



# ABERRANT

## STORYTELLERS SCREEN™

World of Dream...

Eerily like our own world, the Aberrant universe of 2008 has been irrevocably changed by the presence of the godlike novas. All aspects of human society have felt — or suffered — the presence of these capricious, quantum-powered deities.

After months of secrecy and rumor-quashing, Viacom and Microsoft publicly announced their merger into a single conglomerate to be called ViaSoft. The news dramatically raised the stock prices of both companies, as investors rushed to acquire a part of what industry analysts say is undoubtedly going to be a major player in multiple industries well into the new century.

Microsoft hopes to use this merger to make up for Apple Computer's dramatic four-year rally, which has led to the Cupertino-based computer company's trebling its domestic market share at the expense of Microsoft and its allies, Dell, Intel, and Compaq.

Viacom, on the other hand, which owns MTV, Blockbuster Video, UPN, Showtime, Spelling Entertainment, Paramount, and Simon & Schuster, will benefit from having Microsoft's technical proficiency turned to its entertainment endeavors, which have been slow to capitalize on the OpNet and most other technical developments of the last decade.

The talks that led up to the merger were kept highly secret to prevent speculators from prematurely impacting the stock prices.

According to John Byrnes, stock analyst for Scardino, Jovanovich and Ethridge, "Microsoft has been under pressure to diversify for the last three years. The combination of their antitrust case, the stormy resignation of Bill Gates, and Apple's renaissance has sent their stock into a slow but steady downward spiral. This surprise merger with Viacom, from what I can see, appears to be very well thought out and should give them the stability they've needed, although they'll never be where they were at their apex three to five years ago, especially now with Apple's G5 machines devouring market share."

Peter Cavallino, CEO of Microsoft, will keep that position in the new corporation, and Sumner Redstone, Viacom's president, will be the new chairman. "The great thing about a merger like this," said Cavallino, "is that there's very little redundancy. There's no need for a round of layoffs because everyone is needed doing what they're doing right now."

Since the ViaSoft announcement, rumors have been flying about a proposed merger between Apple and Disney, but no word has been forthcoming from Cupertino or Anaheim.

**From Time Magazine,  
November 21, 2002**





In what may be the year's most astonishing fairy-tale ending, Microsoft Corporation hired the young nova Mungu Kuwasha for what has only been described as "a truly remarkable sum of money." Kuwasha, whose nova abilities allow him to interface with computer systems without the need for equipment, had been going to school at the University of Burundi as well as working full-time in the computer center to support his ailing parents and six younger siblings. That's where a Microsoft corporate recruiter named Miriam Blackwell discovered him.

"Oh, it was awful; that poor man had circles under his eyes from lack of sleep and he could never take a day off without falling behind somewhere. Professors at the university saw his ability as a neat trick at best and had him patching buggy amateur software applications. When I saw what he could do I immediately called Redmond and arranged for a visit. Let me just say, our engineers were amazed, absolutely amazed, and we decided to hire him on the spot. His family will receive an amount equal to three times what Mungu was bringing in while working at the university and he'll be living in the United States and working at various Microsoft research campuses, able to use his marvelous talent in ways that can help revolutionize software development. It really is a win-win situation."

Mr. Kuwasha himself is in extremely good spirits regarding the recent shift in career paths. "Before, I work all the time and I make no money. Now, I work sometimes and I make lots of money. I no longer have to worry that my family will go hungry. I am very happy to be working for Microsoft. They are very good to me."

## CORPORATE LETTER

**To:** All ViaSoft recruiters

**Fr:** Ben Levine, Vice-President of Human Resources

**Re:** Nova Recruitment

A mere five years after the *Galatea* disaster, trends in business are already changing radically due to the research, energy-manipulation, and information-gathering abilities of novas. And this is only the beginning.

Given the immense talents that one such employee can bring to our corporate family, the recruitment of nova personnel is to be given the highest possible priority. One way this change will be effected is to halve campus recruitment. Henceforth, recruiters will visit only the best-yielding campuses in their respective territories. Recruiters are to use the resulting free time to pursue leads on potential nova personnel. Recruiters will receive a \$75,000 bonus for every nova signed and an additional \$25,000 if the nova's abilities involve interface with computers, brainwaves, electromagnetic waves, or enhance cerebral capacity.

While this change may seem sudden and unorthodox, rest assured that we have given a great deal of consideration to the new policy. There can no longer be any doubt that the emergence of novas is going to have a profound effect on the way the world does business, and a strong base of nova personnel will assure that ViaSoft remains a leader in the computer and entertainment industries for years to come.

I look forward to awarding bonuses to many of you.

Good luck and happy hunting,

B.L.-VPHR

Ray,

Aloha. I hear it's getting chilly in Redmond. My sympathies. It's 72 here and the forecast is sun for the next five days.

Good news. All this damned OpNet research has finally paid off; unfortunately, all I have is a name and a reputation to go on. I'm hoping it'll be enough. It'll give you a solid place to start from in any case. We have to find and engage the services of a nova called "Trip." This guy is everything we've been looking for in the way of an intelligence operative: technically sound, ethically relaxed, and very discreet. And best of all, he's known to work freelance. Find him. Sign him. Show him the light of VS. Go through DeVries if you have to, at least initially, to contact him. We can make him the offer he can't refuse later.

Drawbacks: He's a little weird. More than a little, actually. Rumor attributes to him some very disturbing predilections. Specifics as I track them down.

Hush-hush, as usual. And make sure I get my bonus!

Kaleo



## CORPORATE LETTER

To: Peter Cavallino , CEO, ViaSoft

Fr: Sylvie Montaigne, Science & Technology Department, Project Utopia

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Mr. Cavallino:

After a brief discussion of the potential ramifications of its use, our review board has determined that the technology known as "Shadow Tracker RM" is in violation of Project Utopia's SafeTech codes and could be used in ways that endanger life, property, or the environment.

As it has been empowered to do by the United Nations, the S&T division of Project Utopia hereby requests that you cease and desist all research, development, and all other inquiry into the technology called "Shadow Tracker RM" as soon as safety permits.

Representatives of Project Utopia will visit your Cambridge, Massachusetts facility on September 20<sup>th</sup> for receipt of all documents, prototypes, and storage devices associated with this technology. Interim duplication of these items is expressly forbidden.

You will of course be compensated per standard Utopia guidelines. Failure to turn over the requested items will result in fines of no less than \$2,000,000 per day until delivery of requested items.

Thank you for your prompt compliance,

Sylvie Montaigne, Compliance Analyst, Hardtech Branch, Science & Technology Division, Project Utopia

## CORPORATE LETTER

Mr. Nakamura,

ViaSoft has reconsidered your generous offer to purchase our new Shadow Tracker RM technology. Please forgive our previous poorly considered refusal. Provided you arrange to take possession of all documents, prototypes and materials associated with ST RM, on or by the 18th of September (i.e., tomorrow), we will gladly sell it to you at the most generous price you named in your letter to us dated May 22, 2006.

Sincerely,

Raymond Chu, Director of Special Projects, ViaSoft

## CORPORATE LETTER

To: Sylvie Montaigne, Science & Technology Division, Project Utopia

Fr: Peter Cavallino , CEO, ViaSoft

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Ms. Montaigne:

I would be very interested in where you are getting your information from, because it certainly isn't from us. And it's wrong. ViaSoft has never invented, tested, used, seen or otherwise had anything to do with any technology called "Shadow Tracker RM." Feel free to launch one of your tiredly quixotic raids of any or all of our research facilities to find aforementioned technology. You will simply leave empty-handed and embarrassed. Again.

Sincerely,

Peter Cavallino, President and CEO, ViaSoft





# N

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## the news

Industrial espionage cases are on a steep rise across the globe and a startling number of fingers are pointed directly at ViaSoft. The computer and entertainment behemoth is the defendant in no fewer than 23 industrial espionage cases worldwide, with more rumored to be pending.

Besides trying to find out their rivals' latest designs, companies also want to know what the other side has achieved in the production capacity and their profit margins. The growing confidence showed by foreign investors in allowing their Japanese subsidiaries to manufacture their latest designs has also contributed to the growth of industrial espionage in the sector. Said Ryuchi Yashida of Sony Computing, "If this is what it means to compete in the world technology market today, then I guess we'll have to adapt. While I am greatly saddened, it should not come as any surprise that our country's great industrial renaissance comes with a price to pay. This is inevitable, especially with the stiff competition among manufacturers in the technical sector. Our research offices have been ransacked no fewer than three times in the last year alone.

In the most competitive industries, notably computers and pharmaceuticals, business is becoming a competition of who can afford more nova operatives, both for research and espionage. And who can afford more nova agents than ViaSoft?" The Redmond-based corporate giant responded by saying, "In any situation where companies compete for resources, there are always going to be haves and have-nots. The have-nots can inevitably be counted on to accuse the haves of somehow stealing their portion of the wealth. It's the same old story we've been getting pummeled with for years by envious competitors, and it's getting irritating."

Said one source who asked to go unnamed, "ViaSoft hates competition more than just about anything else, and if they can constantly steal the fruits of another company's R&D, then of course they'll always be on the forefront of technological development. On those occasions when their agents can't get the information through unethical methods, they buy the company wholesale. I don't see any healthy competition going on there, do you?"

Federation of Japanese Manufacturers chairman Miyamoto Hideo is more prevention oriented. He advised manufacturers to keep security tight around research installations and to patent their findings immediately.

ViaSoft won the most US patents for the sixth consecutive year in 2007, beating its prior record by 40 percent, as it once again topped a list led largely by Asian firms.

ViaSoft received 2,682 patents in 2007 from the US Patent and Trademark Office, about 750 more patents than in 2006. That was nearly 40 percent more than second-place Canon of Japan, said patent tracking firm IFI/Plenum Data Corp.

Six of the top 10 US patent recipients in 2007 were Japanese electronics firms, continuing the Saisho trend of recent years. In the biggest single year advance in a decade, Korea's Samsung surged from 16th place in 2006 to sixth in 2007, receiving 123 percent more patents year-to-year. Speculators attribute this to Korea's intensive consultation with the Hong Kong-based Novelty Consulting.

Overall, 351,024 utility and statutory patents were granted, a record number and 33 percent more than in 2006. The rise reflected growing patent activity in the OpNet, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, and is thought to be due, in part, to the impressive contributions made by nova researchers.

UTOPIA AFFILIATE: NOVATION ENTERPRISES



From letter dated Jan 5, 2002

Dear Store Manager,

There's good news on the sales horizon! By popular demand, Team Tomorrow merchandise will soon be available for sale at your store. Novation Toys, Games & Comics has been designated Project Utopia's official licensing agent in the US and abroad, and we are proud to offer you a full line of high-quality action figures, video games and comics based on the adventures of Team Tomorrow and other popular Utopia-affiliated nova heroes. Alpha Series 1 comes out next month and includes high-demand favorites like Slag™, Core™, and Kikjak™ as featured on N!, the Nova Network™.

The original for each action figure is carefully sculpted from the likeness of the real nova by award winning artists. Novation action figures are fully posable and come with accessories like the Slag Pile™.

Our initial line of six OpNet-broadcast animated programs will be available beginning in February and will include *Team Tomorrow: Protectors*, *Slag: Hot Metal Fury*, *Core: Meltdown Mayhem*, *T2M Auxiliary: The New Heroes*, *Harmony: Princess of Peace* and *True Tales of Team Tomorrow*. Four additional series will begin distribution in August; we are particularly excited about the upcoming *Kikjak: Urban Defender*, which features a brand-new soundtrack specially composed for the series by Isaac Hayes.

You've been waiting for your chance to cash in on the T2M craze. This is it. Novation is your one true source for all authorized Utopian vidgames, action figures, comics and more!

Don't let a sure thing pass you by. Sign up now to get added to our database!



Best-selling action figures with licensing agents (Taken from "Playthings: the International Merchandising Magazine of the Toy Industry," June, 2003)

1. Tötentanz (Devries, Alpha series)
2. Duke "Core" Baron (Novation, series 1)
3. Jake "Dragon" Korelli (DeVries, Alpha series)
4. Hiram "Slag" Goldberg (Novation, series 1)
5. Kikjak (Novation, series 1)
6. Lotus Infinite (Devries, Alpha series)
7. Lance "Stone Badguy" Stryker (Novation, series 1)
8. Sarge In-Charge (DeVries, Alpha series)
9. Harmony (Novation, series 1)
10. Randel "The Fireman" Portman



Letter dated 4/28/04

Dear Store Manager,

We regret to inform you that due to Slag's shocking death while on assignment in Africa, *Slag™: Hot Metal Fury* will cease publication with Issue 30. After much discussion with Project Utopia and here in our offices, we have decided to end the title with as accurate a portrayal of Slag's final adventure as possible, including his tragic last moments in combat with the Nigerian government forces and their elites. We will try to make this as respectful, tasteful, accurate, and mature a depiction of the actual events as possible, and we recommend that this issue be sold to mature readers only due to its graphic portrayal of Slag's™ final moments. This special double-sized final issue will feature two full-color covers and will come wrapped in a reflective mylar bag to keep it safe from more sensitive readers and to preserve its value to the collector.

Likewise, production of the Slag™ action figure will cease with the series IIIb, the Mourning Edition, which will include three action figures boxed together: Slag™ with Slag Pile™ as well as Slag™ with Accurate Death Wounds, and Hiram Goldberg in casket (with movable lid).

Finally, on a more personal note, while we may like to think of novas as immortal super heroes, facts prove otherwise. The untimely death of Hiram "Slag" Goldberg puts us in the awkward position of setting precedent. The road forks here; one path leads to a comfortable and changeless mythology, the other leads back to the real world. We at Novation have, after a great deal of debate, chosen to err on the side of realism to illustrate that novas are real people, with real problems and whose choices have real consequences.

Hiram visited our offices a little over a year ago when we were revising his action figure for series IIIa. He took me to lunch at a great Thai place over on East 56th where he rhapsodized about the grand places he would be going with Utopia.

That was then. This is now.

Thank you for your understanding,

Jerome Grant

Editor-in-Chief, Novation Toys, Games and Comics

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL EMAIL

**To:** Jerome Grant, Editor-in-Chief

**Fr:** John Tweeddale, Marketing Manager

**Re:** Testing and recommendations

Hi Jerome,

Okay, the good news is that most of the action figures rate very high on the realism and playability scales. When rated on a scale of one to ten, almost all of the figures scored six or higher. Highest scoring, just for playability, was Geryon, but that's no surprise. He's bigger, and bad guys always get to look better. Pax wins hands down for most realistic, but that could just be because the real guy is so plastic-looking.

In the triage department, we're going to have to either drop or completely redesign Antaeus. Two different parents and one of the kids said, independently of one another, that they thought he looked "like a turd." Don't kill the messenger. The phrasing is theirs. Could explain why Antaeus' sales figures weren't in line with our projections.

I should have some more sophisticated statistics worked up by this afternoon. I'll let you know if anything departs sharply from what I've already said.

John





## Voicemail Dated 11/16/07

Hey, Jerome, it's Andr — err, Skew. I have to ask you one little question. What the fuck are you guys trying to do to me? I just read *T2M: The Noble Cause*, issue 71, and I'm a little...well, let me phrase it this way, what kind of drug-guzzling knuckle-walking college dropout do you guys have writing my dialogue? I have never, never, since my eruption said, "Nowhere but in the hands of Team Tomorrow will a brighter future be found." You know I hate that soliloquy bullshit. And the art sucks. We've talked in your office, what, twenty, thirty times? Has my hair ever looked like that? Jesus Christ, I look like I'm ready to defect to the QNA or something. Can you get that guy back who was drawing me about five issues ago? I think he really captured me, well, all of us actually, a lot better. I don't really want to have to talk to my licensing agent, but this issue is really just...it's just intolerable.

I'm on call for the next few days, but you have my digital number. I'm concerned. I don't want to see this art and writing team become a — shit — a regular thing. My pager's beeping. Gotta run. Bye.

## EMAIL FROM PROJECT UTOPIA



## Email Memorandum Dated 5/19/08

To: Jerome Grant, Novation

Fr: Morganna Wolf, Utopia

Re: Public Opinion

Jerome,

Utopia, as you know, prefers to allow its various projects complete autonomy with regard to how they carry out their respective businesses from day to day. Unfortunately, in light of the recent Slider tragedy, such *laissez-faire* management would be in nobody's best interest.

The media have been given a lot of carefully engineered disinformation that could be detrimental to Utopia if the public gives it any credence. While we at Utopia are confident that the screech and thunder generated by this media feeding frenzy will die down soon enough, as these things do, we need to run a tighter ship in the interim.

Utopia is calling in a number of favors now to help mitigate the damage done by these irresponsible allegations, and if you think about how many people owe Utopia favors, you can imagine what a force that might be.

The favor we need to call in from you, Jerome, is this: We need all Novation products, particularly the comics, to be on the side of Utopia one hundred percent: no shades of gray, no "equal time" for heroic rebels, no hand-wringing debates on "artistic integrity." All of that can come later, if at all.

We're in dire straits at the moment, and this is how you're going to portray things: Utopia and Team Tomorrow are the good guys. We're the ones who cured AIDS, cleaned up Mexico City, revitalized Ethiopia and what have you. André Corbin is a dangerous psychopath who brutally murdered an innocent and much-loved young woman named Jennifer Landers.

If any of this is at all unclear or if you have any doubts whatsoever about how characters are to be portrayed during this crisis, or, most importantly, if you have any doubts about which side you're on, call me immediately.

I look forward to reading the next several issues. Of everything.

Morganna Wolf  
Public Relations Manager,  
Utopia Project



Conversation held between Jerome Grant, Editor-in-Chief, Novation Comics and Dave Roh, Market Analyst.

· **Jerome Grant:** What do you mean Corbin is selling better than Pax?

· **Dave Roh:** Just that. The guys in Marketing think it's because the boys buy both Caestus Pax and Corbin for their little wars and the girls just buy Corbin because he's perceived as attractive. A lot of the college kids buy him too because they liked *Hardballs*. We've had a lot of requests to make him anatomically correct.

· **Jerome:** OK. Make the Corbin figure uglier.

· **Dave:** Well, Jerome, I don't think you know what you're asking. That would involve getting the artist back to do another master, and I don't think Corbin is going to be as accessible this time around.

· **Jerome:** OK. So where's the holdup?

· **Dave:** Well, it seems a little petty or something.

· **Jerome:** Dave, what kind of values are you trying to instill in these kids? The higher-ups in Utopia didn't even want a Corbin figure to begin with after the whole *Hardballs* thing; how am I supposed to tell them that he's outselling Caestus Pax? Worse, how am I supposed to tell that vain sonofabitch Pax? He'll go through the roof, possibly literally. I'll need to talk to the guys in the art department and have them do something similar with the comic, give him a sneer or something. And, hey, could we include a Slider murder weapon with the new Corbin? Just to up the verisimilitude? See what Marketing thinks. These kids are pretty savvy, right? They love those little authentic touches.

· **Artist:** Jerome was down here in a snit today.

· **Writer:** What this time? Pax want you to draw him with a bigger bulge in his super suit?

· **Artist:** Nah, we're supposed to make Corbin less sympathetic.

· **Writer:** Get out!

· **Artist:** No, man, seriously. He got all heavy on me over it.

· **Writer:** Bullshit.

· **Artist:** Exactly, man. That's exactly what I said. He wants me to give Corbin more angular features and either a demonic grin or a sneer for the rest of the run.

· **Writer:** Gonna do it?

· **Artist:** Fuck, no. Let him find some other way to wedge his nose up Utopia's butt. I think Corbin was totally framed. They don't fuckin' pay me enough to be an artist and a propaganda agent. It's like some sort of really ungroovy Chomskian conspiracy or something and I don't want to be some tool of Utopia.

· **Writer:** That might be pushing his innocence just a little. Utopia wouldn't have such a hate-on for him if he hadn't killed Slider.

· **Artist:** They probably just want to get rid of him before he makes another porno or something.

· **Writer:** It's gotta be something worse than that.

· **Artist:** Bet it's not.

· **Writer:** Sucks to have Jerome micromanaging like that.

· **Artist:** I'll deal. You going to the Lacefisher show tonight?

· **Writer:** Can't. Sold out. 'Sides, I promised Brittany I'd go to the *South Park* retrospective with her tonight.



Best-selling action figures with licensing agents (Taken from "Playthings: the International Merchandising Magazine of the Toy Industry," June, 2008)



1. Jennifer "Slider" Landers (Novation series VIb, Mourning Edition)



4. Corbin (Novation series VIb)



6. Divis Mal (Novation series VIa)



2. Geryon (Novation series VIa)



7. Caestus Pax (Novation series VIa)



5. Antaeus (Novation series VIb)



3. Rob "Superbeast" Steele (Devries, Delta series)



8. Skew (Novation series VIb)







9. Duke "Core" Baron (Novation series VIa)



10. Mirko "Overkill" Mirkonen (Devries, Delta series)

INTRADEPARTMENTAL MEMO

**N! Intradepartmental Memo Dated 3/5/03**

**From:** Geoffrey Gold, Vice-President of Programming

**To:** Anne Binghamton, Director of Programming

**Re:** Next Season

Anne,

Friend, buddy, pal, what the HELL are you trying to do to me? If we're going to be charging the ad rates we're looking at next season, we HAVE to get more action-oriented stuff going here. What are you giving me? You're giving me chick shows. You're giving me touchy-feely, getting-in-touch-with-your-inner-nova, nova recipes, nova horoscopes crap every night of the week. Chick shows are great during the day, Anne, I love them to pieces; they make me all warm and tingly. They sell soap, diapers and feminine-hygiene products very effectively. But at night, when we need to sell beer and cars and video games, we have to have data and death: numbers and trends for the accountants, stockbrokers and lawyers; and slashing, bleeding and carnage for the lowest-common-denominator boys — you know who I'm talking about, the ones who need an alternative to *Baywatch* and *Warzone*.

Can we get a nova football team? What about nova wrestling? How about a show called Nova Cop? Nova Court? Dr. Nova? Work on it. The lineup you proposed would leave us hemorrhaging money.

Sorry to be so blunt, but you know what the V-P meetings have been like lately. If you could get me a revised proposal for next season's lineup by the end of the week, I'd appreciate it.

Thanks,

G.



Excerpt from N! interview with hyperintelligent nova Cassandra on "N! Sight with Parker Stevenson"; show aired April 7, 2008



• **Cassandra:** ...and they would appear to be the only faction currently aware of the full ramifications of their actions at this time.

• **Parker:** Fascinating. We have only a few moments left, so allow me to change topics quickly. A great deal has been said about the exploitation of novas, but do you think it's true? Are novas really being exploited?



• **C:** Of course it's true, Parker. Armies are exploiting us. Researchers are exploiting us. And you...or, rather, the media, are exploiting us. I would venture to say that the most egregious violations are in fact being committed by N!, whose entire profit margin depends on broadcasting our very lives to the pathetically voyeuristic denizens of a glamour- and substance-starved entertainment wasteland. N! is under the impression that our M-R nodes somehow negate our private citizen status.



• **C:** N! hopes to wring every last iota of pathos from the lives of novas and serve it to their viewers. You report what we eat, whom we're dating, how we get along with our significant others, what clothes we wear, where we vacation, and how we die. When Slider's corpse was found in Calcutta, N! was there dwelling on every last blood spatter. Am I wrong? They even broadcast the autopsy report. Could they have been more lurid? Worse yet—



• **P.S:** Well, looks like that's all the time we have today. I'd like to thank our brilliant guest Cassandra. Remember to join us next week when we feature Mrs. Randel Portman on what it's like to be married to the first known nova! I'm Parker Stevenson. Good night.

Excerpt from N! interview with Skew on "N! Sight with Parker Stevenson"; show aired April 28, 2008



• **Skew:** ...and like I was saying earlier, that's the whole point of being a nova anyway.

• **Parker:** Fascinating. We have only a few moments left, so allow me to change topics quickly. A great deal has been said about the exploitation of novas, but do you think it's true? Are novas really being exploited?



• **Skew:** Do I feel exploited? Sure. Do I care? When one interview nets me 200K? Are you kidding?! OpNet sells lots of advertising and makes lots of money, a respectable fraction of which they kindly drop into my bank account just to have me jabber on for twenty minutes with y'all. Hi Mom! Yeah, I feel exploited. Terrible, ain't it?

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL MEMO

**From N!** Intradepartmental Memo Dated 10/10/04  
**From:** Geoffrey Glass, Vice-President of Programming  
**To:** Monique Dufresne, Director of Programming  
**Re:** Next Season

You're brilliant, Monique, absolutely nova class. I brought up your idea for Two Minutes Hate at the V-P meeting this morning and they loved it. It has everything: the trends factor, the raw factor, the Omigod! factor and even the high-culture factor if you squint your eyes a little. We're going to run with it. I'm having Legal start work on contracts now.

One thing it doesn't have is the sex factor. You said something last week about some sort of late-night filter-fodder show interviewing novas about their sex lives or chatting about sex or giving advice about sex or something. Have you come up with anything else along those lines? I think it would appeal to a broad segment if we do it right. Let's think about having Alejandra as the first guest so the audience sees that we can be sensitive and adult or whatever. Or Ironskin Andy. That whole Queer Nova Alliance rhetoric of his is quite the lightning rod for those right-wingers. We could really milk that for numbers if we do it right.

Henry and Will liked your idea for the nova-against-nova obstacle course game show thingy, but Will thinks it'll require a special studio. Not certain about that.

In any case, keep me apprised.

Thanks,

G.

## INTRADEPARTMENTAL MEMO

**From N!** Intradepartmental Memo Dated 3/21/08  
**From:** Monique Dufresne, Director of Programming  
**To:** Bryan Clain, Assistant to the Director of Programming  
**Re:** New Talent

Hi Bryan,

I was talking to Geoff today and it's looking like we're going to need a lot of new novas for the next season. New faces for everything: interviews, fights, biographies, whatever. He thinks we've been sitting back and interviewing the same Utopia frontmen over and over again. I'd like to disagree, but I can't. If I see Core or Kikjak spouting off one more time I'm going to lose it.

I think we should be going for exotic here. Let's leave the Utopia standbys for the nonce and find some interesting novas. Sexy novas. Weird novas. Disturbing novas. Call the DeVries Agency and get some pricing info on their rent-a-nova program. Do we dare contact the Teragen? Hell, yes. Do something to follow up on that possibility. Let's get at least one Big Hitter. Divis Mal? Caestus Pax? Who else can we contact?

It might only take a small change. Maybe we could get some folks from T2M Asia or Africa, somebody with some pigment for a change? Check on the Japanese Utopia wannabe, too, whatever it's called. Nippontai.

Maybe we'll have to send someone to Ibiza to raid the Amp Room. That's where we'll find all the really weird novas anyway. Those are your action items for the rest of the week. Everything else can be put on hold for now.

Let me know what you come up with.

Thanks,

Monique





# N

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From *Novaline*, call-in  
OpNet program, aired  
October 11, 2006

**Paul Martin:** Hello, Amy-from-Waukegan-Illinois, you're on *Novaline*.

**Amy:** Omigod! Umm...hi Paul, hi Andy.

**Andy Vance:** Hi, Amy.

**Paul:** What's up, Amy? This is your chance to ask a real live nova a real live question and get an honest answer. Don't waste it.

**Amy:** Well, Paul, first I just wanted to say that I just love your show. My sister and I watch every night before we go to bed. We have them all on disk.

**Paul:** Hey, Amy, that's fantastic. We love to hear that. What's your question for Ironskin Andy tonight?

**Amy:** Well, I...umm, was wondering if Andy had ever given girls a real, you know, try, because my sister and I both...well, we, like, think he is the hottest, and I mean the hottest nova on the planet. He's just so, like, studly and wholesome at the same time.

**Paul:** It's up to you if you want to answer that one, Andy. Ouch.

**Andy:** No problem, Paul; I get that one all the time. To be honest, I can't say that I have tried them, Amy, but I can't say I have any real inclination to do so, either. My partner, Jake "The Dragon" Korelli and I just celebrated our second anniversary last month, and we're pretty happy together. Thanks for your interest, though.

**Paul:** Ckay, thanks for the question, Amy. Now we go to Justin in Atlanta. Justin, you're on *Novaline*.

**Justin:** Kickass! Hi Paul, hi Andy. I've, like, always wanted to live in Ibiza, and I just wanted to ask Andy what it's like living there. Is it like sex and drugs all the time? Slash cool!

**Andy:** Well, it's like a party all the time, Justin. We novas can party for days and days and days and days without stopping, and it gets really crazy. Now don't confuse the town of Ibiza with the island. The town of Ibiza is almost all novas and paparazzi these days thanks to the presence of the Amp Room, and there's basically one big party going on from April until September, day and night, rain or shine. The other towns on the island aren't so novacentric and keep more civil hours.

**Justin:** Damn, I wish I were a nova. What's the weirdest part about living in Ibiza? Is there, like, a downside?

**Andy:** Yeah, actually, there is. My partner and I are both pretty laid-back, normal guys, but there are some novas out there who get a little...odd. A lot of those types wind up in Ibiza because they like what I refer to as the "novacentric" lifestyle, and they know that in a place like Ibiza where there are over a hundred novas at any given time, folks won't gawk if they see a woman with blue skin or a guy walking down the street with tentacles sprouting from his rib cage.

**Justin:** Wow! What's the weirdest ab—umm, nova you've ever seen in Ibiza?

**Andy:** Um... Well, Justin, for a number of reasons, I'd rather not answer that. Is that okay?

**Justin:** Oh. Yeah, sorry—

**Paul:** Thanks, Justin. Lashandra from Detroit, you're on *Novaline*....

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**From Novelty form letter, "Response #1"**

Thank you for contacting Novelty, the world's only universal consulting and solutions firm. Whether you need a crime investigated, a technical system analyzed, or a competitor's tactics dissected and explicated, no problem is too complex for Novelty.

Our founder and primary consultant, Amanda Wu, is among the planet's most brilliant novas. No assignment comes through Novelty that Ms. Wu does not peruse personally, so you can be confident that your query will be addressed by her or the individual she deems most qualified to do so.

While only a young firm, Novelty has already made a name for itself by finding solutions to some of the greatest problems faced by industry, government, and private citizens. We look forward to solving your problem as well.

There are three things we at Novelty would like you to know before you make your first appointment.

Novelty takes your privacy very seriously. We understand that sensitive information may pass through our offices on occasion, and we want you to rest assured that it will remain confidential. Our security systems are second to none, and our discretion unsurpassed. At Novelty, we believe that your business is your business.

Secondly, Novelty does require a detailed credit check before accepting a new client. Novelty sits firmly at the pinnacle of the consulting world, and our services are priced accordingly. Novelty retains the right to decline clients based on the results of the credit check. Those clients lacking sufficient credit may still engage the services of Novelty by paying the full fee in advance as well as a fully refundable contingency deposit in equal amount.

Lastly, Novelty has developed such standing in the consulting world that we must now inform potential clients of an estimated one-month waiting period for our services. Novelty refuses to compromise the unmatched quality of its analyses in the name of speed, thereby assuring every Novelty client our full and unremitting attention. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. If, however, yours is a particularly time-sensitive matter, Novelty has recently adopted a policy allowing clients to place bids on our newly available ASAP service. Opening bid currently stands at eight million dollars (US).

Thank you very much for contacting Novelty. We look forward to helping you find the answers you need.

## OPMAIL TRANSMISSION

**To:** Amanda Wu  
**From:** Johnny Rose  
**CC:** Nobody yet  
**Subject:** Urgent

Figured the only way to get you to read opmail from your late unlamented employee was to mark it urgent. For your sake, I hope it works. If I may be so brazen, I would wholeheartedly recommend reading this letter through to the end.

Now that I have your attention, I have a little story I'd like to tell you.

Once upon a time, there was a very bright American nova who escaped his zealot-infested hometown of Tulsa, Oklahoma and went to work for a big, bad multinational consulting firm in Hong Kong. Very Bright American (or VBA for short) did a bang-up job as the number two brain and earned aforementioned big, bad multinational consulting firm (or BBMNCF for short) enormous amounts of money and a significant portion of BBMNCF's currently impeccable reputation.

One day, the wicked queen who ruled the BBMNCF got her panties in a wad because VBA had the audacity to suggest an alternative (and clearly superior) analysis to one that her royal pampered highness had written for one of VBA's key accounts, and within a week VBA was out on his ass, banished from the BBMNCF forever.

Surprise, surprise. But I'm not bitter. Much.

VBA then follows his uncannily accurate intuition directly into the motherload of evidence, finds a veritable trove of dirty deals (which the evil queen should have been clever enough to eschew in the first place), tells the world, ruins her business, very possibly gets her arrested, and takes over the multinational consulting firm, which he rules as a benevolent and much-beloved leader for the rest of his long healthy nova life. The end.

Don't like the ending? Change it.

Do I want Novelty? Not really, but it would make for a great revenge, wouldn't it? And you're wrapped up in enough ugly shit that it would be really easy to pluck it from your crooked little fingers. For me, anyway. The moment ViaSoft and Apple found out that you've been playing them against each other to make money, your days in the sun would be over. Conflict of interest, hello? Not at all clever. Very easy to get caught. Not the high-quality ratiocination I would expect from you. Makes me wonder if you're even a nova, because your thinking processes resemble those of a spikehead. Oh, and then there's that little "crimes against humanity" thing, but let's not even go there. Yes, I did find out about that.

So this is how we'll play it from here on out: You tell me how valuable my silence is, you name a figure, I double it, you pay me, I go away, build a castle in southern Oregon and we never cross paths again. The end. Like this ending better? Me too.

Now, the old noggin suggests that there's about a 39% chance that you would find me easier to live with were I, say, the unfortunate victim of some third-rate Bangkok snuff film and then sent all unceremoniously to a rendering plant in the forgotten wilds of Asia. You have a lot of money riding on this and gods know you're not nearly so stable as you pretend to be.... We can turn this into a high-stakes worldwide chess match if you want; I have my pawns, rooks, bishops and knights picked out and lined up, but I don't think you're ready to risk the consequences that would follow this particular checkmate. Let me know if I'm wrong. You believe way too much in your own PR propaganda, Amanda, and I'd love to prove myself smarter than you in a big, ugly, decisive sort of way. Fuck with me and I will maneuver your bitch ass into jail and take your company out from underneath you.

If you'd had the humility to refrain from firing me over some petty ego bruise, this would never have come to pass. Don't forget that.

The game is afoot. How shall we play it?

XXOO,

Johnny



**To:** All researchers and analysts working on the Kim project  
**From:** Amanda Wu, CEO  
**Re:** Security  
January 7, 2008

Dear Team Members,

I thought I should inform you that our final sales figure for December was \$256.6 million HK\$, a magnificent performance. I extend my thanks and heartfelt congratulations to all of you in the Novelty family. This should make you proud and ensure that bonuses are at the level you have aspired to — and worked hard for — all year.

As you know, we will soon be turning over plans to Mr. Kim for North Korea's new land-annexation endeavor. You should all feel very proud of your accomplishments on this project. Tactical maneuvers of this magnitude have traditionally been the purview of generals and other military strategists. By reexamining your own capabilities and making yourselves experts on such diverse topics as strategy, troop movement, supply lines, and military weaponry and hardware, you are expanding the role of the analyst/consultant in the modern world.

For those of you who have not heard, your co-consultant Emily Park has family in the region of South Korea soon to be annexed. After much discussion with Mr. Kim, it was arranged for Ms. Park's family to be away for the entire period of the incursion, keeping them safely out of harm's way while maintaining uncompromised security around this very challenging assignment.

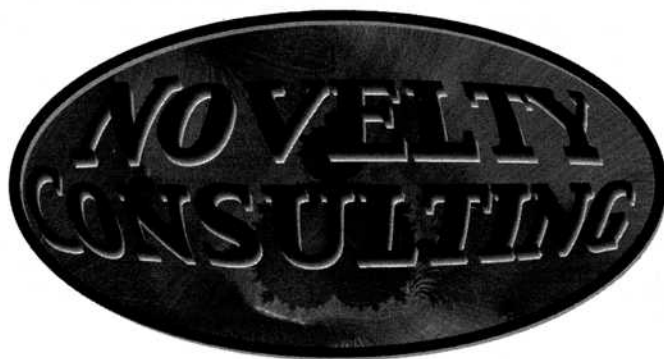
I know that this project, of all those we've completed in the last twelve months, has been particularly difficult for many of you. The ethical, geopolitical, and historical ramifications are both staggering and exceedingly difficult to gauge, while the potential for unforeseen complications is high.

Allow me to be the first to say that you've made a splendid showing. I have examined the final version of the incursion plans with a highly critical eye, and the probability of Mr. Kim's success, if he adheres strictly to the plans we give him, is 70%, with a standard deviation of five percentage points.

Those of you working on the Kim project will find an extra appreciation of my thanks in your checks at the end of the month.

Mens agitat molem!

Fondest wishes,  
Amanda Wu





## OPMAIL TRANSMISSION

**To:** Amanda Wu  
**From:** Johnny Rose  
**CC:** [recipient list suppressed]  
**Subject:** Don't Cry For Me North Korea

Well, it's been over a week now and still no check. In the meantime I've avoided the poison in my water, the driverless armored car and that sloppy sniper you visited upon me. I accept your conditions of war. By now you've dealt with the aftereffects of my EMP grenade. You're a bright girl; you didn't need those silly computers anyway. I've taken the liberty of initiating a little chitchat session with some acquaintances of mine at the South Korean consulate. They'll be very, very interested in your recent destabilizing hijinks. Does this up the ante any? I hope so. I know that this is precisely the type of thing that, ideally, you'd like to take care of yourself, Amanda, but just try to get off that little island kingdom of yours. You'll find that leaving Hong Kong is a much bigger pain in the ass than it's ever been. Try it. You'll see what I mean.

You know, my mother said that I should just use my novasonic brain and make my own überfortune. Given the ludicrous amounts of money networks like N! are tossing around these days, it wouldn't be that difficult to go on *Jeopardy* and win a few million, but that doesn't have the same "fuck you" Hallmark sentiment attached to it, know what I mean? Maybe it's just an ego problem. Maybe it's just two personalities that should never have been working together coming into conflict. Maybe it's because I'm a Taurus and you're a Scorpio. Then again, maybe you're just a pathologically greedy and manipulative bitch. Hmmmmm. Wonder which it is? You know where my money's at.

You can still contact me to pay me off. Please don't. This is turning into way too much fun.

War: what a beautiful choice.

XXOO,

Johnny

Berringer, it's Amanda. Things are not as they should be, so listen very attentively. Look, I'm going to need to call in a few of those favors you owe me from the London conundrum of last year. I've recently developed a bit of a malady that quite handily prevents me from leaving Hong Kong. I'm unable(!) to analyze the exact vectors the disease is using to keep me down, but it's quite virulent. Unless I can heal things myself, only my wayward priest is capable of curing me at this point. You've taken confession from him before, I believe. He was the angel I sent to you in your hour of need. You remember Father Gianni Rossellini? I need you to track him down for me before things get any worse. I believe him to be in New York or possibly Tulsa of all Godforsaken places. I sent him several postcards last week, but none of them seems to have reached him, so I'm asking you to attend to things personally. He's a good man who knows his stuff, but you're more than up to conveying my need despite your extreme prejudice concerning matters religious. I'm sure you'll choose just the right words to say to make things all better. Sooner is better than later.

You know I appreciate this.

Take care, sweetie. Bye-bye.



Letter dated November 5, 2004, from Alejandra to His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI

Your Holiness,

I am so honored that you have agreed to meet with me. I think it will be a wonderful opportunity for you to see that novas are just like other people. My mother is very proud. She is delighted almost beyond speaking and wanted me to tell you that she prays for your health and well-being every day.

I know you are a busy man, but I think it's so important that the Church take a position on me and others like me that I must speak with you. I know you are a good man and a fair man and you will listen with an open mind.

My brother tells me that there are those in the church who feel that novas are less than human. I hope to show you in the course of our conversation that that is entirely untrue. But that conversation must wait a few weeks more. In the meantime, my prayers are with you.

Your Humble Servant,  
Alejandra Carranza

**EXCERPT FROM PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN BISHOP DIONIGI TETTAMANZI, PRELATE-GENERAL OF OPUS DEI, AND FR. RODERIGO ALTA, NUMERARY, TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH AND LATIN**

• **Dionigi:** So, Alta, my dear, dear friend, let me get this straight. You did speak with His Holiness and your brought up our concerns, and yet you were still unable to sway His Holiness from granting an audience to this girl...this...aberrant?

• **Alta:** (*sighing into the phone*) That is correct, Excellency.

• **D:** Your worst enemy is yourself, yes. Benedict XVI is no John Paul II; we can no longer just let our will be known and hear it drip from the papal lips within a fortnight, Alta. Those days are gone, and with Utopia minding everyone's business, we can't be as free with the terminal remedies as we were with Benelli or Albini. We have clear limitations. We are but one arm of a large holy body, Alta, and we are but men. It is folly to assume that we have the power to affect all matters of church doctrine. But to let him grant an audience to an aberrant?! No, no, that failing is clearly yours, but one with which Opus Dei will now have to live.

• **A:** What you say is true, Excellency, but there was no advising to do on the matter. He very much wanted to meet with Alejandra.

• **D:** Of course he did, he's male. Your task was to make him want otherwise, and you failed, yes? You occupy the role of Opus Dei's papal advisor because of your interpersonal and people-management skills, and if you cannot successfully handle those responsibilities, then perhaps we would be better served by someone else in that position.

• **A:** This position is my calling, Excellency, and I shall do whatever is necessary to regain your trust

• **D:** No ideal becomes a reality without sacrifice, Alta. For this heavy failure, yours will be a heavy penance, Alta. You understand why, yes?

• **A:** Yes.

• **D:** I will ask you to wear your cilice not for two hours a day, no, but for two solid weeks. You will sleep with it on, yes? You may change legs if need be, but you will give this pain up to the Father as an offering. I am understood, yes?

• **A:** Yes.

• **D:** In this way will you come to understand the enormity of your failing. We can only hope that His Holiness is too wise to be swayed by her sweet face and nova mind tricks. I am not optimistic.

• **A:** I will serve.

• **D:** We shall certainly see.



## INTERPERSONAL VATICAN MEMO

Your Holiness,

After reading the body of *Ad Dei Lucem*, I must compliment you on a splendid job of addressing a difficult issue. I agree that the nova situation needs to be addressed by the church; I am worried, however, that some of the language may be a bit "over the top," as the Americans say. It would be disadvantageous for the Vatican to be perceived as a tool of novas. I fear this may be the result of *Ad Dei Lucem*, most especially should word of your meeting with Alejandra become common knowledge. I ask that you reconsider certain sections of your message and perhaps mitigate some of the stronger wordings. I have already read reports of novas being recommended for canonization, and this encyclical will only muddy the waters further. If you would like for me to clarify some of the more problematic points, I would be happy to do so.

In Christ,  
Alta

## INTERPERSONAL VATICAN MEMO

Cardinal Alta,

You know well that We hold your counsel in high esteem. Time and time again you have brought clarity where it was most needed. Your most recent recommendation moved Us to reexamine the phrasing of *Ad Dei Lucem* word by word. While We can appreciate the points you make, Our heart is very clear on this matter. *Ad Dei Lucem* shall go out exactly as written. Thank you for your kind advice.

In Christ,  
Mario Bardi, Benedict XVI



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**N****the news****His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI***Ad Dei Lucem***Encyclical on the new people called novas****Promulgated on June 15, 2005**

To the Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other Local Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.

Venerable Brethren, Greetings and Apostolic Benediction.

It is ever Our duty to guide all persons of whatever origins toward the light of God. This We are expected by God to do without prejudice or bias of any kind. None who piously seek salvation shall be turned away. Thinking on the troubled nature of recent events are we brought to reiterate this highly salient point.

The last seven years have seen the emergence everywhere around the globe of a new people, gifted by God with remarkable abilities. These persons are called "novas" by the various media, and by that term shall We refer to them also.

There are factions who claim that these novas are other than human, that they are not capable of salvation or that they are tools of a darker power. Such opinions have too frequently reached Our ears of late and trouble Us greatly. Our heart has been vexed as We have heard it said that these new and greatly blessed children of God are simply beasts of burden meant only to serve the secular needs of governments, to fight petty wars in the names of the highest bidding regimes, to correct the errors of misguided humanity, and to be managed like livestock.

Against policies such as these, which violate the principal rights of the human person and trample on the sacred liberty of the children of God, all Christians from every part of the world, indeed all men of good sense, cannot refrain from raising their voices with Us in real horror and from uttering a protest deploring the deranged conscience of their fellow men.

As we are troubled when we see our nova children treated like beasts, so are We likewise troubled when we see small but vocal factions of novas claiming superiority over mankind and glories that rightfully belongs to the Lord. We maintain that the appropriate relationship of nova and non-nova is one of equality and brotherhood.

Having witnessed novas engage in acts of great virtue as well as terrible cruelty, it is clear to Us that they are children of Adam with souls and all concomitant talents and failings. They, too, are stained by original sin; and they, too, may attain salvation through the most holy intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We do proclaim novas the blessed work of God possessed of souls, needing apostolic love and guidance, and We welcome them into Our fold. It is Our sincerest wish that by setting this example of acceptance and Christian love, We may help usher in a new day of peace based on justice, liberty, and the care of all souls, both human and nova.

**Given at Rome from St. Peter's, on the fifteenth day of June, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the year 2005, the sixth of Our Pontificate.**

Hundreds of faithful gathered today at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome to mourn the death of Cardinal Roderigo Alta. A well-known and much-beloved man of great faith, Alta was also Benedict XVI's confidant and primary advisor. The pope himself delivered the benediction, wherein he referred to Alta as "a man of great knowledge and a true practitioner of the work of God." The cardinal's death came as a great shock to the Vatican, as Alta appeared to be in excellent health only weeks ago.



RELIGION

Excellency,

Greetings and blessings. I understand how valuable your time is, but I have a question for you. I'll be brief. A week ago I gave a sermon concerning the lives of the saints and how emulation of their good deeds can exalt man and bring him nearer to God. As part of this sermon, I explained the criteria for canonization — selfless good deeds and three miracles — and later, when Mass was over, the most adorable little girl ran up and asked if novas are saints, because they do good deeds and they have abilities that certainly appear to the common man to be miraculous. I would have just made up something on the spot, but her parents were there by that point and it was clear that they wanted an answer, too. I'm reasonably certain that novas do not achieve sainthood so easily, but I'm unclear how to explain this more clearly. Would you have any recommendations on how to treat such an awkward question? According to the definition I usually give, most of Team Tomorrow would qualify as saints, and this, I think is probably not as it should be.

Thank you so much for your attention in this matter,  
 Fr. Robert Ianuzi  
 Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow  
 Deerfield, IL

PERSONAL LETTER

Chalepeno,

The virtuosity you demonstrated with Alta is appreciated. Now that you've proved yourself, I think that perhaps you may be the proper tool for another of God's works. Benedict XVI refuses to play ball with Opus Dei where novas are concerned. While his other views are tolerably in line with ours, he is catastrophically out of step when it comes to seeing novas for the potential threat they pose. With the promulgation of *Ad Luceam Dei*, he has essentially won that battle. While I would love to get him out of there, and replace him with, say, Herranz or Cipliani, one poisoning a year in the Vatican should probably be our upper limit. Besides, Bardi is just too damned popular with the cardinals right now, and between the lot of them I think they might have enough of an inkling to know which way to point the accusatory finger. As if this weren't bad enough, His Holiness has made it clear that he would like that liberal Pentilla from the USA to be his successor, and that we cannot abide. An American pope? Not while there's breath in my body.

Here's the direction in which we need things to go. This is more complex than a clever poisoning, so pay attention: Since Benedict XVI is so fond of novas, I want novas to play a key role in his undoing. Your job is to supply the novas and the motivation. Teragen members would be most convenient and believable, but I'm not picky. DeVries is fine as a last resort, although I don't know how far we can trust their discretion; it may not be up to our necessarily exacting standards. Utopia affiliates are out of the picture: too much potential for investigation there.

I leave it to you to determine how best to bring the Vatican into conflict with the nova or novas of your choosing.

I expect great things from you.  
 Dionigi



From a message spammed to OpNet, seen on wheatpaste posters, and handed out on flyers:

# They want your children!

That's the one and only thing these novas have in common. They want to open up your innocent child's brain and cram in a MazarinRashoud node to make your kids **just like them**. That's just one strategy they'll use to steal the world away from you, and leave you spiraling out of control. The government won't help you, they **love** novas. Utopia won't help you, they **love** novas even more! So what can you do to keep these heathen cultural-elite, demon-powered freaks of nature away from your children? You can attend **Reverend Tuley's Genuine Old-Fashioned Revival on Spiritual Warfare and Wielding the Weapons of the Almighty God**. Find out how to protect yourself and your family through prayer and good old-fashioned firepower.

The Lord isn't scared by Quantum Blasts. He can create blasts bigger than anything seen so far by living man. And there's no nova that's miracle-proof!

Attend the revival physically or virtually. There's no charge but what you want to contribute to Brother Tuley's efforts. And the child you save, the country you save, the world you save...could be your own.



**AMANDA CHEN:** HERE WE ARE OUTSIDE THE NI STUDIOS, BOB, PRACTICALLY ON OUR OWN FRONT LAWN, AND IT APPEARS THAT WE ARE BEING PICKETED. BEARING SIGNS READING "BURN IN HELL ABERRANT SCUM," AND "DO NOT WORSHIP THE DEVIL'S NOVA CHILDREN," THE DEMONSTRATORS HAVE A CLEAR BIAS AGAINST NOVAS. LEADING THIS DEMONSTRATION IS A MAN IDENTIFIED AS 51-YEAR-OLD REVEREND LON MABON OF WILSONVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH AND THE ORGANIZER OF THE OREGON-BASED NORMAL FAMILIES COALITION. MR. MABON, CAN YOU TELL US PLEASE WHY YOU AND YOUR SUPPORTERS HAVE COME ALL THIS WAY TO PICKET THE NI STUDIOS?



**LON MABON:** AMANDA, WE THINK OPNET PROGRAMMING IN AMERICA HAS GONE COMPLETELY DOWN THE TUBES, AND A GREAT DEAL OF THAT IS NI'S FAULT. THERE WAS A TIME IN AMERICA WHEN VIEWERS COULD TUNE IN TO WHOLESOME PROGRAMMING THAT REFLECTED THE FAMILY. A FATHER, A MOTHER, AND CHILDREN. MAYBE EVEN GRANDPARENTS. WE WERE ABLE TO WATCH SHOWS LIKE THE WALTONS AND LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE, AND WE KNEW THAT OUR KIDS WERE GETTING WHOLESOME IDEAS ABOUT THE WORLD. NOW WE CAN'T TURN ON THE TV OR THE COMPUTER WITHOUT THE NETWORKS SAYING "THIS NOVA DID SOMETHING TODAY," OR "THAT NOVA IS GREAT."



WE BELIEVE THAT NOVAS — WE CALL THEM ABERRANTS, BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE: THEY'RE ABERRATIONS OF THE NATURAL ORDER AND ABERRATIONS OF GOD'S PLAN — WE BELIEVE THAT ABERRANTS ARE NOT THE WAY TO GO. WE DON'T WANT OUR KIDS TO GROW UP THINKING THAT ABERRANTS ARE THE BE-ALL AND THE END-ALL. THAT'S WHAT MOM AND DAD ARE SUPPOSED TO BE TO THEM IN THE HOME AND THAT'S WHAT JESUS CHRIST IS SUPPOSED TO BE TO THEM OUT IN THE WORLD. ALL THIS ATTENTION ON ABERRANTS IS WEAKENING THE MORAL FIBER OF AMERICA'S FAMILIES, AMANDA, AND WE WANT TO PUT A STOP TO IT.



**A.C:** BUT REVEREND MABON, NOVAS ARE OUT THERE EVERY DAY, FIXING THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS AND HELPING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE LEAD HIGHER-QUALITY LIVES. SHOULDN'T THAT BE RECOGNIZED?



**L.M:** NO, AMANDA, I DON'T THINK IT SHOULD BE. AMERICA ISN'T FOCUSING ON THE GOOD THAT NOVAS ARE DOING. AMERICA IS FOCUSING ON THE GLAMOUR, ON THE POWER, AND ON THE WEALTH. NOVAS ARE BECOMING THE FALSE IDOLS OF THE 21ST CENTURY. YOU CAN'T RAISE MERE MEN ABOVE GOD LIKE THAT AND NOT EXPECT FOR THERE NOT TO BE REPERCUSSIONS. THAT'S WHAT THE CATHOLICS DO, THEY RAISE UP MEN LIKE HEATHEN GODS, THAT'S WHAT THE SAINTS ARE, AFTER ALL. AND THAT'S WHAT AMERICA LIKES ABOUT NOVAS. OOH, THEY'RE PRETTY; OOH, THEY'RE RICH. NOVAS RAISE THEMSELVES ABOVE GOD, AND THIS COUNTRY HELPS THEM DO IT. WORSE, YOU HAVE NOVAS WITH DEVIANT LIFESTYLES LIKE ANDY VANCE WHO FLOUT GOD'S AUTHORITY AND GO WALTZING OFF HAVING FUN LA-TI-DA AND STARTING UP EVIL GROUPS LIKE THIS QUEER NOVA ALLIANCE OR THE TERAGEN AND SETTING EXAMPLES FOR OUR KIDS THAT WE DON'T NEED SET.



**L.M:** I DON'T WANT MY KIDS OR MY GRANDKIDS GROWING UP ANYTHING LIKE ANDY VANCE OR THIS ASTAROTH CHARACTER, OR MOST ABERRANTS I'VE SEEN ON OPNET.

**A.C:** MR. MABON, HAVE YOU EVER MET AN ACTUAL NOVA?  
**L.M:** NO, MA'AM, AND I DON'T CARE TO, EITHER. YOU DON'T NEED TO MEET THE DEVIL TO KNOW HE REEKS OF SULFUR.



**A.C.:** YOU AND THE WILSONVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH HAVE RECEIVED A GREAT DEAL OF CRITICISM FROM JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE FOR PICKETING THE FUNERAL OF GRAHAM "HOUSTON TORNADO" HERRON LAST MONTH. SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THAT SORT OF BEHAVIOR REFLECTS BADLY ON SOUTHERN BAPTISTS IN GENERAL AND ON YOU IN PARTICULAR. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

**L.M.:** THE WORLD IS FULL OF SIN, AMANDA. THE WORLDLY ARE BUSY LOOKING AT THEMSELVES IN MIRRORS, LOOKING AT THEIR PROFITS, LOOKING AT SEXY PICTURES ON OPNET. THEY'RE NOT LOOKING TOWARD GOD. THEY THINK THAT IT'S BETTER TO GO ALONG WITH SIN THAN TO CALL IT WHAT IT IS. WELL I CAN'T DO THAT. MY CONSCIENCE TELLS ME TO POINT OUT SIN WHERE I SEE IT, AND I SEE IT ALL OVER THE NOVAS. LET ME TELL YOU, HERRON GOT WHAT HE WAS ASKING FOR. PRIDE LIFTED HIM UP, AND GOD SMOTE HIM DOWN.



**A.C.:** IT'S POPULARLY BELIEVED THAT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF MICHAEL ARCHANGEL MURDERED HERRON; DOES YOUR GROUP HAVE ANY CONNECTIONS WITH THEM?

**L.M.:** YOU KNOW, AMANDA, WE'RE LIVING IN AN ERA OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE, AND ALL GOOD CHRISTIANS MUST TAKE UP THE ARMOR OF VIRTUE AND SWORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND MEET THE FORCES OF SATAN IN BATTLE. I DO IT THROUGH MY GO-ROUNDS WITH THE MEDIA, THROUGH FUNDRAISING, AND THROUGH POLITICAL ACTION. THEY DO IT THROUGH THE WAYS IN WHICH THE LORD HAS INSTRUCTED THEM.



**A.C.:** I'M SURE YOU'VE READ THE GRISLY ACCOUNTS OF THE FINAL MOMENTS OF MR. HERRON'S LIFE: THE POINT-BLANK SHOTGUN BLASTS TO THE STOMACH, THE CROWBAR TO THE HEAD, THE MUTILATION OF THE CORPSE. WHAT THOUGHTS DO YOU HAVE PERSONALLY, IF ANY, ON THE CRIMINALS WHO TORTURED AND MURDERED MR. HERRON?

**L.M.:** OUR CHURCH DOESN'T ADVOCATE KILLING, NO MA'AM, BUT EVEN JESUS DROVE THE DEVILS OUT OF THE WORLD, AND IF THE MINIONS OF BEELZEBUB ARE WALKING THE EARTH ONCE MORE, THEN MAYBE THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST ON EARTH NEED TO FOLLOW IN THE LORD'S FOOTSTEPS.



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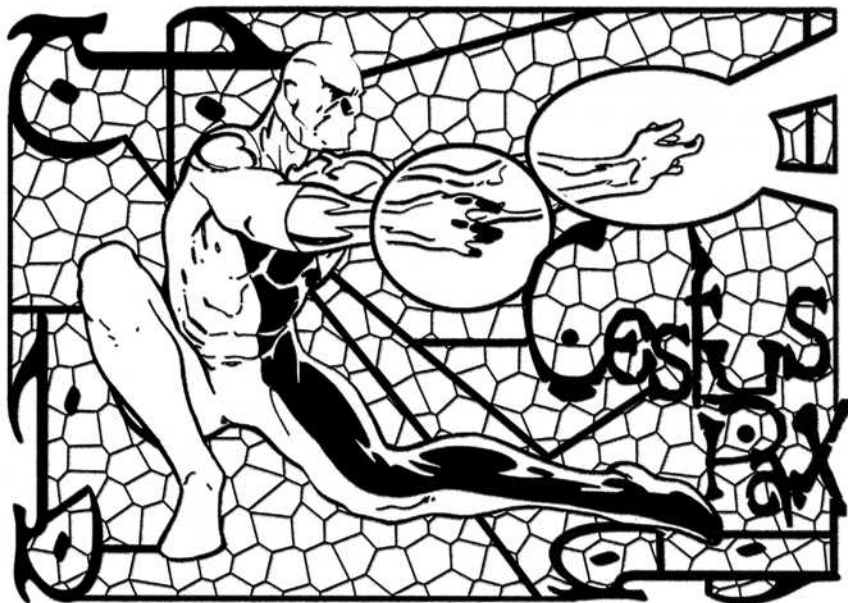
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sightFrom sermon given by the  
Rev. Melinda Knight

I have been receiving...questions of late. Many, many questions. "Who are these novas?" I'm asked. "What is their significance? How should we deal with them in our church?" I tell you this: The answer is in the words of Jesus Christ when he says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." And let there be no doubt, novas are your neighbors in the world. They may not live in your neighborhood, they may not live in your city, but they are our neighbors. And most of them are very good neighbors. By their works have great injustices been righted. By their deeds have ecological disasters been undone. By their deeds have great diseases been cleansed from our planet. God bless them for these things.



As your pastor I can tell you that we believe in the inherent dignity and worth of every person, nova or otherwise. As a church, we seek justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. We seek the acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations, and again, novas are no exception. So, our relationship to novas? We extend our love to them. We hope for their ethical and spiritual well-being. And, most importantly, we include them in our prayers.

Let our beacon, the lighted chalice, always guide us, and our nova sisters and brothers, with an affirming flame. Amen.

  
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CHURCH LETTER

**From:** Church President, Matthew C. Bormuth  
**To:** The Quorum of the Twelve

Brothers,

The missionary emphasis of the Church is perhaps one of its most recognized characteristics. By following the biblical tradition of sending missionaries two by two, we have increased the size of our world congregation from six courageous persons in 1830 to nearly twenty million in 2007. Our missionary program is the most successful the world has known, and I truly believe the Heavenly Father looks down and smiles on our efforts. After much prayer and personal searching on my part, the Lord has granted me a revelation concerning our missionary work and the directions we need to go from here.

Brothers, I believe it may be time to emphasize our missionary work with those great men and women called novas. The responsibilities they shoulder every day are enough to pummel any one of us into the very dust. These hard-working young men and women work their minds every day, they work their bodies every day, but I don't see that their souls are receiving much guidance. Without spiritual guidance these young people can wind up in moral swamps like Ibiza, Spain, where drugs and sin are the order of the day. It is that sort of behavior that leads to despair and bitterness, which in turn lead to hostility and anger, and from there to the terroristic perdition of the Teragen. These powerful young people must at least have the opportunity to hear the gospel if they are to avoid such fates.

To that end, I have asked the missionary training center in Provo to create a program for especially gifted missionaries. They will be instructed for three weeks in what I'll call here "nova-ology." For those three weeks, these Elders will learn the in-depth history of the nova phenomenon, not just what they get from N! or other sensationalistic OpNet programs, but the true, first-person accounts of what novas go through, from their "eruption" to working with Team Tomorrow or one of the other groups. After getting a feel for what novas have gone through, these missionaries will be sent to nova hotspots: New York, Bahrain, Mexico City, Addis Ababa, Venice, Talaud Island and other places where nova populations are concentrated, including Ibiza.

I look forward to hearing your carefully considered impressions. May the Lord bless each of you in your contemplations.

Sincerely,  
 Matthew C. Bormuth



## CHURCH LETTER

**From:** David Moulton, Assistant to Families  
**To:** Matthew C. Bormuth, President of the Church of Latter-Day Saints

President Bormuth,

As you know, the Heavenly Father has gifted the great family we have in the Church with no fewer than five novas: more than chance would predict. Elders Christoff Weaver, Mark Bennett, and Urumbu N!Godatu and Sisters Tyson Smiley and Maria Peralta-Perez are all Latter-Day Saints in good standing. What some might attribute to luck, I can confidently say is the Lord helping his one true Church on earth to flourish.

I have received some troubling news of a very personal but important nature, however, from our nova brothers and sisters. Elder Bennet and Sister Peralta-Perez both accepted invitations extended by Project Utopia to visit one of their Rashoud facilities to learn the use of their new abilities. The long and the short of the story is that they both came back infertile. Elder Benner, while only twenty-five, is already the father of three beautiful children, and Sister Peralta-Perez has one child of her own as well. These are clearly not people for whom infertility has been a problem. Both of these good people were hoping for large families and a great deal of sadness has been brought forth by this development. While I would like to say that this is just an awkward coincidence, certain recent reports in the news make me leery of doing so.

It is our recommendation that, before any more of our nova Brothers and Sisters accept invitations to study with Utopia or any other non-LDS organization, we give them options. Do we have the facilities or the trainers at BYU to handle the education of a nova?

I have sent tentative letters to Elders Weaver and N!Godatu and Sister Smiley recommending against visiting any Utopia facilities or accepting anything given them by Utopia's friendly staff.

If the situation is as it appears, it is possible that Utopia is not as benevolent as it would like to appear. I'll leave the ramifications of that for you to ponder.

Your Brother in Christ,  
David Moulton,  
Assistant to Families



Dear Antaeus,

Perhaps you will find this to be a very strange letter, but please bear with me. I serve as the high priestess of the Covenant of the Goddess, an umbrella group for pagan covens across North America, Europe, and Australia. Our co-religionists span the globe and come from all walks of life; they share a love and veneration for the forces of nature. I don't know what your spiritual bent is, but to many in our group, you epitomize the perfect melding of man and nature. There is no one as connected to the heartbeat and breath of the natural world. Our national convocation takes place on the summer solstice, June 21st. Would you consider addressing our convocation? It would be an enormous honor for us.

Please let me know.

Thank you and Blessed Be,  
Sheila ThunderLove



Ms. ThunderLove,

I thank you for your gracious invitation but, for any number of reasons, I do not believe I am the person you really want to speak to your convocation. Correct me if I am mistaken, but what I believe you are looking for is a nature spirit, a dryad, an incarnation of Pan, or perhaps a living, breathing embodiment of the Green Man. I am, alas, none of these things. I do not hail from the forest's deepest penetralia; I do not frolic with unicorns; and, most of all, I am not a god. I come from Manchester, a rather grim factory town in England not unlike your Detroit. I don't dislike animals, although neither do I frolic with them. And as for what I am: First and foremost, I am a research scientist. I am also a Taurus, a cricket player, an uncle, a member of the Labor Party; and it is also true that I was once an ecoterrorist at one wildly idealistic point in my life. And, yes, I am a nova, and one whose abilities involve harnessing the natural world to my will. This does not give me the wisdom you crave. This does not give me an overview of the Grand Scheme of Things. It simply means that I have a quantum-based ability to perceive and manipulate earth and plants and living things in the same way that a number of people now manipulate computer code as their livelihood. While I can certainly empathize with your motives, I would kindly thank you to refrain from pinning your romantic notions on me.

So as not to be entirely unhelpful, may I recommend that you contact the New Zealand nova dubbing herself Belladonna? She and I see each other around, and not only is she a little more spiritual, to understate the point, but the fact that she's a woman will mesh tidily with the ecofeminism that so frequently pervades neopagan thought. Utopia and DeVries both find her a little too frightening to use in their operations with any real frequency, which leaves her with far more time than I have for speaking engagements and the like.

I do hope that this letter doesn't seem too brusque, but I find the numbers of individuals who want me to be a god instead of a scientist are disturbingly high, and I'd like to see those numbers drop precipitously.

Best of luck in your spiritual quest,  
Dr. Spencer "Antaeus" Balmer





Dear Belladonna,

Perhaps you will find this to be a very strange letter, but please bear with me. I serve as the high priestess of the Covenant of the Goddess, an umbrella group for pagan covens from North America, Europe, and Australia. Our co-religionists span the globe and come from all walks of life; they share a love and veneration for the forces of nature. I don't know what your spiritual bent is, but to many in our group, you epitomize the perfect melding of woman and nature. There is no one as connected to the heartbeat and breath of the natural world. Our national convocation takes place in America on the summer solstice, June 21st. Would you consider addressing our convocation? It would be an enormous honor for us.

Please let me know.

Thank you and Blessed Be,  
Sheila ThunderLove



Dearest Sheila,

I would be honoured to come to America to speak to your convocation on the sacred occasion of the Solstice. It will give me a reason to leave New Zealand on the longest night of the year and come up to visit the longest day. Unless there's a theme you'd like me to stick to, I'll plan on giving one of my favorite presentations titled "The Darker Nature." It's part sermon and part performance piece, really, and I daresay it's quite engrossing. Previous audiences have responded to it with a powerful outpouring of emotion. In particular, I think you'll love the special effects; they convey quite an impact.

One caveat: Please see the attached rate sheet for my speaking fees. If they are within your means, please complete and return the subsequent forms including the liability waiver.

Many thanks and Blessed Be,  
Belladonna

## EXCERPT FROM RABBINICAL SPEECH

From his famous "Where Is Our Golem?" speech to the Israeli people by Rabbi Dov Youdovin of the Tel Aviv Rabbinical Council.

In the Prague Ghettos in 1596, Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the Maharal of Prague, brought his knowledge of the Kabbalah to bear on the problem of the terrible pogrom being carried out by Christian harassers. He combined his great learning and faith to create a golem to protect his people against the vicious slander and depredations of the Czechs, and the persecution abated. Now it is five hundred years later and Israel herself is without a hero — without a golem — to protect her while every other country is developing armies of these defenders.

So-called novas have appeared in every country in the world — India has hundreds, Germany, America, Poland, all have their novas working for them as their strong arms, to maintain peace and to contribute to the national well-being. But Israel? Israel has no golem. Project Utopia lists no known novas residing in Israel or even claiming her as their country of origin. Do we even know what we have lost?

The golem of Prague was brought about by a great work of faith. Perhaps it is our faith that is missing? Has Israel grown so far from her faith that she can no longer sustain miracles, even those that are becoming quotidian elsewhere in the world? We are a religion shattered. We are Sepphardic and Ashkenazi, Conservative, Orthodox and Reformed. When will we be one people? When will our faith be strong enough? Only then will Israel have her defender, her strong arm, her golem. People of Israel, I implore you: Listen to the language of coincidence, it is God's native tongue.

## EXCERPT FROM TIKKUN (ISRAELI NEWSPAPER)

**From letter to the Editor (one week after above speech) by Miriam ben Shea**

Rabbi Dov Youdovin asks us where our golem is. Where our savior is. Rabbi Youdovin, why not ask where our Messiah is? Isn't that what you're looking for? And you should know that answer. Jews don't believe in Messiahs, we believe in helping ourselves. We control our own lives. For centuries, through plagues and pogroms, we have done what we needed to do to get along, and for centuries it has been enough. And yet now we suddenly need novas to make our way in the world? Have Jews become so weak? We can always hope for divine intervention, but to expect it, or to kvetch when it is not forthcoming, is wrong.

You want a Jewish superhero? Let me tell you about a Jewish superhero. His name was Moses, and he led our people out of slavery, but never made it to the Land of Milk and Honey because his ability with miracles made him arrogant. We don't need any more of these superheroes. We don't need to rely on anyone but ourselves. Novas have

taken power away from the people in the countries where they are numerous. They have taken jobs from the normal men and women who needed them. They have monopolized the attentions of the thinkers, the artists, and the leaders. Should the day ever come when the novas decide to leave, to follow their own paths, where will those countries be then?

Jews have forever been a self-reliant people with great achievements and strong, sensible families. We have a history of men of great mystical power and women of great intellectual ability. They led our people, and they inspired our people, but they were never above the people or separate from the people, like novas are.

No, Rabbi Youdovin, we have no need for novas. Jews have always been self-reliant. If we make a mess, we clean it up ourselves, and novas would just weaken our resolve. YHVH has blessed us with freedom from these "superheroes" because Jews, among all others, do not need them.

Sincerely,  
Miriam ben Shea



Novas are beings of profound power. They possess SECRETS that few baselines can ever hope to share, but even these potent secrets can be derived from an understanding of the KABBALAH. Kabbalah means "tradition," and entails the entirety of Jewish mysticism, but by far the greatest single element is the ZOHAR, or "Book of Splendor." Through an understanding of the esoteric Kabalistic traditions can all things be understood. Including the secrets of the novas.

The Kabbalistic Sephiroth all correspond to particular ANGELS, and as angels are but manipulators of the power of YHVH (Shekhinah), they are very like NOVAS, who are manipulators of QUANTUM. These correspondences can be made manifest by noting directions and tendencies of famous novas.



The first Sephiroth is Kether (Crown), whose angel is Metatron, whose nova is Kubernetes, the far-seeing guide.



The second Sephiroth is Hokmah (Wisdom), whose angel is Raziel, whose nova is Sophia Rousseau, the fugitive queen.



The third Sephiroth is Binah (Understanding), whose angel is Tzaphkiel, whose nova is Amanda Wu, the knowing one.



The fourth Sephiroth is Hesed (Mercy), whose angel is Tzadkiel, whose nova is Harmony, the crippled.



The fifth Sephiroth is Geburah (Force), whose angel is Khamael, whose nova is Geryon, the violent one.



The Sixth Sephiroth is Tiphareth (Beauty), whose angel is Mikhael, whose nova is Alejandra, the singer.





The Seventh Sephiroth is Netzach (Victory), whose angel is Haniel, whose nova is Ironskin Andy Vance, the enduring one.



The Eighth Sephiroth is Hod (Splendor), whose angel is Raphael, whose nova is Caestus Pax, the righteous one.



The Ninth Sephiroth is Yesod (Foundation), whose angel is Gabriel, whose nova is Antaeus, the earthy one.



The Tenth Sephiroth is Malkuth (Kingdom), whose angel is Metatron, whose nova is Slider, who in death is all around us.

Not only can novas, like angels, be assigned to the holy Sephiroth, but the prime essences or ELEMENTS of the nova existence can all be found in the ten SEPHIROTH of the Kabbalah.

The Shekhinah, or God's presence in the world, is said to be the way human beings experience the Divine. When referring to novas, however, Shekhinah refers to the QUANTUM force that novas can manipulate. It is a bit of God's presence that they are capable of comprehending and bending in accordance with their will and YHVH's. It is in this way that it can be said that novas are ANGELIC beings.

Yesod is the mighty foundation, the tree of life, the sanctified PHALLUS of YHVH. In the life of a nova, it represents the ORGAN that grants them their mighty potency: the Mazarin-Rashoud node. It is the M-R node that is the

FOUNDATION of their power and their REDEMPTION from the human condition.

MAJESTY is the translation of the next Sephiroth: Hod. It is associated with the power of prophecy and represents the channel through which God's judgments come down to us. When referring to novas, it refers to the moment of their greatest majesty: their ERUPTION or coming out, when they don the mantle of the power of the Tetragrammaton.

Many of the Sephiroth have no correspondences to the lives of novas that we can see yet, though they will make themselves clear in the fullness of time. Most horrible will be the manifestation of Gevurah, the holy Sephiroth representing

God's wrath in the world. It will balance the power of the novas with a terrible price. It is the power wielded by the angels of PUNISHMENT (MALAKE HABBALAH), and punishment taken to excess generates the seeds of the DEMONIC. Perhaps we have some hint of what form this may take when we see Geryon or other MONSTROSITIES torment and kill those who stray from the true path.

But, greatest of all there promises made by the Sephiroth, is that great promise inherent in Kether, the SUPREME CROWN of God, which shall be His most glorious triumph: the eruption of all mankind into novahood. All humanity will ERUPT, and at that moment will we ALL stand by the Eternal Throne of unnamable GOD surrounded by the SERAPHIM and CHERUBIM. So let it be.



DIRECTIVE FILE

Director Harris:

The theory we've been working with is correct. Israel does have plenty of its own novas — my investigations suggest eight of them: five women, three men — it's just keeping them under wraps. Mossad has its Sayanim Register, sort of a local informant network, keeping a sharp eye out for new nova eruptions all through Israel. When a new nova is found, he or she is immediately taken to a facility outside Tel Aviv for training. Six of the eight appear to be at least Titan-class, emphasis on at least. Mossad is putting them through intense training, though to what end remains unclear. West Bank/Gaza Strip? Hope not. On the bright side, all this training keeps these novas too busy for the Teragen.

Mossad has done a truly excellent job thus far of keeping this tactical strike team under wraps. Utopia is sniffing around in kind of a *faux*-casual way, but as of this writing they're not willing to alienate Israel over mere speculation.

Interesting — some might say suspicious — side effect of these “missing novas” is that some religious leaders are claiming it's due to a lack of faith on the part of the Israeli citizenry. Certain elements of the more conservative Ashkenazic sect are effectively turning the *absence* of novas into an issue for Israelis to rally around. This is taking on some disturbing jingoistic overtones that may need more investigation. I have to wonder if either the government or the Rabbinical Council has orchestrated this whole thing. Speculation at this point, of course. I'll keep you apprised.

Trip

Simon,

Looks like we're safe for the moment. The gematrial value of Gevurah begins at 46,764, signified by the word *devoz ved*. Even the most overenthusiastic and imaginative nova-spotters, counting mitoids and other hopefuls, have suggested a maximum nova population of 8,146 worldwide, so either the incidence of eruptions will have to go up drastically, or we have a long time to figure this out. Novas don't seem to be breeding much, so maybe that will keep the number down. The judgment (Din) will reach its worst point with the number 46 (15 13 12) (however you want to interpret that number. I really don't think it refers to 46,151,312, but if it does, I'm not going to worry about this anymore), the number of the dark angel, which must be the Qlippoth (shell) of Gevurah indicating Golab (or Golachab) the “Flaming One.” I've put this through the computer a thousand times, and cross-referencing it with the online Zohar keeps getting me the name Dev (or Div or Dov) Sammael. Do what you will with that.

How you pulled me into this I don't know. Women aren't even supposed to study Kabbalah, and here you tell me I'm the only one who really understands it? I have nothing to say to that. Well, oy gevalt! might come close. At least I meet the age requirement.

Don't tell anyone we're doing this. The rubber room ward of Tel Aviv General is not where I want to spend the rest of my days, thank you very much.

Zeva B.



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## the news

...And in other news, sociologists from the University of Chicago have noticed an unexpected trend in mainstream Islam. According to Dr. Patricia Troy, a postdoctoral student at the Eugene Skinner Center for the Sociology of Religions, attitudes towards women and novas show a close correlation throughout the Islamic world. What's more interesting, for the last eight years Muslims throughout most of the Arab world have shown a marked trend toward liberalization in their attitudes toward these two groups.

**Troy:** Correlation, of course, doesn't really tell us much about cause, but a longitudinal study shows that novas and women are the prime beneficiaries of this liberalizing trend. Throughout Saudi Arabia and Egypt, two bastions of Sunni Islam, women have been benefiting from the relaxation of certain longstanding Islamic rulings. What we're really seeing here is a sharp split with the Shi'ite faction of Islam, which continues to view both novas and women with hostility.

Troy believes the incorporation of Sufi practices has helped to soften what has traditionally been a severe religion.

**Troy:** The emergence of novas seems to have sparked a mystical chord in Sunni Islam. While the word "angel" has popped up only a few times, the general undercurrent seems to point to the belief that novas are spiritually advanced entities, perhaps agents of Al'lah or the Prophet. Sales of Sufi works, like the poetry of Rumi, can't be kept on the shelves in major cities throughout the Middle East. It's a remarkable trend, but one the women appreciate.

Thank you Dr. Troy. And now we go to Peter and sports....

Investigators in Casablanca are uncovering evidence of what they are calling a heretical sect of Islam that venerates novas — their bodies, in any case — as physical manifestations of God. Called a "baraka cult" by the officers performing the investigation, the sect believes that God is working through novas, and that the bodies of novas contain divine essence that can be harvested after death. Investigators declined to comment on what, exactly, they meant by the term "harvested."

According to Professor Yusuf al-Qaradawi of the University of Rabat in the capital of Morocco: "This baraka cult is the product of superstitious thinking. These persons believe that the strength of a nova remains in the muscles, that the brilliance remains in the brain, even after death. By collecting these organs and distilling their essence, the cultists hope to take into themselves the spirit of Al'lah that was in that organ, and become likewise powerful. It is just a case of muddy reasoning, nothing more. It will pass."

Mainstream Sunni Muslims are reacting to the rumors of the baraka cult with outrage. Most find this veneration of the bodies of novas scandalous, calling it "idolatry" or "necromancy."

How far baraka cultists are willing to go to obtain this divine essence remains to be seen, but until investigators track down this cult, novas may want to keep a low profile in Morocco.

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SHIRAZ, Iran

The city of Shiraz was very nearly destroyed today in what was originally thought to be a terrorist attack. The real cause, however, was one angry nova. Faruq al-Hadim, a nova who erupted only last week in Shiraz, was being led to his execution for "acting as an ally of Shaitan among the Arab peoples" — the standard charge leveled by Shi'ite extremists against novas — when he apparently became resentful of the treatment he was receiving. Witnesses say that flames appeared from nowhere around al-Hadim and an enormous firestorm surged out from the angry nova in a half-kilometer radius. Thousands are presumed dead and property damage is estimated at several hundred million euros.

Team Tomorrow Central was on the scene within 30 minutes and was eventually able to contain the inferno and take the contrite al-Hadim into protective custody. According to Team Tomorrow spokesman Caestus Pax, "We are speaking with Faruq now. His actions of earlier today were the tragic outcome of a very complex web of events and prejudices. While we do not condone his behavior, it takes only a small amount of empathy to understand the emotional forces which caused him to lash out with such anger at the people who were going to execute him simply for being who he is. Team Tomorrow is in dialogue with the Iranian government even now with regard to what might be done about this situation and what kinds of reparations may need to be made."



Teragen spokesman Raoul Orzaiz was leaving for a weekend off the coast in Spain, but felt free to offer a one-word commentary on the Shiraz tragedy: "Bravo."

Shi'ite extremists are calling for the immediate death of al-Hadim. One survivor of the Shiraz firestorm released a letter over OpNet shortly after al-Hadim was taken into custody. "The devils of Team Tomorrow will clearly take the side of one who serves the same master. They will do everything in their ability to shield al-Hadim the destroyer from the consequences of his actions. He has killed thousands and yet they will insist that he is innocent. What will it take to get justice for the dead?" Team Tomorrow Central has not yet responded to these accusations, nor is it known if they intend to.

The Shiraz incident is the latest example of the difficulties between Shi'ite and nova. Eight months ago, Souhir Ben-Hamida, the nova popularly known as Seraph, was attacked in her home by a mob wielding pistols and rocket launchers. She escaped with minimal damage, but she no longer feels safe returning to her native Turkey and is living in the USA as a political exile.

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## From N! special "A World of Novas"

Bombay, India

Nowhere has the emergence of novas had the impact on religion that it has in India. With the world's densest population, India boasts an amazing 847 known novas within its national boundaries, a number that seems to resonate disturbingly well with the country's polytheistic Hindu population.

To say that a spiritual renaissance has swept India's Hindus would not be overstating the situation. According to Dr. Danit Bijali, director of Project Utopia's Rashoud Facility in Bombay, "The emergence of novas at this time ties in very neatly with Hindu cosmology. As souls proceed through *samsara*, or the cycle of death and rebirth, or reincarnation as it is called in the West, the soul becomes closer to perfection. The closer the soul is to perfection, the more enlightened it will be; the more enlightened it will be, the more power it will have. This is how Hindus think of novas — souls that have finally come so near to *moksha*, or the liberation from *samsara*, that they begin showing great power over the world."

Novas tie into Hindu spirituality in more ways than one, however. Other Hindus believe that novas are the avatars of various deities. While Hinduism recognizes several hundred spirits, demons, and gods, the big three Hindu deities are Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. These three are frequently represented as having avatars, or mortal incarnations which are their tools for interacting with the mortal world. Many Hindus think of novas as being avatars for the gods. To that end, many Hindus make offerings to novas as a form of *bhakti*, or love directed toward a deity. Many novas in the more rural regions of India are content to be treated as gods or holy men, accepting the offerings of local farmers in return for demonstrations of *maya*, or power. *Maya* is a concept taken directly from the Vedas, one of the sacred books of the Hindus. Meaning, alternately, magic and illusion, *maya* is the concept through which these novas have come to understand their nova abilities. In many cases, the subconscious desires that shape the manifestation of a particular nova's abilities appear to draw on India's vast wealth of Hindu sacred texts, most notably the Vedas and the Upanishads. Kanjan Baru of Sri Lanka, shown here, is every bit the avatar of Shiva Nataraja, that is, Shiva in his aspect as the Lord of the Dance. Baru has been claiming to be an avatar of Shiva now for nearly three years, and the villagers who worship him feel blessed by his choice to manifest to them. He uses his powers to help the local farmers, and in return they feed him, wait on him, and allow him mating access to the women of the village.



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As part of its modernization program, Project Utopia has been sending small teams of nova representatives into some of these rural areas to explain to both nova and farmer alike the actual nature of these "gods" powers. Surprisingly, even when the concept of novas is explained to the inhabitants of these rural areas, they remain steadfast in their behavior toward these new "gods," and some have even gone so far as to refer to Project Utopia's efforts in this sector as a form of neoimperialism. According to Nandakumara Singh, professor of ethnology at the University of Bombay, "These people in the country's interior, away from the cities, are not very sophisticated, you know. By following the *karma-marga*, a strict observation of the caste system, these individuals expect to attain happiness and dharmic fulfillment. When avatars of Shiva or Krishna appear, you know, it is quite clear that those persons are to be treated like Brahmins, or great priests or teachers. Treating them as peers would be impious, to say the least. And really, you know, does the West worship their novas any less?"

These controversial attempts to prevent novas from posing as avatars have been surprisingly unsuccessful thus far, and some have backfired spectacularly. In one notable and oddly unpublicized case that took place early on in Utopia's deculting crusade, Eric Huffman, a talented American nova and veteran of many Utopia-funded missions, was sent into the Indian hinterland alone to dissolve the cult that had formed around a recently erupted nova who called herself Kali-ma, The Blood Queen, a popular goddess of death. Huffman disappeared and was presumed dead, but stories have found their way down the Ganges that suggest that he may have found a new life as a god more interesting than life as a Project Utopia representative. Utopia declined to comment on the story, and its official stance on Huffman is that his current whereabouts are unknown.

For the moment, the powers that be in Project Utopia continue their crusade to interpose themselves between self-proclaimed nova gods and their devout worshippers, with lackluster results. Novas, it would appear, strike a chord in the minds of many millions of Hindus, and after reading about the exploits of the gods for so long, they're not willing to give up the real thing.

## BEGIN LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 30, 2006 FROM MIKE DAWSON

Dear Mom and Dad,

How are you? Things are fine here. Classes are interesting, but they expect us to work harder here. It's weird being away from home, and the food in the dorms kind of sucks, but I got really lucky when I got here and I met some really cool people. They think about stuff in a way that I've never done before, and it's pretty cool. They're friends of this girl who's a nova and they said that if I wanted to and if they thought I was up to it that they might let me meet her. Would that not be the total slash? I'm all about meeting a real nova. If she triggered my M-R node I bet my philosophy classes would make more sense!

Only a month and a half until TG vacation!

I love you and miss you,

Mike

## BULLETIN

## EXCERPT FROM "CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT BULLETIN" DATED 8/17/04

Cult Update: The last six years have seen a slow but pronounced increase in the number of cult-related incidents. Certain very charismatic novas have apparently realized that they can do a holy man routine and get followers (and the followers' money) at the drop of a hat. The worst offenders, according to an FBI report released last week, are Kelly "Calliope" Pierson and Bhagwan Sri Mahananda. Both appeal to different sectors of the public and play off of different pseudo-religious themes, but their use of classic cult operating procedure is unmistakable: Separate victim from values-reinforcing peers/friends; find something "special" about victim; keep victim busy learning cult's values; evoke feelings of "family" or "true understanding" with other cult members to replace friends/family members; etc. Refer to your handbook on cults (or your Psych 101 text) if this stuff doesn't sound familiar.

**Note:** The Church of Astaroth, while trying its damndest to look like a cult, isn't one in the technical sense, as it doesn't utilize the same recruitment techniques or mystical "hooks" to gain followers. At least not in a way that anyone over the age of 20 can take seriously. "Astaroth" is in it for the ego boost and the shock value, and his long-haired, drug-chugging "followers" are more likely to be stupid than actually dangerous. However, do not hesitate to stop them for possession. No pun intended.

## BEGIN LETTER DATED OCTOBER 17, 2006 FROM MIKE DAWSON

Dear Mom and Dad,

How are you? Things are fine here. I'm learning so much about life and pretty much everything that it's scary. The world gets bigger fast, doesn't it? I've been spending a lot of time with Natasha and Jason. They're the ones I told you about. The nova they know is Calliope, and she's one of the most amazing people I've ever met! She's so beautiful it hurts to look at her. I can't even tell you.... When she looks at you it's like she knows every last thing that's going on in your head or in your soul and she =understands= and she doesn't judge or anything. I'm going on a retreat with them next weekend, and I think it should be a =lot= of fun! I'm hoping I can learn more about Calliope and the way she thinks. I've only heard her speak a few words and I think I'm already seeing things in a whole new way. Wow.

I love you,

Mike



PERSONAL LETTER

BEGIN LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 5, 2006 FROM MIKE DAWSON

Dear Mom and Dad,

How are you? Things are good here. Very good. The retreat with the Calliopists was incredible. I really want to tell you all about it, but there's no way that you could possibly understand how it feels to share complete and utter trust with others in the way we do now. There are six of us, and with Calliope making seven, that completes the Sacred Circle. I'll tell you more about that in another letter. Natasha said that Calliope thinks I have great spiritual potential. I was so happy! I always kind of thought that I had something like that going for me, but it was amazing to hear Natasha say that Calliope senses it too. She is =so= beautiful and insightful!

I'm probably going to stay here for Thanksgiving break so I can go to the Grand Circle. That's when our Sacred Circle meets with all of Calliope's other Sacred Circles and Calliope helps bring us all closer to Perfect Understanding and the Immaculate Soul.

I hope you can come visit some time so you can meet Natasha and Jason. And maybe Calliope. I would really like if that could happen.

Love,

Mike

PERSONAL LETTER

BEGIN LETTER DATED DECEMBER 8, 2006 FROM MIKE DAWSON

Dear Mom and Dad,

I have stumbled upon a happiness that I could never have even guessed was possible. Who could have foreseen? The Grand Circle was the most beautiful experience of my life. Calliope said it was all about intimacy. I'd never known true intimacy before. At the Grand Circle I underwent some changes I'll have to tell you about someday. I am now part of Calliope and Calliope is part of me. You can't know how lucky I am. Calliope's soul is so strong in me now that I haven't had to sleep in days. I think I may have reached the next level

I'm staying with Calliope and my circle for Christmas. You don't need to send any presents or anything. I am more than complete as is.

Enjoy your holidays. Tell Sarah I love her.

Mike



WITNESS IS SO CALLED AND SWORN IN  
BEGIN HAWKE TESTIMONY EXCERPT

MIKE CALLED AROUND FOUR. HIS PARENTS HAD BEEN LAYING HEAVY PRESSURE ON HIM TO COME BACK TO FLORIDA FOR CHRISTMAS AND THERE HAD BEEN...UNPLEASANTNESS OVER THE PHONE. HIS SOUL WAS TROUBLED. HED WORKED HARD TO ATTAIN AN IMMACULATE SOUL, AND IT HURT HIM THAT HIS PARENTS, WITH THEIR LACK OF INSIGHT, COULD NOT SEE THAT WHAT HE WAS DOING WAS THE BEST THING HE COULD BE DOING: SEEKING TRUE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING AND FREEDOM INSTEAD OF HONORING THE HOLLOW AND COMMERCIALIZED RITUALS OF A DYING RELIGION.

MS. HAWKE, COULD YOU TELL US WHAT HAPPENED ON THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 21, 2006?



WELL, MIKE CALLED AND ASKED IF HE COULD COME OVER AND MELD WITH US--

GO ON.

DEFINE "US," MS. HAWKE.



ME AND JASON.

AND COULD YOU DEFINE "MELD" FOR THE COURT AS WELL, PLEASE?



THAT'S KIND OF A FREEBIE, ISN'T IT? IT MEANS TO SHARE PHYSICAL PLEASURE WITH.

JUST CLARIFYING FOR THE COURT, MS. HAWKE, PLEASE CONTINUE.

SO MIKE CAME OVER AND MELDED WITH US, AND IT WAS VERY GOOD. HE SEEMED LESS TROUBLED THEN AND SO WE SHARED FOOD. AND THEN CALLIOPE CALLED US INTO THE SANCTUARY.

CALLED OUT TO YOU?

NO, SHE SOULSPOKE SO CALLIOPE CALLED US INTO THE SANCTUARY AND WHEN WE GOT THERE SHE SAID, "MICHAEL HAS BEEN VERY WISE, AND HIS SOUL IS PREPARED. SINCE HE IS FREE OF THE NAGGING OF THE FLESH AT THIS TIME, I BELIEVE HE IS READY TO BECOME." SO JASON AND I WASHED MIKE'S VESSEL - HIS BODY, I MEAN - AND THEN HE STEPPED UP ONTO THE DAIS WHERE CALLIOPE WAS WAITING FOR HIM.



AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED, MS. HAWKE?

AND THEN CALLIOPE TOUCHED MIKE AND MIKE'S BODY FLOWED INTO HER BODY AND INTO ANOTHER PLACE AND MIKE WAS NO LONGER OF THIS PLACE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO MICHAEL DAWSON, MS. HAWKE?

HE BECAME.





BEGIN PIERSON TESTIMONY EXCERPT



HE APPROACHED ME ON THE Dais, I TOOK HIS HAND, AND IN ONE BRIGHT MOMENT OF PERFECT LOVE REGAINED, HIS SOUL WAS RENDERED IMMACULATE AND GARY MICHAEL DAWSON BECAME

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, BECAME? BECAME WHAT, MS. PIERSON?



HIS FLESH TOUCHED MY FLESH AND BY MY FLESH WAS HIS SOUL MADE IMMACULATE.

DID YOU EAT HIM?



I BEG YOUR PARDON?



DID YOU CONSUME THE FLESH OF MIKE DAWSON, MS. PIERSON? DID YOU INCORPORATE THE TISSUE OF HIS BODY INTO YOURS FOR YOUR SUSTENANCE? DID YOU EAT HIM?

NO. HE ATTAINED THE STATE OF THE IMMACULATE SOUL, AND WITHOUT THE BURDEN OF SIN, HIS IMMACULATE SOUL WAS FREE TO ACHIEVE HIGHER AWARENESS. HE BECAME.



I HAVE NO FURTHER QUESTIONS, YOUR HONOR.

END PIERSON TESTIMONY EXCERPT

## JUDGE'S RULING

**From the trial of Kelly "Calliope" Pierson**

America prides itself on its constitutional right to worship as it sees fit. Persons following minority or unpopular religions are in no way barred from the pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, nor are novae. Michael Dawson was no longer a minor and is considered an adult by this court, capable of making his own decisions. He knew the consequences of his actions, and he devoutly wished for them to come to pass. He and Ms. Pierson both entered freely and of their own will into a sacred religious ceremony which appears to have served its function better than our jaded and anti-religious society was ready to accept, and for that reason was this woman put through the unpleasantness of a trial. The ruling of the jury is unanimous. Ms. Kelly "Calliope" Pierson is found not guilty of murder in the first degree. I can only thank God that we live in an enlightened society where novae do not have to fear witch hunts and pointless persecution for the practice of their faith.

**From:** Phillip Feingold, FBI Bureau Chief, Portland

**To:** Susan Gorey, Assistant Liaison, Team Tomorrow Americas

Dear Susan,

You may not know me from Adam, but we met about a year back when we were both training in the Bureau's Profiling program down in Quantico. I don't know that you're the person to talk with about this, but we have an issue up that really needs addressing and I think it's going to take some nova power, and maybe some rules-bending, to do it right. I'm not working through my chain of command because, legally, I don't really have a leg to stand on here. This is just me being one guy here.

Now, I'm not asking for T2M to get involved — in fact I think that would be a little too high-profile — but I'm hoping you might be able to recommend a small, highly cohesive unit of from three to five novae to infiltrate and possibly bust a religious nutcase up here. Her name is Calliope. In the four years I've been watching her and her cult, she's been connected to over 14 disappearances. She admits that something happened to these guys (it's always young guys), and she claims that they're ascending to Heaven or somesuch, but I think it's a scam of the creepiest sort. Basically, I think she's eating people, and I've even steered prosecutors in that direction, but she's just so damned charismatic and earnest that you can't find a jury that'll convict her. She's been let off every single time by a sympathetic judge and jury every single time; unanimously, I might add.

Let me know if you can help me out. Also don't hesitate to let me know if you think I'm nuttier than a fruitcake.

Best Regards,

Phil



## PERMANENT VACATION

WARNING! Utopia Computer Systems Breached.  
Live Data Stream Entering Network.  
Processing Data. . . . .  
Identifying. . . Project: Permanent Vacation.  
Beginning Transmission to all pertinent staff.

## BEGIN COMMUNIQUE

### BEGIN UTOPIA COMMUNIQUE

Fellow Personnel:

Recent weeks have seen our organization reeling beneath the strain of a barrage of negative publicity. An expanding ring of anti-Utopia dissidents, perhaps working in conjunction with the Teragen or other groups as yet undetermined, has been making unfounded allegations of unethical and improper conduct against the Project, which we must now take steps to counteract.

One of these dissidents is a nova named Charlotte Holden (a.k.a. Ghostdancer). Holden is currently thought to be residing in Ibiza Town on the island of Ibiza, off the coast of Spain. You are authorized to proceed to that location, arrest her with minimal visibility, and bring her to the nearest Rashoud facility for questioning. If possible, find out whom she has been in communication with and ascertain the extent of the public-relations damage in Ibiza.

Holden is thought to be in league with André Corbin and possibly Count Raoul Orzaiz. Although she is not thought to be dangerous, she is unbalanced and highly paranoid. Proceed with caution.

## BEGIN COMMUNIQUE

### BEGIN PROTEUS COMMUNIQUE

Good work on the Larson job. Very subtle. Your discretion is appreciated.

We've found another one. Charlotte Holden (a.k.a. Ghostdancer) is thought to be on the island of Ibiza, frequenting the Amp Room. Possible Teragen sympathies.

Standard visibility protocols. ASAP.

We've recently learned that there is another first-degree contact of Jennifer's running around, probably being targeted by the same people who killed Landers. Her name is Charlotte Holden, used to go by the code name Ghostdancer when she was doing work with Utopia. We've traced her to Ibiza, specifically the Amp Room (of all places). She may have been in the Amp Room while we were having our meeting on the first and we wouldn't even have known — a thought that frustrates me to no end. We think she is a friend of Andy Vance's, possibly staying with him and his lover, Jake Korelli. That's just a hunch, mind you, but it's better than nothing.

Holden is a very sharp — and very odd — woman. We think it's highly likely that she's been marked for disappearance. Find her before they do. We'd really like to know if Jennifer told her anything that we don't already know. I suspect that might be the case, actually. Bring her into the fold if you can. At the very least, make sure that she realizes that she has someone she can turn to. From what André has told me of her approach to life, I suspect it will be pointless, but be sure to let her know that she's not alone in this.

Your help in these matters is invaluable.

Thank you so much,

S. R.



## Sodom, Gomorrah, and Now This: Ibiza Decadence, Nova Style

Never a place for the demure or retiring, Ibiza has truly taken decadence to new levels (not to say lows, necessarily, but if the shoe fits...) since Travius Diaz opened the Amp Room, the notorious novas-only dance club. Although this sweaty den of writhing flesh and sybaritic excess has been open only 10 months at the time of this writing, it has been the scene of violence, semi-public nova trysts of all description, and, yes, the debut of at least one nova

drag queen! Novas of all genders, affiliations, persuasions, affectations and skin colors (and I do mean *all*) come here to throw off

their tired old political differences (not to mention most of their clothes), to dance, to drink (and drink and drink and drink...) and to satisfy those insatiable nova urges we've all heard (and fantasized) so much about.

Rumor has it that even the DJ and light tech at the Amp Room are novas, but most think that's nothing but a big load of juicy gossip. On the other hand, if it's true, that's one beat we really want to groove to.

The Amp Room is the closest thing to an Autonomous Zone on Earth. Ibiza's baseline police know that there's not a blessed thing they

can do to a rowdy nova, so they steer clear. It's up to owner Diaz and her hand-picked security staff to keep the crowd nonviolent. Diaz claims never to have had a problem with violence at her club, though the grapevine disagrees with her on that account. One has to wonder why she has three of the best-known elites in the world on retainer if she's never had a problem... But that's an exposé for another time.

Diaz herself is the very soul of graciousness. After months of phone tag — made more complex by the eight hours lost between Ibiza and New York — and further hours of wheedling, begging and bribery, the delightful mistress of the Amp Room agreed to grant me entry to that holiest of holies, most sacred of shrines, the interior of the Amp Room. I was in Ibiza Town within 48 hours.

It sits humbly enough at the base of a hill beneath a grand old walled fortress called Dalt Vila. It's small. Not that I'm a size queen, mind you, but it's difficult not to compare it to Ibiza's monster-sized clubs: Ku 2, El Divino, and, of course, the grandest of the grand, Privilege, which boasts room for thousands on its dance floor. No, the Amp Room isn't on the same scale as those establishments. It doesn't need to be. It's never held more than 400 people, according to Diaz, and that was at the grand, no-holds-barred, bubble-deluged celebration that kicked off the beginning of this party season.

It is not the Alhambra Palace, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the city of Paris all rolled into one. That said, it is the most beautiful nightclub I've ever seen. Stained-glass skylights of Moorish design are only the beginning. The lighting is ingenious, illuminating what needs to be

lit, while leaving enough dark corners for the discreet commission of sinful acts, even with a full house. The dance floor is solid enough to allow even Geryon himself to get jiggy. In all, the place is a marvel of both aesthetics and function. Demure baseline Diaz simply smiles and nods when complimented. We suspect that if we'd seen the things that go on in the Amp Room on those hot summer nights, we'd be smiling too.

### From *Details*, May 2008







· **CONSUELO MONTOYA:** WE'RE HERE IN IBIZA TOWN, WHERE THE SHADOWY NOVA KNOWN AS CHARLOTTE "GHOSTDANCER" HOLDEN WAS MURDERED ON THIS SPOT MERE HOURS AGO. WITH HER AT THE TIME OF HER MURDER WAS "IRONSKIN" ANDY VANCE. ANDY, WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE INCIDENT?



· **"IRONSKIN" ANDY VANCE:** WELL, CONSUELO, I'M, UH, I GUESS I'M STILL A LITTLE CHOKED UP BY IT, BUT CHARLOTTE AND I WERE JUST — WE WERE JUST GETTING READY TO GO TO LUNCH TOGETHER AND WE GOT IN HER CAR AND THE MOMENT SHE TURNED THE KEY IN THE IGNITION, THE CAR JUST BLEW UP IN A HUGE EXPLOSION.



· **MONTOYA:** WITH THE TWO OF YOU INSIDE.  
· **VANCE:** YES.



· **MONTOYA:** AND THE BOMB SHREDDED THE CAR, TURNING IT INTO A VICIOUS STORM OF SHRAPNEL AND SHATTERING WINDOWS AS FAR AS 12 BLOCKS AWAY, IS THAT RIGHT ANDY?  
· **VANCE:** YEAH, PRETTY MUCH.



· **MONTOYA:** AND YET YOU SEEM FINE.  
· **VANCE:** THAT'S HOW I GOT MY NICKNAME, CONSUELO.  
· **MONTOYA:** I KNOW THIS MUST BE HARD FOR YOU, BUT OUR VIEWERS MUST KNOW: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WOMAN WHO WAS SITTING NEXT TO YOU, YOUR CLOSE FRIEND, CHARLOTTE HOLDEN?  
· **VANCE:** (CHOKED UP) SHE WAS... UH... I GUESS SHE WAS VAPORIZED, CONSUELO. IT WAS TERRIBLE. I DON'T KNOW WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS TO HER. SHE NEVER DID ANYTHING TO HURT ANYONE... I MEAN, FIRST IT'S SLIDER AND NOW THIS. (SOBS)



· **MONTOYA:** THIS IS CONSUELO MONTOYA, AT THE SCENE OF THE TRAGIC DEATH OF THE NOVA CHARLOTTE HOLDEN, REPORTING FROM IBIZA. BACK TO YOU, DIEGO.

## From the brunch menu of *El Divino*

### *Hors d'oeuvres*

Melon and cured ham salad  
Sashimi Divino  
Beef Carpaccio  
Shellfish in salsa verde  
Two-salmon crepe (fresh and smoked) with a spinach sauce

### *Meat*

Rossini fillet  
Ibiza-style roast lamb  
Fillet steak of ostrich with sweet and sour mustard sauce

### *Fish*

Grilled monkfish with salsa verde  
Oven-baked mahi-mahi  
Seared tuna steak served with capers and finocchio pericoloso

### *Dessert*

Warm chocolate cake with orange ice-cream and mint sauce  
Tiramisu  
Biscuit glacé of figs  
Truffle tart

Dearest Jurigan,

If you've seen any of the 27 interviews I've given for OpNet in the past six months, you'll know that the Amp Room is taking off just as I had hoped it would. Perhaps even better. It gets enormous amounts of free publicity, saving me a fortune, and sits squarely in the mind's eye of the baseline public as the seat of all that is glamorous and sexy. Would that it were so.

While many of them are congenial and wonderful conversationalists, some of the more barbaric among these yahoos are under the impression that they gained social skills when they erupted. How does one tell a 300-pound, muscle-bound, quantum-manipulating party animal that he's being inappropriate or needs a shower? No one has written an etiquette manual for novas yet, but when they do I'll buy the entire first printing so I can give them out at the door.

Many are dears, of course, especially the Canadians and Thai; the Americans remain spectacularly boorish. *Quelle surprise*. Andy, of course, continues to be a delight, despite his nation of origin. Perhaps we got him out of the country before it became permanent. One hopes.

Speaking of getting out in time, I'm entertaining a notion to sell the Amp Room. Pick your jaw up off the floor, dear Jurigan, and read on. I don't know that I'm as open-minded as I thought I was when I hatched this golden egg. I have grown to understand too well the use of that vile word "aberrant." The Amp Room, more than any other place I've seen, seems to appeal to the truly freakish among them: the ones with the alien *je ne sais quoi*, the oddly radiant eyes, the disturbing behavioral problems, the tentacles (no, that is not in jest), other things.... Perhaps this is just standard old-fashioned bigotry; perhaps it's my nova envy creeping to the fore, but I have tried to ignore it, hoping I was just misperceiving or jumping to conclusions. Alas, it only gets worse. At this point the only thing keeping me here is the truly astronomical amounts of money that it's bringing in. I tell myself, "Trav, you built it, you earned it," but I think I've convinced myself to sell to the first rich elite or T2M starlet who flashes a few million in front of me (in that way that the *nouveau riche* like to do).

Not what you expected to read, is it? Good. I like being unpredictable. No telling.

A blizzard of tiny kisses,  
Trav

# For Storytellers' Eyes Only

If you intend to play this adventure and don't want to cheat, stop reading now. This section contains the plot and all the surprises that you'll want to uncover over the course of the game. Familiarize yourself instead with the setting section that players are supposed to know.

## What Is This?

"Permanent Vacation" is the first published story for **Aberrant**. It allows you easy access to the setting as a whole and serves as an introduction for you and your players into the world of **Aberrant**, including its factions, movers and shakers, hotspots and secrets. It comprises three chapters: "La Vida Nocturna," set in Ibiza off the coast of Spain; "Quantum Communion," set in Marrakesh in central Morocco; and "La Grande Vie," set in Monte Carlo in the French Riviera. The story is set in mid- to late July, 2008, in the midst of the buzz surrounding the "Slider scandal."

There is a larger story at work than what is seen here. "Permanent Vacation" gives only the slightest peek into the politics, intrigues, and plots that inundate the lives of novas, but it is intended only to reveal some of the forces at work in a relatively small arena that players can explore without feeling lost.

The three episodes in this book can work together as a standalone story or as a jumping-off point into the world of **Aberrant**. Ibiza in general and the Amp Room in particular are neutral territory among the nova factions and make a good base of operations regardless of your affiliation.

Players should familiarize themselves with the full-color setting before the game. It contains background and information that will help players become acclimated to their new environment and help characters stay on track as they get pulled into the adventure. The rules section gives the skinny on who did what to whom where as well as other information that may be helpful in other **Aberrant** stories that you script yourself.

## The Plot

The brief plot synopsis that follows touches on the major events of "La Vida Nocturna." Subsequent sections detail these events in greater depth. Again, if you're not the Storyteller and you don't want to cheat and ruin the adventure for yourself (and possibly others), stop reading now.

## Overview

Jennifer "Slider" Landers, possibly the world's best-loved nova, is dead. Before her murder just over a month ago, however, she revealed information to a host of other novas concerning alleged misconduct from no lesser an organization than Utopia itself.

One such nova was Charlotte Holden, a friend of

Landers' from her early days with Utopia. Holden had long since proved too eccentric and difficult for either Team Tomorrow or any of Utopia's more interesting projects; instead, she worked occasional freelance jobs with the DeVries Agency to keep herself fed and tanked on Amp Wells. Within days of Landers' death, an attempt was made on Holden's life as well. Holden very effectively held off her attacker and escaped, but now her paranoia has been triggered and she is living under a series of identities that she borrows. Holden doesn't particularly want to be a player in the conflict between the Aberrants and Utopia, and she would gladly turn over the documents and microchips given to her by Slider in exchange for being left alone. Her sympathies lie with the Aberrants, but Holden is nothing if not pragmatic, particularly where her life and freedom are concerned. Later, she will be willing to make deals with whomever can offer her safety.

Holden is in Ibiza only briefly during the course of the story. She leaves for Marrakesh the day after player characters arrive on the island, ostensibly just to keep a lower profile and avoid her would-be killer. Holden's friend, Amp Room security head Andy Vance, knows that she's in Marrakesh, and hopes things will clear up so that she can move back. Teragen spokesman Raoul Orzaiz knows her whereabouts too, because Holden's investigating some disturbing rumors for him while she's in Morocco; it was he who arranged (and is paying for) her room at Hotel La Mamounia. In Marrakesh, Holden alternately investigates the "baraka cult" and lingers in the enormous hotel garden by the pool, taking in the jasmine-scented air and trying to forget that someone, presumably someone within Utopia, wants her dead.

Technically it's someone in Proteus who wants her dead, and the assassin Chiraben is in Ibiza to take care of their network. He needs to do a neat job of it to clear away the black marks he's put on his reputation after his overly playful killings of late.

His work is being made harder by Andy Vance and Raoul Orzaiz, both friends of Holden's. As a useful side effect of the Artistic Genius Enhancement, Andy knows Chiraben regardless of whose appearance he's wearing by the way he wears his clothes, and he refuses him access to the Amp Room (or kicks him out) when he spots him. Vance doesn't know for sure that Chiraben actually tried to kill Holden — Vance loves Holden like a sister, but he knows that her paranoia can sometimes get the better of her — but he has a strong suspicion and hates the man anyway on general principle. The day before the characters arrive, Chiraben tried to intimidate Vance into revealing Holden's whereabouts. Unfortunately for the assassin, however, there's not much that Chiraben can actually do to the near-invulnerable Andy, so it had little effect besides making another powerful enemy. Vance considered the period when Holden was living with him and Jake to be a sort of familial Golden Age, and he resents Chiraben for bringing that to an end. If given a chance, Andy will interfere with Chiraben's plans in any way he can; although he eschews violence, he will use it against Chiraben

as a last resort. Simply interposing himself between Chiraben and potential victims is a more likely tactic. Vance appreciates the way Orzaiz helped Holden slip away to Marrakesh, and while Andy doesn't understand the appeal of the Teragen's philosophy, he does like Orzaiz, and feels a certain solidarity with him against Chiraben.

Chiraben, on the other hand, despises the both of them, Vance in particular. Chiraben remains in Ibiza for the duration of the characters' time there, desperate to uncover a fresh lead. After snooping around the scattered remains of Holden's car, he isn't convinced that she's dead, but he can't figure out how to find her, especially not with Orzaiz supplying him with distractions and false leads. While he's unofficially barred from the Amp Room, Chiraben frequently masquerades as Holden in the neighboring clubs to see what kind of response that draws, hoping for a "Hey, I thought you were in..." from someone who knows Holden. Alternatively, if posing as Holden puts him in a position to neutralize more Aberrants or Aberrant sympathizers, well then, so be it...

Orzaiz has a vague understanding of Chiraben's work, gathered through his vast network of contacts and Teragen associates. He despises Chiraben, whom he thinks of as the very basest type of nova: the stupid dupe willing to kill his own kind for baselines' money. Orzaiz uses various channels to feed Chiraben false leads from time to time, just to watch him run around in circles.

Chiraben isn't entirely stupid; he realizes that Orzaiz knows more than he's willing to share, and on the characters' third day in Ibiza, he risks his life by using his shapeshifting ability to masquerade as Orzaiz and enter the baseline nightclub Privilege. Here he finally obtains Holden's whereabouts from one of the count's friends and retinue, Sahara Santiago, whom he then kills and leaves in a bathroom stall to spite the count.

In his fury, the count is willing to make deals with the players just to thwart Chiraben. By the third day he will likely have a vague idea of their affiliation, and figures them for possible pawns. Before the police arrive to accuse Orzaiz of the murder of Santiago, Orzaiz beckons the characters to his table, and offers to tell them anything they haven't figured out yet.

Alternatively, if the characters don't warm up to Orzaiz (or vice versa), Vance may be motivated by Santiago's death to tell the characters about faking Holden's death and her escape to Marrakesh, but that's likely only if they're Aberrant sympathizers. Depending on how things are going, the Storyteller may opt to have Andy tell even known Utopia agents if he thinks Chiraben is likely to succeed against Holden. He will not tell "suspicious" characters anything. Regardless of his feelings for the characters, Vance doesn't know what Holden will look like or which identity she's using in Marrakesh.

## Theme

Paranoia is the theme of "La Vida Nocturna." The characters have no idea whom to trust. Certain novas are capable of looking like anyone they choose; others can inspire feelings of love or loyalty with just a couple

of Mega-Manipulative words. And in a setting like the Amp Room, anything goes.

The mood of "La Vida Nocturna," on the other hand, is decadence. Like a drunken orgy still going on the morning after, or too-ripe fruit that's ready to dehisce, Ibiza is a town stuck permanently in the gray zone between wild excess and regret. Those who visit for a few days see nothing but the fun and party opportunities, but anyone staying longer will start to notice that the long-term residents of Ibiza are just tired, like hosts whose guests won't leave. They cope with the worst excesses of partying novas six months out of the year and they're beyond the hero-worship that the media promulgate. To them, novas are just more drinks to serve, more tricks to turn, and more euros in their pockets.

The Amp Room is the ultimate anything-goes atmosphere. The entire club, especially the dance floor, is an inhibition-free zone. Men dance with women, men dance with men, women dance with women. The most worn by typical Amp Room revelers is a pair of shorts, and many wear nothing but liquid latex, strings of beads, bright swaths of body paint, or the new screw-on protrusions and LEDs that are the latest rage. Every night of the week boasts its own suggestive gimmick or party theme: Taboo, Lights-Out, Bubble Bath, Exotica...each striving to be more titillating and transgressive than the last. The music of the Amp Room is simultaneously hi-tech and primordial, arranging synthesized sound textures in ageless, tribal rhythms that put the hips on autopilot. Part dance club, part carnival, part orgy, novas can get away with just about any consensual behavior here. Although most stick to dancing, Travius Diaz made sure that the Amp Room was furnished with ample dark corners for those activities inappropriate to the dance floor, or for the convenience of those who prefer to watch.

Ibiza Town at night is a pilgrimage from club to club. Novas inevitably wind up at the Amp Room, which doesn't close until 11 in the morning, when the nova party animals leave to eat a huge brunch and sleep (if they feel the need) until sundown, when the party starts all over again.

Ibiza Town by day is quiet, verging on regretful. The locals wash vomit from the sidewalks, change the linens on the hotel beds and restock the booze. The single most popular daytime fashion accessory among nova and baseline alike is dark sunglasses to protect dilated pupils and hide tired eyes.

Many locals resent the novas' presence; the cost of living has nearly trebled over the last eight months because of an effect economists have begun calling "nov-flation," i.e., inflation caused by all the wealthy novas who suddenly feel the urge to buy everything in sight. This is particularly true here in Ibiza, where big-spending novas drive the price of well drinks up by 400 percent. Many of the locals are selling and moving to other towns on the island, like San Antoni, which don't cater so much to a nova clientele. The effect of this is that novas now represent nearly a tenth of the population of Ibiza Town during the summer party season.



## Introducing the Characters

Characters can be brought into “La Vida Nocturna” any number of ways. It helps if the group has a certain amount of cohesion, so ideally the characters will be working for one of three factions: Aberrants, Project Utopia, or Project Proteus.

Idealistic players who tend to identify with the underdog in any given situation will probably want to be associated with the Aberrants. This is the easiest of the affiliations to play because Holden isn't quite as evasive toward them. For this action-thriller approach to the adventure, characters will need physical abilities that will allow them to survive potential conflicts with Chiraben or other Proteus ops. The characters may or may not know Charlotte Holden personally, but being asked by Sophia Rousseau to find her and get the information Slider gave her should keep them together. The objective holding the Aberrants together is learning more about Project Utopia's alleged anti-nova agenda.

The drawback to this affiliation is that it's the weakest of the three. At the beginning of the chronicle there are around 40 novas affiliated with the Aberrant faction — although, alternatively, you could decide that more and more novas are slipping over to the Aberrant cause as rumor of Utopia's anti-nova agenda spreads.

Characters affiliated with the Aberrants will know (or think they know) first- or secondhand what Utopia's game entails. They may know enough to fear Project Proteus, but they won't know why. They will know nothing about Chiraben. Their primary motive will be to find Charlotte Holden, then to investigate her death, possibly tracking down her nonexistent killer, and then to get the information she holds and help her when and if they find out that she's still alive. “Help” could be anything from taking her to an Aberrant safehouse to holding off Chiraben while she makes good her escape from Marrakesh.

Players who want a more investigative, fact-finding chronicle may want to play agents of Project Utopia. This option will work especially well for characters with high Social Traits. The goal of a Utopia chronicle would be to find Charlotte Holden, investigate her affiliations, and take her into custody, which is a greater task than they'll realize at the beginning. Slider chose to tell what she knew to Holden, a distant friend, because she knew precisely how difficult a target the paranoid woman would be. Utopia operatives have freedom to use the name recognition that comes with being Utopia agents, but while acting on behalf of such a high-profile entity, their actions (especially in these tense times) must be above reproach; therefore, lethal force is prohibited. Their affiliation is also likely to work against them in a setting like the Amp Room, where politics (like most of the clothes) are supposed to be checked at the door.

Such a chronicle might well end with the characters finding out more about their employer than they wanted to know, in which case they may do with this information what they will.

If the players want a darker, more militaristic, hunt-and-destroy chronicle, Project Proteus will give them their money's worth. As with Utopia, Proteus agents are ideally to bring Holden into custody, but have a larger degree of latitude in how they accomplish this endeavor. Unlike Utopia operatives, agents working for Proteus cannot use name recognition to open doors. No one has heard of Project Proteus. No one *should* hear of Project Proteus. If a Proteus op goes around telling people he's a Proteus op, his life expectancy drops precipitously. On the other hand, Proteus operatives are allowed to use extreme measures, including deadly force, to achieve their objective — in this case, silencing Holden. The Proteus option is the hardest to make work because there are places where Holden and the players have to interact nonviolently, and if the player characters want to shoot first and ask questions later, they're going to have a lot of unanswered questions.

It's not impossible to bring unaffiliated or even Teragen characters into the plot. If the players, for whatever reason, don't want to be associated with any of the three factions listed above, and if they come up with an alternative arrangement that gives the characters a credible reason to work together, then go with it. If the players want their characters to be a group of insightful vigilantes who want nothing more than to track down Chiraben and make him pay — literally or figuratively — that might work. If they want to be friends of Ironskin Andy's who accidentally get pulled into the intrigues caused by Andy's friendship with Holden, that works. If they want to be elites working for the DeVries Agency to discredit Utopia (which they might want to do for any number of reasons), that works. If they want to be Teragen allies or rivals of Raoul Orzaiz, acting on the count's behalf or simply to thwart him, that works. What does not work well is a gang of four or five random novas on vacation at the Amp Room who just happen to be hanging out together and just happen to stick together long enough to start putting pieces together and just happen to decide to go to Marrakesh together later to see what else is up. That's neither compelling nor particularly creative. If your characters really don't want to be associated with one of the three main factions in this situation, make them work to come up with something that's as least as good if not better.

## Behind the Scenes

Ibiza: Where Teragen terrorist, Team Tomorrow champion, and elite mercenary can dance, drink and carouse without politics spoiling anyone's fun.

What makes Ibiza, and the Amp Room in particular, so popular is the absence of roles. Novas are novas here, first and foremost, and they are here to fraternize with other novas. They are not agents of this operation, that corporation or that nation. They come to the Amp Room to dance, to drink, to get laid, and to unleash themselves a bit without worrying about stepping on the toes of the fragile baselines.

The Teragen loves the Amp Room. To their way of thinking, The Amp Room is Teragen 101, where novas may come to realize that they have a better time without

baselines pestering them. Teragen sympathizers will often casually drop lines like, "It just feels better to be with novas, doesn't it?" or "Baselines just don't understand what we need," as a way of reinforcing a subtle anti-baseline sentiment. Many nights, Raoul Orzaiz himself sits at a private table at the back of the Amp Room, entertaining contacts, guests, and potential Teragen sympathizers. His amplified charm can be hard to escape once caught, and stalwart Utopia supporters have walked away from his table having given him money, information, or other resources.

It's a good time in general for the Teragen. Recent unflattering reports of ethically challenged intrigues and Machiavellian hijinks have dealt a severe blow to Utopia's grip on public opinion and UN sympathies. Now, more than any other time, the Teragen is willing to allow that the enemy of its enemy might be its pawn. To this end, Raoul or members of his retinue will cheerfully help Aberrant or independent characters, if their situation is made clear to him. They need but to promise to return the favor at some unspecified time in the future....

## The Death of Charlotte Holden

Project Utopia took Charlotte Holden in shortly after her eruption, and they were grooming her for a spot in Team Tomorrow until her danger-junkie personality got her permanently

disinvited from all Utopia departments. She lived in Ibiza after that, partying and developing a chronic thirst for Amp Wells, the only intoxicant that ever did anything for her. She kept her bills paid, and her adrenaline glands busy, by doing occasional freelance stealth work for DeVries. It was at the Amp Room that Holden met Andy Vance and



his lover Jake Korelli. She hit it off with both of them and Holden moved into a spare room in their house. For nearly two years the three of them constituted an unorthodox "family," with Holden taking the role of the adopted sister. Recently, Holden was contacted by Team Tomorrow darling Jennifer "Slider" Landers and given an envelope containing Landers' research into Utopia's anti-nova agenda. To be on the safe side, Slider gave Holden the same information in hardcopy and on two silicon chips. At first, Holden thought Landers was nuts — but Jennifer was dead within the week. It was only a few days after Landers' death that Chiraben made his attempt on Holden as she made her sunrise walk home from the Amp Room. The Proteus assassin Chiraben had been assigned to "mop up" known contacts of Landers before they could bring compromising information to light.

Chiraben underestimated Holden's combat abilities, however. Before he could lay a claw on her, she laid him

out on the street with a kick to the head and disappeared. Holden's stability, shaky to begin with, unraveled over the subsequent two weeks and she became extremely paranoid. She began to see Chiraben lurking behind every door and hiding in every dark corner. Finally, in desperation, she and Vance talked to Count Orzaiz about a way to get her out of danger. She turned over the documents given to her by Slider after only a perfunctory perusal. Orzaiz recommended faking her death and going far away. When asked for suggestions, Orzaiz mentioned that he had some questions about some recent goings-on in Marrakesh, and offered to arrange her trip down there if she would get certain information back to him at his home in Monte Carlo. The information he needed seemed innocuous enough, and Holden was quite taken with the count anyway, so she agreed.

She and Vance then faked her assassination. Vance and Holden "acquired" a suitable quantity of explosives and wired them to the ignition of Holden's car, Vance and Holden got in, Holden turned invisible and jumped out as Vance turned the key, and the car was blown into metal confetti. There were no witnesses and the Ibiza police didn't really want

to get into another high-profile nova murder case, so it was ruled a murder and swept under the rug. The police genuinely like Vance and will always give him the benefit of any doubt, should the matter come up. Holden will be taking her leave of Ibiza the night after the player characters arrive.

That's where the characters come in.



## Ibiza: Day 1

The chronicle opens with the characters' arrival at the Amp Room. While not the only game in town, the Amp Room has rapidly become Ibiza Town's *raison d'être*. The Storyteller should play up the decadence, the nakedness, the shocking behavior. If there's a theme to the party, play it up, e.g., if it's a Bubble Party, the dance floor will be four feet deep in bubbles and foam; likewise, if it's a Lights Out party, the dance floor will be dark except for the glow coming off the novas themselves and the occasional colored dot of a laser pointer. The Amp Room is pure gold refined from the base elements of deviance, decadence and display.

If the characters begin asking randomly about Holden, they'll immediately get pointed to Andy Vance, the Amp Room's "Face Man" and second in command. Vance will be circulating around the club, wearing nothing but a thin coating of liquid latex, which fits fine with the dress code at the Amp Room. He'll be polite but brief with anyone who is still fully clothed and not partying. Asked about Holden, Vance will seem sad and tell the players that they're too late, that Holden was murdered yesterday in a car bombing. He'll seem

upset for a moment and then ask why they want to know. If the characters seem sympathetic, or even lie half-convincingly, Vance will ask if they want to have breakfast with him and his husband in the morning. If the players agree, Vance will give the address of El Divino Cafe. With that, Vance apologizes to the characters but insists that he has to get back to work; he then spins off into a pulsing throng of people. If the party asks other people about Holden, they'll shrug or pretend not to be able to hear. If they approach Count Orzaiz's table, he'll tell them that Andy is the person they need to see and then cavalierly dismiss them.

Andy is clearly the linchpin of this scene. Everyone knows that Vance was Holden's best friend and that he was sitting next to her in the car when it exploded. Some may feel protective of the grief that he must be going through; others may ask if this is an official investigation.

## Close Encounters at the Amp Room

For novas, the Amp Room is simply *the* place to be; everyone, but everyone, in nova circles comes here at least once. Accordingly, the club is a Casablanca where novas of all affiliations can meet without (much) fear of partisanship or violence, and the characters should have ample opportunities for personal subplots and other liaisons.

Any or all of following story seeds may be sown into the characters' downtime at the Amp Room; they can provide fodder for later stories or sidetracks/red herrings for the current one.

- A Teragen agent approaches the characters, seeking to befriend or assist them in exchange for favors of whatever sort. This can be problematic if the agent — and/or the characters — has superhuman Social Traits. Perhaps the agent is a rival of Count Orzaiz, seeking to use the characters to embarrass Orzaiz or foil the count's current stratagem.

- A nova, tanked to the gills on Amp Wells or something stronger (and almost certainly illegal), belligerently challenges the character to some sort of contest of power ("I've heard ya brag on N! 'bout how you can suck up a fuckin' shaped charge. Whyn'cha try one'a my shots, punk-ass?!?"). The character can choose to "take it outside," preferably into the countryside surrounding the town; this course of action will be loudly applauded by the more boorish patrons and sneered at by the cattier ones. Alternatively, the character can try to defuse the situation socially or simply let the bouncers take care of it; this will likely work, as the Amp Room's staff frowns on violence, but may earn the character a reputation as a wimp among certain elite circles. If the character starts or reacts to a fight or other disturbance, she'll have Vance, the other bouncers, and several pissed-off regulars to deal with, and she'll likely be barred from the club for a good while.

- One of the characters, probably (but not necessarily) one with high Appearance or Charisma, is approached and propositioned in a fashion ranging from the charming to the obscene. This situation can be straightforward or as complex as the Storyteller wishes to make it; perhaps the would-be lover has a jealous boy/girlfriend or is actually a government agent seeking to recruit the character into a less-than-upright scheme.

- Novas are largely immune to drugs, but that doesn't stop would-be profiteers from trying. A dealer might offer the characters vast (and pricy) quantities of normal drugs, or might claim to have "the latest thing" to get a nova high. Alternatively, the rumors of soma might be true, and nova characters might be shadowed and later attacked for their potent glands.

- Elite characters can trade war stories and find all sorts of contract work here. Although baselines are not allowed in the Amp Room, a couple of nova "fixers" maintain semi-permanent status at the club, working on behalf of various Powers That Be to negotiate with potential agents.

- If the characters are known Aberrants, *anybody* could be a spy for Utopia and might inconvenience or trail the characters if possible.

For any given nova at the Amp Room, assume Traits similar to the following:

Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

**Abilities:** Endurance 3, Rapport 1, Resistance 3, Subterfuge 2, Style 3, 15 other dots to divide as necessary

**Mega-Attributes and Quantum Powers:** Mega-Stamina

- (Resiliency), Mega-Strength • (Crush); three dots in other Mega-Attributes or one Level Two power at ••; three dots in Level One powers.

Quantum 2, Willpower 5, Taint 2

## Ibiza: Day 2

The next morning at El Divino Cafe, Andy will introduce the characters to his husband Jake Korelli, one of the Amp Room's bouncers and a freelance elite for the DeVries Agency. "Korelli," though, isn't really Korelli. Vance is letting the shapeshifting Holden check out the party herself while playing a minor role in the breakfast conversation. Vance will ask again why the players want to know about Holden, and what their goal is. If anything sounds suspicious, Vance will ask very specific questions that might clarify their mission a little. "Jake," in the meantime, will listen quietly while eating a seemingly unending breakfast. If players try to question Jake, he'll just tell them that Holden was more Andy's friend. If the characters seem overly interested in Korelli, he'll claim he has phone calls to make at home, something he'll do anyway after about an hour of conversation since Holden can only maintain Korelli's appearance for an hour and a half with her Copycat enhancement. Characters have a slight chance



of noticing that there's something odd about the way Korelli moves (difficulty +3 for characters without Mega-Perception); likewise, it will be obvious to a character with the Bloodhound enhancement that "Korelli" is not a man. Characters with x-ray vision may note that Korelli has the internal anatomy of a woman; characters with the ability to perceive her at the cellular level may notice the XX chromosome arrangement and get suspicious. The real Jake Korelli is back at the house keeping watch lest inquiring souls come snooping and find Holden's packed suitcase underneath her bed.

The outcome of this scene depends on the approach the players take. If they are working with the Aberrants and say as much, then Holden will start up her own line of questioning to try to get the characters to divulge what they know about the Aberrant movement, what they know about Project Utopia, and similar things. If the characters are either Utopia or Proteus operatives, Vance will share his secret suspicions that he's certain that the Teragen were behind the bombing. Immediately after saying so, he will finish his breakfast and excuse himself, claiming to be late for an interview with a Spanish television program.

If the characters are at all visible in Ibiza that day, an emissary of Orzaiz's will deliver an invitation to visit with the count and share wine at his table "whilst swapping grand confessions, shocking tales and comforting lies."

Orzaiz invites the characters to his personal table at the Amp Room, where he can charm them and hear about their quest (or their lies, whichever they choose to tell him). The players should find this to be an honor. Orzaiz is something of a celebrity, and royalty to boot. If the characters behave reasonably well (and perhaps make a few Etiquette rolls), Orzaiz will give them his card suggesting that they look him up next time they're in Monte Carlo. If the characters behave boorishly, he won't give them his card and later sections of the story will consequently prove more difficult.

At his table, after much wine (just for show), Orzaiz will ask the characters what they've learned so far in their little investigation. If they haven't figured out already that Holden is alive, he'll help them along by explaining that neither the authorities nor certain very attentive friends of his were able to find any hint of Ms. Holden, and if they couldn't find it, then there wasn't any of her to find. Seek elsewhere.

When the characters leave the club, the nova with the highest Perception will notice that they're being tailed. If and when they catch their shadow — and it won't be particularly difficult — they will finally meet up with Charlotte Holden. Not the real one, of course. Chiraben, the Proteus assassin, is posing as Holden to draw information out of the characters. He may be noticed by the same means as Holden above. Because of his Taint, Chiraben has to wear heavily shaded contact lenses that cover his entire sclera. Characters may notice a little green light coming from his eyes. Chiraben is not particularly adept at passing as a woman — it goes against his nature — so the difficulty

for figuring out that he's not actually a woman is only +2. "Holden" will confess her faked death (which Chiraben presumes the characters know about by this point) and tell the characters the most ludicrous lies about Orzaiz and his habit of murdering his ex-lovers, which is what he's trying to do to her. "She" will then ask the characters what they're doing there. "Holden" may invite them for a drink so she can get more information out of them. If the party seems to be experiencing culture shock from their forays into the Amp Room, then "Holden" will come across as the most down-to-earth person possible.

About the time the characters finish with talking with "Holden," the sun comes up and it's time to rest.

## Outcomes

If the characters are affiliated with the Aberrants, Chiraben will weasel as much information as possible out of the characters. He will tell them that he thinks Orzaiz has been unbalanced lately and that he is still trying to kill him (Holden). She'll tell the characters to meet her in the Amp Room tomorrow night to get the information given to her by Slider. Should the characters linger in Ibiza too long, Chiraben will try to separate the characters and kill them one by one.

If the characters are Utopia ops, Chiraben will play up the horrors committed by Orzaiz, just to make it clear to the characters who the bad guy is in this situation.

If the characters are Proteus ops, and Chiraben knows this (depending on the characters' level of Cipher and the Storyteller's discretion), Chiraben may reveal himself immediately, which may disturb the characters, and explain that they're on the same mission. He'll then slip away to continue his assignment. Alternatively, the ever-egotistical killer might try to mislead his "rivals," so he can show them up.

## Ibiza: Day 3

The following night, the Amp Room actually shuts down, as novas and baselines alike head over to the enormous and opulent nightclub Privilege, which is hosting a great summer gala dance party in conjunction with the Amp Room staff. At this party, novas and baselines mingle, dance, drink, ingest substances and exchange bodily fluids indiscriminately. Characters can try to pursue some kind of lead, but likely will see little of import.

Things quickly change as the characters see Orzaiz walk in, speak heatedly with a young member of his retinue (the conversation is unintelligible over the dance music), and then gesture for her to follow him into one of the unisex bathrooms. If the characters follow the two in or use quantum powers to spy on the two, they'll see a heated conversation, after which "Orzaiz" grows enormous claws on his hands, which he uses to disembowel the young woman (unless a character with Hypermovement or mental powers intervenes) and then escape by punching his way through the wall. If the characters don't follow the two into the bath-





room, they'll simultaneously see another young woman enter that same bathroom and start screaming, precisely as another Orzaiz makes one of his flawless entrances with a starlet on each arm.

The music stops. The dancing stops. The lights go up. Vance and Korelli, assisting Privilege's normal security staff, view the carnage in the bathroom, promptly close the club and begin clearing out the crowd.

The characters should realize that someone just impersonated Orzaiz. It won't be clear to them who, but Orzaiz, who knows a little about Chirabin, will know perfectly well, especially once he sees the mess in the bathroom. Orzaiz will also realize that the Directive, Utopia, Interpol and any number of other groups will want to pin this murder on him. Since Orzaiz has a solid alibi, he won't be compromised for long, but in the interim, he's going to be put through a great deal of trouble. His first thought is revenge. Sahara Santiago, the woman Chiraben just killed, was Orzaiz's secretary; it was she who arranged Holden's flight to Marrakesh. Going on the assumption that Chiraben now knows Holden's whereabouts, Orzaiz, raging, does anything he can to spite the assassin, including giving another Proteus op her whereabouts just to keep Chiraben from making the kill. The count will approach the characters, tell them that Holden is alive and well and staying at the Hotel La Mamounia in Marrakesh. The count then returns to his table to wait quietly for the police to come. If the characters approach him, he asks them to sit and proceeds to tell them what he knows. Some of these facts he put together on his own, some of them he got from Holden, who in turn got some of them from Slider:

1. Before her murder, Jennifer "Slider" Landers gave Holden compromising information on Project Utopia.
2. An assassin, presumably from the rumored secret division of Utopia, was trying to kill Holden because of this potentially damaging information.
3. The assassin's name is allegedly Chiraben and he is exceedingly dangerous.
4. Holden faked her death to avoid being killed.
5. Orzaiz's secretary Sahara arranged a trip to Marrakesh for Holden so she could lie low for a few months.

He'll tell them that Holden is staying at the Hotel La Mamounia. If the characters are gracious and have social skills (and especially if they have Mega-Social Attributes) he may even arrange to have them flown down to Marrakesh. He will tell Aberrant sympathizers and friends of Holden where to find her so they can rescue her, and he will tell Utopia/Proteus types where she is so they get to her first, leaving Chiraben in the dust (that's just the beginning of what he has planned for Chiraben...). If the players have been friendly, he'll mention to them that Marrakesh is not an "aberrant"-friendly city, and that they should keep their quantum powers under wraps if at all possible. While Orzaiz can make things easier for the players, they'll still have to do their own investigative work; he doesn't know what identity Holden is using (if he did, he would just call down to warn her).

Once Orzaiz tells the party everything, he dis-

misses them with a supercilious wave of his hand, suggesting they hurry down to Marrakesh if they want to get to Holden before Chiraben does.

Alternatively, if the party is strongly Utopia-affiliated and opts not to talk with the count, Andy Vance will be able to fill in most of the same blanks. The death of Sahara will shock him, given the vow of secrecy he made to Holden, and he will tell Aberrants everything. He may or may not tell Utopia operatives anything, depending on what he thinks their intentions are. He will tell Proteus ops nothing.

## Outcomes

Chiraben will use his shapeshifting ability the moment he's leaves to blend with the crowd in the street. Characters with Mega-Dexterity, Mega-Wits, Hypermovement, or ESP may see him do that. If this is the case, the characters may engage Chiraben in combat. If they do, Chiraben will make the most of it. Given the enormous amounts of damage Chiraben can inflict, the Storyteller will want to make it clear to players just how frightening Chiraben really is. Unless they work very well together, beginning characters should think twice before engaging this highly efficient killer in combat.

Back in the bar, Korelli watches Orzaiz until the police arrive. Police take Orzaiz into custody and off the party circuit for the next four days as investigators interrogate Orzaiz and go over the murder scene in excruciating detail, ultimately realizing that Orzaiz did not kill Sahara. Given his known affiliation with the Teragen, Utopia agents may still use this opportunity to take Orzaiz down without making him a martyr. The Teragen might well come looking for the characters to ask them to help clear their spokesman by telling the truth. That, however, is a hook for another story.

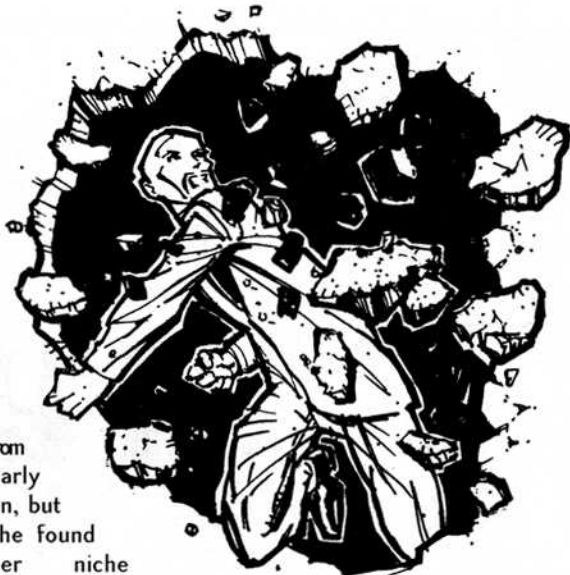
## Conclusions

"La Vida Nocturna" comes to a close as Privilege shuts its doors for a few weeks of "remodeling and repairs." Characters may watch as Count Orzaiz allows himself to be arrested and taken to the Spanish mainland for interrogation. Vance is bothered by the death at the club; he and Korelli take advantage of the tumult to return to the United States to ensure a nova presence at the San Francisco Gay Pride festival. If the characters need any more hints that it's time to leave, they may find tickets from Ibiza to Marrakesh via Madrid waiting for them wherever they're staying, compliments of Vance (if they're Aberrants) or Orzaiz (who will help any side provided it cheats Chiraben of his prize).

## Dramatis Personae

### Charlotte Holden

**Background:** Charlotte Holden grew up north of Chicago in the affluent suburb of Winnetka. Holden was an aggressive and somewhat unbalanced nonconformist



from  
early  
on, but  
she found  
her niche  
studying dance at

Northwestern University. When an ex-boyfriend began stalking her, Holden opted to live the experience to the fullest as a way of gathering material for her art. Over a period of weeks she deliberately cultivated paranoia in herself, thinking of it as a radical form of "personality modification." The experiment went well until Holden woke up one night to the sound of her stalker kicking in her door. Her terror triggered her M-R node and she disappeared, literally. Watching the stalker enter her bedroom with a gun and not being able to find her was simultaneously the most terrifying and exciting moment of Charlotte's life. Fear and arousal, never exactly strangers, are now close companions in Holden's head.

After her eruption, Holden dropped out of college and was briefly affiliated with Utopia to learn how to use her nova abilities. It was there that she met Jennifer "Slider" Landers. Landers seemed nice, but a little tame for Holden. Landers, on the other hand, admired Holden's "on the edge" approach



to life. When Slider needed to disseminate information about Utopia's questionable dealings, Holden seemed a good (i.e., unlikely and well-suited) candidate. In the Amp Room Holden found a kindred soul in "Ironskin" Andy Vance and began renting a room in the house he shared with his partner Jake Korelli. This worked well until recently; Holden realized she was falling in love with Andy and growing to resent Korelli, at which point she made plans to move out. When Holden received a carefully hidden packet of information from Landers, things began to heat up. Her paranoia was triggered again. When Slider was reported murdered, Holden felt the heat too keenly and went to Ibiza and escape the *sturm und drang* of it all. The day she decided to move out of Vance and Korelli's place was the day Chiraben made his first attack.

Chiraben had a little girl lead Holden into a blind alley, where he could murder her at his leisure. Sexist that he is, however, he underestimated Holden's fighting abilities. Holden's quick reaction time saved her. She dodged his claws, broke his nose with a quick kick and disappeared. Holden let him think she had fled and started following him, invisible. This attack was proof that "they" were out to get her, and she was determined to find out who they were. To complicate matters, Holden talked Andy Vance into helping her fake her own death so that her killers would assume their objective was met and leave.

Chiraben isn't that stupid. He investigated the "murder" scene himself and saw nothing to convince him that Holden was dead. He knows Holden and Vance are friends, and he's frequenting the Amp Room, waiting for one or both of them to screw up so he can get his second chance at Holden.

**Image:** Holden is a beautiful brunette woman in her late 20s whose movements are so amazingly graceful that just watching her walk can be hypnotic. Somewhat disconcerting, however, is the way she constantly scans the room around her with her eyes in long, graceful saccades. In conversation, Holden has a hard time concentrating on those she's talking with because she's always glancing around for pursuers.

**Roleplaying Hints:** The notion of your own mortality fascinates you, and you find the game of predator and prey to be alternately terrifying and exhilarating. Nothing makes you feel so alive as someone hunting you. Better yet is when they're mere inches away and don't know you're there. You live for those moments. The past few weeks have been the most exciting of your life. The game with Chiraben is starting to wear thin, however, and you're on the verge of doing something extreme. In social interactions with people you trust, you have a very well-developed sense of humor, albeit a morbid and caustic one. Nature: Thrillseeker

Allegiance: Individualist

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Appearance 4, Manipulation 3, Charisma 4

Abilities: Athletics 4 (Swimming), Martial Arts 2 (Thai Kickboxing), Stealth 5, Endurance 3, Awareness 4 (Keeping Watch), Drive 2, Pilot 2, Intrusion 2, Streetwise 3, Perform 4 (Dance), Style 2

Backgrounds: Cipher 3, Contacts 2, Dormancy 3, Quantum 2, Willpower 8, Taint 4 (Paranoia), Quantum Pool 26

Mega-Attributes: Mega-Stamina 1 (Adaptability), Mega-Dexterity 2 (Catfooted), Mega-Perception 1 (Electromagnetic Vision), Mega-Wits 2 (Enhanced Initiative), Mega-Appearance 2 (Copycat)

Quantum Powers: Invisibility 3

## "Ironskin" Andy Vance

**Background:** Six years ago Andy Vance was a closeted gay kid in Cody, Wyoming. When three rednecks caught him walking home from track practice and decided to "show the faggot a lesson," Vance's nova abilities erupted; he stood unharmed (and amazed) as his would-be assailants impotently hit him with everything from fists to baseball bats. He quickly realized that he had become a nova and started mocking his attackers, casting aspersions on their manhood and inciting them to greater acts of ineffectual violence. When they panicked and tried to flee, Vance subdued the three and handed them to the police.

Vance was the first nova from Wyoming and he left immediately after graduating from high school. Organizations were soon tripping over themselves to recruit his immense social talents. Vance declined a score of lucrative offers in favor of standing up as a self-appointed spokesperson for gay causes. Vance became an icon of pride and self-acceptance tinged with the faintest hint of sexual exoticism.



Conveniently, that was precisely what Travius Diaz was looking for in the Amp Room's "Face Man." Diaz offered Vance an enormous salary to schmooze, flirt and circulate through the nova club. Vance never hesitated. In Cody, adventure had consisted of trips to Yellowstone and the Buffalo Bill Museum; suddenly, he was one of the most popular personalities on the nova party circuit, living in Ibiza and traveling regularly to Addis Ababa, Hong Kong and other locales he never thought he'd see. Vance quickly became Diaz's second-in-command at the Amp Room, and he now works there during the party season on Ibiza and takes PR assignments for DeVries during the winter.

Vance met Charlotte Holden at the Amp Room the first year he worked there, and the two of them became friends when they realized they shared a similar acerbic wit. She moved in with Vance and Korelli shortly thereafter. When Holden realized she was being stalked, she told Vance and, after a great deal of discussion, the two of them contrived to fake her death. Holden has been living with Vance and Korelli since her "death," and will continue to do so right up until she leaves for Marrakesh, but under no circumstances will Vance share this information or disclose her whereabouts. If he is given good reason to trust the characters, he may share the knowledge that she is still alive and offer to relay a message to her, provided it strikes him as important.

**Image:** Vance is a stunningly handsome man with excellent social skills, and he relies on these abilities far more than on his toughness or fighting prowess. He has an amazing body, even for a nova, and he likes to show it off on the dance floor any time he's not busy chatting up the more important patrons of the Amp Room. When Vance enters conversation, he is attentive, almost flirtatious, with whom-ever he's speaking with. Vance dresses well, but he is an exhibitionist by nature and generally parades around the Amp Room wearing only a thong (which is still more than most novas in Ibiza are wearing by the end of the night).

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your transition to international party boy has been a bit startling. Even before your eruption you were very likable; now you're a social powerhouse. Everyone wants to be your friend, and it's hard to know who really likes you and who just wants to bask in your reflected glory. For that reason you have become a very private person. You cherish your lover and your few trusted friends; everyone else is kept at arm's length, albeit in a very subtle and charming way. You have no time for people who want to use you and have developed very effective tactics for shedding unwanted groupies.

Nature: Hedonist

Allegiance: The Amp Room

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Appearance 5, Manipulation 4, Charisma 4

Abilities: Brawl 3, Drive 2, Endurance 5, Resistance 5, Arts 2, Style 4, Intimidation 1, Etiquette 4, Linguistics 3 (German, Spanish, Arabic)

Backgrounds: Allies 3 (Travius Diaz and Jake "Dragon" Korelli), Backing 2, Contacts 5 (who *doesn't* he know?), Influence 3, Node 2, Resources 3

Quantum 5, Willpower 5, Taint 1, Quantum Pool 30  
Mega-Stamina 5 (Hardbody, Resilency), Mega-Strength 2 (Crush), Mega-Wits 1 (Artistic Genius), Mega-Charisma 2 (Seductive), Mega-Appearance 2 (First Impression)

Quantum Powers: Armor 5, Invulnerability (mental attacks 3, cutting attacks 2)

## Chiraben

**Background:** Chiraben grew up in a bad neighborhood in L.A., torturing cats and smaller children. Were it

not for his eruption, he would have become a small-time thug and probably died in a gang-related shooting. As it happened, he was furiously hunting down his neighbor's three small yappy dogs when his M-R node erupted. His talent for stalking and killing has served him in good stead. Proteus has paid him a small fortune to handle much of its network on an exclusive basis. Until recently, he was their Directors' first choice for seek-and-destroy missions. However, Chiraben's professionalism has slipped of late, and he's indulged his warped sense of fun to such an extent that he's gotten sloppy; the resulting coverups have been haphazard at best, particularly in light of the intense scrutiny recently directed at Utopia's activities.



Chiraben is fully aware that he is very much the *bête noir* among Proteus circles at the moment, and he intends to be the very soul of professionalism with his execution of Holden. Holden, unfortunately, is pushing the limits of his patience, and when he finally catches her, it will be a close race to determine who kills her: Chiraben the professional or Chiraben the monster.

**Image:** Chiraben is a tall, thin, ugly man of indeterminate descent. His Taint causes his already fishily bulging eyes to glow bright green and, as a side effect of his Taint, he frequently forgets to blink. Though his looks have never been important to him, he is exacting about his clothing. The clothes he wears may change in accordance with his mission, but they're always the finest of their type and almost always made of eufiber.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are the classic antisocial personality type: egotistical to a fault, but incapable of interacting with people on any real emotional level. Quite simply, you have no superego, no conscience; whether this is an inborn deficiency or one triggered by the M-R node is unknown and, frankly, not particularly relevant. You respect and fear power in others; if your first head-on attack is thwarted, be sneaky unless rage overtakes you.

Nature: Bravo

Allegiance: Proteus

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 5, Appearance 1, Manipulation



tion 3, Charisma 2

Abilities: Brawl 5 (Dirty Maneuvers), Resistance 2, Firearms 4, Investigation 3, Bureaucracy 1, Computer 2, Intrusion 4 (Lock Picking), Intimidation 4 (Implied Threat), Interrogation 5 (Torture), Stealth 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 1

Backgrounds: Allies 3, Backing 3, Contacts 1

Quantum 4, Willpower 6, Taint 5 (Aberrant Eyes [bright green], Hormonal Imbalance [rage]), Quantum Pool 32  
Mega-Attributes: Mega-Strength 3 (Shockwave), Mega-Dexterity 3 (Accuracy), Mega-Stamina 1 (Durability), Mega-Wits 2 (Quickness x2)

Quantum Powers: Claws 4, Shapeshift 3 (typically used to simulate Armor), Healing 1, Psychic Shield 1

## Other Characters of Note

### Jake "Dragon" Korelli

Nature: Thrillseeker

Allegiance: Individualist

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Appearance 4, Manipulation 3, Charisma 3

Abilities: Awareness 4 (Troublemakers), Command 2, Drive 2, Martial Arts (Shotokan Karate) 5, Survival 2

Mega-Attributes: Mega-Stamina 2 (Resiliency, Regeneration), Mega-Strength 3 (Thunderclap), Mega-Dexterity 3 (Rapid Strike), Mega-Perception 1 (Blindfighting), Mega-Wits 3 (Enhanced Initiative, Quickness x3)

Quantum Powers: Force Field 2, Quantum Blast (Fire Breath) 4

Quantum 3, Willpower 6, Taint 2, Quantum Pool 28

**Background:** Korelli is an experienced elite and a veteran of a hundred little wars and conflicts. In recent years Vance has been trying to get him to move away from the dangerous work and enjoy life more. After the adrenaline rush



of going toe to toe with the likes of Tötentanz and the Stone Badass, being a bouncer at a club — even a nova club — isn't really much fun, but there's very little he wouldn't do for Vance, to whom he is unswervingly loyal.

### Raoul Orzaiz

Nature: Visionary

Allegiance: Teragen

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Appearance 5, Manipulation 5, Charisma 5

Abilities: Drive 2, Pilot 2, Legerdemain 1, Martial Arts (savate) 4, Academics 4, Biz 4, Arts (photography) 3, Investigation 2, Command 3, Rapport 4, Style 4, Etiquette 5

Backgrounds: Allies: 5, Backing 5, Contacts 4, Devices 4, Followers 5, Influence 5, Resources 5

Quantum 4, Willpower 9, Taint 0, Quantum Pool 36

Mega-Attributes: Mega-Strength 1 (Thunderclap)

Mega-Stamina 3 (Regeneration) Mega-Dexterity 3 (Enhanced Movement) Mega-Charisma 2 (Natural Agitator), Mega-Appearance 2 (Awe-Inspiring), Mega-Manipulation 4 (Persuader, Trickster, The Voice)

Quantum Powers: Premonition 4



**Background:** Raoul fancies himself an accomplished intriguer, which he unquestionably is. At the Amp Room, he sits at his private table with his back to the wall in an alcove where the lights are lowest. He watches the dance floor, and chats with friends, allies, contacts and informants like a prince granting audiences. His charm is insidious and people have walked away from his table and done some of the most remarkable and shocking things at his gracious request. Both the Directive and Utopia consider Orzaiz a major target should they be forced to declare war on the Teragen. As it stands, his visibility and extreme popularity would render him an instant martyr, and with all the anti-Utopia sentiment going around lately, it's better to put up with him. For now.

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An oasis set upon the fertile Haouz Plain at the foot of the High Atlas Mountains, Marrakesh is the fourth of Morocco's Imperial Cities. Its stunning architectural record extends back to 1062 and evokes visions from One Thousand and One Arabian Nights. For baselines working in nova-intensive African cities like Addis Ababa, Marrakesh can be an oasis in more ways than one. The city's Islamic heritage and values make it unattractive to nova party-fiends, leaving its beauty and splendor for the common man to enjoy. Whether you're drawn to our legendary rugs, extensive history, or delicious camel tagine, Marrakesh holds all the delights a person could hope for.

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**BEGIN UTOPIA STAFF MEMO**

**From:** Michael M'btede, Director of African Operations

**To:** All Utopia-Africa staff and operatives

**Date:** September 11, 2006

**Re:** Moroccan Hazard Alerts

Due to persistent reports of nova harassment and the rumored disappearances of two DeVries elites in the last six months (the infamous Tycho "Wardog" DeWitt and Benoit "Zip" Goubeaux), I am proactively, and temporarily, classifying Marrakesh and Casablanca as avoid zones for all nova personnel. Unless specific duty assignments require your presence in those cities, they are to be considered off limits until further notice. I am contacting Interpol and asking them to look into this to see if it warrants Team Tomorrow's attention.

The news I've heard on this is problematic, but no Utopia personnel have been affected yet and I'd like to keep it that way.

**END UTOPIA STAFF MEMO**

**BEGIN JOURNAL ENTRY**

From the journal of Zaid Alwan, March 19th, 2007

Soma

Soma oma om

OM

SomaTrick SomaTrap SomaEnd to the nova fixation

SomaDream SomaScheme SomaSong of a bold new Creation

SomaBlade SomaFlame SomaFist of the Islamic nation

SomaLove. SomaAl'lah. SomaKiss on the lips of salvation.

**END JOURNAL ENTRY**

## Quantum Communion

The theme of "Quantum Communion" begins as alienation as the characters deal with a city and a people that don't like novas, and shifts to horror as the characters deal with baraka cultists who like novas too much and in all the wrong ways.

The Islamic world is split over how to view novas, and Marrakesh is decidedly in the antinova camp, a fact that gives implicit permission to certain groups who have their own designs on novas. While Addis Ababa is the focal point for nova activity in Africa, Marrakesh is the vacation destination for baselines tired of dealing with the egos, attitudes, and idiosyncrasies of the freakish, famous and rich novas. The glory days of Marrakesh were in the first half of the 20th century, when Morocco was a French protectorate, and the city as a whole still feels very much stuck in time somewhere between 1920 and 1950, culturally as well as architecturally. Marrakesh was the center for Art Deco architecture in the 1920s, and the mixture of that style with traditional Arabic design makes for a beautiful if unexpected mix.

Certain of the larger cities in Morocco, like Casablanca and Rabat, may be keeping pace with the modern world, but Marrakesh will have none of it. The vehicles driving around the city are at least 20 years old and may as well run on 40-weight oil for all the gray exhaust they spew out behind them. Likewise, the world's recent fascination with novas hasn't caught on here either. Subtle but ubiquitous prejudice will make characters feel distinctly ill at ease. Nova characters will certainly not be attacked or even called names, but the service they receive will be reserved; unexpected "errors" may pop up to prevent things from going smoothly, and seemingly empty hotels will be "booked for the next several evenings" when characters inquire about lodging. The antinova sentiment is subtle, but pervasive and inescapable. Characters with the Dormancy Background should use it here to make things easier on themselves.

The language barrier does not work in the characters' favor here. Very little English is spoken anywhere in Morocco. The two national languages are Arabic and French, and not everyone speaks French; Marrakeshis manipulate the language barrier very skillfully. If no one in the party speaks Arabic, the natives will take merciless advantage of the characters, inflating prices by orders of magnitude and arranging unwanted "adventures" for the characters (like a three-block cab ride taking 45 minutes and costing 500 dirhams when it should cost two). Copping a "We're novas, you should love us," attitude will only antagonize the locals, which is the last thing characters will want to do. Marrakesh, especially the old town, is full of people with dangerous little connections. Many know that "a friend of my brother-in-law's good friend Abdullah" is looking to talk with stray novas.... That kind of subtle bait is often all it takes to lead some brash novas right into the clutches of the baraka cult, which wants desperately to "harvest" more of Al'lah's blessings.

Despite the ascendancy of Addis Ababa, Marrakesh's enormous Hotel La Mamounia on the Avenue Bab Jdid re-

mains the finest and most expensive hotel on the African continent. Its mixture of Arabic and Art Deco styles makes it one of the more interesting places to visit in Morocco. The hotel's enormous gardens full of roses, jasmine and orange blossoms seem bigger than some small American towns.

## Behind the Scenes

Charlotte Holden is staying at the Hotel La Mamounia for two reasons. The first, obviously, is to escape Chiraben. Secondly, she has come to Marrakesh in service to Raoul Orzaiz (who will be paying for her extended stay at La Mamounia) to follow up on certain information that was in the packet given to her by Slider. One file on a microchip mentions a "baraka cult," certain members of which allegedly have tenuous connections to Utopia personnel, although several hard-to-trace steps removed. Count Orzaiz was very curious about the details of this baraka cult and gave Holden the option of spending the next few weeks at the best hotel in Africa if she would do a little sniffing around for him. While it wasn't the kind of highly lucrative work she was used to, the count's charming manner was enough to convince her that it was a good way to get out of Ibiza for a while.

When the characters arrive in Marrakesh and make their way to La Mamounia, Holden is looking like whom-ever she feels like at the moment. She's registered under the name Mark Levy, and takes an appropriately male visage when she has to deal with the front desk. Other than that, she changes her face on an hourly basis. If characters are unable to use investigation or nova powers to track Holden down, the players will find her in the enormous lobby of the Mamounia or in the gardens wearing the freshly adopted visage of one of the characters.

How she responds to the characters depends on their affiliations. She'll tell Aberrant characters all about the baraka cult and ask for their help in breaking it up. If the characters are Utopia agents, Holden will coldly inform them about the baraka cult, stressing its supposed Utopia connections as a way of disabusing the characters of their belief in Utopia. If the characters are Proteus ops, Holden will use her enhanced initiative to flee into the gardens, where she can take another appearance (or turn invisible).

Chiraben's glowing green eyes pose an extra problem for him in Marrakesh. This isn't Ibiza: The natives don't like novas, and wearing sunglasses at night is considered rude, not chic. He has to wear darkly tinted contact lenses that cover his entire sclera in order to keep the glow hidden. Should he lose those, say, in combat (any botch or taking more than four health levels of damage at once will pop them right out), then he'll have to rely on glacier or wrap-around sunglasses the whole time to keep his tainted eyes from giving him away regardless of the shape he assumes.

Holden will want the characters on her side when she goes to investigate the baraka cult. Ideally, she would like to get the player characters to do the majority of the dirty work, especially if they're Utopia agents. If she can trick Proteus ops into raiding the baraka cult, then she might even get rid of her pursuers.



If the players have convinced Holden that they're on her side by the end of the raid on the baraka cult (saving her life is about the only way), then she'll take them to Monte Carlo, where she stashed the documents and microchips from Slider. She doesn't particularly want to hold onto them anymore and she'll be happy to give them to the characters.

If the players are Utopia or Proteus ops, then Holden will flee to her room at the Mamounia as soon as she's able. While she should have no problem getting away, she'll be just sloppy enough that the players will be able to follow her flight down to Monte Carlo.

## Marrakesh: Day 1

Most of the first day will be spent getting used to the annoyances of the city: Moroccans make a habit of "doing favors" for visitors and then demanding payment. If the characters are unable to hide the fact that they're novas (or, Al'lah forbid, flaunt the fact), the locals will be particularly inhospitable. Only those who cannot avoid speaking with the characters (hotel concierges, for example) will do so. Others will pretend not to understand anything but Arabic, whether or not that's actually the case. Of course, certain levels of Mega-Social Attributes can change this for any given interaction, but after the interaction ends, the baselines in question will be even more wary and hostile toward the "devil novas."

If the characters are reasonably subtle, have low Taint ratings, and especially if some have the Dormancy Background, it may be possible for them to pose as baseline tourists, in which case they'll be approached by all manner of helpful natives offering to guide them around the city, show them the souks (bazaar), or provide them with *kif* (marijuana) fresh from the neighboring High Atlas mountains.

Utopia operatives receive communications warning them of the disappearance of novas Wardog and Zip in the area and advising them to be alert and prepared for danger at all times.

At Hotel La Mamounia, characters begin playing a very strange game of hide-and-seek with Charlotte Holden. Obviously, she's not there under her own name, and her Copycat enhancement gives her access to any number of different visages. The party will likely need to use quantum powers if they are to find her on the first day, because she's posing as a male tourist from America named Mark Levy, and she's doing very little but lounging by the pool. Following advice given to her by Orzaiz, Holden assumed the guise of a tourist who was leaving the day she arrived. By claiming to be Mark Levy extending his stay, she makes it impossible for Chiraben (or the characters) to track her down by check-in date.

## Marrakesh: Day 2

By the second day, Holden is much more interested in the baraka cult than in the garden. Slider's notes are vague; the mention of the cult is a few blunt sentences at the end of a long list that tracks the establishment of

the cult through the cult's three imams, or leaders: Zaid Alwan, Raschid al-Hazmi, and Abdullah Ramahi.

Having read a description of Alwan, the cult's Marrakesh leader and a known mitoid, Holden will be extra-paranoid by this point, particularly around hyper-muscular Arabic men (a rarity since Islam frowns on body-building). She will return to her room to change her appearance every hour or so. When she is in public, she will be actively scanning whatever room she's in for threats.

## Why Attack the Cult?

It may be hard for characters to switch goals at this point in the story. They've found Holden; she can provide them with the rest of the documents, end of story. The focus of "Quantum Communion," however, is the encounter with the baraka cult, and other elements should push the characters in that direction.

This will be easy if the player characters are Aberrants. Holden is intent on uncovering everything she can about the baraka cult, partly out of devotion to Orzaiz and partly because of her morbid curiosity, and she agrees to join the Aberrants' cause and provide them with the entirety of the information Slider sent her *with* the two microchips if and only if they help her investigate the baraka cult. Holden is intent on this, in part because it intrigues her, and partly because she feels she owes it to Raoul, whom she likes a great deal, to do a thorough job.

If the characters are Utopia agents, getting them to postpone apprehending Holden might be difficult. Holden will show them the report on the baraka cult and its purported links to Utopia as a means of convincing them to come along. If that doesn't work, the characters might receive a communique of some kind from a higher-up in Utopia advising them to "humor her" in order to get to the bottom of the baraka cult rumors and clear Utopia's name.

Hardest to convince of all will be Proteus ops. If their assignment is to neutralize Holden, then she won't have much chance of convincing them to follow her in her quest to learn more about the baraka cult. In this case, it might work better if the Proteus ops don't even catch up to Holden in Marrakesh. Lead them, instead, to Holden's room overlooking the gardens, where a few documents are laid out suggesting that Holden is seeking refuge or meeting other Aberrants that night at a defunct rug warehouse located at 52 Rue Sidi El Yamani in Marrakesh's old town. It's Holden's way of getting a free peek at the cult (and its firepower) from a distance.



## The Baraka Cult

"Baraka" is Arabic for "spiritual power" or "blessing." The baraka cult takes this notion and adulterates it with primitive magic to form a dangerous and disturbing belief system with which to shock your players.

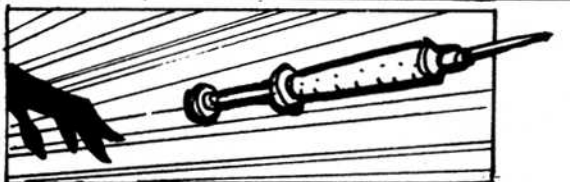
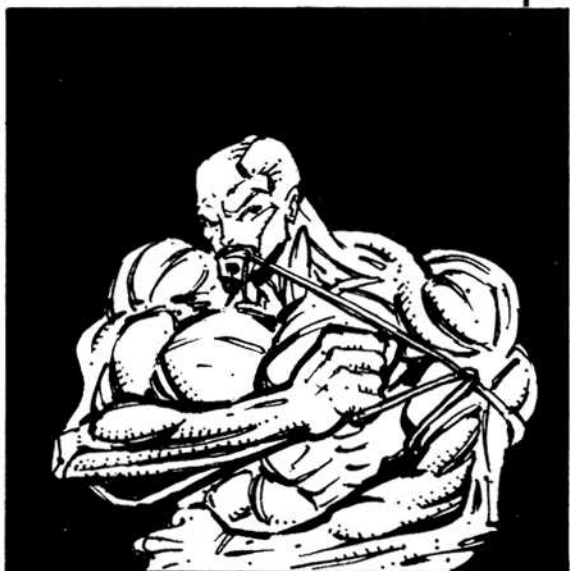
What they do: Cells of cultists, using whatever weapons they can obtain along with hefty quantities of mite, kill or disable a nova and then consume the nova in order to gain his power. Muscles are eaten for the acquisition of nova strength, brains for nova brilliance, genitals for sexual performance, heart for courage and so on. The baraka, or power of Al'lah, is thought to be most concentrated in living tissue, so, ideally, the nova should still be alive when devoured. Novas with the quantum powers of Healing or Regeneration are prized by baraka cultists, who can sell (or consume) the same organs again and again.

The cell's imam, or spiritual leader, harvests the M-R node last, for which he is paid mind-boggling amounts of money by soma manufacturers (that's how a cult on the fringes of Islam can afford high-tech items and mite).

The cell encountered by the players is a little more aggressive than most. They've actually taken down two novas in the last year, one of whom they're still "harvesting," and they're getting cocky.

The baraka cultists do not think of themselves as evil. They should not be played as generic morons. They may be superstitious and less intelligent than many of their peers, but they are simply following the orders of Alwan. Having seen some of the things Alwan can do (with the help of mite and Red 7), they attribute his increased power to his consumption of baraka taken from the bodies of novas. To their way of thinking, novas are angels sent by Al'lah to deliver his blessings (baraka) to them, and no more resent being "harvested" than a fig. The Storyteller knows they're kidding themselves; Alwan knows they're kidding themselves; but religion is not a rational force, and what we term madness, they call faith.

The leader of this baraka cultist cell is Zaid Alwan, an Iraqi transplant to Morocco (via England and the US, where he received his education and developed his taste for drugs and blond women). He looks haggard and the reek of nicotine oozes from his pores. That's deceiving, however. Alwan is a nova-extract junkie; his craving for anything derived from nova physiology — mite, soma, Red 7, and less orthodox substances — has made him physically quite powerful. His body is deformed with muscles. His most intense addiction is to soma, despite having ingested the substance only two times in his life.



He has one hit left, which he carries around in a quick-injector, and he's saving that until he can use it to bring down another nova.

The cell comprises Zaid Alwan, Khytam Manat al-Uzza al-Lat (his Proteus monitor) and six true believers.

The cultist's "temple" is located in the heart of Marrakesh's old town. One quick comment on Marrakesh and the First World: This ain't it. Except for the city's downtown area, the streets are packed dirt; children and chickens run wild in the narrow streets, and even land-based telephones are considered a luxury. The layout of the old town is gratuitously complex; streets curve around in unexpected directions, many of the Arabic street names differ by only one small syllable, and right angles are a rarity. "Do not enter" and "stop" signs in Arabic are everywhere, although nobody pays them any attention. High walls of the ubiquitous red clay make these narrow streets claustrophobic and trap the blue-gray exhaust emitted by the small and poorly tuned motorcycles that are all the rage among the youth here. The characters will pass door after identical door, making the medinah (old town) seem all the more labyrinthine.

If the characters are obviously novas, they will get absolutely no help from the locals, who are more likely to point them in the wrong direction (and then ask for a few dirhams for their trouble). Characters fluent in Arabic will at least be able to read signs, but without a map (which only the police have) the characters will not be able to find the cult temple without a guide or the use of quantum powers. The temple itself is located in the very heart of the medinah. The door is small and exactly like those around it.

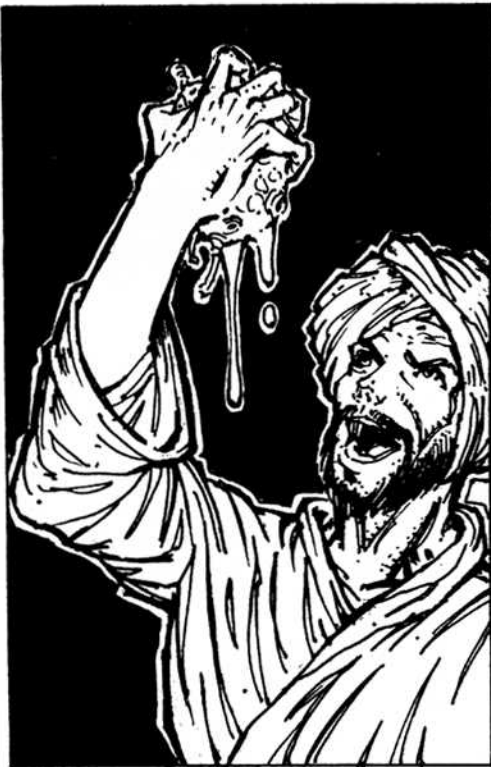
If there are obvious novas making their way to the temple, or if the characters paid a guide to bring them here, the cultists will be in a state of high readiness. From the

inside, the entrance to the temple is well protected. The door to the temple was rigged from an old bank vault and can be opened only from the inside. One solid kick from a nova with Mega-Strength 2 or above will be all the "open sesame" the characters need to rip the door from its hinges. That course of action, however, triggers the 10 white phosphorus grenades placed around the door. Those sorts of strong-arm tactics are exactly what the cultists are expecting from novas should they be found out.

The temple was once a government-run rug market. The cultists bought the leftover rugs when they took ownership of the building, and the place is still draped with Arabic rugs: on the floor, hanging from the walls, and folded and stacked in piles.

If the cultists are expecting the novas, two cultists will be on the balcony upstairs, firing a 30mm cannon at the door and tossing concussion grenades. If these weapons don't seem to be working, two additional cultists, also in alcoves behind hanging rugs, will toss out tear gas grenades to soften the enemy. The cultists, it should be pointed out, are fanatics; they are not suicidal, but are willing to mow down one of their own if necessary to bring down a nova.

If such tactics still don't take down their quarry, the cultists will make use of a ghastly "weapon" indeed: the half-alive carcass of Benoit "Zip" Goubeaux. Two cultists will drag the half-eaten nova from his resting place, ram the nova at the players' characters, and use a metal goad to prod Zip into instinctively activating his Quantum Leech power at the most dangerous-looking target. The agonized nova has only three attack dice to



hit targets, though the power acts at full effect.

Unless their lives are at stake, the cultists will take nova opponents down no further than Incapacitated. The cultists believe absolutely that baraka concentrations are richest in living tissue, and they want to preserve as much as possible, reenacting, if possible, the extended harvest they've received from Zip.

Alwan and Khytam, the one woman in the cult, will be downstairs in the sanctum and makeshift lab (which they call the i'tikaf, or shrine) preparing for a last stand. Unknown to Alwan, Khytam is a Proteus op assigned to keep an eye on his unexpectedly successful (and disturbing) cult. If enemy novas make it in to the i'tikaf, Khytam will cower in the corner, leaving Alwan to fight for himself. She will make herself as small and forgettable as possible, hoping that the invaders will be so shocked by the horror of the room that they forget her. Despite speaking perfect French and English, she will wrap the language barrier around herself like a veil (which she also wears) to avoid interrogation by the party. If she is captured, she will quietly cooperate until she is turned over to baseline authorities, whom she will manipulate into freeing her.

The i'tikaf, or holy place, in the basement is both a lab and a place of spiritual retreat for the cultists. It is where they go to partake of the baraka cult from novas they have captured. This they do through ritualized anthropophagy. The octagonal room smells of incense and perfumes, in part to mask other smells.

The nova elite Zip, missing for almost four months, is still alive, despite having large portions of his body "harvested" for baraka. There is nothing left of him below the waist; the cultists cut it away bit by bit, either for auction on the very black market or for the cult's own consumption. The meatier sections of his right arm are also gone. His chest, back and arms display red constellations of bite wounds left by frenzied cultists who couldn't control themselves. Brightly colored silk cords bind Zip tightly to an inclined metal slab. He is fed through one tube that snakes down his throat; another leads from his left arm to a machine that filters his blood for the hormones that will be processed and distilled into mite. A white plastic bucket beneath the table catches blood and waste.

Assuming he wasn't deployed as a last-ditch weapon, Zip is in this room and is completely incoherent when the players find him. Pain has pushed his conscious mind into hiding. His body is so power-starved because of his constant regeneration that his Quantum Leech power will instantly trigger if he is touched by another nova. Stolen quantum points are immediately channeled into his Regeneration enhancement. His energy Absorption power will likewise trigger if an energy current passes anywhere near him. If he is supplied with both quantum and strength from energy, he will soon become coherent. Unfortunately, like a limb that has fallen asleep, coming back from numbness is going to involve an immense amount of suffering that the characters are likely to bear witness to. It could make rescuing him all the more difficult (e.g., the characters are try-

ing to maintain a low profile and Zip starts screaming because of the pain). Even if brought back to full consciousness, Zip will not be able to speak. He is not gagged, but his tongue and his teeth, prized by cultists, are gone. Even with a constant source of quantum, it will take weeks before his tongue grows back, months more for his teeth and eyes, and years for the complete regeneration of his lower body (if he is rescued, Zip will become a very popular research subject for Utopia's parapsychicians).

## Outcomes

If the players are Aberrant- (or Teragen-) friendly, and if they've comported themselves reasonably well, Holden will stay and possibly fight with the players against the cultists. If the party makes it out alive, Holden will keep her word and meet them the next morning, ostensibly to turn over the Slider documents to them. She's not being entirely truthful when she says that. She doesn't have the documents with her. They are at Palazzo Orzaiz in Monte Carlo, being studied by Orzaiz.

In any event, the characters have uncovered the first layer of what could be a much larger operation. Zaid Alwan, if taken alive, can provide information on other baraka cells throughout the Middle East, though his fanaticism makes him extraordinarily resistant to Interrogation attempts (+3 difficulty).

If the players are loyal to Utopia (or if Proteus ops somehow follow her), Holden will lead them into a trap and try to stay out of the way. If she's still there when the smoke clears, she will do her best to cause conflict between the party and Khytam. She has a vague understanding of Khytam's role and abilities (from Slider's notes on the cult hierarchy) and will do what she can to cause conflict between the two sides to give herself a way to escape. If she is unable to escape, she'll go along peacefully. She has a backup plan. She will point out that it is not she that the operatives really want, but the information she received from Slider, which is in Monte Carlo. She will offer to give it to them if they'll let her go.

If Holden led the Proteus ops to the temple, she may call the police at the first sounds of conflict. It stands to reason that they can't kill her if they're stuck in a Moroccan prison. If they player characters survive the cult and the police (which shouldn't be hard — Marrakesh doesn't have enough money to provide its police department with nova-stopping tech), and don't lose track of the very stealthy Holden, she'll point out to them the same thing she would point out to Utopia ops: It's the information that's dangerous to their cause, not her, and while they have her there, the info is in Monte Carlo just waiting for an audience.

If Holden manages to escape from Proteus/Utopia operatives, they'll need to track her down through superiors, contacts or their own cleverness. In any event, they should soon be on their way to Monte Carlo.



## Marrakesh: Day 3

Holden will meet Aberrant characters the next morning. Her paranoia will seem a little more under control, and she will look like herself. She will explain to the party, a little apologetically, that the items she promised them are actually in Monte Carlo, and that she has taken the liberty of arranging for a helicopter to Monte Carlo, should the characters want to accompany her.

Utopia or Proteus ops who have given her the benefit of the doubt can get to Monte Carlo the same way, while hostile operatives will have to do some investigative work to find out that Holden left for Monaco.

## Conclusions

Charlotte Holden has escaped again, but she's given the characters a trail to follow this time. The baraka cult has been uncovered and broken apart. Chiraben has once more been deprived of his prey. But it's not over yet.

The whole trip to Marrakesh brings up a myriad of potential story hooks. The party rescued Zip, but what happened to Wardog? Did he give up his baraka to the cultists? There are at least two other active cells of the baraka cult in the Middle East; what kind of success are they having? If they grow desperate enough, what might they resort to? Why is a generally easygoing Islamic country like Morocco so intolerant of novas? Is someone manipulating public opinion, and if so, why?

## Aftermath

Rescuing Zip will be harder than it seems at first. Assuming they're able to defeat the heavily armed cultists and the muscle-bound Alwan, and provided Khytam does not distract them, they will need to get the ravaged nova out of the temple and out of Marrakesh. They might risk taking him to a hospital, but given his condition and the local attitudes toward novas, they might choose not to. At the Storyteller's discretion, a hospital might insist on calling the police....

If the characters are seen taking Zip anywhere, they may be accused of attempted murder. If Zip is revived in the temple, he will be in enormous amounts of pain as his conscious mind comes to terms with the trauma of the last four months all at once. He will not suffer quietly.

If the characters rescue Zip and actually get him back to Addis Ababa or Monte Carlo, they will be media darlings for at least a week. If they are Aberrants (or Teragen sympathizers), this may be their opportunity to tell the world a thing or two about certain of Utopia's ethically challenged activities. If they are Utopia agents, they will be asked about *everything* they know about the baraka cult in the presence of a nova with the Lie Detector enhancement. The wrong answer could indicate that it's time to switch sides (if it's not already too late)....

If the player characters are Proteus ops, they will have to keep a very low profile to avoid the kind of media frenzy that could make them the topic of career-threatening, nosy investigative journalism.

## Dramatis Personae

### Zaid Alwan

**Background:** Alwan was born in Baghdad, but his parents emigrated to England when he was only seven. He grew up in England, experimented wildly with all available drugs and spent more time in altered states of consciousness than in school; nevertheless, his innate intelligence allowed him to maintain a grade-point average sufficient to get him into a prestigious American university.

After getting his degree he went to Morocco and got a position with Utopia, which he was able to hang onto for nearly a year before his drug problem got him arrested and fired. A shadowy figure named "Efrit" contacted him some days later and asked if he might be interested in a position that would give him direct access to novas and the good things that came from them. He said yes. He was furnished with great quantities of mite and Red 7 and given the task of creating and spreading a cult, a task he has achieved with more success than anyone had expected.



**Image:** Alwan's features are fine, but his complexion is mottled and vaguely unhealthy-looking; his muscles are grotesquely overdeveloped — a side effect of his addiction to the entire pharmacopoeia of nova-derived chemicals.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are simultaneously ayatollah and showman, leader and slave to your vices. You can be extraordinarily resistant to intimidation or coaxing of any sort; if your drug supply is threatened, though, you fold instantly.

Nature: Thrillseeker (Addict)

Allegiance: Baraka cult

Attributes: (figures in parentheses are after an injection of mite/Red 7) Strength 5 (Mega 1), Dexterity 3 (5), Stamina 2 (5), Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3, Appearance 1, Manipulation 4, Charisma 3

Abilities: Brawl 3, Melee 3, Might 5, Drive 2, Endurance 3, Resistance 4, Linguistics 1, Medicine 2, Science 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2, Command 1, Etiquette 1  
Backgrounds: Backing 3, Contacts 3, Devices 4, Followers 4,



Resources 3  
Willpower: 3

## Khytam Manat al-Uzza al-Lat

**Background:** The most powerful nova Zaid Alwan has ever encountered is working as his assistant and he doesn't even know it. Khytam was reared in a strictly Islamic home in Pakistan, and when she erupted at the early age of 16, her abilities caused too much tension in the family and she was quietly sent away to study with Utopia. Utopia found her powers remarkable, but her personality was too introverted for Team Tomorrow, and her strict adherence to Islam, including covering her face with veils, made many assignments awkward or impossible. For many years she simply trained at the Bahrain facility. Eventually her powers and relentless practice took their toll in Taint. She grew callous toward others, became disenchanted with Utopia and left to work undercover in the Islamic world.

Proteus began using her as the blackest of its black ops. Her stealth abilities, zealous adherence to orders and complete lack of conscience made her a powerful tool, and when they realized that the baraka cult led by Alwan was moving in bold and unexpected directions, they placed Khytam as his "nurse assistant" to monitor the situation.



**Image:** Only Khytam's catlike eyes are visible, but they're quite enchanting....

**Roleplaying Hints:** Avoid the characters if at all possible. If forced into a confrontation, play the part of the submissive, ignorant Muslim woman until you can get clear.

Nature: Follower

Allegiance: Proteus (loosely)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5, Appearance 4, Manipulation 5, Charisma 3

Abilities: Legerdemain 4, Stealth 5, Awareness 3, Investigation 2, Intrusion 2, Linguistics 2, Medicine 4, Rapport 3, Subterfuge 4, Perform 4 (impersonation)

Backgrounds: Cipher 3, Contacts 2, Dormancy 4  
Quantum 4, Willpower 9, Taint 4 (sociopathy), Quantum Pool 28

Mega-Attributes: Mega-Intelligence 3 (Enhanced Memory), Mega-Manipulation 4 (Hypnotic Gaze)

Quantum Powers: Domination 4, Telepathy 4

## Benoit "Zip" Goubeaux

**Background:** Growing up in the very rural south of France, Benoit Goubeaux daydreamed for hours about what it might be like to have nova powers. When he erupted at the age of 17, he was thrilled and immediately went to DeVries and took a few small missions to bring in the novabucks he'd heard so much about. His first two missions went well, so he signed on as an elite mercenary fighting for Algeria. Zip was an immediate French cultural hero. The French loved his cleverness and good looks, and his action figure sold very well in France (though nowhere else, oddly enough). And then, after a relatively brief career, he disappeared. The mystery of his disappearance has made him the tragic beefcake icon, the James Dean of his generation, with French schoolgirls (and boys) displaying his picture prominently in their lockers, on their backpacks, and anywhere else it will fit.

DeVries management agreed that he was a bit green to have gone into heavy combat so quickly and claim to have learned a lesson. For Goubeaux, though, it wasn't the combat that proved to be a problem, but his first R&R. He went to Marrakesh (they speak French there) and was having a lovely time of it until he was ambushed by the baraka cult. They overestimated his resilience and nearly killed him with their initial barrage of bullets, but his ability to regenerate saved his life and promptly became the curse of his existence. Nothing pleases an anthropophagous cult more than a victim who regenerates....



**Image:** Zip was quite handsome before being captured by the baraka cult. Now, at the age of 20, he is emaciated, his eyes have been plucked out by cultists wanting "Al'lah's vision," his mouth is toothless and collapsed, his complexion is ashen, and he appears close to

## ABERRANT

death. His body is covered with half-dollar-sized wounds that, upon inspection, appear to have been caused by human bites. His body comes to a ragged end just below the navel; his lower torso, including pelvis, has been cut away and either sold or devoured by the cultists. Mega-Stamina is the only reason he is still alive.

At the point player characters discover him, Zip isn't really conscious. Blood loss and four months of vivisection have pushed him into a state resembling complete autism.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Gibber, twitch and scream.

**Nature:** Gallant

**Allegiance:** DeVries

**Attributes:** Numbers in parentheses are his stats when the characters find him. Dexterity 5 (1), Stamina 4, Strength 3 (1), Intelligence 4, Perception 3 (1), Wits 4, Appearance 4 (0), Charisma 3 (1), Manipulation 3 (1)  
**Abilities:** Brawl 2, Might 2, Athletics 3, Stealth 2, Investigation 4, Computer 3, Linguistics 3, Science 1, Raport 1, Style 2

**Backgrounds:** Attunement 1, Backing 1, Contacts 2, Node 3, Quantum 2, Willpower 6, Taint 3, Quantum Pool 24 (currently 1)

**Mega-Attributes:** Mega-Dexterity 2 (Enhanced Movement), Mega-Stamina 2 (Regeneration), Mega-Intelligence 2 (Mental Prodigy: Investigative)

**Quantum Powers:** Quantum Leech 3 (Extra: Range), Absorption 2 (electricity, Extra: Energy Magnet)

## Other Characters

### Baraka Cultists

**Attributes:** Strength 5, Stamina 3, all others 2.

**Abilities:** Brawl 2, Firearms 1, Might 5, Melee 2, Resistance 4, Stealth 1

**Willpower:** 3

**Equipment:** Mite (gives Mega-Strength 1 equivalent).

**Notes:** The baraka cultists are heavily armed with firearms and makeshift melee weapons (pipes, knives, whatever).

## PRESS RELEASE

MONACO — Founded in 1974 by His Serene Highness, Prince Rainier III, father of our own Prince Albert, the 34th annual International Circus Festival of Monte Carlo will gather some of the world's finest circus performers. Twenty-two circus acts, selected from a pool of over 400 entries, will be performed from June 21-28, 2008, by artists from 14 different countries competing for the coveted Gold or Silver Clown award.

Highlights of the Festival include Portugal's infamous "rola rola number," listed in the Guinness Book of World Records; Canada's Cirque du Soleil, which will execute a number designed especially for novices to perform at this Festival; and the return of Michael Peeler, the famed Barnum Circus clown who won the Silver Clown award last year, representing the United States. Also performing under the big top are presenters from China, France, Great Britain, Mongolia, Poland, Czech Republic, Russia, Switzerland, the Ukraine and, for the first time, Brazil.

Cirque performers who dream of taking their place in this prestigious competition prepare for years in hopes of winning the Monte Carlo International Circus Festival's highest honor, the Gold Clown award. Each act will be judged for its technical difficulty and creativity by a jury composed of seasoned circus professionals from around the world. This year, Alain DuRosier, the world-renowned nova acrobat, will join the Festival's jury committee.

Presiding over the jury, H.S.H. Prince Albert will open the star-studded festivities.

For reservations, call the Société des Bains de Mer at (800) 221-4708

# La Grande Vie

Theme: Control is the theme that pops up repeatedly in "La Grande Vie." While Monte Carlo markets itself as one of the premiere vacation destinations in Europe, characters will notice again and again that the fun here is artificial, obligatory, and forced. The latest successor to the Grimaldi dynasty of Monaco is Prince Albert, who has imposed a very simple rule: "Monaco must have total security." To this end, there is one police officer for every one hundred residents, 24-hour video surveillance of the entire principality, and swift and aggressive enforcement of even minor laws and traffic violations. Nothing is allowed to imperil the harmony and "total security" of Monaco. Over this infrastructure of control, Monaco stretches a thin veneer of mass-produced "fun" for the very wealthy: Casinos are omnipresent, every other week is the Festival of some bland old saint or Monegasque ruler, and sporting events are occasions for large groups of strangers to spontaneously break into song. Perceptive characters will find the combination of iron-fisted security and contrived "fun" surreal or unsettling. They should.

Monte Carlo has carved a niche for itself out of the southernmost barb of the French Riviera. It sells itself to Europe as an exclusive (i.e., snobby) and prestigious (i.e., expensive) getaway for the wealthy. While that would seem to make it perfect for many newly rich novas, it doesn't. While a few of the oldest novas may enjoy some of Monaco's attractions, the city caters mostly to the ossified rich who need to be coddled and entertained every moment. Most novas are sufficiently adept at finding or making their own fun that places like Monte Carlo seem both dull and contrived. As Count Orzaiz says, "It's a nice place to live, but I wouldn't want to visit there."

If the players rescued Zip from the baraka cultists, they will have a very difficult time keeping a low profile. The French will love them. French and Monegasque citizens will invite them to every party, every festival, every little summer parade through Monte Carlo, and if the players decline then they will be dismissed icily by the insulted parties.

## Behind the Scenes

Monte Carlo is neither as accepting of novas as Ibiza, nor as hostile as Marrakesh. On the down side, it's nearly impossible to get away with anything because of the constant video surveillance of the entire principality. On the bright (?) side, it is Count Orzaiz's territory, and he does have connections to the Grimaldi dynasty....

In Monte Carlo, if the players are Aberrants with Holden, then Chiraben will find them shortly after they land. He will make a bold strike at Holden to prevent her from giving the characters the information given to her by Slider. Chiraben is desperate at this point and will use every trick up his sleeve to kill Holden and possibly the characters. Just as things start to get ugly, Holden will turn invisible, Chiraben will attempt to flee, and the characters will get stuck with the blame just as the Monegasque police arrive *en masse*. If subdued, the players will be incarcerated in a very clean,

very well-lit reinforced nova holding facility. Note that official Utopia operatives will have a good deal of clout in the region, but under no circumstances are to resist law-enforcement officers of any sort.

If the players were gracious enough to receive Count Orzaiz's card when they were in Ibiza (and kept it), then it will come in handy here. Their connection to the count will save them at this point — either they'll call him or the authorities will find the card in their possessions and call him. In either case, provided they haven't killed any Monegasque police officers, the party will grudgingly be released. This trick works only once, however.

Rude or aggressive players who didn't get the count's card in Ibiza will have to make their own way free or wait to be rescued by other agencies. Such is the price of boorishness.

When the characters get out of jail, they will have no idea how to contact Holden. If they are Aberrants, she will contact them and arrange to meet them. She's near the heliport on a cliff overlooking the ocean so that she can unload her information on the characters before disappearing.

If the characters are Utopia operatives, they'll be contacted by Utopia. Their agents will have intercepted transmissions from Holden to known Aberrants stating both her whereabouts and her willingness to part with the information Slider gave to her. The materials must be recovered at all cost. The capture of Holden is to be considered a secondary objective at this point.

If the characters are Proteus operatives, they'll be contacted by a furious Chiraben, who will now have orders to work with them. He will inform the party of her whereabouts and tell them that they'd better get to her before he does if they want anything from her before he kills her.

If the players are Aberrants and do nothing to change the story's outcome, "La Grande Vie" will end with Holden walking into Palazzo Orzaiz with Raoul and the doors closing behind them, signifying her new association with the Teragen.

If the players are Utopia or Proteus operatives, it'll end with Holden handing over the info an diving into the ocean while turning invisible. The ocean is her playground, and she can be anybody, anywhere.

## Monte Carlo: Day 1

It's night when the characters arrive. The dark ocean ends abruptly at the densely packed lights of Monte Carlo. A light warm rain is falling and the air smells clean.

If the characters are Aberrants, they will be arriving in the same copter as Holden. Holden will get out last, and before her foot so much as touches the ground, Chiraben lunges at her out of the shadows. He is enraged at the merry chase she has put him through. His rational mind tells him to wait until Holden is alone, but the tainted part of his brain insists on attacking now. Holden, with her Mega-Dexterity and Enhanced Initiative, will have no problem ducking and rolling under the helicopter and from there turning invisible and escaping. That leaves Chiraben and the players.

Even though it will be broken up, this should be the



climactic showdown between the player characters and Chiraben. Allow the battle to go right up to the edge of someone dying and then bring in the Monegasque police. Having the police arrive so quickly may seem a stretch, but it's not. Monaco has one police officer for every hundred citizens, cameras watch most of the principality, and the helipad is just a few blocks from the palace of Prince Albert Grimaldi; violence so close to the palace will be taken very seriously. Chiraben, fearing for his black-op status more than anything, will make a run for it, possibly taking a bullet or two for his efforts. If the characters try to resist arrest, they will face a SWAT team of Monaco's finest (treat as Crisis Response Specialist, from the **Aberrant** Appendix, p. 283) and Prince Albert's special bodyguard, DeVries nova Seraphelle.

## The Proteus Option

Proteus will fly its own operatives to Monte Carlo. Agents will be given directions to retrieve any information that Holden was given by Landers and then apprehend Holden (or kill her if absolutely necessary).

The characters will find Holden strangely easily. She's out walking the streets of Monte Carlo in front of the casinos and not even bothering to disguise herself. The trick: It's Chiraben. Just as he was doing in Ibiza, the assassin is hoping to draw in friends or acquaintances of Holden's whom he can interrogate and then kill. If Chiraben is apprehended by Proteus, he will, reluctantly, reveal himself to the characters, possibly filling them in on information that he knows: Holden's friendship with Vance, her possible connection to the Teragen through Raoul Orzaiz, etc.

The Monegasque police hit the party hard and fast. They pride themselves on their counternova tactics, and this is their chance to put that training into action. There will be approximately three officers per character, plus the DeVries nova Seraphelle. Officers will try to subdue first and will treat the wounds of characters who go down in combat — Monte Carlo doesn't want novas dying on its soil. The Monegasque police are disturbingly effective and professional, and they will be cordial at all times. If subdued, the characters will be taken into custody and treated for injuries. Any possessions they have will be taken from them, and they will be placed in Monaco's brand-new nova holding facility. The cells are airtight, brightly lit, and very thoroughly reinforced; even characters with Mega-Strength will have a tough time breaking free, though it can be done. Note that Utopia agents who resist the Monegasque police will be in grave trouble with their organization — scandal is the last thing the Project wants right now.

## Monte Carlo: Day 2

Assuming the characters were captured or allowed themselves to be taken into custody, the day begins in a confinement chamber. **Aberrant** and Teragen characters will receive a visitor: Raphael Orzaiz, the very distinguished father of Raoul Orzaiz, will arrive to take custody of the characters. Raoul hasn't returned yet from his visit to Ibiza, and his father received a call from the police telling him that friends of Raoul's were being held at the Monte Carlo nova confinement facility. Raphael is one of the few people who could get the characters out of this predicament, but because he is a very popular and powerful figure (and he *is* royalty), he can do it. He asks the characters if they would like to come back to Palazzo Orzaiz with him and perhaps go out to the circus later on. If they agree, he gets them released. He tells them on the drive to the palazzo that Raoul has been formally cleared of the charges from "that Ibiza fiasco," and will be returning that afternoon.

At the palazzo, Raphael will offer the characters something to eat and then formally introduce the characters to "a dear friend of my son's who will also be coming to the circus with us this afternoon, Ms. Charlotte Holden."

Holden will be looking especially beautiful. She's using her Mega-Appearance to full effect, and it's quite amazing.

"I thought it might be you," she says. "Raoul has the documents in safekeeping. He should be able to get those to you as soon as we get back from the circus. I look forward to getting rid of them. They've been nothing but trouble."

The front door opens before she can say anymore, and Raoul walks in the front door, smiling "A party! Perfect!" Should the characters be so rude as to ask for the documents before the circus, Holden and both Orzaizes will make it clear to the characters that they just made a terrible *faux pas*.

The characters will get the definite impression that Holden and Raoul are romantically involved at this point (which they are). This is an opportune time to attempt a capture or kill of Charlotte Holden; however, characters who attempt such a thing will be blowing their cover



(if Proteus operatives) or breaking international law and bringing a severe blot on their organization's reputation (if Aberrants or Utopia operatives).

If the characters and Raoul engage in discussion, Raphael will go to get ready for the afternoon's outing. The characters are invited to attend the circus as part of the Orzaiz entourage. A limousine large enough for the entire party will take them to the enormously crowded Monte Carlo circus festival. The Counts Orzaiz will clearly know everyone of any importance and the party's progress will be slowed down by repeated conversations and extended greetings.

The Circus Festival should seem odd to the characters for any number of reasons. Going to the circus may seem an odd thing to do at this time. Stranger still, the Festival will be full of adults in evening wear. The control theme of "La Grande Vie" will be right on the surface here. Monegasque citizens and tourists alike will be filing in, directed by smiling, friendly police officers. His Serene Highness Prince Albert will be sitting above the spectacle in his box of bulletproof glass with his bodyguard Seraphelle.

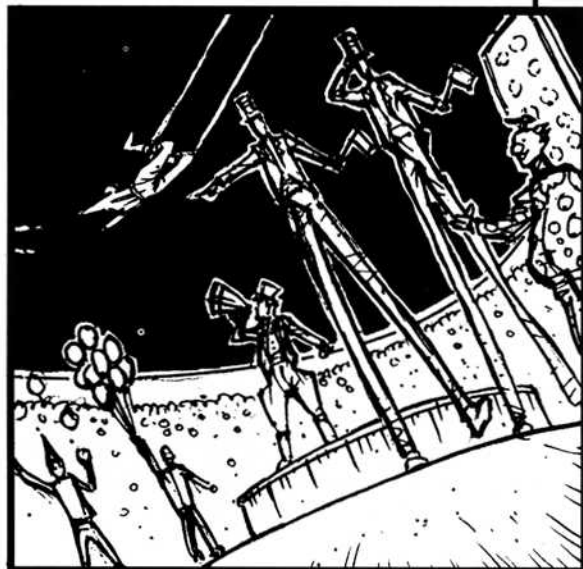
Orzaiz and Holden will be on the interior or the row, and the characters will have seats on the outside of the row. Circus performers are sprinkled throughout the audience clowning with the crowd. One such performer, in full clown regalia, is sitting across the aisles from the characters. They may notice that he's not very funny. They may also notice that his eyes are glowing bright green. He keeps looking over at the characters.

Chiraben will not do anything in this setting but intimidate (a thing for which he has a true talent, and which is actually helped by the clown suit). If the characters say anything to Orzaiz, he will look down the aisle at Chiraben, whisper something unintelligible to Holden, and then make a cell-phone call. He will then tell the characters to comport themselves in a manner appropriate to novas.

The Storyteller is encouraged to let the suspense grow for as long as possible. Chiraben remains across the aisle, staring at the characters, for the entire performance. The acts are the best in the world. Acrobats, contortionists, aerialists, clowns, and geeks all demonstrate their skills for the party, and Chiraben glares at the characters throughout.

When the performance is over, Chiraben begins following the party again. The players are free to attempt to defuse or escalate the situation as they will — Orzaiz wishes to test how they react to pressure. If the characters wish to escalate the encounter into a violent one, they can; Orzaiz won't stop them, though the Monagesque police and Seraphelle certainly will attempt to. Orzaiz and Holden will defend themselves vigorously if attacked at any point.

If the characters do nothing or unsuccessfully parlay with Chiraben, Orzaiz excuses himself from the characters for one moment and, smiling the whole while, faces Chiraben and starts chatting amiably. Holden will place the characters between herself and the assassin. She will be watching him and scanning the room for other threats. She will be too distracted to hold a conversation at this point. If the characters pay any attention at all, it only



takes a standard Awareness roll to hear the conversation between Orzaiz and Chiraben. Orzaiz is buying off Chiraben. The Count makes full use of his Mega-Social Attributes at this point, and Chiraben is helpless in the face of the smiling social juggernaut that is Raoul Orzaiz.

The characters may think that they are the only ones privy to this conversation, but Orzaiz doesn't. He knows perfectly well that the police are videotaping this friendly public encounter. Orzaiz suspects, and rightly so, that H.S.H. Albert and his bodyguard are watching it up in his box. So he's killing two birds with one stone. He is buying off his lover's hitman (and at a very cheap price, considering), and he is giving the baselines a model of how a Teragen member operates. Orzaiz is the quintessential PR man and never misses an opportunity to score points for his side.

When the encounter is over, Chiraben looks at the party one last time, shifts right there into his normal street appearance, smiles, and disappears into the crowd.

Orzaiz will take the characters to dinner at a fine restaurant and offer them lodging for the night. Holden tells them she has a present for them back at the palazzo.

If they accept these offers, Holden hands them an envelope full of photocopied papers and two microchips: the complete annotated notes sent by Slider before her death.

At some point in the course of the evening Holden will explain that she's going to help Raoul with his Teragen activities. If the characters have become friendly with her, she may confide that she hopes to pry Orzaiz from the grip of the Teragen. Next morning, the clouds have cleared and it's a beautiful day in Monte Carlo. Orzaiz and Holden say their good-byes to the party. This is where everything begins.

## Aftermath

Unless the players have affected the story's outcome, Charlotte Holden has chosen the company of Raoul Orzaiz — and that of the Teragen — over that of the Aberrants. While her reasons are more romantic than ideological, the characters (unless they were Teragen-friendly) have lost her.

The documents in Holden's possession largely consist of speculation on the part of the deceased Slider. However, they do provide several points of interest, including a list of about two dozen names in Utopia, as well as various private concerns and independents, whom Slider suspects of being involved with the conspiracy. In particular, T2M leader Caestus Pax and the Triton Foundation are singled out as being potential dupes or active agents of the conspiracy. Additionally, information on the baraka cult's activities will enable characters to trace the cult more readily (two dice to any Investigation rolls into the cult's activities).

If these documents fall into the hands of Aberrants, Directive agents or the like, any Investigation rolls made against Utopia will gain an additional die. Utopian agents who examine the documents may find themselves questioning the motivations of the agency, and Utopian higher-ups will want the documents turned over to them as evidence. If Utopia members have befriended Raoul Orzaiz, he may well try to turn them to the side of the Teragen.

If the players wound or kill Orzaiz, they make an enemy of Holden and certain factions of the Teragen. Alternatively, if a male character with Mega-Social Attributes has befriended or fascinated Holden earlier in the story, he may prove to be a romantic rival of the count; indeed, sufficiently good roleplaying and several resisted Social rolls may sway Holden to the Aberrants' cause instead of Orzaiz's. In this case, Orzaiz will prove to be a dangerous adversary in the future.

Chiraben may or may not remain a Proteus operative. In either case, he will not go after Holden again. If the Storyteller chooses, he could extrapolate from this encounter other conversations that may take place between the Count and the assassin. Will Chiraben become a Proteus liability due to Teragen connections? Will Orzaiz hire Chiraben for jobs other Teragen the subtlety to carry out properly? Will Chiraben grow resistant to the Count's smooth talk and decide that it's time to make his personal strike against the Teragen? Only the Storyteller can say for sure.

## Dramatis Personae

### Seraphelle

**Background:** Seraphelle shrouds her past and present in an aura of glamorous mystery. As a high-end operative for DeVries' European operations, she specializes in protecting the beautiful, famous and (most importantly) wealthy. A social butterfly par excellence, Seraphelle is uncompromisingly professional when on duty; she can stun potential threats with witty banter, veiled threats, or a Mega-Strength karate chop.

**Image:** Seraphelle lives up to her name. An angelic blond with flashing blue eyes, always splendidly dressed in silver active or fashion wear, Seraphelle is the perfect, *tres sophistique* DeVries poster girl.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Simultaneously sexy and coolly professional, you prefer to defuse situations as elegantly as possible. Never commit to a battle — verbal, physical or otherwise — unless you're sure of yourself and your opponent. Once engaged, though, you don't stop until you've won. Toward your peers you are coolly flirtatious and charming; toward your lessers and fans you maintain an aura of gracious, polite untouchability.

**Nature:** Gallant

**Allegiance:** DeVries

**Attributes:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4

**Abilities:** Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Biz 1, Command 2, Etiquette 3, Investigation 1, Martial Arts 4, Rapport 2, Style 3

**Backgrounds:** Backing 3, Cipher 4, Contacts 5, Dormancy 3, Followers (agent) 1, Influence 2, Resources 4, Quantum 3, Willpower 7, Taint 2, Quantum Pool 26

**Mega-Attributes:** Mega-Strength 2 (Thunderclap), Mega-Stamina 3 (Resiliency, Durability), Mega-Wits 2 (Quickness x2, Enhanced Initiative), Mega-Charisma 1

(Dreadful Mien, Awe-Inspiring), Mega-Appearance 1 (Sooth)

Quantum Powers: Force Field 4, Flight 3

## Orzaiz the Elder

**Background:** It becomes clear upon meeting Raphael Orzaiz precisely where Raoul gets his charm. The distinguished gentleman responds to just about everything with a pleasant demeanor and a gentle sense of humor. If one or more of the characters are women with Appearance scores above 3, the smiling older man will shower attention on them — offering them candies, rides in his Jaguar, or dinner — while carefully skirting the edge of lasciviousness. He believes that even women who claim otherwise deeply enjoy being fawned over. It's an approach that seems to have worked: He has nine children by five different women, Raoul being the oldest (and his favorite).

Raphael is quite news-savvy and fully aware of his son's Teragen affiliations; he fully believes it's a phase that Raoul will grow out of "in the fullness of time." If pressed on the issue

he'll shrug and change the subject.

**Image:** Raphael is a trim 50-year-old man with salt-and-pepper hair and a neatly trimmed moustache. His tailored white suits are a trademark of his around Monte Carlo.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are witty, elegantly blasé and completely unflappable. Even if threatened (for whatever reason), you just roll his eyes and sigh mournfully; you have had great adventures, known beautiful women, reared talented children and traveled to the best

places on Earth, and if you're going to die at 50 at the hands of some super-pup, then so be it.

**Nature:** Caregiver

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Appearance 3, Manipulation 4, Charisma 5

**Abilities:** Awareness 3, Academics 3, Bureaucracy 2, Finance 4, Linguistics 2, Arts 2, Rapport 4, Command 1, Etiquette 4 (Social Graces)

**Backgrounds:** Allies 4, Contacts 5, Influence 3, Resources 5

**Willpower** 7



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