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THE JOURNAL OF THE SHADOWFIST SECRET WAR SOCIETY

TWO-FISTED 密戰 TALES 英傳 of the Secret War



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From the desk of THE UNSPOKEN NAME

You will have no doubt seen the new Shadowfist expansion, *Two-Fisted Tales of the Secret War*, in stores. This was a fun set to design, full of flavor of those pulp archetypes. It also accomplishes another goal I have dreamed of for the game. We hope you enjoy this set.

Read this issue and get your fill of Shadowfist goodness, including some news about the upcoming core set, entitled, *Critical Shift*. It's going to be big, not only in number of cards, but in scope as it celebrates Shadowfist's 10th anniversary. We hope to party things up and that you will be there to share it with us.

Two-Fisted Combos

by David Eber



TWO-FISTED TALES of the Secret War plunges Shadowfist players into the world of gangsters, masked avengers, lost cities, and pulp super-science. Here are a few quick combos from the set to get you started.

Blitzkrieg & Supersoldier Serum
Supersoldier Serum has a great cost-to-benefit ratio, but since you can only play it on unturned characters, you won't be able to play it on your attackers, thus losing the advantage of surprise. In an all-soldier deck, you can get around this with Blitzkrieg. Attack, then use Blitzkrieg to unturn all your soliders after interceptors are declared. Not only is that hugely powerful in its own right, but now you can play your Supersoldier Serums during the attack instead of beforehand.

Teutonic Knights & Tomb of Itzcolihqui & Armies of the Monarchs

This is a situation where all the cards in the combo work to make each other better. The Knights gain +2 damage from every Armies of the Monarchs you play. The Tomb will let you play the Armies cheaper, and it'll add another +1 damage to the Knights, and the Armies of the Monarchs will increase the body of the Tomb. If you make this into an all-Thunder deck, you can throw in Fanaticism as well, which also combos with both the Knights and the Tomb in the same way.



Seedy Dive & Hired Killer & "Hammer" Harrison

The most obvious uses for Seedy Dive is to have a hood character heal during or after combat, or to get in a second attack, or to unturn a character to intercept. In combo with Hired Killer, you'll get to blast an opponent's character twice. This is even better if you're already intercepting that character, and it's even better still if you're using "Hammer" Harrison. Hammer can hit an incoming character for six damage with this combo, and then intercept for another three. Or, he can hit a larger character with Hired Killer, and then intercept a smaller one and use his ability to take no damage.

Charge of the Righteous & The Red Harvest

This isn't so much a combo as it is a case of benefiting twice when your characters get smoked. Play Charge of the Righteous, then play The Red Harvest, and then attack. For each character that gets smoked, you'll get a counter on Charge and you'll get power from The Red Harvest. You'll have to discard as well, but this can work to your advantage too, particularly if you're playing with multiple Sunless Sea Ruins. Of course, your characters have to get smoked for this to actually work, so I suggest playing it and then going after an opponent's character, or possibly their Temple of the Angry Spirits.

The Twisted Horror & Material Transcendence

The Twisted Horror has Toughness: 3 while an opponent controls an edge. With this combo, you don't have to wait for him to play one. Not only will Material Transcendence effectively neutralize one of his characters, but you'll have some very tough Twisted Horrors knocking on his door.

Ubermensch & Helix Chewer

The Ubermensch might not look like much at first, but with the plethora of 0-cost cards available to the Architects, you can ratchet up his Toughness pretty quickly. The best way to do this, however, is with the Helix Chewer. Play this on a character intercepting the Ubermensch, and it's like giving the Ubermensch Toughness: 2. What's more, since the Chewer returns to your hand when its subject is smoked, you can keep replaying it, increasing the Ubermensch's Toughness each time. This is particularly brutal when your opponent intercepts with a chain of small characters.

The Jade Dragon & Ornamental Garden & Hidden Tomb

A site that's the subject of both the Jade Dragon and an Ornamental Garden will produce a whopping four power per turn. However, it costs four power to get this combo started. By playing both cards on the Hidden Tomb, you'll cut that cost in half. Bear in mind that this will make the site a huge target, and the double-damage from the Ornamental Garden will make it easy to take. The Toughness from the Jade Dragon will help a little, but make sure to stock up on defensive cards if you're going to try this one.



Critical Shift This Summer!

by Zev Shlasinger

WE RECENTLY CONCLUDED a summer-long storyline event wherein the faction that scored the most points would win in the pulp juncture and cause a critical shift. This shift serves two purposes: one, to cause a shakeup in the Shadowfist universe, as fans have asked for; and two, to prepare for the next Shadowfist expansion which will in fact be a new core set.

Many fans for years have asked for a definitive change in the battle of the Secret War. We decided to open a storyline competition leading up to the release of the new Two Fisted Tales of the Secret War expansion, to determine who will win this newly opened pulp juncture. The winner of this juncture was going to cause a critical shift, an event that changes the look of the Secret War.

The winner of this event is the Dragons. They came out on top after a hard fought battle (isn't always that way for them?); their underdog victory will cause a ripple through time affecting the future, and the future to be most affected is the one occupied by the Architects.

We are not getting rid of the Architects; they are still around, just not in the same way as we have all come to love them. Hey, this is a critical shift and that means change! And change will come to all factions in some way, all of which you will see in the new core set, appropriately titled, Critical Shift.

Critical Shift will be the celebration of 10 years of Shadowfist, containing the best cards from the first, limited edition set all the way through to the Seven Masters expansion. There will also be at least 75 new cards. Expect to see over 400 cards total! This set will define Shadowfist to new players, giving them access to the card pool they will need to build any faction they wish.

To further reflect the change in the 2066 juncture, a new faction will premiere as the main force in that juncture. Think cyberpunk meets martial arts. Yes, this new faction will have access to both Chi and Tech! We'll have more about them in another issue of Kii-Yaaah!

The final thing to say about the makeup of Critical Shift is that you will be able to draft from the starters and boosters. There will be four rarities to make this possible: common, uncommon, rare, and very common. The "very common" category will reflect the staple Feng Shui sites and foundation cards.

We will speak more about the Critical Shift set in the future. Please visit our website for news, including ideas on how to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Shadowfist. We will need your help running events in stores and demoing to get new players into the game.

Thank you all for the support you have given and here's to a bright future.

Kii-Yaaah!!

The Walk of a Thousand Steps

How to Create or Expand A Shadowfist Playgroup by Stefan Vincent



DON'T HAVE A PLAYGROUP? Or want to expand the one you have? It's not easy, but it can be done if you're willing to put some time and effort into it.

1. LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Playing in your home/apartment is fine, but most likely you aren't getting much gamer walk-by traffic in your home. You're going for exposure here, so pick a public-ish place where gamers congregate. Find a local game store that has gaming tables and allows open play (preferably a store that also stocks Shadowfist, although that's not absolutely necessary). Introduce yourself to the register monkey and ask if he/she knows anyone who plays Shadowfist. Let's assume the answer is "I dunno," otherwise this becomes a very short article.

2. GET THE WORD OUT

Advertise mercilessly. If the store has a bulletin board (the physical kind or the electronic kind), post a notice looking for opponents and people interested in learning the game. Post to the Shadowfist forum on Yahoogroups. If you're lucky enough to have more than one place where gamers congregate in your area (another shop, or a college, for instance) check there too—many colleges have a gaming club where you might be able to drum up new converts.

Include in your advertisement that new players are welcome, rules will be taught, and loaner cards will be provided. Provide multiple ways for folks to contact you—email, instant messaging, telephone, etc.. Make it easy for people to try the game, and to find you.

3. GIVE FREE STUFF

If you can spare the cards, put together some playable single-faction decks with cards from your overstock, and give them away to new players. I usually don't give the deck away unless the novice student appears to have a real interest in the game, but if you've got enough cards to spare then give 'em away to everyone. (and go back to step 2 and write "Free cards!" on all your merciless advertising)

As long as you're going to all this effort, check out the Silver Band on Shadowfist.com. Zev will support your demo efforts with promo cards, and when you get to the point that your group is ready for tournaments, you can get prize support as well.

4. TO DEMO, OR NOT TO DEMO

You might be tempted to offer a formal demo event; most stores will allow or even encourage this since they aren't paying you and you might bring in more business. But you probably won't entice many (or any) people to make a special trip just to try out the game—there isn't much buzz about Shadowfist in the stores right now, so people aren't flocking to check it out. If you decide to go for it, remember the advertise mercilessly bit, and get it on the calendar at Shadowfist.com too.

I find that the guerilla demo approach tends to be more effective than the traditional demo. Find out what day is most popular for card gamers at the store, bring a friend or three, sit down and play for a while. Bring some paraphernalia like posters or deck boxes you can casually scatter where it will be visible to passers-by. Wear a Shadowfist t-shirt, if you've got one. Set up on an aisle, preferably on the way to the bathroom (really—sooner or later, everyone will walk past your table) or the register. Be willing to drop

your game and teach a new player if you get the slightest expression of interest (have loaner or give-away decks ready). This also works at major tournaments for other games, especially those with elimination rounds where you can try to lure in folks who are waiting for their next game to start. Of course, this only works if you already have the beginnings of a playgroup; if you're starting from scratch then the traditional demo is the way to go.

5. GET THE 4 1 1

You've gone to all this trouble to get people involved but how do you keep them coming back? Always introduce yourself and get names (write them down!). After the demo, let new players know how to reach you and when you usually play. Ask politely for their contact info (email, primarily.) and whether they'd like to be notified of games, demos, and tournaments. Set up a mailing list to publicize your "events", even if it's just game night in your apartment. Direct emailing was always ok with me, but services like Yahoogroups make the mailing list concept pretty easy these days.

6. BE REGULAR

Once you get a few people interested, set up a regular day and time to meet at the store, and stick to it. Weekly or monthly, whatever you can manage. If possible, meet on a night when other card gamers are in the store (tournaments, open play, etc.) to maximize the chance that you'll draw in a new player. This makes it easy for the store workers to spread the word for you; if someone should happen to ask about Shadowfist they'll hear those magic words you worked hard for: "Shadowfist? Yeah, there's a bunch who play that every Tuesday night."



Card Analysis: Yakuza Enforcer

by Michael Stadermann

Yakuza Enforcer
Killer Hood
Faction Unaligned

Cost: 3

Provides: None

Fighting 4

Yakuza Enforcer takes no damage from cards you own. You may not redirect damage to Yakuza Enforcer.

WHILE THE YAKUZA ENFORCER certainly does not go into every deck, he has amazing utility and can be used in downright nasty combos. The fact that he is unaligned means he can be put into decks of any faction without problems.

The fact that he doesn't take damage from cards you own opens up a huge number of combos, both straightforward and less straightforward. The obvious combos are, of course, cards that damage all characters, or all characters at one location: Final Brawl, Throwdown in Chinatown, Fakhir-al-Din, Submachine Gun, to name a few. You can use all these and be certain only your opponents will hurt. On the other hand, Toughness: 1 will work just as well against most of these cards. Other cards make the Enforcer stand out more: few people expect a defender in front of a Jagged Cliff as they run their weenie horde into it. Play a vehicle on your Enforcer, sacrifice it with the Chop Shop during in attack, and watch the opposition melt away as you play Life in the Fast Lane. Have the Yakuza Enforcer attack with his buddy, FAE Schwartz, and Nerve Gas Schwartz before interception begins (this is more fun when Schwartz is riding a Battlematic or a Homemade Tank). And if all of that doesn't help, leave a Parting Gift. None of these

cards so much as touch the Enforcer while laying waste to the opposition.

Another notable strength of the Enforcer is that he can be turned into an unbreachable wall with Amulet of the Turtle or Big Rig: both of these cards redirect any damage done to the Enforcer to themselves, and become the source of damage once the damage exceeds the absorption capability. Since you control these states, none of the overflow damage can harm the Enforcer. So a Yakuza Enforcer with a Big Rig can block anyone, anywhere, anytime (well, except for CHAR and his friends), and stop the attacker dead in his tracks.

Note that the Yakuza does not take damage from cards you own. This means he can block characters that your opponents Bribe, Mentored, or Tortured Memoried without being damaged, but he is very dangerous when he is mentored himself. Also, if opponents Brain Fire your damaging events onto him, he is unaffected.

But not only the Enforcer himself can make good use of his ability; other characters also enjoy having his rules text. All characters that have to inflict damage on themselves to generate an effect can benefit from a Yakuza Enforcer in your smoked pile and an Occult Kung Fu: Tommy Hsu can redirect events with impunity, Concourse Goddard become completely immune to events that remove him from play, and Suong Xa can become gutsy anytime she wants without being half-dead after the experience. There are several other characters that inflict damage on themselves to generate effects, but it's typically easier to give them Toughness instead of going the Occult Kung Fu route.

Unfortunately, the Yakuza Enforcer doesn't do so well without the infrastructure. If he isn't played carefully, he ends up being just another 3 for 4 Fighting character that your opponent can kill easily, so it often pays to hold back on playing him until you have a combo in place, or if you can return him to play with "Is That All You Got?" or The Big Boss.

So, what kind of deck does the Yakuza Enforcer go into? He feels very at home in Dragon or Dragon/Jammer vehicle decks that can recycle Big Rigs onto him and play Life in the Fast Lane. He is very good in environments where characters get stolen a lot. His designator makes him a fine addition to Hood decks, especially if you mix in some 7 Masters and use the Occult Kung Fu combo with Tommy Hsu.

In summary, the Yakuza Enforcer can be a very powerful card in the right deck, and is definitely a card to bear in mind when designing decks that do damage to your own cards.



Jan Malina: The Greatest Secret Warrior?



By Gus Andropolous, IKTV Reporter

PICTURE THIS. You are at the annual BigCon and your deck is rolling like an Abrams tank. You have stomped through three qualifying rounds without breaking a sweat and can't help but think, "This is my year." Then they announce the players for the final round. What is the one name you do not want to hear? Who is the opponent you fear most? I argue it should be Jan Malina, the most successful competitive player in the history of Shadowfist.

I base this claim on two sources of data: the Tournament Reports on Stefan's Shadowfist Page (netherworld.chimpshack.org) and the Secret War Society rankings (www.shadowfist.com, and follow the link).

MAKING THE CASE

First, consider the Tournament Reports. There are 21 major events documented on Stefan's website. They range from 1996 to 2004 and include GenCon, Origins, and others. This body of reports holds the most complete list of tournament winners available. A thorough review of the reports reveals that most winners have only a single title. This illustrates how hard it is to win more than once. A small handful of players have two or three titles and only three players in the world have accumulated four titles: Yuit Sum Vong, Steve Valladolid, and Troy Duffy.

Jan Malina has won a remarkable 18 titles. Four and a half times as many titles to his name than his nearest rivals.

Since 2000 Jan has cast a Desolation-sized shadow over GenCon, KublaCon, and GenCon SoCal. Bryant Durrell remembers

when Jan was, "a shy kid who showed up at Neutral Ground Mountain View and lost a lot," then adds, "but those days are long past." Jan's ascendance began at GenCon 2000 where he won three of the five events: Baptism of Fire, Who Wants Some? and Who's the Big Man Now?. Jan racked up 32 wins in the Who Wants Some? tournament, likely the most wins ever in that format. And he won the Baptism of Fire multiplayer draft without a loss.

At GenCon 2001, Jan demonstrated that he was not a flash-in-the-pan. He won three of the six events, this time including a team format event in which he partnered with Steve Valladolid. He repeated his victories in Who Wants Some? and Who's the Big Man Now? He might have won a fourth event but the Whirlpool of Blood final was decided by a die roll due to the 3 a.m. start time.

His dominance continued at GenCon 2002, where he won three of seven events. This was his first "World Championship" Final Brawl victory. He also completed a remarkable double three-peat by winning both Who Wants Some? and Who's the Big Man Now? for the third consecutive year. Jan's now legendary decks "Golden Memories" and "Death Cab for Cutie" (names by Andrew Davidson) made their appearances here.

Jan did not attend GenCon 2003 but Eric Lui reports that Jan "cleaned house at GenCon SoCal 2003. I think the only event he didn't win was the one he didn't enter." The tournament record validates that. Jan won 5 of 6, including the big-budget variant "Array of Stunts."

This year at GenCon '04 he scored

three more victories, this time out of eight events. Again he might have had a fourth title but the draft finalists decided to call the Whirlpool of Blood final a draw and get supper. As if that weren't enough for one year he took the 2004 Final Brawl title at KublaCon.

Bryant Durrell states what the tournament records clearly indicate: "Jan's the most dominant ever. Once his run started, he's been fairly unbeatable when he puts his mind to it." Erik Berg muses that, "If I didn't know any better, I would think that he reads *The Art of War* before each tournament and puts his opponents on entrapping ground by the 4th turn of every game."

The Secret War Society rankings paint another vivid picture. Jan is the only player in the world to achieve level 7. As of June 1, 2004 he held 449 points. At that time his nearest rival was Dan "Nightwolf" Mauldin with 291 points. That is a lead of 158 points. Most competitive players would take between one and two years to amass 158 points.

Another reason Jan's achievement is so remarkable is his versatility and innovation. He has repeatedly won both duelling and multiplayer events, constructed and draft events, and variants such as Team Whirlpool of Blood and Array of Stunts. Each year his decks are different and recently he has won events at GenCon SoCal and KublaCon using borrowed decks, one designed by John Castelluci and the other by Steve Valladolid.

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE AND BEYOND: JAN'S DECKS

What accounts for Jan's unprecedented string of successes? To be competitive you need a competitive deck. On that topic, Jan notes simply, "I guess I try to bring the best deck to the table," then adds, "or failing that a deck I am not bored with." Erik Berg provides a more detailed assessment when he writes, "Take a look at his winning decks from GenCon and the latest KublaCon and you'll see a common thread: Golden Comeback, alt power gen, Independent hitters and powerful sites." Erik also notes that Jan has made good use of Final Brawl in several of his decks.

Every Proving Ground League has local Dragon players who's decks are full of the same cards Jan is known for. And he has made great use of Ascended, Hand, and Architect cards/decks. The tournament records show that Jan does play well-designed decks, but that does not account for his success. Jan says so himself when he states that, "the deck is mostly secondary. You end up beating the player, not their deck."

THE ART OF WAR: JAN'S TACTICS

My correspondence with Jan's friends and opponents suggest that his success comes from a combination of his excellent timing, card knowledge, ability to accurately assess the table positions and read opponents, and a patient, opportunistic yet active play style.

Jan attributes his success to, "A good bit of luck, a good bit of being able to read people, and a good bit of knowing the cards (both those in my deck and those my opponents are likely playing)." Asked for more detail

on his play style, he elaborates, "I do tend to hoard power and not discard nearly as much as other people. Also, I always attack when possible and generally dislike board stall decks."

Erik Berg provides insight into Jan's play style when he says that Jan's, "timing is impeccable. When he makes a move and actually commits to doing something, he is like a rushing river; moving around any obstacle that he cannot push out of the way." John Merrill, who put up a great battle against Jan in the duelling event at this year's GenCon, observes that, "Like a good chess player, he could see many turns into the future and not make the easy mistakes of an overly aggressive player."

This notion of timing comes up repeatedly when talking to opponents. Laying back, letting "the other players fight and rip up the carcass of a table gimp," as Erik Berg notes, seems to be a core part of his approach. After letting the other players rip the gimp, of course he strikes for the critical fifth Feng Shui Site. This requires excellent timing.

Jan is also noted for his card knowledge. He has the ability to read opponent's deck, anticipate their cards, and adjust his approach accordingly. John Merrill says, "my Monarchs are event heavy and tricky. He quickly surmised most of my ploys and avoided them while I spent the second half of the game just trying to survive."

Jan appears to prefer to control the game from outside the lead position. He lets himself get beat down and conserves his strength, like Muhamad Ali's classic rope-a-dope tactic. Part of this approach is building a power reserve. Power in your pool is the least vulnerable place for it. All cards

in play, Characters, Sites, etc., are much more vulnerable than the power in your pool. Only a small number of cards can take power from your pool. Mole Network, Kiii-YAAAHH!, and Iron Monkey being the only ones that see regular play.

While building his power pool, assessing opponent's decks and play styles, and making strategic attacks, Jan, "sets up the table for one hard take and one easy take," according to Erik Berg. He often makes surprise pushes that go beyond what opponent's expect he can achieve that turn.

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THAT REPUTATION: CURMUDGEONLY VET OR NOT?

When Jan gave permission for me to write this article he insisted I report the good and the bad and to talk to people who don't like him. While I did not find anyone that would say they don't like him, I did find evidence of a certain reputation. Jan alludes to it himself in his GenCon 2004 report where he writes, "Chris says I am too serious after the game while eating but I don't really care. He is a nice guy, and it didn't end up mattering. He says I am too serious, I quip that his jokes need to be better. He says I am much nicer than my online rep. I don't know what that rep is but I am guessing it is bad. I say those people have likely never met me, which seems to largely be the case."

When I asked around about this one player offered, "When I first played Jan waaaayyyy back in the day, he was an annoying, whiny bitch (not unlike another certain top-ranked player) that everyone wanted to beat just so he would shut up." But he went on to say that in recent years Jan has changed, saying about a recent competition, "Jan was focused when losing and gracious when winning."

Readers of the shadowfist_forum may recall some semi-public feuding between Jan and the design team around Jan's card design that ended up as the card 'Jan Zvireci'. Jan was angry over the design decisions regarding this card and threatened to quit the game, drop his SWS membership, and cease supporting Z-Man altogether. Some posters called Jan "too negative" and

criticized him in their posts. Others felt he was simply expressing his frustration over his personal representation in a card form.

When I asked Jan about this topic of 'his reputation' he answered, "I guess it is 'cause I speak my mind even if things are sometimes best left alone and I don't really care what people think of me because of it. Some people can't take jokes either but that is another story."

Erik Berg offers a very different view of Jan when he writes, "Jan is fun to play with. He plays a good, hard game, but most people enjoy playing at his table as he is gracious and relatively casual. Well, to qualify that he is pretty frustrating to play against, but only because he capitalizes on your mistakes better than most and you feel even worse about making a bonehead play when it ends the game in his favor. I think that this keeps people coming back."

BEHIND THE MASK: WHO IS JAN MALINA?

Jan was born in San Francisco in 1981 (12 lbs 6 ozs, if you really want to know). He grew up in a busy household with a family business that involved a lot of travel. Jan went on to earn a B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering but has no current interest in further formal studies.

Jan likes to put on the high-tops and shoot hoops when he can. He likes reading, music, and film. His reading list leans towards detective fiction and SciFi. Musically, Jan is most interested in independent and alternative music and is currently learning to play the guitar. He has a deep interest in film, especially off-beat modern films and true classics. He confided in me that if he could ever be as cool as Cary Grant he could die a happy man.

Jan was introduced to Shadowfist in 1996 just after the Flashpoint release. John Castelluci supplied some mono-faction decks for a casual game and Jan was intrigued. One night, soon after, he and some friends bought some starters after a Magic event at MatchPlay. They sat on the pavement outside a RiteAid, traded some cards and threw down. Jan remembers his first rare from that pack of cards: The Unspoken Name.

Jan's interest in the game has ebbed and flowed but has always enjoyed the multiplayer dynamics, the art, theme and core design concepts. Variants formats like 100 Names (Highlander) and stints as a playtester have also kept him interested.

Finally, I asked Jan what advice he would offer a new player who wanted to be do well in tournaments. He replied, "friendly games are better in general and a ton more so when starting out. But if you want to try tournament play, try to observe what others do and see what works. Play a deck you know and be confident with it. Oh, and remember to have fun. Also do not be overly confident. Just 'cause you win a couple times doesn't mean you are better than the other players."



A Player's Point of View, Part 3 by Jim Sensenbrenner

THIS IS THE FINAL INSTALLMENT looking at Jammer decks from various Shadowfist eras. The first deck used Daedalus cards. It featured Portal Jockeys wielding shotgun and driving tanks. The second deck used Z-man cards through Dark Future, driving Battle-matics to victory. Both decks depended heavily on states. Now using cards from Boom Chaka Laka, 10,000 Bullets, Red Wedding, and 7 Masters, I will explore the Jammer's signature tactic: site destruction.

Don't let Potempkin know, but I do not like site destruction just for the sake of blowing things up. This is strictly a defensive tactic. You are either removing a site that is giving you trouble, or destroying a site to prevent someone else from winning. I prefer to play a card that advances my position over one that takes someone else down. For this reason, I like Disco Inferno. It softens up sites for me to grab, and if needed it can be used as denial. I will use this as the core of the event side of the deck.

The other side of the deck is characters to seize damaged sites. Red Wedding and 7 Masters built Rebel and Rabble designators into a powerful subset. The synergy among Violence Junkies, Deep-Cover Rebels and Uprising is too powerful to pass up. Using these cards I put this deck together based on the rule of five (1/5 foundation, 1/5 characters, 1/5 0-1 cost events, 1/5 Feng Shui, and 1/5 miscellaneous).

Foundations have to be one cost characters because they are going to be fodder for the Violence Junkies. Because this is a low [Tech] deck, I would rather have the minor abilities and the rebel designator of Just Another Consumer and Punks over Mad Scientist's [Tech] resource.

The main characters are Violence Junkies and Deep-Cover Rebels. Using these cards, it is easy to get 39 fighting for a 4 power Uprising. The Deep-Cover Rebels' ability to attack back row sites is also strong. You often get chances to hit

smaller sites hiding back there, and if you damage the site but fail to take it, you aren't setting it up for the player on your left. Finally, note that the ability allows any of your characters to attack back row sites, not just the Deep-Cover Rebels. The supporting characters will be Buffalo Soldier, Curtis Graham, Two-Face and 401k Squad.

In addition to Disco Inferno, I'll include Monkeywrenching and Close Call for site damage. Who's the Monkey Now? is one of the strongest denial events in the game. "There's Always One More..." will recycle either a hitter or a foundation that can be sacrificed for Violence Junkies. Finally, a Scrounging is included for comeback.

Miscellaneous includes the needed Uprisings. It will also have Payback Time, Frag the G!, RedGlare Chapel, and Burn, Baby, Burn to support the site destruction. Black Market Connections will help with alternate power generation. A Bomb Factory will also help power generation and add punch to attacks. Finally, The Bazaar will help with card flow. Note that RedGlare Chapel and The Bazaar must not be played after your Black Market Connections are set up.

Feng Shui also support the destruction of opponent's sites. Rust Gardens and Pinball Arcades will pile damage on your opponents' sites. Family Home, Stone Spirals, Nine Dragon Temple, and City Park help with comeback or power generation. Stone Dolmens is for state defense, which is not available elsewhere. No unique or limited sites are used because of Black Market Connections.

The deck plays very offensively. Attack all the time. You want to put as much damage on opponents' sites as possible. This has two purposes. First, it makes sites easier for you to take, and second, it makes the sites tempting targets for your opponents. Many players will attack a damaged site rather than attacking your Rust Garden when Payback Time is in play even if it

means attacking to the right. This is the type of mentality you want to foster. It lets you build up your position. If the board becomes too unstable, it is easy to remove damaged sites with Disco Inferno or Curtis Graham. After one or two attacks are failed this way, it is easy to stop more attacks before they are declared by bluffing. Your win will often come from waves of attacks from an Uprising of Deep-Cover Rebels followed by Violence Junkies. Just watch out for Confucian Stability.

R and R

FOUNDATIONS	5 Just Another Consumer
	5 Punks
	3 Mad Scientist
CHARACTERS	1 Buffalo Soldier
	1 Curtis Graham
	1 Two-Face
	4 Violence Junkies
0-1 COST	1 401k Squad
	4 Deep-Cover Rebels
	3 Monkeywrenching
	4 Disco Inferno
OTHER	2 Who's the Monkey Now?
	2 Close Call
	1 "There's Always One More..."
	1 Scrounging
	2 Frag the G!
	2 Payback Time
	2 Black Market Connections
	1 RedGlare Chapel
	1 Bomb Factory
	2 Uprising
1 The Bazaar	
1 Burn, Baby, Burn	
FENG SHUI	5 Rust Garden
	2 Family Home
	1 Stone Dolmans
	1 Stone Spirals
	2 Pinball Arcade
	1 City Hospital
1 Nine Dragon Temple	
1 City Park	

What's Next for Shadowfist?

by Anil Das-Gupta



“WHAT’S NEXT FOR SHADOWFIST?” is an interesting and serious topic for discussion. The game has seen various expansions, two new factions and new bold faced abilities. However, despite there being a lot of good new cards to choose from, the game is still dominated by the core cards that have been around since the beginning, such as Shadowy Mentor, CHAR, Tortured Memories, Confucian Stability, Final Brawl, etc. It’s rare to see a game in which at least one of these cards is not played.

So what’s the solution? One suggestion is a revised edition of the game, balancing some of the more potent cards to make room for less commonly used ones. Make Shadowy Mentor more expensive, make CHAR require more resources and so forth. Unfortunately, this would mean that cards that most players already own are rendered useless, and new ones that have the same title and do the same thing have to be purchased, just because they have been altered.

Another idea is to rotate the sets that are allowed at any one time, as favored by other CCG’s. This would spice up the game as players would literally be forced into changing their decks. However, it leaves us with the situation where lots of cards are left collecting dust whilst they aren’t legal for tournament play. Those cards could possibly be rotated back into the tournament environment in the future, but they are still being unused.

So what does this leave with us then? Well how about more new concepts and bold faced abilities? Shadowfist has seen the introduction of face-offs and reload. Sadly, I think even the designers themselves would admit that these abilities have yet to really take off in a big way. So perhaps a more far-reaching mechanic is necessary which would have wide-scale implications. An example would be to use junctures as a mechanic:

Cards with the Netherworld designator could only have Netherworld characters at their location. This would change the game drastically. No matter which deck one plays, a player must take into consideration if the opposition is using Netherworld sites. Unless they have some sort of characters in their deck that can attack these sites, they may find their options lacking as many sites may not be reachable simply because their characters are in the wrong juncture. However, it’s possible that players could find themselves in games where one player uses nothing but Netherworld sites and characters and another player uses only characters and sites that are not Netherworld. A stalemate is created, with both players looking at each other thinking "What now?"

Although junctures may not be a good idea, new concepts are worth persevering with. An example of a game that has uses new concepts successfully is Magic: The Gathering. They’ve introduced Buyback, Flashback, Morphing, Alternate playing costs, multi-factioned cards and so forth. A lot of their ideas have proved to be broken (Buyback) or a waste of time (Phasing). However, once in a while they do introduce an interesting mechanic and it gives players something to think about in terms of altering old decks and trying to use and abuse the new mechanic. I’m not a Magic fan, but I think Shadowfist shouldn’t be afraid to try new ideas.

One last idea would be to introduce more factions and new universal resources. Z-Man has bought in two new factions, The Purists and the Seven Masters. Generally, the Purists haven’t been greatly received; there is a lot of disdain towards them for being dull and unimaginative, and they already existed within other factions. The Seven Masters have been welcomed much more openly, but are quite often viewed as "The Guiding Hand Mk2".

More diversity is needed with newer factions. New factions could be more interesting by using new universal resources. We have Chi, Magic and Technology, how about resources such as "Psychic Ability" or "Religion / Faith." How about a faction such as an order of religious Knights from the medieval era, in the vain of King Arthur who use faith? Or an advanced race of ancients, such as the mythological Atlanteans who use Psychic Ability / Telekenisis that has since been eradicated? Older sub-factions could also be given access to the new universal resources, to make them more interesting too. What if the Reascended had access to faith?

Powerful new cards can be made for new factions as they will need them to be able to match the existing ones other factions possess. New factions can also have their own semi-mechanic. The Guiding Hand for example has lots of recycling ability thanks to Wind on the Mountain and Into the Light. The Architects have a lot of denial power thanks to low cost stopping events. Perhaps factions could have abilities like being able to discard cards when their cards are played to either reduce the cost or make the card stronger. Or perhaps there could be a faction that does not draw cards, but their cards let you search through your deck to be able to find another card from the same faction when they are played? It would require testing, but it would certainly be interesting!

In summary, these may just be the ramblings of a Netherworld Vet who has played one game too many, but I believe that the game has become stale through the over use of certain cards. Shadowfist should embrace the future. The secret war should become home to new factions and new ideas. I’m a fan of evolution and feel it’s time to broaden horizons to make the game even more fun to play.



WELCOME TO THE SECOND ASK X COLUMN. With so many questions to answer, how can I attend to my personal duties of controlling the world as you know it? Not every question demands the attention of the lodge. So, without further hesitation, here is the best question submitted. The rest of you really need to try harder.

Joey Pazlowski from Chicago, Illinois writes: My favorite card is the Flashpoint character Joey Paz, for rather obvious reasons, so I put him into every deck I build. My opponents all make fun of me for playing what they consider to be such a bad card. How can I make Joey all he could be and make my opponents choke on their laughter until they can no longer oppose the obvious power of the Pazinator?

Joey Paz
Escrima Master

Cost: 4

Fighting: 6

Provides: D

Unique. Toughness:2 against combat damage inflicted by unturned characters and any character whose controller played an Event this turn.

X: Joey has an easily overlooked ability: his name. Imagine yelling "Joey!" and "By the power of Escrima!" ten to fifteen times every turn. This will, more often than not, be a major distraction for your opponent, give him a headache and lead to his hesitation at obvious attack opportunities. It works great at tournaments, where you know you will never see your opponent again. On the more functional side, try playing with reflective sleeves. These will surely temporarily blind opponents and while they fumble to recover their vision, you can remove all characters, states, edges and sites from their decks. With just events left, Joey is almost sure to have Toughness each and every turn.

Until next time, may you all have a satisfactory Holliday Season. Please ignore all miniature audio and video recording devices in the gifts you receive. Consider them an added gift from us to you.

Mr. X



Power for Promos

Did you notice that Shadowfist starter and booster packaging has numbers in diamonds that look like the Power Generation stat from Feng Shui Sites? Well, they are, sort of.

Each starter box or booster wrapper is worth an amount of Power Points. You can trade them in at our website (see the Power for Promos program) for nifty promo stuff, while supplies last. Each booster is worth 2 Power (clip the 2 in

the diamond on the back of the wrapper) and each starter is worth 5 (clip the 5 on the box flap). Send your Power along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope (for players outside the US, please send the appropriate number of International Reply Coupons for airmail) and anything you'd like to protect your item to **Power for Promos, Z-Man Games, Inc., 6 Alan Drive, Mahopac, NY 10541.**



The stuff we offer for redemption will change over time. We'll keep a current list online (at www.shadowfist.com/buy) and we'll update the list in the FAQ whenever we update the FAQ.



Once and Future Champion
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Four Monarchs SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Elephant Gun
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Time To Kick Ass!
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Dragon SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Yung Chang
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Guiding Hand SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Che Gorilla
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Jammers SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Funky Monkey
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Jammers SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



The Junkyard
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Silver Jet
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Four Monarchs SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Wedding Gifts
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Four Monarchs or Dragons SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



4 Burn for Victory Counter Cards
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 (sets of 4)
 Power Pts: _____



Ho Chen
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Lateral Reincarnation
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____



Sinister Research
 90 PPTs for general public.
 80 PPTs for SWS members.
 70 PPTs for registered Architects SWS members.
 Quantity: _____
 Power Pts: _____

Name _____
 Address _____

 Power Pts Enclosed _____ Phone# _____
 SWS Member? No Yes/Faction _____

All items are subject to availability. Allow 2-6 weeks for delivery.