

# The Unspeakable Oath

issue seven

four dollars

for Call of Cthulhu



Blair

Reynolds

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The Unspeakable Oath

Fall, 1992

Issue 7

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This issue, column logos (such as the one at the top of the next page) were done by Dennis Detwiler. This issue's logos depict scenes that occurred when Dennis ran the Masks of Nyarlathotep campaign for his players, and so you may find several familiar!

*The Unspeakable Oath*, volume 2, number 3, Fall 1992 (whole number 7) is published quarterly by Pagan Publishing, 403A N. 8th St., Columbia, MO 65201. Individual contents are ©1992 by the respective creators. Package is ©1992 John Tynes. The term "Call of Cthulhu"® represents Chaosium, Inc.'s trademarked horror role-playing game, and is used with their kind permission. The term "Cyberpunk"® represents R. Talsorian's trademarked game of dark-future role-playing, and is used with their kind permission. The contents of TUO are not to be considered "official" for Call of Cthulhu or Cyberpunk, but instead represent suggestions and opinions by the writers for your personal use with those games. Due to a mistake, proper credit was not given for the "Message In A Bottle" column in TUO6. Gary Thomas' piece illustrated his interpretation of the poem "Arlyeh," by Brian Lumley. "Arlyeh" is ©1992 Brian Lumley. Sorry about that! Mi-Go mind control...

## The Dread Page Of Azathoth



John Tynes

"Censorship Sucks Is Very Good For You"  
—a button worn at the Pagan Publishing booth,  
GenCon/Origins 1992

**C**ensorship, perceptions, and money: three volatile issues that seem to strike the *Oath* moreso than most gaming magazines. From the first issue, we've made a point of pushing the envelope of what was allowable in gaming. There's a constant fear among game companies that a big-time backlash is always on the horizon, from the people that equate gaming with Satanism, murder, suicide, and worse. TUO has tended towards subject matter and (especially) artwork that makes some people nervous. We don't do this out of any great drive to tilt at windmills; such things largely occur instead as solely artistic or editorial decisions. TUO is produced in an area of consideration that includes the quality of the magazine itself, but only rarely the perceptions of it by the gaming public and industry.

So, we get heat sometimes. This summer's GenCon/Origins convention in Milwaukee is a case in point.

GenCon is owned and operated by TSR, Inc., the publishers of *Dungeons & Dragons* and many other lousy games. TSR is, however, responsible for the success of this industry. Their continued success and professionalism (at least on the surface) has made gaming acceptable in many quarters, including financial ones. Due in large part to TSR's success, companies such as FASA and White Wolf can get their games sold in

mainstream bookstores across the nation.

If you've been to GenCon in the past, you're no doubt aware that TSR always takes a large amount of floor space in the dealer's hall, right in the center where floor traffic is the highest. After all, it's their convention.

This past summer, at GenCon/Origins, TSR took a *huge* amount of floor space. At one point several large companies threatened to boycott GenCon if TSR didn't scale back their plans—thereby allowing other, smaller companies to be present at the convention. TSR did so (for whatever reason).

At the convention, they still occupied about a sixth of the total space. In this space, they erected a gigantic castle made of styrofoam, costing (reportedly) more than \$200,000. As the convention got started, they made it clear that this was *their* show.

Why? The answer is money. Word in the industry was that TSR was planning on going public; that is, offering stock in the company to investors. This could mean a substantial investment in the company by big-money people, which in turn would allow TSR to expand and offer more products, higher production values, more advertising—you name it.

This is not a bad thing. After all: as TSR goes, so goes gaming. The better TSR does, the better the rest of the industry does, because moreso than any other company TSR has the ability to bring in new people to the hobby.

The reason for the huge castle and the sucking up of floor space that otherwise would have been used by other gaming companies was—so the rumor went—that some of these big-money investors would be touring GenCon, and TSR wanted to show them who the big boy was in the industry.

This, in my opinion, led to some other rather unfortunate events.

The morning of the first day of the convention, about half-an-hour before the doors opened, representatives from TSR came by and informed us that the cover of our book "Courting Madness" was offensive and violated convention guidelines for what was saleable. In addition, the poster we had displayed showing the cover of the book also had to be taken down.

Why? That's a damn good question.

We asked just what, specifically, was offensive; we asked to see the guidelines that TSR went by in making such decisions. The TSR representatives could not identify any portion of the artwork as being specifically offensive, and they said that, in fact, there *were* no guidelines for what was saleable—yet we violated these

non-existent guidelines anyway.

We debated and argued back and forth, as the clock ticked down to the time when the doors would open and the gamers would come flooding in. Finally, we suggested that we would leave only two copies of "Courting Madness" on display, and we would put black duct tape over the cover art on both to avoid offense. This satisfied them, and we did as we agreed.

Notably, they did not have any problems with our other covers or posters; not the graphic violence of TUO1, not the cover nudity of TUO4 or TUO6. It was only "Courting Madness" that they objected to. Since they themselves were selling the demeaning and offensive "Women Of Fantasy" calendar (a collection of semi-nude female pin-ups) perhaps even they couldn't make that big of a stink.

Faced with the proposition of selling a book with no cover, we did the next best thing: we took advantage of it. I went to Kinko's and rented a computer, using it to produce a bunch of "CENSORED" labels.

These we taped over the books and the poster.

Needless to say, word spread on the convention floor and as a result we got a lot of interest. Many people came by just because they heard we had a "censored" book, and sales improved as a result.

Others were not so lucky. One company had, as part of their display, a guillotine. There was nothing gross about it—no fake body or severed heads—but TSR demanded that they remove the guillotine or be thrown out of the convention. Why?

Because it "promoted death."

God forbid this should happen at a gaming convention, where 98% of the products and activities present involved killing, death, violence and murder, often on large scales and often in graphic detail.

God forbid a gaming company would be accused of "promoting death" by another gaming company whose entire product line consists of games in which the players pretend to kill each other.

God forbid any of the big-money investors should waltz by and be disturbed by any of these things.

At any rate, GenCon/Origins was a great success for us, and I'd like to publicly thank TSR for their own

part in contributing to the attention our booth received as a result of their actions. Thanks a bunch.



But it wasn't over with that, of course. Our problems continued, thankfully without the involvement of TSR. In TUO6, one of our contributors was Richard Watts, a talented Australian writer who has written a lot of CoC and Stormbringer material for Chaosium.

When Richard submitted an article to us, he included a brief paragraph for our contributor's page. What was printed was taken from what he sent, to wit:

"Richard Watts...[is] a member of Queer Nation, Australia's radical gay-rights movement. Richard

writes us that he can't be trusted around drugs or attractive men." Needless to say, Richard never shies from being confrontational, and is very outspoken about his beliefs.

One of our wholesale distributors reported to us that a couple of the gaming shops they service had outraged par-

"...the parents said it sounded like this guy was going to pick up their son, rape him, and make him do drugs."

ents coming in, complaining about the above paragraph in TUO6. The implication, in the words of the distributor representative I spoke to, was that "the parents said it sounded like this guy was going to pick up their son, rape him, and make him do drugs."

What? I felt like I was on another planet. Had they read the same magazine I had edited and published?

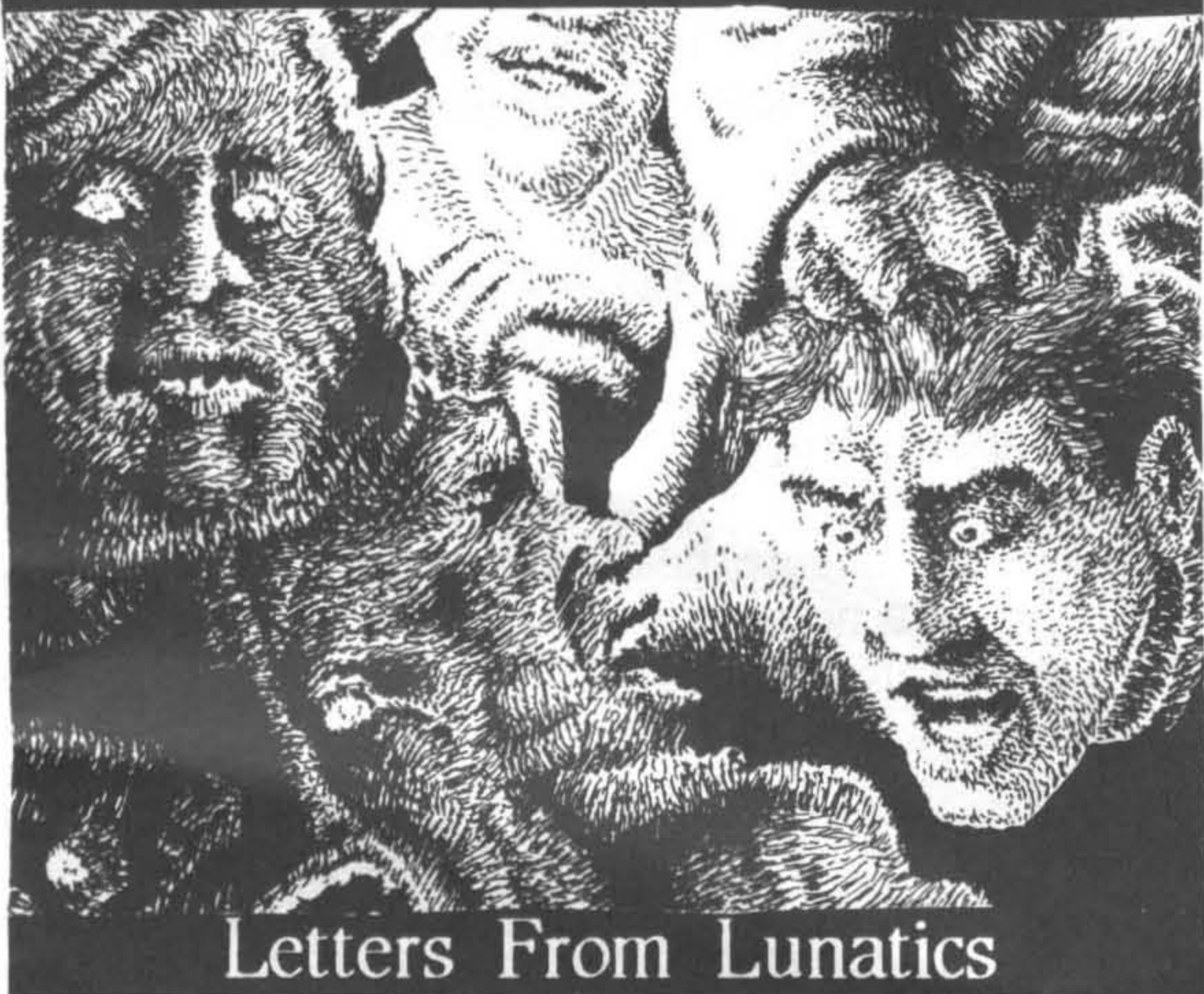
The distributor expressed his concern that this had appeared on the contributor's page. He said that if it had appeared on an editorial page (such as this one) that would be fine, but it wasn't right to print this on the contributor's page—it sounded like an advertisement for someone's way of life.

In the past I've mentioned on the contributor's page that Steve Hatherley is a civil engineer. Should parents be worried as a result that Steve is going to survey their house? Is this an advertisement for civil engineers?

I'll tell you what it is—it's damn stupid. Anyone who cannot see the humor (and the message) behind Richard's description of himself—which is, after all, what the contributor's page is for—is welcome to find other reading material for their children.

I suggest they try *Dragon* instead. ☺

## Scream And Scream Again



### Letters From Lunatics

**G**race Under Pressure" [from TUO2 and now *Courting Madness*] was awesome. I thought you might like to know what happened this weekend because we did a few things differently. Overall, it was very effective, and we had a great time.

*[Editor's note: sections of Maria's letter have been deleted to avoid giving away the scenario to those who haven't played it]*

Well, we ran the game in an Edwardian house in Hayward, CA. There was a huge sliding wood panel that we closed to separate the dining room and the living room. The living room was the lower deck of the Wallaby [the ocean-floor research vessel] and the dining room was the upper deck. We turned off all the lights, and used only green and pink glow sticks for illumination. On the upper deck we also had a special mag light with a yellow light at one end and a red light on the other that flashed like the light on a police car. A special closet was one of the Joeys [mini-sub], and whenever we went out in our diving gear, we went outside and walked around the house, "checking the sub." When the minisub crossed into the anomaly, the players went upstairs to the big open hallway.

Jeff (my husband) and Chris Hockabout (our bud) ran the game with walkie-talkie headsets. The "crew" had their own set of two walkie-talkies so that whoever remained in the Wallaby could communicate with whoever was in one of the Joeys, etc. The Keepers carried pen lights to reference the adventure, while we

had only the glow sticks. The living room had only the table in the middle and on it the map of the sub. The crowning effect was the whale song tape we played on a boom box hidden in the middle of the house. All the pinging and crying and the lone flashing lights, not to mention the isolation of the closed-off dining room, just heightened the events of the game.

The two most sanity-blasting experiences I had (as a player) were when Arthur and I were alone on the upper deck and [deleted]. Jeff made some pretty awesome sound effects over the walkie talkie, and our blood curdled. As soon as the walkie talkie went dead, we looked at each other and screamed in unison. [deleted] We were all alone, and something was scraping across our hull...

The second, and probably worst, experience was when [deleted]. Bruce said "I don't know what it is, but it's real big on the radar." We each grabbed something: I grabbed the black box and the video tapes. As I ran to [deleted] everyone called to me "Steve! Steve! Hurry!" because [deleted]. I could feel the "boom...boom...boom" of [deleted]. As I ran down the corridor [deleted] past all the port holes, huge dark shapes eclipsed the windows.

"Do you look?" asked Chris with an evil smile.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!" I screamed, looking straight ahead. "What do you think?"

[deleted]

What a night. We started at 9:30pm and ended at 3am. Thanks for the terror.

**Maria Douglas**

**via the Internet**

*[Maria's reactions (and SAN loss) are fairly typical. At conventions we usually run it in about three-and-a-half hours.]*



Scott Aniolowski is quite right *about "Leather on Willow," TUO5*. I am suitably humbled—there are plenty of Mythos stories set over here. But I still stand by what I said in the article about the Mythos in England—it sits somewhat uneasily here.

Personally (and this is another subject altogether) I don't rate the Campbell and Lumley stories especially high. When I think of the Cthulhu Mythos, Glaaki, Xiclotl, and Yibb-Tstll are not the creatures I think of. To me, they're nothing but fringe creatures. They make for some okay stories, but I find they lack the flavour and interest of the "mainstream" Mythos creations. I certainly have never had any desire to use them in my

games.

That's the lettercol out of the way, now what did I think of CoC5½? Well, some of it I liked, and some of it I didn't. Without going into detail, I liked the ideas, but hated the mechanics.

I find most of the modifications unnecessarily complex—I like simplicity, I like it a lot. (Sometimes I think gamers like to complicate things for the sake of complexity itself.) More fundamentally, I don't see that tinkering with the system is the best way to make CoC "campaignable."

The problem instead lies with the scenarios. Or, more accurately, trying to tie published scenarios into some sort of campaign framework. It is easier to run these scenarios separately, with new investigators, rather than contrive a hook on which to begin the adventure. And Call of Cthulhu scenarios are often too good not to be run.

Instead, I would like to see the birth of the campaign framework. This is a broad campaign outline, including crucial characters, scenes and events. But more importantly, it includes essays on incorporating other (previously published) scenarios into the campaign. For example, The Stars Are Right! suffers in that there is nothing to tie the scenarios together. A campaign framework would do that.

At first glance the Randolph Pierce Foundation appears to solve this. However, the foundation lessens the horror and isolation of the game. One of Cthulhu's best elements is that there is **nobody** to turn to for help. Not the police. Not the government. And especially not a well-equipped foundation.

**Steve Hatherley** Halton, Leeds, England

*I know (and guessed in advance) that many experienced Keepers might be leery of the Foundation, for the reasons Steve cites. I think what you have to remember is that the Foundation (or anything like it) is still up to you to use as you like. It's not something for the players to use against you—"We just call in so-and-so to cast Dismiss Bunyip and beat the scenario"—but instead a tool to help you tell coherent, connected stories. Anyone who's run (or played in) Masks of Nyarlathotep knows what a logistical nightmare it is, as you travel all over the globe to strange places. The death rate is high; as investigators die and need to be replaced, credibility suffers. "Well, Thurston's dead. Bob, roll up the hotel clerk and he'll join us." This kind of crap really detracts from the experience of a campaign. The ability to wire the Foundation, who can then send someone else or put the investigators in contact with*

*someone nearby, makes things more sensible. This shouldn't be abused, but it simplifies things. And the Foundation is only as "well-equipped" as you want it to be. No more, no less—it's still your own game, you know.]*



I am sorry Adam Crossingham did not like TUO5. I take his point about Alfred Watkins' earlier works, but they were minor works in comparison to The Old Straight Track. Besides, I'm sure the readers would not have liked or felt this data necessary. I also think Adam may be correct in his comment about Alfred Watkins not being a Reverend. That title came up somewhere in the discussions about this material and it simply stuck, though the criticism is somewhat petty.

Michael Tice's work on Lunatic Asylums was good. It seems well-researched and informative. I cannot praise anyone enough who takes such time and effort in his work. That article must have taken ages, unless the man is very well-informed. Well done.

**G.R. Theobalds** Southampton, England

*[Some players here put the article to good use when an investigator went insane—they promptly shipped him off to the asylum with the worst cure rate and highest death rate in the state! Callous bastards.]*



I just found TUO5 at the local games shop.

"Hmmm," I said. "This looks like just the thing for an upstart Keeper like myself. Low-priced, too."

I bought it, took it home, and began to read. My brain melted after the first page.

"Hmmm," I said. "It seems my brain is melting."

Well, not really. I read it cover-to-cover. TUO must have done something to my brain, though, because I'm hooked. Thanks.

**Joel Patton**

Travelers Rest, SC



I picked up and enjoyed issues 5 and 6 of TUO, especially the Blair Reynolds artwork, the Paranoia Files and Mark Morrison's column. However, I was peeved by the Anglocentrism of your British Isles feature. Newgrange is far from being the only occult site in Ireland. For example, the Hellfire Club, an old hunting lodge in the Wicklow Mountains south of the

Irish capital, Dublin, was the base of a genuine Satanic cult in the 18th century.

Andrew Behan

Dublin, Ireland



I've picked up the last few issues of TUO, and I must disagree with the complaints about the "Lovecraft Country" books.

The only one I have is "Tales of the Miskatonic Valley," and so far, my only problem with the book is "Regiment of Dread." There's nothing for the investigators to do in this one. I have a copy of Chaosium's writer's guidelines, and they say to use historical accuracy, but only about a fifth of the adventure should be background. This was *all* background, clearly written by a Civil War buff for Civil War buffs. The only use I could see for it would be to increase Library Use and combat skills between actual adventures.

This aside, my biggest problem with this, and indeed most games, is that they all labor under the misapprehension that at any given moment, you can just call up three or four friends and get them to meet in one place and play.

I'd have to say that a good 60% of my games are one-player affairs. Very few of the packaged adventures are well-suited for this ("Order of the Silver Twilight" works well) and so I am required to come up with a different grand plot to destroy all life every week, twice on three-day weekends. But I think that the "one man against the universe" idea is very Lovecraftian, and we really should see a few books that tackle this problem.

So, how about a few one-player adventures? Not the "follow-the-path" kind in most games, but missions that one player could go on and stand a chance of surviving. I for one gain a great deal of satisfaction in telling my players that a housewife on her own solved an adventure that two groups of convention players couldn't.

Jim Blanas, 427 W. 87th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99515



*[The following is in response to Mark Morrison's letter in TUO5, on the subject of "explaining" parts of history with the Mythos—Jack the Ripper was a cultist, etc.]*

So adding history to CoC is "tasteless and stupid." This from a man with a valise of viscera as his contribution to the pages of TUO. Thank you, Mr. Morrison. Now, gamers, please remove all references to actual historical events from your CoC campaigns, your supplements, your rulebook. It seems that the major villains of the past are off-limits—their careers and crimes are somehow to be set apart from the gaming world. And what is the reasoning? That our articles and games belittle the victims of such men and women? No. Because a man who has been writing for years for CoC dislikes some of the newer written material.

CoC is a game, Mr. Morrison, and Keepers may do anything they wish with the game. If the desire is to put in Abbott and Costello, so be it. If the desire is to add Hobbits, that too is fine. My understanding of TUO is that it exists for the enjoyments of players, not the opinionated judgements of writers. Who is fooled by the ideas of myself or Mr. Barber? Does Mr. Morrison really think we are "obscuring" the past? I have been studying history for twenty years, and teaching it for five. I'll do as I please with it when I am having fun. So too can anyone, including Mr. Morrison.

Finally, who is obscuring history anyway? A keeper who mixes fact and fiction, or someone who states outright that Hitler was "arguably a genius?" Mr. Morrison may be willing to argue, but few with any real understanding of the Third Reich would. Hitler was ordinary, mundane, banal. What he did cannot be obscured by the use of fiction. Reality is far more terrible. No one is going to be fooled. We don't aim to fool. We aim to give enjoyment, even if it is "tasteless and stupid." So be it.

Phil Garland

Greenville, SC

# NEXT ISSUE:

Get your wallets ready, because the next issue of *The Unspeakable Oath* is going to cost you \$8.00. Why? Well it's a *double issue*, of course! **160 pages**, crammed with longer scenarios and articles than ever. Includes an April Fool's section with its own scenario, and more wacked-out weirdness than you can shake a fetch stick at. It's big, it's bad, and it's spooging your way in the Spring of 1993.





the sorcerers of old, seek immortality, and find that the blood required was far beyond the imagination of wizards of the past? Is he now among the Old Ones, looking down on us and plotting to return? Was he perhaps not a cultist, but a living avatar of one of them? What better candidate exists?

For investigations into Soviet Russia in the Twenties, there are perils aplenty. During the Civil War you may have soldiers available for investigators. After the war, there are plenty of journalists, Communist sympathizers, et. al. around. There are enemies everywhere—the CHEKA (after 1922 the GPU), which Stalin is closely associated with, the White partisans and terrorists, etc. Soviet Russia is one place there they are all out to get you, anywhere and everywhere. Historical figures are in abundance—Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Big Bill Haywood

(one of the founders of the IWW, in exile in the Soviet Union), and many more.

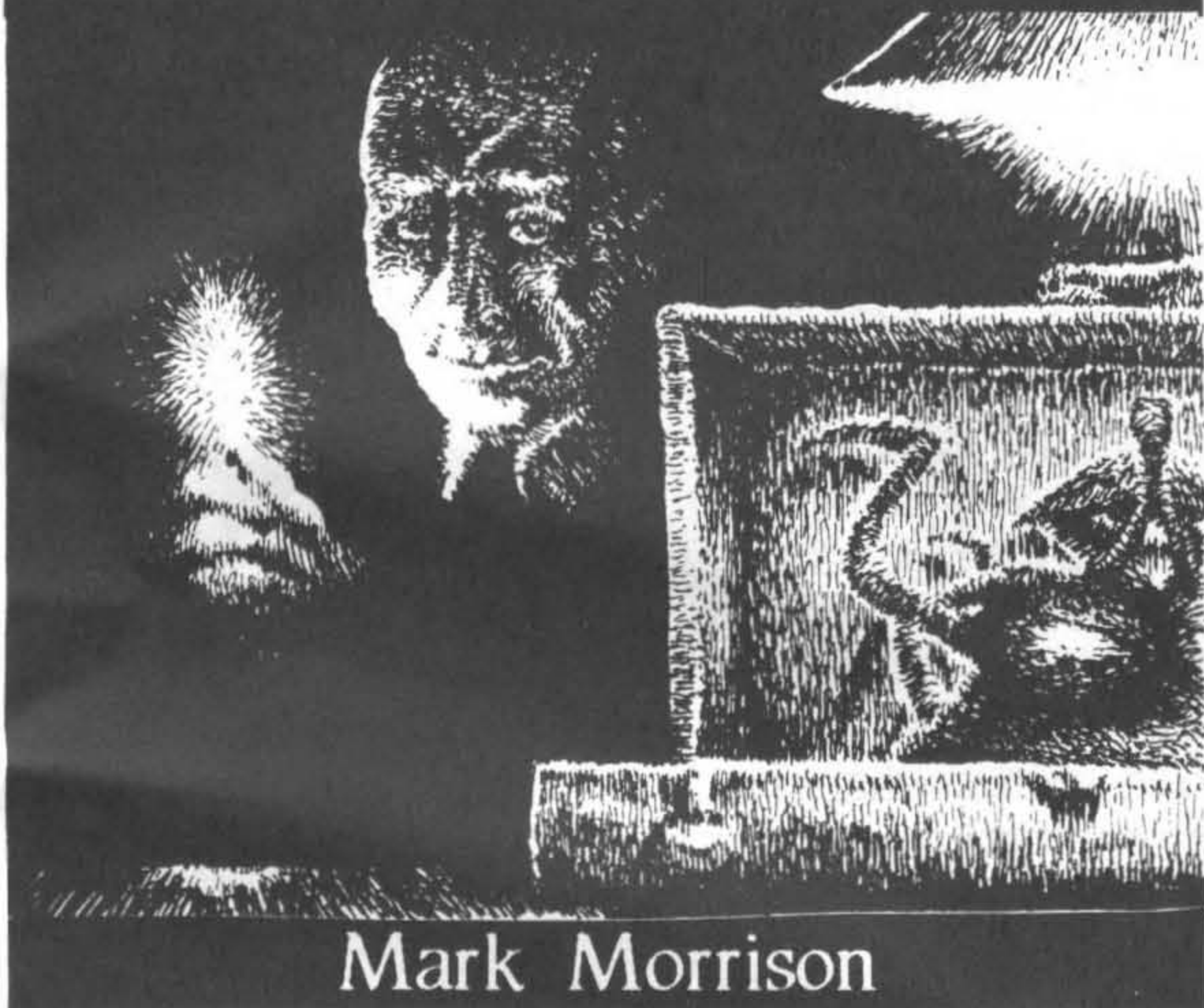
What is the young Stalin like? Ruthless, intelligent (more so than he is usually given credit for—fools and imbeciles do not rule a superpower for thirty years), calculating, always seeking more power. He has no sense of morality in a normal sense, and will do anything to reach his ends. The perfect servant of the Old Ones. Did he become one during the Russian Civil War? Was he born *a la* Wilbur Whately, as the child of some Old One, or was the human Stalin destroyed so that an Old One could impersonate him and bring to Russia its bath of chaos and destruction? We can only continue our studies, hoping to find the answer. But be careful—answers, after all, are often more horrible than questions. Watch out, investigators! ☞



DAVID BROWN



## The Case Of Mark Edward Morrison



Mark Morrison

In the course of these articles, I have neglected to mention someone who has faithfully stood by me, irrespective of the increasingly bizarre circumstances of my daily existence. It is time then to introduce you to my constant companion—my black cat.

Unlike most humans, my cat has simple needs in life: food, a warm fire, a comfortable lap, and the occasional mouse for amusement. Actually, not so many mice these days, as the furry fellow has become a trifle plump, and cannot pursue marauding rodents with his usual vigor.

But now my cat has disappeared. I have called him, over and over again. I have searched in all his favorite haunts. I have left doors and windows open to facilitate

his return, and have even left plates of his favorite food about the place in the hope that this will entice him out of hiding. But he is gone.

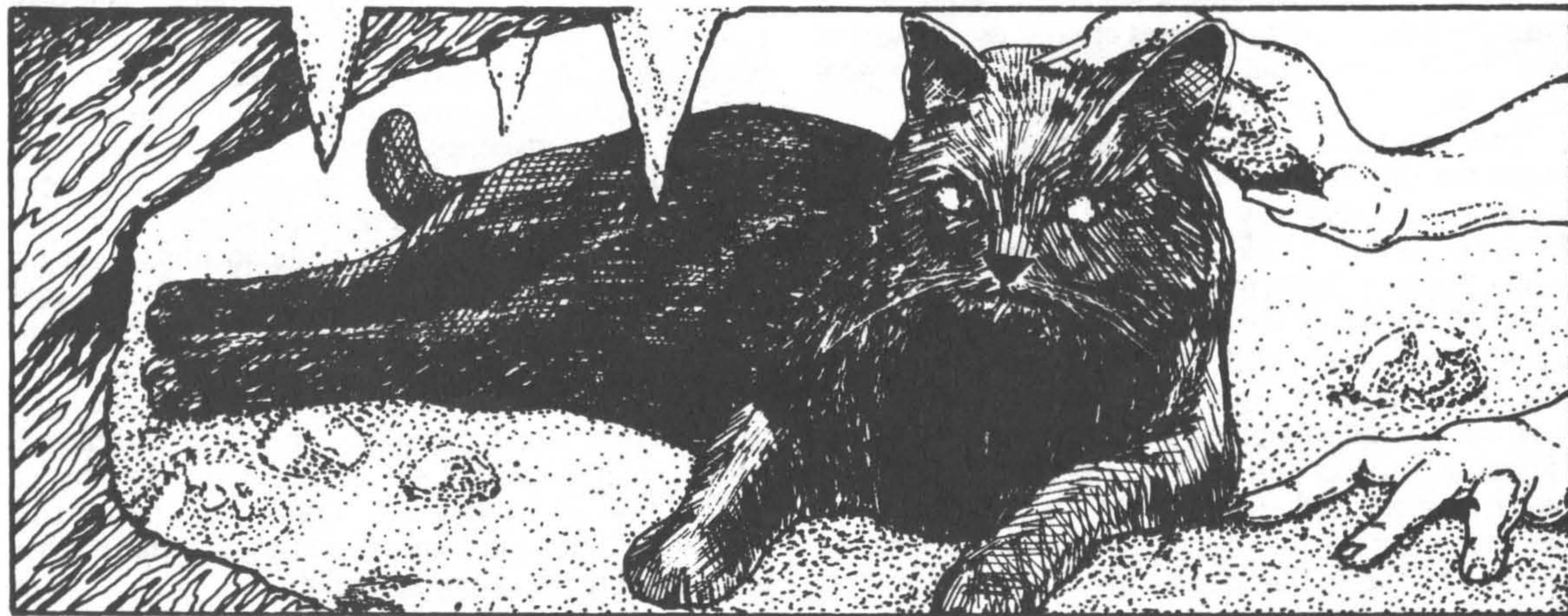
As I sat quietly reading in my study this evening, I heard an odd sound, quiet but insidious. With a rush of horror, I realized that it came from the shadowed corner where I keep that abominable piece of luggage—the case, the damnable case.

The sound came again, and then I knew with shocking clarity that my dear pet had met the same hideous fate as my books, my neighbors, my sanity, and my psychiatrist—lost forever in the black bowels of that stinking case! With a curdled cry of vengeance, I fetched the wood-axe, and advanced slowly on the leering portmanteau, even as those hideous strangled sounds began anew from deep within its depths.

Animals have tremendous value in horror. There is nothing scarier than an animal acting in an unnatural manner. Animals are governed by strict behavioral patterns, and to see them deviate in any way is evidence that something is seriously wrong, that the natural order of things has collapsed, and that gibbering nightmare is about to descend.

Why is the dog growling at the fireplace? What made the horses bolt? Why has a flock of ravens landed on the roof of my house? Why did that goat attack us like that? The easiest use for animals is as a barometer to gauge supernatural presences.

Put simply, animals know. When Nyarlathotep appears, every dog in the neighborhood raises its muzzle and howls. If a Hound of Tindalos is about to manifest, a cat indoors will flatten its ears, hiss at the corner, and bolt out of the room; seconds later, the dripping jaws



of the Hound emerge from the wall. If someone is to die out west of Arkham, the whippoorwills begin their eerie call. If some aeon-frozen abomination is about to lurch out of the swirling Antarctic snow, all the sled dogs will burst their tethers and flee into the blizzard. If a slaving horror from beyond the grave is crashing through the woods, all of the deer will burst out of the trees and gallop across the meadow.

Of course, investigators may come to rely on this if it happens too often. I would hate to see investigators carrying around budgies in cages as early warning systems: if the budgie squawks, gasps, foams at the beak and falls dead off its perch, that either means that there's a gas leak or that some crouching extra-terrene predator is about to leap out of the dark and rip someone's head off.

I remember a game in which a terrified investigator spent the whole night closely watching a raccoon that had been trapped in his cabin, convinced that it would show some sign if a monster was around. Neither of them got any sleep.

Animals might provide a more direct and personal warning. One of the chills I will never forget when playing *Call of Cthulhu* was when a husky looked at me and laughed in an oddly human tone. Out in the African night, no investigator can suppress a shudder when the insane cackle of hyenas mocks their petty accomplishments. The first white men in Australia to hear the cry of the kookaburra were convinced that it was the Devil laughing at them from the bush.

Animals can also be used in the same manner as old school-teachers, close friends, policemen, and former lovers: to show how the monster works. In just about every horror film involving a stalking creature, a few paddocks full of sheep or horses or dogs get massacred first. "I don't know what it was, but it sure made a mess of Jeb Wilson's pigs. Weren't no bear."

Then there are supernatural animals. No one can forget the rats in the walls of Exham Priory, unseen, invisible, and endlessly scurrying. Then there's the Black Dog of British folklore which guides travelers lost in the night, or leads them to their doom (depending on which version of the story is told. Would you trust a pitch-black mastiff with glowing red eyes on a lonely road in the dead of night? Can you afford not to?).

A mass of animals going berserk is a popular staple of films and novels. Guy N. Smith has founded a writing career on giant flesh-eating crabs, and James Herbert has had similar success with plague-bearing rats. Alfred Hitchcock's classic film of Daphne Du Maurier's short

story "The Birds" launched the animal frenzy sub-genre, and since then we have seen films about killer dogs, rats, bees, worms, piranha, and even giant rabbits. Other films have focused on a single killer animal, such as a great white shark, a killer whale, a grizzly bear, a rabid St. Bernard, a giant sewer-dwelling alligator, and even a vampire dog. So, any keeper who wants to unleash a ravaging wave of animals upon the countryside has plenty of precedent to draw on. But please, no killer sheep, not if you want your players to respect you in the morning.

In truth, animals rarely attack humans, but in the horror genre it happens a lot. Investigators will find themselves tangling with belligerent guard dogs, cunning lions, grumpy bears, hungry crocodiles, and God knows what else. When it does happen, don't let rules mechanics give humans all the advantages. Animals are faster, stronger, and meaner. Everyone knows how terrifying and hard to handle an angry dog is at close quarters.

Gunshots at a charging animal could be reduced to half-chance, because of the speed of the attack and the panic of the situation. Generally you only get the one shot, and then it's on top of you. An animal's first attack should be a Knockdown. Compare the STR+DEX of the animal to the SIZ+DEX of the human on the Resistance Table. If the human's SIZ+DEX is overcome, they are knocked over. In a flash the animal will be sitting on their chest and biting for the throat. Other investigators trying to help out with gunfire are just as likely to hit their friend. The person under the animal cannot effectively use anything larger than a knife or a pistol, and is unlikely to live long enough to use those.

Obviously the keeper should not go out of their way to slaughter investigators (it isn't a hard thing to do), but do try to give animals the full benefit of their power and agility. So, weird, unusual, or deadly behavior from animals is a convenient source of unsettlement and unease. If the animals are the investigator's own pets, the horror can be even more exquisite.

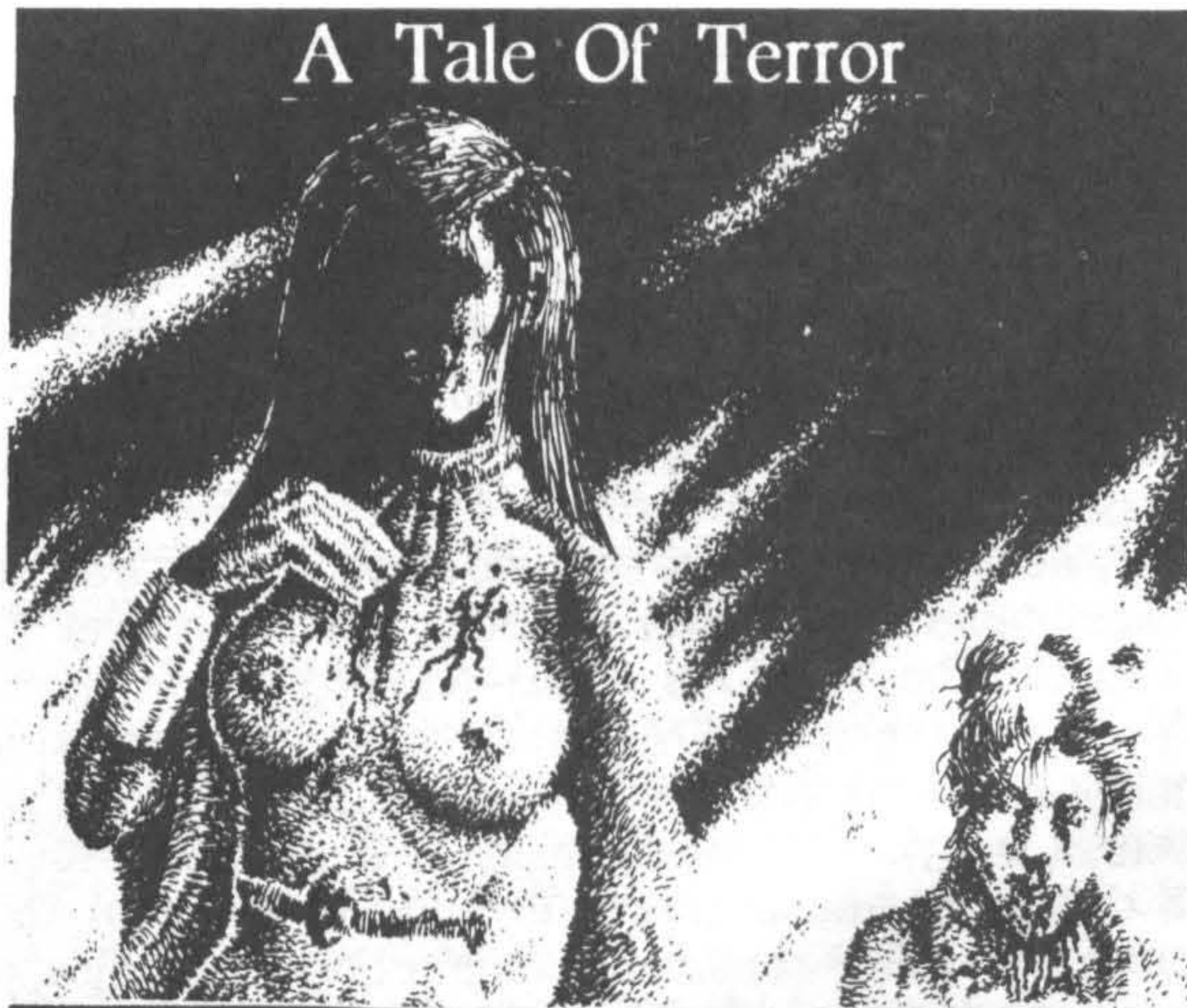
As for my pet, I could not abandon him to such a terrible fate. Raising the axe in one hand, fully prepared to chop the case to pieces and damn the consequences, I flipped the latch up with my free hand. The lid sprang open, and a chorus of sounds rose in protest at the light. It seems then that the gender of my beloved feline is no longer in question. I still do not know how he, or rather, how *she* managed to crawl into the case to deliver her litter, but I am pleased to say that mother and offspring are doing splendidly. ☺







## A Tale Of Terror



Steve Hatherley

### The Carpet

It is a small carpet, barely eight feet long by three wide. It is threadbare and worn, and of indeterminate middle-eastern style. In the centre of the carpet is an oval of abstract design. Surrounding this is a long fluid line of wavy characters, possibly letters from an obscure alphabet.

Things are sometimes seen in the oval pattern in the centre of the carpet. A flicker on the edge of vision, a suggestive shape or threatening shadow. They are slightly unsettling, but vanish upon closer inspection: a trick of the light.

The carpet might be found in a cultist's home, at an auction or at a manor house. Perhaps it is delivered to the investigator's house by mistake, a mix-up at the post office or by the removals company. Perhaps the investigators spot an illustration of it in an ancient and forbidden book, unlocking the secrets to the language around its edge.

### Possibilities

1. The carpet is a cult weapon. The words on the carpet are known as the Circle of Suggestive Deaths. If chanted within earshot of someone standing upon the rug, that person will surely die. Whether by bullet, knife, monster, accident, disease or injury, the result is the same.

The investigators might find it in their possession after angering the cult it favours. Wherever it is found,

its keeper (and the cult assassin) is never far away.  
2. The carpet contains the immortal soul of Kastajhan, a sorcerer originally living in Constantinople in the fifteenth century.

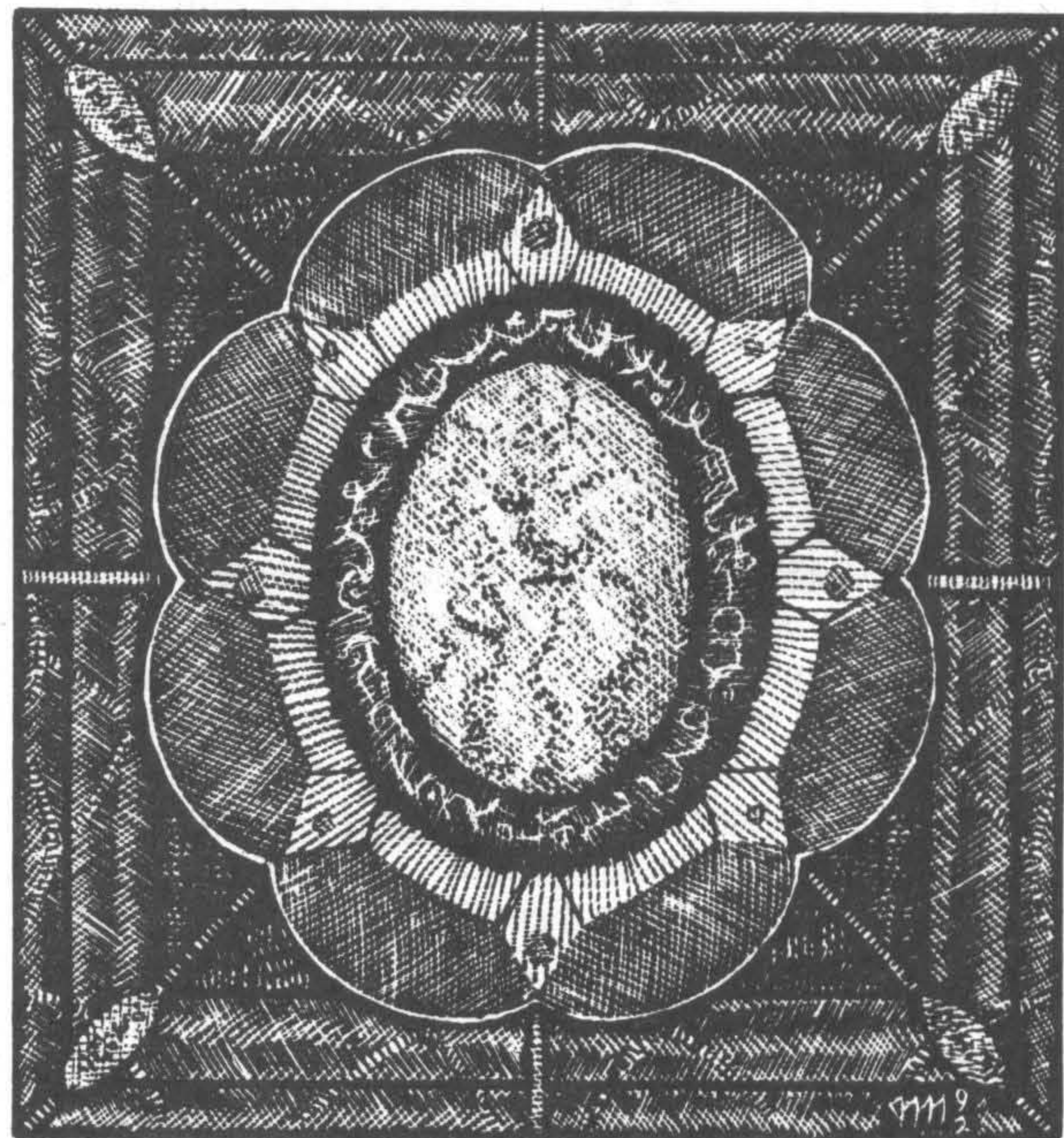
DENNIS DETWILER

Legend has it that as soon as Kastajhan discovered the source of true immortality he was sentenced to death. One hundred assassins were sent to his house, and when the dawn light fell across Constantinople none remained alive. As for Kastajhan, there was no sign.

The script around the edge of the carpet describes a short spell, the casting of which allows communication with Kastajhan's spirit. Unfortunately, the spirit is now quite insane and babbles only nonsense.

(Note that it is quite possible that Kastajhan knew of the Sedefkar Simulacrum [from Chaosium's *Orient Express*]. Sadly, Kastajhan's spirit is so insane that any useful advice the investigators may require is reduced to meaningless gibberish.)

3. The carpet belongs to Y'Golonac, and is mentioned at least three times in the Revelations of Glaaki. The carpet is used by worshippers of the Great Old One. Victims are sacrificed over the carpet while the chant is recited over and over. Y'Golonac possesses the sacrifice for as long as it amuses him. ☩



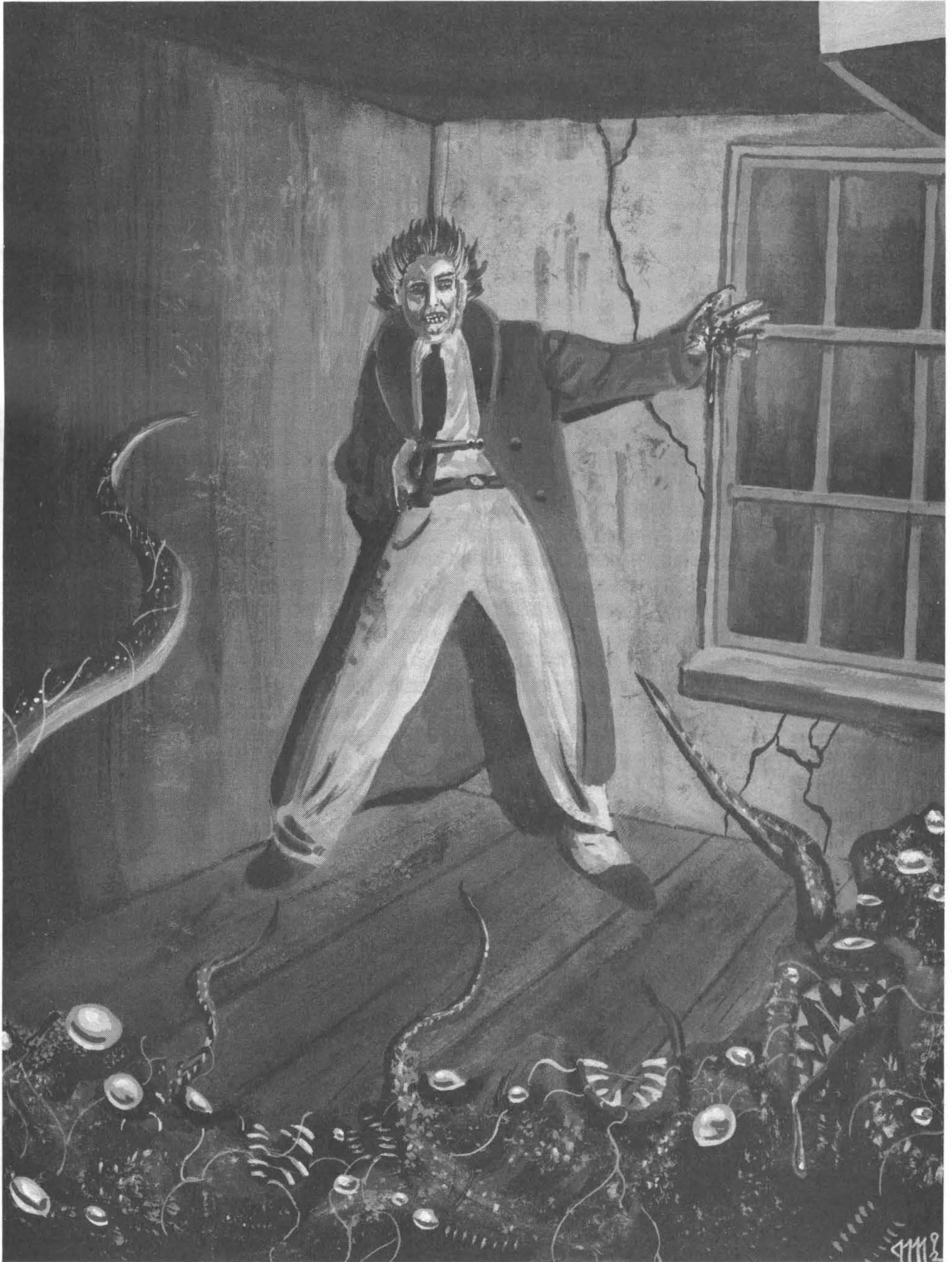
JESPER MYRFORS





5½

RESOURCES



JESPER MYRFORS

# Introduction & Errata

**John Tynes**

In TUO6, we presented a wide selection of additions and adjustments to Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* Fifth Edition rules. These additions ranged from new skills and occupations to new rules for sanity and magic.

These were offered to Keepers to use selectively—taking only what parts were appealing and ignoring the rest. Most everything in CoC5½ (our humble name for it) was modular, and could be used or discarded without affecting the rest.

In the quest to squeeze as much into one issue as possible—thereby concentrating information in one easily-referable location—much was also squeezed out. Hence, this is the “missing” chapter for the rules. This chapter, Resources, is less rules-oriented, and consists mostly of articles on more tangential subjects—how to use skills better, using classic villains from fiction, running CoC in the 1930s, and more. Another selection of “Resources” will also appear next issue.

The material in this section is a real grab-bag of stuff. Once again, some parts may seem silly to you—rest assured that others will delight in their presentation. CoC tends to be elitist by nature (if not by design), but even elitists have differences of opinion.

Following this section, you'll also find another entry in our continuing support of The Randolph Pierce Foundation, a campaign setting for your 1920s CoC games. This time, we feature a look at The Last Dawn, possibly one of the most original and frightening groups of cultists to ever appear in CoC. They have a very definite (and unusual) belief system, as well as a long and colorful history. Their history, in fact, is tied very much into that of the Foundation—but you can easily use them in any other campaign, if you wish.

Finally, below you'll also find errata for CoC5½. The editor made a number of mistakes in putting the issue together, and one big one is addressed here. If you find more, or have contributions or comments of your own, please let us know. A reprinting of this material with the full set of Foundation and CoC5½ materials is a likelihood somewhere down the road. ☺

The income charts below were combined into one on p. 12 of TUO6, which made the chart on p. 13 useless. Use these instead. Find the occupation at left, and match with the income on the right. Income shifts (p. 13, TUO6) are on the table at right. "V" means variable—choose according to investigator background or roll randomly.

Occupation	Code	Occupation	Code	Annual Income	Occupation Code	Property Number	Random
Adventurer	V	Musician	O	2D6x\$1000	A	20\$	01
Antiquarian*	D	Parapsychologist*	G	1D8x\$1000, +\$3000	B	15\$	02
Artist	O	Park Ranger*	O	1D10x\$1000, +\$1000	C	14\$	03
Athlete*	V	Police Detective	L	1D8x\$1000, +\$2000	D	13\$	04-05
Clergyman	N	Police Patrolman	N	2D4x\$1000, +\$1000	E	12\$	06-08
Consulting Detective*	H	Private Eye*	K	1D8x\$1000, +\$1000	F	11\$	09-11
Dilettante	A	Professor*	F	1D6x\$1000, +\$2000	G	10\$	12-15
Dockworker (Laborer)	P	Psychic Medium*	J	2D3x\$1000, +\$1000	H	10\$	16-20
Doctor*	C	Religious Investigator*	H	2D4x\$1000	I	9\$	21-25
Engineer	D	Revolutionary	Q	1D6x\$1000, +\$1000	J	9\$	26-35
Farmer/Woodsman	P	Shaman	N/A	1D8x\$1000	K	8\$	36-45
Gangster (Criminal)*	E	Showman*	N/A	1D4x\$1000, +\$2000	L	7\$	46-55
Hobo	Q	Soldier of Fortune*	M	1D6x\$1000	M	6\$	56-65
Inventor	M	Tribal Fisherman	N/A	1D4x\$1000, +\$1000	N	5\$	66-85
Journalist/Author*	I	Tribal Warrior	N/A	1D4x\$1000	O	4	86-95
Lawyer*	B	Wildlife Hunter/Photographer*	H	1D4x\$500	P	1	96-99
Military Commander	M	Youthful Sidekick*	Q	1D4x\$100	Q	¼	00
Missionary	P	* new occupation from TUO6					



## Handguns

Skill	Remarks
20%	<b>INCOMPETENT</b> (base skill). This person is completely unfamiliar with this weapon type. To be able to even fire a simple revolver requires a successful Idea or Knowledge roll (whichever is higher) while loading one requires a Knowledge roll. To load or fire any other type of handgun also requires a Knowledge roll. Cleaning the weapon will prove to be more difficult and requires a successful INTx2 roll unless detailed instructions are present. Failure forces the person to attempt a Luck roll to avoid damaging or disabling the weapon. Fumbling it results in an accidental discharge sometime during the cleaning process. In this case, another Luck roll is warranted in order to avoid having the errant bullet strike a bystander or the handler. An individual with base skill has absolutely no business handling this class of firearms.
25%	<b>NOVICE</b> . This individual knows the most basic elements of handgun operation and maintenance. Loading, firing, and cleaning revolvers is no problem while the operation and maintenance of all other handgun types still requires a Knowledge roll.
30%	<b>AMATEUR</b> . The basic operation of all types of handguns is within the capability of a person at this level. A more complex or unusual type must still be examined for a few rounds in order to determine how to operate it (to determine how to chamber a round, find the safety, etc.). In an emergency, an amateur need only successfully make an Idea or Knowl-
	edge roll (whichever is higher) in order to be able to instantly begin using an unfamiliar handgun.
40%	<b>COMPETENT</b> . This individual has enough skill, training, and/or experience to be able to operate and maintain most handguns with little or no trouble.
60%	<b>PROFESSIONAL</b> . Professionals probably shoot as part of their careers or are at least die-hard shooting enthusiasts (though not all police, soldiers, etc. have skill this high). With a successful DEXx5 roll, one extra shot per round can be fired accurately (Keeper discretion, some weapons may be physically incapable, due to condition or design, of such a swift and sustained rate of fire). In addition, Fast Draw skill equal to the shooter's DEX is gained.
70%	<b>EXPERT</b> . This individual gains Fast Draw skill equal to his or her DEX in addition to that gained previously (total of DEXx2). He/she also gains the ability to fire one extra shot per round (again, Keeper's discretion).
80%	<b>MASTER</b> . A truly rare individual, a handgun Master gains Fast Draw skill equal to his/her DEX in addition to that gained previously (total of DEXx3). An extra shot may be fired per round, or two shots with a successful DEXx1 roll. A Master's base ranges are all increased by 50%. Keepers should not allow new characters to start with any firearm skill higher than 80%.
90%	<b>GRAND MASTER</b> . This scary person has all of the aforementioned benefits except base ranges are doubled. In addition, a successful DEXx2 roll will permit a second extra shot per round.

## Rifles and Shotguns

Skill	Remarks
25%	<b>INCOMPETENT</b> (base skill). This person is completely, or almost completely, unfamiliar with long guns. To load, fire, or maintain bolt-action, lever-action, revolving-action, and pump-action firearms requires a successful Idea or Knowledge roll, whichever is higher. To load or fire a semi-automatic or automatic weapon requires a successful Knowledge roll and to maintain one requires an INTx2 roll. Failure to make the appropriate roll when cleaning a rifle requires the subject to make a Luck roll to avoid disabling or damaging the weapon. Fumbling this roll results in it discharging sometime during the cleaning process. In this case, a second Luck roll is warranted to determine whether or not the errant bullet strikes the handler or a bystander. Anyone with this level of skill has no business handling long guns and if given one, should probably use it as a club, cricket bat, or crowbar.
30%	<b>NOVICE</b> . Novices know the most basic elements of rifle and shotgun operation and maintenance. Only semi-automatic and automatic weapons are still a problem and require a successful Idea or Knowledge roll (whichever is higher) for operation and maintenance.
35%	<b>AMATEUR</b> . This individual knows the basics of operating and maintaining most long guns. He or she is the equivalent of a handgun Amateur and has the same skills applying to these weapon types.
40%	<b>COMPETENT</b> . This person has enough skill, training, and/or experience to be able to operate and maintain most rifles and shotguns with little or no trouble.
60%	<b>PROFESSIONAL</b> . Professionals probably shoot as part of their careers or are at least die-hard hunters and shooting enthusiasts (however, not all police, soldiers, etc. have skill this high). With a successful DEXx4 roll, one extra shot per round may be made unless the weapon is a high-powered bolt-action rifle.
70%	<b>EXPERT</b> . An individual at this level may fire one extra shot per round if a successful DEXx5 roll is made. The exception to this are high powered bolt-action rifles which require successful DEXx2 rolls to be able to fire at a higher rate (Keeper discretion).
80%	<b>MASTER</b> . A rare person, a rifle Master may fire one extra shot per round except for high powered bolt-action rifles which require a successful DEXx3 roll to fire more quickly (Keeper discretion). A Master's base ranges are increased by 50%. Keepers should not allow new characters to start with any firearm skill over 80%.
90%	<b>GRAND MASTER</b> . Such a person comes straight from a film or cartoon where the hero magically never has to reload. He or she gains all the benefits of a Master except all rifle base ranges are doubled (including shotguns firing slugs). With a successful STRx5 roll, a long gun can be fired with one arm, but only at 50% of the normal chance after all other modifiers have been taken into account. This assumes the shooter is not bracing the weapon on anything. The base range when pulling this stunt drops to twenty yards which essentially turns it into a clumsy handgun.

Note that the previous table assumes that shotguns are firing slugs and that rifles and shotguns fall under the same skill. With buckshot or birdshot, the shooter has an extra 5% chance to hit, but this does not increase the skill level of the shooter.



## Reloading Revisited

In light of the levels of expertise detailed previously, the reloading of firearms must once again be addressed. This article is based on one previously printed in TUO1. The following charts are self-explanatory.

### INCOMPETENT SHOOTERS

<u>Loading Type</u>	<u>Time Element</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Clip	2 rounds to insert	
Magazine	2 rounds to change	
Drum	2 rounds to change	
Side-Loading	1 cartridge per round	a
Swing-Out	1 cartridge per round	
Break-Open	1 cartridge per round	
Reverse Break-Open (Tip Up)	1 cartridge per round	b
Cap & Ball	1/3 cartridge per round	c

### NOVICE, AMATEUR, AND COMPETENT SHOOTERS

<u>Loading Type</u>	<u>Time Element</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Clip	1 round to insert	
Magazine	1 round to change	
Drum	1 round to change	
Side-Loading	2 cartridges per round	d
Swing-Out	2 cartridges per round	
Break-Open	2 cartridges per round	
Reverse Break-Open (Tip Up)	2 cartridges per round	b
Cap & Ball	2/3 cartridge per round	c

### PROFESSIONAL AND EXPERT SHOOTERS

<u>Loading Type</u>	<u>Time Element</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Clip	1 round to insert	
Magazine	1 round to change	
Drum	1 round to change	
Side-Loading	3 cartridges per round	e
Swing-Out	3 cartridges per round	
Break-Open	3 cartridges per round	
Reverse Break-Open (Tip Up)	3 cartridges per round	b
Cap & Ball	2/3 cartridge per round	c

### MASTER AND GRAND MASTER SHOOTERS

<u>Loading Type</u>	<u>Time Element</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Clip	1 round to insert	
Magazine	1 round to change	
Drum	1 round to change	
Side-Loading	3 cartridges per round	f
Swing-Out	4 cartridges per round	g
Break-Open	4 cartridges per round	g
Reverse Break-Open (Tip Up)	4 cartridges per round	b, g
Cap & Ball	1 cartridge per round	c

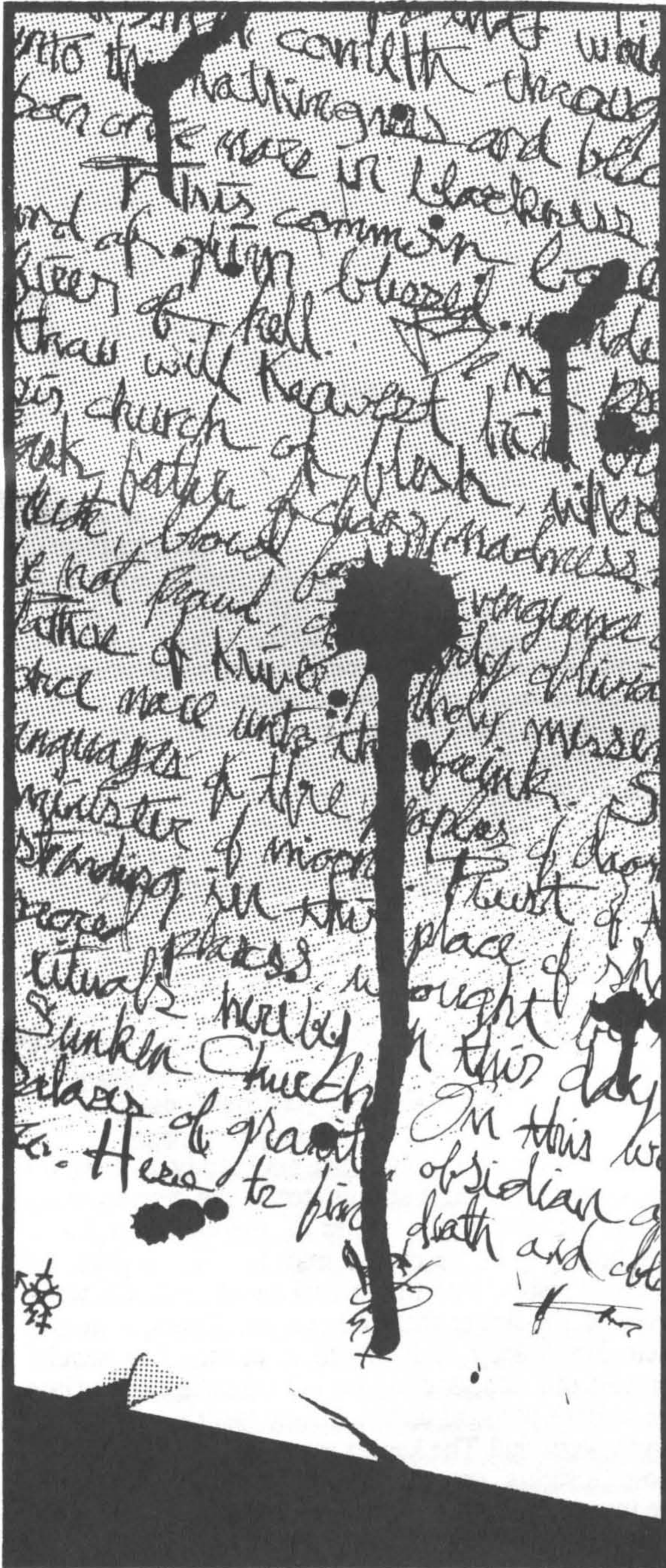
## Notes

- a A successful DEXx5 roll is required to be able to load one round into any side-loaded revolver since the expended cartridge casing must first be removed. If the roll fails, the cartridge is loaded in the next round.
- b A reverse break-open weapon (more correctly called a "tip up" weapon) is fairly rare, but the design can be found in a few fairly common Smith & Wesson revolvers. It is similar to the classic break-open design, but with an odd twist. The barrel is hinged forward of the cylinder so when it swings out, the cylinder must be removed in order for it to be reloaded. One extra round must be taken before and after reloading in order for the shooter to essentially dismantle and then reassemble his/her weapon.
- c Cap & ball firearms are inconvenient and slow to reload. To load one, first the gunpowder is poured into the chamber. Then the projectile(s) is rammed into place and a percussion cap is placed on the hollow "nipple" above the chamber. This lengthy process can be aggravating to those used to metallic cartridges.
- d To load a second cartridge requires a successful DEXx5 roll. Side-loaded revolvers cannot have a second cartridge loaded in the same round unless all expended casings have already been removed.
- e Loading a third cartridge requires a DEXx5 roll. Again, side-loaded revolvers are greatly slowed since an action is essentially wasted because cartridge casings are not conveniently ejected from the weapon as it fires.
- f Again, the process of reloading side-loaded revolvers is inhibited by having to remove cartridge casings.
- g The fourth cartridge can be loaded if a successful DEXx5 roll is made.

These charts assume the individual handling the weapon is trying to reload quickly and is obtaining ammunition from an easily accessible source such as a bandolier, magazine pouch, or cartridge belt. There are penalties for being poorly prepared or organized. Those who insist on putting different calibers of ammunition in a cartridge belt run the risk, especially in a high pressure situation, of either fumbling for the correct cartridge or loading in the wrong one. Luck or INT rolls are appropriate in such situations.

The reloading times given for incompetent shooters are provided under the assumption that either the subject was instructed on how to operate that particular weapon or that he/she made a successful Knowledge roll to figure it out.

Finally, the Keeper may wish to use a "pressure factor" for reloading (or anything else, actually). One option is to have characters attempting to reload to make Luck rolls to avoid fumbling around and dropping cartridges, loading magazines in backwards, inserting the wrong ammunition, etc. Those with war experience or the like should have +25% to such a roll. In this way, investigators will not just calmly reload their shotguns when facing the Charge of the Ghoul Brigade.



### Graphology

Since we were children, we have noticed that people write differently from one another. Perhaps you noticed that your mother drew circles above her "i's" and not dots, or that your father's writing was nearly illegible because of the numerous flourishes and broad pen strokes. Or, perhaps, you never noticed anything specific about a person's writing, but it impressed you; and if you could imitate your mother's handwriting, you could forge away a world of trouble at school. A person's writing is as distinctive as their fingerprints: it is their personal imprint on the world around them, and it cannot be easily imitated, at least not without great skill. In literate societies like ours, our signature is better to creditors than our word because it commits us to something in a way that our verbal agreements do not. It leaves a record of our statements that anyone can recognize as our own whether or not they have ever met us, and it can be easily stored away for reference.

The science of graphology, or graphoanalysis, is founded on the premise that the electrical impulses of the brain subconsciously transmit signals to our hands that reveal our innermost personality traits in our writing. The slant of our lines, the shapes of our letters, the size of our loops, and the position of our t-bars are only a few details that the graphologist examines to ferret out the facets of our nature. While graphologists are often referred to as handwriting analysts, they are often confused with document examiners. Document examiners review legal documents (e.g., wills, medical records, contracts) for the validity of their signatures and handwriting, without evaluating the personality of the writer. Document examiners are often expert witnesses in court cases dealing with forgery. For gaming purposes, however, a graphologist can perform those same evaluations.

An amateur graphologist can discern several different personality traits about a writer from his or her writing, and from it assemble some portrait of the writer's psyche. But a professional graphologist with a background in psychology can bore deeply into the writer's psychological terrain and evaluate certain general aspects of the writer's physical and mental health. Graphologists are sometimes consulted for psychological assessments, pre-marital counseling, and career evaluations.

Whether or not you subscribe to the basic premise of graphoanalysis, the skill itself can add an interesting dimension to your gaming sessions. When characters

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need a deeper understanding of the NPCs (non-player characters) they encounter, or when they simply need to bolster their psychoanalysis skills to gain back sanity during campaigns, a graphology skill will enhance their abilities.

## Graphology as a Skill

Graphology can be one of the primary skills of a Psychologist character. It can also be used by a layman as a pickup skill. Neither the keeper nor the player needs any specific knowledge of graphology in order to use it effectively in a campaign or in live role-playing. Outlined here are some general guidelines and suggestions for its use.

## Writing Sample Size & Evaluations

The analyst's evaluation will be more complete depending on how many writing samples he or she obtains. A collection of letters or a diary will give a much more complete analysis than a single letter or note. A writer's mood can vary from day to day, if not moment to moment, and it will prevail in their writing. A single letter might reveal a great deal about the writer's general mood at the time it was written, but that mood may obscure other important traits and even belie others.

For example, someone may usually be very optimistic about most things, but if they were to write about a very unhappy incident, their writing may indicate a great deal of pessimism. Thus, both the subject and the writer's mood may be misleading. Keepers and players must be aware that a single sample represents little

### Example

Dr. Arthur Smelrich, a handwriting analyst, and his friends investigate the flat of a woman who has recently disappeared. He finds an unmailed letter written by the woman the day she disappeared. Arthur's player rolls a 1D4+3; the result is 5 hours of study for the letter. Arthur studies the letter that evening (making a successful Graphology Roll) and discovers strong traits of agitation, depression and anger, among other things. Since Arthur's sample covers only one day, he can conclude only that the writer felt agitated, depressed and angry the day she disappeared, but is unable to tell if this is an overriding character trait for her. Arthur concludes that this might merely represent how she felt at the time she wrote the letter, and perhaps she knew that some foul play might befall her soon.

more than the writer's psychological state at that point in time, although that, too, may be very important, depending on the keeper's intentions. A single letter requires only ½ to 1 day (4 to 7 hours) to examine.

A diary or collection of letters will reveal a great deal more than any other sample because they both represent a variety of moods, passions, and events. The character will be able to make an evaluation based on those traits which prevail regardless of mood. A full analysis, however, can be lengthy. Depending on how many hours per day the character devotes to studying the sample, it can take 1-3 days to make a fair assessment. The character's skill will also affect the length of time it takes to assess a large sample. If a player can roll under 20% of his or her skill in graphology (a critical success), that may reduce the number of days by half. The exact amount of time needed may be randomly determined by the keeper if necessary.

### Example

Arthur later returns to the woman's flat to investigate and finds a collection of half-written detective stories, giving him around 100 or so pages of handwritten material on lined paper. Arthur's player rolls 1D3 for the number of days it will take to make the analysis studying full time and rolls a 2 (2 days). He then makes a Graphology Roll and rolls an 04%. Since his Graphology skill is 54%, he has rolled under 20% of his skill and cuts the amount of study time to half, or 1 day. So, Arthur takes the manuscripts home and studies them over the next day and discovers that, among other things, the woman is overall a very light-hearted, generous and optimistic person. Arthur therefore concludes that the day the woman disappeared she was very upset about something and was probably under some adverse conditions.

So, although a graphologist may study a letter for two days, he or she is still limited to the general mood and tendencies of the writer. If the character has a Psychology skill, he or she may be able to gain one valuable insight into the mental and/or physical well-being of the writer from a letter-sized sample at half their Psychology skill. If the character has several samples, that analyst can gain 1-3 valuable insights into the writer's physical and/or mental health at half their Psychology skill. The keeper may decide precisely what those "insights" are and may delay revealing them to the investigator until the appropriate time. A successful Idea roll may reveal how to use those insights









looked it over with a profound sigh. "Well, I certainly cannot understand what has gotten into him." He looked over the request. It was certainly urgent, and the symbols about the border of the application looked valid. He noticed the thick pen swipes and the severe left slant of the writing, deducing that the man was a very sensual person, if not a bit selfish. Aren't we all? he asked himself. "This request does seem to warrant some investigation. I'll go check it out tomorrow."

Richard inhaled quickly, about to protest the seasoned investigator's strategy, but decided to keep his mouth shut. It didn't seem wise to go do any investigating on one's own. "Won't you have Dr. Blackstone accompany you?"

"No, no," James countered again. "This chap seemed ordinary enough. He has an extraordinary problem is all. I'll take this one tomorrow, so I'll be calling in before I get there."

"Yes, Mr. Billington," Richard said as he locked up his drawers and shut off the copy machine. "Good night!"

That evening, Phillip sat on the edge of his bed, blowing his nose and feeling as though the miasma of Chaos itself was flooding his sinuses. No thanks to what the Foundation paid him for his investigations as an associate member, he had been able to nicely furnish his flat with the fees he continued to accrue from his private practice. Out front was his office, with its art-deco and walnut veneer desk. He had cancelled his appointment with Mrs. Flotsheim this evening so that he could rest and relax. Perhaps he would feel better tomorrow if he only got some sleep tonight, he thought as he neatly hung up the clothes he wore that day. The pocket of his suit rustled gently as he pulled the extra kleenexes from his pocket.

That damned application, he thought. He withdrew the folded photocopy, unfolded it, and took it over to his light table on the far side of his bedroom. He laid the paper on top of the bright white glass plate in the center and picked up a pencil, never taking his eyes off the unusual letters. Already he felt his curiosity twisting itself into an obsession as he began diagramming the slant of the letters, carefully examining the odd line spacing and waving lines.

Picking up his magnifying glass he examined the eccentric, angled loops and odd hooks in every zone, from the top of each letter to the bottom. Each strange configuration was the brush stroke of a mad artist painting a bizarre impressionistic portrait of the small man that sat in the lobby at closing that day. Phillip

tried to be objective: he really did have a strange feeling about the man to begin with, and it was truly unfair to judge this man's request by his appearance.

Phillip knew that his dreams would bring horror. After four hours of exhaustive analysis, Phillip got up from the light table and stumbled over to his bed, his eyes gleaming with terrible insight. He lay down, but the unusual writing had woven itself into his dreamworld. There was no doubt in his mind that the man was not only deceitful, amoral and ambitious, but he was almost insanely intelligent, and there was no telling what his true intentions might be regarding the Foundation. And he recognized the symbols. They were from one of the library's most enigmatic manuscripts: a small, grey cloth-bound book penned in faded brown ink. Phillip closed his eyes for a moment, remembering well the awful incantations from that book. The book had a title once, but it had been mostly obscured by what looked like acid drippings. All that anyone could make out was the unmistakable syllable of "thoth." Beyond that, no one could determine its origins, except for some Sumerian influences which didn't surprise anyone at all.

Phillip got back up and looked at the writing on the application as it lay on the light table. He realized that he had been concentrating so hard on the writing itself that he really hadn't given the same attention to the contents. The man described quite vividly strange lights, particularly blue lights, that occasioned his attic. He claimed that the original owner of the house had apparently carved some strange symbols around the attic door, which were the symbols that he sketched somewhat vaguely around the border of the application. Phillip recognized them as binding wards and wondered what kind of hideous, unearthly creature lurked within the confines of the attic. The lights, the man wrote, came and went, most particularly on the eighth day of each month, and at all hours he heard shuffling noises, among other sounds. He said that he couldn't afford to move, had no family and desperately needed the Foundation's help.

Comparing what the application said with the handwriting analysis, the investigator could not believe that this was the whole story. He acknowledged that the writing sample was small—a single page—and therefore not the truest representation of the man's character. But why would these characteristics—the deceit and amorality in particular—be so strong in his application? He expected that rather fear and self-recrimination perhaps would weave in and out of the



blackened, moist walls and stopped after he took several steps downward and held up the kerosene lamp. "I'm afraid I am unable to continue this investigation until I've seen the attic."

The man turned and looked at the investigator, narrowing his eyes for a moment. The man's face then relaxed. "But I have other things to show you as well," his voice pleaded softly, pouring over James' anxiety like a rich, dark syrup. "I just discovered these other symbols, and I think they may be far more important."



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James clung to the grey book; he could feel it getting warm in his hand. "I understand your concern," he stuttered, "but I feel like we're getting ahead of ourselves." The slick black walls reminded him of the sticky substance from the floor upstairs.

"Very well," the man said. "Let me show you the way." James stepped to the side, pressing against the wall to let him pass to the open doorway. Suddenly James grew very, very cold. He remembered something about the handwriting on the application as he watched the small man step slowly through the basement doorway and turned to look at the investigator. James stood halfway down the staircase, transfixed by the nagging, stomach-wringing feeling that he remembered something about the handwriting. The man looked down wordlessly at James, as the investigator's eyes now gleamed with recognition. Suddenly, his heart raged with terror, pounding at his ribs like a caged beast.

"Here are the symbols, Mr. Billington," the man said,

his words now tinged with an unsettling accent. The door slammed shut, and James ran up the steps to grab the doorknob. But when he reached the door, he saw the symbols covering the doorway in a dark scrawl.

"No, oh God!" he cried, damning himself for his stupidity. He could feel the magical strength of the door. He sat on the top step, put down the lamp, and quickly thumbed through the book, nearly tearing several pages in his haste. Page after page confirmed that the handwriting in the grey book was the same as that on the application, and he began to sob with despair. The sanity-rending truths that were penned on its pages had never truly affected James' psyche, but now they contained unbelievable horror. How could that small man be old enough to have written this book? Whatever his key to longevity was, James thought, it was definitely him. As he skimmed through the passages, his ears prickled. The dripping continued, almost obscuring a faint gurgling sound that grew louder and louder, hissing and churning. James dropped the book when he looked down the staircase into the wet abyss.



Phillip knocked at the decaying door and looked at his sides nervously, nodding to the other investigators standing just out of sight. Three women and four men; he hoped that the stars were right. Anthony Jesper, an extraordinary magician and researcher for the Foundation, stood to his left. Anthony had searched everywhere for the grey book, and finally concluded that James, being the twit that he is, must have taken it with him to confirm the symbols. He was still fuming as they approached the house, but managed to gain control before they reached the door, angrily wiping the sweat from his silver mustache with his fingertips. The book's binding and pages and pages would soon decay if removed from the carefully controlled atmosphere of the Pierce library.

Footsteps lightly approached the door. It opened slowly, creaking slightly, and the small man with his bristling brown hair stood meekly in the dark opening. He smiled slightly, a thin line on his lips turning upwards. "Yes?"

Phillip glanced at the older investigator and tried to control a deep shudder. The dark, soothing voice did not match the man's appearance—his faded, sallow skin, yellow teeth and sharp blue eyes were too unsettling. Phillip felt the butt of his revolver pressing against his waist. "Yes, we are from the Randolph Pierce

Foundation, and we are here to investigate the lights and noises you reported yesterday."

The man drew backwards and admitted the investigators. Some of the other men and women positioned themselves at two of the windows, with crowbars ready to pry off the boards. Two more stood at the door, listening intently for signs of danger.

"I have found more symbols," the man explained as he led the investigators toward the back of the house. Both investigators cringed visibly as they looked around at the disturbing condition of the house. Inside, it was very dim except for the single lamp on the table. Anthony recognized the smell of formaldehyde coming from the east side of the house, mixed with smells of sewage and rot. "I think you will find them more mysterious than those in the attic."

"You mean on the attic door, don't you?" Phillip said slowly, his hand quivering as it fought with his mind to brandish the .38 in the holster under his jacket. Like lightning in a fierce storm, the realization struck him with deadly electricity. The pronounced left slant in the handwriting on the application, the same odd angles and the brown-penned lettering in the grey book—the spell erupted from his throat.

"Ia! Ia!—"

The boxes on the table fluttered open and trash scuttled across the floor. Confusion momentarily darkened the small man's eyes when he heard Phillip intoning one of the incantations from the grey book. He looked around as he heard the boarded up windows cracking from the investigators outside with crowbars. Light broke through cracks in the board, tearing through the elder darkness.

The man ran towards the basement door as Anthony joined his comrade in a desperate chorus. The noise outside stopped as the other investigators stood in concentration, chanting, lending their will to their fellow magicians. The small man flung open the door to the staircase below. A huge maw, filled with hideous, ragged teeth, belched forth the blasphemous black ooze, flooding from the doorway the flayed carnage of Phillip's late friend James in a viscous pool of dark porridge. The investigator choked, forcing the words into the thick air, willing control over his convulsing stomach as the great wyrm writhed through the doorway, spewing bloody fragments and tarry rot. The gun burned against his waist, but he knew it was useless.

As Anthony wildly drew signs in the air, the investigators outside began to drop with exhaustion,

one by one. The small man's mouth opened in a terrible scream, drowning out the hoarse shouts. Phillip could feel the wizard's incredible psychic strength trying to possess his mind. Unable to overcome Phillip's will, the force slackened, and Anthony suddenly seemed to falter under the tremendous spiritual strain. They had taken this monster completely by surprise, and the wizard had not counted on the extra strength that the outside investigators lent against him. His whole frame seemed to weaken as he slumped forward slightly in the doorway. Phillip quickly pulled the automatic out of his holster, flipped the safety and opened fire.



Phillip opened his eyes drowsily when he heard a knock on the door.

"Phillip! It's me, Richard!"

The analyst sat up, blinking slowly. The door. Richard. It was beginning to sink in.

"I have the collection of requests the Foundation asked you to review," the theology student said loudly, looking around himself to see if there was anyone else in the halls.

Groggily, the investigator got up and opened to the door. "Thank you, Richard. You've been very kind." The young grad student had visited Phillip every day since Phillip was released from jail on bail from the Foundation. Phillip was preparing to plead "not guilty" to the charge of manslaughter, unable to convince the police he had been aiming for the wyrm when he hit the small man. "And so has Anthony for reviewing all the applications for me."

"It's nothing at all," Richard said, producing a large manila envelope. He looked around a bit and lowered his voice. "There is something here, though, that I thought you had better look at." Phillip beckoned him into the living room/office, and the two sat and looked at the papers. "I know that I've only started learning graphoanalysis, but I'm certain this is significant." He shuffled a bit through the pages and pulled one out, laying it on Phillip's lap. "No one knows I've brought these papers to you."

As the investigator looked at the reviewer's signature—Anthony's—on the bottom line of the application, a chill quickened in his body. The name on the reviewer's line was Anthony Jesper, but the writing was that of their dead wizard.

Dead?

"You are right, Richard. You are certainly right." ☞

# Thirties-Something

David Barras

**T**he original *Call of Cthulhu*, set in the 1920s, has proven its flexibility in transferring to different time periods and involving the player characters in daringly different role-play environments. However, in expanding the plethora of timescapes for CoC, a period close to that of the original has been overlooked—the 1930s.

If you run or play a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign from the twenties base, then the thirties is an inevitable destination, even if it isn't as exciting as R'lyeh!

This article contains information, both serious and fun, which can be integrated into a 1930s-based Cthulhu campaign. Apologies to British investigators—the information herein is as American as invading inoffensive little countries (the Falkland Islands excepted). The text should provide a general mood and atmosphere for US.-based play in a decade that started in depression and ended swinging.

## The Depression

At the end of the twenties, the Wall Street crash damaged the US. economy beyond swift repair. Years of buying stocks on credit fed a bull market in a china shop, a shop whose contents went to pieces both in the US. and the rest of the world. By March of 1933, when President Herbert Hoover left the White House after what most Americans considered to be a disastrous term of office, the American banking system had finally collapsed.

Statistically, output was less than half that in 1929; the unemployed numbered almost fifteen million; hourly wages had dropped 60% since the late twenties; and the whole country hit a low the likes of which have not been seen since.

The land of opportunity had knocked itself out.

Statistics are harsh and unfeeling; they do not reflect the practical realities of what life was like to live at this time. Keepers should, however, take great glee in reducing investigators' incomes based on these statistics. The lesser the job of the investigator, the worse hit by

the depression they will be. It may be advantageous to put a few investigators out of work at some point in order to allow them to take crummy investigative jobs for little financial reward. Of course we all know where crummy investigations can lead.

For those that found themselves out of work in the 1930s prospects were bleak. Jobs were few and lines waiting for interviews stretched monotonously around buildings, while here and there fights break out amongst the desperate people. Bitterness over the depression is rife and for investigators in big cities, the oppressive feel is heightened. Being hassled and hustled for money all the time is not pleasant and any investigator openly displaying wealth will likely be hounded on the streets. If they don't part with money, they will be spat at, swore at, and generally abused.

Not everyone begs—some sell basic commodities like fruit and vegetables but there are so many sellers that hardly any of them make enough to live. Diners at fancy restaurants may find themselves the object of abject stares from hungry-looking individuals outside the windows, pitiful in their ragged street clothes. At the back of restaurants fights break out for scraps in the trash.

At this point the division between rich and poor in the States was at its most visual. Whole districts with boards covering what used to be shop windows, beggars on the streets and the ubiquitous apple sellers. But perhaps the most telling visual representation of the depression were the shanty towns, or Hoovervilles as they were christened, a backhanded slap at the President blamed for them. Their existence was due to the nomadic nature of a population in search of work. Almost one million people were living this lifestyle during the great depression.

## Investigator Occupations

In the CoC rules most of the investigator occupations are well-to-do and generally high up in the structure of society. A selective look at what some professions can expect job-wise follows.

**Authors/Journalists**—These two have been grouped together for a good reason. In times of great depression,





of J. Edgar Hoover, head of the F.B.I.

Although things got better when Roosevelt entered the Oval Office in 1933, the rest of the thirties was spent pulling America back on her feet again, just in time for World War 2.

On the lighter side of things...

## Popular Culture

Now your campaign has hit the thirties—is it all depression and overstated violence? No.

Radio, cinema and magazines are the most popular forms of entertainment and they all went through a boom period in the depression. Desperate to escape the everyday practicalities of life, people chose fantasy as an outlet.

For those Keepers who enjoy basing their play in as realistic a background as possible, investigators can partake of some of the following entertainments, to contrast with the bizarre nightmares of the Mythos.

On radio and in the sunday newspaper comics, Little Orphan Annie, cowboy hero Tom Mix, Buck Rogers, Tarzan and Dick Tracy were all favorites.

Cinema responded to the depression by churning out gangster movies, horror films, and comedies—anything to avoid focusing on reality. Jean Harlow and Clark Gable were among the big sex symbols of the time. Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon and Tarzan hit the silver screen. Other personalities appearing at the time include Mickey Rooney, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, and director Frank Capra.

### Notable Films of the Thirties

Dracula	1931
Frankenstein	1931
Freaks	1932
King Kong	1933
It Happened One Night	1934
Mutiny on the Bounty	1935
Bride of Frankenstein	1935
The Wizard of Oz	1939
Gone With The Wind	1939

## Nightlife

If serious background information is not your cup of slime and now and again you just want to relax your players before sucking out all their bodily fluids, then this is the section for you.

For those rich enough to join it, this was the age of

“café society.” Out of the ashes of the old High Society came the transformed rich; movie stars, gossip columnists, hangers-on and sycophants all joined in the publicity-soaked '30s high life. With the repeal of prohibition the speak-easies had become fashionable restaurants and New York resounded with forced laughter and false flattery.

For the less fortunate it was ballrooms and theaters and swing. At times, thousands of youngsters would cram onto dance floors unfit for hundreds and swing. Basically a jazz derivative, the frenetic dancing and pulsing rhythms had moralists calling for it to be banned—who says things change?

The *New York Times* quoted a psychologist who said there was a “dangerously hypnotic influence of swing, cunningly devised to a faster tempo than seventy-two bars to the minute—faster than the human pulse.”

Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Harry James and Duke Ellington were prominent purveyors of swing, and jive talkin' became the language of the craze. Big bands were the thing and gatherings were all-important. The small jazz clubs still existed but for many large dance halls were the place to be. Strange dance crazes emerged like the black bottom, truckin', shag, stompin' and posin'. Swing took the nation by storm and seeped into American culture. Those who didn't like it were branded strange names and listened to classical and other boring tunes. Improvised, free music was in and the language that developed around it was probably the first national youth-speak. As we ourselves would say today, “most excellent.”

## Conclusion

To conclude, the role of the Mythos in the thirties is a difficult one. It is all very well and good to provide information on the 1930s, but it's all got to fit into the Cthulhu milieu. In truth, not too much differs here from the twenties. Technology has taken a few more faltering steps forward, and the world has become a smaller place thanks to communication advancements. In the twenties decadence and an unflinching belief in the American way kept the country going. A price had to be paid, and that price was the depression. Upheaval and chaos followed; many people moved and the fluid population drifted from one town to another seeking work. Most of them eventually ended up in the big cities—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, etc.

A depression of the human soul was occurring, just the climate in which cultists can warp the sensibilities of those in need. Offers of a new start, work, and a

**Jive Talkin'**

Alligator	a swing fan
Canary	a female singer
Cats	swing musicians
Corn	bad music, uninspiring
Cuttin' the rug	dancing
Mothbox	piano
Hepcat	a swing afficianado
Ickie	someone who doesn't understand swing
In the Groove	"knocked out" by swing
Jam Session	swing musicians playing unrehearsed for personal pleasure
Jitterbug	a groovy kind of dance
Kicking Out	being wild and crazy
Knocked Out	aroused and engrossed by the music, more than "in the groove."
Long Hair	a square, a dull person
One Nighter	a one-off performance, for low wages
Paper Man	a musician who can't improvise
Platter	a record
Scat Singer	a vocalist who sings nonsense lyrics
Skins	drums
Swing	unrestrained big band jazz, lots of improvisation

**examples:**

**"That skin-beater sure is one hell of a hepcat."**  
*-The drummer is quite proficient*

**"Hey paper man, kick it out for once!"**  
*-Try improvising instead of sheet music*

**"What's that canary doing with an ickie like him."**  
*-Why won't that girl go out with me?*

**"This scat is knocking me out."**  
*-I feel great about the music.*

**"That platter is corn."**  
*-The record is crap.*

**"Shee, a one-nighter in R'lyeh with Cthulhu is worse than a month with a long hair."**  
*-I would rather listen to symphonic music than have my innards blasted by a gigantic relic of some forgotten race.*

chance to move up could be used to entice the desperate into sinister acts. Chaos abounds and the Mythos thrives in such circumstances. Human behavior becomes polarized in times of crisis; some sit back and let it happen, while others stand up and fight for their lives and their rights. All these ingredients are there for a wily Keeper to exploit and manipulate. Cities, shanty towns, dusty plains—the locations are endless for effective role-playing.

Use this information as fuel for plots and stories set in the thirties. The depression may strike fearful investigators as the beginning of the end; with so much abject misery, surely the time of the Great Old Ones must be drawing near! Play it up as a time of encroaching doom. Who knows where your next meal is coming from? With that kind of basic insecurity, the threat of the Mythos looms ever larger.

Add the *film noir* style of countless thirties movies and stories and the atmospherics really begin to boil. Cold shafts of concrete and steel rear up about the investigators in the city while the countryside is wide open and exposed, encouraging agoraphobia. Rain and darkness are other staples of *noir*; vampish women and desperate, sinister men lurk in the background, to unguessable purpose. You're being followed—cultists, or beggars? This is a time when humans are small, and the forces of life are big. The Mythos is bigger still.

The thirties were a time of great change. Poverty and sadness started the decade and the War in Europe ended it. In between are the elements described above, and many more. Setting scenarios in that time gives the Keeper a new set of tools to play with; turn the lives of the investigators upside-down, while still keeping the pressure on them to do their best. They may save a world that doesn't deserve saving, but that's their lot and they'll learn to live with it.

Remember, "it don't mean a thing, if you ain't got that swing" ♪

# The Arch-Nemesis

G.W. Thomas

**T**he old church is in flames. The minions of Iog-soth-ot lie dead before the altar. The Great Old Ones have been banished back behind the gate. Only the leader of the Cult of the Burning Sword remains...Rubal Khan! You push into the flames. There! Amongst the burning pews a figure wrapped in flickering, flaming death, as the ceiling collapses over him...

And so Rubal Khan perishes. Or does he? On your next investigation the team comes across a dead man bearing a tattoo you've seen before. The burning sword—the calling card of Rubal Khan!

The recurring villain, the kith and kin of Fu Manchu, has much to offer the CoC campaign. The unkillable arch-nemesis was a staple of pulp fiction. Perhaps the

most famous, of course, is Neyland Smith's good buddy Fu Manchu, though A. Conan Doyle's pesky Moriarty claims that title as well. He only appeared in one story, but came back again and again in film and the stories of other authors.

Fu Manchu was created about the time Sherlock took up bee-keeping for good. As a foil for Neyland Smith, Fu embodied the xenophobic "yellow peril" with his killer spiders and blow darts in dark alleys. These tactics are not unfamiliar to the CoC investigator, who is as likely to get a poison crisis in the back as he is to be eaten by a Byakhee.

The two elements meet under the pen of Robert E. Howard, who was a member of the Lovecraft circle and authored stories like "The Black Stone" and "Dig Me No Grave," not to mention the Conan books. One of Howard's earliest attempts was a story called "Skull-Face" which featured an ancient villain of Manchu-

## Fu Manchu

CL. Werner

Speaking of arch-villians, the aforementioned Fu Manchu makes a great one. Here he is, straight from the decayed pages of the pulps.

### Dr. Fu Manchu, Master Fiend

STR	10	DEX	10	INT	21
CON	15	APP	9	POW	18
SIZ	12	SAN	20	EDU	21
HP	14				

**Skills:** Anthropology 40%, Archeology 50%, Astronomy 50%, Botany 80%, Chemistry 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Electrical Repair 60%, Geology 60%, History 80%, Law 75%, Library Use 70%, Listen 70%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Native Language: Mandarin Chinese 98%, Occult 70%, Operate Heavy Machinery 45%, Other Language: English 70%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 80%, Psychology 80%, Spot Hidden 60%, Treat Disease 50%, Treat Poison 50%

Fu Manchu is the insidious leader of the Si Fan, a vile group of depraved, villainous Eastern criminals totally

loyal to their diabolic master. By means of his 'Elixir Viti,' Fu Manchu never ages, hence his villainy may span the centuries—reaching from Victorian settings to modern ones. Fu Manchu's plans revolve around world domination at any cost and his schemes and plots are often so incredibly intricate and complex that only Fu Manchu himself knows what is vital and what is only a red herring. The Si Fan are known to operate in London from the infamous Limehouse district while Fu Manchu's headquarters is in the snowy peaks of Tibet.

Members of the Si Fan should have the following skills: Camouflage, Climb, Jump, Hide, Martial Arts, Listen, Sneak, Track, Swim and proficiency in any one archaic Oriental weapon (i.e. sais, nunchuka, throwing stars, etc.).

Among the accomplishments attributed to Fu Manchu are botanical hybrids of fiendish capabilities (sleeping gas plants, carnivorous flowers, etc.) and intricate machinations of torture capable of breaking anyone's resolve. For all his villainy, Fu Manchu intimated that he was only the servant of some greater being, something both superhuman and inhuman. Keepers may interpret this as you wish...

esque style named Cathulos. Not too hard to figure which Great Old One he suggests. Cathulos appears millennia earlier in Kull's time as a scheming ventriloquist. He survives to modern day 1929 through rites and practices beyond ordinary men.

As for applying this pulp paradigm to *Call of Cthulhu*—why bother? There are many good reasons, the first being the enjoyment of the pulp atmosphere. Imagine the thrill that races through the players as they realize Baron von Evyl wasn't killed in that exploding munitions warehouse; imagine, too, the fun the Keeper has in explaining (dramatically, no doubt) just how the Baron survived.

Secondly, the supposition of a master-mind behind many of the activities investigators stumble upon gives credence to a concept that is otherwise hard to swallow. Could there really be ten different cults operating in the New England area without anybody noticing? Seems to be stretching it a bit. But the ridiculous seems plausible when you realize that all of these groups are led by one man (or woman) and one only, a being of such evil that he controls crime, the police, the politicians, everyone! Where is it safe to hide? Certainly not in dank crypts or lost islands, but with the master-mind even the everyday world is a threat to the poor investigators.

Thirdly, a master villain allows a thread of continuity to work its way through many investigations. If players meet to game infrequently, the arch-nemesis offers a point of recognition for the players after a long hiatus.

Finally, a continuing villain builds paranoia and suspense (or at least caution). Though not every adventure will feature that dread Captain Brubaker or the sensuous Lilli Gallant, your players will not know this until the final chapter of the investigation. Is this the work of serpent men or is it Rubal Khan? Has Black Jack Davies returned to Arkham from Ponape? Tune in next week...

As with all things in gaming, the Keeper must show discretion. If every naughty thing that happens in Providence is the work of your arch-nemesis, then the concept becomes ludicrous. Even Rubal Khan is above stealing the milk money off the tops of milk bottles. You can keep events fresh by spreading them around. Have several villains, with their own networks of thugs and cultists. And don't forget the isolated instances of horror that have no earthly origin.

For no matter how powerful these arch-villians get, there are always the Great Old Ones controlling them from afar. ☞



DENNIS DETWILER



## Philosophy

Since the 1500s The Last Dawn has embraced a quasi-religious/occult/mythos philosophy they call God's Divine Design. This Divine Design is explained as follows.

"God, in His infinite wisdom, would provide man with enough glimpses of Hell during man's time on Earth as to assure his constant devotion to God. The more civilized and intellectual man is, the more he questions God's motives and existence (organized religion calls this turning away from God). God responds to this by introducing, in small, subtle doses, horrors that are neither civilized nor intellectually comprehensible. Therefore mankind has no defense against these horrors except to return to blind faith in and obedience to God. The more civilized man becomes (and the more men who turn away from God) the greater the horror and the more frequent the occurrences. Ultimately, by showing mankind flashes of chaos and hellspawned creatures, God helps man avoid being condemned to Hell eternally. Though mankind has free will, he must be shown the consequences of rejecting He who granted free will.

"However, only a few men of faith must know of this Divine Design, otherwise its very existence could lead to more questions about God's nature. The existence of the horrors must be plausible enough to withstand the advancement of civilization and technology. In other words, the horrors must have a believable mythos surrounding them to withstand scrutiny and must be of immense power to withstand advanced weaponry. They must be sanity-shaking enough to make men question their own impotence and wish for the reassurance of God. Therefore God created the "Outer Gods" and "Elder Gods," along with all their servitor races, histories, and machinations, to fulfill this position of "horror on Earth" in God's universe.

"Thus did God reveal His plan to Cardinal Francesco Cassini in 1500. The Last Dawn, then, is God's tool for introducing the horrors of the mythos onto an unsuspecting, but increasingly cynical, world. Civilized men, investigating the existence of these "horrors," shall discover cults (evil men who have turned from God) who are trying to "return the Other Gods to power." The struggle to prevent this influx of chaos and evil will spread as time goes on, eventually encompassing even those wrong and misguided deeds which are not mythos inspired, but which displease God nonetheless. Finally, by 3000 A.D., the true existence and actual purpose of

The Last Dawn will be discovered by mankind, but since that marks the end of the world (as revealed to Cardinal Cassini) The Last Dawn will have already accomplished its mission and God's work. Its members, who have worked on God's behalf over the centuries, will be vindicated and they shall be praised by the righteous on Judgement Day." -Disciple Carter Simon, 1900.

## Philosophy Notes

It is important for the keeper to completely be clear on a few points.

- ✦ The philosophy of The Last Dawn does not alter the "reality" of the game setting. It is a twisted rationale which allows this organization to operate quite effectively in a CoC campaign. While a couple members of The Last Dawn might be skeptics themselves (or even members of a different cult who have infiltrated The Last Dawn), the vast majority truly believe this philosophy.
- ✦ Because of a member's fanatic rationalization, he views the horrors of the mythos differently, as a creation of a sane and loving God. This does not mean a member of The Last Dawn cannot be frightened witless, it just means he or she handles Sanity loss differently. When mythos creatures are encountered, a successful Sanity roll means the character loses no Sanity points, no matter the normal loss. Even a missed roll means that a member will only lose half the normal amount. This rule also applies for witnessing depictions, dreams, or other representations of the mythos. No Sanity is ever lost for a member of The Last Dawn from using a mythos item or reading a tome or manuscript.
- ✦ Last Dawn members ("Lasts") are still human beings and so suffer normal Sanity loss from personally witnessing the carnage and butchery a mythos encounter can inflict on humans. Lasts who go insane are considered to have been weak in their faith. They are usually dealt with kindly by their brethren and sent to special, hidden retreats for cure or confinement.
- ✦ The Last Dawn views what they do as directed by God for the fulfillment of His Design. Therefore they may employ almost any methods to achieve their goals. For example, some research indicates that The Last Dawn may have shared major responsibility for the rise in power of Adolph Hitler and the beginning of World War II. "The end justifies the means" is a major guideline of The Last Dawn, though they will not go out of their way to inflict pain or act evilly.

- ✦ The Last Dawn does not view organized religions or associations, such as The Randolph Pierce Foundation, as natural enemies or even misguided fools. There is no animosity there whatsoever. They feel that they have their uses for "bringing the lost into the light." However, they will attack any faction which they believe is hindering their operations, even unto destruction. As Cardinal Cassini once said, "God's sheep must be brought back to the fold, even if it must be over the broken bodies of shepherds."
- ✦ Yes, there are huge gaps of logic in the tenets of The Last Dawn's beliefs, but its members function primarily on blind faith to its teachings and instructions. Arguing with them will get a person absolutely nowhere.

## Structure

The Last Dawn has a centralized structure, somewhat like the Roman Catholic Church. The head of The Last Dawn is called the Hierophant (always capitalized). The Hierophant shall be covered in a later section.

Each of the six populated continents is controlled by a leader, known as a disciple. Disciples answer only to the Hierophant. The six disciples are known collectively as the Council Break. It is almost impossible to trace a disciple through other members of The Last Dawn.

Each continent is divided into regions of control called "spheres." A sphere can be a specific region of a country, if it is advanced and powerful (such as America), otherwise a sphere is usually an entire country (such as Canada) or a collective of countries (such as Central America). The leader of a sphere is called an "exarch." A continent's exarchs are known collectively as a "college."

Each sphere has one center of power called a "diocese" and many other, smaller areas of power, each known as a "see."

A diocese is almost always located in a large city, has dozens of loyal members, and has a rock solid "front organization." The head of a diocese is called a "scion." This front organization actually works on its own and has a headquarters building which also serves as the control center for that sphere's operations and a home for the exarch and the scion. The scion answers to the exarch, but the scion handles the normal operations of the diocese. There is no collective term for scions.

A see usually contains six to twelve members who are responsible for keeping an eye on their individual locales. Every see has a spokesman, called a "prelate," sort of a leader with very limited powers. All prelates

in a sphere report to the exarch. Collectively, prelates are known as a "throng."

All non-leader members are referred to as "heirs." All members are also commonly referred to as brother, sister, or child by the leader position above them. Collectively, members of The Last Dawn are referred to within the organization as "the flock" or "the body."

There are hundreds of agents employed by The Last Dawn who do not suspect its motives or actual existence. They are usually given their instructions by the local prelate. They know there is probably some higher boss directing the prelate, but they usually have no idea who it is or where they are located. These agents are formally known within the ranks of The Last Dawn as "instruments." These instruments are normally employed for fulfilling a single task, such as assassination, information gathering, "acquisition," and so on. Many dangerous groups in the world, such as the Black Hand and various Tongs, started out as groups of instruments.

## Structure Notes

The Last Dawn is extremely devious and covert. Only a disciple knows the locations of his specific spheres and diocese. Usually a scion is not even aware of what other diocese exist on the continent he occupies (unless he was trained there). Only the Hierophant knows all of the disciples, spheres, exarchs, scions, diocese, and sees.

The fronts for each diocese headquarters are usually as complex and well equipped as The Randolph Pierce Foundation. Normally, the front is so well established and so respectable that any investigator checking up on it will not easily find anything suspicious. As a matter of fact, police, elected officials, and even average citizens may try to hinder investigators from "slandering the good name" of the front organization.

## The Hierophant

The unquestioned leader of The Last Dawn is called the Hierophant. No name or number is attached to the title, so no one knows how long the Hierophant has been in control. When an exarch ascends to the position of a disciple, one of the things he is promised is a chance at immortality. What he does not know, though, is that The Last Dawn offers immortality at a horrific cost.

If a disciple reaches old age, is not diseased, and has served The Last Dawn well, he is allowed to request "a place in the Hierophant." By this time the disciple has met the Hierophant and knows what lies in store for him or her, but he has no other choice than death



JASON BOVEE



sigil of the Last Dawn

## Examples of Spheres, Diocese and Front Organizations (circa 1920)

**Sphere: CANADA** **Montreal**  
 The Canadian School of Broadcasting  
 (education & training of future radio personalities)

**Sphere: CENTRAL AMERICA** **Diocese varies every 25 years, currently is Panama City**  
 (including the Caribbean Sea)

The Central American Biological Union  
 (exploration and identification of fauna in the region)

**Sphere: EAST AMERICA** **New York City**  
 Inactive American Soldiers (I.A.S.)  
 (non-government sponsored veterans organization)

**Sphere: LOWER MIDWEST AMERICA** **St. Louis**  
 The St. Louis Browns Appreciation Ass.  
 (huge fan organization not sponsored by the Browns)

**Sphere: MEXICO** **Mexico City**  
 The Golden Sun  
 (national health care organization, especially handling natural disasters within Mexico, like earthquakes)

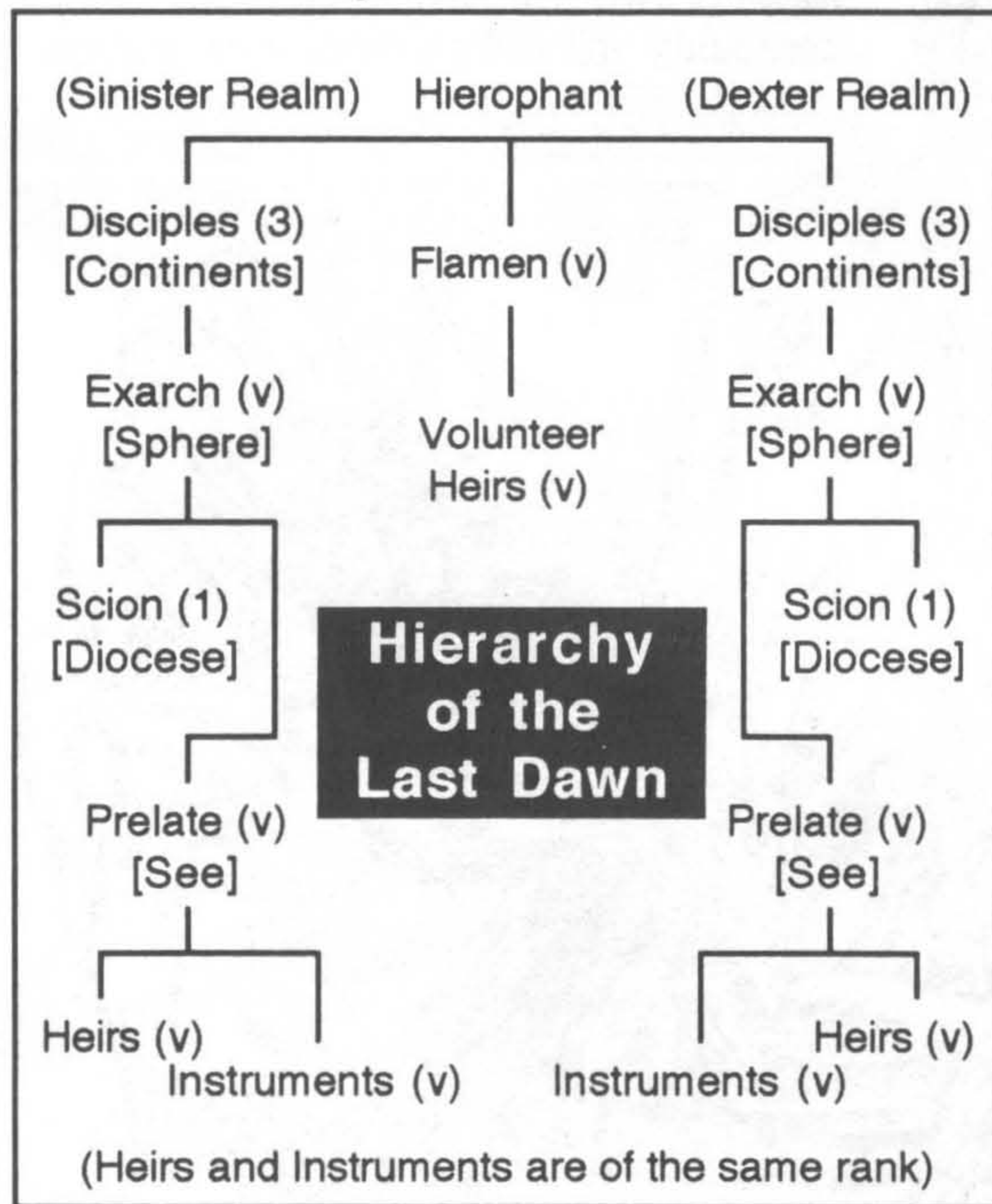
**Sphere: NORTHEAST AMERICA** **Boston**  
 The Loula Institute of Theatrical Studies  
 (education & training for theatre and voice)

**Sphere: PLAINS AMERICA** **Omaha**  
 Pioneer Historical Society  
 (society for preservation of plains' history & geneology)

**Sphere: UPPER MIDWEST AMERICA** **Chicago**  
 The Hamilton Updike Association  
 (dedicated to stamping out illiteracy in America)

**Sphere: WESTERN AMERICA** **Los Angeles**  
 America Relief League  
 (central organization which coordinates hundreds of private, legitimate relief agencies in America, for both domestic and foreign aid)

*about the chart:* the chart at left shows the hierarchy of the Last Dawn, as described in the accompanying article. Numbers in parentheses represent the number of individuals with the title listed; "(v)" means the number is variable.



at this point.

Neither a human or a creature, the Hierophant is a monstrosity of disciple body parts and intellects. Arms, hands, ball socket joints, sexual organs, and faces (and facial parts) comprise most of the body of the Hierophant. The monster displays a history of many different races, ethnic backgrounds, and both sexes. It was created in the late 1500s by a miscasting of a Spell of Immortality (once available in the original de' Medici Manuscript). Up to that point the Hierophant had always been an aging ecclesiastic, much like the pope, who served until he died. But Marcello Cassini (Francesco's great grandson) wanted more, he wished to be the head of The Last Dawn until Judgement Day. Attended to by another Cardinal of the Church, Cassini misread the last stanza of the spell and physically merged with Cardinal Mariballi.

Since then, gruesome rituals have increased the power and size of the Hierophant. The ascension of a disciple includes the psychic digestion of the intellect, then devouring the body. This is the only time the Hierophant eats and it consumes everything. Within hours, a new face emerges on the body. The more powerful the mind consumed, the more prominent the face. Faces of less powerful disciples slowly dwindle over the consuming centuries and move to the back of the Hierophant or down the limbs. Thus the Hierophant ever adapts to the modern era, yet maintains the wisdom of the ages.

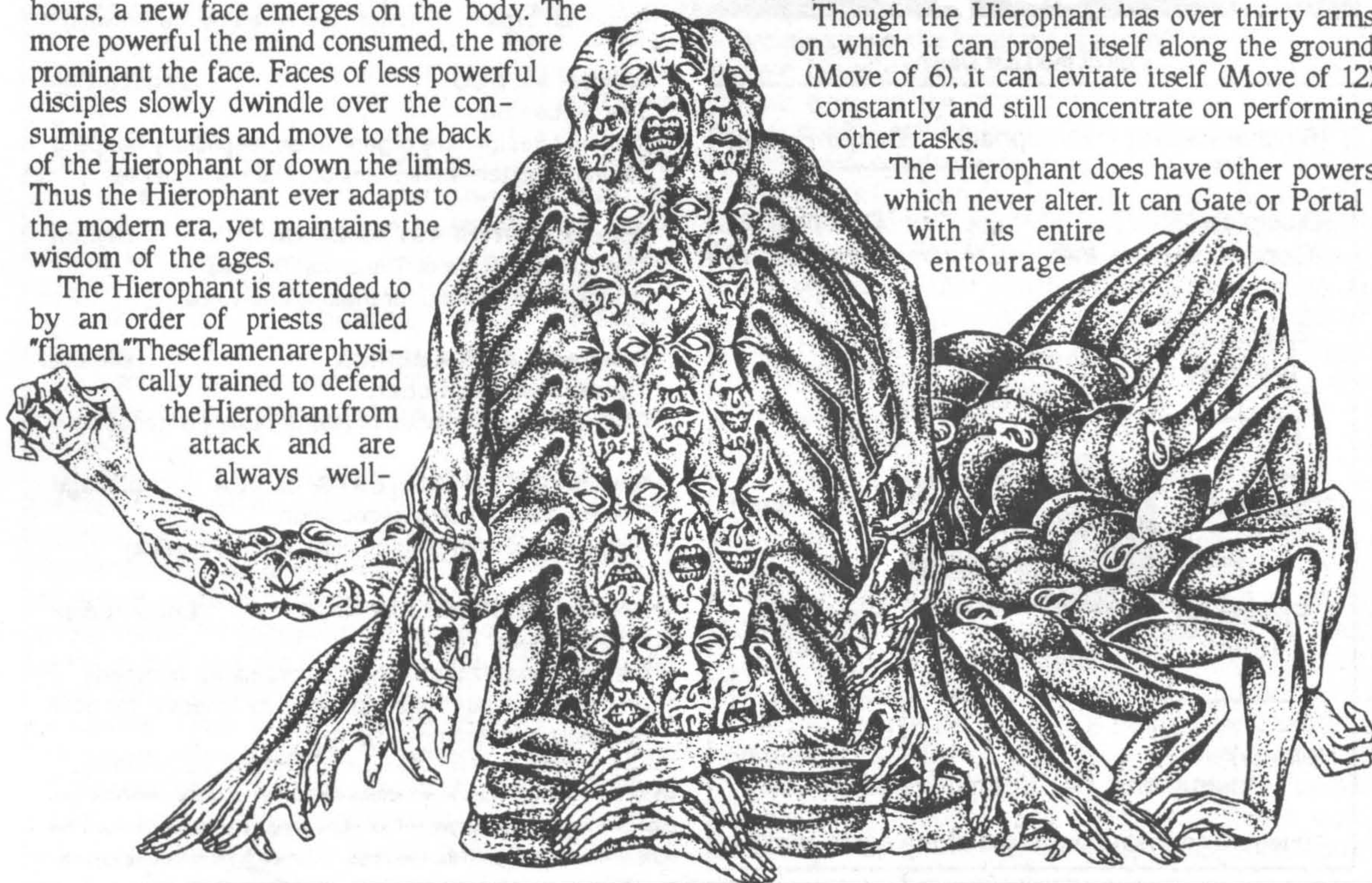
The Hierophant is attended to by an order of priests called "flamen." These flamen are physically trained to defend the Hierophant from attack and are always well-

armed. In addition, they always know at least one attack spell, such as Stun Limb, Wither Limb, Shrivelling, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, etc., or can summon and bind a specific creature. It is these flamen, usually in their 20s and devastatingly beautiful women (actually hermaphrodites), who most disciples must deal with, while the Hierophant is nearby hidden behind a screen, heavy curtain, or protected by a spell which somehow masks it from sight. Normally 8 to 14 (1D6+8) flamen travel with him, at least two of which are deaf.

The Hierophant's statistics are not listed here, as the keeper should really develop him to match his own game or campaign. Remember, the Hierophant is a multiple personality entity whose abilities are in constant flux. Anytime the keeper wishes the Hierophant to use a skill, speak a language, perform a spell, or otherwise perform an ability, he should roll percentile dice. The result is the chance of the Hierophant being able to perform that ability for the next hour. Whenever the keeper wishes to utilize the ability, he will roll against that number. Any other attribute chance is normally at 50%.

Though the Hierophant has over thirty arms on which it can propel itself along the ground (Move of 6), it can levitate itself (Move of 12) constantly and still concentrate on performing other tasks.

The Hierophant does have other powers which never alter. It can Gate or Portal with its entire entourage



JASON BOVEE



# de Medici Manoscritto

## (The Medici Manuscript)

Kim Eastland

**T**his Mysterious Manuscript is a powerful driving force behind both the Randolph Pierce Foundation and their greatest enemy, The Last Dawn (see other articles in this issue and issue #6 of TUO). You can use it exactly as written, with a few of your own spells added to its contents if you so desire, for a Randolph Pierce Foundation campaign. Or you can use it as a boilerplate to redesign spells and create your own unique campaign history. You can even increase the power of the spells and reduce SAN if you wish to use it as a normal tome for a "straight" CoC scenario.

### History

The history of *de' Medici Manoscritto* is extensive and probably will never be fully known. It is a history of not only a particular artifact, but of the creation of two very different organizations, The Last Dawn and The Randolph Pierce Foundation.

The history we do have was compiled by Thaddeus Pierce and passed onto his son Randolph by the 1920s. Some of it is derived from extensive notes within the Pierce copy, other information came through years of Thad's research around the world. Yet more background was acquired by the elder Pierce through arcane or mythos means no longer at the family's disposal. And still more details are assumptions made in light of what facts are definitely known. Certain portions of the *Manoscritto* are definitely missing by the '20s, probably powerful spells which were too dangerous to be allowed to pass into the hands of other dynasties (and extremely upsetting for game balance). Nonetheless, some hints are provided for these "lost spells" in the timeline. One such spell is believed to be some type of Earthquake creation, though no version of it now remains.

Following is Thaddeus Pierce's timeline for *de' Medici Manoscritto*, also known to a few as the Pierce Manuscript. Some additional viewpoints by Randolph Pierce are noted, marked by a R. for those who wish to know the variations from the original notes.

Furthermore, Quintin Pierce, Randolph's Canadian

cousin who specializes in religious history, offers a slightly more detailed and different timeline. Quintin has been researching The Last Dawn in the past few years. Quintin's different timeline observations are marked with a Q.

### de' Medici Manoscritto Timeline

**AD. 1233.** The Dominican order is entrusted with the Inquisition by Pope Gregory IX to make sure that all of the clergy understand and preach the same theology. Q. believes its original nature was well-intentioned.

**1252.** The Inquisition turns cruel, using torture for their purposes. Q. believes these few, rogue Inquisitors formed the nucleus of The Last Dawn. At first, it is just a radical movement within the church by ambitious clergy wishing to gain power through the fear of the mythos. Over the next hundred years they would start small cabals everywhere the church holds formidable power.

**1400.** The Medici family grows in power and influence in Florence. They have no connections with The Last Dawn and any knowledge of the mythos is limited at best.

**1414.** The Medici family become bankers for the papacy. Their influence within the framework of the church increases dramatically.

**1469.** Lorenzo de' Medici, "The Magnificent", becomes ruler of Florence (until 1492). He soon is one of the most powerful men in the world. Q. Almost immediately Lorenzo runs afoul of The Last Dawn, who are strong in Florence. During this time he almost destroys the Florentine cabal and seriously battles with the rest of the Italian faction.

**1478.** Giuliano de' Medici, Lorenzo's brother, is murdered in Florence's cathedral. Q. thinks this was accomplished by The Last Dawn, an act which permanently sets the Medicis against the evil cartel.

**1481.** The Spanish Inquisition begins in full force. Q. believes The Last Dawn somehow has gained control over Ferdinand and Isabella by this time, though how and to what extent is unknown. Spain becomes the center of power for The Last Dawn's hierarchy. By the turn of the decade, power over all the cabals on the



unknown reason. But it is obvious that though his works will not cause Sanity loss, his creation of them certainly did.

**1523.** Guilio de' Medici reigns as Pope Clement VII. The first known use of the de' Medici Manoscritto is upon the orders of Clement. It was through a Portal's secret passage that information was obtained to defrock Cardinal Alfredo Cassini who was plotting the Pope's death and his own ascension to the papal throne. Q. Cassini was the head of The Last Dawn at this time, the man who overthrew the old guard. His excommunication, and subsequent disappearance, was a serious blow to the Lasts. Though he was forced to spend the remaining days of his life hiding from Medici and Borgia assassins, he still maintained control over The Last Dawn and passed it on to his son, Alfredo, in 1526.

**1527.** Protestant Reformation fuels military invasions into Italy. When Pope Clement is imprisoned the papacy is temporarily paralyzed. Q. Though this invasion of Italy was not fully orchestrated by the Lasts, it is of extreme importance. So effective was Clement's persecution of The Last Dawn that its complete destruction in Italy may have been possible if this respite had not occurred.

**1528.** Lucindia Borgia, illegitimate daughter of Lucrezia Borgia, uses the tome's contents to murder those whom she felt were her mother's true enemies. R. No definite knowledge exists on how Lucindia obtained the book, or how it was returned to the Vatican after her use for revenge. Possibly she demanded its single purpose use in exchange for sexual favors, for which she was allegedly quite sought after by many de' Medici male members of the clergy. Q. A number of suspected, high-clergy members of The Last Dawn were poisoned during this year. This may have prevented them taking over the papacy while Pope Clement's power waned.

**1531.** The Inquisition grows to full force in Portugal. Q. The Last Dawn, still under Italian Cassini control,

moves their foreign base of operations to Portugal.

**1534.** Cardinal Farnese becomes Pope Paul III. Q. Apparently unconnected with either the Medici/ Borgia alliance or The Last Dawn, Paul III purges the upper ranks of the Vatican of this factional fighting.

**1542.** Pope Paul III establishes the Inquisition in Rome. Q. The Last Dawn begins to be hunted down again, but this time for their religious beliefs, not because of factional differences. Through the Inquisition many names of The Last Dawn hierarchy are obtained. Soon most are in hiding or imprisoned.

**1559.** Giovanni Angelo de' Medici becomes Pope Pius IV. Q. With a return of a Medici to the papacy The

Last Dawn loses all influence in the Vatican and in Rome, retreating to western Europe for security. In many cases members begin to infiltrate Protestant movements or royal courts and families. Ironically at this time, when their influence in Italy is on the wane, their greatest coup in the Vatican is accomplished. An unassuming clerk close to the papacy turns out to be a lifelong spy of the Lasts. Under torture he reveals that only a few days earlier he had completed a copy of de' Medici Manoscritto for The Last Dawn. Despite frantic efforts, the Vatican cannot retrieve the copy before it is whisked away to a safe haven outside of Italy.



de' Medici Manoscritto

JASON BOVEE

**1560.** King Francis II of France dies after but two years on the throne. Because of intricate lineage, Catherine de' Medici's son shall become Charles IX, but she is regent until he is of age in 1563, then Queen Mother until her death in 1589. Q. can find no definite connections to the events of 1559, but the quick expansion of de' Medici power in these two, short years beggars believability. Possibly some Borgia poison helped Francis II along.

**1569.** Pope Pius V (no, not a Medici) makes Cosimo de' Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany. Q. Through expansion of Medici influence in Europe The Last Dawn is on the run everywhere but Spain and Portugal.

Though the Inquisition still existed in Europe until the 19th Century, The Last Dawn quickly loses control of most of it as well. This lessening of power brings about the demise of the Cassini family's control for centuries. No one family picks up the reigns of power at this time. Instead it is shared by the Council Break, a group of influential leaders from within the organization which varies in size and control from century to century.

**1600.** Maria de' Medici marries Henry IV, King of France, continuing the Medici transferral of power to France. When he is assassinated in 1610, she becomes regent until 1617, when her son becomes Louis XIII. Her control of the French court is absolute (evidence suggests extensive use of de' Medici Manoscritto spells to hold power) and she even challenges her son in 1619 for power.

**1605.** Alessandro de' Medici becomes Pope Leo XI and dies the same year. He is the last Medici pope and has no impact on anything.

**1616-1618.** Richelieu becomes Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and War in France. In 1618 he is exiled for intriguing with Queen Maria de' Medici.

**1619.** Richelieu is brought back by Louis XIII to help make peace with his mother. Her power grows. Facts suggest that in payment for his support, Maria de' Medici has a French copy of de' Medici Manoscritto made for Richelieu, though an abridged version.

**1622.** Richelieu has used his copy well and is made Cardinal. He becomes First Minister in 1624. Q. Recent discoveries in the Vatican indicate that Richelieu may have been the French member of The Last Dawn's Council Break starting this year.

**1624.** The Medici family influence expands when Maria's daughter, Henrietta Maria, marries King Charles I of England. Q. Believes that the French Queen Mother Maria de' Medici passed a copy of de' Medici Manoscritto to her daughter to help keep Cardinal Richelieu in check.

**1626.** Q. Cardinal Richelieu's use of the spells are so effective that by this year he has all the power of France in his hands. Maria de' Medici visits Naples during July. On July 30 a major quake strikes, destroying the city and devastating dozens of villages. 70,000 are killed. Miraculously, she escapes but now believes Richelieu is trying to kill her.

**1630.** Richelieu overthrows Maria de' Medici's conspiracy and the next year she is exiled to Brussels. But she joins forces with her son, Gaston, the Duke of Orleans, to bring about Richelieu's fall. His power is seriously broken. When he dies in 1642 he is replaced

by an Italian as First Minister.

**1640s.** As the English Civil War occurs, Henrietta Maria flees to Holland. In 1647, with her husband imprisoned, she is seen in England though supposedly she is in France. Some evidence shows she Portaled into England from a ship, then helped her husband escape. However, she fled back to France alone when her husband was recaptured. Apparently Oliver Cromwell (the leader of the opposition) suspected that Charles I used "witchcraft" to escape and thereafter Cromwell insisted on an end of allegiance to the King. No more uses of the Henrietta book are indicated hereafter.

**1701.** Q. de' Medici influence in Italy, while declining, is still enough to force the Vatican to establish the Revelare Nuncius (Latin for unveiling messenger or agent). This elite organization exists solely to investigate, expose, and/or neutralize occult organizations of a highly dangerous nature, such as mythos cults, whether within or without the Holy Mother Church. For centuries they have been the chief nemesis of the international organization of The Last Dawn.

By the twentieth century, the group was bastardized to Revel Nuncio, or simply Revelers. While most modern agents are recruited from the Jesuit Order some specialists are actually laymen who have a deep devotion to the church or simply to Christianity.

**1737.** The last of the Medici ruling lords, The Grand Duke of Tuscany, dies. Francis, Duke of Lorraine receives Tuscany. He is the husband of Maria Theresa, who ascends to the thrones of Austria, Hungary, and the Holy Roman Empire. With the transferral of Tuscany, the Italian de' Medici Manoscritto leaves Italian soil and power. Though certain spells may have been separately recorded, it is not now thought that an entire copy was left in Italy for use by the Revelare Nuncius. Maria Theresa used the book's contents extensively. She held off both Frederick the Great and France with it quite successfully, despite their many wars. But because of this successful use of the spells for espionage it is quite probable that France's copy, brought there by Catherine de' Medici and shared by Richelieu, was no longer available to the government. R. feels it certain that it was either destroyed by this time or in the hands of private users.

**1746.** The Austro-Russian Alliance is formed. Certain notes from old czarist manuscripts reveal that this alliance was sealed with a special gift from Maria Theresa of Austria to Czarina Elizabeth of Russia; quite probably a Russian translation of de' Medici Manoscritto. Definite use of some de' Medici Manoscritto spells

within Russia occur within 15 years of this alliance.

**1750.** The Chronos Term is unearthed in Greece. See "The Magic of the Manoscritto" article, p. 49.

**1755.** A major quake destroys numerous towns in Portugal throughout the year, including one in Lisbon which destroyed 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants. Q. Though this may have been a misfire of the Earthquake spell, the severity makes me believe it was a multiple casting of the spell against Portugal. Following these earthquakes there was a major purge by the government of The Last Dawn cabals still remaining in Portugal. No known members were alive by 1756. I think some descendants of the Medici family decided to clean off the Iberian peninsula.

**1762.** Russian Czarina Catherine II ascends the throne and signs the Russo-Prussian alliance against Austria. Maria Theresa, quite infuriated about this Russian betrayal, almost certainly provided her daughter, Marie Antoinette, with her own copy in 1770 when she married the Dauphin of France. R., We are quite certain that this later copy was even less complete than Richelieu's abridged edition. In this way Maria Theresa makes a secret ally of France against Prussia and Russia.

**1770.** Q. For the next two years there is a major exodus to the New World of young Lasts. Whether this was an

organized exodus is unknown. Within 10 years, though, members of the Revelare Nuncius began joining missionary expeditions to the new world.

**1780.** The Empress Maria Theresa dies. Absolutely nothing has ever turned up about the fate of her copy, except it is certain it passed out of Austrian hands upon her demise.

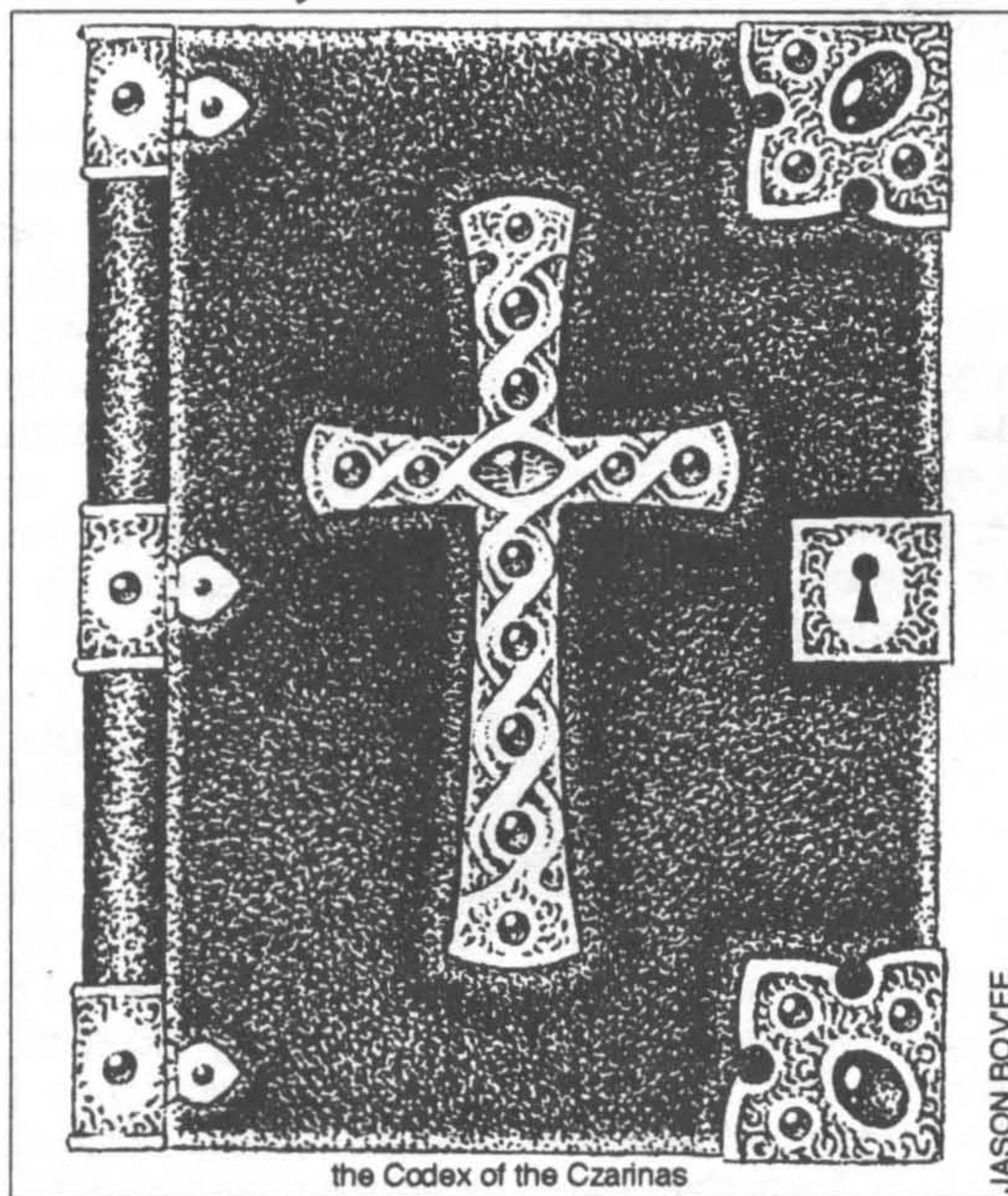
**1788.** The last known use of *de' Medici Manoscritto* in England was in 1647. In 1788, George III uses it to see his mistress. Coincidentally, his first attack of mental illness is shortly thereafter. Believing it to be caused by the tome, upon his recovery he orders the book destroyed. Several private transcriptions of individual

spells, unknown by the royal family to have been copied from their manual, are also destroyed at this time. At most, only one or two English editions may have survived.

**1789.** The French Revolution forces the Nobility to emigrate. It is believed that Marie Antoinette's copy is taken to America by one of her attendants, Bridgette Rousseau. Four years later, when it was obvious the French royal family were not coming over, Rousseau marries Ashley Bainbridge in the Louisiana Territory. The book is handed down over generations through the females of the family, but seldom, if ever, were the spells used until 1887.

**1827.** Five years after they invade Greece, Turkey enters Athens. Though Russia intervenes and forces Turkey out of Greece by 1829, the Turks have already looted many valuables, including the Chronos Term.

**1886.** R. Sarah Hampstead (see 1887) was visiting her mother in Charleston, South Carolina in late August of this year. On August 31st the worst earthquake ever recorded on the east coast occurred in Charleston. It was so great that it was felt even in Omaha! I wonder if Sarah's mother misused the book, then passed it to her daughter in fear, or possibly Sarah misused the spell herself. Whichever it was, her mother died a year later from inju-



ries sustained in the earthquake.

**1887.** Part of a diary inside the Pierce copy of the tome provides a detailed account of its use. Sarah Hampstead, a descendant of Bridgette Rousseau, resided in Nanaimo, Vancouver Island. On May 4th her husband, Sutter, was trapped in the Victoria coal mine fire, which entombed all 170 miners. She used the Know Portal Locale and Create Portal spells to save her husband and three friends. This came as quite a shock to Sutter, as he was totally unaware of his wife's secret. Though the three men were sworn to secrecy Sutter did not believe such a power could remain hidden long and moved away with his wife during the night.



Fearing the book's power he demanded that his wife destroy it, but she incinerated a dictionary instead, secretly sending her copy of *de' Medici Manoscritto* to her adult, married daughter: Debra Pierce.

Unlike her mother Debra shared the knowledge of her gift with her husband, Thaddeus. He spent the next 30 years of his life interpreting the book into modern English and researching its origins. During this time the original copy was either lost or destroyed. Q. I believe that a modern cabal of The Last Dawn, possibly based in San Fransisco picked up the trail of the Marie Antoinette copy after the Nanaimo usage. Evidence suggests they somehow managed to fool the Pierces into betraying its location by setting the Pierce home afire. We know that such a fire did occur, but when the Lasts tried grabbing the tome from Thaddeus he fought back, dropping the book down a staircase into the heart of the fire. The Last Dawn probably felt that was the end of the matter and fled, not realizing Thaddeus still had enough notes (safely hidden away at another locale) to reconstruct the book.

**1902.** (Keeper's knowledge only) James Loula Jr. travels overseas to stay with his mother's family, the Cassinis. (See future Loula Institute article).

**1903.** Q. On April 29th, a giant mudslide wiped out the village of Frank on Turtle Mountain in Alberta. I believe this was caused by the French-Canadian cabal of The Last Dawn trying to rebind the old Earthquake spell back into one of the only copies they possessed in North America. Rantings by dying Lasts at the site suggest that only a few pages were saved by other, fleeing members when the book was torn asunder by "a screaming priest who unleashed God's bolts upon the tome... and upon our selves for blaspheming so." This might indicate that the Revelers are somehow tracking down Lasts in North America.

**1909.** A civil war in Turkey deposed the Sultan. During the chaos Russian spies stole the Chronos Term, though no one knows for whom. Coincidentally, Grigori Rasputin, the "Mad Monk", (b. 1871) increased his power over the court of Czar Nicholas II of Russia this year. Q. The term disappears by 1910, so it is possible Rasputin discovered its powers and used it to influence the royal family. Working his way into the affections of the Czarina Alexandra, she shared her knowledge of the long disused Russian copy of *de' Medici Manoscritto*. Eye witness accounts indicates that he used it extensively, arrogantly, sometimes in full display in front of the nobility. Use of the term may have shaken his sanity too much. Probably the Russian copy was

destroyed with him in 1916, though certain spells are believed to live on in private copies.

**1912.** (Keeper knowledge only) James Loula Jr. returns to Boston. Ostensibly, it is to continue his father's work in theatre, but secretly he plans to reorganize The Last Dawn in North America into a powerful force which will someday reunite chapters the world over. He brings back with him a copy of *de' Medici Manoscritto* which he has obtained in his travels. It is the only extensive copy in the hands of the North American Last Dawn.

**1917.** Thaddeus Pierce dies and Debra Pierce becomes sickly. With no female heirs, she passes Thaddeus' copy of the manuscript to her son, Randolph Pierce. Accompanying the book are boxes of his father's notes and research. Though Randolph had some small interest in the occult by way of antiquities before the tome's arrival, it radically changes his life. He masters the spells found in his father's translation, with his mother's occasional help. Upon her death his research into the other further spells ceases and he concentrates on the portal spells. These he uses to acquire stock market information and build up his finances.

**1920.** The Randolph Pierce Foundation takes on its current form, funded by the finances Pierce has acquired to "fight the evil which slithers about the foundations of humanity".

(Keeper knowledge only) The Loula Institute of Theatrical Studies is one of the two strongest American bastions of The Last Dawn, thanks to James Loula Jr. He now starts sending his students throughout the country to start new cells.

### For those playing in the mid-1920s.

**1923.** Randolph Pierce is forced into semi-retirement by his sanity shaking adventures. Upon the recovery of his mental health he dedicates most of his time to the rest of his father's work.

(Keeper knowledge only) The Loula Institute has hundreds of followers in place, though very few are capable combatants, know spells, or even have more than a 5% knowledge of the mythos. Through sheer, dumb luck one agent is in a Chicago bar at the right moment. He overhears Vinnie Fusco, of the Randolph Pierce Foundation, bragging about his Italian roots. He mentions that even a non-Italian friend of his, Randolph Pierce, relies on the ancient Medicis and their books for his income. Within hours Loula is told that there is another copy of *de' Medici Manoscritto* on the east coast. And its owner knows how to use it! ☺

## Known Copies & Editions

### de' Medici Manoscritto (original)

A Collection of 13 "Purified" Spells by: Brother Antonio de' Medici (Latin, no Mythos gain or SAN loss, x5 Spell Multiplier, study time: 100 hours)

Printing history: one beautifully handscribed copy, bound in gold and silver, for Pope Leo X, ca 1513 -1519 A.D.

One common Italian translation, also by Brother Antonio, bound as a breviary, ca 1519 -1521 A.D.

Spells known to exist: Cloak, Create Portal, Create Scrying Orb, Find Orb, Incarn, Know Locale, Memorize, Stun Limb, Truth

Spells suspected to exist: • Some form of earthquake spell of great power and great cost to cast • Some type of disguise or body altering spell • Some internally damaging assassination spell (believed to have been quite costly to cast) • Completely unknown spell

### de' Medici Manoscritto (1500s)

The Maria Miscellany

A Collection of 13 "Purified" Spells

originally by: Brother Antonio de' Medici

translated by: unknown, upon the order of the French Queen Maria de' Medici from her mother's copy

(French, no Mythos gain or SAN loss, x4 Spell Multiplier, study time: 88 hours)

Printing history: a gorgeous handscribed copy, bound in hardwood and finest, tooled leather with inset jewels. ca late 1590s A.D.

• A small possibility that one common French or Latin translation was also secretly made by Cardinal Richelieu during ca 1616 -1625 A.D.

• A copy of Queen Maria's book is made for her daughter, Henrietta Maria upon her ascension to the Queenship of England, in 1624. The book is purported to have excluded the assassination, unknown, and earthquake spells, and to have been plainly bound and quite unremarkable.

Spells known to exist: Cloak, Create Portal, Create Scrying Orb, Find Orb, Incarn, Know Locale, Memorize, Stun Limb, Truth

Spells suspected to exist: • Some type of disguise or body-altering spell

### The Marias Manual

A Collection of 10 Ancient Spells

by: unknown, on the order of an unknown English lord. (English, no Mythos gain or SAN loss, x2 Spell Multiplier, study time: 70 hours)

Printing history: unknown appearance, believed to have been a secretly copied translation from Henrietta Maria's book ca late 1630s.

Spells known to exist: Cloak, Create Portal, Create Scrying Orb, Find Orb, Incarn, Know Locale, Memorize, Stun Limb, Truth

Spells suspected to exist: • Some type of disguise or body altering spell

### The Codex of the Czarinas

A Collection of Royal Spells by: unknown

(Russian, no Mythos gain or SAN loss, x1 Spell Multiplier, study time: 72 hours)

Printing history: unknown appearance but probably expensive and impressive, ordered copied from the original de' Medici Manoscritto by Empress Maria Theresa for Czarina Elizabeth in 1746.

Spells known to exist: Cloak, Create Portal, Create Scrying Orb, Find Orb, Incarn, Know Locale, Memorize, Stun Limb

### de' Medici Manoscritto (1700s)

A Spell Collection for the preservation of the Family. by: unknown

(French and Austrian, no Mythos gain or SAN loss, x2 Spell Multiplier, study time: 68 hours)

Printing history: unknown appearance, believed to have been ordered for Marie Antoinette by her mother, the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, in 1770. This is the last known royal translation.

Spells known to exist: Cloak, Create Portal, Create Scrying Orb, Find Orb, Incarn, Know Locale, Memorize, Stun Limb, and an unknown spell.

### de' Medici Manoscritto (1900s)

The Pierce Papers translated and reconstructed by: Thaddeus Pierce

(American English, no Mythos gain or SAN loss, x3 Spell Multiplier, study time: 64 hours)

Printing history: simple appearance, somewhat like a dictionary, hand printed and bound by its author. The binding job is not too well done, ca. early 1900s.

Spells known to exist: Cloak, Create Portal, Create Scrying Orb, Find Orb, Incarn, Know Locale, Memorize, Stun Limb

# Magic of the Manuscript

## Spells of Sinister Portent

Kim Eastland

The following spells are usually found in copies of *de' Medici Manuscript*. They are not likely to be found in any other tome, although it is

conceivable that people have copied some of the spells from one edition of the book or another, and inscribed them elsewhere.

**CLOAK:** increases a character's Conceal, Hide, and Sneak skills, each by 10%, for up to 15 minutes. It requires 3 magic points to cast on oneself, or 6 magic points to cast on another character. Cloak will never increase a skill chance beyond 80%—that can only be performed by natural mastery.

**CREATE PORTAL:** a portal is a limited form of the gate spell used to travel distances less than 200 miles. Normally a portal can be opened from a primary, studied locale to a secondary, studied locale. For a locale to become a "studied location" requires the character to actually be there, studying it for 8 hours, and seeing it clearly during the entire time. Portals can be opened thusly from locale A to locale B. But a given character can only have one functioning portal at a time. If the character desires to open a portal to a different location he must forget either (as in "erase") locale A or locale B to learn locale C. Once both locales are studied, a portal can be created between them. It costs no SAN to create a portal, but it does require a minimum of 5 magic points.

The maximum amount of magic points placed into the portal depends on how strong the creator wishes

to make its doors. The outlines of the portal doors are automatically traced out on the surface from which they exit when the portal is created. These exterior doors are very faint, somewhat like well-made secret doors. When closed, these doors require a successful Spot Hidden roll at 1/4 the normal chance to be spotted by



someone who does not know their exact location. Only the portal's creator can open the doors unhindered, anyone else must attempt a Resistance roll. The Active characteristic on this roll is one half the magic points of the being trying to enter vs. the magic points used to create the portal. Thus, when a portal is created the magic points used to make it must be recorded. If characters wish, they can "transfer" some of their magic points to the creator during the portal's creation to add to its strength. As always, these magic points are used up just as if they had cast the spell

themselves (see "Group Casting" in TUO6).

If the creator wishes, he can leave the portal doors open so anyone can cross through. An open portal door is only seen by someone standing directly in front of it. It looks like a rectangular pool of shimmering red liquid, even if standing upright. Anyone entering a portal must expend 2 magic points and make a successful POWx5 roll. If a character fails this roll, he may try again but must keep expending 2 magic points for every attempt. Only one individual may try to enter per round. This means a character passing back and forth through a portal will expend 4 magic points if he is successful on both rolls. Team members may wish to keep this in mind when transferring magic points

for the portal's creation.

Entering a portal is like entering a starry tunnel, 25 feet long, with a slab of deep red metal which resembles a door at either end (this is how the human mind perceives it). Travelling through the tunnel is best described as "free falling," like a parachutist. It takes three rounds to go from end to end and normally no more than three people can be falling through the tunnel at any one time.

The danger with portals is that they sometimes intersect with other portal tunnels and gates that are being used. Each time someone successfully enters a portal the Keeper should roll percentile dice: 98-99 indicates a portal is open elsewhere within 250 miles and intersects (Keeper's discretion as to who or what is portalling and their disposition, though it usually is a human creating it for human passage), a 00 indicates a major gate is being used, possibly summoning some dimensional creature, and things can get messy indeed (e.g., a second percentile roll should indicate how powerful and bad the gating creature is, a 00 would be something incredibly unpleasant). These intersecting portals and gates are like an inter-dimensional pocket, so numerous creatures can be in it at any one time. Spell and device use within this pocket is left to the Keeper, but interference from outside is impossible without stepping through. As a matter of fact, the characters outside will not even know what is happening and will continue according to plan unless otherwise warned.

**CREATE SCRYING ORB:** makes a crystal orb magical, allowing it to look into one specific locale. Creating the orb's scrying ability costs 6 magic points. Anyone using it spends 1 Magic Point per minute of viewing. The orb used must be the very best crystal, and so is very heavy and expensive.

Once the orb is enchanted it must be keyed to a "studied locale." This "studied locale" requires the character to concentrate on it for 8 hours, seeing it clearly during the entire time. The locale scryed cannot be changed without recasting the spell. Observing through the orb is like standing in the locale for purposes of hearing and seeing (normal light is required to see, SAN loss is normal for seeing creatures, a Spot Hidden or Listen roll might be required, etc.). Unless using specific counter-spells, though, no one at the locale is aware of the watcher. Know Locale can be used in conjunction with this spell. If no one looks through the orb for an entire minute the spell is nullified.

The reflective properties of the Create Scrying Orb are different than the Create Scrying Window spell

(CoC5, page 151). Spells cannot be cast through the orb in either direction, but if someone successfully sees the orb being used (such as through the use of a Find Orb spell), they may be able to identify the watcher.

**FIND ORB:** makes apparent to the caster any orb scrying being used to watch a locale he is in (within his normal vision for his present circumstances). This spell locates, it does not empower anyone to alter the scrying orb or cast spells through it. It does, however, allow the viewer a Spot Hidden roll, at half his normal chance, to clearly see the watcher on the other side of the orb *if* he is within 10 feet of the orb's opening.

**INCARN:** closes wounds and heals back 1D4+2 hit points if they were caused by slashing, impaling, crushing, and so on (in other words, non-poison or non-disease physical damage). Unlike the Heal spell on page 155 of CoC5, Incarn does not alter the character's natural healing rate. The spell costs a number of magic points equal to the hit points returned, but costs no SAN points. Incarn takes one round to cast and one to work (the second round does not require the caster's attention). The recipient must be touched by the caster or the spell cannot take effect. Of course, the caster can use it on him or herself.

**KNOW LOCALE:** expands the use of the Create Portal or Create Scrying Orb spells. By spending magic points the user may bypass the normal time required to study a locale. The magic point expenditure is per locale. Guidelines for the magic points required to lock in a locale are as follows:

<u>Mp Use</u>	<u>If spending this much time at the locale</u>
3	1 hour or more
5	20 minutes to 1 hour
7	10 to 20 minutes
10	5 to 10 minutes
12	1 to 5 minutes
15	No time spent at locale but looking at the location with clear line-of-sight in full light, even if through binoculars
17	No time spent at locale but requiring an excellent photo (or film or videotape). Primarily modern usage.
20	Mentally linked with someone who has been in the locale for awhile and can clearly remember it (requires an INT x 3 roll for clarity).

**MEMORIZE:** causes temporary improvement in memory. It can be cast on oneself or another, and costs 3 magic points to do so. Once the spell is cast the character will completely retain anything he can

physically hear of a non-magical nature and specifically wishes to memorize, up to 30 minutes in duration. He will retain this memory for 24 hours, then will forget it. Only one Memorize spell can effectively be cast on a character per 24 hours, any more will simply nullify the first casting.

This was a particularly favorite spell of Cardinal Richelieu's, who would imbue an agent with the memory increase and portal him into another part of the palace, such as the Queen's chambers. Or Richelieu would use it himself while scrying through an orb, then write everything down that he had seen and heard. Apparently Henrietta Maria helped Charles I escape by memorizing a map of the prison's surrounding area. But no spell, foreign language or hieroglyphs can be learned or used (other than repetition) through this spell because it does not increase comprehension, only rote memory.

**STUN LIMB:** causes momentary loss of control of the limb affected. The spell costs the caster 4 magic points and no SAN loss to cast. It takes 1 round to cast and the target must be within 30 yards. The caster must specify which limb is to be attacked when the spell is cast. Overcoming the target's magic points with his own on a Resistance Table roll, the caster stuns the limb for 1D3 rounds. The first round is always total loss of control of that limb; if an arm, a sturdy item or weapon held is dropped, or a spell requiring gestures is nullified; if a leg, the target must make a DEXx1 roll or fall, in any case he cannot move his leg. If the spell lasts longer than 1 round, the subsequent effects are less severe; if an arm, all efforts using the hand or arm requires a DEXx2 roll to succeed; if a leg, movement is dropped to one-quarter normal and any other effort using the leg requires a DEXx2 roll to succeed.

**TRUTH:** compels the target to tell the truth. It costs 4 magic points to cast. The target must be within 10 feet of caster, and the spell remains in effect for 10 minutes. Once the spell is activated, anyone within range must make a Resistance Table check every time they try to deceive the caster. The Active characteristic is their current POW, rolled vs. the caster's current POW. An unsuccessful roll means they cannot lie, they have started to deceive but suddenly blurt out the truth. Even if they make a successful Resistance roll and are able to lie, the caster is still allowed an INT x 1 roll to detect their untruth, he just cannot compel them to speak it. The target is unaware if the caster is successfully detecting his lies this way or not.

## The Chronos Term

The Last Dawn, through one of their American branches (the Loula Institute) has been searching for an artifact known as the Chronos Term for years. In the last few months Randolph Pierce has also become aware of its existence and has instructed his agents to try and locate it. The Pierce Foundation is aware that someone else is also searching for this item and will do almost anything to acquire its components.

### Description

The Chronos Term is a term—that is, a bust used to mark the end of a boundry. Its origins are unknown, but probably date to ancient Greece. Legend says it somehow grants information of an awesome nature, but possibly at an incredible price.

The bust is comprised of 16 separate sculptings of hands which are fitted together to form a bizarre skull (the separate sculptings can be of whatever material the keeper desires—bronze, marble, iron, porcelain, perfectly preserved flesh, or even an assortment). Once the term is complete it has magical properties. The name is handed down from ancient texts; Chronos, of course, refers to a diety of time.

### Origin

The Chronos Term first appeared in ancient Greece. It was a gift from Nyarlothotep for a particularly deserving priest. At that time, its use was clear and it did not fracture after use. But with the fall of the mighty Greek civilization the Messenger of the Outer Gods altered the device slightly to tempt exceptionally clever humans to madness.

The hands will not easily grasp each other, almost as if they were held apart by magnetic fields. To completely interlock the pieces successfully an individual must make successful INTx1, POWx1, and DEXx1 rolls. None of these may be modified by any means whatsoever, just the base scores. One roll for each score is allowed per day. Attempts at assembly are considered to take at least 6 hours. Characters trying to work together will never get even two pieces to fit together. Only by working alone can it be assembled. Note that a missed roll does not invalidate previously successful rolls; that is, if the INT roll is made, and the POW roll missed, the INT roll is still considered successful for that person.

Once it is assembled (all the rolls made and the character is alone), time stops for him or her and no

one else can intervene. Even the assembler cannot return to the time stream without asking a question. In other words, the keeper tells everyone else to be quiet and it's up to the player who made the rolls. Once assembled, the term will speak in a voice out of the ages and explain he is there to answer one question only, then he will be gone. The assembler loses 2/1D4 points of SAN when it begins to speak.

## Powers

The Chronos Term marks the outermost boundry of answerable time for the device—the present. Each hand sculpture stops all timekeeping devices within 25 feet of it, otherwise it offers no other powers to a possessor. Once assembled, however, the term becomes very powerful. It can answer any one question asked by the assembler, about events up to the point the term was assembled. This last point is very important because the extent of the question and power its answer can grant determines many things, all at the discretion of the keeper.

The Keeper must make the questioner write down his question for clarity's sake (and to avoid arguements later on). The more intricate the question, with multiple phrases and nuances, the greater the force. The more power the questioner receives with the answer, the greater the force. The greater the force, the worse the Sanity loss from knowing the answer. For example, if assembled and asked, "Where is the closest copy of de' Medici Manoscritto?" it might say "Boston." Then it would collapse and be gone (see below). Sanity loss would only be a 1D4, because the answer is not enough to easily gain power. A question of "What is the address of the closest copy of de' Medici Manoscritto?" would deal a greater SAN loss, perhaps 1D10 to 1D20, because the answer might assure its possession (1D10 for a location that is almost impossible to get into, up to 1D20 for a simple residence). Massive SAN loss is the result

of questions such as, "How can I get Hastur to obey me?" or other such idiocies.

Note: Though a character may be driven mad by the SAN loss, the answer from the term is always in his mind. It is just up to the other investigators (and the keeper) as to how that info can be extracted.

## Collapsing

The most unfortunate aspect of the Chronos Term is that once the parts are aquired, it is assembled, and asked a question, it then undergoes a strange collapse. The hands seem to exert pressure on each other, and the Term seems to quiver from the tension. They press harder and harder and the whole term begins to collapse inwards, as the hands simply press themselves into the angles of time. In moments the Term is gone. Though appearing to phase out interdimensionally, the pieces actually do stay on Earth. The distance the pieces travel away from the questioner also depends on the question. If the answer provides little power, and thus little chance for insanity, the pieces will re-emerge (separated once more) within a few miles. If the answer provides great power, and thus almost assured insanity, the pieces can go to the borders of a continent. Just think of it as Nyarlothotep's way of balancing your game.

No matter how far they go the pieces always seem to be found. They never go underwater or underground, unless they are still accessable. It is almost as if they appear when someone can happen on to them. An inventive keeper can maintain a campaign for quite a while just by tying all the investigator's adventures to finding the Chronos Term. Option: If the keeper wants to make it a little easier to find the individual hands, he can use the option of having a piece in possession point to the nearest hand not in possession (SAN roll for 0/1 loss for anyone the first time they see the sculpture point). ☺

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The Chronos Term





"This Fire Shall Kill" by Andre Bishop is a powerful scenario, well thought-out and wonderfully executed. This piece contains some great scenes and characters (especially a rotten little girl with a squirt gun!), and promises to keep investigators on the move. This scenario, like "Nemo Solus Sapit," can be deadly, but the good use of a heretofore poorly-used Mythos deity and its servants makes it well worth it; scenario writers will be hard-pressed to use these entities any better. One error in the piece is the lack of explanation and description of several new spells possibly discovered by the investigator, and used by the villain. However, this is an outstanding first scenario by a new writer.

"The Professionals" by Fred Behrendt is a tangled, twisted web of political intrigue, conspiracy, and madness. This is a scenario that will have the investigators feeling frustrated and beaten every step of the way, and even at the end they may not fully comprehend everything, or feel that they have accomplished much. This piece is ripe with interesting characters, James Bond high-tech toys, and corruption. As the investigators uncover layer upon layer of conspiracy and cover-up they learn that everything points back at the political campaign and nearing election. A scene involving a "snuff film," by the way, is undoubtedly the most gruesome, graphic scene yet done in a scenario—one which should leave the investigators and players alike with a chill or a pang of nausea! The complicated plot of the piece, however, leads the investigators from place to place with little for them to do at times, and in the end they can do little more than stand by and watch as the climax plays itself out. Despite this, and despite the fact that some of the high-tech gadgets are rather contrived, this is a strong piece and my personal favorite scenario in The Stars Are Right! While difficult both to run and play, this is well worth the effort—truly a modern scenario, in every sense of the word.

"Fractal Gods" by Steve Hatherley is a very modern tale about computers and technology. While the scenario has some very good moments and scenes, including a wonderful gateway to another, weird dimension, it is the weakest piece in the book with a few plot flaws. Computer buffs, however, should really appreciate this tale, and will most likely find it more enjoyable than computer-illiterates (like myself!).

"The Gates of Delirium" by Gary Sumpter is a good, solid scenario involving drugs and weird dimension, and makes great use of a little-used Mythos god. Interestingly, the villain is no worshipper or servant of

the Mythos—instead the character has a personal agenda and goal which, however, requires the "use" of certain factions of the Mythos. Investigators are in for a real treat, too, with some weird, surrealistic scenes and encounters. Try as I may, I can find nothing bad to say about this piece, which is one of the best in the book! I look forward to seeing more work by Gary.

"The Music of the Spheres" by Kevin A. Ross is a typical Kevin A. Ross scenario: grand and expansive, over-crowded with characters, yet solid, well thought-out, and intelligent (and despite utter chaos inflicted upon the investigators, there is a certain subtlety in the piece that can be called nothing less than artistic). Dealing with radio astronomy, the Keeper must wade through some rather dry areas of the scenario to get to the action, but the wade is worth it—the grand climax bringing to mind the action-packed climax of the film Lifeforce. Keepers may well feel overwhelmed by the large number of characters he or she must run and keep track of, but these characters could prove to make great character-fodder when the shit hits the fan (and hit it it does!). Ultimately, the investigators must deal with the mindblasting fact that the stars may actually be right, and the time of the Old Ones may be upon them. Oh, there are things the investigators can do to forestall the inevitable, but it may take a high toll. Survivors of this scenario will really feel that they accomplished something.

"When the Stars Came Right Again" by Steven C. Rasmussen and D.H. Frew is an essay about the position of the stars at the time of R'lyeh's rising in 1925. An interesting essay, although of little actual use to keepers or investigators. I would have preferred a player hand-out section (conspicuously absent), or some other modern article of more use (new skills, weapons, travel, prices, etc.)

Finally, the artwork in *The Stars Are Right!* is brilliant, from the cover depicting San Francisco ablaze by John T. Snyder, to the wonderful interiors by the ineffable Blair Reynolds (too bad the illustration on page 17 is but a third of the original—the powers that be at Chaosium headquarters felt it necessary to censor that one. Too bad—I saw the original and it was perhaps the best illustration for the book!).

This set of sinister scenarios deserves 9 phobias—go out and buy it, you won't be disappointed!

*editor's note: the censored illustration by Blair Reynolds appears, uncut, as the cover to our book Courting Madness!*

***Tales of the Lovecraft Mythos***

hardcover anthology of pulp-era Lovecraftian fiction

Fedogan &amp; Bremer, \$27

reviewed by Kevin A. Ross

Editor Robert M. Price (of *Crypt of Cthulhu* fame) has put together the latest collection of fiction based on H.P. Lovecraft's Mythos. *Tales of the Lovecraft Mythos* boasts 20 stories from the pulp era (the earliest of these stories was published in 1929, the latest in 1966). While not always dropping specific Cthulhuoid names, these tales are nonetheless definitely in the Lovecraftian spirit.

The stories range from middling to good in quality, and sport an interesting cast of authors: from well-knowns such as Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Robert Bloch, and Fritz Lieber, to lesser-known *Weird Tales* contributors such as Henry Hasse, Merle Prout, and C. Hall Thompson.

The strongest tales are Howard's "The Thing on the Roof," the two excellent Kuttner selections "The Invaders" and "The Bells of Horror," Derleth's extremely scarce "Ithaqua" and "The Thing That Walked On The Wind" (arguably his best two Mythos stories), Prout's "The House of the Worm," Thompson's "Spawn of the Green Abyss," and Lieber's "To Arkham and the Stars."

Editor Price has unearthed some intriguing gems here for the Mythos collector. He states in his introduction that a prime factor in the story selection for this volume was to illuminate some of the allusions found in later, more-accessible Mythos sources. In this book, for instance, we find the stories which introduced Lloigor and Zhar (Derleth & Schorer's "Lair of the Star-Spawn"), Zuchequan (Henry Kuttner's "The Bells of Horror"), and several of the aquatic Mythos tomes used in Brian Lumley's Mythos fiction (they originally appeared in the Mythos version of Carl Jacobi's "The Aquarium").

There are a handful of oddities here for the collector as well. The version of Robert E. Howard's "The Fire of Asshurbanipal" which appears here, for instance, is a variant non-supernatural version of this Mythos tale. Editor Price also treats us to E. Hoffman Price's "The Lord of Illusion," which Lovecraft later collaborated on to create the Randolph Carter tale "Through the Gates of the Silver Key." And finally we have the original versions of Robert A.W. Lowndes' "The Abyss" and Jacobi's "The Aquarium" (the latter of which was contributed to August Derleth for an Arkham House anthology—only to have Derleth rather capriciously

excise the Mythos allusions).

Complaints? Well, a warning is in order that since these stories are from the pulp era, they are definitely *pulpy*, with occasional over-florid prose and story conventions which will seem all-too-familiar to the jaded horror fan. And some of the tales illustrate why their authors are not known for their Lovecraftian writings: Bertram Russell's "The Scourge of B'Moth" suffers from a too-wide scope, while Donald A. Wolheim's "The Horror Out of Lovecraft" is another of those annoying HPL parodies that needs a stake driven through its heart.

Arguing with the choice of tales in a collection such as this is risky, but here goes. Instead of the dull parody, the Russell piece, and perhaps the E. Hoffman Price draft and the non-supernatural Howard piece, why not substitute more of the unsung/uncollected bits? Manly Wade Wellman's "The Terrible Parchment" and Donald Wandrei's "The Fire Vampires" and "The Tree-Men of M'bwa" are rumored to feature Lovecraftian elements—and when was the last time anybody saw any of those (let alone *heard* of them)? I personally would have substituted Howard's "The Children of the Night" for the "Asshurbanipal" version here; "Children" was criminally omitted from the Baen Books collection of Howard's Mythos tales (*Cthulhu: The Mythos and Kindred Horrors*). Also welcome would have been more of Smith's works and perhaps another of C. Hall Thompson's rare *Weird Tales* appearances.

But these are minor complaints at best. This is an exciting anthology, and one that should be sought out by all Mythos fanatics. While the price is steep, the rarity of many of the stories makes up for it. Price's introduction is very informative and sets the tone quite nicely, while Bloch offers a brief preface. And Gahan Wilson contributes a brilliantly funny cover that perfectly illustrates the evolution of the Lovecraft Mythos.

Price states in the introduction that a companion volume may be produced, featuring the next/newest (?) generation of HPL-ian writers. Let's hope that comes through. Until then, this volume will do quite nicely. It's worth a good eight phobias, at least.

(Order from Fedogan & Bremer, 700 Washington Ave. SE, Suite 50, Minneapolis, MN 55414. The price per copy is \$27 + \$3 shipping and handling) ☞



# Convergence

*in which the investigators are seduced by science, then raped by it*

John Tynes

**T**his scenario is the first of two, each of which examines CyberPunk concepts in *Call of Cthulhu*—and vice versa. This scenario, a 1990s *Cthulhu Now* piece, introduces a few concepts used in CyberPunk fiction as well as R. Talsorian's *Cyberpunk* role-playing game. It requires the *Call of Cthulhu* 5th edition rules—or any earlier edition plus the *Cthulhu Now* rules—to play. The second scenario, "Transference," will appear in issue 7 of *Interface*, a digest for the Cyberpunk role-playing game. It is a 2020s Cyberpunk scenario that features Mythos elements. Each scenario stands alone, and can be played independently. Their stories are interrelated, however, despite the fact that they are set 30+ years apart.

In *Interface 7*, a full conversion system will be presented for transferring characters, creatures, sanity rules, etc. from *Call of Cthulhu* to *Cyberpunk*, and vice versa. As a result, CoC players who want to use the *Interface* scenario can play it using the familiar CoC rules; likewise, *Cyberpunk* players who want to use the familiar *Cyberpunk* rules can play this scenario using those conversions. In either case, however, it is strongly suggested that the time period and setting not be changed—even if run as a *Cyberpunk* game, this scenario should occur in the 1990s. Groups who play both games will have the easiest time of it.

Beyond the scenarios, *Interface 7* will also feature articles on cults of the future—why they still exist and who joins them—and an article on EctoTech, a paranormal technology brought about by Mythos forces.

## Preparation

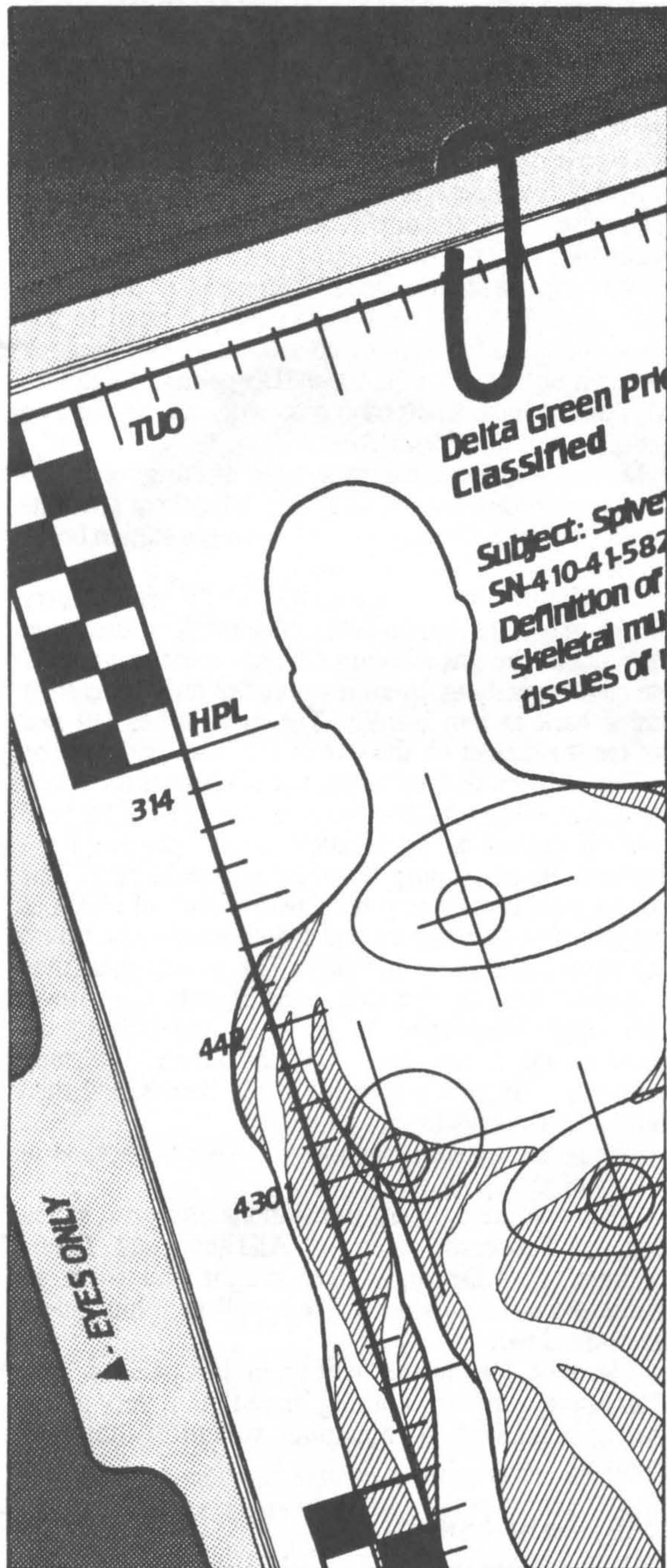
Fitting this scenario into your *Cthulhu Now* campaign isn't easy, but then few published scenarios are. The scenario assumes that the investigators are a group of federal (preferably FBI) agents looking into the background of an interstate fugitive with some strange abilities. In the playtesting session, these agents were also members of a group called Delta Green, an

unofficial group consisting of members of national law enforcement, intelligence, and the military. Delta Green itself has no funding, but those who run it channel funds, equipment, and personnel as needed from whatever agency or military branch they happen to work for. Delta Green specializes in situations where the members feel rivalries among different parts of government would make efficient problem-solving difficult, not to mention keeping things secret. For the most part, this has meant dealing with the paranormal, and particularly the Cthulhu Mythos.

Delta Green, sadly, is not an intelligence-gathering body; its focus is problem resolution. Those who carry out Delta Green missions rarely learn anything about what they face; they simply go somewhere, do something, and come home. As a result, Delta Green's organizers aren't very informed about the Mythos, nor do they want to be. They simply want to screen the rest of the government from getting involved in such peripheral problems.

Delta Green's agents are not full-time; they work, in various capacities, for other groups such as the FBI, the NSA, the Army, the IRS, etc. They are "assigned" to a Delta Green mission by their Delta Green-member supervisors, who camouflage their activities as being part of their regular duties. There are no regular meetings, no headquarters, etc.; members simply contact each other when their respective agency stumbles on something that Delta Green is better capable of handling. Thus there is no Delta Green database, no files, no letterhead or reports. To gather a full profile of all of their activities, one would have to comb the files of most national government bodies, finding evidence of operations sanctioned hastily and with little apparent result. Scattered thusly, Delta Green is hard to locate; only if such reports were assembled and considered in the aggregate would a clearer picture emerge.

In other words, Delta Green is little more than an ad hoc assembly of people "in the know," an old-boy's-network if you will, with no central command whatsoever. When one member happens upon something, he or she contacts a few others who might be



of help and they deal with the situation. Any knowledge gained is effectively lost due to the lack of any real structure.

If this background is incompatible with your game, replace it altogether. But be aware that inter-agency rivalries are a part of the scenario; in particular, agents working for the National Security Agency crop up as some of the villains of the piece.

### Keeper Information

Under the ice in Antarctica lies the Outer God Ubbo-Sothla, the Unbegotten Source. Ubbo-Sothla has been there for eons, unthinking, unmoving, simply existing, a massive bulk of primal ooze. The Elder Things long ago used matter taken from Ubbo-Sothla to construct their terrible Shoggoths; more recently, the Mi-Go have begun experimenting with the properties of this strange being.

Specifically, the Mi-Go have become interested in new ways to prolong their lives. Organs, even extra-terrene ones, give out eventually. To address this, they are conducting numerous experiments on humans and animals in the vicinity of Groversville, a small town which you can place wherever you like. For this text, we assume Groversville is in Eastern Tennessee; references to adjacent states will be figured accordingly.

These experiments involve the abduction of subjects, who are then subjected to surgery and strange experimentation. These subjects are then returned, unaware of what has occurred. Occasionally the experiment fails immediately, and the subject dies.

The principal experiments involve implanting Mi-Go organs into the bodies of humans and animals, using the adaptable proto-matter of Ubbo-Sothla to make the tissue implant acceptable both to host and to organ. But other experiments are underway as well; the proto-matter has been found to possess amazing qualities, and many more experiments have been undertaken simply out of curiosity.

One of these peripheral experiments, on a young man named Billy Ray Spivey, involved the replacement of the muscle tissue in his arms and legs with tissue constructed of the Ubbo-Sothla ooze. The net effect is that Spivey possesses tremendous strength and endurance in those parts of his body, but he needs a substantially higher caloric intake (more food) to replace the calories burned in any heavy exertion. Due to the drain on his system from the enhanced components, he also suffers from a great deal of pain throughout his body.

After being released, Spivey found himself in tremendous pain; unaware of what had occurred, he accidentally killed his father with his amazing strength. He ran, robbing drug stores for painkillers and money, crossing several state lines while he did so. The FBI caught him, and an agent witnessed Spivey's strange ability. The case officer, a member of Delta Green, examined Spivey and decided this was something Delta Green could best handle; the technological implications of Spivey's "improvements" were too stunning to leave in the confused hands of the normal chain of command.

## Investigator Information

The investigators are assumed to be agents of the FBI. Note that they don't all need to be field agents; instructors, bureaucrats, accountants—any such specialists are possible. Delta Green members by no means all carry guns. They are all, however, competent, intelligent, and discrete.

These agents are summoned to a briefing by a regional FBI supervisor, James Derringer. Derringer is a career FBI man, and participated in his first Delta Green op as a green marine in Vietnam. Derringer is a model FBI supervisor, except for his belief that some things are better taken care of outside of the normal chain of command.

### Why Delta Green?

Every sub-culture (just like every culture) has its own body of folklore. Among U.S. government employees, there is a very minor piece of folklore passed around. An employee of the I.R.S. is just as likely to hear it as an employee of the National Parks Service or the Navy. This particular bit of folklore is that some employees' personnel files have a sticker placed by their names, a sticker which consists of a small green triangle. Only those who have worked for more than one part of the government for any substantial length of time will realize that this particular bit of folklore crops up in more than one office.

What does it mean? Speculation varies, of course. The reality is that such individuals have, at some point, been a part of a Delta Green (the green triangle) operation. In fact, the "green sticker" designation is faulty; the stickers were last used on personnel files in the Vietnam era, and have since been replaced with secret flags on computerized files, where they don't encourage such speculation. But folklore doesn't die out, and thus the "green triangle" story continues to this day.

The investigators (hereinafter referred to as the agents) may well be in different parts of the country altogether; Delta Green's members are few, and so Derringer may very well request agents from other areas be temporarily transferred. Appropriate paperwork is filed, a few favors are called in, and the agents find themselves in a meeting room at the FBI bureau in Nashville.

Brief the players on Delta Green. It is assumed that each agent has been on a DG op before; often as not, these don't lead to anything conclusive, so call for Luck rolls. Those who succeed have 1D6 points of Cthulhu Mythos, gained from past ops, with an appropriate deduction in maximum Sanity.

Derringer greets the agents in the meeting room, and pops a videotape into a VCR. He tells them that the video they are about to see was from a gas station hold-up in Alabama, four days ago.

The picture comes to life on the 21" TV set, in blurry black-and-white surveillance camera. A young man approaches the gas station's counter, looking agitated. He says something (there is no audio) and the cashier stares back at him blankly. The man lashes out and strikes the cashier on the side of the head with his fist.

The cashier's skull collapses, and his head is torn right off his shoulders by the force of the blow. The head flies off-screen, as the headless corpse staggers for a moment, blood gouting from the sundered flesh. The young man takes a step back with a look of shock as the cashier's hands go up and twitch spastically, before the body collapses to the floor. The young man then hits some keys on the cash register until the drawer pops open, whereupon he grabs all the bills in the register. He turns and runs offscreen, returning moments later with a handful of pill bottles, and then runs offscreen again, not to return.

The preceding scene requires a SAN roll to view, at a cost of 0/1 SAN.

"This man held up six gas stations and drug stores, first in Tennessee, then in Alabama and finally Georgia," says Derringer. "We caught him there; an agent and a state trooper put four bullets in him before he went down.

"He lived. He's in the next room. His name is Billy Ray Spivey, and he's nothing more than a very scared young man...with a muscular structure that isn't human."

### Billy Ray Spivey

Spivey is, indeed, little more than a frightened teenager.



## Groversville

Groversville is the county seat of (fictitious) Grover County in Central Tennessee. Grover County is mostly agricultural, with numerous small towns scattered about. Groversville has an official "town" population of about 1200 people, but its facilities are better than this would suggest. Its position as county seat and as the main stop along this stretch of Highway 135 have led to a greater prosperity than many of its neighbors.

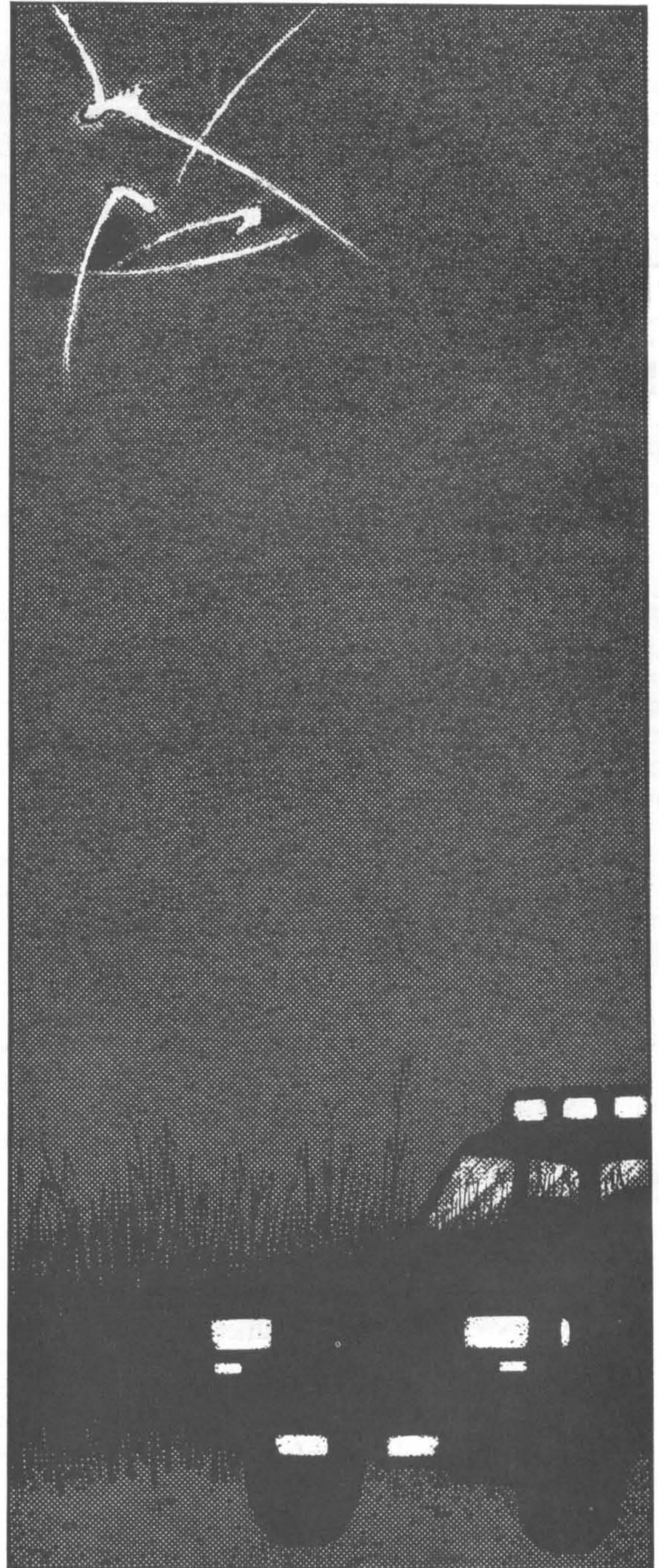
Groversville is located at the east end of two rows of steep hills, which converge at the Groversville end to form a sort of sideways-"V." The town's boundaries officially end with those hills, but there is a substantial number of farms in the area beyond the hills (as well as within them) which brings Groversville commerce and trade.

Four months ago, a group of Mi-Go established a laboratory beneath an abandoned farmhouse east of the valley. From there, they began conducting experiments using first the local cattle, and more recently the local citizens. They were assisted in this, to some extent, by agents working for a highly-placed official in the National Security Agency.

The existence of the NSA has become public knowledge only in recent years; it is an agency of the US. Government responsible for the security of the nation, especially in the area of communication. The NSA monitors a great deal of communications traffic within the borders of the US., ranging from phone lines to computer networks.

Some years ago, the NSA was the first agency to make contact with extraterrestrial intelligence, in the form of the Mi-Go. The Mi-Go presented themselves in altogether different (and manufactured) bodies—tall, spindly humanoids with large black eyes and hairless skin. They established a pattern of appearances impossible to ignore (forming the basis of books such as "Communion") and made contact with the NSA in the late 1970s.

A deal was struck. The "greys" as they came to be called (owing to their pallid skin color) were allowed to conduct experiments on US. citizens and operate on US. property, in exchange for which the "greys" provided intelligence and technological information to the NSA. Those members of the NSA who possessed "grey-clearance" told only a few other government officials, namely those who could be trusted. Under the code name "MAJESTIC," the ruling body ("MJ-12") conducted deals with the "greys" and passed on the



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## Billy Ray's Friends

Needless to say, Billy Ray ran with a crowd of young guys, who mostly just hung out and played music loud and got their older brothers to buy take-out beer for them at Merle's Country Bunker.

You can make these fellows up as needed. They can offer little information, though they all deny that Billy Ray had any drug connections (which is the truth, after all, as the agents are aware). If at some point they are asked about favorite hang-outs where Billy Ray might have hidden during his "missing time" they reply that the reservoir was the big hang-out spot at night and on weekends. Sheriff Oakley and most any parent in Groversville can confirm this.

## The Reservoir

Agents asking among Billy Ray's friends or other townsfolk about local teen-age hangouts will invariably be referred to the reservoir in the hills north of town. On the assumption that Billy Ray might have been up there during some of his "missing time," or if they've found out about the contamination in the town's water, the agents may go up for a visit.

If they travel up before Supervisor Derringer has delivered the identification compound (see "The Investigation," below) they will find nothing of interest. The area around the reservoir does show signs of occupation—empty beer cans, potato chip bags, the remains of campfires—but nothing suspicious can be found, nor anything to do with Billy Ray Spivey.

If they have the FBI compound, however, it's a different story. Spraying the compound around the reservoir will turn up purple flecks everywhere: in the air, on the grass, on the pump building by the reservoir. If they spray water from the reservoir, it is the purest, brightest purple they have seen yet. Clearly, this is the source of the contamination in the town.

The Mi-Go deposited a Spawn of Ubbo-Sothla here in the reservoir to protect it. If the agents attempt to destroy, drain, or otherwise inhibit the flow of water from the reservoir to the town, the Spawn will emerge from the water and attack. Note that dragging the reservoir or using sonar will not detect it; the Spawn is fluid enough to not be found by such attempts.

## Town Hall

If the agents want to speak with the town's leaders (about the contamination in the water, probably), it's not easy. Appointments have to be made the day before,

and then only at town hall itself—calls to the aldermen's homes only get responses like "oh, he's rarely home these days. Try him at work." Those who know the aldermen have been instructed, through the proto-matter, not to find anything strange about the aldermen's behavior.

An appointment, as said, can be made—but only for any one alderman at a time. It is, quite simply, impossible to meet with more than one alderman at a time. The excuses given—it's tax time for our county, much work to do—don't pan out if the agents check with the leaders of other towns.

Any alderman that the agents meet is courteous, friendly, and answers all their questions in as normal a tone as possible. He or she will look grave at dire warnings given by the agents, and will promise to do whatever it takes. What this means, of course, is that the aldermen will control the townspeople needed to cover something up.

Should an agent or agents force their way into the aldermen's board room, a terrible sight awaits them. Within, books and papers are scattered across the floor. Furniture is overturned, and the windows are covered up. Occupying about a half of the floor is a mass of goo, Ubbo-Sothla proto-matter. It contains the absorbed bodies of the aldermen, and their faces play across the surface of the goo at different sizes, all speaking at once. Any alderman who needs to be seen alone can sort of "bud" off from the main body, but not more than one at a time can do so without compromising the hold the aldermen have over the town. If combat occurs, use the Spawn of Ubbo-Sothla stats provided at the end of the scenario.

## Merle's Shut-Eye

This is a smallish (six-room) motel owned by Merle Barn, the richest man in Groversville—which isn't saying much. Merle is the head of the board of aldermen, and also owns Merle's Country Bunker (the only establishment in Groversville allowed a liquor license) and Merle's Auto & Body.

Merle's Shut-Eye is the only place investigators can stay while in town, short of renting a couple of rooms from a farmer—which is rather irregular for FBI agents. At any rate, Merle's is a decent enough place and places them in no special jeopardy.

Two rooms at the motel contain people of interest to the investigation. One is Alan Smithee, editor of a UFO newsletter, "Watch the Skies!" and a nearly-fanatical UFO researcher. He dies the day before the agents

arrive. The other occupant of note is Jane Allen, Billy Ray Spivey's girlfriend. She is holed up at the Shut-Eye, under the (former) protection of Smithee. Both of these individuals are addressed in detail below.

## Alan Smithee

Smithee, editor of the Tennessee UFO newsletter *Watch the Skies!* and a dauntless UFO researcher, is now among the researched. He was abducted by the Mi-Go while examining the reservoir; his spinal and cranial fluid was replaced with proto-matter as an experiment. As a result, he became hyper-sensitive and gained fledgling telekinesis and telepathic abilities. He was unable to control these powers, however, and holed up in his motel room at Merle's Shut-Eye. He kept all the lights off and the windows covered—he could see perfectly well in the dark, but daylight was much too bright for him to deal with, not to mention the heat of the sun and the ultraviolet radiation he could experience as a physical sensation. When he tried to communicate with the outside world, he was forced by the Mi-Go (through the proto-matter in his system) to commit suicide. His body remains in the motel room, awaiting discovery.

Most folks in town, if asked about the strange lights and UFO activity, will mention Smithee (usually as "that UFO guy"). Residents can tell the agents that Smithee came to town about a week-and-a-half ago, shortly before Billy Ray Spivey killed his father. There is no direct connection, although the agents may suspect otherwise. Background checks on Smithee show that he's a resident of Knoxville, publishes a newsletter called "Watch the Skies!" and has been arrested twice for trespassing, both times being sentenced to community service only. These charges came during various misguided UFO investigations; Smithee was not a criminal.

## Smithee's Room

Smithee is registered at Merle's Shut-Eye, and is paid up for another three days. Since he's just a few doors down from the agents' room, they may wish to pay him a visit. The girl behind the front desk hasn't seen Smithee since the day before the agents arrived, but that isn't suspicious in and of itself. Phone calls to his room are answered by a computer modem; if the agents call with a computer of their own (which they may well have) nothing occurs once the two connect. Knocking at his door produces no answer. A Spot Hidden roll allows an agent to notice a bit of cloth sticking out from

the bottom of the door—which suggests that a towel has been placed against the door jam along the floor.

With a key from the front desk (obtainable at the flash of a badge) the front door, and a connecting door to the next motel room, can be opened. The front door takes some shoving to get open.

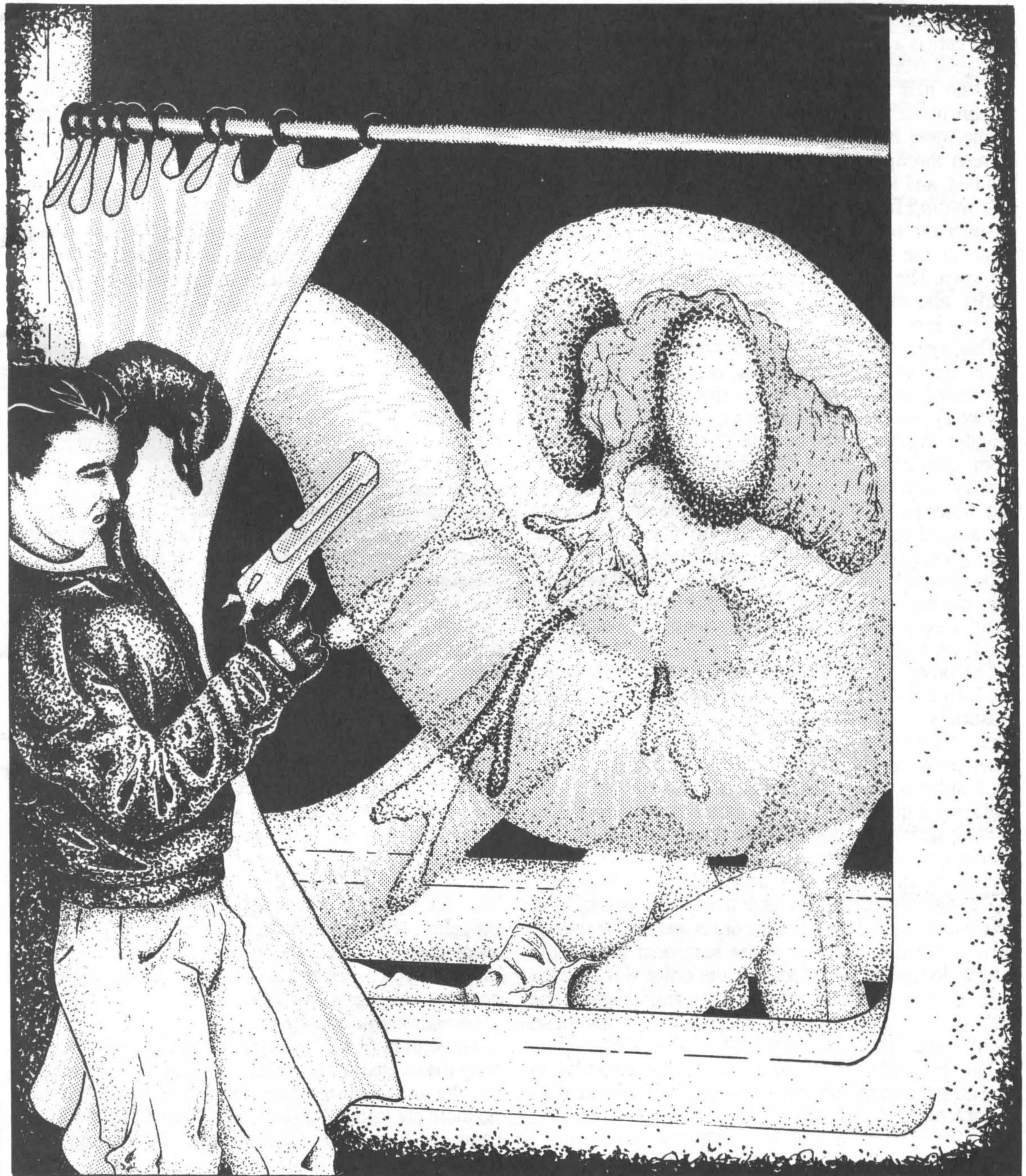
The situation is as follows: Smithee, his senses acutely intensified by the proto-matter, methodically sealed off the room from outside sources of light. He closed the curtains, put blankets over the windows sealed with duct tape, and did the same for the front door. He disconnected the phone, plugging the phone cord directly into the modem on his portable computer. And, he removed all of the light bulbs.

These things gave him some comfort. He then attempted to contact associates of his via his computer modem, hoping that it would slip by anyone listening at the telephone switchboard. It did, but did not remove him from surveillance by the Mi-Go, who were observing his activities since the operation.

Deciding that the experiment was concluded, the Mi-Go commanded Smithee (by means of the proto-matter in his brain) to fill the tub, get in, and slash his wrists. His body is awaiting discovery by the agents.

Those entering his motel room find themselves in a dark room with a bad odor. Pulling the blankets off the windows, using flashlights or special-vision goggles, or screwing in light bulbs from the front desk all can provide illumination. The room is in a strange disarray. Many of Smithee's clothes are folded up neatly on a table, while others are tossed in a corner (these, actually, were judged to be too scratchy or "noticeable" to Smithee's hyper-sensitive skin). Junk food containers litter the floor. On the bed rests Smithee's portable computer, a Macintosh Powerbook, currently plugged into the wall for power (see "Smithee's Computer" for more information). In the bathroom, a man lies in a tub full of bloody water.

The body is the most immediate thing of interest. It is the body of a man about 34 years of age, heavysset, with curly black hair and a bushy beard. The man wears boxer shorts and a t-shirt (reading "Knoxville Fantasy Con 1989"), and appears to have died from numerous slashes inflicted on his wrist. Investigators who make a Medicine roll notice that the slashes are along the wrists, top to bottom, rather than across the wrists, left to right, as is often portrayed in movies. Those who make the roll also know that this length-wise slashing is the most effective way to commit suicide in this manner, but this is not a well-publicized fact.



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After a moment or two, the agents notice something odd. There is a bulge on the top-right of Smithee's head, a bulge of whitish tissue about three inches in diameter, with no hair upon it. This bulge does not look like human tissue.

The water in the tub is dark with blood, and cannot be seen through. The proto-matter in Smithee's body has fled, and is now a free-moving glob in the water. It is waiting for the drain to be opened, so that it can re-enter the water supply. It has a limited sentience, as a part of the total proto-matter dispersed throughout the town. The bulge on Smithee's head is more proto-matter, and can dis-attach itself whenever needed to join the rest.

This scene, believe it or not, provides an opportunity for intense drama. A re-telling of what happened in playtesting should demonstrate this.

Two agents entered Smithee's room, with a couple of deputies and the Sheriff outside. They poked around the room, then entered the bathroom. At this point they already knew about the contamination in the reservoir and water supply. In the bathroom, one of the agents felt around in the tub for anything that might have been dropped there, and felt something run over his hand (the proto-matter goo). Both agents panicked. One kept his handgun trained on the tub, while the other went to open the drain so as to release the water and see what was there.

The proto-matter shot out of the water and down the barrel of the first agent's handgun, then expanded drastically in two directions, shattering the gun in the agent's hand. Both agents panicked again, and drew other guns. At this point they noticed that the bulge on Smithee's head was gone, causing further panic. Suddenly, a quantity of proto-matter in the pipes began to bang against the drain stopper with a loud clank. The agents stepped back slowly, training their guns on the tub, as the thumping got louder and louder. Suddenly, the drain exploded open and a massive quantity of proto-matter gushed out of the drain and hit the ceiling, then splashed down all over the bathroom. One of the agents dodged out the door, but the other was covered with proto-matter. He ran outside screaming, where the proto-matter fled into his body through his nose, mouth, and other orifices. Eventually he died.

Play up this scene for all it's worth. The information on Smithee's computer, once revealed, will be a suitable reward for the agents.

## Smithee's Computer

Alan Smithee's portable computer is an important resource for the investigators. Agents who wish to examine it need to make a Computer Use roll, or a Know roll at half—whichever is higher. Examining it, they will find three things of immediate interest.

The first is a file of notes Smithee has taken during his investigations around town. This file, "Groverville Notebook," is reproduced as Handout #1; it should be given to the players for them to examine and follow up on. The results of such investigations are presented below in the section "Groverville Notebook."

The second is a short file made by Smithee, the day of his death. It is in the top level of the directory, and is entitled "szet." This file is reproduced as Handout #2. The file is largely nonsensical, and should serve only to confound the players. It represents the state of Smithee's (altered) thought processes shortly before his death.

The third is a file called "Message." This file is a digitized sound sample, of a message Smithee recorded over his car radio. The message, as transmitted, is slowed down and reversed. Making it intelligible (with a program on Smithee's hard drive) requires a Computer Use roll. The message, once made clear, is as follows: "(garbled) has been a long time and we have many things to do, and you are not sure what you are doing. Stop now. Stop now." The agents must make a Listen roll to understand the metallic, squawky voice. Those who fail hear instead: "Billy Webb has been a (garbled) and we have many things to do and your note says what your duty. Talk now, tone brown." Also, see the sidebar "The Real Thing" for instructions on ordering the actual sound sample and editing program to use as a real-life clue for your players to figure out.

## Groverville Notebook

This file (Handout #1) presents notes Smithee took in the course of his investigation. In the interests of brevity all of the encounters it may lead to are not described in detail; you'll need to ad lib these. Some guidelines on what the agents will find:

### Livestock Mutilations

Those interviewed will report that the livestock listed were discovered in the fields, dissected by odd methods. All the animals listed have long since been destroyed; no more are known to have been found. In some of the cases, the farmers saw lights in the sky the night that the animals were killed.

### Livestock Alterations

Robert Gum can show the agents his cow, whose udder was removed, leaving no scars. Examination with the chemical solution will show that the strange proto-matter was indeed used to close the wounds and to cover the patch where the udder was removed. Laboratory analysis will reveal that the cow can still give milk; the patch of replaced tissue will extend nipples for suckling by calves if nuzzled, and will then deliver milk as normal.

### Missing Time

Those interviewed will deny knowledge of any such event, even if intimidated. They clearly are lying but do not wish to discuss what happened. No amount of coercion, short of torture, will persuade them. All they remember in any event is that the missing time occurred; they have no recollection of what happened during that time.

### Chopper Sightings

These are sightings of the NSA agents' two black helicopters. One of the sightings occurred during their mid-air battle with a stray Mi-Go, which resulted in the fungi's death. The other Mi-Go have taken no action, to protect their cover as the "greys." Smithee made these spottings himself, and hence listed no witnesses.

### Lights

As Smithee wrote, virtually everyone in town has seen lights in the skies at night—or says they have. What they've been seeing are, in fact, the pulsing glows used by the Mi-Go to communicate with each other (see the description in the rulebook). People they ask will tell the agents "just sit out and watch! You'll see 'em too." If the agents wish to watch for the lights, consult "Watching The Skies" for details.

### Crop Circles

Smithee found a few farmers who had crop circles appear in their fields. In UFO folklore, crop circles are areas in a field where the grass, corn, wheat, or whatever has been beaten down in definite patterns—as if some craft had landed there. These "circles" sometimes appear as complex patterns, suggesting intelligent design.

In the case of Groversville, the circles are few and are caused by an NSA helicopter (actually a gunship) making occasional, stealth-enhanced landings. The agents can examine some of the circles and Idea rolls will make it clear that they are caused by chopper landings (if a player asks this directly, they don't need to make the roll).

## Handout #1

The following are brief notes Smithee entered on his computer during his investigation. Each section begins with a short heading, followed by information.

### Livestock Mutilations

Jeff Owens (555-1243) 3 cows, 8/1, 8/4, 8/8  
Margaret Allison (555-4628) 1 goat, 8/2  
Jeremy Dark (555-9258) about 20 chickens, 8/6  
Others?

### Livestock Alterations

Robert Gum (no phone) 1 cow, missing udder but in good health. purpose?  
Others like this—operated on and released?  
9/6—Spotted three more in a roadside survey, not sure who farmer was

### Missing Time

Bud Aldrich (555-4290) 8/8, 1 hour; 8/15, 1 hour; 8/29, 3.5 hours.  
Louisa May (555-9462) 8/10, 3 hours+?

### Chopper Sightings

Ameley's Hills Area (North) 9/6, 9pm; 9/6, 11pm; 9/7, 10:40 pm (muzzle flash & discharge)

### Lights

Many—everyone's seen a few. No correlation I can find, but reports are very sketchy and unreliable.

### Crop Circles

Bo Laramie (555-9473), 8/26; 9/3

### J.A.

P. 3 weeks=6 months. Refuses Rx, got a room for her at the shut-eye.

Allen, Barn, Thomas, Jacobs, Cartwright & Anderson never go home.

### JA

This is a reference to Jane Allen, Billy Ray Spivey's Girlfriend. See "Jane Allen" for details.

### Allen, Barn, Thomas, Jacobs, Cartwright & Anderson

Smithee noticed that the members of the board of aldermen never leave the building; checking on any of these people reveals that they are aldermen. See "Town Hall" for details.

## Handout #2

I am wondering about the possibility that the brain translates information in terms of the extra sensory, and that's why it achieves intuition and common sense.

for evidence of esp, or extra sensory perception, look for coincidences especially within words of significance. if i leave you with a few words that are significant to me personally as examples if you write down the word choice, underline the letters oi of choice, and underneath insert the binary code that's oh 1 of course, you will see that the difference between the i and the 1 is of a number with no head on it.

but if consciousness is omnipresent, or just is, or if consciousness shall we say is on open network, we would expect in one or more of the languages the word for choice to contain THE BINARY CODE! but we all also expect in one of the words for reason, the word on representing a consent code in the same way as the ability of on on hte computer is a consent code. and you wsee if we read across the word reason in english, it would say RE AS ON. if you write down the word neuron, and with the same meaning the word neurone, you will see that the last few letters of the each word neuron is they would say the words 'you are on' by sound using letters as symbols. the word neurone is able to say in the last few letters 'you are one.' if write the word science, underline the letter i of science, write down the word genius, underline the letter i in genius, and two words, i don't know whether you know in the french, je suis, they spell j-e-s-u-i-s, they mean 'i am,' of course, you see it is able to say 'jeeze, you is.' no it is not about abysmal stupidity of the religions, it is telling you whether the religions like it or not, whether we like it or not, consciousness is omnipresent and on open network that's why we breathe in and breathe out molecules, and that is why we eat drink and excrete molecules. because if consciousness is omnipresent, and on open network, then even molecules achieve an ability to code as do the atoms within them as do sub-atoms within them because they belong to consciousness. so it not only expresses or explains the food chains it also explains fission and fusion or the creation of stars, galaxies, planets, rock...

**Special Note:** the kinds of things that Smithee found (crop circles, altered livestock, lights, missing time) can also be found by the agents if they ask around. Use Smithee's findings as guidelines, since the agents can find more of the same, usually more recent.

## Jane Allen

Jane is Billy Ray Spivey's girlfriend, which is no secret to anyone. Her family lives a couple miles from the Spivey farm.

Jane's father is on the board of aldermen, and so is never at home anymore. Her mother, Nancy, is constantly kept in a state of mild sedation by the proto-matter in her body from the drinking water. She doesn't worry about anything. Which is good; after all, her daughter disappeared three days ago.

This isn't the first time Jane Allen disappeared. Three weeks ago she was gone for 8 hours, during which a strange experiment was performed on her by the Mi-Go.

When she was abducted, her uterus and cervix were replaced. She was already pregnant (by way of Spivey) but the replacement uterus and cervix served as accelerators. Although only three weeks pregnant, she is already at the six-month stage of development. Each week that goes by encompasses two months' worth of development by the infant—a week and a half from the start of the scenario she will give birth.

Frightened by what was happening to her, and by what happened to Billy Ray, Jane sought help in the form of Alan Smithee. Pouring out her problems to him, she sought refuge, and he gave it. Jane is now holed up in another room at the Shut-Eye, a room rented by Smithee "for research materials." No one at the Shut-Eye knows anyone actually sleeps there; Smithee left instructions for the room not to be disturbed.

Jane hasn't come out of the room since she went in. Smithee planned to bring in a doctor from another county when it was time, but time ran out for him. Now, Jane is waiting for Smithee to come by with food and news. She doesn't use the phone out of fear, and so is difficult to find.

Each day, the agents may make a party Luck roll. If they succeed, they may notice someone watching them from behind the window blinds of one motel room. This is Jane Allen. The only other ways they can find out about her are from questioning the front desk to learn about Smithee's second room, or from Smithee's computer; see "Smithee's Computer" for details.

Jane will give birth a week-and-a-half into the scenario. The infant is human and appears normal to doctors, but the amniotic fluids it is developing in are very different from the usual kind, and as a result the child is essentially a Spawn of Ubbo-Sothla with human intelligence and form. Jane is scared to death;





JEFF BARBER

## The Real Thing

The sound sample mentioned in "Smithee's Computer" exists. It was prepared by the author for the playtest session, using Garrick McFarlane's freeware program "Sample Editor." The sample is rather eerie. In play, the players were given a diskette and directed to the author's Macintosh. There, they experimented with the program and the sound sample until they finally figured out how to decipher it. It proved to be one of the most intense and dramatic periods of play, as they all gathered around the computer and kept refining the sound to figure out what it was saying.

"Sample Editor" requires a 68020 or greater Macintosh running System 7 or later. It also requires at least a 13" 8-bit color monitor to function.

To get the program and the sound file, send a formatted Macintosh diskette (DD or HD) along with a self-addressed envelope with enough postage to mail your disk back, to: Pagan Publishing; 403A N. 8th St.; Columbia, MO 65201.

If you don't have the needed equipment, you can also send a blank cassette tape (again, with a SASE) to the same address. We'll put both the original sound and the deciphered version on the tape and mail it back. In play, let the players hear the first one, then ask for Computer Use rolls. If any succeed, play the second one. The players can make their best guesses to the content, and you can ignore the Listen rolls normally called for in the scenario.

Finally, Handouts #1 & 2 (the "Groverville Notebook" and "sze,t" files on Smithee's computer) were originally not computer files. For playtesting, the author purchased a blank book (available at most bookstores—a small hardcover book with blank pages) and wrote the information from the handout onto some of the pages. The author also drew a sketchy map of the valley. The book was then dropped and kicked about in several oily puddles in a handy parking lot and allowed to dry. The resulting prop was given to the players, who had the expected difficulties deciphering the blurry handwriting. Like the computer sound file, this added a lot to play, and it is recommended you try this if you have time.

Such "real" props are a natural extension of CoC's trademark handouts. They give the players something real to examine, and make the events much more immediate. If you have examples of props you've used in any of your games, write us and share your experiences.

she has to eat a tremendous amount to "feed" the accelerated pregnancy. If Smithee doesn't bring her food soon, she will have to go out and get some—a scary proposition for her at best.

She doesn't know about what has happened to her father and the rest of the aldermen; if asked, she recalls that he was very busy the last few days before she left, and she didn't see him at all—not that she really wanted to.

## Tough Stories

As mentioned earlier, the NSA anonymously passed on information about Groversville's UFO sightings to the tabloid television show "Tough Stories." A field producer and his assistant are staying at Merle's Shut-Eye while they poke around and decide if the story is worth reporting on. The NSA's intent in doing so was to discredit the story in the eyes of the mainstream press by getting the town's problems on "Tough Stories," a program barely respected, or even noticed, by the mainstream press. The two have been here for three days; they're aware of Billy Ray Spivey's crimes but haven't heard about his "missing time." Unless they do, they won't be terribly interested in him.

So far, the two have done little more than talk to local residents and stake out darkened fields for signs of UFOs. They haven't seen anything, and the stories they've heard are flimsy enough that, barring some new development, they'll be gone two days after the agents arrive and no story will be filed on "Tough Stories" or anyplace else.

But, they'll stick around if they hear some FBI agents are in town asking about the UFO's. This is up to the players to determine; if they ask a lot of questions about the UFO's (instead of just asking about Billy Ray's problems), or if they let word get out that Billy Ray suffered from "missing time" before his violent outbreak, then the producer will probably hear about it and get interested.

Should this happen, the producer—Frank Carincola—will spend two cautious days asking around town about the agents and what they've been asking about. Carincola will let his assignment editor at "Tough Stories" know about the FBI's interest in the UFO's, and on the third day a camera crew will arrive. Depending on what's happened in the meantime, the crew will either continue to stalk along after the agents, visiting and questioning those the agents visit and question, until they "ambush" the agents in the parking lot of the motel. With cameras rolling, they'll approach the

agents and ask them about the case. Agents can do nothing more than deny any accusations and refuse to answer questions; they cannot confiscate the videotapes or arrest the reporters unless they actually break federal laws (local laws are up to the Sheriff to deal with).

If the agents go into Alan Smithee's room (see above), give Carincola a Luck roll to be around when it happens. If so, the reporters hustle their gear outside the room and shoot in from the parking lot at the events inside the room. Note that the bathroom is not visible from outside.

Once the agents are being watched, there will always be a "Tough Stories" staffer at the motel watching the agents' room, who will call the other reporters with information about when the agents leave and come back.

The crew represents little danger to the agents; they mostly exist to get in the way. If the investigation is going poorly, give the players something else to gripe about: "Tough Stories" airs a preliminary report on the investigation in Groversville, complete with footage of the agents making angry denials in the parking lot, etc. This can, at your option, lead to some more serious problems: FBI higher-ups may ask questions about this investigation that Delta Green members won't want asked, particularly if any of the agents are not from the local bureau.

## Resolving Things

The preceding has established what is going on in Groversville, and several likely lines of investigation for the players. Below are the steps to take in resolving the scenario. Note that a sad and deadly end is hardly out of the question; if so, this will probably be as dramatically effective as a victory.

## Watching The Skies

If the agents wish to spend a night (or several) watching the skies for UFOs, have them make a party Luck roll among those who are watching. If unsuccessful, the night is wasted. If they make it, allow each a Spot Hidden roll. If that roll is successful, they spot them: many-colored lights, pulsing in irregular patterns, in several clusters that flit about in the sky. If the agents try to follow them, the lights head east and disappear behind the hills.

Further observation closer to the east hills (or a fast vehicle ready for pursuit) allows a payoff: the lights are clearly seen to emerge from a farm just past the hills. See "The Installation" for more details.



but not getting involved in the experiments. Their heads pulse in different colors as they talk back and forth.

The agents need to make Sneak rolls to observe the Mi-Go from the loft. If they succeed, they witness all that is described above. If they watch for more than ten minutes, they witness one of the "greys" take some proto-matter from the vat while another removes the boy's body from the tube. They then begin an operation aimed at replacing those cells worst damaged by death trauma with proto-matter, and then will attempt to bring the boy back to life. This experiment will consume several hours and will cost 1/1D6 SAN to watch in its entirety (0/1D3 if only a portion of the operation is witnessed). The experiment will be a failure, and the boy will not respond to the attempts at resuscitation.

Assuming the agents attack, any real Mi-Go present will respond immediately with beam weapons (see stats). The "greys" will rush for cover, as they are very vulnerable to physical injury.

Once an attack begins, a mental alert is sent out, and the remainder of the Mi-Go will return within 3D6 minutes, ready to attack. They will enter the loft after dropping the rest of the "greys" someplace safe nearby, and attack immediately.

The investigators will probably not have too much trouble with the Mi-Go. The "greys" will meanwhile try to get to the proto-matter vat, and release the valve. The substance that emerges will form a Spawn of Ubbo-Sothla (see stats) and also attack, although the agents can make free attacks on it in the three rounds it takes to form.

## The NSA

If the agents all perish in the fight against the Mi-Go, then the town is destroyed by the subsequent virus.

If the agents prevail or flee, they will find a black helicopter sitting in the field outside the barn. In various tactical positions nearby are four NSA agents. Their leader is named Adolph Lepus; all four are cold-blooded killers.

When the agents emerge from the barn, the NSA men will, with assault rifles trained on the agents, order them to lay down their weapons. If the agents comply, Lepus will walk forward and demand to know what happened in the barn.

Lepus is a wiry little man in his late 40s. He speaks with a nasal but thick Southern accent, though not the kind found in Eastern Tennessee. Upon hearing of whatever happened inside (or whatever the agents choose to tell him), Lepus grins, three gold teeth glinting

"Run along now, little FBI men. Bust a Mayor or something." The NSA men will withdraw to their helicopter, climb aboard, and leave. They keep their guns on the agents until they depart, including the heavy machine cannons on board the chopper.

Play this scene out with as much tension as you can manage. The NSA men will refuse to answer questions unless Lepus finds it amusing; he may hint that they are also government agents, but will not reveal who they are working for (it is an old saw that NSA actually stands for "No Such Agency"). Up until the point that the black chopper disappears over the hills, the agents should not be sure that the men won't just kill them outright. Maintain the impression that everyone is on the very edge of opening fire out of pure malice—which, in fact, they are.

If the agents attempt to take on the NSA men, play out the fight. The NSA men will fight to the death, in what is sure to be a short and very, very bloody combat. If the agents win, subsequent investigation will identify the bodies as being individuals with various military backgrounds, but no current employer. Again, the NSA will not be named. If the NSA men win the combat, the agents will, of course, all be killed.

## Aftermath

Assuming some semblance of a victory (since about the only other option is death), the town of Grovesville resumes a normal life. The proto-matter loses its efficacy a few days after the Mi-Go are destroyed, causing substantial and probably fatal problems for any "altered" individuals or animals, including any such unfortunate agents. Jane Allen's child dies at this time, birthed or not.

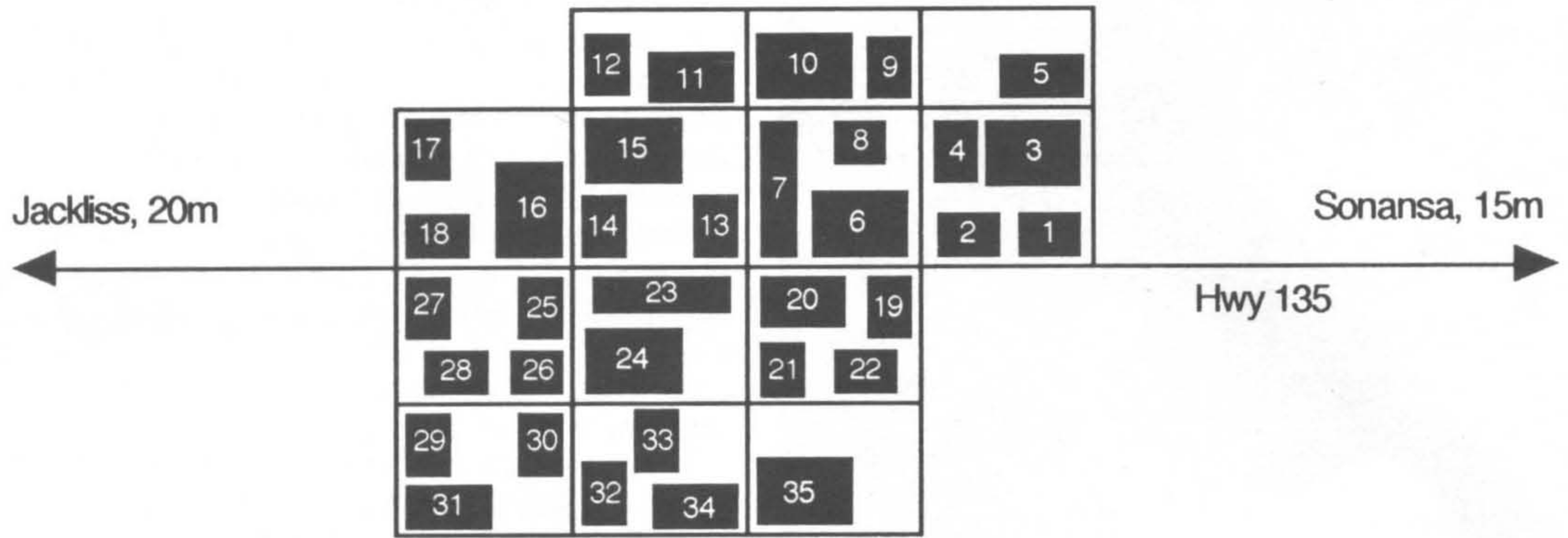
The "official" story is largely up to the agents to determine, with whatever help they need from Supervisor Derringer. Derringer won't offer any guesses as to what was going on, and will ask as few questions as possible. When all samples of the proto-matter become inert, Derringer will close the files on the investigation, after making them look as normal as possible, and consider the matter finished. Until it happens again.

The NSA will continue their operations, although the non-"grey" Mi-Go destroyed by Lepus' agents makes the NSA more suspicious than ever of the true nature and intent of the "greys."

Billy Ray Spivey, should any of the agents ask Derringer, tried to escape and had to be killed. Like so much else in this world, this is a lie.



## Downtown Groversville, Tennessee



- |                           |                                 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Sinclair Gas            | 18 Magic Discount               |
| 2 Handi Mart              | 19 Family Video                 |
| 3 RR Diner                | 20 Assessor's Office            |
| 4 Downey & Son Taxidermey | 21 Residence                    |
| 5 John Deere              | 22 Residence                    |
| 6 Town Hall               | 23 Second-Hand Rose             |
| 7 Wall Drug               | 24 Ameley Goods                 |
| 8 Sheriff's Department    | 25 Sears-Roebuck Catalog Store  |
| 9 Jail                    | 26 GTE                          |
| 10 County Courthouse      | 27 County Light, Gas & Water    |
| 11 Residence              | 28 Residence                    |
| 12 Residence              | 29 Residence                    |
| 13 Liquor, Guns & Ammo    | 30 Stuffer Shack                |
| 14 Shining Heart Daycare  | 31 Merle's Country Bunker       |
| 15 Residence              | 32 Residence                    |
| 16 First Methodist Church | 33 Merle's Auto & Body          |
| 17 Residence              | 34 Merle's Shut-Eye Motel       |
|                           | 35 Flaming Cross Baptist Church |



# Unspeakable Mail Order

Horrific Things You Can't Blow A SAN Roll Without!

All the stuff on this page can only be ordered through Chaosium, Inc.! The only thing we sell directly is *Unspeakable Oath* subscriptions and plush Cthulhu dolls—see the form on the next page. TUO1, TUO2, TUO3, and **Stark Raving Mad!** are officially sold out. As of this writing, there are only a few copies remaining of TUO4 (\$4) and our limited-edition reprint book **Courting Madness** (\$6). Call Chaosium to inquire on the status of these items before ordering.

**Creatures & Cultists** is our classic card game of spoozy Cthulhu fun, now as classy as it is classic. This edition includes 128 playing cards, featuring Mythos monsters, spells, and weirdness, now perforated for easy removal. In the game, 3-5 players take the roles of ruthless cultists, bent on world domination. Smash your foes, summon your deity to Earth, and commit atrocities like *Steal The President's Brain!* Fast and funny. If you have the previous stand-alone version, send it to **Pagan Publishing** with \$2 for this new one. *Boof!* (January 1993) .... \$5.95

**TUO5** is our biggest issue yet, 80 pages focusing on the Cthulhu Mythos in Britain, written almost entirely by British readers! You'll find articles on folklore and legends of the emerald isles, with looks at ruins, barrow mounds, strange customs, and more. Two scenarios, both set in England, let you kick-start your campaign with a British flair. In one, battle a spectral hound and something *worse* in the ruins of an abbey. Then, unravel an ancient legend that takes you *inside* one of the Mythos' most awesome creatures. .... \$4.00

**TUO6** is another giant, 80 pages featuring *Call of Cthulhu 5 1/2*. Chaosium's release of CoC 5th Edition left a few gaps, gaps that we've filled in. Our regular columns and features are absent to make way for pages of new occupations, new skills, and new ways to use magic and sanity. It even includes a revised character sheet for your new CoC5 1/2 investigators. And just to top things off, we present every player's dream: The Randolph Pierce Foundation, a small but complete organization of dedicated investigators working to unearth lost knowledge and illuminate humanity. Your investigators can join with this issue's scenario, "Blood on the Tracks." .... \$4.00

**Alone On Halloween** is a *Call of Cthulhu* supplement containing two scenarios. The first, "Alone On Halloween," is a long solo scenario where the player delves into secrets best left hidden, on a dark and rainy Halloween night. The second, "The Old Dark House" is designed for the Keeper to tinker with. It includes floor plans and descriptions for an English country manor, accompanied by numerous plot ideas, NPCs, villains and monsters, from which the Keeper can pick and choose. The end result is a scenario uniquely suited to each group's temperament and style of play. *Alone On Halloween* features a gruesome centerfold illustration by artist Blair Reynolds. .... \$8.95

**Cult of Cthulhu T-Shirts** feature a new design by *Oath* cover artist Blair Reynolds. It depicts a horribly violent confrontation between a handful of investigators and a mob of cultists. Bullets fly, swords swing, and limbs and blood spray through the air. In the background sits a strange temple, while above it all hangs a sinister symbol, the symbol of the Cult of Cthulhu! To make it complete, there's a Pagan Publishing logo on one shoulder. Available in Large and X-Large—please specify! .... \$10.00

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All done? Okay, total up your purchases. If you're in the U.S. or Canada, add \$5 for shipping and handling. If you're overseas, to figure your shipping costs add 30% of your total order for Surface Rate, or 80% for Air Rate. Send a check or money order to: **Chaosium, Inc.; 950-A 56th Street; Oakland, CA 94608**. Or, use your Visa or MasterCard by mail, or by phone: **[510] 547-7681**. If you're using a credit card by mail, include card #, expiration date, and signature.





## Message In A Bottle



Marie E. Listopad

DENNIS DETWILER

*by size and shape or picking out and sorting these white leaves on a white background.*

*You have to check out the cool desks I have. It's one of those huge old mahogany desks with about a billion little drawers. I can't get some of them opened. Some of the ones I can have the bizarrest stuff in 'em. Like—an old, bent up silver ring; an antique ladies broach watch (broken, of course); a string of pearls missing the clasps. I stuck my favorite pair of earrings, you know the ones you gave me, in an empty drawer the other day and now I can't find them. I did find this neat mascara that's kind of like face paint.*

*December 22, 1992*

*Dear John,*

*I know it's been a while since I last wrote but I've been so busy.*

*I got a job! Can you believe it! After a whole year unemployed, I finally have a job. It pays well and has really good benefits. The boss, Jan, is okay. At the interview I thought he was kind of creepy but first impressions aren't everything. He's really very nice.*

*The work is easy. I sign for packages when they come in. The one sitting here now came from Tuuva. I answer the phone but it rarely rings. And Jan gives me the strangest stuff to do. Like, sorting these beads by size and color or arranging these weird sticks*

*I felt a little guilty wearing the mascara to work but Jan said he liked it. What a super guy he is. I told him about the earrings and he gave me some other ones. They have a little clear glass bead hanging from silver chains. Inside the bead is a teeny tiny little black spyder. Just for giggles I drew a little spyder's web design under my eyes with the mascara. Jan said I looked beautiful. Oh, John, he is so handsome. I think he likes me. He asked me to join him for dinner tonite. I know I should have said "No" but...*

*Oh well, I'll write you all about it later.*

*Ta Ta,*

*Marissa*

## Summon/Bind Pagan Publishing

If you have an IBM or Macintosh computer and a modem, you can now reach us almost daily on the nationwide America Online computer network. We sponsor discussion groups, offer regular conferences, give quick feedback to your questions, and (soon) you can download articles from out-of-print issues. Many other game companies are there as well (including Chaosium), and America Online's features are extensive. If you'd like to try AOL out, just call 1-800-827-6364 (3 p.m.-11 p.m. EST) and request the start-up kit. This free kit includes instructions, free software, and free time to try AOL out. Remaining on AOL costs \$7.95 a month, which includes two hours' worth of monthly online time. To reach us on AOL, send mail to "Pagan Pub" and we'll get back to you within a day. Or, use the keyword "OGF" for the Online Gaming Forums, where you'll find discussion groups for our products and many other gaming companies' as well. AOL is a lot of fun, and we recommend it highly.

# Contributors

**Scott D. Aniolowski** wrote *Alone On Halloween* almost a decade ago and is pleased it was finally published, after careful proofreading by **Brian Appleton**, who lathered himself in Crisco and rolled around on the pages knowing only the ones with typos would stick, much to the dismay of **Jeff Barber** who was planning on using the Crisco to fry up a big mess o' hog's feet but was stymied through the intervention of Scotsman **David Barras** who was at the time sought by agents of Interpol as well as Outerpol (and for that matter Northpol) for committing crimes against nature in the laboratory under a nearby loch with **Jason Bov'ee**, a madman accused of the stipling deaths of sixteen partridges; the pear trees, meanwhile, were chopped down and whittled into toothpicks by **David Brown** who proceeded to insert all of the fresh toothpicks into the eyes of our noble friend and fascist-out-of-uniform **John Crowe**, who promptly hurled the Macintosh he's writing our huge Ithaqua campaign on in the general direction of **Les B. Dean** in the midst of Les' Masters' Comps but fortunately failed to faze him, I mean him, due to the sudden arrival of **Dennis Detwiler** who placed himself in the path of the flying computer and stopped it with his head, to the relief of Les' wife who is not, in fact, **Maria Douglas** for Maria lives in another state and has never even met Les, nor for that matter has **Kim Eastland** who was, at the time, being mobbed by a procession of Bavarian villagers with torches who found him through his address in the last issue and who were led by **Philip H. Garland**, who sometime before Christmas will receive the enlarged color photo of the dog's head he asked us for some while back but **Steve Hatherley** won't, because he didn't ask for it so *there* and if that doesn't show him **J. Todd Kingrea** will fly over to Boney Old England and learn him some manners taught to him, in fact, by **Marie E. Listopad** who is now the second woman to appear in the *Oath* and it's about time since some readers may not be familiar with the concept (not to mention some staff members—ouch!) but rest assured that **Mark Morrison** is and keeps several in his Case, to the chagrin of Yesper, I mean, **Jesper Myrfors** who can't get the editor to spell his name right but at least he isn't **Blair (Shea) Reynolds** who doesn't know what his first name is or **Kevin A. Ross**, who doesn't know where he lives anymore (having moved) but in fact I've heard that Jesper is **Thomas M. Stratman**, who will be surprised to learn this no doubt but, like **G.W. Thomas**, will just have to learn to live with it since **John Tynes**, that's me, the editor, is writing all this and will say what he darn well pleases about anyone except for **CL Werner**, who has gone to the store for another case of Crisco. Now aren't you well-informed? **Not!**

Needless to say, we're always looking for more contributors to write and draw for *The Unspeakable Oath*. To get writer's guidelines, send a SASE to our address below. If you're an artist, send *photocopied* samples of your work (preferably Mythos/horror) and a SASE to Jeff Barber, Art Director, again at the address below. You can also reach us over the internet worldwide computer network (which includes services such as CompuServe). See our Internet address below. Finally, feel free to call or fax us with questions or comments.

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Feeling a little drained? A wee bit out of sorts? Haven't had any time to catch up on your leisure reading? Don't feel bad. Your leisure reading has just caught up to you—with the Fall 1992 issue of *The Unspeakable Oath*, the world's premiere digest for the *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game. Inside this issue you'll meet **The Last Dawn**, a very scary group trying to bring the Old Ones to power. Plus, our *CyberCthulhu* crossover with the magazine *Interface* kicks off in a modern-day adventure that will put investigators through some strange changes. Hold on tight, open wide, and just say "Ahh..."

