

A NEW TYPE OF OFFICER

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—AN ABRIDGED HISTORY OF OFFICE 9—

01

THE INSPECTOR'S OFFICE

The inspector leaned back in his chair and spat into the trash can. Returning his cigar to his mouth, he gestured at his aide. "Look here. This says the bone-bag is going to take care of this one."

"Yes sir" muttered the aide. They both disliked the undead. Official Office 9 policy was not to discriminate against them, but who wanted to work with a bone-bag anyway?

"Fine. I guess we better get this started. Go ahead and show him in."

The aide shrugged and walked across the room to the door. The thick smoke in the room swirled in his wake. The inspector spat again into his trash can and lifted his eyes toward the door as it opened.

A form of bones and rags appeared in the doorway. His skull seemed to glow faintly through the smoke in the

room. A ragged mantle was draped around his shoulders. It wrapped his bones all the way to the floor and was tied at his waist with a fraying rope. "Take a seat, bone-bag" hissed the aide. The skeleton figure walked easily to the chair without disturbing the smoky air and sat down in the chair. The inspector glared at him across the desk. The skull stared back through the inspector.

"Alright bone-bag." As the inspector spoke he thought he saw a glimmer of red light in the eye sockets of the skull in front of him. He shook his head and took another drag of his cigar. "Alright officer. We've been following a group of state enemies for about a month now. The higher-ups have decided to move on them now. Apparently you're taking this one." He slid a folder across the desk to the cloaked figure. Bony fingers flipped through the pages. "I guess they thought you were uniquely suited to this task".

The aide snickered from across the room. He felt something at the base of his neck and looked up at the desk where the skeleton was. He was staring straight into the bare eyes of the officer. The aide coughed and looked away.

"The assignment is as usual." grunted the inspector. The figure folded the paper into his mantle and rose from the chair. The aide opened the door for the figure to exit. The inspector spat as the figure silently left. The door closed with a swirl of smoke. "I hate that thing" said the inspector.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Grimes finished his beer and laughed. The ruckus filled the pub and patrons looked over with judgment. Grimes wouldn't have cared if he were sober. He slapped Shorty on the back, almost sending him toppling into a table. "Hey!" shouted Shorty. "Maybe you've had enough." Grimes laughed even louder at this. "One more for my little friend here, and two more for me!" he yelled at the bartender. The bartender rolled his eyes and pulled out some stained glasses. 'Another Wednesday' he thought. Shorty grabbed one of the glasses and drained half of it.

"Come on Grimes. Let's go find some trouble to get in."

"I like the way you think!" responded Grimes. He grabbed the other two glasses from the bar and headed for the door. The bartender shook his head. 'Guess I'll never see those glasses again' he thought. Grimes dropped one

as he left the pub. 'Seems right' thought the bartender.

Grimes and Shorty stumbled through the filthy street. "Mr. Morris, Mr. Morris..." sang Grimes. Passerby's turned their noses from the duo's stench. "Come on Grimes!" blurted Shorty. "These people think they're too good for us."

Shorty and Grimes turned into an alley, away from people in the street. Grimes stumbled over a trashcan and laughed. Shorty kicked the trashcan over with a loud bang. Their raucous laughter filled the alley and echoed back off the crumbling brick walls. Shorty's laughter cut short when he spotted something at the end of the alley.

"Hello?" inquired Shorty. Grimes paused his laughter. "What's going on Shorty?" he asked.

Shorty peered into the darkness. "I thought I saw something."

"Hey! You back there!" shouted Grimes. A blast of cold air came from the darkness. Grimes stumbled back over the trashcan and landed in a pile of bones. "Aaaahhh! What the hell!" screamed Grimes. Shorty tried to help Grimes up but tripped on another heap of bones. "What's going on here!?" shrieked Shorty.

A figure emerged from the darknes. Shorty and Grimes felt their breath being sucked from their chests. The figure seemed to bring the shadows of the alley with him as he strode silently towards them. The men cowered in the trash and piles of bones as a faintly glowing skull emerged from the darkness. A grin spread across the skull. A slow, haunting voice rumbled in the men's ears. "Men. Always seeking trouble."

03

THE DEBRIEF

The aide opened the door and smoke drifted into the corridor. The skeleton figure strode into the room, paying no mind to the smoke. The inspector was seated behind the desk surrounded by wisps of cigar smoke. He spat in the trash can. “Any problems with the assignment?”

A bony hand dropped the folder on the desk. The inspector reached for the folder and opened it. “What’s this about witnesses?”

The smoke stopped swirling in the room. The skull stared into the inspector. “There were no witnesses.” said the slow voice from the figure. The inspector gulped and returned his attention to his cigar. “Very well, officer. Dismissed”.

The figure turned to the door as the aide looked away. The door shut and the smoke swirled again in the room.

“I hate that thing.”