



## Secrets Of The Elvis Invisibility Diet And Miracle Scenario Generator

by Kenneth Hite

*"The business of the journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of mammon, and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread. You know it and I know it, and what folly is this toasting an independent press?"*

- - apocryphal toast of John Swinton, Chief of Staff of the *New York Times*, at the New York Press Club in 1953

You've seen them, the newspapers read and believed implicitly by a shocking number of Americans every week. Papers concerned only with lurid tales of sex and conspiracy, with celebrity gossip and with ludicrous scaremongering disguised as science coverage. Papers that actively play to stereotype and sloppy thinking. Papers driven solely by rumor and political expediency.

But there is a different breed of paper out there; papers that aren't ashamed to admit it. These are the supermarket tabloids, and they make (among other things) great scenario generators. Lester Smith's *Dark Conspiracy* RPG actually used real headlines from selected tabloids as the scenario seeds in the main rulebook, an example that I keenly follow in this week's column. All these headlines and stories spring, therefore, not from my deranged id but from the hallowed pages of the September 22, 1998 *Weekly World News*. Most of these scenarios or plot elements fit more or less into the 20th-century Weird Illuminated world of the *GURPS* "Illuminated Trilogy": *Illuminati*, *Black Ops* and *Warehouse 23*. But, as I emphasize throughout, weirdness is everywhere, so some of them might spark notions for other settings, too. Plunk down your \$1.39, then, and let's get our fingers all black and smudgy together.

### MONKEY RAMPAGE IN MIAMI!

"No one knows where they came from . . ." always a promising beginning. Rhesus and Java macaques have bitten a toddler, attacked a cop and terrorized motorists in a parking lot; is it the beginning of a Day of the Animals? Have the Fiendish Commies 90 miles off shore finally perfected Monkey Mind Control, *GURPS Atomic Horror* style? Is it a manifestation of a jungle orisha from the deeps of *GURPS Voodoo* Africa? Or has PETA somehow smuggled some IQ-boosting serum into a secret testing lab, allowing the research monkeys to band together and break for freedom? Playing the monkeys would be quite a challenge as they quest for freedom in the Everglades. Of course, if the Warehouse 23 brain-swapping machine backfired and a bunch of Black Ops got put into monkey bodies, a *Warehouse 23-*

**Black Ops** game gets even odder. Given that chimps have a ST of 18 and rhesus monkeys a DX of 15, even Combat Ops might not want to swap back in a hurry!

## NAPOLEON WAS HALF-MAN AND HALF-WOMAN!

"Famous French hero had narrow shoulders, wide hips and big breasts, says study." Well, the headline really says it all, doesn't it? The article goes on to quote "Dr. James Robinson" and "Major General Frank Richardson" (good Anglo-Saxon names, not like those half-woman Latinate ones you see running around nowadays) to the effect that Napoleon's pituitary gave out in his mid-30s (resulting in Froehlich's syndrome or even Klinefelter's syndrome), making his skin baby-soft and his drive to conquer the world iron-hard. (According to Arno Karlen's aptly-named *Napoleon's Glands*, these theories date back to 1913 - - Karlen mentions lots of others including psychopathy, schistosomiasis, poison and epilepsy.)

But what if his ailment was magical? One of the greatest feats of the alchemical transformation was the Marriage of the White Queen and the Red King (more chess imagery, while we're counting) to "recapitulate the androgyne" and produce the Hermaphrodite - - the living Philosopher's Stone. Could someone have been working Napoleon magically? His marriage to Josephine Beauharnais (a dark-complexioned lady no doubt tied into the Black Madonna cult) has been explained as a Merovingian plot; could his divorce and remarriage to Marie Louise of Austria (as white as a Queen could get) have been an alchemical counterstroke? His condition dates from just after his Egyptian campaign, during which he entered the Great Pyramid alone and spent the night there. If Napoleon had begun an alchemical transformation (or triggered a Pharaoh's curse), perhaps only the sex-magic of the Hellfire Club saved England and the world. Hitler, we all recall the rumor saying, had undescended testicles and a squeaky voice - - could he have tried the same ritual that Napoleon did? Investigating these links will keep **GURPS Illuminati** players busy for some time.

## SWARM OF GNATS DOWNS AIRLINER

An Indonesian DC-8 flying from Jakarta to Medan in northern Sumatra flew into "this giant swarm of bugs," and crashed into the jungle near Pekanbaru. Crash investigators found "billions of the tiny bugs in the aircraft's jet engines." "One stunned investigator" said (and these are the words to watch for in tabloid scenario generation), "I've never seen anything like it in all the years I've been in this business." Which would rule out natural causes, and rule in Insect God Sorcery! Indonesia is currently suffering from a serious depression, riots, anti-Chinese pogroms, rumors of a military coup, smuggling and general chaos - - in other words, it's perfect roleplaying ground. Could all these troubles be linked to secretive cults of Insect God worshippers throughout the Pacific Rim? (For some really unpleasant insect gods, do check out the current run of Grant Morrison's *Invisibles* comic from Vertigo/DC.) Or, perhaps, to Beelzebub - - the Lord of the Flies? Lovecraft's story "Winged Death" tells of a murderous entomologist; could a secret Black Biotech project have gone horribly wrong - - or horribly right - - in remotest Sumatra? What happens when the gnats start breeding in the swamps outside Washington, D.C.'s Andrews Air Force Base - - where Air Force One takes off? Better hope your Science Op took Entomology, and remember - - a swarm of gnats is bulletproof.

## THE MILLENNIUM PAPERS!

"Top Secret group stuns Washington with uncanny predictions ... They're called The Nostradamus 10 ...." and they are a "secret underground think tank," and a "cabal of farsighted scientists, economists and other experts [who] keep their identities a closely guarded secret." The Nostradamus 10 publishes its predictions "periodically in a small booklet known as *The Millennium Papers*, which they distribute 'guerrilla style' to chosen individuals." Are they part of the Illuminati? A part surfacing to subtly push events in the direction they "predict"? Or an Illuminated faction gone rogue, like the Priore de Sion - - which also produces "guerilla booklets" and leaves them in libraries, and which may have included Nostradamus in its membership. When two prophets compete, who wins? And who knows about it ahead of time? You might go mad making sure that all the prophecies come true while still keeping the game a surprise to your players, but the effect of the "inevitable prophecy" is a great one. Check out Michael Flynn's *In the Country of the Blind* for a superbly excellent work on conspiratorial predictions by secret think tanks, if you plan to run with this theme.

## THIS WEEK'S SIX LUCKIEST LOTTERY NUMBERS

A Swiss computer named Bright Green picks six numbers weekly by scanning "all numbers selected in lotteries across America over the past year." Leaving aside the obvious ties to the Networked Gnomes of Zurich inherent in a Swiss computer, and the obvious ties to the Nazi orgone-variant Green Ray (or Green Flash) used in their UFO bases beneath the hollow Antarctic icecap inherent in something called Bright Green, it's obvious that what is actually occurring is a high-tech sortilege; picking lots to determine the future and the will of God much as the Levites of Israel did before the Ark of the Covenant with the Urim and Thummim.

By that reading, the lottery numbers must be interpreted - - and the magical interpretation of numerical truth is, of course, found within kabbalah. (Insanely quick version: ancient Hebrew used the letters as numbers, thus every Hebrew word has at least one numerical equivalent; the Torah is God's OS for the world.) So, checking this week's sortilege (1, 22, 24, 31, 35, 42) against my handy copy of *Godwin's Cabalistic Encyclopedia*, I get: "Crown," "Jehu," "vessel," "Habuiah," "boundary," "mother." Jehu was the charioteer who became King of Israel, and Habuiah is the angel of agriculture. Obviously, a royal driver (possibly a covert Merovingian) must take the vessel (the Grail?) to the boundary; with the twinning of mother and agriculture, the boundary should probably be a sacred Goddess site - - like Rennes-la-Chateau in the border region between France and Spain. Added all together, the numbers representing the state of the numinous, magickal world (this week) equal 164, "the Pillars." Looks like everything stays stable, assuming nothing interferes with our crowned Jehu. Were I of a Sinological bent, I could check the lucky lottery numbers against the hexagrams of the *I Ching*, (no kidding: the lottery numbers are right next to "your secret message from the Orient" there on p. 27) and if your campaign depends more on Chinese feng shui than on kabbalistic-Templar sacred geometry, that's what you should do.

## SLEEPWALKERS RISK VAMPIRE ATTACKS!

More a handy tip than anything else, the *News* mentions that "university experts" in Brasov, Romania, have studied 300 case histories of vampire attacks between 1975 and 1995 and found that sleepwalking was the No. 1 risk factor; sleepwalkers are twice as likely to be attacked. This could spark investigations into a particularly nasty dream spirit for *GURPS Voodoo* GMs, the invention of a quick delta-wave emitter to use as a vampire lure by the Tech boys in *Black Ops*, or even an investigation by the PCs of the curious practices of the Brasov University Sleep Research Department.

## U.S. NAVY SUB VANISHES IN DEVIL'S TRIANGLE

Practically a gimme, this one is. A U.S. Navy submarine 200 feet deep, "off the coast of South Florida ... to help track the launch of a space satellite" endured a strange vibration "for only 60 seconds" and suddenly appeared 300 miles off the coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. As the sub proceeded to Kuwait to dock, the crew realized they had aged 20 to 30 years each! A "select group of experts in the field of paranormal travel ... have been asked to submit data that might help explain the phenomenon." Surely this recalls the Philadelphia Experiment of 1943, when the *U.S.S. Eldridge* teleported from Philadelphia to Norfolk, Virginia in instants! Unconfirmed reports (Okay, okay, the entire Philadelphia Experiment is an unconfirmed report, or, as we used to call it, a lie. Are you happy now? I may still do a whole column on it someday, because it's so darn cool.) imply that some sailors on the *Eldridge* also suffered premature aging. Did the unnamed sub get caught in the fallout from a 55-year-old experiment? From an ongoing experiment? By whom? Or what? Sounds like a job for a minisub full of Black Ops to me.

*"Best damn investigative reporting on the planet."*

- - Agent Kay, *Men In Black*

Putting it all together almost certainly means running the Tabloid Conspiracy Game. In addition to the possibilities inherent in the *Midnight Sun* outlined on pp. 83 and 84 of *GURPS Illuminati*, (and elsewhere in that nighted tome), check out *Pandemonium!* by Stephan Michael Sechi and Robin Laws (now available from Atlas Games) or *Tabloid!* by Zeb Cook (now not available from TSR). Whether the tabloids are the only foe, or the finest tool, of the Conspiracy is probably a Secret Best Kept For Later. The extent to which the tabloid headlines mirror, or cover up, real events, is similarly up to the GM - - it might be fun to run a game in a world where, yes, everybody knows that Elvis is alive, and the Air Force's (openly Congressionally funded) MJ-12 group is looking very hard for him to interrogate the King about that alien incident. Fortunately, he learned the secrets of the psychic invisibility diet from Bigfoot, who's due to appear on *Letterman* to announce his candidacy for the Senate on a "release JFK from prison" platform...

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