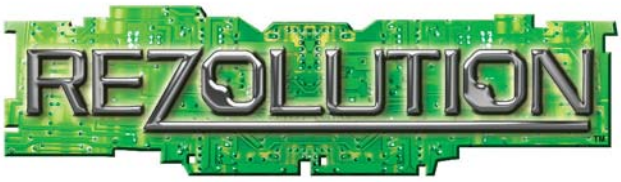

Enter the Ronin

By Tony Kenealy

The Elysium pyramid looms out of the darkness as the small group of Ronin move through the shadows towards it. Using anything they can for cover, they press themselves deep into the dark recesses as the security cameras swoop overhead. Waiting for the optimum moment, they unfold out of the shadows, moving to the next piece of cover, then blend back into the shadows as the moment for movement passes.
Their goal is the small security door at the base of the black monolith. The Ghost kneels at the door, tapping away on the keypad. The silence is complete, each Ronin holding their breath. They wait for the signal, and when it comes, they move as one through the open door into the darkness beyond…

2175, a world of corporate crime and corrupt governments: where information can be sold to the highest bidder and some people will risk anything and anyone to get it. Elysium Inc, controlled by Dravani International, offers hope to the terminally ill or to those who want to cheat death. The Elysium pyramids slice through the skyline of all major cities, but these black monoliths hold many dark secrets.

Briefing

'Enter the Ronin' is a Rezolution assignment that matches the skill, cunning and expertise of a Ronin crew against the dark horrific menace of the Dravani forces inside an Elysium pyramid. The Ronin have been employed to infiltrate and retrieve data from the central computer...

Recommended Points Value: 500 per side **Play Area:** 4'x4'

Objectives

The objective of this assignment is simple: the Ronin must break into the pyramid, get connected to a Hard Point Terminal (HPT), download data from the central computer and get out alive. The Dravani must stop them.

The Ronin win the game when their Ghost escapes the pyramid, after downloading 7pts of data from the central computer, and returns to their set-up zone and off the table. If multiple Ghosts are used, the downloaded data is shared and only one needs to escape.

The Dravani win by preventing the data from leaving the pyramid.

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Set-up

As this assignment is played inside an Elysium pyramid the scenery should be set-up accordingly, the more rooms and corridors the better. Any scenery can be used to represent walls and corridors; strips of card or string can be used across the table as walls, or wall sections using foam board can be arranged in any formation.

The terrain should be set-up to the agreement of each player. Rooms and corridors should have multiple doors, to allow different routes around the complex. This provides for a more tactical and enjoyable game.

Once all scenery has been placed, one HPT (taken from the CD-ROM scenery available with the starter sets) is placed in the center of the table and then each player gets to place one additional HPT, 8" from the first, but no closer than 10" from a set-up sector. One more HPT should be placed 10" from the Dravani set-up sector with the Dravani Wraith, taken from their 500pt force, placed in base-to-base contact with it, already connected to the device. The computer system is a Neutral system, requiring a target number of 10 in order to successfully hack into and download d3 points of data.

The Ronin will enter the table from a single point of entry, preferably into a central corridor rather than a room. The Dravani set-up area should be at the opposite end of the table in a 10" x 24" sector, but they can cover rooms as well as corridors. Roll the control roll to determine who sets up first; however in this assignment, regardless of who wins the control roll, the Ronin will always move a model or team first.

Enter the Ronin Battle Report

'Enter the Ronin' was played at Aberrant Games with Anthony in control of the Ronin and SImon with the Dravani.

Anthony's thoughts on his Crew selection:

"Entry into an Elysium Pyramid is almost a suicide mission: the only advantage the Ronin will have is that they will be focused in one area, while the Dravani may need to spread out to cover all exits. Taking a Maven is essential as all crews need a leader. I selected three Shootists, run as independents, as they are the backbones of the Ronin, in my opinion, deadly and highly effective. This assignment calls for downloading data so I'm taking two Ghosts to optimize my chances of getting it. I am using two Espers for the Jaunt power, a fast route into or out of the complex. Inside the pyramid there is going to be a lot of close combat, so selecting two Fists is a necessity, as they are the close combat specialists. Finally, to round out the crew, I selected a Brick, the heavy gunman of the group, who has the added bonus that he can carry a dead Ghost and so still save the downloaded data. My overall strategy is to use the Espers' Jaunt power, get the Ghosts in quickly, get the data and get out, before things get way too hot to handle."

SImon's thoughts on his crew selection:

"Being within the confined corridors of an Elysium facility, I've definitely got the advantage and I've also got a good idea of what to expect from Anthony's Ronin force. So, I'll start with the basics, a Dravani (Human Form) and two teams of eight Lektra Vassals. The Dravani is a

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powerhouse and definitely one of the most dangerous individuals in *a Dark Tomorrow*. The Lektra Vassals are the cheapest basic teams in the game and the Dravani's ability to sacrifice one of them in order to heal itself, or even bring itself back from the dead, should not be underestimated. My next decision was easy: Souless. Four, in fact, all running as independents, as their ability to ignore all terrain and charge up to 12" could be a critical factor in this game, and would hopefully counter the amount of ranged firepower that I know would be leveled at me. A team of Shamblers was also an easy choice as, although slow, these guys are walking walls and can soak up just about everything thrown at them, and when in close combat, it can get ugly… To round off my force, I took a Wraith, compulsory to the assignment, and also an Executor, whose conduit ability could prove very useful to extend the range of certain Dravani powers."

Let the Battle commence…

The Ronin set-up first, taking up close formation at the corridor entrance, with the Shootists in the front, and the Espers close to the Ghosts. The Dravani set-up by spreading across their starting sector, ready to surge forward during the first round.

The first round was as expected. One Esper cast his Jaunt power, vanishing and reappearing, with a Ghost and a Fist in a room adjacent to an HPT. The second Esper failed and remained in his starting position. The jaunted Ghost connected to the HPT, while the Fists ran to block the doorways on either side. During their first movements, all the Dravani forces moved forward down the corridors towards the Ronin, trying to flank both sides of the HPT room. A Shootist tried to Run'n'Gun the Lectra Vassals, but his shot fell short and the Brick stayed with the Esper as protection. The remaining two Shootists ran into the HPT room to protect the Ghost, while the Maven performed a heroic Run'n'Gun towards the advancing Lectra Vassals, damaging one and stunning another.

The second round began with the Dravani Wraith attacking the Ghost over the Grid, an attack that resulted in feedback, giving the Wraith a mental spike that caused 1pt of damage. The Ghost attempted to hack the system, succeeded and downloaded 3pts of data. The Souless swarmed into the HPT room, materialising through the walls by using their Smoke ability, and attacked the Fist and the Shootists. A mass of close combat resulted, with the Ronin valiantly holding off. A Souless was damaged, but recovered by feeding from a nearby Lectra Vassal. The Dravani (Human Form) took a shot at the Fist holding the doorway, and missed the target completely. Outside in the corridor, the Maven and the Shootist were cutting their way through the Lectra Vassals. The Maven managed to gun down three of them in a hail of bullets, while the Shootist damaged another, jamming his gun in the process. With the Shootists protecting the Ghost, the Fist used his Swift ability to charge the Lectra Vassals and, using Flurry, managed to kill the rest of them. The corridor was clear for the moment, but the Shamblers were on their way. The Brick charged the Souless, from behind, in the HPT room, but lost the combat. The Souless used Drain and took 4pts of damage from the Brick, healing himself in the process. The second Esper cast his Jaunt ability and moved away from the fighting, with the Ghost, towards a second HPT.

At the start of the third round, the Wraith attacked the hardwired Ghost. Again, the Ghost held out, managing to download 1pt of data and still beat the Wraith, who is stunned and disconnected from the Grid. Outside in the corridor, the Fist was in a life and death struggle as the Shamblers attack. The combat was brutal, but the Fist killed one Shambler and then used his Flurry ability to attack another. The Fist took damage, as the next three Shamblers attacked, but held on, only taking 2pts of damage. The Esper tried to cast Paranoia on a Shambler, but failed as the second team of Lectra Vassals now reached the combat zone, and piled into the Brick. Four Vassals attacked the Brick, who lashed out, pounding two into jelly and damaging a third, but then a Souless attacked him from behind, only to fail to perform a Drain. In the HPT room, the fighting was fierce with three Souless trying to break through to attack the Ghost, but they were stopped by the valiant fighting of the Shootists and a Fist, who unfortunately fell, a drained husk. The

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Maven, seeing the desperate fight to get to the Ghost, shot into the close combat and managed to hit the Souless. It was killed, but recovered by feeding off a nearby Lectra Vassal, using the Executor as a conduit. The second Ghost made a dash for the nearby HPT, with the Dravani (Human Form) and Executor in close pursuit.

The fourth round - and now things are really hotting up. The Wraith recovered and reconnected to the Grid, while the Ghost failed to download any data. The Esper distracted the Dravani (Human Form,) and caused it to lose its activation for that round. The Souless and Shootists were still fighting it out over the Ghost, who was concentrating on the HPT. The Shootists were taking damage, but were valiantly holding on. The Brick fell, having taken down two more Lectra Vassals. The Maven, ran in to help, but was too late, although he did kill two more. The Fist was still fighting the Shamblers, assisted by a Shootist. The second Esper tried to cast Paranoia onto a Souless to provide the beleaguered Shootists with some respite, but failed. The Executor took a shot at the Maven, who managed to shrug off the wound, while the second Ghost connected to another HPT.

In the fifth round, another Souless fell, staying down this time, in a fight between Souless and Shootists. The Executor and another Lektra Vassal are shot by the Maven, who also managed to suppress a Souless. The Fist and Shamblers continued to fight, while the Shootist moved through a side room and shot at the Dravani Human form, putting him into fatal damage. Was the battle turning in favour of the Ronin?

The sixth round began with the Dravani (Human Form) failing to regenerate, and the Ghosts downloading another point of data while fighting off the Grid attack from the Wraith, who got his brain fried in the process. The Souless and Shootists continued to fight, with multiple Drains failing as the valiant protection of the Ghost continued, although one Shootist did fall to a successful Drain. The Esper moved in to fill the gap from the fallen Shootist, and the Maven continued the fight, damaging a Souless.

With the next round underway, the Ghosts managed to download another 3pts of data, as now they are free of attack by the Wraith. So, now they had the required data and the first one ran away from the HPT, trying to get to the set-up sector. The Souless attacked the Esper, trying to stop him from jaunting the Ghost, but failed to Drain. The Maven managed to kill one Souless, and the last Shambler attacked the Fist and died. The Fist moved off to attack another Souless, but the Esper jaunts the Ghost out of the complex. It was a hard-fought and costly win for the Ronin.

Anthony's Summary

"Even with the victory, I still believe entering an Elysium complex is suicide. At several points in the game, I was almost ready to concede, with most of my best ranged abilities being defeated by the opposition's Smoke and Feed abilities. Unfortunately for Simon, however, my forces protected my Ghosts long enough to download the data and get away, and I only lost 70% of my force."

"The ultimate aim of any focused Dravani assault has to be on getting rid of the Vassals before you work on the stronger characters. This poses a very big problem, as these are focusing all of their energy on smashing up your best units. Double gunning with Snapshot goes a long way towards taking out a lot of Vassals, just don't jam your guns!"

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SImon's Summary

"It was looking so good, but then it all went so, so wrong! So what happened? Well, the dice definitely deserted me in the second half of the game. Not getting above a two when I went to Drain with my Souless, really hurt me, and that happened about six times in a row! Due to this, I became obsessed with taking-out that Shootist and committed all of my Souless to attack him; a major tactical error on my part, but he should have died (although he did eventually)! The worst mistake I made was under-utilizing my Dravani (Human Form); the most powerful model I had on the board, and I kept him back the whole game, and I had only myself to blame. But don't worry, those few Ronin that lived won't get far, already my forces have picked up their trail in the wastelands beyond the wall, and this time none will survive!"

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