



TARGETS OF ACQUISITION

FOR USE WITH THE LAUNDRY RPG





The

Laundry Files

TARGETS OF ACQUISITION

Based on the Laundry Files novels by Charles Stross.

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Credits

Writing: Geoff Skellams
Editing: Benjamin Watkins
Layout and Graphic Design: Tom Hutchings
Art Direction: Jon Hodgson
Cover Art: Scott Purdy and Jon Hodgson
Managing Editor: Andrew Kenrick
Line Manager: Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan
Creative Director: Jon Hodgson
Publisher: Dominic McDowall

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TARGETS OF ACQUISITION

Ref: DOR-A-1345/23

D-CoPos

For Information:

D-DOR-A

Re: Targets of Acquisition

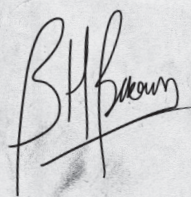
STATIONX/
SOE MEMORANDUM

1. Annexe A lists the Acquisition Section's current high priority target list, in response to your minute D-COPOS-3789/582.

2. Each entry provides a physical description (as much as is known), basic historical context, its current location and an intelligence analysis (particularly regarding occult significance).

3. Some artefacts present a potential serious risk to British national security and their acquisition needs to be given a high priority.

4. Any assistance from Operations Division in acquiring these particular items would be greatly appreciated.



B. H. BROWN

AD-DOR-A

Annexés:

A. Current list of Acquisition Targets

A 1 DIGITAL JADE

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A1.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

DIGITAL JADE is conical in shape, with a slight bend along the longitudinal axis. Length is believed to be 200mm (8 inches). Diameter is approximately 40mm (1.6 inches), at the base, tapering to only 5mm (0.2 inches) at the tip.

The item appears to have been made from some sort of greenish-grey stone, perhaps jade, although this has not been confirmed by analysis. Chemical tests will need to be performed should the item be recovered.

DIGITAL JADE is said to be covered in scrimshaw carvings, although the exact design and significance of the carvings cannot be ascertained from the only poor quality photograph of the item available. However, descriptions from other sources indicate the carvings may hold occult significance.

A1.2 HISTORY

The exact origins of DIGITAL JADE are currently unknown. The Laundry first became aware of it in 1948, whilst examining records of the Nazi PROJECT JOTUNHEIM. Although no description of it was made in those documents, several references were made to it in despatches from agents in the South Pacific. Indications are that the Germans were using Japanese forces, as well as their own operatives, to search for it.

The next mention of the artefact was uncovered in correspondence taken from cultists in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 1954 (see the case file for Operation PURPLE ASSEGAI – DOFS-OCC-34908). One letter makes mention of it, saying that it is a piece of the great god himself, allowing those who possess it to make direct contact with a 'Great Old One'. The cultists were believed to be searching for the artefact when their activities were terminated.

Only one original photograph of the item is known to exist, believed to have been taken in 1928. A low-quality copy of the photograph is attached (see DOR-AR-9775/67). This copy was taken by Laundry HUMINT resources in Moscow during 1958. At the time, the original photograph was part of a collection of old photographs of occult items being sought by the Russian Thirteenth Directorate. Unfortunately, due to the low resolution of the spy camera used, important elements of the artefact's carvings are not clearly visible

in the copy. Several attempts were made to gain either the original, or a much higher resolution version; however, it is believed the original was incinerated in a fire in a Thirteenth Directorate storehouse in 1963.

The significance of this artefact was not realised until four years ago, when classified transmissions from the Black Chamber were obtained, indicating that they believed that the artefact was genuine and they were highly interested in acquiring it. It was only a careful search of the Archives that revealed the forgotten record of this item.

A1.3 CURRENT LOCATION

This artefact's precise location and possessor are unfortunately unknown at this time. Intelligence from the Black Chamber's transmissions indicate that the object may be located either in Papua New Guinea, or on one of

[DOR-AR-9775/67]



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the surrounding islands. Traffic analysis is currently being conducted on communications and operative movements from organisations such as the Black Chamber and Thirteenth Directorate, in an attempt to narrow down the location.

At this time, it has been confirmed that the Americans and Russians are both actively searching for the artefact. Other nations, including Australia, China and Iran are believed to be undertaking their own investigations.

Unconfirmed reports also indicate that several cults – including one in the UK – have recently become interested in acquiring the item. Cult knowledge of the artefact was believed to have been suppressed after the PURPLE ASSEGAI operation. However, rumours of its existence have resurfaced. The Laundry has learned of several subtle feelers being sent to private auction houses and other dealers in occult objects enquiring about such an object. At this time, the identity of the cultists is unknown; there is a chance that these enquiries may be a disguised attempt by a foreign power to gain further information through channels normally closed to them.

A1.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Only a minuscule amount of information is available on DIGITAL JADE. However, if the information proves accurate, then it is a piece of a talon from a Class IV+ exosome, broken off after one of the entity's prehistoric appearances on Earth.

If this is true, then possessing this artefact opens up a wide range of options for sympathetic sorcery, which could prove vitally important should CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN come to fruition. Predictive Branch have not been able to ascertain the artefact's validity to date (see DORD-PB-7966/45).

Predictive Branch has also been unable to narrow down the location of the artefact; they have, however been able to determine that it will play an important part in upcoming international events. Precisely what those events will be remains uncertain at this time (see DORD-PB-7966/48).

If the artefact's origins are genuine, then this artefact must not fall into the hands of hostile foreign powers – particularly countries such as China or Iran – and must certainly not come into the possession of any doomsday cult looking to bring about the End Times. While it would be preferable to acquire this artefact for its own collection and use, it is recommended that the object be destroyed if it cannot be safely acquired.

There does exist an opportunity to create a sting operation to bring opposition forces out into the open. Creating a fake artefact and getting it into circulation could bring the cults into the open, so they can be quashed. Alternatively, false information can be disseminated to the opposition, in order to disrupt their operations, allowing the Laundry more time to recover the artefact.



A2 BRASS SUBTRACTION

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A2.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

BRASS SUBTRACTION is a fully working implementation of Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine. It stands approximately 3m (10 feet) tall, 6m (20 feet) in width and 1.5m (5 feet) in depth. The engine's mechanical clockworks are made entirely from polished brass, enclosed in an oak framed glass cabinet, which in turn sits atop an oak timber cabinet. The whole assembly weighs in the order of 18 tonnes (40,000 pounds).

The unit itself has a complicated array of highly intricate mechanical parts, arranged in stacks, with complex clockwork elements connecting them together. A punched card reader is located on the front of the machine, and a hopper for output cards is located immediately to its right. A second hopper, this time for holding unused punch cards is situated on the right side of the unit, allowing the operator to load fresh cards in bulk.

Glass doors are built into all sides of the cabinet, allowing access to internal mechanisms. This is necessary to ensure that any mechanical jams – which apparently are a common occurrence when the unit is in operation – can be quickly cleared. Cabinet doors on the front of the timber section at the bottom allow for clearing the sections of blank cards that have been removed as part of the engine's operation.

Photographs of BRASS SUBTRACTION from a private monograph published in 1903 (see -A-647/91) show an engraved brass disc screwed to the side of the timber cabinet, bearing the manufacturer's mark of ELKMAN and Sons, Liverpool, dated 1895.

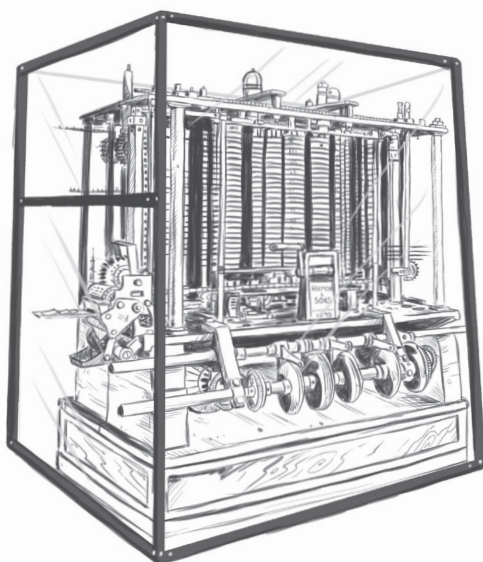
A2.2 HISTORY

Charles Babbage – considered by many to be the father of modern computing – first developed the plans for a generic Analytical Engine as a refinement of his more limited Difference Engine in the 1830s. Due to a lack of funding and disputes with his chief engineer, Babbage never saw a working version of his engine completed before his death in 1871.

Publicly, none of his designs were realised in working form until 1991 when a Difference Engine was built. To date, no working Analytical Engines have been publicised, although attempts are currently being made to model the workings in a virtual environment, with the view to perfecting the design before moving on to making a physical version. Several flaws in Babbage's original designs have already been discovered in the process.

Privately, however, a successful Analytical Engine appears to have been made in the late 19th Century. A private monograph was disseminated to members of the secretive and now defunct Menabrean Society, describing their engine and its successful early operations. The monograph also included several photographs of the device.

Later correspondence among members of the Menabrean Society indicate that much work was done on the Engine and creating programs for it (see -A-647-2/33). There are many gaps in the correspondence trail, so no firm conclusions can be drawn on exactly what the society was working



[-A-647/91]

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towards. However, certain elements of the calculations mentioned show a high degree of correlation with the Dho-Na curve, suggesting that the society was attempting a version of computational demonology a full 40 years before Alan Turing perfected the mathematics (see also BRAZEN HEAD). One letter indicates that a punched card stack exists (or at least existed) that had successfully 'opened a gateway to Heaven'. Whether this was simply a figure of speech, or the program had actually opened a portal to another universe is not known at this time.

A2.3 CURRENT LOCATION

At the time of the monograph's publication in 1908, BRASS SUBTRACTION was situated in a secret location in Edinburgh. No actual address was given for the object's location, and the photographs of it provide no further hints as to where they were taken

A complete list of members of the Menabrean Society has never been compiled, as the exact number of members is unknown. However, the identity of more than a dozen members have been confirmed, including at least four who had links to occult groups in the early 20th Century. Searches of property, legal and other documents related to these individuals are still on-going.

A2.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Despite the passage of more than a century since the publication of the monograph detailing the engine, Predictive Branch has concluded, with a reasonable degree of confidence, that the device still exists and is located somewhere in Edinburgh. A precise location has not been determined.

Careful analysis of Babbage's original Analytical Engine designs show it is extremely primitive in comparison with modern computing machinery. However, it theoretically has power and complexity for use in computational demonology, albeit at low levels only. Arcana Analysis does suggest that BRASS SUBTRACTION may be thaumically 'hot' due to long exposure to computational demonological processes, and that its capabilities may no longer be wholly predictable.

The Menabrean Society was primarily a theoretical group, specialising in studying obscure mathematical theories. The group was believed to have dissolved in 1943. Several members were Nazi sympathisers and it is thought that some of their work may have been passed to the Germans before and during the war. At least one society member was arrested and secretly executed for treason, related to stealing secrets about British naval operations.

Society membership was extremely limited and strictly controlled. Apart from the monograph regarding the Analytical Engine, only four other monographs were published (see -A-647). All were printed by a small printing house in Liverpool, which closed shortly after the Second World War. Most information passed between members via personal correspondence.

The existence of a working Analytical Engine poses a significant risk. Being disconnected from the Internet, there is no way of tracking it via the usual means. If the punch card stack containing the 'gateway program' still exists, then it is possible that cultists could be using the engine for occult work.

Laundry possession of BRASS SUBTRACTION could be highly beneficial. A mechanical computer with the ability to perform computational sorcery at times of no electricity would be high advantageous.



A 3 ABSENT GIANT

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A3.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

ABSENT GIANT is a glass vacuum tube, constructed in the early 1940s. It is approximately 150mm (6 inches) in length and 25mm (1 inch) in diameter. The majority of the length is made up of a glass tube enclosing a vacuum. An aluminium cap seals the tube, and houses the connectors that allow the tube to be wired into a larger electronic circuit.

At a cursory glance, there are no markings on the outside of ABSENT GIANT that set it apart from any other valve manufactured at the same time. However, if light is reflected off the metal base, a faint X can be seen scratched into the base.

The metal anode plate inside the vacuum tube is also different, having a distinct green sheen, unlike any other tube.

A3.2 HISTORY

ABSENT GIANT began as a regular vacuum tube, and was used in the construction of one of the Colossus machines at Bletchley Park during World War II. The Colossus machines were not general-purpose computers; instead they were designed specifically for cryptanalysis and were used almost exclusively for that role. By the end of the war, ten Colossus Mark 2 machines – each one having 2400 vacuum tubes – had been constructed, allowing the British to quickly decrypt German strategic message traffic.

In late 1944, Alan Turing suggested an improvement to the hard-wired algorithm that the Colossus machines implemented. One of the machines was partially rewired to test the new theory. While the idea seemed sound, the design could never be made to work reliably in the machine, regularly producing spurious results. Eventually, the test machine was reset to its original configuration as it was needed for more urgent cryptanalysis work.

While the configuration changes were being undone, the technicians noted that one of the vacuum tubes had a discoloured anode plate, and replaced it with another unit. The discarded tube was going to be destroyed, but the technician decided to test it to ensure it was faulty and found that it still functioned. He scratched an 'X' into the metal plate and stored it in a box with other spare tubes.



ABSENT GIANT would not be used for another two years. After the war, most of the Colossus machines were destroyed under Churchill's orders, although two machines were retained by the GCHQ. Turing, still perplexed as to why his new algorithm had not worked, requested that one of them be again rewired into the test configuration for further examination. It was during this reconfiguration that ABSENT GIANT was again installed into a Colossus machine.

Again, the problem was never resolved, much to Turing's frustration. The test machine was rewired several times under Turing's direct supervision, including several changes to the design, but the spurious results persisted. In the end, Turing gave up and moved onto other things. During this time, his initial ideas on computational demonology began to take shape.

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Turing, for some reason, took a personal liking to the odd tube and kept it on his desk while he worked. Even after he stopped working on the Colossus hardware, he would occasionally ask for it to be installed into a machine he was working on, including the Manchester Mark 1, one of the world's first stored program computers.

After Turing's death in 1954, ABSENT GIANT disappeared for many years. It turned up again in 1979, in a box of Turing's effects that had been classified along with the remains of the Colossus project. Software developers at GCHQ, where the box had been stored, took a liking to it, calling it 'Turing's Tube' and had it mounted on a wooden base.

A3.3 CURRENT LOCATION

Currently, ABSENT GIANT is stored in a glass display case in the Software Development section at GCHQ. It had been used as a trophy for software development excellence, and was awarded to a different programmer every year. However, the competition fell out of favour with the developmental staff, and the trophy now remains as an anachronistic reminder of GCHQ's past activities.

A3.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

When Alan Turing died in 1954, his classified notes on computational demonology were stored in the Archives. In several places throughout the notes are references to 'the green tube', including mentions of swapping it in and out of the circuits. Turing apparently believed that this tube had a positive effect on summoning rituals, somehow increasing the amount of thaumic energy that the circuit could contain.

Turing believed that the original Colossus rewiring experiments had somehow opened a minuscule portal to another universe inside that one particular vacuum tube. It had then been somehow turned into a thaumic energy capacitor, capable of storing the energy and then releasing it in bursts later on. Turing thought this is partly why the results of the rewiring were only occasionally spurious, rather than continually so. Exposure to the thaumic energy is also why the tube's anode had turned green.

Whether this is true or not has not been tested. James Porter, who worked with Turing in the last couple of years of his life, dismissed the idea as nonsense. Porter believed that the spurious results were caused by nothing more than a manufacturing defect of that specific vacuum tube, and it should be disposed of. Turing and Porter allegedly had a number of volatile arguments about the subject, although it would seem that Turing prevailed.



A4 ORNERY OCTAL

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A4.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

ORNERY OCTAL appears to be a battered eight-track tape cartridge. It is made from bone-coloured plastic, measuring 134mm (5.25 inches) in length, 100mm (4 inches) in width and 22mm (0.87 inches) in height. There are scratch marks down both sides of the cartridge from years of use, and several deep gouges on the non-tape end, as though it has been attacked with a blade of some description.

A slightly ripped label is affixed to one side, although some reports have mentioned that the glue on the back of the label is failing and it is now peeling off. The label is handwritten, bearing the words 'Country Classics'; the writing has faded and is now barely legible.

The cartridge has a compilation of obscure Country and Western songs on it. The sound quality is poor, with crackles and other tape noise quite audible. The cartridge is also prone to jamming, due to wear of the tape inside from overplaying.

A4.2 HISTORY

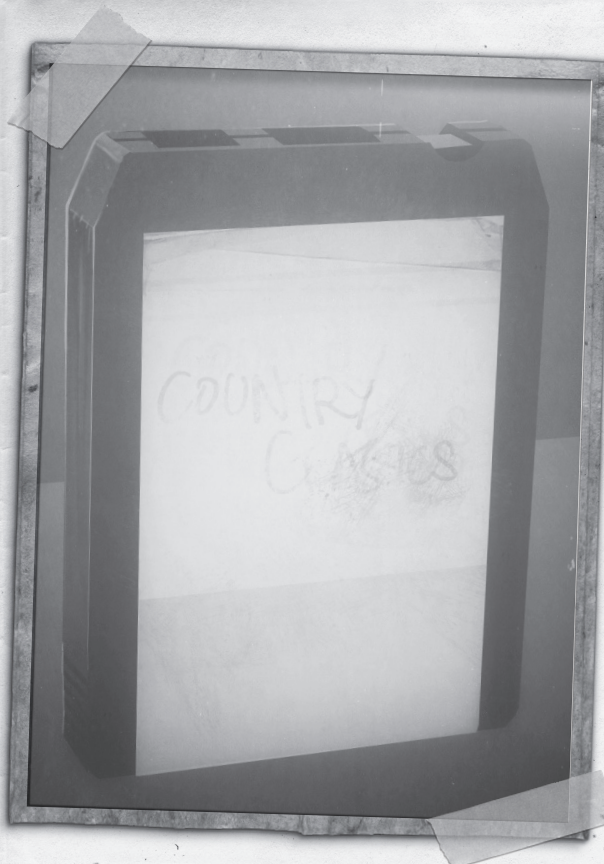
The precise origins of ORNERY OCTAL remain a mystery. Rumours of its existence first appeared in the alt.folklore USENET group in the late 1980s. Several stories about the cartridge circulated with differing details, including what music was included on the compilation. Some reports claim that the songs were all by the same artist, while others said that the songs were a home-made compilation of different musicians.

The stories did however share certain core elements, namely that the tape contained an odd mixture of obscure Country music and that, despite the depressing nature of the songs, those who possess the item often find themselves with increased luck for a period. The stories all agree that listening to the tape too much drove the listener insane, but they differed on how much 'too much' was.

In the intervening two decades, stories of ORNERY OCTAL's existence surface periodically in Internet forums, although they have dramatically reduced in frequency since 2001, with the obsolescence of eight-track technology. Some versions of the story have changed the media into either compact cassette or, in one case, a CD-RW filled with MP3 tracks.

Several attempts have been made to verify the truth of the story. However, most of these attempts lack authenticity themselves, and often sound like urban legends in their own right. In one well-documented case, an individual named Jason Luran, a college student in Los Angeles, decided in 1992 to locate and obtain ORNERY OCTAL. He kept detailed diaries and Internet logfiles, copies of which were obtained by Laundry contacts in the United States. Over the course of seven months, Luran tracked down the cartridge. Shortly afterwards, Luran won large sums of money at the casinos in both Reno and Las Vegas, which he attributed to ideas he received whilst listening to ORNERY OCTAL.

Within two months of listening to the tape daily, Luran began describing much darker dreams and even hearing voices during his waking hours. His journal entries became increasingly paranoid and he was convinced he was being followed by either the Mafia or, occasionally, the CIA. He



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gambled away all of his money and racked up large debts trying to keep out of sight.

Lauran stopped writing his journals at that point and vanished. Six months later, he resurfaced in a mental health facility in San Francisco. Records obtained from the facility indicated that Lauran was suffering from schizophrenic delusions, claiming that a demon had lodged in his brain and was constantly telling him to do things.

A4.3 CURRENT LOCATION

According to intelligence, ORNERY OCTAL is located in either California or Nevada. It never seems to leave those particular states. The most recent posts have put it in Sacramento, California, but this is currently unconfirmed. (It should also be mentioned that these forums are populated by a wide variety of conspiracy theorists, whose world views should be considered suspect. Careful verification of their claims should be made before embarking on a detailed search for the item).

A4.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Given the information from the well-documented Lauran case, it is surmised that ORNERY OCTAL is somehow playing host to an inter-dimensional being – potentially a Level Two

entity – who feeds on the emotions of the cartridge's owner. If this being is reacting to the specific emotional desires of the owner, this could explain the differences in the descriptions of the cartridge's playlist; the being is altering the contents of the tape to suit the needs of the listener.

The material on the tape is likely to be highly suggestive in nature, possibly to the point of being emotionally addictive. This is certainly backed up by the Lauran case. Extreme care should be taken when listening to the contents of the cartridge, as it would appear that even a single listening can put the listener under the control of the entity housed within. A **minimum** of a level two Protective Ward should be employed before listening to the cartridge.

Care should also be taken when acquiring the item from its current owner. Previous stories indicate the owner is likely to be highly addicted to the contents of the cartridge and will be typically unwilling to release the object to another person's custody. Furthermore, if it is stolen, the previous owner may go to extreme lengths – potentially up to, and including, assault or murder – in order to regain possession of the device. This suggests that the owner may also be under some form of Geas, which will need to be broken.



A5 HYPERACTIVE VISAGE

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A5.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

HYPERACTIVE VISAGE originated as a normal 473ml (16 oz) thermal travel mug. It stands 16cm (6.5 inches tall) and has an opening diameter of 8cm (3 inches). The top half of the mug is covered with black rubber as additional insulation and a black plastic handle is attached to this.

The lower half of the mug was originally buffed stainless steel, but since modification, it has been covered with camouflage duct tape for additional stability and strength.

A micro USB port is fitted beneath the handle, allowing HYPERACTIVE VISAGE to be connected to a powered USB 2.0 outlet (either fitted to a computer, a powered USB hub, or even a voltage converter). Access to the mug's micro USB port is through a hole cut in the duct tape.

A5.2 HISTORY

HYPERACTIVE VISAGE has only existed for six months. It was originally a simple travel mug, using the power from the USB port to keep the liquid contained in the mug warm.

Its modifier, Eamon Beading, was an engineering student at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. According to an internet forum post on the subject, he originally purchased the mug to keep his coffee warm while he working in the computer laboratory on his research project. However, he found that the mug, in its original form, did not keep the coffee at the high temperature he preferred.

Out of frustration, Beading pulled the mug apart and rewired it, aiming to boost the temperature that the mug would keep the contents at. He succeeded, but in the process he somehow managed to alter the circuitry in such a way that it 'supercharges the caffeine'.

Beading claims that not only does the mug now keep the coffee much hotter than it originally did, but it somehow changes its chemical composition to boost mental performance. Beading alleges that he has been able to focus more clearly on his work for extended periods, far beyond what he expected. This claim has been corroborated by several other students who have drunk from the mug and reported the same boost in mental capabilities. One went on to say "it is the clearest I have ever thought" after drinking from Beading's mug.

Beading is currently keeping HYPERACTIVE VISAGE's actual circuit design a close secret. It is believed that he is looking at perfecting the design and marketing it himself. He is very protective of the physical item, rarely letting it out of his sight. Beading has allegedly become increasingly paranoid about his invention, as several attempts have been made to steal it.

Beading was already on the Laundry's watch list; he accessed several websites and forums discussing alchemy and occult topics, and is taking advanced courses in mathematics.



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A5.3 CURRENT LOCATION

HYPERACTIVE VISAGE is currently in the possession of its inventor, Eamon Beading, in Glasgow. Beading is a postgraduate student at the School of Engineering, and is often found in the research laboratories there. However, there are unconfirmed reports that he is rarely at the university, especially after several attempts to steal HYPERACTIVE VISAGE were made.

It is also reported that he has moved out of the shared house that he had been living in for the past five years, and is staying at an undisclosed location in Glasgow.

A5.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

From the description of HYPERACTIVE VISAGE's effects posted by Beading and his friends, it would appear that the redesigned heating circuitry inside the mug acts as a Level One energetic gate to an alternative dimension. Exactly which dimension is targeted is presently unknown and will not be determined until the mug's design has been carefully analysed.

Speculation within the Mathematical Modelling section believes that the energy passing through the gate is either altering the chemical composition of the coffee directly, or

alternatively infusing the liquid with some unknown form of energy which has a direct effect on the human brain. It may also be possible this same energy is causing subtle temporary neural pathways to form in the drinker's brain, explaining the apparent increased cognitive ability. Whether these new neural paths will solidify and become permanent in time is currently unknown, or whether continued exposure to this energy is harmful to the human mind. It is possible that Beading's apparent increased levels of paranoia could be attributed to repeated exposure to this energy.

The Mathematical Modelling section has requested that HYPERACTIVE VISAGE be obtained for analysis, to determine if:

- The effects reported by Beading and others are accurate.
- The design is safe.
- The design can be reproduced.
- If energy from another dimension is involved, that said energy is not acting as a beacon for hostile entities.



A 6 EMERALD TOMAHAWK

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A6.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

EMERALD TOMAHAWK is a handmade electric guitar. The instrument's body is made from lacquered and polished timber, stained a rich green colour. The neck is made from a single piece of maple timber. The frets are believed to be made from a brass alloy, although an exact chemical analysis has not been performed. A persistent rumour claims that the frets were made from melted-down bullet casings that were part of a sacrificial execution ritual.

The body of EMERALD TOMAHAWK features three volume control dials and a 'whammy bar', and has a cable socket installed on the base of the body. It is inlaid with what appears to be polished plastic, although some analysts have speculated that the inlays may actually be made from bone or ivory.

The strings have also caused a great deal of speculation and argument among analysts. The majority believe they are normal steel strings, perhaps coated with some form of polymer or metallic compound to alter their sound-making potential. Other analysts feel that given the unique sound qualities of the instrument, the strings must be a far more exotic material specially designed and created for this particular guitar. However, until a proper chemical analysis is performed, the string's chemical composition remains a mystery.

Nothing is known about the internal circuitry of EMERALD TOMAHAWK. The most common belief is that the body conceals a complicated array of pickups and amplification circuitry, which enhances the sound performance of the instrument. However, some analysts believe that the body contains more esoteric circuitry, perhaps even having some occult significance.

A6.2 HISTORY

EMERALD TOMAHAWK first came to public attention in 2002, after a trance music concert in Oslo, Norway. It was played by Aaron Albrect, who – under the stage name of 'Janus' – headlined the Alternate Reality music festival.

Albrect was a 27 year-old expert classical guitarist at the time of the Oslo concert. During the late 1990s, he became obsessed by music's ability to alter human consciousness. He



switched from classical guitar to digital trance music and made a small name for himself at dance parties in Scandinavia. He also may have studied the works of Erich Zann. However, Albrect was not happy simply using turntables and computer equipment to create his music. He was convinced he could produce something 'purer'.

While he occasionally performed at the turn of the millennium, he remained out of the public spotlight most of the time. It is believed that this was when he was busy perfecting EMERALD TOMAHAWK. Police records show that during this time he was arrested three times for possession of psychotropic drugs, such as LSD.

Albrect's performance at Alternative Reality caused a storm in dance party circles. EMERALD TOMAHAWK somehow produced a range of sound effects never before achieved by a guitar. Albrect played the instrument to maximum effect and everyone who attended the gig reported achieving mental states unlike anything they had previously experienced.

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Albrect continued to use EMERALD TOMAHAWK at concerts over a nine-month period. After word got out about the first few concerts, tickets became exceptionally hard to get. Psychotropic drugs were easily available at these concerts and the vast majority of the audience was allegedly under the influence of one or more drugs. Each concert was reported to be more intense than the last, and Albrect's reputation grew.

The performances were not without their problems though. The combination of mind-bending drugs and intense trance music was often too much for some of the audience; dozens of concert goers ended up in psychiatric care as a result of their experiences, and at least seven of them committed suicide, after they were unable to deal with the 'bad trip'.

Albrect himself began to believe that he had some sort of power over the audience and his ego grew accordingly. Some reports mentioned that he had started to believe that he was some sort of god and that he could choose whether the people in his audience lived or died. Later interrogation of Albrect's manager revealed that Albrect had begun having hallucinations by this time.

The string of concerts ended abruptly after Albrect collapsed and died mid-concert in 2002. He had been building his music towards a triumphant crescendo at the time when he threw his head back and his arms wide, before collapsing to the ground. Several concertgoers reported seeing a dark shadow behind him, appearing to grasp Albrect's head, but these were dismissed as drug induced hallucinations.

An autopsy later discovered that Albrect had suffered from massive cerebral trauma, as though something had driven spikes through his brain. He eventually died from blood loss, after heavily intracranial bleeding.

A6.3 CURRENT LOCATION

EMERALD TOMAHAWK disappeared after Albrect's final concert. Albrect's manager said during interrogation that he believed it had been carried off stage following the musician's collapse, but no trace of it was found.

Current understanding is that the guitar was stolen by either a member of the audience, or one of the backstage crew. Interviews with the security personnel – including several under Geas – revealed that none of them saw anyone removing the instrument from the concert premises that night, and despite a thorough search of the area made in the hours following Albrect's collapse, no trace of it was found.

In the past six months, videos have begun appearing on the internet, showing someone playing a guitar that looks and sounds like EMERALD TOMAHAWK. However, because of the camera position, their face is not visible in frame. Analysis of the videos has concluded that they were shot somewhere in the United Kingdom (based on the furniture and other items visible in the shot) and a more specific location is unavailable at this time.

A6.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

EMERALD TOMAHAWK should be considered extremely dangerous in the wrong hands.

The eyewitness reports of Albrect's death and the subsequent autopsy report indicate that Albrect was killed by an exnome or possibly a tulpa (psychic projection). Because no footage of that final concert is available, it is not known whether the extradimensional entity was sent back to his native dimension after Albrect was killed, or whether it somehow jumped to another person present at the time. Given the way the instrument disappeared after the concert, it seems prudent to assume that the entity is still at large and needs to be dealt with.



A7 COBALT CAVALCADE

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A7.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

COBALT CAVALCADE appears to be a gigantic seed pod. It is about 600mm (24 inches) in length, and 150mm (6 inches) in width at its widest point. It is roughly crescent shaped, and thinner at the edges than it is in the centre.

The material used in its construction is organic, looking and feeling to be some sort of rough leathery material, similar to shark skin. It is also incredibly difficult to cut, even with the sharpest implements. Knives or scalpels will only score it, and even those marks slowly heal over time if left alone. It is possible to penetrate the outer skin using high-power cutting lasers, but this is highly dangerous (see below).

The colour of the item depends on whether it is stored out of water or not. While it is kept immersed in salt water, it takes on a blue-green appearance, with a slight shimmer to it. If it is removed from the water and allowed to dry it, the colour changes to a muddy brown. Once the item is immersed in salt water again, it will take between two and six hours to return to its original colour.



A7.2 HISTORY

COBALT CAVALCADE is not a unique item; several have been found since the first one washed up on a beach in Patagonia in 2006. It was found by cetacean researchers, who believed it came from the whales they were studying in the area, although it bore little resemblance to anything they had ever seen before. The scientists subjected the specimen to a wide variety of tests, but because of the incredible toughness of the item's outer skin, they were unable to determine what the item was made from, nor what it contained.

They sent the sample to a laboratory at the University of California, San Diego, for further analysis. Minute samples of the material were able to be scraped off and analysed, showing the material was definitely biological and vaguely related to sharks. Microscopic examination showed that the substance was actually self-healing; any damage done to the surface was quickly repaired with new cells growing to patch up the 'wounds'.

X-ray and ultrasound imagery determined that the pod contained a liquid-filled cavity. Given the sound returns from the ultrasound, the liquid had a much higher viscosity than either fresh or salt water, but it had a different acoustic signature than oil.

The problem occurred when the scientists used a cutting laser to try to slice open the pod. When the laser penetrated the cavity, a dark blue liquid spilled out and almost instantly evaporated to an invisible gas. The scientists died within seconds of inhaling this gas. Post-mortem examination showed they had suffered the effects of a highly potent neurotoxin.

The lab was sealed off and a clean-up crew arrived to collect samples and sanitise the lab. Eyewitnesses disagree on which agency the crew belonged to. Some believed that the crew belonged to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), while others maintain the crew belonged to the US Army. The sample itself disappeared at that point, no doubt taken to some highly classified biological weapons research laboratory.

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A7.3 CURRENT LOCATION

Since the discovery of the original seed pod, at least three others have either washed up on beaches in the South Pacific, or have been spotted floating in the ocean by sailors.

Of those three, one appeared to have already been emptied and there was no residue of the neurotoxin found within the pod. It's also not known how the pod came to be split, given its incredible toughness and self-healing capabilities.

The second sample washed up on a beach on Pitcairn Island. It was still sealed and was collected by a local, who planned to send it to a university in New Zealand. Arrangements were made for its pick-up, but before shipment could be made, the sample was stolen by an unknown party. No arrests were made.

The third sample was spotted in the south-eastern Pacific by a sailor on a passing bulk carrier. It was noted in the ship's log, but no attempt to recover it was made. Nothing is known of this sample's present location.

A7.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Although there is a chance that COBALT CAVALCADE examples may be naturally occurring items from deep portions of the Pacific Ocean, current analysis of the reports available from the San Diego laboratories indicate that these items were deliberately created. Given the location of the known samples, it is thought these items are of BLUE HADES origin.

This has not been confirmed by BLUE HADES' representatives. In fact, they refuse to answer questions about the subject. Leaked information from the Black

Chamber in the USA indicates that the samples were actually created by a renegade BLUE HADES faction, intent on breaking the Benthic Treaty and wiping humanity from the surface of the Earth. This theory gains some credence given the extreme lethality of the neurotoxin contained within COBALT CAVALCADE.

The disappearance of the known specimens is of particular concern, given the nature of the contents. It is believed that all of them have been collected by Black Chamber operatives for analysis; the Pitcairn Island specimen was believed to have been stolen by a bribed local and held until the Black Chamber could collect it. If the Black Chamber do indeed hold the samples and have analysed the neurotoxin, it's likely they are attempting to weaponise it.

To date, the Laundry has not been able to acquire a COBALT CAVALCADE specimen. Q Division has requested a sample at the earliest convenience. It is also hoped that analysis of the contents might allow creation of either a neutralising agent or, failing that, learning about the effectiveness of the toxin, including how large an area it can conceivably affect once the specimen is ruptured. (Somehow puncturing a COBALT CAVALCADE specimen in the London Underground would have catastrophic effects, and contingency plans need to be created to deal with the – admittedly remote – possibility).

Given the way COBALT CAVALCADE washes up on random beaches, there is the very great risk that it could fall into the hands of a terrorist organisation or hostile foreign military power. Given this, all information regarding the appearance of another COBALT CAVALCADE specimen should be suppressed immediately and the sample secured by Laundry personnel as soon as practically possible.



A 8 L A M B S K I N E C L I P S E

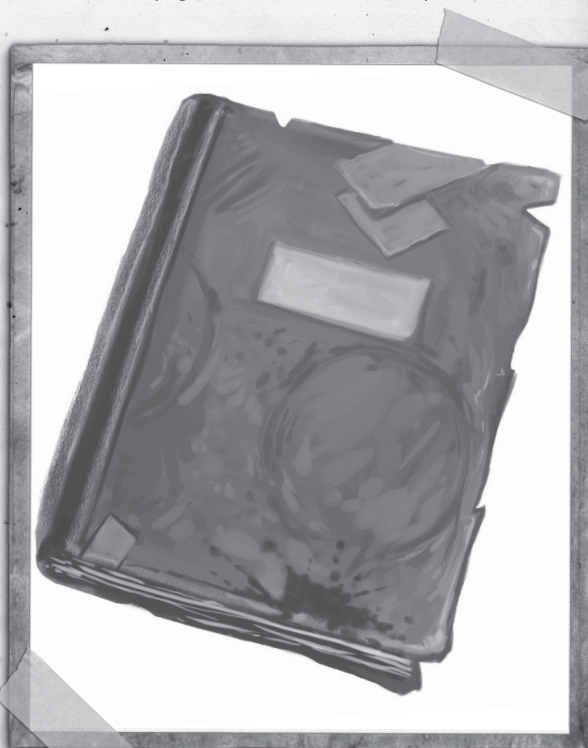
FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A8.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE is a battered, hard-covered student notebook, dating back to the 1950s. The original cover was a deep burgundy colour, but the intervening years, of mistreatment have caused considerable fading. The cover of the book also bears multiple stains (including several from coffee cups and one that could potentially be a human bloodstain) as well as several cuts. The corners of the cover are all split and most have been repaired with different forms of adhesive tape at least once. There is no writing visible on the outside of the cover.

Inside, there are 128 pages filled with handwritten notes. The notes are a complex series of mathematical formulae and some annotations (including several in a different handwriting to the main author). As the book progresses, the handwriting becomes more ragged and by the end of the book it is almost unintelligible.

Towards the end, several sequential pages have been torn from the book, affecting the flow of the equations. Only small stubs of these pages remain at the book's spine.



A8.2 HISTORY

LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE originated at Oxford University during the 1950s. It originally belonged to a postgraduate science student named Sullivan Myss, who was reading physics at University College. Myss became enthralled by quantum physics and studying it unlocked something within Myss' mind.

He spent weeks straight contemplating alternate states of reality and was convinced that manipulation of quantum states could allow him to access extradimensional spaces. While Turing had proven that manipulation of Dho Na curves could do the same thing, Myss' theories took an entirely different approach.

Myss' work did come with consequences though. He started missing his university classes and even began to neglect taking care of himself. His hair and beard grew longer, and he began to rapidly lose weight because he had forgotten to eat. While he was still coming up with mathematical solutions in his notebook, his theories became harder and harder for anyone else to follow. Myss became increasingly paranoid that he was being followed.

In 1953, Myss would disappear for days at a time. No one was sure where he went, although most of his friends assumed that he was wandering aimlessly through the city. In fact, he was working on opening dimensional gates to alternate realities and existing simultaneously in all of them at once.

All of this came to a horrific end in the October 1953, when Myss was found dead. Officially, Myss died from injuries sustained in a hit-and-run car accident. However, this was a cover-up; Myss was found with his head and shoulders embedded in a concrete wall. At the time, no one could explain how this happened, but it was later thought that Myss had made a mistake with his multi-dimensional calculations and his realities collapsed back into a single one when he was overlapped with the wall.

After Myss' death, Laundry agents (and agents from several other foreign powers) became interested in his theories. A covert race began to find LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE, a race

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

that would end up causing the death of three British and one Russian agent, and almost caused a major international diplomatic incident. However, all these operations failed as Myss had hidden his notebook.

In the subsequent decades, LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE would occasionally surface at university campuses in various different countries. It has been sighted at the University of Oxford, Stanford University and The University of Sydney. It normally appears in the possession of a gifted physics student specialising in quantum mechanics. However, there seems to be no pattern to its appearances. If the student attempts to use the equations, they usually end up going insane (two of them have committed suicide as a result). If the student ignores the book, it somehow disappears again within a few days.

A8.3 CURRENT LOCATION

LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE has not been sighted since 1999, when it was last reported in Australia. After the death of the student who had reportedly been seen with it, a thorough search for the book was conducted. It was in the possession of an Australian ASIO agent for 48 hours, but it mysteriously disappeared from inside a locked safe in a secure office. No trace of any physical intervention was found.

A8.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Capturing LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE is an extremely difficult prospect. Predictive Branch has conducted an extensive search for its location, and has come up completely at a loss. As far as they can tell, it does not exist in this dimension.

Given the unique formulae that Myss had apparently created, this is not entirely unexpected. Myss was believed to have found a way to simultaneously coexist in several dimensions, something that is not normally possible, especially based on Turing's work (Turing's work makes it possible to create gates between the dimensions, but not to co-exist in them).

Mathematical Modelling suggest that the book could potentially reside in an alternative dimension. It may also be plausible that Myss' consciousness is somehow trapped in one of those dimensions and is trying to get home (or alternatively, to draw other suitably trained individuals across into the other dimension for an unknown person.) A third alternative is that it is not Myss who is control of the book, but a native of whatever dimension LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE currently resides in.

LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE poses a potential risk for Laundry security if the equations do allow a user to simultaneously inhabit several dimensions. It has the potential to bypass current ward technology, thereby rendering current magical protections obsolete. Acquiring the knowledge this book contains could give the Laundry a potent strategic edge.



A9 PRINCIPAL OXIDE

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A9.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

PRINCIPAL OXIDE is a hollow, life-sized bronze casting of a female human head, with extremely detailed features. The case has been sealed shut, preventing examination of the internal mechanism. The eyelids and mouth are normally closed, but they have been constructed to allow them to open.

In the back of the head is a small hole, only a few millimetres across, designed to take a complexly shaped key. There are a series of mechanical tumblers partially visible inside; these are believed to wind up a clockwork mechanism inside the head, as opposed to be a mechanism for opening the bust to allow access to the inside.

A9.2 HISTORY

Records of PRINCIPAL OXIDE originated in Cambridge during the late 19th Century. It had been purchased by Arthur Castledon, a wealthy businessman with an interest in spiritualist matters. According to his memoirs, he had been assured by the seller that it had been constructed in Italy in the 16th Century by Mattia Quirino, a renowned sculptor and occultist.

Castledon used PRINCIPAL OXIDE as the centrepiece of the séances that he used to hold at his residence. When the head was wound using the special key, the eyes would open and it would answer yes or no questions posed to it. Castledon and his peers believed that the head was able to predict the future, and placed great stock in the responses it gave.

Castledon's claims about the origin of the bust were not without detractors. Several prominent occultists found no record of Mattia Quirino, and believed that such a man never existed. (There had been an Italian painter named Quirino in the 16th Century, but he specialised in landscape oil paintings; there is no record of him involved in any sculpture, nor having any interest in the occult at all).

Regardless of the origins of PRINCIPAL OXIDE, it was able to successfully predict the future, if the questions were worded in such a way that a yes/no answer could be given. Castledon and his associates enjoyed a string of successful business ventures, increasing their own fortunes considerably.

Castledon died from cancer in 1911, and PRINCIPAL OXIDE was left to his associates in his will. However, the group quickly tore itself apart trying to gain control of the bust. Several of the men were murdered, and one of them, Alexander Cofferson, disappeared under mysterious circumstances.



FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

PRINCIPAL OXIDE eventually ended up in the private collection of William Bowie. Bowie had not been one of Castledon's immediate associates, but he was tangentially linked with him. The bust came into his possession following the brutal murder of Silas Nelson, who had been one of Castledon's associates. Bowie realising the importance of the item, spirited PRINCIPAL OXIDE away to an undisclosed location and disappeared himself for many years.

The bust would not reappear until after World War II. Bowie had made a considerable profit during the war – some say with the help of PRINCIPAL OXIDE – but surprised many by putting the object up for auction. It sold for £27,000 to an undisclosed Welsh collector. Bowie, in his memoirs, said that he was finally glad to be rid of the thing, as it had haunted his life and made him miserable, despite the external success that it had brought him.

PRINCIPAL OXIDE has circulated among collectors of rare occult artefacts since then. It usually only stays with one person for no more than 10 years at a stretch, before they either pass away, or they decide to sell it.

A9.3 CURRENT LOCATION

PRINCIPAL OXIDE is presently sitting in a bank vault in London. It is due to be put up for auction at Sotheby's Auction House. The current owner is not listed, although the provenance has been confirmed as genuine.

The auction listing does mention that the key to this clockwork curiosity is currently missing, which will make it less attractive to many buyers. This could make acquiring PRINCIPAL OXIDE for the Laundry much cheaper. However, it also means that the internal mechanism cannot currently be confirmed as operational; this increases the risk of wasting money on faulty goods.

A9.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Without examining PRINCIPAL OXIDE physically, it is impossible to determine if it was created in the 16th Century, or was manufactured in the 19th Century. It's possible that a close examination may show up some manufacturer's mark that could be compared with known marks to determine its real origin.

There is a reasonable chance that the bust is no more than an elaborate hoax. The mechanism inside is likely nothing more than a primitive random number generator that creates an answer regardless of the question and any accuracy in its answers comes from a self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of the listener.

However, PRINCIPAL OXIDE could potentially possess the ability to predict the future in a limited way. Given the clockwork mechanism inside the head, it's possible that it opens a weak Informational Gate when wound up and asked a question. Over time, the Gate's construction could cause weakening between the walls of this reality and whatever reality the Gate is connected to – thus allowing potentially harmful entities to come through to, or at least influence, Earth. Most of the bust's owners typically sell the bust after a few years and want nothing further to do with it, lending some credence to this theory. A careful analysis of the mechanism using X-ray, T-ray, ultrasound and three-dimensional computer modelling would be required to determine if this is the case.

Enquiries made to Sotheby's Auction House regarding the bust have indicated that there is a fair amount of interest in the object, particularly from Germany and parts of Eastern Europe. GLADIO updates have recently reported an increase in cult activity across Eastern Europe; whether this is coincidental remains to be seen. However, if the bust does open an Informational Gate, having it fall into the hands of cultists could have tragic consequences.





GameMaster's Notes

Any of these artefacts might be a real treasure, a clever forgery or just an agglomeration of rumours around some perfectly innocent object. Sometimes, it won't matter either way! Use these artefacts to drag the PCs into a heist, a four-way chases, into intrigue and running spell battles on the streets of London, Vienna, Moscow or Celeano.

DIGITAL JADE

DIGITAL JADE's actual authenticity is left for the GM to decide. If it actually is a talon from a monster of your choice, then possessing the artefact provides a +20% bonus to either summon or banish the entity.

If the PCs are tasked with recovering the artefact, run a full investigation and intrigue story, trying to track down information that leads to the actual artefact. This investigation will be opposed by agents from one or more foreign powers, who are also intent on recovering DIGITAL JADE for themselves. This could ultimately lead to an Indiana Jones-style archaeological expedition in the jungles of New Guinea, with the potential for (multiple) double-crosses as everyone tries their damndest to take control of the artefact.

Alternatively, the Laundry might decide to make a fake version of DIGITAL JADE and use it as a lure. Creating a convincing forgery would require a series of *Difficult* Art skill checks (using Cthulhu Mythos as a complementary skill), perhaps with a -20% penalty applied because of the poor quality of the photograph (ignore this penalty if the real artefact has already been recovered by the Laundry and is available as a reference item). If the PCs lack the skills to create the forgery themselves, they might be tasked with tracking down a suitable forger and persuading him or her to do the work.

BRASS SUBTRACTION

BRASS SUBTRACTION is still operational and working in Edinburgh. Although the Menabrean Society did actually dissolve in the early 1940s, the engine is currently run by a cult descended from the society. They are heavily involved with trying to predict the future and believe that the Difference Engine is a key part of that.

The engine itself is hidden in an old basement in a run down part of the city. The original entrances to the basement have been sealed and a secret network of tunnels allows cultists access to the engine room. They use an old steam engine to provide the mechanical energy needed to drive the machine, as it does not run on electricity.

Learning to program BRASS SUBTRACTION requires a series of *Difficult* Computer Use (Programming) tests to learn the arcane machine language of the machine. Science (Mathematics) can be used as a complementary skill.

As a basic engine, BRASS SUBTRACTION can be used to cast spells, although it is not particularly powerful and is quite slow. It has a POW rating of 11, and has a Time Modifier of 10. Of course, if Arcana Analysis are right and the engine's become magically radioactive or possessed over the course of a whole century of demon-crunching, all bets are off.

ABSENT GIANT

Maybe ABSENT GIANT does indeed act as Alan Turing believed. It acts as a capacitor for thaumic energy and can release that energy as part of a spell. Treat a sorcerous circuit containing the vacuum tube as having a POW one greater than it would otherwise have. However, there is a 60% chance that the tube will cause the spurious results that Turing had tried so hard to combat. Make a roll before the spell is cast. If the roll succeeds, then the casting ritual itself suffers a -10% penalty.

Alternatively, the item is a superstition among computational demonologists, and has no intrinsic value as anything other than a curio.

Another possibility is that *something* got stuck in the vacuum tube back in the day. HP Lovecraft wrote about the Terrible Old Man who caught spirits in bottles; why not a vacuum tube?

ABSENT GIANT is stored in the GCHQ building as part of an old trophy. It is still intact and could be put to its original use if it could be recovered by the Laundry. However, GCHQ personnel are unlikely to hand over control of the item; Laundry agents who wish to acquire it will need to convince someone working at GCHQ to

recover it for them (perhaps posing a security risk or potentially jeopardising their own careers), or the Agents must find a way to infiltrate the GCHQ building and steal the trophy themselves.

ORNERY OCTAL

ORNERY OCTAL does host a Level Two entity. It works by getting someone to steal the cartridge and then listen to it when they are alone; it will not work if there is more than one person listening to it.

The more times a character listens to the tape, the stronger the demon's power over them becomes. The character will be under a level three Geas to keep the tape in their possession and to listen to it regularly.

A close analysis of the recording reveals that it was made in a car with the radio playing loudly. Parts of a conversation can be heard in the gaps between songs, suggesting that someone was bugging the car. The two people in the car were using the loud music to counter any attempted surveillance. Phrases like 'the Eye', 'Philadelphia again' and 'invoke the Prolonged-of-Life' imply the conversation was connected to the Black Chamber, but electronic enhancement or analysis of the sound is useless: the only way to hear the full conversation is to listen to the tape over and over and over...

HYPERACTIVE VISAGE

Drinking a hot beverage from HYPERACTIVE VISAGE provides a +5% bonus to a character's Idea rolls for up to one hour after drinking. At the GM's discretion, it may also provide a similar bonus to intellectual skills such as Knowledge and Science.

In order to get the bonus, the beverage contained within the mug must have been hot to begin with (e.g. coffee, tea, hot chocolate or even soup). The mug must then be plugged into a powered USB port for at least ten minutes. This allows the modified circuit inside the mug to infuse the beverage with power.

Whether or not drinking from HYPERACTIVE VISAGE has any negative effects is also left to the GM's discretion. A suggested side effect may be that the character must make a SAN check or lose 1d2 SAN points as the infused liquid makes problematic neural connections in the character's brain. That, or the coffee is actually the intrusion of a hyperdimensional horror into our reality, and anyone who's drunk the coffee now has an indigestible glob-monster in their stomach, waiting for the moment to burst out.

EMERALD TOMAHAWK

The internal circuitry of EMERALD TOMAHAWK is carefully designed to open an Informational Gate when played. In mechanical terms, the guitar has a pre-written magical spell hard-wired into its internal circuitry. Playing the guitar triggers the spell's casting, which then draws sound energy through from an alternative dimension.

The extra energy extracted from the connected dimension provides the person playing the instrument with extra resonant frequencies which deepens the effect of the music. These extra frequencies coincide with the higher brain activity frequencies, and quickly put listeners into a deep trance state, particularly if they have consumed psychotropic drugs. The bigger the audience, the bigger the POW bonus to the Gate opening, as per the Parallel Processing rules (see page 134 of *The Laundry Core Rulebook*). In other words, playing for a crowd of 625 people gives the guitar a whopping +4 POW, letting it open physical gates.

Adjusting the different volume controls on the front of the guitar gives a limited amount of control over which alternative dimension the instrument is linked to. Albrect did not fully understand what he was doing, so it does not necessarily even lead to the same dimensions reliably.

The problem with Albrect's gate design is that it is not warded. Albrect was killed when a demon from the dimension he was connected to came through and ate his brain. (Whether or not the demon still resides in this dimension is left to the GM's discretion, and whether they want the mission to be about just recovering the guitar, or whether it also entails banishing a demon that is now on the loose on Earth.)

EMERALD TOMAHAWK's present location also presents the GM with several options. It may be in the hands of one of Albrect's hardcore fans, who will do anything to keep it in their possession. Alternatively, it may be in the hands of a foreign occult service, who plan on using it for possibly nefarious purposes.

COBALD CAVALCADE

The liquid inside a COBALD CAVALCADE pod is designed to poison a fresh water supply. If one of these pods was opened in a city reservoir, the death toll would be enormous. When contaminated liquid is consumed, the poison's POT is 16, and the effects start anywhere between 30 minutes and 24 hours. If the liquid inside the pod is exposed directly to air, it immediately vaporises into a gas. This 'gaseous poison's POT is 25, with the damage taking effect within 2 minutes.

TARGETS OF ACQUISITION

COBALT CAVALCADE presents the GM with some alternative scenarios:

The first is trying to stop the renegade BLUE HADES faction, who are determined to wipe out humanity. To this end, more and more of the COBALT CAVALCADE pods begin appearing where they can be triggered to open and cause havoc. It would be up to the Laundry (and potentially other foreign signatories to the Benthic Treaty, including the main BLUE HADES population) to stop the renegades' plans.

If the GM does not want to have the PCs directly interact with BLUE HADES, COBALT CAVALCADE can still be used to create an inter-agency intrigue story, as all the agencies rush to acquire a pod that has just washed up somewhere. Alternatively, by having one of the pods fall into the hands of a terrorist organisation, a 'normal' counter-terrorism plot can be constructed.

LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE

There are two main ways in which LAMBSKIN ECLIPSE could come to the attention of the PCs:

The first (and more interesting) one works if a PC has a reasonably high skill rating in Science (Physics). If this is the case, the book spontaneously appears in their possession one night. They may find it in one of their bags, under a pile of dirty washing or any other strange location that you can think of.

Alternatively, the book may appear in the possession of an NPC physics student, who goes insane as a result of trying to understand the equations and their ramifications. This will bring the student to the Laundry's attention.

Once the PCs actually acquire the book, reading it requires a SAN check (0/1d3 loss). The equations it contains are incredibly complicated and because of the scrawled handwriting, particularly towards the back of the book, it becomes harder and harder to understand. Understanding the contents of the book requires a series of six Difficult Science (Physics) or Science (Thaumaturgy) rolls, with a minimum of a week between each roll. Each roll also requires an additional SAN check, as the equations open the reader's mind to alternative ways of thinking about dimensions.

The missing five pages towards the end of the book contain a crucial part of the theory, and without it, it will not be possible to use Myss' theory to the fullest.

The reader will be able to perceive multiple dimensions simultaneously (which, in itself, has the potential to cause SAN loss), but they will not be able to physically move into a new dimension.

If the reader wishes to recreate the missing information, it will take ten successful Difficult Science (Thaumaturgy) rolls, using Science (Mathematics) as a complementary skill. Each roll requires two weeks of solid research and experimentation, and requires a SAN check for each step (0/1d6 loss on failure).

If the reader is able to successfully understand the whole book and recreate the missing information without going insane, they are able to co-exist between dimensions simultaneously. With a successful Science (Thaumaturgy) roll, they can physically shift between dimensions.

Needless to say, if they make it this far, and word gets out, there will be a lot of interested parties trying to get the information for themselves. That, or the PC gets absorbed by Yog-Sothoth.

PRINCIPAL OXIDE

One option for letting the PCs acquire PRINCIPAL OXIDE is getting them involved in the wheelings and dealings of the art world. This would be in the lead up to the auction, with the aim of winning the auction for the Laundry. This route involves the use of skills such as Bargain, Bureaucracy, Fast Talk, Knowledge (Art History) and Persuade.

If the group is more action oriented, then they could try to break into the vault where the bust is being stored. Alternatively, they could create an elaborate con to get people with access to acquire the bust for them. They could also be tasked with investigating the potential buyers from Germany and whether or not they have cult connections.

Whether or not PRINCIPAL OXIDE actually can open an Informational Gate to an alternative dimension is left for the GM to decide based on the needs of the individual game. If it can, then it is only a level one Gate, because of the extremely limited computational power of the clockworks inside the bust. However, it is much more likely that the bust is merely a fake, using a primitive pseudo-random number generator to come up with the answers to the questions. In this case, have fun by playing PRINCIPAL OXIDE as a really ornate Magic 8 Ball, and watch the players tie themselves up in knots as they try to fit your random responses into some coherent pattern.