

Special Crimes Division

("The Stakhanovites")

In theory, being assigned to Asmodeus's (Demon Prince of the Game) Special Crimes Division **should** be equivalent to a slow death sentence. It is well known that Asmodeus reserves membership in it to those of his Gamesters who are credibly suspected of dissatisfaction, altruism, piety, angelic-deviationism, thoughtcrime, excess Revolutionary zeal, equivocalism, accommodationism, Peacemongering, not enough Revolutionary zeal, humanocentrism, unsanctioned rebellion, and punning. Worse, the Prince uses the SCD to investigate ideologically inconvenient crimes, delicate political scandals -- and, shockingly, outrages committed against damned souls. Unreliable personnel assigned to situations ready to explode; clearly, those trapped in the SCD are doomed demons walking.

And yet, the SCD does not lack for resources (quite the contrary, in fact). Promotion is no faster or slower than it is in other parts of InfSec. The arrest/execution numbers for SCD members are likewise not unusually high. And, most importantly, there is the unstated -- yet universally understood -- awareness among members of the Game that the Lord Player has not singled *these* pieces out for

destruction **quite** yet. It is widely guessed that Asmodeus does not do so because he believes the group to be useful; it is equally widely guessed that the continuing survival of the SCD relies entirely on making sure that the Prince of the Game keeps on believing that.

Purpose and Goals

Officially, to investigate, solve, and prosecute those cases brought to its attention by Prince Asmodeus and/or his duly assigned representatives. Unofficially, do this and ensure the SCD's survival in the process.

Organization and Membership

The SCD is set up on reasonably hierarchical lines: there are a mass of Investigators, who are led by various Detectives, who report to several Knights, who are watched over by a Baron (who is advised by two Captains). There is a third Captain who is charge of various Researchers, most of whom specialize in forensics.

As noted above, being assigned to the SCD implies that Asmodeus thinks that you're very close to becoming a traitor. You may not be quite there, yet -- but you're close,

and whether or not this is designed to be a last chance to get you back on track, or just a last chance to get useful work out of you, is one of the quiet worries of every SCD operative.

By and large, SCD operatives are **not** Redemption candidates. The ones that might have been usually try to run for it when they're given their reassignment orders. The ones that stay, and survive, typically take pains to unsobtly establish their demonic natures, while at the same time not hiding the same tendencies that got them in trouble in the first place. After all, it's not as if they can keep their better natures a secret, and there is a certain power in being able to be a mild heretic in public, and yet survive.

Abilities and Resources

As the Special Crimes Division handles a variety of investigations in Hell (and more rarely on Earth), it is set up to be fairly eclectic. The main offices are located precisely as far away as one can get from the Halls of Loyalty and still be in Hades -- nobody has ever dared asked if this was one of Asmodeus' little jokes -- and are mostly given over to Investigator offices and specialized research labs. Prisoners, trials and sentencing are all

outsourced: the SCD is there to solve mysteries, not prosecute crimes.

The resource level of the SCD would be fairly impressive normally for a perpetually resource-starved Hell, and downright stunning for a group of half-accused, assumed traitors. They enjoy the use of adequate laboratories, comprehensive research materials, functional mechanical and electronic equipment, and even decent cafeteria food. Of course, this is considered a double-edged sword by some, as it removes a favorite Infernal excuse for failure (lack of supplies). In fact, it is definitely expected that there is no excuse for the SCD to ever fail to successfully prosecute one of its assigned cases. Ever.

Celestial Relations

Heaven

No member of the SCD would ever dare to voluntarily meet with an angel or member of the Host unless he was planning to both go Renegade and seek Redemption that very second. As the penalties for a member of the SCD going Renegade are starkly terrifying, and tend to be spread around, there is an institutional bias towards keeping this state of affairs in place. SCD members do *not* work with Dominican Triads.

Hell

The SCD has a very antagonistic relationship with regular denizens of Hell. The average demon hates them for their apparent freedom to break the Rules (even more so than the average Gamester), and fears them for their willingness to repay insults with death sentences. It invariably comes as a shock -- sometimes, a terminal one -- to a newly-fledged demon when he finds out that it is actually against the Rules to torture or casually destroy a damned soul. No matter that the Rule was written in the very beginning of Lucifer's reign, or that enforcing it has never been standard Gamester policy, or that it was never really meant to be taken seriously in the first place; it's still a Rule, and the SCD will enforce it against rank-and-file demons who try to hassle them, and InfSec will cheerfully execute a duly-arrested violator of that Rule.

The end result is that the SCD gets very little assistance from the Horde in general, but is not notably at risk of either random attacks or assassinations. This suits them very well. And as for Damned souls? Well, SCD operatives are very careful not to be *too* friendly towards any human, but as they do deal with them on a regular basis, it's generally considered best to use the carrot a bit more than the typical demon would.

History

The SCD has been around for some time, as celestials mark things: the name, personnel and modus operandi all change from time to time, but the core idea remains the same. Its current incarnation as a quasi-police department is relatively new, and not yet quite proven to be an acceptably efficient use of Asmodeus' valuable resources. As noted above, the SCD handles cases of interest; usually sensitive, never straightforward, quite often difficult. They survive because they do their jobs; demons too stupid to understand that being assigned to SCD is a reprieve from the guillotine are never assigned to SCD in the first place, and demons who fail their assignments tend not to stay long. The ones that survive are the ones that can work hard, keep out of further trouble, and not get too close to either the humans -- or each other.

After all, this is still Hell, and they still work for the Game.

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