



AGENTS OF CHAOS

Shadowrun Line Developer: Jason M. Hardy

Product Design & Development: Randall N. Bills,
Jason M. Hardy, Philip A. Lee

Original Cue System Design:
Matt Heerd

Writing: Patrick Goodman, Jason Hawks,
O.C. Presley, Grant Robinson, Malik Toms,
Russell Zimmerman

Cover Art: Victor Manuel Leza Moreno

Cover Layout: Matt “Cracked Foundation” Heerd

Interior Art: Bruno Balixa, Tyler Clark, Kat Hardy,
Brian McCranie, Andreas “AAS” Schroth

Interior Layout: Matt “Cracked Foundation” Heerd

Playtesting & Proofing: Bruce Ford, Mason Hart,
Louis Ray, Jeremy Weyand

Based on Material by: John Appel, David
Ellenberger, Cullen Erbacher, Tony Gambino,
Robert Loper, Michael Messmer, Danny Oliver,
Elizabeth Miller Patrick, Timothy Patrick,
O.C. Presley, Steven “Bull” Ratkovich, Grant
Robinson, Ron Rummell, Steven Tinner, Thomas
Willoughby



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PMB 202 • 303 -91st Ave. NE, E-502
Lake Stevens, WA 98258



Find us online:
info@shadowruntabletop.com
(Shadowrun questions)
<http://www.shadowruntabletop.com>
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INTRODUCTION

In the Sixth World, the Second City stands second to none in terms of the wounds it has suffered. A collapsed core, an invasion of nightmarish insectoid spirits from another plane, and a full-on nuclear explosion combined to turn a once-thriving metropolis into a wasteland full of deadly threats and those dispossessed brave (or crazy) enough to live among them.

But the memories of the city—and in particular, the wealth it generated—remain in the minds of the megacorporate powers of the world, and they're not about to let those memories go. Especially if it means taking back promising real estate that currently sits in the hands of the people they'd prefer to push aside. Chicago will attempt to rise while hosting a convergence of powers as corporations battle each other to reclaim the area's wealth—and avoid falling prey to the shady entities that still haunt its darkest corners.

Chicago Chaos is a supplement for *Shadowrun: Anarchy* that introduces a host of new material for your *Anarchy*

game. After some short fiction to set the mood, we leap into **Screamsheet Howl**, which provides background information on how Chicago got to be what it is, as well as details on the current powers in the city and their goals. Next comes **The Uncontained**, a treasure trove of characters and NPCs that can be used in your *Anarchy* game, including as a character you may want to play. After that is a collection of **Contract Briefs**, plotlines you can pick up and run in your *Anarchy* game. These are a combination of storylines from the seasons of *Shadowrun Missions* that were set in Chicago and original plots, and they can be run in isolation or as a long-running Chicago-based campaign. Finally, there's the **Items and Objects** chapter, which lists some of the new Shadow Amps, qualities, gear and other options that the characters in this book bring into the game, and that you can adopt for your own game.

That's plenty of material to launch you into the heart of Chicago and set you on a quest to help save the city from the forces tearing it apart—or maybe shove it ahead to its final destruction. You'll make the choice, and then, as always, you'll see if you can live with it.



PLAN B

BY RUSSELL ZIMMERMAN

“And that—” Grimm’s Reaper smiled as he swung his sword down, two-handed, and the blade cleaved neatly through skin, bone, flesh, and magic, to part emaciated head from emaciated shoulders “—is that.”

The vampire was dead. Head removed by weapon focus—there was no coming back from that. Reaper knew a done deal when he saw it, and this deal was very, very, done.

The elf turned to glance at the sleek gun-drone hovering nearby. One buzzed and whirred near the entrance to this sewer’s reeking chamber, covering the exit. The other hovered just about an arm’s reach away, a blinking green light showing it was broadcasting. He looked it square in the smartlink camera lens.

“You get that footage?” he said loudly enough to be sure the aerodynamic Transys combat-bot could pick up his question on its external mics. The tunnels were a too-deep maze lined with too many old metallics, so the short-range radios they’d scrounged up for communications weren’t working any better than his commlink had. Reaper’d had to leave his back at the tunnel entrance with his getaway man, the two ’links spliced together to boost Sharky’s signal so *he*, at least, could maintain clear communications with their electronic support duo, clear and away, topside.

And so, without proper communications, Reaper had learned to settle for yelling at a gun-drone and hoping either microphones or facial recognition subroutines linked up to lip-reading protocols did the job.

Looked like it was still working, at least. His question got through.

Elsewhere, a rigger sent a mental command and twitched her wrist just so. The drone hovered in place, but its mounted assault rifle’s muzzle bobbed down and up several times in a virtual nod. Footage received. Rigger confirmed.

“All righty! Kill documented and verified, then,” Reaper nodded matter-of-factly, sheathing his mageblade at his hip. “No need to collect the corpse. I’m in the clear to get the frag out of he—”

He heard them coming just as the second drone reacted, suppressed Typhoon autorifle coughing and spitting death. Reaper’s mageblade leapt back into his hand, and the scythe-sharp tattoos on his forearms blazed with power as he tapped into his internal reservoirs of power to fuel himself with supernatural speed. Grimm’s Reaper was hard to catch unawares, and even harder to pin down.

The first wave of howling, blood-mad feral ghouls fell to combined waves of high-velocity death spat forth by the Transys combat-drones, several well-placed swings of Reaper’s preternaturally sharp sword, and a single focused blast of pure magical power. Nothing dropped threats like Manabolt, that’s what Reaper always said.

There were more claws in the darkness, more sets of glowing eyes peering at him from all around.



"Where the frag is my exit?!"
Reaper said that a lot, too.

"I've got no word from Sharky. How's Grimmy doing?" Dot-Execute *almost* sounded like she cared. Caring wasn't like her. She might've been faking it—she did that sometimes—but maybe she liked Reaper 'cause he was easy on the eyes. Or maybe it was an elf thing. Or maybe it was the potential payday he represented. Or, yeah, given how she was leaning carelessly against the van, maybe she was just faking it.

"You know he hates it when you call him that. And he's doing fine." Loop took a few seconds to answer, shrugging her ork-broad shoulders. Half or more of her attention was invested in manipulating her gun-drones, guiding them via her top-of-the-line control rig, flying them based on the visuals she saw projected through her augmented-reality goggles; they were flying and shooting a few clicks away and underground, so the signal noise had her lagging a bit and kept her from piloting them at full speed. She pretended it was a video game, like she'd played as a kid. Making the vampire hunt and ensuing chase feel unreal made it easier to swallow.

"But he'd be doing better if he followed my fraggin' drones more closely."

Loop had, like all right-thinking gamers, always hated escort missions.

"No, left!" She growled, agitation raising her voice. There was no way for the elven mage to hear her—not any more than her AR gaming rigs could've heard her, ten years ago, playing just for fun—but she didn't let that stop her from voicing her frustration. "Left! Turn le—ah, damn it Reaper! My drone!"

Dot-Exe rolled her eyes and busied herself with her own cyberdeck, but half-heartedly. The elf didn't seem to care very much, after all. She shrugged, elf-graceful even in her disdain for others.

"I guess Imma call Sharky and see what's what," she said, a sharp nod sliding her AR goggles down from her forehead and over her eyes. It was only fair, Dot had been the one to talk Sharky into this gig, she was the one that knew him from around the way, and she wasn't the one that was overseeing the drone fire team. It was only fair the elf do some work on this gig, right?

Reaper ran. He didn't trot, jog, jander, saunter, or stroll, no. He ran. He ran like he hadn't in a long time. He wasn't in bad shape, far from it—he was just rusty at running away. He didn't like the taste it left in his mouth, the coppery taste of pure fear and the primal, animalistic acknowledgement of another creature as a superior threat.

Pride like that was dangerous for a monster hunter, naturally, but Reaper seldom claimed he was perfect.

So it stung, but he ran.

He ran away from the spark-spewing gun-drone that he'd last seen emptying its magazine while feral ghouls tore it apart and raged about a lack of meat within. He ran away from the muzzle flashes and whirring engine of Loop's other gun-drone, letting the machine draw fire and attention as he—and his precious meat—hoofed it down a side passage. He ran as he heard claws skittering and bare feet splashing in the darkness behind him. He thought of nothing but running.

Reaper's feet slid, but the elf kept his balance as he rounded the last corner to the surface entrance where he'd left his bike and his sidekick. Sharky was local muscle, Chicago born and bred, that'd been picked up by another local Reaper'd just started to work with. She vouched for him. Sharky'd been seduced into coming along on his own set of wheels, to standing shotgun over his and Reaper's bikes, and to getting paid half in advance and half after they both made it clear, post-vampire encounter.

"Aww, drek. Damn it, Sharky!"

Reaper's skittering stop drew the glowing-eyed gaze of a knot of ghouls, feasting, bloody up to their elbows.

The good news was that Reaper hadn't ever grown very close to the local muscle. The better news was that Sharky wasn't going to need the second half of that payment. The bad news was that a whole pack of bloody-chinned ferals with bits of implanted musculature stuck in their teeth were between Reaper and his way out.

Halfway between him and the snarling, staring monsters, the elf saw a clear-glowing screen. One of their commlink's had survived Sharky's getting snuck up on and torn open, and a tinny voice rang out from it, high-pitched. Disinterested. A terrible lifeline, as lifelines went.

"—en I guess try Plan B, or whatever. Anyways, I don't know if you can even hear me, Grimmy. Sharky's Meta went offline, which could just mean the drekky battery died, could just mean that dummy dropped it, or could mean he, I dunno, got eaten or something. So if you can hear me, then I guess try Plan B, or whatever. Anyways, I don't know if you can even hear me, Gri—"

A ghoulish crushed the commlink under one bare, sewer-filthy foot as the wave of them howled and rushed at Reaper.

What the frag was Plan B again? He just had time to think before his mageblade and sparking bolts of pure sorcerous power busied themselves trying to carve out a little space for him. And, for just a second, *Maybe it's time to get a regular crew instead of trying this drek solo.*

"What do you mean, it went dead?" Loop gawked over at the elf, managing to glare even as her attention remained split, one eye—literally, thanks to her AR monocle—on her remaining gun-drone, the other leveled incredulously at Dot-Execute's casual posture.

"Uh, I thought I was pretty clear," the elf rolled her eyes.

"It went dead. No return when I ping it. No response when I call, no answer when I text, no icon remaining when I full-dive in to check on it."

She shrugged.

"I set a loop—" a very un-elfen snort escaped her lips as she grinned at the ork, Loop, "—to give them a heads up and remind them of our back-up plan, and wide-cast it to both 'links, but, drek, girl, I don't know. They might both be dead, I guess."

"You guess?" The ork growled.

Dot splayed her hands in front of her in a what-you-gonna-do flail.

"Girl, get your skinny ass in there," Loop nodded to Dot's cyberdeck, and by extension the Matrix, "And check again. Scan for nearby sec-cams, check on their bikes' location signals, hit up the bikes' diagnostics checks I installed, *do something*. If they're both dead, we don't get paid!"

That widened the elf's disinterested eyes and got her to work.

Loop wasn't *technically* telling her the whole truth, of course. The footage of the vampire's execution was recorded, and Loop *had* saved it already. To three different places. So they could probably still get paid, even if Grimm's Reaper and Sharky were both ghoulish. It would be a hassle—forging up a proper license and all, since Reaper was the only one with the paperwork to do this sort of gig—but Loop knew she'd be up to the task, if push came to shove.

She just *also* knew that threatening the nuyen was the surest way to get Dot-Execute's hoop in gear. Dot had promise. Dot had potential. Dot had a conscience problem. She was pure merc, and Loop tried not to hold it against her, but she also knew just how to motivate the younger console cowgirl.

"Plan B," Reaper panted as he ran, "Is stupid."

Swimming wasn't his *strong* suit, any more than running was. But if he had to run, then swim, then pedal a damned bike like in some old Ironman competition, by Jesus, Buddha, and Zeus, *that's what he'd do*; he wasn't going to get eaten by ghouls, he had a reputation to keep up!

So he continued to trek towards Plan B, which was a nautical exit. It would mean leaping right into the oh-so-polluted Chicago River and just hoping these ghouls weren't natural swimmers. There was a tendency—Reaper read a lot—there was a tendency for ghouls and assorted other Infected to shy away from aquatic encounters, and they seldom ventured into areas rich with running water. Some speculated it was a side effect of the Human/Metahuman Vampiric Virus (Krieger Strain) that made ghouls so ghoulish, others that it was a purely psychological holdover, with evidence that non-feral ghouls could swim just fine, while only ferals seemed to avoid the water. Others suggested that it had to do with a ghoulish blindness, their utter reliance only on astral vision to

see, and that they found water disconcerting or disorienting in some way.

Long story short, Plan B hinged on Reaper out-swimming ghouls who, for whatever reason, often weren't strong swimmers.

But damn, was that a weak assumption to be betting his life on.

Limping as well as panting now, Grimm's Reaper tried to ignore the steady trickle of warmth running down his side, past one hip, and along his leg. It was the bite of a ghoul that was likely to spread their disease, not just a rake of their claws, but hell if it wasn't still an open wound and he wasn't running around an actual sewer with it. And double-hell if he wasn't about to jump right into the Chicago River with a few extra holes in his body.

"If," he said aloud to nobody in particular, wincing in pain. "I can even find it."

They hadn't mapped Plan B out very meticulously, no. He'd uploaded a basic MapSoft to his goggles for emergency reference, but the local hacker girl—the elfen one, Dot-Execute—had been honest about it being years out of date. Wary, even, when she'd announced it. Worried, no doubt, that providing years-old tunnel plans might endanger her payment.

"Maybe it should have," Reaper grunted as he ran, unevenly, along the route his goggles displayed for him. He had to run. They were still behind him. He could still hear them breathing, snarling, growling, splashing, and skittering after him.

Frag the map. It was time to just navigate by instinct. A monster hunter's got to trust his gut sometimes, and that means, when in doubt, running away from the ravenous horde of ghouls. Not north, not south, not measuring in meters ... just orienting in terms of away and fast and far.

Until, the huffing, puffing, limping elf realized, you heard snarling and the skitter of long-grown claws in front of you, too.

Grimm's Reaper sighed and resigned himself to another fight—his last?—and figured a proper Fireball would be a better way to die, if it came down to it, than yellow teeth and splitting claws. He leveled his mageblade, found the confident, balanced, center of himself, and called up his power.

Just as the shadows swarmed in from all around, every nearby mouth of every nearby tunnel, just as he felt swollen and pregnant with the terrible, raw, fire he was about to loose in the too-tight confines of the sewers, just the second when he felt certain it was too many claws, from too many different directions ... there was a bright light and a muted roar.

A Transys Typhoon autogun, mounted in the sleek, polymer, body of a custom-rigged security drone, firing on full auto.

Grimm's Reaper pivoted on one foot and slung his fireball far down a side passage, a streaking blur of fire that cast crazed shadows on the walls as it blurred and burned its way past a half-dozen ghouls, exploded behind them, and sent