.

Long Ride: Doing life.

Lop: A prisoner held in low regard or considered stupid. A fool, chump or sucker.

Mafias: Dark sun-glasses.

Man: An officer someone in a position of authority -- "The Man."

Man Walking: A signal that an officer is coming down the tier.

Midnight Express: Escape, when one catches the "midnight express." Derived from the film of the same name, detailing an escape from a Turkish prison.

Monkey: Correctional officer.

Monkey Mouth: Individual who speaks constantly about nothing substantial or valid.

Monster: HIV. "He has the Monster."

Nothin' Coming: Inmate not deserving of regular issue or privileges, as in "That little girl stranglin' SOB has nothin' coming."

Nut up: Go crazy, become enraged. To plead insanity, sometimes shortened to "nuttin'."

On Pipe: A homosexual or "punk" as in "He's on pipe."

Organisation: Gang.

Peckerwood: A white prisoner. Originally, this was a derogatory term, but it has been adopted by some white gangs as positive reflection of gang loyalty.

Peels: An orange jumpsuit worn in some jails and prisons, from "orange peels."

Pinner: A marijuana cigarette the size of a toothpick.

Pipeline: A channel through which contraband enters a prison.

Playing on Ass: Gambling without money -- if a prisoner loses "it's his ass."

Pruno: Homemade alcohol, fermented juice, the classic prison drink. It is made by putting fruit juice, fruit, fruit peelings in a plastic bag with bread and/or sugar. The yeast in the bread along with the sugar helps ferment the fruit juice, fruit, or peelings. The plastic bag is usually placed down the toilet and secured so that it is not detected.

Pumpkin Head: To have put something in pillowcase and beaten somebody with it until their face becomes bruised or a "pumpkin head." Also, to give a "pumpkin head degree."

Punk: Homosexual, generally passive.

Purple: Illegal drugs going through the prison system.

Rack: Bunk.

Rack In: Get in the cell.

Radio: 1) An old term asking for quiet (Shut up and listen to the radio). 2) A warning that an officer is walking towards one, and to turn off the radio or stop what one is doing.

Rag: A bandanna.

Rank: High ranking officers, such as lieutenants or captains. As in "I want to talk to some rank."

Range: Tier, as in "yell down the range."

Rat: An informant. See "Snitch."

Red Tag: Confine to a cell.

Red Light Special: A death warrant on a member of the opposing gang.

Rest Your Neck: Be quiet, as in "Lay down and rest your neck." Also, "Bite your pillow."

Road dogs: Prisoners who walk the track on the exercise yard together. A person who has remained a best friend through thick and thin whether on the inside or on the outside.

Run Through: Planned escape.

Rustle: Riot or disturbance.

Schooled: Taught in the ways of prison life.

Sending Out: In order to make a point about prison conditions, a weak inmate may be beaten, or sent out of the unit.

Shakedown: A search of a cell, work area, or person. The most common complaint by prisoners is that property is lost, destroyed, or left scattered after a search.

Shank: Handmade prison weapon -- generally a stabbing instrument. Also called a shiv or a piece.

Shokram: To slice someone's throat, throwing a homemade weapon

Shooting a Move: Breaking a rule.

Shot Caller: A person on the yards who directs action/discipline. Someone in authority in a gang, a high ranking gang member.

Shower Hawk: A prisoner who preys upon others in the showers.

Six: Keep watch, as in "Hey, Joe, keep six for me."

Skating: Being in an area of the prison you are not allowed, especially another housing unit. Being "out of place".

Smoke on the Horizon: Increasing tensions and grievances that may explode into violence.

Snitch: An informant. Rat. One who has given up names or activities.

Spread Your Shots: Borrow elsewhere. "It's okay for now, but why don't you spread your shots?" Also referred to as "Spread your hustle."

Square: Cigarette.

Stand Your Gate: Order for prisoner to be in position in front of the cell.

Stand Point: To keep lookout for another prisoner.

Stash: To hide something.

Stiched up: A problem that has been taken care of, generally through a fight.

Stick: To stab with a knife.

Stinger: Appliance used to heat water, which may be created by attaching live electrical wires to a metal plate.

Stuntin': To lie, or to pretend to have knowledge of something.

Sweetie-Gold: Individually wrapped cookie-cakes saved from meals and used for gambling

Tack: Tattoo.

Tip: Prison gang.

Talking out the side of his neck: Disbelief in what a prisoner is saying. From past practices when prisoners were not allowed to speak to each other and learned to talk to the person next to them while standing and looking straight ahead.

Tat: Tattoo.

Three Knee Deep: Stabbed with a shank, not deep enough to kill, as a warning.

Three Snap Case: An individual likely to go berserk at any given moment.

Tipped up: Member of the Aryan Brotherhood or other prison gang.

Traffic Ticket: Minor disciplinary offence.

Tune Up: A severe beating by an officer.

The Walk: The walkway in a prison, which leads from one place to another. Most walks contain yellow lines on both sides. Inmates are required to walk on one side of the lines.

Waterhead: A derogatory term referring to an inept inmate. Someone who does not fit in and is not respected.

Wobble Head: Prisoners with mental health problems or on medication.

Wood: White prisoner, usually a derogatory term. From "Peckerwood."

Working the Corners: Building a relationship in prison to provide news, information, or protection. Being "plugged" into the prison undercurrents.

Wreck: When a prisoner gets into trouble, as in "Did you hear about Jones? He got into a wreck last night on East yard."

Yard: The exercise area. In segregation, the yard may be nothing more than a concrete "dog run" with no equipment. Other units may have a basketball court, recreation equipment, or grassy areas.

Yellow Brick Road: Yellow lines indicating path that prisoners from stay within.

Yo Yo: A person who is not sexually active with other prisoners.

Non-Player Characters

For the most part I'm not going to bother providing stats for NPCs. Use common sense as to what they're likely to have. It's doubtful any prisoner or guard has a Willpower higher than five, and as far as Faith's concerned she does and can do whatever is most funky, cool and dramatic.

However, the following stats might be useful.

Angry Ghosts

Here are the stats you may wish to use when dealing with the angry ghosts that Faith summons at the end.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Attributes: Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Empathy 2, Intimidation 5, Occult 4

Willpower: 6

Pathos: 8

Tricks: *Full Possession* (Manipulation + Empathy, difficulty victim's Willpower, Cost 4 Pathos), *Firebug* (Stamina + Occult, difficulty 7, Cost 3 Pathos, number of successes determines size and heat of fire), *Armed*

and Dangerous (Strength +3, difficulty 6, Cost 2 Pathos, number of successes determines number of turns the materialised melee weapon lasts for, all damage inflicted is real as per weapon type).

Each Angry Ghost has 10 health levels and can soak all forms of damage.

Possessed Humans

Whether it be Faith or an Angry Ghost possessing a guard or a prisoner, use the same stats as below. Ratings provided for adult human with the possessed bodies (in parentheses).

Attributes: Strength 3 (7), Dexterity 3 (5), Stamina 3 (5), Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3 (5)

Attributes: Brawl (3), Dodge (3), Intimidation (4), Melee (2)

Tricks: A ghost in possession of a human host cannot use any of its other powers until it abandons the host.

A possessed human has the normal (7) health levels. The host cannot soak Lethal damage, but the ghost *can*.

Player Characters

Special Note for the Web Edition:

The background sheets for the Vanguard are provided here because they contain opinions on Aron and Jack, which are relevant for this game. However, in the interests of saving space I have left out all other aspects of the character sheets, which can be obtained from the first scenario, *Oh Daddy Dear*. If you do not have this, then you can download it from <http://www.zencadet.com> and may even find it more entertaining to play this scenario first if you haven't already since it explains how the Vanguard found themselves behind bars.

Normally, in a Web Edition I remove all the material that I took from the source books to explain the characters' Edges and some of the basic rules so that, for a convention, you can play it without needing to refer to the sourcebook. This makes it nearly completely stand-alone. However, in the case of Jack Valentine I have used **Creedbook: Wayward**, which might prove tricky to track down now that it is out of print. Since playing Jack Valentine accurately to his creed is a vital aspect of the game I have kept in all of this information so that if you cannot find this book then you can still enjoy playing the character.

Have fun!

SEBASTIAN MATTHEWS

"I have come to kick ass and smoke cigars," stubbing out his lit cigar underfoot, "and I'm all out of smokes."

Sebastian is a tallish man in his mid-forties. He has white hair, a close-trimmed grey-white beard with a dark patch on the chin. He always wears a long, dark brown trench coat (with many customised pockets), sometimes he'll wear a matching wide-brimmed hat and he smokes cigars.

Although he is a good judge of character, Sebastian can sometimes be naively trusting of people. If they are not an alien, they *must* be ultimately trustworthy. The exception comes from obvious authority figures who are all under the control of aliens whether they know it or not, but are not the real enemy. A policeman can be trusted only to do his job — they just don't understand what's at stake.

His trusting nature makes him very approachable by people, but when wronged he exacts revenge to the extreme. So treat him with the respect and dignity that he deserves, or he'll kick your ass and blow smoke in your face before you can say, "Screw you, Mcgrew!" And while you lie, bewildered, staring at the ceiling while the world grows dark around you, the last thing you'll see is his mug leaning over you, and the last thing you'll hear is him saying, "The name's Matthews. Sebastian Matthews. Don't you go forgetting it now," as, the last thing you feel is him stubbing out his cigar on your face!

Okay, admittedly his link with reality has a few kinks in it, but up until about a year ago he was just a regular guy. Well, fairly regular. About as regular as a man whose wife had left him, children had disowned him, who'd lost his job and was now drifting from state to state just trying not to freeze to death at night, his longest lasting friend Mr. John Daniel. Well, that and a real guy called Slim. Sebastian liked Slim. He was easy to talk to, easy to listen to, and he seemed to have the answers. What were the answers? Aliens! They're everywhere! They're controlling us; they're fighting secret wars right under our noses. He was a conspiracy nut. Sebastian didn't take it all that seriously, but it was better than TV.

Then, one day, Slim vanished. At first, Sebastian didn't think too much about it, but he began to miss his friend and when he went out to look for him he discovered a horrible truth: Slim was dead. Murdered, drained of blood and the police didn't give a damn. Sebastian lost more than one friend that night, he quickly abandoned Mr. Daniels and he cleaned himself up and took to tracking

down the fiend himself. And then, as chance would have it, he stumbled upon an abandoned box of sunglasses. Thinking, at first, that he'd just look cool in them, he took a pair and stashed the rest. When he put them on, however, his whole world changed. He could see colours dancing around people; he could see auras! But that night he saw more than just auras, he saw his first "pod person". A voice in his head said: "*Do it for Slim!*" He knew exactly what to do. Since then, he's managed to gather together the Vanguard on his crusade to rid the Earth of the alien scum. Occasionally, you might hear him say, just before blowing the head off another pod, "This one's for Slim!" Of the Vanguards, only Luke ever mustered the nerve to ask Sebastian who Slim was. Turning from the smouldering ashes of the pod he's just dragged into the daylight, he replied simply, "A prophet. A visionary." He then lit his cigar on the burning mass and walked away.

Sebastian met Brian and Marcus the day he saved them from three ugly pods. Together with Brian they filled in the gaps in the alien conspiracy and the Vanguard was born.

In many ways, Sebastian is the glue that holds the Vanguard together. His sheer determination, force of will and personality seems bind together this motley crew. When all seems lost, he always knows the right things to say to rekindle lost hope in their Cause. Sebastian's overly trustful nature, however, has got them into a few scrapes in the past.

He brought Luke in more recently when they crossed paths in New York.

Brian — *He's a geek, but he's a clever geek and a fast learner. He was already a Believer before he saw the Truth. He also builds the best weapons and gadgets. He is the creator of the Rotary Bolt Gun.*

Marcus — *A quiet and apparently nervous guy, but when it comes to the crunch there's no doubting his tenacity to the Cause. A bit stubborn at times.*

Luke — *This newest recruit is sometimes a little impatient and a bit cocky at times, but the kid's he has proven himself very useful.*

Aron Kowalski — *Seems like he might be a decent guy. Once you get to know him. If getting to know him is wise.*

Jack Valentine — *A complete psychopath by all accounts, but he's probably just misunderstood. Five year ago he spoke of monsters and puppet masters in his trial. Perhaps he indeed knows the Truth.*

BRIAN ROSTOW

"You're just not seeing the bigger picture, man. Check out my web-site! The truth is in there."

A scruffy looking guy in his mid-twenties, greasy dark hair, glasses held together with a Band-Aid, wearing an *X-Files* T-shirt and black jeans. Sometimes an insufferable geek, but fortunately always a practical one. He's a wizard in computers and science, and is often found tinkering with his creations, or forging IDs and other papers. The most popular of these is what he has dubbed the Rotary Bolt Gun (or an RBG — or as Luke puts it: "The Bolt Baby").

Even in his teens Brian was a Believer. He grew up in a basement in Chicago, IL the fourth and youngest child in a loud and busy family that couldn't appreciate his genius. Brian had managed to persuade his parents to let him live in the basement when he was thirteen. Tinkering with electronics and computers even then, his parents welcomed the space that was made by moving all his stuff into the basement; as did his older brother whose room he was sharing. There, locked away, he built his own computer, connected to the Internet and found new friends in the world of conspiracy theories. He'd noticed strange things in the city and took it upon himself to investigate matters further — to uncover the conspiracy.

It was on a cold winter night that he noticed a trio of rather pale-looking people walking past him — two men and a woman. Then it struck him that something was odd about them — like a voice in his head, telling him to look at them again. It was a cold night, but he couldn't see their breath. They weren't breathing! Perhaps it was just a trick of the mind; they must have been wearing scarves or something. He went home, went to bed and the next morning he saw a news report of two young women found dead not far from where he saw those pale non-breathers. Two girls he knew from high school. Dead. He knew that these non-breathers had been responsible and guilt and rage filled him...

...and in a flash he was back to last night, still watching the non-breathers as they walked past him. He had a second chance! A chance to stop what might happen!

Carefully following them he watched as they turned into an alleyway. Looking carefully around the corner he saw nothing. They had vanished! A hand on his shoulder made him jump, but he turned to see a man, maybe about the same age as him, most definitely human. "Jesus!" Brian cried. "You scared me."

"Where did they go?" he said, bluntly.

"You mean the non-breathers?" Brian replied. The stranger nodded. "I don't know. They seemed to vanish," he continued as they both walked into the alleyway — a dead-end. Where could they have gone? And then a voice, seemingly whispering in Brian's mind said, "*Turn around. They're behind you.*" Turning around they saw three... *creatures*. Snarling and foul, ugly as sin, licking their long fangs. At the end of the alleyway, Brian and the stranger were trapped.

But then, a question formed in his mind, "What are you? What do you want?" Out of the corner of his eye he caught the stranger reaching for a metal bar that was hidden in his coat. Without saying a word he raised the metal bar and it seemed that it was on fire, and he launched himself at one of the creatures.

And then something burst through the chest of the female. It looked down as surprised as the others at it and began to turn. Revealing a man in his mid-forties wearing a pair of sunglasses (at night!) holding a shotgun through the creature's chest. "Head's up! This one's for Slim!" he said as he aimed the shotgun at another of the creatures and blasted it's head into the wall. With the flaming metal bar the stranger clean sliced the head off the third remaining creature.

This was how Brian met Marcus, and how the two of them met Sebastian. Although it was Sebastian who told Brian that it was aliens they were fighting, it was Brian that pieced together the facts of the conspiracy. Sebastian only had a nebulous understanding of the situation.

Sebastian — *He's an inspiration and a natural leader, but sometimes he can be too trusting. He's not paranoid enough. He sometimes needs reminding who pieced together the whole alien conspiracy.*

Marcus — *You dare call him a friend. You certainly wouldn't want him as an enemy. You saw the Truth together. His silence often speaks volume, He's very observant but he's also a stubborn bastard at times, and when he fights he sure fights ferociously.*

Luke — *God, he is so annoying sometimes. He's always getting under your feet, always ends up breaking your gadgets. Why the hell did Sebastian let him join the Vanguard?*

Aron Kowalski — *Your cellmate. The guy's got self-confidence issues. That much is clear, but otherwise he's a fairly okay person.*

Jack Valentine — *His execution of Mayor Olsen was big news five years ago. You also remember reading that he was suspected of a whole bunch of other murders they could never pin on him.*

MARCUS AJELLO

...Silence... "EYAAAAH!!!!" ...Goes all Yoda on the alien scum, with two machetes.

Cautious in his mannerisms and wary of strangers, this twenty-something has mousy curly hair, is jittery as hell and constantly fingering a curl nervously, he dresses sensibly but not very expressively, managing to blend into the background enough that he doesn't stand out in a crowd. His dark eyes are very observant and he's very patient. In action, however, he's the most ferocious and tenacious of the lot. He's also a stubborn bastard.

Marcus grew up in an Italian-American family and hated everyone. His family knew him as "Marco," but he hated the name and always introduced himself as Marcus. He changed his name as soon as he legally could. He disliked his father's associates coming round at all hours of the night, disrupting their lives. Yet his father never stood up for himself, he always did whatever they asked. Even from a young age Marcus could tell that there was something not right with these pale nocturnal visitors and their whole arrangement. When he was sixteen his father eventually committed suicide and his father's dubious nocturnal acquaintances turned to him, the eldest male, to continue where his father left off. Marcus ran away from home before they could get their hands on him.

In Chicago he eventually found a crappy job and a crappy place to live. Working in a fast-food sandwich shop with late hours was not a great job, but it paid enough for him to pay his rent and get enough to eat. He spoke to no one, yet everyone spoke to him. They told him their grievances and he just listened. They told him their troubles at home and he just listened. They told him their darkest secrets, and were surprised they had done so — and he just listened. Occasionally, he replied. Like the time Ginger really liked Rick, and was torn about whether to make a move on him after he'd just split up with his girlfriend. "He split up because he likes you," he told her, one evening, to shut her up from boring him with the *same* trivial worries as she'd done all week, every night.

"Did he tell you?" she asked.

"No," he replied with no further explanation. It was enough. They eventually got engaged.

One night, two girls came into the sandwich bar to get some food. Two guys and a girl came in after them and sat at another table.

"They don't feed like us. They feed from us. They live while we die," said one of the girls.

Marcus looked up in surprise and couldn't help but respond. "Excuse me?"

"I said," the girl declared testily. "I'll have a Hot Veggie Special, with no gherkins and Thousand Island dressing." He fixed them both their sandwiches and as he gave the girls their change the other said with a smile, "They'll kill tonight." And they left as merrily as they had

entered. The three at the table got up and made to leave.

"Hey, don't you want anything?" asked Rick.

"No, thank you," said one of them, turning. "We'll eat elsewhere." And as he faced Rick he was a corpse, his flesh rotting — but Rick didn't even seem to notice.

Following them they passed a geeky-looking kid, maybe about the same age as him, and he began to follow them, ultimately into an alleyway. "Where did they go?" Marcus asked the stranger, practically terrifying the guy as he put his hand on his shoulder.

"You mean the non-breathers?" the stranger replied. Marcus nodded. "I don't know. They seemed to vanish," he continued as they both walked into the alleyway — a dead-end. Where could they have gone? And then a voice, seemingly whispering in Marcus's mind said, "*They live while your father died.*" Turning around they saw three... *creatures*. Snarling and foul, ugly as sin, licking their long fangs. At the end of the alleyway, Marcus and the stranger were trapped.

"What are you?" said the stranger, next to him. "What do you want?" Marcus reached into his coat where he'd picked up a metal bar he'd passed while following them. Anger raged inside him. These creatures, or rather creatures like these had killed his father! He knew it now! In his hands his anger seemed to manifest as the metal bar caught fire, without saying a word he lifted his flaming sword and leapt at one of the things with murderous intent.

"Head's up! This one's for Slim!" said a voice. In his rage Marcus barely saw the old man ram a shotgun through the female's chest and blast the head of the other across the wall. Marcus just sliced its head off with one swipe.

This was how Marcus met Brian, and how the two of them met Sebastian, who told them what they were fighting against. Well, Brian was taken by it straight away. Marcus is still listening. And watching.

Sebastian — *He's a little overly trusting, but he's got presence, and he's got experience. He suffers nightmares to do with Slim, although he's told no one.*

Brian — *A conspiracy nut. His web-site appears to be quite popular, though. He considers you a friend.*

Luke — *He's impatient and he gambles too much. But he's certainly a smooth operator. Sebastian seems to like him, Brian finds him very annoying.*

Aron Kowalski — *He has self-confidence issues. He also has a secret. He laughed on the prison bus in a self-knowing way. He's got an ace up his sleeve somewhere.*

Jack Valentine — *There's something in his eyes. Something disconnected from the rest of the world. Sebastian wants to see if he's another believer, but he could just be trouble. He's worth keeping an eye on either way.*

LUCAS "LUKE" SHARP

"Hey, formaldehyde-face! How about you and my baseball bat have us a conversation?"

A suave and cocksure pretty-boy with attitude; blonde hair, black leather jacket, white T-shirt, blue jeans, chews bubble-gum, just can't wait to kick some alien butt! A smooth operator, and fancies himself as a real ladies' man — most of the time he is. He's the newest member of the Vanguard and doesn't really care about the details of why the aliens are here so long as he gets to help kick them off the planet. He's a risk-taker and a gambler, which has got him into a few tight spots before now.

In truth, he's still not sure if he completely buys all this alien crap, but the monsters are real, and that's what matters.

Lucas Sharp was born to a family of three in New Jersey. His father was a locksmith, so he spent a great deal of his childhood learning how different locks worked. To his father's disappointment, however, rather than use this knowledge to follow in his footsteps and create a career for himself, Luke took to using it to become a thief in order to obtain money to pay off his gambling debts.

Thrown out of his home Luke spent a lot of time on the streets of New York City chasing Lady Luck, but always she was just around the corner. And just around the corner Luke bounced in and out of juvenile facilities, and when he was old enough even ended up with a short spell in prison. When he got out he wanted to go straight and try to make the most of it, but he still owed money (with interest) to Sammy "One Shoe" (called that because when he loaned anyone any money you were always waiting for the proverbial "other shoe" to drop). Sammy was nearly untouchable, he had some serious protection going on, and he had some serious goons that would come rough you up if payments or "favours" lapsed too far behind. When Luke tried to go straight and managed to take a job at a locksmith's, Sammy took it personally.

"What the hell's wrong with you?" came that Brooklyn drawl when Sammy visited him at work. "Have I done something to offend you?" he continued in that Italian melodramatic way. "Have I not looked out for you? And this is how you repay my kindness? By ignoring your old pal?"

"You'll get your money," Luke replied, flatly. "I'm getting paid next week."

"I'm a fair man," said Sammy. "Let nobody tell you I ain't a fair man. I just got one more job for you to do and then we'll call it quits. I like you, kid. Wouldn't want anything to spoil that pretty face of yours. You'll be working off your debts with some other kids I like. I'm feeling generous." He paused with a proud grin on his face. "My daughter's getting married," he said, pulling out a handkerchief and making a big show of being emotional.

Luke eventually agreed. One more and then it's all over.

Luke, Raoul, Cindy and Jonah crept through the dark mansion as quietly as they could. They were here to steal some real expensive jewellery one of Sammy's clients wanted.

"It's a trap," said Luke suddenly.

"You're just being paranoid," said Cindy. "You couldn't possibly know that."

"I don't know how I know," said Luke, "I just suddenly got this feeling."

And then the kitchen light went on and a large figure was silhouetted against the light, and when it stepped forward, they saw a monster, his face like a rotting corpse. Raoul and Cindy tried to run but crashed into another one that knocked them both down in a single blow. Jonah grabbed a chair and it flared up as he attacked the one at the door.

"Back off!" cried Luke to the creature now trying to grab Cindy, as he ran to help her. To his surprise it did, which seemed to be much to its surprise. "Go!" cried Luke to the others. "Run!"

They did, and were fortunate not to see Jonah torn in two. "Time to get the hell out of here," Luke thought and bolted for the door as the two monsters gave chase.

BAM!

Luke came to in the back of his car.

"What the hell happened?" he moaned.

"Sorry, man," said the voice of Raoul. "Cindy hit you when you came a bombin' outta there. We're taking you to the hospital. Don't move, man; you got hit pretty bad."

Hospital? No way, he still had a month left on of his probation. What if they started asking questions?

"No, no," said Luke. "It ain't so bad. Take me home."

Reluctantly they did so, and the next day was surprised to see Luke up and walking around again.

"We need to talk about what the hell happened," said Luke.

"No, we don't," said Cindy slamming the door in his face. Raoul was the same, too. They were both too scared. So was Luke. He was real rattled. He was seeing more of these creatures *everywhere*.

Eventually, he and Sebastian crossed paths and he joined the Vanguard. They may not be his first choice in friends, but at least they know what's going on. He tried explaining again to Cindy and Raoul about the aliens but they still didn't want to hear it, they still wanted to go about their "normal" lives.

Sebastian "Old Man" — He's cool for an old man. He's seen a lot and is fairly experienced.

Brian — "Gadget-boy" knows way too much about all this. He needs to get laid, real bad. Shame it's not gonna be happening any time soon.

Marcus — This guy really needs to get laid. Shame it's not gonna be happening any time soon. It might lighten him up a bit, but he's pretty bad ass when he gets into a rumble.

Aron Kowalski — He was the only guy on the bus laughing when he saw Stanford. If he knows something then let's hope he speaks. Stanford's got a bad rap.

Jack Valentine — They say he's a real bad ass. Sure, he's got the skinhead, the beard, the tattoos, the scowl, and the brooding. But he's probably not so tough now.

ARON KOWALSKI

"Hey, can't we all just get along, hold hands, sing songs, eat daisies and all that hippie shit? — Yeah, right."

A man now in his early thirties, with short dark brown hair in a side-parting, prison life has clearly taken its toll on him. He smokes roll-ups whenever he can get hold of the tobacco, and seems to always walk with his head down and a bit of a stoop, and can often be heard to make some cynically pessimistic comment.

During WWII Aron's grandfather fought first with the British and then with the Americans. When the war was finally over he came to America with his new wife to discover a new life in the land of freedom and justice. The family business became a construction company, which was finally bought out when Aron's father owned it.

Aron himself hadn't wanted to get into the construction work and had fallen in with a bad crowd and a life of crime. He quickly became the black sheep of the family, bouncing from one juvenile facility to the next. At the age of 19 he was once again caught from a minor offence, but one that would this time send him to prison. A kindly cop decided to give him a break, so long as he clean up his act. Aron finally realised that this is what he needed to do and after failing to get a job elsewhere because of his troubled past, he turned to his father who was still in charge of the running of his former construction company. His father finally convinced that his prodigal son had returned, gave him a chance and employed him. For the paperwork they lied about his criminal past and Aron started making an honest living for himself, working under the false name Aron Peterson.

And then he met Faith.

During the final weeks of construction on the new Stanford State Penitentiary, the future governor had already been installed. His offices had been finished so he started settling and hiring his staff. On one particular day, Governor Jacob Wilson was joined by his daughter, Faith.

It was pretty much lust at first sight, and later it turned to love. At first their involvement was kept secret from anyone else, but then Faith's father found out. He didn't approve, but Faith was a stubborn girl, unwilling to let Aron go just because her father considered him beneath her.

They decided to get married in secret. Faith knew that her father wouldn't give them any money to support themselves, and Aron could hardly afford it either. But they decided nonetheless. The plan was to get married, keep it secret, save up enough money and then to run away together.

As a kind of informal stag night, Aron went down to the Mardi Gras with his friends Jason and Gary. One night, while they were having a wild time and had far too much to drink and far too many beads, they got separated from Gary.

They found him again by pure chance, but he was lying in a gutter with his head split wide open.

The entire vacation was a bust from that point onwards. They flew home, went to his funeral and shortly after Aron and Faith were married with Jason as best man and witness.

For nine months they lived apart, pretending to still be just seeing each other, while they stashed what money they could be together.

Having finally scraped together enough to make a meagre start at a life together, Aron tried to contact Faith, but her father wouldn't let her come to the phone. This was getting ridiculous. Aron decided to go see her in person, tell her father and take her away.

However, as he was about to leave the police came to his door and arrested him for dealing in narcotics. It was a totally bum rap, he was completely innocent. He spent the night in jail, but was let go in the morning. They had nothing on him, and that was that. He'd tried calling Faith to let him know where he was but her father told him that she wasn't there. He tried to see Faith again when he got out, but she wasn't at home.

One night, Aron was out for a drink with Jason during which he was going through his usual frustrated complaining that he and Faith couldn't be together, and that he was worried that Faith might have changed her mind about the marriage.

"What did you just say?" said Jason, suddenly.

"I said, do you want another drink?" said Aron.

Jason furrowed his brow, a slightly confused look on his face.

"What did you think I said?"

"I dunno, dude," said Jason. "Perhaps I shouldn't have any more to drink."

Aron's eyes wandered to the door, and more to the point to the Exit sign above it. The neon seemed somewhat brighter, the sign somewhat more urgent. Aron couldn't place why.

"Yeah," he said, "let's get outta here."

The two made their way out of the bar and both then stood gaping in the night, staring unbelievably across the road.

"Dude," said Jason. "Do you see who I see?"

"It can't be," said Aron. "He's dead."

"I know, but I'm looking right at him."

Across from them, they saw Gary with two other men, talking on the street corner. More importantly, Aron thought, Gary looked wrong. Aside from the fact that they saw him dead, there was something else about him, something that seemed to emphasize that fact to him. To really drive home that he was just... wrong. It was more than just seeing Gary that gave him

this sense, the other two men also seemed wrong to his eyes.

"Come on," said Jason crossing the road.

"What the hell?"

"Hey!" called out Jason as he crossed. "Gary!"

Gary turned and looked straight at them and ran, the other two followed behind. Aron and Jason didn't need any further communication they both immediately broke into a sprint after them.

They rounded a corner and as they neared suddenly one of the men appeared swinging a metal bar at Jason's head. Even fleetingly, Aron could now see that the term man was to be applied loosely. A gut instinct seemed to tell him that his use of the term was just wrong.

"No!" Aron cried, but the thing's hand suddenly veered, missing Jason and took chips out of the wall instead.

"How the hell...?" Jason began, but he could see from the look on Aron's face that he was just as confused himself.

The man took another swing at Jason who seemed to duck at just the right moment to turn and run.

Jason was never a fighter, but Aron had been in his fair share of fights. Aron slammed into the man with a body tackle. It was like slamming into a brick wall. The man picked Aron and threw him into a car with such force that it winded him, smashing the side windows. Barely aware of the screaming car alarm, Aron was helped to his feet by Jason as they made to run, but Aron was too winded. This impossibly strong man - Aron knew now that "man" was definitely not the right term for him, but what had made him this way? - This *man* picked Jason up off the ground in one hand and tossed him into the wall as if he was a rag-doll.

Aron got is wind back and managed to jump out of the way as a fist came slamming at him which put a massive dent in the car door, buckling it as though a car had gone into it.

Jason was just getting to his feet and Aron knew that they just couldn't win this fight. They didn't know what the hell they were up against.

"Run!" he cried, and without needing any further encouragement the two bolted in opposite directions.

Aron didn't know whether he had lost their attacker or whether he had instead pursued Jason. Either way, he went home.

He wanted to go to Faith, he needed to speak with her, but her father got angry with him saying that he hadn't seen her in days, insisting that *he* tell him where he's hiding Faith.

Aron was still too dizzy with drink, adrenaline and shaking with shock to deal with him right now. He hung up while Jacob Wilson was still in mid-rant.

Aron didn't sleep that night. He stayed up staring at the TV trying to take his mind off what had happened and where Jason was, but it was no use. Every time he tried to focus on

the TV, he'd just drift off into introspection and thought, lost in a world of problems made even more difficult with last night's strange encounter.

Aron turned off the television set as he heard a knock on the door. He opened the door to Jason.

"Dude," said Jason, just as on edge if not slightly more so. "We're fucked."

"Jesus Christ," said Aron. "Where the fuck have you been?"

"Trying to figure it all out, dude, trying to figure it all out." Jason darted into the living room and started pacing back and forth almost immediately, biting at his fingernails. His normally loose blonde dreads tied back. The normally easy-going surfer was a bundle of nerves.

"What the fuck happened last night, man? What the fuck is going on?" cried Aron.

"Okay, first the good news," said Jason. "Sit, sit," he added, motioning.

Aron sat on the edge of his armchair. Jason paced a little more, sat on the sofa and was immediately back up and pacing again as he talked. "Okay, the good news is I don't think we're insane. Unfortunately this means we weren't hallucinating."

"So you're telling me that we really did see Gary?" Jason looked at him silently. "Gary's fucking dead, man," Aron insisted.

"I know, I know. And we both saw the - " Jason didn't need to finish the sentence. Both had the experience burned cleanly in their mind. "Look, this is pretty whack, but I think we're not alone."

Aron looked at him in disbelief.

"There are others it would seem," Jason continued. "Others who have seen things, others who have heard voices in their heads and stuff."

"Yeah, and they're in fucking looney bins," Aron burst out.

"No, no, seriously, dude. I did some searching on the net. It took me ages until I could finally figure out - you know - what to search for and what to ask about in the chat rooms. But I think I got some leads. I found a couple of websites, but they got some very contradictory information."

"No shit, it's the Internet," Aron interjected and then sighed with a degree of resignation. "Okay, so what do you have?"

"Well, I found one site saying that these are demons and we're facing the end of the world. And then I found another saying these are aliens and we're facing a full-scale alien invasion."

"You're telling me Gary is an alien?" said Aron. "Or a demon?"

"I dunno, dude," Jason replied, finally sitting down. "But we gotta do something, man."

"I know. I know," said Aron, rubbing his brow. "I dunno why the hell it's gotta be us, but look this is Gary we're talking about. He was a pal. I refuse to believe that Gary is an alien or a demon."

"It might not be willingly," said Jason. "I mean, from what that alien invasion website says Gary's body might just be a host to the invaders."

"Like a body snatcher?"

"Yeah, or if its not an alien then a demon might have possessed him. I mean, dude, its that or Gary's gone to the dark side."

Aron was silent for a moment. "No," he said eventually. "This is Gary we're talking about."

"Yeah, but – what if?" said Jason.

"I've never been a religious man," said Aron. "But if there's an afterlife then Gary deserves to rest in it. Not – not walk around when he's supposed to be dead."

"Well, I think we'd better find out why he's back," said Jason. "You know, whether he's evil or not."

There was a loud knock on the door and the two men jumped slightly.

Aron got up and answered it. Two plain-clothes cops were at the door.

"Aron Kowalski?" said the one after showing him his badge.

"Yeah," said Aron, cautiously. "What's this about?"

"You're under arrest for the murder of Faith Wilson."

The detective slammed his fist on the table.

"Tell us what you did with the body, you sick son of a bitch," he said. Aron's experience as a young kid in these interrogation rooms kicked in. This was the Bad Cop.

The Good Cop said, "The blood on the shirt we found at your place matches Faith's DNA so we know you did it. If you admit it now then you can avoid the death penalty."

"I told you," said Aron, somewhat tired and exhausted by now. "That's not my shirt."

"So you keep saying," said Good Cop.

Bad Cop leaned forward and from a file produced a photograph. It was a picture of him, Jason and Gary last year when they were at the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. That was where Gary... Aron didn't want to think about it. He had to concentrate on the shit he was in right now. Gary would have to wait. Aron looked at the photo again and noticed that in it he was wearing a shirt just like the one they found with the bloodstains.

"Yeah," he said. "I used to have a shirt like that but I lost it about three months back or something."

"Around the time that your girlfriend went missing," growled Bad Cop. "Pretty damned convenient."

"She wasn't my girlfriend," said Aron. "She was my wife. We got married behind her father's back. I told you before – when she went missing I was inside for that phoney drugs rap you guys put on me. When I came out I figured she'd just left me without saying anything."

"We checked on that, Aron," said Good Cop. "Truth is she went missing just before you were

sentenced. You're going down." Great! Good Cop wants to trade places with Bad Cop.

"Give it up, scumbag. We found the shirt at in your house," said Bad Cop, still determined to keep the role. He slammed his fist on the table again. "Tell us what you did with the body, you little punk!"

The trial was a joke, there was no body, no murder weapon. By all rights he shouldn't have gone down, but Aron suspected that his lawyer's sudden incompetence, that the jury's blindness, the judge's unwillingness to listen to any kind of reason was an incredible bias. Maybe her father was pulling strings to make sure he was punished regardless of whether or not he was innocent. Perhaps it was just because of his track record, he didn't know. Either way, at least the five-year appeal process saved him from a death sentence.

Finally, he was transferred for his 25-year sentence to the one place he figured that he'd never leave – the one place that was as good as a death sentence. Perhaps, for him it was, certainly if Warden Jacob Wilson found out he was there.

As the bus pulled up to Stanford he couldn't help but laugh out loud to himself. When the other inmates turned to look at him, he shut up, quickly. He had an ace up his sleeve.

He should have never been sent here. He'd worked on its construction, but under a false name. Any paperwork wouldn't have shown an Aron Kowalski as having worked on the site. The police, thankfully, never uncovered that little detail. He had the upper hand here, he of all people had the potential to escape. He knew he needed to escape, he knew he needed to get out. He needed to prove his innocence, he needed to find Jason and figure out what was happening with Gary. He needed to get away from Faith's father. He needed, especially, to keep his head down and out of trouble as much as possible.

Sebastian Matthews — The man exudes confidence, there's something about his manner which suggests he views prison as simply transitory.

Brian Rostow — Your cellmate. He's smart. Perhaps smart enough to be of use in any attempt to arrange a prison break. If you think you can trust him.

Marcus Ajello — He's real quiet. You don't know what to make of him.

Luke Sharp — He's a pretty boy with a sharp tongue. He's a wise guy, really, but he's clearly been in prison before, although he still comes across as a bit naïve about certain things. He'd better watch his back.

Jack Valentine — Keep well away if possible, is the first thing that comes to mind when you look at him. You overheard Sebastian whispering on the bus linking him to Mayor Olsen's death. That was happening around the time you were arrested, didn't really take it all in. Perhaps that's why the trial went so badly for you. Everyone was still reeling from this violent mass killing.

PLAYING ARON

Aron has a low self-esteem as a result of five years being wrongly convicted. He's kept his head down, become cynical, pessimistic but still holds to the hope that one day he'll discover the truth about Faith. They never found a body, so at the beginning he lived on in hope that she would just turn up and everyone would see what a mistake it was. But five years later, she's still not shown up. He was beginning to completely lose hope until he found himself being transferred to Stanford. He's got a mixture of hope and despair at this. He knows he can possibly make an escape (if he can find someone he trusts to help him, because he knows he'll just fail if he tried it alone). But if he doesn't succeed he knows damned well that Jacob Wilson will ensure that his *short* stay at Stanford is as miserable and terminal as possible.

BACKGROUNDS EXPLAINED

●● Allies

Aron doesn't have much ready contact with his allies. He hears from Jason every now and again, but his communications are filled with lots of references to stuff he dares not put into writing and that he'll explain when he comes to visit, but Jason has never visited. Meanwhile, his father, still tries to prove his innocence and has a private investigator trying to track down Faith in the belief that she's just run away. If she can be found and shown to be alive, he can be free.

●●● Contacts

While Aron has only really just arrived at Stanford, his experiences inside means that he's been able to quickly establish contacts within Stanford. He has yet to actually realise these contacts, but he knows who the fixers are and he knows who to ask for what he needs. Part of this comes from quickly recognising people he knew from other prisons who were transferred here and quickly es-

tablishing a small network of information he can use to find out what's what in Stanford. (The Storyteller will provide you with relevant names and details as you present him with your needs.)

MERITS & FLAWS EXPLAINED

Light Sleeper

Aron still needs to sleep as much as a normal person, but in the event of a commotion or disturbance of any kind he wakes up easier than most.

Good Recognition

Aron is great at remembering the names of people he's encountered, and places he's been. This has served him well in Stanford to quickly establish contacts and, more importantly, he can remember much of the layout of buildings and even a somewhat sketchy outline of some of the areas that prisoners can't get to.

Direction Sense

Aron has always had an innate sense of where he is and the distance he's travelled. He can make a good guess of which way is north, even without clues like the position of the sun. He rarely gets lost and can estimate the distance between two points pretty well.

Low Self-esteem

Prison's worn Aron down a bit. He has trouble accepting his own value and worth. He tends to highlight his failures and overlook his triumphs. Whenever he has the opportunity to gain Willpower from accomplishing goals (not from resting), make a Willpower roll, difficulty 6. If you fail the roll, do not gain the bonus. If you botch, you *lose* a temporary point of Willpower.

"JACK VALENTINE"

"You're all just puppets. Nothing more. If you can't see that, you're just as dangerous as the puppet-masters."

Jack Valentine is a man in his forties, but is in great shape. He sports a clean-shaven head, but not a clean-shaven chin. His thick goatee hangs down in straddles, mostly unkempt, though clearly he keeps it in some kind of order. He has piercings in both ears and his body and arms are wallpapered with tattoos. He's not a huge man, but he looks strong as an ox. His teeth are in bad shape, which only adds to his terrifying scowl when he sports it. He comes across as cold and distant, most likely remorseless.

Marti Snow worked in K-Mart somewhere in Colorado since he was 16, saving up to buy himself a decent motorbike to impress the ladies. He wanted a Harley. He loved the look, he loved the freedom, he loved the rock 'n' roll lifestyle of the Hell's Angels.

He came from an average American family in an average American town. Then one day he snapped. He took a K-Mart shotgun, loaded it with K-Mart ammo and robbed the place. He bought himself a chopper, shaved his head and rode away to Texas.

He was barely 21 by the time he had already earned his top and bottom rockers, becoming a fully initiated member of the Texas Chapter of the Hell's Angels.

Marti Snow's body was later found by the police a victim of a house fire. Unfortunately, it wasn't Marti Snow. It was actually some nobody called Jack Valentine, but Marti had decided to switch identities and end the warrant for his arrest. In a way Marti Snow *was* dead, because he was now a far cry from the eighteen-year-old who snapped in K-Mart one overworked day.

The newly liberated Jack Valentine threw himself deeply into the deepest regions workings of the Hell's Angel, dealing drugs and guns and waging war on other biker gangs. Riding with his girl, Cindy.

However, this was all about to change when they rode to Vegas for a convention. They knew that a rival gang was in town, and were ready for trouble.

It started with the nightmares. Violent dreams of people screaming, suffering, black all encompassing death. A voice in his head telling him to find the solution, telling him of monsters walking among the masses: "*There is only one solution to the poison within. They're everywhere.*"

Jack was with three others when they entered the casino. Suddenly, pain ripped through his head and a barrage of images and the garbled voices of his nightmares

overcame him. Nothing seemed to make sense, just the stabbing pain burning through his nervous system.

When he came to he saw the two rival gang members they'd spotted from outside. More importantly, he saw them for what they really were. Suddenly, everything was clear. They were monsters. They weren't human.

"You okay, Jack?" ask Digger.

"Can't you see them? Can't see what they are?" he asked.

They looked at the gang members he pointed to, and they saw.

"Dear lord," said Oscar.

"There is only one solution to the poison," he said. "They must *die!*"

With that he led the other two Hell's Angels to fight them.

A flaming sword appeared in his hands and he struck at the one monster, who fell immediately.

"And I strike you down," he shouting, "with fiery vengeance! I am the divine! I am the liberator of your slaves! The antibody to your poison!"

The other two Hell's Angels felled the other monster. People began screaming and panicking and Jack spotted security running towards him and his colleagues. Up on the balcony, looking down he saw the casino owner. He, too, was one of them. Suddenly, things became clearer to him. It was all a hierarchy. The poison was deeper seated than he had been led to believe. He could see how it all connected. The poison, the corruption had taken root in a position of power and control. Like puppet masters.

He looked back at the security guards as his colleagues tried to persuade him to run.

"They come to do their master's bidding," he said. They were not monsters but he realised that they were as good as monsters. The poison blinded them making them merely puppets.

"Brothers!" he cried to the other two as they fled. "Flee now and know I'm gonna hunt you down!"

Still they ran He pulled out the Heckler & Koch MP5K submachine gun from underneath his jacket and opened fire felling all five of the guards in a single spray. Panic reigned and he knew the police would be here soon.

"Not yet," he said to himself. "Not yet."

Jack took pot shots at the monsters on the balcony, but they didn't seem at all bothered. Jack knew he'd need to fall back.

Jack needed to figure out what was going on. How could everything have changed so suddenly, so dramatically? It was like scales had been lifted from his eyes, but by whom?

Without thinking to announce his presence he walked straight into Cindy's room. There, on top of her, was Frank. He was considered top dog.

Jack realised in that moment why he had been chosen. It was an awakening, a glorious enlightenment — a horrible truth. He had sought freedom from the system, freedom from its slavery, and in doing so he'd merely become yet another puppet. Frank was Wrong. Not just because he was screwing Cindy, but because he looked Wrong. He was a puppet master. No doubt he was a puppet to yet another puppet master, but he was a puppet master all the same. The drugs, the guns, the rock 'n' roll, the freedom of the road — it was all an illusion. Even here, even the Hell's Angels, the last true anarchists were merely puppets, merely being controlled.

"Time to die," he whispered.

The realisation took but a fraction of a second, the rest of the second was used swinging a flaming bicycle chain around Frank's throat and ripping off his head. Cindy screamed and screamed and screamed. She was tainted now. She wasn't Wrong... yet. But it was just a matter of time. Sleeping with the enemy.

Jack took out his Bowie and stabbed her straight in the throat to shut up her damned screaming. Blood spurted everywhere.

"There is no greater crime than to collude with the enemy," he whispered to her as she gagged and choked. "There is no greater crime than treason against all of humanity."

He let her bleed to death, letting her last thoughts be of her sins.

Attracted by the sounds of screaming Digger and Oscar came running in.

"Holy fuck, Jack!" said Digger. "Have you lost your goddamn mind?"

"No," he said. "On the contrary, I think I've just found it."

He picked up Frank's pistol and shot Digger clean in the head. Oscar tried to run but Jack sot him in the back a couple of times.

"If you're not the solution, you're the problem," he told his dead friends. "There is no greater crime than treason against all of humanity."

A day later, the casino was burnt to the ground killing dozens of people who were trapped inside.

Although the police reported it as arson, they never caught the culprit.

It was some months later that Jack found himself in the company of others of his kind in Boston. Those who could see the strings tugging at the masses, controlling how they think and act.

"Well, as far as my research can tell, Olsen's grandfather was implicated in some pretty shading dealings," Jane said, her file open with photocopied press clippings and Internet printouts open for the others to rummage through as she talked. "The allegations were never proven but it was enough to force him to resign from congress. It seems he remained under investigation for just over a year before he committed suicide."

Jack watched the others with a slight detachment from the group. Slowly they had gravitated together. He'd become a kind of unspoken leader of sorts. Jane was the real brains here. She was always doing her research, always questioning the reasons for what they came up against. Sometimes it bugged the hell out of Jack, but there was something about her. When she was around Jack felt kind of human again. On the one hand he liked it, it was like the clearing of a haze, he could feel again. But on the other hand, feelings got in the way of the mission. Sometimes, feelings just weren't a good thing.

"Sounds like a guilty man to me," said Bobby.

Yeah, Bobby was okay. Bobby was put the bad ass into being black. Who said black men couldn't be bigots? Bobby was certainly quick enough to jump to negative conclusions about people and situations. If Bobby had a weakness it was that he would sometimes try to do the "right thing" which was invariably wrong. He let his emotions get in the way. Sometimes he just didn't seem to have the stomach for what was needed.

"Not necessarily," Jane answered back. "Nothing was ever proven, but the press hounded him and his family nearly every day even after his retirement. He was never given a moment's peace. Sounds more like he was driven to suicide, or perhaps he felt that this was the only way his family would finally get some privacy. Every detail of their lives was under scrutiny."

"So what's keeping him here?" said Crystal. "Why hasn't he moved on?"

Crystal, with her goth appearance, was something of a mystery to Jack. She seemed a bit flaky. She was the newest member of their little group. He hadn't decided if she was a liability yet or not.

"Well," said Gus, the last member of their group. A middle-aged man, balding but insisting on a comb-over, and a little overweight. He was totally out of place and not cut out for

the war. "From what I've been able to learn about ghosts they are tied to this world by bonds manifest as people, objects, places."

"His family," said Crystal. "I've noticed that the ghost is always near a family member."

"If that's the case," said Gus. "We're gonna have a hard time helping him move on, I think."

"Can't we just sever the tie somehow?" asked Bobby.

"That's just the point," said Gus. "Doing that would mean destroying the object of the bond. If it was an inanimate object, that wouldn't be so bad, but these are people. We need to find another way."

"Bullshit," said Jack, at last.

* * *

The sirens wailed outside and Crystal snapped open her eyes and looked around at the bodies of her fellows around her. The two storeowners and Olsen's wife, son and daughter were huddled in a corner, trembling with fear.

"Dear god," she said. "What happened? What have we done?"

"Your displays of weakness were getting in the way," said Jack.

"You killed them all?" she said.

"No," he said, stepping over Jane's dead body. "You killed yourselves. If you're not the solution, you're the problem. You're too weak to do what is needed. You were still slaves to your emotions, you were still puppets dancing for your masters."

"Oh my god," cried Crystal, her eyeliner smearing down her cheeks as she realised where all this was going. "But I thought you liked us? I thought you liked Jane."

"Jane, yeah, I liked Jane. But the way she made me feel was getting in the way of the mission. I gotta finish what we started. Ain't no room for half way."

"But the ghost isn't even with them!"

"Yeah, but it will be. Soon as I get the good mayor out here. Then it'll all be over."

"I thought you - you liked *me*," cried Crystal, pleadingly.

"You?" Jack shot her in the head. "Hardly knew ya."

The stand off lasted for an hour before they finally agreed to bring Mayor Olsen down to the scene.

"Why are you doing this?" wept Olsen's wife.

"I'm disinfecting this world from disease," he told her, as he put together the home-made rocket launcher behind the counter. He was careful, he knew that S.W.A.T. would be trying to get a look at what he was up to. He

was careful to make sure that e wasn't tipping his hand.

"Please," the wife continued to plead. "My daughter's only thirteen."

Jack didn't reply. Jack didn't care.

A few minutes later the mayor had arrived. Jack looked out of the window at him. There he was, standing right next to him. The disease was with him.

"One down," said Jack as he raised the home-made rocket launcher and fired it at the mayor. His family screamed behind him, but Jack was more concerned with him. He was standing there now, angry, vicious.

"What are you doing!?" it screamed at him. "Why are you doing this?"

It came at him quicker than Jack had anticipated and it threw him across the room. He smashed into a stack of shelves. He had to act quickly. The ghost was egging him on.

"Write me a postcard from hell, mother-fucker," said Jack as he raised his MP5K and shot his hostages.

"Nooooooo!" screamed the ghost. "You have no idea what you've done!"

But Jack could see for himself what he'd done. As S.W.A.T. teams smashed in through the doors he held up his hands. He wanted to stay alive to see his work. Black hands seemed to be grabbing at the ghost from all directions, it jerked as though it were being mowed down by a thousand guns, its form twisted and writhed in pain, agony and it was pulled into the shadows.

At the trial they tried to call him crazy. He wasn't crazy, but he knew that he'd get the death penalty. He wasn't ready to die. He'd done his research prior to pulling his stunt. He knew that if he pled guilty and refused a trial by jury he couldn't be given the death sentence. At least then, he'd have a hope of escaping.

Sebastian Matthews — *Your cellmate. He reminds you a little of a naïve version of yourself. He's clearly leader material and very charismatic. He might have his uses, but he needs to be put in his place.*

Brian Rostow — *You get that same clarity of thought when this guy is around as you did with Jane. Whether he, too, will prove to be a liability waits to be seen. For now, however, you welcome the calm, if he proves a liability he'll have to be dealt with. Like Jane.*

Marcus Ajello — *This one's got the killer in him. He just isn't quite as brutal as he could be. Perhaps he needs a push in the right direction — and if he refuses to move, he's of no use.*

Luke Sharp — *A cocky son of a bitch, a jester at best, a liability at worst. He might have his uses, but he needs to be put in his place.*

Aron Kowalski — *A weakling.*

HUNTER THE RECKONING

NAME: Jack Valentine

NATURE: Engine

PRIMARY VIRTUE: Visionary

PLAYER:

DEMEANOR: Architect

CREED: Wayward

SCENARIO: Stanford Redemption

CONCEPT: Serial killer

STARTING CONVICTION: 4

ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL

Strength _____ ●●●●●
 Dexterity _____ ●●●●●
 Stamina _____ ●●●●●

SOCIAL

Charisma _____ ●●●●●
 Manipulation (Coersing) _____ ●●●●●
 Appearance _____ ●●●●●

MENTAL

Perception _____ ●●●●●
 Intelligence _____ ●●●●●
 Wits _____ ●●●●●

ABILITIES

TALENTS

Alertness _____ 00000
 Athletics _____ ●●●●●
 Awareness _____ ●●●●●
 Brawl (Dirty Fighting) _____ ●●●●●
 Dodge _____ ●●●●●
 Empathy _____ 00000
 Expression _____ 00000
 Intimidation _____ ●●●●●
 Intuition _____ 00000
 Leadership _____ 00000
 Streetwise _____ ●●●●●
 Subterfuge _____ ●●●●●

SKILLS

Animal Ken _____ 00000
 Crafts _____ 00000
 Demolitions _____ ●●●●●
 Drive _____ ●●●●●
 Etiquette _____ 00000
 Firearms (+1 to Damage) _____ ●●●●●
 Melee _____ ●●●●●
 Performance _____ 00000
 Security _____ ●●●●●
 Stealth _____ ●●●●●
 Survival _____ ●●●●●
 Technology _____ 00000

KNOWLEDGES

Academics _____ 00000
 Bureaucracy _____ 00000
 Computer _____ 00000
 Finance _____ 00000
 Investigation _____ ●●●●●
 Law _____ ●●●●●
 Linguistics _____ 00000
 Medicine _____ 00000
 Occult _____ 00000
 Politics _____ 00000
 Research _____ 00000
 Science _____ 00000

ADVANTAGES

BACKGROUNDS

Patron _____ ●●●●●
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

EDGES

NAME	CREED	LEVEL	TRIGGER
Cleave (Vengeance)	●●●●●	00000	"Time to die."
Trail (Vengeance)	●●●●●	00000	"See ya later."
Impart (Wayward)	●●●●●	00000	"Don't you see?"
Forewarn (Wayward)	●●●●●	00000	n/a
Enrage (Wayward)	●●●●●	00000	"Time to kill!"
_____	00000	00000	_____
_____	00000	00000	_____

Mercy

SCORE	SPENT
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0

VIRTUES

SCORE	SPENT
1	● X
2	● X
3	● X
4	● X
5	● X
6	● X
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0

Zeal

SCORE	SPENT
1	● X
2	● X
3	● X
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0

DERANGEMENTS

Antisocial Personality Disorder

MERITS & FLAWS

Great Liar (2pt), Perfect Balance (1pt)
 Good Night Vision (2pt), Determined (2pt)
 Poor Dental Health (-1pt), Bully (-1pt)
 Distinguishing Characteristics (-2pt)
 Bully (-1pt), Nightmares (-1pt)

CONVICTION

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

WILLPOWER

● ● ● ● 0 0 0 0 0 0
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

EXPERIENCE

HEALTH

Bruised
 Hurt -1
 Injured -1
 Wounded -2
 Mauled -2
 Crippled -5
 Incapacitated

+1 to Damage, Soak or Wits - one active at a time - costs three Conviction points, lasts Vision in days - a day rest between each use

PLAYING JACK

Simply put, Jack Valentine is a psychopath. But be careful not to play him as simply a total headcase. He can be a clever and devious bastard. When he is unleashed the results can be explosive, but he will plot, plan and watch before he acts. Imagine the creepiest serial killer from a movie and play him a little like that. He's a great liar, so he can bullshit his way into people's confidence with ease. When he recognises another hunter he sees them as tools. His answer to everything is with destruction. He was clever enough to know how to avoid the death penalty, and he'd already thought ahead enough to his conviction before taking down the Olsen ghost.

PREVALENT SECOND SIGHT

Unlike other hunters, a Wayward's second sight is *always* active and therefore you never need to spend Conviction to activate Jack's second sight. However, this does not confer the other benefits of immunity towards mind control and so forth. You still need to spend a point of Conviction to put up these defences that are normally associated with second sight, although Jack can "see" at all times.

DERANGEMENT'S EXPLAINED

By default, on account of Jack being a Wayward, he has a Derangement. At the moment of his Imbuing his mind was shattered, and this was the result. Only when he is around a Visionary (such as Brian) can he find any relief from his psychosis. Whereas the Wayward would normally be compelled to act upon whatever depraved act enters his mind, while Brian is within sight or earshot you may spend a Willpower point to overcome those urges for a scene. Brian need do nothing to initiate, encourage or maintain this calming effect, and indeed is not even aware that he is doing this.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder no longer subscribe to social norms. They certainly don't believe in guilt. They recognise no lines dividing right and wrong. Their conscience is so submerged that they are desensitised to any normally unacceptable or inappropriate acts. They're practically automatons, emotionless and cruel. Nothing in their heads tells them not to lie, steal, cheat or kill. Morality, to them, is a single shade of grey.

This derangement allows Jack to engage in acts of atrocity and murder without qualm or remorse. Any action this sociopath performs is magically "excused" by his insanity, allowing any typically vilified deed to be performed free of guilt.

Jack suffers a +2 difficulty to Social rolls, as his cold and distant nature unsettles just about everyone he encounters. Also, he is incapable of succeeding on any roll that requires Empathy, since he has none — or is, at best, incapable of finding it.

Backgrounds Explained

●●●● Patron

The Heralds still communicate with Jack so much that it's almost a daily distraction. Often these come to him as his nightmares. In the last five years, while he has been unable to engage in the war, the nightmares have become increasingly worse. The other method the Heralds use to contact Jack is through splintering headaches, visions and garbled voices. These hit him so strong he is usually crippled for a few seconds with the pain shooting through his body. But when that happens, he knows he's being guided to something specific, unlike his nightmares, which just torment him with a vision of the world unmasked.

Merits & Flaws Explained

Great Liar

Lying comes naturally to Jack. He has no guilt or second thoughts about spinning a deception. He can make even the most seemingly implausible deception sound like God's own truth when it comes tripping off his honeyed tongue. Gain two dice on any Social roll that involves lying to or deceiving another person or monster.

Good Night Vision

The difficulty of Perception rolls at night is decreased by two.

Perfect Balance

This Merit allows Suzie a lowered difficult by two on all balance related rolls.

Determined

Jack is a tenacious bastard, determined to go his own way. It's very difficult for people to persuade him otherwise. Gain two dice in any resisted roll in which someone tries to persuade Jack to do something. This also applies to supernatural tricks that have mind-control effects if Conviction is not active..

Bully

Jack tends to push people around when he can get away with it. This aggression doesn't need to be physical, and is often purely social. He chafes under leadership of more forceful personalities and can be a malcontent when he isn't in charge.

Poor Dental Health

Jack's teeth are very obviously in need of some serious work. For the most part, in prison this has no effect on his Social interaction, but if such a superficial interaction should arise, he has an increase in difficulty of all Social rolls by two

Infamy

That stunt you pulled with Mayor Olsen makes people particularly wary of Jack. They know he's an unstable son of a bitch. For interacting with anyone who knows

what he's in for, add two to the difficulty of any Social rolls.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Jack is heavily tattooed and always sports a clean-shaven head. His scraggly beard also offsets this intimidating image.

Nightmares

With the Heralds always chattering in his head, Jack sleeps the sleep of the restless. Nightly, they speak to him of the horrors that walk the world, urging him to action, showing bloody and gruesome images that would drive even Bosch or Giger to insanity. In game terms, make a Willpower roll, difficulty 7, to sleep through the night without being tormented. The day after, add two to the difficulty of the first Ability or Attribute roll made to deal with the monsters.

WAYWARD SYMBOLS EXPLAINED

While fighting the war, symbols began to form and become clear to Jack. These were unique to the symbols known to others. The Code, they called it. But the Code was merely a means of communications, while these symbols, these were power. These symbols made Jack stronger, better. He incorporated them into his tattoos so they would always be available to him.

For each symbol, shown below, activation costs three Conviction points and lasts for Vision rating in days. Jack can stop the effects at any time, but must wait a day before activating another one.



Devastating
+1 to Damage



Resilient
+1 to Soak



Resourceful
+1 to Wits

VISION

Hunters on this primary path pursue freedom for all. Rather than fight to win battles against the unknown, they fight to end the war.

DEVIANCE

This isn't war. This isn't some sort of intellectual exercise open for debate. Monsters are not sad, sympathetic creatures. This is the last desperate struggle to survive in the face of utter evil. Half-measures won't do. There is no ethics, no room for squeamishness. The monsters and all the other scum have to be destroyed, every last one of them. No matter what the cost. Even if it takes every last drop of blood of every person on Earth, it'll still be a bargain. At least there'll be none of *them* left.

Working with other hunters is fine, so long as they don't slow you down. Some of them talk a good fight, but when it comes to burning down a project to get the rats inside, they lose their stomach for it. That means you

avoid revealing too much about yourself or your plan to anyone. You never know when an "ally" might turn out to be monster-friendly. They don't understand that you have become more than human to *win*. That makes everyone else window-dressing. When the war is over, the monsters will be gone — and all the criminals, sinners and unbelievers with them. Look out for yourself first. You have no one else to turn to.

● Impart

By simply concentrating Jack can "open the eyes" of hunters near him, activating their second sight as if switching on a lamp. Those affected by this sudden "gift" have no idea how this phenomenon occurs, or who or what causes it — only that it happens without their own volition. Unfortunately, some hunters presume that with second sight comes the standard defences, but it doesn't. Unless Jack shares this information, they'll have to learn this the hard way.

System: Roll Perception + Vision, difficulty 6. Each success activates the second sight of one other hunter. Jack chooses which hunters receive this benefit, and who does not. Each hunter must be within 30 yards.

Using Impart costs one action and can be performed by a Wayward once per scene. The benefits last for the remainder of the scene, even if recipients move beyond 30 yards from Jack.

●● Forewarn

In short, this is a kind of danger sense. Jack has a sudden feeling that something bad is about to happen. He doesn't necessarily know what it is, but he has a slight advantage in being able to prepare himself for trouble.

System: This ability is always "on" ready to warn of trouble. In game mechanics, the Storyteller makes a secret roll of Wits + Vision, difficulty 7, as a reflexive roll when danger is imminent.

The edge activates in one of two ways, with separate benefits. In a non-combat situation — when a threat does not involve an imminent attack, such as a crumbling wall, or a bomb about to go off — for each success gained by the Storyteller, Jack detects the danger for about a turn before it presents itself.

In the case of impending combat the Storyteller rolls *in the turn before the attack will occur*. Any successes are added to Jack's initiative in the next turn *or* are added to the dice pool of a reaction roll such as a dodge, block or parry. You choose whether Jack stands ready for action — you gain extra initiative — or he automatically prepares to defend himself — you make a dodge, block or parry.

Danger sense does not indicate the kind of danger that's impending — simply that something is about to happen. How Jack reacts is down to you, and it could well be useless. For example, trying to parry a toppling wall.

The Storyteller decides whether Forewarn is able to anticipate threats posed to others around Jack, but you can't confer the effects to others to give them bonuses.

●●● Enrage

Jack can "share his spirit" and instill a sort of berserk bloodlust in other hunters, forcing even pacifists to do gory battle with whatever raises their or Jack's violent overdrive, their minds red with fury. Even hunters with the best of intentions may be lost to this power, "waking up" in a room full of bodies — those of monsters and people alike.

System: Roll Manipulation + Vision, difficulty 6. For each success achieved, Jack may effect one other hunter within six yards (18 feet) to be affected by a berserk rage.

This rage forces other hunters to act violently against "the enemy" (how that is interpreted is left up to the players and the Storyteller). All players of affected characters may make a Willpower roll, difficulty 7, to resist the effect and must *exceed* the total number of successes gained on your edge roll to do so. The subject may move outside of six yards and still lash out afterwards.

An affected hunter must attack the nearest perceived enemy with the most lethal weapon or power at his disposal over a number of turns equal to the total number of successes achieved in your edge roll. Each attacker also gains a number of bonus dice on all attack rolls equal to the successes gained in your roll. So, if you achieve five successes on your Enrage roll, all five affected hunters attack the enemy for five turns and gain five dice on all attack rolls in that time.

Once the turn is over, each affected hunter suffers a number of bashing levels (which are unsoakable) according to the number of successes you got on your edge roll:

1–2 successes = 1 level

3–4 successes = 2 levels

5 or more successes = 3 levels

Jack is not affected by his own power and does not take any damage associated with its use. The power cannot be used to infuriate regular humans, bystanders or monsters. For use with this power, the term "enemy" typically refers to whoever Jack considers a foe.