

THE LAUNDRY™

OPERATIVE'S HANDBOOK



Roleplaying in the world of Charles Stross' **THE LAUNDRY FILES**

CREDITS

Design & Development: David F Chapman, Calum Collins, Christopher Colston, Michael Duxbury, Elaine Lithgow, Dominic McDowall

Writers: David F Chapman, Calum Collins, Christopher Colston, Alister Davison, Michael Duxbury, Warren Frey, Gareth Hanrahan, Elaine Lithgow

Producer: David F Chapman, Christopher Colston

Cover: Diana Grigorescu, Nick Marinkovich

Illustration: Pier Brito, Alessandro Boer, Davide Calabrese, Daniele di Parma, Andrew Lowry, Katie McGuire, Nick Marinkovich, Dennis Menheere, Jamie Noble, JG O'Donoghue, Gareth Sleightholme, Sergio Villa

Graphic Design & Layout: Claudio Canellas Dias

Proofreading: David F Chapman, Christopher Colston, Charles Stross

Publisher: Dominic McDowall

Cubicle 7 Team: Dave Allen, Chi Attoh, Petru Bumar, David F Chapman, Walt Ciechanowski, Calum Collins, Christopher Colston, Elaine Connolly, Josh Corcoran, Claudio Canellas Dias, Michael Duxbury, Paula Graham, Diana Grigorescu, Keith Hanrahan, Gemma Harper, TS Luikart, Dominic McDowall, Sam Manley, Anja Meidl, Katharine Monaghan, Pádraig Murphy, Neil Ogbeide, Siobhán Sheehy, Zsombor Sváb, Sam Taylor, and Taryn Wray

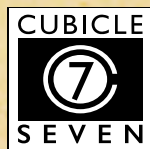
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FOREWORD

BY CHARLES STROSS

Good morning, everyone! My name is Susan. I'm deputising for Emma MacDougal from Human Resources, and I'm here to **help** you.

Welcome to this month's *Induction and Orientation* Training Day. Please help yourself to the complimentary coffee before it goes cold — oh, too late. Well, maybe a biscuit? Take two if you like! (Jennifer accidentally overordered; they're a bit past their sell-by date.)

Good, good. I'm glad to see there are enough chairs for everybody this time. As you can see from the schedule on the overhead projector, we've got a packed —

— No, Egbert, we don't use PowerPoint in this organisation. It's a security risk. As I was saying —

— It's not about computer viruses, Security is protecting you from having your brain eaten because that always happens whenever somebody tries to introduce PowerPoint in this organisation. Have another biscuit and **stop interrupting**, Egbert. Or else.

Moving swiftly on: to start with, please take a briefing pack from the stack in the middle of the table, write your name and payroll number on the form in front with the Bic biro provided, sign for the pen **here** and for the briefing pack in the second column and pass the form round the table. I'll be collecting the pens at the end of the session for ritual incineration as hazardous waste; they **will** be counted back in.

There! Now, we can begin.

This morning, I have two sessions for you: *Introduction to Documentation and Standards* — applied form-filling — and *Introduction to Professional Standards*.

— Yes, Clarissa, that's what we renamed *Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion* to after the Minister for Administrative Affairs forgot his dried frog pills before his appearance on Newsnight last month. If you completed EDI training at the Department of Agriculture last year, you can just sit back and — look, **just take the rest of the biscuits**, that's an order. (Pipe down at the back, or I'll have to open another tin.)

After Divers — I mean, Professional Standards training — there will be a catered lunch in the canteen. Do not **for the love of whatever God you pray to** select the jam sponge and custard dessert. Jennifer accidentally ordered a twenty-kilo industrial catering pack of Maltitol, and they're still using it up.

After lunch, things get more interesting, and you will not want to be stuck in the lav for that — it's much harder to run away from monsters when you're flying the TP flag with your knickers at half mast.

— No, Kyle, there are no serial killers in the Civil Service. Not even in Q-Division SOE, reverently known as the Laundry by all its inmates. I'm referring to **actual monsters** summoned by magic — which is usually applied mathematics, not stage tricks — some of which can best be described as malware for meat-heads. Here, have another biscuit, we've — finished the Jammie Dodgers!

After lunch, Sir Timothy Pierce will be along to prepare you for tomorrow's course on the *Introduction to Applied Occult Computing*. He'll assign you your wards — magical defences — and give you a reading list on the underlying sciency whatnot you need to understand to survive being thrown in at the deep end. (You can tackle it tonight on your own time. Don't worry, there won't be an exam — if you survive tomorrow, you get a passing grade.)

Anyway, on that note, welcome to Capital Laundry Services! And may the Great Pumpkin have mercy on your soul.