





ISSUE GUIDE

EACH ISSUE IN *HOURLY OF NEED* PROVIDES A CINEMATIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE HEROES' ENCOUNTER WITH A DASTARDLY VILLAIN. THIS SECTION PROVIDES NARRATIVE, CLARIFICATIONS, AND ANY OTHER NECESSARY INFORMATION ON EACH ISSUE INCLUDED IN THE GAME.

PLAYERS MAY USE THIS DURING THEIR GAMES TO READ ALOUD THE INDICATED "STORY MOMENTS" THAT HELP SET THE SCENE FOR THE ACTION TAKING PLACE. EACH STORY MOMENT HAS A **CUE EFFECT**; WHEN THAT **CUE EFFECT** OCCURS, PLAYERS CAN CHOOSE TO MOMENTARILY PAUSE THE GAME TO READ THE STORY MOMENT THAT EXPLAINS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE STORY.

STORY MOMENTS ARE ENTIRELY OPTIONAL.

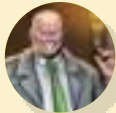
VISITING HOURS

COMPLEXITY: ★ ★ ★

SPECIAL COMPONENTS



Restraint



Harvey Kane

Issue Introduction

Harvey Kane wiped his brow with an already-soaked handkerchief. His office was dark, the only light coming from the small green lamp on his desk. The voice on the other end of the phone hadn't said anything in the last two minutes, but Harvey was afraid to speak.

"Do you understand?" the voice finally asked.

Harvey swallowed, anger and fear inspiring him with a strange sense of confidence. "I'm not quite sure I do. I have a reputation to maintain here. The Crenshaw Sanitarium has never had a visiting day—it's not safe..."

There was another long pause. "Schedule it. Or we'll release the tapes." The line went dead.

Harvey slammed the phone down, wondering how he was going to spin this one...

Scheme Introductions

Before play begins, read the corresponding introduction for each Scheme card in play.

LURE ORDERLIES

"It's the North Ward!" Irene shouted, "Lock it down! And get Mr. Kane!"

Justin—the newest and youngest orderly—came running back toward the security desk. "He's not in his office! I heard gunfire from outside. What's going on?!"

"Don't worry about that now," Irene commanded, "We need to focus on the visitors. Keep them all out of the wards. We need to secure the inmates." She turned to re-check the monitors. It was a riot. She grabbed her baton but paused as she heard a metallic click from behind her. Turning, she saw Justin aiming a gun at her.

"Thanks for all the training," Justin said with an eerie smile. "Makes this all a little easier." He raised a walkie to his mouth. "Tell the boss to come on in. Visiting hours have begun..."

BLACKMAIL

Harvey Kane's legacy is one of corruption, scandal, and overwhelming business success. He was born into money and had lived his life in constant pursuit of more, leading to many business ventures. One of the most successful of his business ventures was the Crenshaw Sanitarium, which specialized in housing the criminally insane. Being so near Meridian City, Crenshaw became highly profitable as a private prison.

Now that Harvey is serving as the head of Crenshaw's daily operations, it's made the institution susceptible to outside influence...

RAID SUPPLIES

Doctor Rebecca London held a blood-soaked bandage to the man's shoulder—it was in ruin after an escaped inmate hit it with a metal pile. "Hold this here," she asked instructed, "I need to check on the others..."

Just then a crash came from the door and a maniacal woman struggled to unlock the door from the inside. "Need some more pills, doc!" the woman screeched, as more crashing came from behind her. "Got some pain to kill!"

THE WILLING PRISONER

In the South Ward of the Crenshaw Sanitarium a black door stands out in a sterile hall of white doors. Beyond that black door is a dangerous being that dwells in Crenshaw on her own free will. Beyond the door, Restraint struggled against her bindings—she could feel the activity behind her door. The voices in her head told her she needed to top what was happening, but the Deep Voice told her this was the time they were waiting for—freedom was at hand...

Story Moments

The following story moments should only be read after the **Cue** effect occurs during the game.

BACK IN ORDER

CUE: "Lure Orderlies" Scheme card is solved.

Irene shrugged out of the ropes as she stood up. "Thank you! I need to get back to the main hall. I don't know how many of us there are left... or how many I can trust. I need your help—look for any other orderlies in the other wings. We've got to get this place back in order before anyone else is hurt!"

LOOSE ENDS

CUE: The "Blackmail" Scheme card is solved.

As the door to his office closet was thrown open, Harvey Kane spilled out a blubbing mess. "Please don't hurt me! They made me do this! I'm the real victim here!"

Before you can even respond, Harvey bolts for the door. "We have to get out of here! You can't let them catch me—you don't know what they'll do to me!"

OFF THE SHELF

CUE: The "Raid Supplies" Scheme card is solved.

You help Dr. London to her feet, pushing debris out of the way. "I'm fine... but they're not," she said, motioning to the injured visitors in her office. "I need to stay here and take care of them, but you need to find our medical supplies. The patients have taken almost everything—mostly after the pills. Be careful... most of them are already dangerous when they're only taking their own medication..."

LOSING CONTROL

CUE: "The Willing Prisoner" Scheme card is solved.

With her eyes wide, desperate, pleading, Restraint floated into the main hall, various pieces of debris floating around her. Her eyes seemed to apologize for the evil dying to be unleashed from her body, but that apology did little good as the bindings that held her slowly began to slither around her like snakes, freeing the terrified woman...

CUT LOOSE

CUE: The heroes lose.

The city was in chaos below. Restraint watched with tearful eyes and a wicked smile on her face. Internally, she was at war with dozens of entities, but the Deep Voice was claiming a victory. She floated near the roof of the tallest building in Meridian City, watching the desolation that she had caused. "Our work is not done," the Deep Voice reassured Restraint, speaking with her own lips. "It has just begun, child..."

TO KANE'S CREDIT

CUE: The heroes win.

"Welcome back to MCN Exclusive. Tonight we have an exciting interview with none other than real estate tycoon, Harvey Kane, here to speak about the terrible attack on his mental health facility. Welcome, Mr. Kane."

"Thank you, Lilah, I'm happy to be here—in fact, I'm happy to even be alive! It was a terrible thing that happened, but with the help of my fantastic team, I was able to wrest control of my facility from the escaped patients and return them to their normal care—something I take very seriously. These aren't bad people, but they suffer from terrible illnesses. And after this horrific episode, I am even more motivated to make it my life's effort to do more for these people—just like I helped those people during the attack..."



CAMPAIGN TRAIL

COMPLEXITY: ★ ★ ★

VOTE FOR KNOX



VOTE FOR KNOX



KEEP MERIDIAN CITY FREE
OF CRIME

SPECIAL COMPONENTS



Angelica
Knox



General
Domain

Issue Introduction

Angelica Knox waved to her supporters as she stepped out of the stretch limousine. It seemed like each time she had a rally, she drew greater numbers. But from what she saw and heard tonight, it seemed like this turnout was slightly weaker...

"There's another rally tonight," one of her aides told her. "Downtown. Some military guy just entered the race."

"How did we not know about this?!" Angelica asked, furious yet trying to keep a smiling face as she continued to pose for pictures.

The aide leaned in closer. "It's... it's General Domain."

The next picture of Angelica Knox was a candid photo of pure terror.

Scheme Introductions

Before play begins, read the corresponding introduction for each Scheme card in play.

MISSING MAYOR

After a series of competing rallies, the Knox campaign team was running ragged and reeling from the disjointed nature of this election cycle. It seemed every time they reacted to General Domain's bizarre campaign tactics, he changed them up.

And now, on the night of the most important rally of the campaign, Angelica Knox is nowhere to be found.

"I swore I saw her here this afternoon," her campaign aide assured you. "She was preparing her speech, and then we met with the police about the chemical situation—we haven't seen her since..."

SMEAR CAMPAIGN

The campaign ad ran on all channels the evening of the final rally. In it, candid black and white photos showed Angelica Knox discreetly exchanging envelopes with local crime boss Cassandra Russo, and entering a hotel room with a young campaign aide. The narration drove the point home:

"Are you tired of corruption as the status quo? Angelica Knox is rotting Meridian City from the inside. While her scandals may still be the mayor's best kept secrets, it's time the truth came out. General Domain will reveal the deepest levels of this city's corruption at his campaign rally tonight. Be there!"

There's no way those images were actually of Mayor Knox... but it looked just like her!

FLESH MOLDING

Andrew walked excitedly to his local polling station, eager to add another number to Knox's side. He wasn't afraid to admit that General Domain made some great promises, it was impossible to forget the disasters that happened in the military when General Domain was still an active officer. There was something fishy about that...

The dark alley wasn't the most pleasant way to the library, but Andrew abhorred crowds and liked the seclusion. He stopped in his tracks when he heard a strange slimy sound and the a *plop* from behind him. He turned and a scream was caught in his throat as he stared writhing mass of flesh that quickly took on the form of...himself.

The new Andrew smiled and said. 'Thanks for voting for the General.'

RIVAL CANDIDATE

General Domain walked into the mayor's office. He surveyed the place meticulously, cautiously. He stopped at the mayor's desk and picked up the nameplay that said "Mayor Knox." He tossed it casually over his shoulder. After his careful inspection, he stepped behind the desk and took a seat.

Two police officers entered the office, one of their faces was visibly melting.

"Fix that," the general commanded. "Or you'll go back in the vat."

The molded officer mashed the amorphous flesh of his face around until it began to take shape again.

"Keep the building locked down. I don't want anyone in here until the poll results are released. Then... well it won't matter any more, will it?"

Story Moments

The following story moments should only be read after the **Cue** effect occurs during the game.

THE ART OF COMPROMISE

CUE: The "Missing Mayor" Scheme card is solved.

The campaign aide was bound and gagged. When freed he began to ramble. "She can't be out there! It's Acrid—she thinks she can reason with him! That maniac won't negotiate! The mayor's going to get herself killed—or worse!"

VIRAL RUMORS

CUE: The "Smear Campaign" Scheme card is solved.

The hidden safe in the mayor's estate was clearly broken into. Among the ransacked materials were letters indicating an extramarital affair with envelopes of photographs. The photographs were strewn about, clearly indicating that certain ones were cherry-picked.

Whatever compromising material was found is surely going to be used to get voters to the polling stations, regardless of their leanings.

VOTER FRAUD

CUE: The "Flesh Molding" Scheme card is solved.

After searching Dane Labs from top to bottom, you can't find any clear way to shut down the Acrid vats. All across the city, innocent people are being abducted and replaced by flesh molded clones, ready to cast their votes for General Domain. This can't happen!

Just as you prepare to continue your investigation, you see an amorphous figure splatter to the ground near you, slowly forming itself back to a standing position to attack!

SUPPRESSING VOTES

CUE: The “Rival Candidate” Scheme card is solved.

“Do you think this city knows what’s good for itself?” General Domain asked, pacing behind his armed guards. “These civilians don’t know what war is—and that’s what we’re in right now: a war between order and chaos. You,” he continued, pointing toward you, “are chaos, and I am a man of absolute order. You will not stop me from returning this city to glory!”

ANSWERING TO THE AUTHORITIES

CUE: The heroes lose.

The Mask Force siren howled through the night as Guerrilla leapt from rooftop to rooftop, looking for any sign that he was being followed. He already regretted coming to Meridian City—since the new mayor took office, vigilantism was the number one crime as far as the new police chief was concerned. And ironically, they now employed their own team of heroes—the Mask Force—dead-set on tracking down and arresting any unauthorized heroes in the city.

Guerrilla leapt across another alley, but in midair he was knocked down bodily onto the fire escape below. Agent Abide, leader of the Mask Force, hovered over Guerrilla’s splayed form. “You are under arrest, vigilante. The General is eager to speak with you and learn what brought you here.”

As Guerrilla began to unsheathe his knife, he felt a forceful grip on his wrists. Looking down he saw a glowing energy band restraining him.

“Don’t resist,” Miss Manacle warned with a smile. “You’re in our domain now.”

DISHONORABLE DISCHARGE

CUE: The heroes win.

General Domain paced in his cell, waiting for the mayor to return to mock him some more. But Angelica never returned—she let him dwell on his failure in miserable silence. Not for long, however...

A cracking sound caused the General to halt, spinning on his heels to see a glowing shape appear in the cell with him—the air itself was split and a portal formed. Out stepped the unsettling form of Astasia.

“Look,” Domain began, “I promise you, we did everything we could. The city was going to be prepared for your arrival, but the heroes interfered—”

Astasia did not speak, her eyes merely bore into the General, seeing something within him that no Earthly being could see. Then, a black tendril whipped out, wrapped around the General, and threw him through the portal. Astasia melted back into it as well and in silence the cell returned to the cold sterile place it was moments before.



HEROES & VILLAINS

JUDGE

COMPLEXITY: ★ ★ ★

As the daughter of a respected judge in Meridian City, Valerie Wright had a very strict upbringing. While her mother presided over high-profile criminal cases, her father worked as a successful stockbroker in the city, leaving Valerie to spend most of her childhood with various tutors and disciplinarians that oversaw her development. This life left Valerie somewhat cold and isolated, and she therefore focused on both physical and scholarly achievements. She was soon regarded as a championship athlete and child prodigy ... and her fame only grew the day her famous mother died.

While the murder of Judge Wendy Wright was ruled as an accident, it didn't take long for Valerie to learn the truth. Using her impressive deductive and investigative skills, she began piecing together that her mother had been killed by Wiseguy—the head of the Russo crime family in New Crown City. Worse yet, she discovered that her father had been blackmailed to cover the whole thing up. Valerie spent the rest of her teenage years compiling a case against Wiseguy—but nothing would stick. Her quest for justice came to a head when her father lashed out at her, urging her to let it go lest the family name suffer further. In a fit of rage, Valerie turned the evidence she had compiled over to the district attorney, knowingly implicating her own father in the process. Although it pained her to see him go to jail, her growing conviction to justice was forged into a cold, steeled resolve as a result of the events. In honor of her mother, she now governs the streets of Meridian City as Judge, an avenging guardian angel that dispenses her own brand of ruthless justice.



JURY

COMPLEXITY: ★☆☆

During the day, Rebecca Morris is an unassuming medical student at Crowley University. But at night, atop the sprawling rooftops of Meridian City, she prowls alongside the hero Judge, dispersing justice in a city on the brink of chaos. Fostered at an early age when her father went mysteriously missing after the death of her mother, Rebecca has spent her life in “the system.” She’s lived on the streets as a runaway, in a mansion as a ward, and ultimately in a college dorm on a full-ride gymnastics scholarship. She never considered her life comfortable or easy, but she came from a unique background that made her transition into crime fighting inevitable. Rebecca began investigating her father’s disappearance at the age of fourteen, when all she had to go off of was the acronym G.R.A.I.L., which she had found on a cloth patch on one of his old jackets. After two years of obsessive investigating, Rebecca found her next lead—Kara, an older woman that had been committed to the Sagamore Sanitarium. The patient raved about her time as a “grail agent,” detailing dangerous missions she had undergone in foreign countries. It sounded like something from a pulp adventure movie, but Rebecca followed up on clues from Kara’s ravings ... and found herself running into Judge, the dark angel of Meridian City. On that day, Rebecca committed her life to earning Judge’s trust by becoming Jury, fighting crime alongside the legendary hero in the hopes of one day uncovering the secret of G.R.A.I.L. and discovering what happened to her father.

ONE-LINER

COMPLEXITY: ★ ★ ★

In the depths of a mysterious manor on the outskirts of Meridian City, One-Liner was born. But before she was known as One-Liner, she was Tori Elmore—an average nine year old girl who was abducted while out wandering through the woods alone. She was a runaway with nowhere to call home because of her condition. No one really knew why, but she was born with hands that were as powerful and unyielding as iron. This condition was noticeable at a young age, when she would break the bars of her crib, or touch hot objects without feeling pain. But it wasn't until she killed her mother in a fit of adolescent rage that she became a source of fear. Her father was constantly abused by her mother, and Tori had attacked her own mother when her parents were fighting—as they often did when her mother came home drunk. Her father was blamed for the death, and Tori kept running. Unfortunately, she ran into the arms of a lunatic who had learned of her condition and had been stalking her for months. His name was Foster. She spent the rest of her younger years locked in the depths of Foster's isolated manor, subjected to torture and experiments, along with other "gifted" individuals. Foster was a joyful captor, who entertained his subjects with long, drawn-out jokes, but he always left his prisoners to ponder the meanings behind his morbid and confusing comedy. He always said, "I'll tell you the punchline tomorrow." After years in Foster's prison, Tori had forgotten her own identity and created a new one. Strangely, her body began to change to reflect her new demented persona, and the day finally came when Foster slipped up and Tori got her hands on him. She dragged the beating out for days, but when she finally decided to end Foster's life, she lifted him up by the throat and pulled him close to say, "Get to the point." From then on, Tori no longer existed, and One-Liner established herself as the top arms dealer for all criminal organizations whose influence passed through Meridian City.

