



# THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU • ISSUE SIXTEEN/SEVENTEEN • SIXTEEN DOLLARS

# T H E   U N S P E A K A B L E   O A T H

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### In Memoriam: L. Sprague de Camp

L. Sprague de Camp (1907-2000) died at the age of 93 on November 6, 2000. First published in 1939, de Camp was a prolific writer in a wide variety of genres and forms, though he is best known in the fields of fantasy and science-fiction for books such as *Lest Darkness Fall* and the *Enchanter* tales, as well as his sequels to Robert E. Howard's *Conan* stories. In 1975 he published *Lovecraft: A Biography*, the first full-length biographical work on HPL. The book generated controversy among Lovecraft scholars for the somewhat dim view de Camp took of HPL's life and work, but it was nonetheless a milestone in the field and established the framework of the academic conversation that led to S.T. Joshi's *HPL: A Life*, among many other works. His wife Catherine Crook de Camp, also a writer, passed away a few months earlier.

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### In Memoriam: Oliver Reed

Oliver Reed (1938-1999) died at the age of 61 on May 2, 1999 during the production of his last film, *Gladiator* (2000). This outspoken and controversial actor had a career spanning four decades and some of his most important early work was in the horror genre. Among these were roles in such Hammer Studios classics as *The Two Faces of Dr. Jekyll* (1960), *The Curse of the Werewolf* (1961), and *Paranoid* (1963). He went on to appear in such horror/suspense films as *The Shuttered Room* (1967; also known as *Blood Island*), Ken Russell's *The Devils* (1971), Dan Curtis' *Burnt Offerings* (1976), David Cronenberg's *The Brood* (1979), *Venom* (1982), *Spasms* (1983), *The House of Usher* (1988), and *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1990). He is, of course, better known for his work in the superb Richard Lester adventure films *The Three Musketeers* (1973) and *The Four Musketeers* (1974).



# Scream and Scream Again

## Letters to The Unspeakable Oath

**W**hen I first began to read Steve Hatherley's opinion on the sanity rules I couldn't help but agree with him. Unfortunately, by the end of the article I couldn't help but shake my head in disagreement. The sanity rules in CoC are a fundamental aspect of the game. While yes, they are awkward, a good Keeper can circumnavigate and make it work.

First let me discuss why I feel the sanity rolls need to be kept in CoC. Sanity was the one aspect of the game which set it apart from all other role-playing games. While most games allowed the players to confront numerous horrors (from being responsible for slaughtering hundreds of sentient creatures to dealing with diabolical fiends) and bear no ill effects, CoC forced the players into realizing that there are mental consequences to these acts.

Mr. Hatherley mentions that "permanent insanity is no better than character death." While that's true, I've always looked at sanity points as the equivalent of hit points in AD&D. I've known more investigators to go insane then simply die. Then there's the fact that, like AD&D's hit points, an investigator's sanity can increase with experience. So it's something more than a simple mechanic to force players into acting foolish; it's an integral part of measuring how well-off your investigator is.

Several times Mr. Hatherley mentions that a roll is not needed, that the players know when to act afraid. He talks about how people are now wiser and don't need to have the roleplaying forced onto them. Well, I wish that was true. I've known more bad roleplayers in my life than good ones. Strip the concrete rules away and you soon have every power-gamer's dream come true. Let's suppose we totally ignored the sanity check rolls. A player then meets up with a Mythos

entity and acts frightened. Well, he thinks he's acting frightened—and yet I as the Keeper don't feel it's enough. Then what? A debate ensues over the fact he's not roleplaying the proper way. He then points out that there's no place where it says how he must act. At least now I can point out how he should act.

There is a solution, though, one which I have used and find quite effective. First, get rid of all sanity checks which have losses less than a potential of 6 points. Personally, I can't stand an adventure which peppers the "lose 0/1 SAN" throughout. Hey, the characters can be shocked or surprised without going insane! The only thing I keep in with a low SAN loss would be the taking of another life. For every killing the investigator loses 1 sanity point. No SAN roll. This will not drive an investigator insane overnight, obviously, and personally I feel that everyone loses a part of themselves when they take another's life.

Next, the Keeper has control over the SAN checks. In fact, the players don't even know their sanity beyond the initial investigator creation. At the proper time—which would have to be a really bizarre horror or something Mythos-related—the Keeper performs the SAN check for the players. Points are subtracted and if there are consequences a note is passed to the player. The Keeper should not consult any of the tables but simply come up with something appropriate to the situation.

What this does is allow the Keeper to build up the horror without bringing it to a screeching halt because of die rolls. While the Keeper is describing the scene he can be making the proper rolls. If he wants to save even more time, then before the game he can roll up the various points for sanity losses and list them on a table. Simply consult the table for the sanity loss if someone fails (*i.e.*, under the D6 column the Keeper had rolled up 5, 3, 2, 4, 5, 6, 6, 1 . . . the first person to fail a D6 roll would lose 5 points, the next person to fail 3 points, *etc.*).

Another nice aspect of this system is that the players never know how close they are to overstepping the boundaries of their minds. Let's face it: there are plenty of times when the investigators are about to confront some nameless horror that the ones with the highest SAN are conveniently placed in front. With this system, no one knows who's going to be the next one to go. Can they really trust Bob to be back-up, or is he one step away from wallowing in a pool of his own urine?

The sanity check does not need to be removed. It is not a mechanic from a simpler time. It is a tool which, when used properly, can be quite effective. Where would CoC be without it? Just another roleplaying game where the investigators confront bizarre monstrosities and ask themselves, "Hm, I wonder how many XPs I'm going to get for killing that thing?"

Scott R. Krol

Thank you very much for such a wonderful issue! Damn! I just don't know where to start telling you guys how much I love your magazine! Well, I'll go with reviews first. I felt so weird after watching the movie *In The Mouth Of Madness*, as most of my friends really liked it but I just didn't get the point. So thank you for letting me know that I wasn't the only fan out there who was sorely disappointed with that movie.

Jason K. Averill

I think Brian Sammons and I saw two different movies with the same title and cast. I loved *In The Mouth Of Madness*! Though I may have felt more akin to Sam Neil as I was watching the movie in a theater by myself, and he ends up doing the same. Ha! That wasn't too spooky! I half expected the world to have gone nuts on exiting the theater.

"Fuel of the Gods" could have used a little tweaking. First, I don't know what town the author is from, but I couldn't ever get more than \$300 from a cash machine in Illinois (in one night, that is). Second, what were the names of Froson's other two kids? If there's one thing that's always a pain in running a game it's thinking up names for everyone the players run across.

More importantly, the question that immediately came to mind as a player of this scenario was: "Why are we going after the guy with the least-concentrated fuel first? It would seem that the person with the most-concentrated fuel would be in the greatest danger. Let's find him first!" If you really want the players to progress from easiest to hardest, get them involved by looking into Froson's strange behavior through a concerned friend of his. Then follow Froson's information to the second test subject, who in turn leads them to FOST, who then hires them to find the *third* guy. The impact is greater when an anomaly becomes a horrific pattern. And the players will not feel like they are being forced to go from point A to B to C—instead, they will have the tingling pleasure of unearthing a mystery/conspiracy where it just goes from bad to worse.

Thomas A. Head

Jason Thompson took on a very delicate topic with his article "Facing Racism," and he came through with flying colors. The whole topic of race, race relations, and historical accuracy can be a tough one and it was handled well in a fine, well-thought-out bundle. You won't find though-provoking articles like this in *Dragon*! One of *The Unspeakable Oath*'s many strengths is your willingness to take on major issues that even news magazines shy away from. One of the major things you have taught us long-time readers is that it's okay to take a stance. So you may offend some people. You get some hate mail, show it to all of us for the ridiculous narrow-minded idiocy that it is, and move on with your lives. I love you guys for that.

Mike Winkle did fairly well in his Charles Fort article, but honestly, there is a *lot* more that could be said about the man's work. It is a gold mine of atmospherics and inspirations for any Keeper who wants to bring atmosphere into her campaign. When I wanted to let the players know that there was something heavy going on, I'd trot out some Fortean occurrences. Sure your big, bad investigator has slain half a dozen Deep Ones and squashed his own weight's worth of the Spawn of Eihort, but how will she react when writhing worms start falling from the sky? The inclusion of and background support for Fort's X and Y were absolutely beautiful. This is how I like my Mysterious Manuscripts—with just a hint of reality to add verisimilitude.

The "Glove Cleaners" article was unusual. At the end of the article, we find that we must supply the vast majority of the information about these individuals—even why they are called "glove cleaners" and who would call them that. Not that this is a bad thing. It makes us stretch our little tiny minds some.

John Crowe's article on the Templars was one of those beautiful, well-researched articles that are the meat and drink of *The Unspeakable Oath*. There are the facts in good order without us having to delve, like one of Lovecraft's hapless protagonists, through musty books of elder lore. John has done it for us and pulled out the relevant facts. An excellent article, and a fantastic resource for any Keeper.

"Zines and the Mythos" is another extraordinary article. There are so many little facets of modern life that can be used to interesting effect in *Call of Cthulhu* that one person cannot possibly see them all. I am a stranger to the world of zines, but James Thomas's article explained them concisely. The crowning jewel of the article is surely *Lottery Muse*. What a brilliant piece of inspiration and execution, all handled with a wink to the audience. Elvis's moles, Yucatan trade routes, and the Javanese *I Ching*? What fun! Let's see some more articles from James Thomas, okay?

"What You Should Know About The Tommy Gun" by Kim Eastland was also excellent. While the connect-the-dots format would have been annoying for much longer, it wasn't enough to irritate. And again, the wealth of useful information in the five pages is almost immeasurable. How much does the average Keeper know about buying a Tommy Gun? A lot more now! Reality is stranger than fiction. Who in their right mind would ever have invented the bumbling idiocy and failure that pursued the Thompson? Incredible!

"Fuel of the Gods" is undoubtedly the best-thought-out adventure of the magazine. Michael Cisco obviously sits up nights chanting and asking the Great Old Ones for cool ideas. A Mythos monster in the form of gasoline? A wonderful idea that could have easily been squandered with a sub-average scenario. But the presentation is thorough and layered, even adding just a hint of foreshadowing. There is also a level of revulsion in this that is lacking in many horror books and scenarios. Just the thought of Jan Bronski sucking



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down that gasoline-like sludge makes me start to gag. There's nothing like the truly revolting to get your players off balance.

"Unhealthy Occupation" works as a scenario, but the whole thing needed a little more cohesion. There is a lot going on, and there is little to make it all hang together. Still, with a little work, it looks like a fun evening or two.

I love Dennis Detwiler's art, but I have problems with his scenario "Call of Duty." It seems to have all the hallmarks of an old bash-em-up scenario. Hordes of evil cultists who are easily distinguishable from the normal population, well-armed gangsters, and the Keeper's trump card, a shoggoth. First of all, even Al-Azrad had never seen a shoggoth, and yet there are nearly half-a-dozen dotting the New England Coast. While it is a wonderful thing to play with, shoggoths are too common in *Call of Cthulhu*, especially since virtually any other monster would have done. The shoggoth is only tenuously linked to the scenario and serves no purpose. However, there is a lot of good information to be mined out of the scenario. With only a little effort I could build a wide-spanning campaign out of the cult and other trappings in there. Perhaps part of my problem with the scenario is that the characters are thrown abruptly into a setting that really should take an adventure or two to savor completely.

"The Eye of Light and Darkness" remains as useful as ever, although I beg to differ with Daniel Harms on his review of *Scream for Jeeves*. As opposed to Mr. Harms, I have read half-a-dozen of the Jeeves books, and am currently hunting the rest down. I love Wodehouse. I love his style. He had as excellent a grip on dialog as Lovecraft did on mood. Peter Cannon, on the other hand, does not. While the whole idea is intriguing—yes, I bought one—the stories are great let-downs. In order to preserve Bertie from serious mental damage, he must leave the scene of the horrors just before they happen. And we know the stories. And a good deal of Bertie's dialog is lifted directly from Wodehouse's stories. The results, I fear, will not please the fan who has a yen for "two great tastes that taste great together." To be effective, the book would have to be written with a command of mood close to Lovecraft's and dialog close to Wodehouse's. Unfortunately, Peter Cannon is not the man for the job. But I cannot fault him for trying: the idea was pure inspiration, and I'm just a crabby old purist.

All said, *The Unspeakable Oath* 14/15 is another great package of bubbling blasphemy and fear that is vastly underpriced. The cover is wonderful, the articles thought-provoking and informative, and without a doubt worth more than I paid for it. Again, you can take all the damn time you want to produce *The Unspeakable Oath*, because every time it comes out, I get a whole load of ideas that scream around in my head. Great stuff.

John Goodrich

*The Unspeakable Oath 14/15*

# Mysterious Manuscripts

## The Canopic Bible

by Mark Eley

**T**he incredible story of Anne LeCarrier started in the latter half of the 12th century in Toulouse, France. The year was around 1185, a tumultuous period for the Christians fighting the Crusades in the Holy Lands. Many young men flocked to join the holy orders and knightships at the time. One individual was a "boy" named Andrew who joined one monkhood resembling the Carthusian Order (a severely puritanical order founded by St. Bruno in 1084).

The fact that the young man was actually Anne LeCarrier, a woman in disguise, was not uncommon for the times. The teen served in the order several years before she was sent into the fray of the Holy Lands. Stationed at Tyre, the only Christian outpost which didn't fall to Saladin's army

in 1187, Anne served in a castle monastery nursing the sick and injured. After the disastrous Fourth Crusade led by Pope Innocent nearly crippled the Christian Empire, her order moved to Jaffa. It was here that LeCarrier soon discovered a hidden cache of forbidden books in an ancient chamber. The knowledge from this library—which contained the Greek edition of the *Necronomicon*—unhinged Anne's mind and led her on her next endeavor.

The disguised monk began to write a new biblical text using Mythos knowledge in secret. As the years passed, Anne finished her bizarre work. Despite its alien truths, the woman never lost her faith in God, mentioning Him (or Her) throughout the text. She soon requested to preach about the Lord to the local heathens, not telling her superiors about her twisted book. Naturally, the locals took her words to be those of the Christian Bible. It was not long afterward that the monk had a small following.

As Anne's followers grew, her downfall became inevitable. One ardent follower went to her superiors to praise her words and let slip mention of the devil "Cthulhu, cast into the sea by the Lord." Spies soon confirmed the terrible truth: "Brother Andrew" was preaching blasphemy to the innocent townsfolk. What followed was an interrogation by torture in which the inquisitors learned the whole truth. The female had been exposed and was summarily burned at the stake in 1207. The hidden library was likewise burned, but LeCarrier's bible was spirited away by her followers, or perhaps by "heathen" Moslems who saw the book as a weapon Christianity. The Church basically hid the whole incident in the history books, but it occasionally surfaces.

The bible was believed lost until it surfaced again in the Middle East during the 17th century. Referred to in Anne's notes as *The Canopic Bible*, the name has two possible connotations. One could be the Egyptian city of Canopus . . . but the other meaning is more sinister. Canopus is a star of the first magnitude in the constellation Argo, an astral body which plays heavily in Anne's *Book of Revelations*.

Ten copies of the original were made in French, supposedly by the legendary Comte de Saint-Germain before he fled Paris in 1670. Indeed, many surmised that the seemingly immortal Saint-Germain was truly ancient and received his Elixir of Life from LeCarrier's chapter on Christ's resurrective force.

Presently, all copies and the original *Canopic Bible* are lost, but supposedly two are stashed away in the Vatican. Whether LeCarrier's volume contains a resurrection or sustained-life spell is left up to the Keeper. ☸

*"The Canopic Bible" by Anne LeCarrier.*

Original handwritten version in Latin

+5% Cthulhu Mythos

No spells.

-1D4 SAN

French version printed in 1669 (purportedly by  
Le Comte de Saint-Germain, Paris)

+4% Cthulhu Mythos

No spells

-1D3 SAN

*Excerpts:*

And Christ stared into Hell itself, where Asmodithoth stirred in the Void, "a place of outer darkness" (Matt 8:12). Jesus anguished, for he knew the "place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48)

Indeed, God in the form the master Cthugaha had struck down Sodom with "a devouring fire" (Isaiah 33:14)

In the Beginning, there was but heaven and earth, but the Old One had prophesied life and created it. And when He was done He created Woman from Sathla's rib.





# THE CASE OF COLONEL FAWCETT

By  
DANIEL  
HARMS

*The Unspeakable Path of a Spy*

**O**n page 266 of the CoC rulebook appears the following sentence: "1926—No trace of the Percy Expedition, seemingly swallowed up by the northern Brazilian jungle." This is somewhat inaccurate—the expedition was led by Colonel Percy Fawcett, one of the most colorful and ill-fated explorers of all time. Even for Keepers who prefer not to use real-life figures in their games, the true tale of Col. Fawcett is a fascinating one that could be easily inserted into any collection of Mythos fiction—or *Call of Cthulhu* game.

Percy Harrison Fawcett was born in 1865 and grew up in Torquay, Devonshire. The young explorer became a cadet at Woolwich Academy and afterward in 1886 joined the Royal Artillery. He spent the next several years in Sri Lanka (Ceylon); there he met his wife, whom he married in 1901. Fawcett's career forced him to move frequently, so the next few years he lived in such far-flung areas as Ireland, Malta, Morocco, and Hong Kong.

Fawcett began to make a name for himself as an explorer in 1906. At the time, Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia were involved in a heated border dispute over the area near the Acre and Abuna rivers, a place very rich in rubber. The Bolivians requested assistance from the Royal Geographic Society, which selected Fawcett due to the surveying experience he had gained while working in Morocco. Leaving behind his son and pregnant wife, Fawcett departed for three years into the jungle. He returned to England briefly after this mission, but then returned to South America to survey the Peruvian border for the Bolivian government.

Fawcett's travels were cut short when World War I broke out; during the conflict, he commanded a brigade of field artillery and became noted for his bravery. With the war over, Fawcett went to Rio de Janeiro in 1920 for yet another expedition into the country's interior.

Fawcett's family published the explorer's memoirs in 1953, and these papers give an amazing view of the explorer's journeys through the interior of South America. During his travels he was forced to deal with hostile natives, crippling illnesses, trigger-happy revolutionaries, and the snakes and exotic insects that populated the jungle. Fawcett also reported the stories that he heard along the way, and he filled his account with anecdotes of huge spiders that poisoned visitors who stayed at a certain inn, ghosts which inhabited shunned houses, and unseen river-monsters that left huge tracks in the swamps. Fawcett told his stories in a sensationalistic manner that made it hard to tell just how much of this is true, but they are fascinating reading nonetheless.

Despite these feats of exploration, Fawcett is best known for his last expedition in 1925. Having become disgusted by the tendency of his previous companions to drink and fall ill so easily, Fawcett set off with his son, Jack, and Raleigh Rimell, a college friend of Jack's. Their intention was to travel across the Mato Grosso from the town of Cuyaba, passing over the Xingu, Araguaia, and Tocantis riv-

ers and making their way through hundreds of miles of little-explored territory to the eastern coast. Fawcett sent letters back to his relatives periodically; he was last seen on May 30, 1925, at Kuluene, a village of the Kalapalo Indians near the Xingu River. After that, Fawcett and his two companions vanished into the jungles.

Before he had left England, Fawcett had warned that his trip would take at least two years, so it was not until 1927 that the Royal Geographical Society sensed something was amiss and offered to back anyone willing to search for the colonel's party. It was in September of that year in which the first sightings of the Colonel began. A Brazilian engineer, Roger Courteville, claimed that he had met a man of Fawcett's description on a ranch near Diamantina City, Brazil, about one hundred miles from Cuyaba. According to Courteville, the man told him that he had taken up the life of a farmer and would not return to civilization for a few years at least. Inquiries made by the Peruvian government turned up no sign of any such person.

In the meantime, George Dyott, a man known for his forays into the jungles, embarked upon the first systematic attempt to find Col. Fawcett. He claimed to have found a metal case that proved that Fawcett had been through the area, and believed that Indians had killed the group. The metal case, however, was from one of Fawcett's earlier expeditions, and Dyott could offer no conclusive evidence that Fawcett was dead.

In 1930, a journalist named Albert de Winton embarked on his own investigation of the matter. He reached Kuluene, and proceeded onward into the jungle. He did not return. (I was unable to find much information on this expedition, but if we accept even some of Fawcett's details of his Amazonian journeys, the disappearance of a presumably-inexperienced journalist is unsurprising.)

Stefan Rattin, a Swiss trapper, added another chapter to the mystery in 1932. According to his story, he met an old white man with a yellowish beard and wearing four rings living among the Indians. The man told him to contact Major Paget, an old friend of Fawcett's, at the English Consulate, and then was led away by his captors. It was pointed out that Fawcett did not wear four rings, and that Major Paget had been retired and living in England before Fawcett set out, but Rattin was undeterred. He set out again into the jungle, and was never heard from again.

In the following years, several expeditions to find Fawcett set out, but none of them were able to find the colonel. Unsubstantiated reports still circulated; one explorer claimed that he had met Fawcett, who told him not to tell about their meeting for three years. Another stated in all seriousness that it was not Fawcett who was being seen, but the journalist and horror writer Ambrose Bierce, who had disappeared thousands of miles away many years before! With the coming of World War II, the people of Europe and America had more pressing concerns than the lost explorer, and little was heard about him for quite some time.



In 1951, it seemed for a while that the Fawcett mystery had been solved. Orland Vilas Boas, a frontiersman who had spent years befriending the natives, received a deathbed confession from the chief of Kuluene who stated that his tribe had killed Fawcett and his companions following a fight over a woman. The victors hid Fawcett's body on the other side of the river, and threw the remains of Jack and Raleigh in a lake. A search turned up a set of bones, and Fawcett's fate was no more a mystery—until three experts from the Royal Anthropological Institute's confirmed that the bones were not in fact those of Col. Fawcett. Almost no other news of Fawcett has appeared since then, though many have been inspired by his quest for a lost city.

## "Z"

During a stop in Rio de Janeiro, Fawcett discovered a Portuguese manuscript dating back to 1743. This tale of unknown origin told of an expedition searching for the lost mines of Muribeca, a rich silver deposit that had been hidden for over a century. On a hidden plain, the group found a city of cyclopean architecture with huge arched gateways whose carvings and inscriptions resembled those of ancient Greece. The gigantic buildings of this place, which showed signs of the great earthquake which had almost destroyed it, were inhabited only by millions of bats. In the city's center an imposing statue of a man pointing toward the north stood in front of the remains of a spectacular palace. The group gathered up some treasure of unspecified nature and returned home to report their discovery to the Viceroy. There the account ended, with no explanation of who the author was or if anyone had returned to the city.

Fawcett took this account and expanded upon it. According to his own claims, the fantasy writer H. Rider Haggard had once given him a small stone plaque from Brazil. Though no archaeologist could tell where it came from, psychometrists (psychics who could perceive an object's background) often told him that it had come from a colony of Atlantis that had survived that land's destruction. During his travels, he took careful note of the many Indian stories about cities lit by "lamps that never go out", and that were usually abandoned, though from time to time an inhabited place was reported. These cities in the jungle, according to Fawcett's explanation, were remnants of the Atlantean civilization. When the lost continent sank, some of its people migrated to the west to found the Tiahuanaco and Inca empires of the Andes, while others remained in the Amazon to build their cities. It was to one of these ruins, to which he gave the code-name "Z", that Fawcett set out on his final expedition.

## Morcegos

One particular group of natives stands out in Fawcett's account, even though he never found them. These were the

Morcegos, or "Bat People", a tribe of Indians whom Fawcett implies are remnants of pre-Indian aborigines, though at other times he connects them with the people who built the fabulous cities. These people lived in caverns and pits hidden in the jungle, and only ventured forth at night. These people were cannibalistic, and had an uncanny sense of smell which led them to their prey. One story Fawcett relates involves a man who was captured by these creatures and held him until he escaped by climbing a tree in the daytime and swinging through the branches until he was far away. Unfortunately, even this is at least a second-hand account. Fawcett was never able to confirm the existence of these people, though he did look forward to meeting them on his trip to "Z".

## Fawcett's Mysterious Powers

Even as he proceeded on his adventures, Fawcett himself became an object of much speculation. He was especially famed for his supposed psychic powers. At one point in his memoirs he attributes his escape from the bite of a poisonous snake to the "inner man"—though it is uncertain whether he is referring to his own instincts or something else. Once Fawcett escaped being charged by a wild bull by using what he considered to have been a "hypnotic eye," and others often attributed his success in dealing with hostile native groups with his abilities to mesmerize them. These tales did not cease even after Fawcett's disappearance: his wife insisted for years thereafter that she was receiving telepathic messages from him informing her that he was not dead. Finally, Fawcett wrote in his last letter home that he had conducted a seance just before embarking and had been rewarded with a series of raps and knocks on the table. What, if anything, the spirits may have told him is a mystery.

## Mythos Speculations

1. (1920s) The players are approached by a wealthy businessman/journalist/ would-be explorer who asks them to join a highly-publicized expedition to track down Colonel Fawcett. When the characters push into the Mato Grosso, they find that the rumors Fawcett heard of the Morcegos are true. These beings turn out to be a lost tribe of voormis who have migrated far from their homes in the north. They have set up a small shrine to Tsathoggua, in which the PCs may find an equipment case which is clearly from the expedition. The voormis may have evolved into peaceful and docile giants (which may put the PCs at odds with their money-hungry expedition leader), or they may be dangerous and warlike, unwilling to accept this intrusion into their territory. And lurking behind a gate to N'kai, the god awaits . . .

2. (1920s) When discussing the Portuguese account he discovered, Fawcett tells us, "The document hints at the find-

ing of treasure, but no details are given." Von Junzt's Unausprechlichen Kulten reveals that the treasure of a temple was often its god. Fawcett had read von Junzt on this subject, but thought it was bunk and ignored it. When he made it to the temple, he was not prepared for what he found, and his psychic sensitivity only made him a more fitting victim for what lurked within.

The Thing captured Fawcett's memories, and learned all it could about the outside civilizUMion. Now it has put its plan into motion. It has sent Fawcett's body, preserved and animated by its consciousness, out into the woods, making contact with others from time to time. From what it has learned, it knows that soon others will come into the woods to search for the lost explorer . . .

3. (1990s) A government satellite photo revealing a set of huge buildings in the heart of the Brazilian jungle has caught the attention of the National Reconnaissance Office. As the Mato Grosso is now flown over by planes several times a day, it seems unbelievable that such structures could be built overnight. A senior agent in the department assigns a Delta Green team to investigate.

On their way to the site, a local native finds them with tales of Fawcett and his lost city of "Z". Upon their arrival, they find that the ruins were formerly an Elder Thing city protected by a psychic screen. Fawcett did find the city during a previous failure of the screen, but fell prey to the sole remaining shoggoth that dwelt there. The few surviving Elder Things will not molest the characters if unprovoked, being content to try to repair their mechanism to render a permanent solution. However, the city's appearance has not gone unnoticed by other groups, whether cultists, governments agencies, or even the Karotechia . . .

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# WAR



# DOGS

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*The Unspeakable Oath is up*

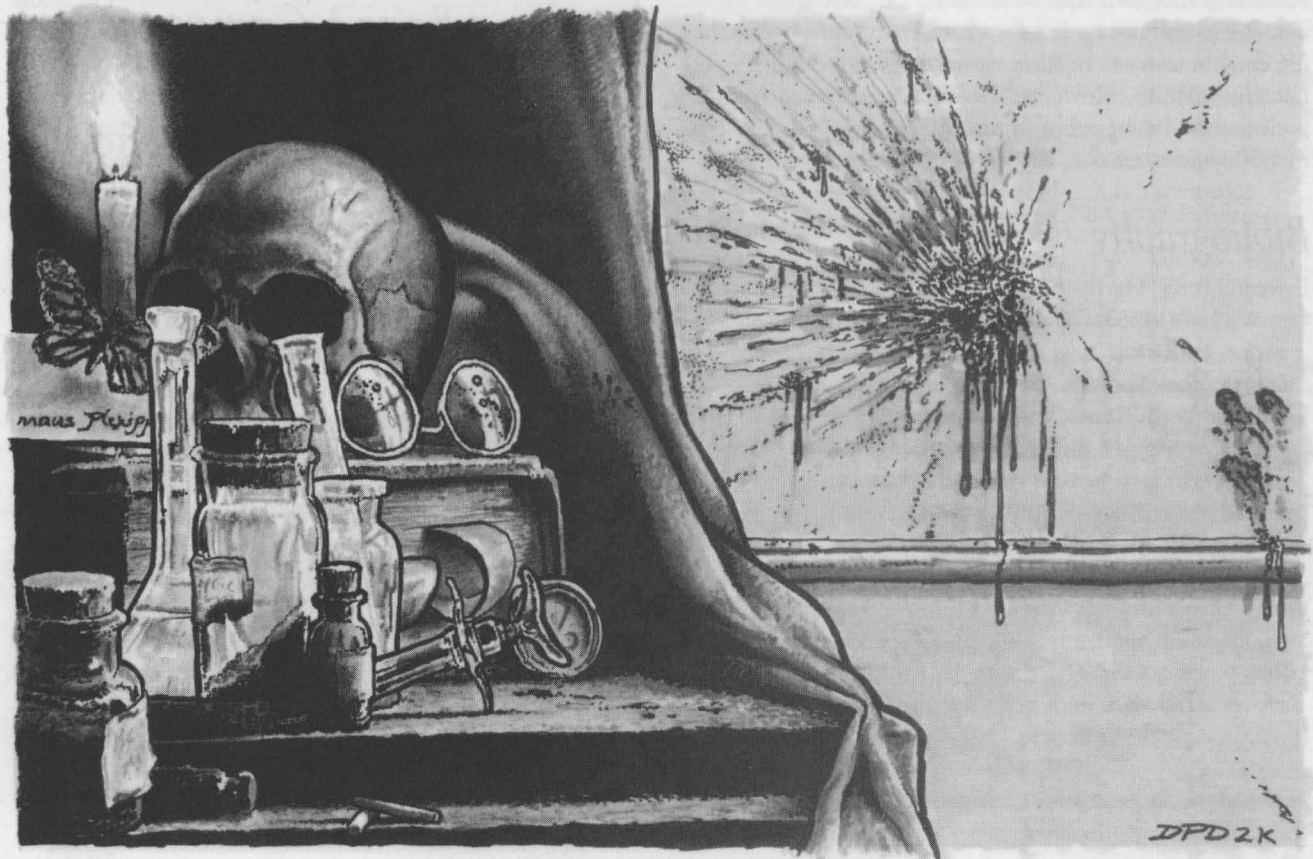


# That HORRID BOOK!

BY JOHN GOODRICH

As a Keeper, you've teased and hinted, dodged and schemed, avoided and delayed, but somehow, through perseverance, pigheadedness, and not a little cleverness, the players have finally located a copy of the *Necronomicon*. Knowledge is power, after all, and the *Necronomicon* is well-known for being a tremendous repository of knowledge on all sorts of unholy topics. However, as a Keeper, you need to do something more than just slap a player with a 2d10 SAN loss for reading it. The *Necronomicon* isn't just a horrible book. It's also horrid—as in repulsive, detestable, and obscene. If the characters are going to consult this work, then you as the Keeper have a chance to make the experience truly memorable in the most horrible way possible. Hey, your players are counting on you. In most cases, a subtle, creeping, yet pervasive experience is more likely to unnerve a player than simply slamming a character with a big SAN loss.

According to many stories concerning the Mad Arab's book, it is a thing like no other, immediately assaulting the senses of any person who comes too close to it. Some have said that the book is so overflowing with unbelievably horrible magic that it has achieved a sentience of its own, and is able to protect its own existence. Obscure yet frightening stories circulate on the coast of Brittany about sentient books that hold knowledge too terrible to be contained, but the name of this book has not been recorded.





Here are some suggestions that may help make consulting the *Necronomicon* a more unsettling experience. If you wish, you could apply these suggestions to other Mythos tomes as well.

1. While the character is reading the *Necronomicon*, he hears whispers. Everywhere. They don't stop until the investigator has quit reading the horrible thing. Are these whispers the speech of unholy djinn that Alhazred wrote of?
2. The investigator doing research becomes possessed of a strange but discernibly foul body odor, not unlike that of the book itself. It may or may not go away when the investigator has finished with the tome.
3. While the investigator is reading the *Necronomicon*, he or she can read nothing else. Whatever else the player reads transmogrifies into the accursed verses from the blasphemous tome. From children's books to the ingredients on a cereal box, the last pages the poor wretch read become inescapably etched into memory.
4. Some stories speak of demon-haunted books having wills and tempers of their own, as well as being self-propelled. If unwatched, they are said to shift position restlessly, never staying quite where the possessor left them. The only safe way to store such a book is suspended from a beam and bound in chains.
5. The *Necronomicon* is a book like no other, and it will not endure being placed near lesser tomes for more than an hour. An investigator may hear a loud crash and rush to discover than an entire bookshelf, with the exception of the profane tome itself, has been dumped onto the floor.
6. The miasma of evil that the *Necronomicon* produces is so potent that anything with a CON below three dies immediately on contact with it. This means the investigator must sweep up the corpses of whatever insects were near his reading table every morning. Pity the investigator who has a cat, a dog . . . or a small child.
7. The *Necronomicon* protects its own existence, defending itself against the elements. It cannot be burned or crushed, only contained. Wind will not flip its pages, nor will rain soak into them. If an investigator's house was mysteriously destroyed, the copy of the *Necronomicon* within would surely survive. Flung into a fireplace, it merely puts the fire out.
8. Such appalling knowledge does not allow itself to be eas-

ily reproduced. Disk drives mysteriously degauss, photocopiers devour reams of copy paper without creating a single clear duplicate, ink spills happen with distressing regularity, and previously copied pages unaccountably disappear. Creating a copy of any significant portion of the *Necronomicon* could be an agonizing task, pitted against the malignant intelligence of the tome itself.

9. Failing the above, the poisonous tome may attempt to rid itself of the hapless copier more directly. The copyist may find himself beset by numerous health problems, some subtle and others not. Serious lung infections from fungal spores contained within the moldering pages and toxic reactions to unknown substances within the ink itself are the least of the attacks the accursed tome has to offer.

10. The original title of the book, *Kitab Al-Azif*, refers to the nocturnal buzzing of insects that may be the voices of demons. After reading the book, the peruser may well be able to judge the veracity of that statement.

11. It should go without saying that anyone absorbing such hideous knowledge should have screaming nightmares for at least as long as they are reading the book. The effects of long-term sleep-deprivation are well documented; irritability, an inability to concentrate, hallucinations, and even unprovoked violent outbreaks are likely.

12. Insidiously, the *Necronomicon* may instill an unquenchable thirst for Mythos knowledge in the investigator who reads it. Such an unfortunate will never be rid of the yearning to explore other tomes of Mythos information, to delve into horrid secrets, and be damned thereby.

13. The investigators have undoubtedly spent a great deal of time and effort tracking down a tome so important and infamous. They are surely not the only ones who are doing so.

The Keeper certainly need not use all of these effects, and of course, they should be lessened the further the edition is from the original *Kitab Al-Azif*. The *Sussex Manuscript* is a cancerous tome, but it is not the atrocity that Olaus Wormius' Latin translation is. Tomes of Mythos knowledge should be frightening, ghastly things that ought to be hidden away from all humanity, and consulted by only the most foolhardy or desperate of investigators. In medieval times, all books were regarded with a superstitious awe because they were considered communication with the dead. Mythos tomes in *Call of Cthulhu* deserve that same apprehensive veneration, and the legend-haunted *Necronomicon* most of all. ☞





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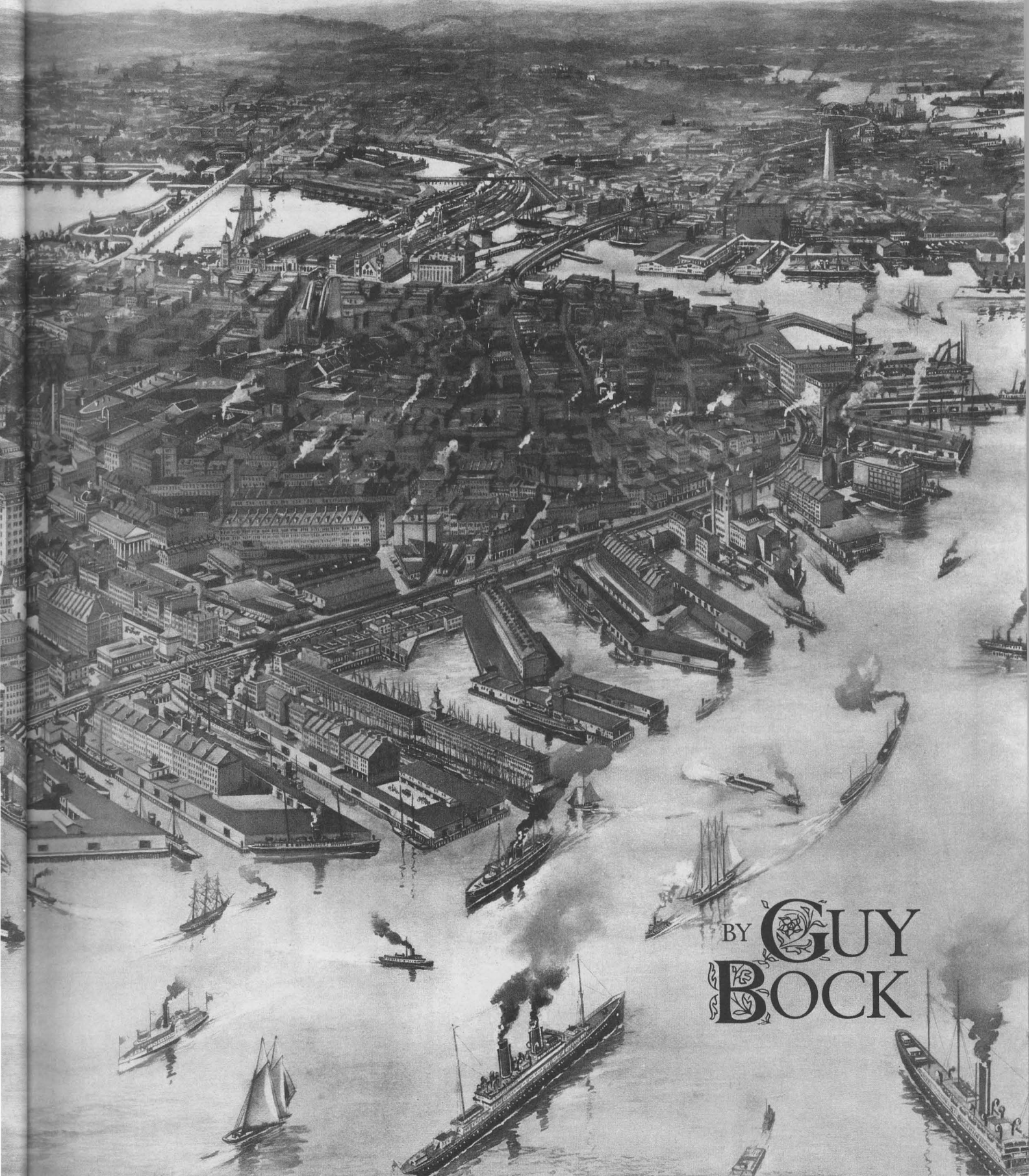




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BY GUY  
BOCK



**T**his description of Boston in the 1930s is intended as source material for Keepers who need location background to set an adventure in, or for players who wish to create a detailed character background. In this article, historical fact has been blended with elements of Lovecraft's fiction—though only those elements judged to be general knowledge are explicitly described. Obscure or sanity-blasting information will be merely hinted at. Further clarification can be found in the Chronology at the end of the article, and a bibliography of relevant Lovecraft stories is included for those who wish to explore further.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive treatment of 1930s Boston. Minor liberties have been taken with history and geography in order to make them conform with the spirit of Lovecraft's work. An effort has been made to avoid inclusion of information dull or mundane in nature or easily available from modern basic reference works. Well-known historic events, such as the Boston Tea Party, are mentioned only in passing or not at all. All information given tends to reflect 1930s conditions, though it wouldn't be too difficult to convert to 1920 or even 1890.

This article gives the Keeper a rough sketch of the city's major buildings and locales. Included are several interesting or odd bits of local history that may provide some basic elements for plot-building. When my source materials contradicted each other I've exploited this for dramatic purpose—always insinuating a sinister reason for the discrepancy. Like its author, this article has a good grasp on reality. But not a fanatical one.

## *Boston, Massachusetts*

The great gilded dome of the Massachusetts State House, like a ball of fire hung high in the air, is the most conspicuous object which meets the visitor's eyes, whether he approaches Boston by land or by sea. Ascend to the cupola which crowns the dome and you behold a scene never to be forgotten. To the east your sight sweeps out over the island-dotted harbor, crowded with giant liners and freighters from



across the Atlantic, with the smaller vessels that ply the cities of the Atlantic coast, and with assorted ferries, fishing craft, and pleasure yachts. As you gaze north, west, and south, you see what looks like one unbroken city, stretching as far as the eye can see. Boston itself covers only a small part of this district. Its area is about 48 square miles, but within a radius of 15 miles from the State House lie many towns and villages so closely built that the visitor cannot tell when he passes from one to another.

The State House where you have taken your stand is on Beacon Hill, not far from the center of the northward-pointing peninsula on which old Boston was built. Beacon Hill has been called the citadel of Boston aristocracy, for along its steep gaslit Beacon Street are rows of serene and beautiful old red-brick townhouses in which have lived many of the men who have made American political and literary history. Beacon Hill was the home of author and mystic Randolph Carter, until his disappearance in 1928.

Some distance beyond the foot of the hill to the west you see, along the Charles River, the beginning of the wide embankment created by landfill which is one of the many notable civic alterations of the last generation. To the southwest is the famous Common, a tree-dotted expanse of 48 acres in the heart of the city with the smaller Public Gardens adjoining. Here criminals, Quakers, and witches were executed in the early days of Massachusetts Colony and here,





until 1830, the sedate folk of Beacon Hill used to send their cattle to graze. Some of the famous men who often trod the Common in the days when the nation was in the making lie buried in the little Old Granary burying-ground just to the northwest of the Common. A short distance further is the oldest of the city's elder cemeteries, King's Chapel burying-ground. At the north end of Old Granary is the Boston Athenaeum, a small, private library that has over 200,000 rare old volumes.

### *The Back Bay District*

Straight on past the Common and the Public Gardens, along the broad Charles River, lies the fashionable Back Bay district, originally a salt marsh until the city's landfill project created the community in the mid-1800s. Today in the 1930s, long rows of beautiful old townhouses stand along the neighborhood's tree-lined street. Wealthy families lived in the Back Bay area until the 1920s, when they began to move to Boston's northern and western suburbs. Many of the townhouses were then converted into apartments. Back Bay is a popular neighborhood among college students. Visible on the other side of the river are the ivy-covered red-brick buildings of Harvard University, lying in the heart of Cambridge, the most celebrated of Boston's suburbs. A few blocks south of the river is stately Commonwealth Avenue, 240 feet wide, with its strip of green

parkway down the center adorned by statues of famous men. This is one of the links in Boston's famous park system, which girdles the city with two rings of parks and playgrounds and boulevards so that there is no part of the whole metropolitan area without its breathing space. A few blocks south of Commonwealth Avenue, and running parallel to it, is the scarcely less famous Boylston Street, with its many magnificent public buildings, churches, and hotels. Many of Boston's most expensive stores and finest restaurants lie between fashionable Boylston and Newbury Streets. About half a mile down, Boylston broadens into the green triangle of Copley Square, where you see one of the most famous groups of modern buildings in America. To the west is the great Public Library (founded 1854), renowned for its beautiful design as well as for its huge collection of books. There are 450,000 volumes in the Central Library and, together with 2,200,000 books in its various branches, it is the largest library in the U.S. after the Library of Congress. Opposite the library is one of the finest examples of ecclesiastical architecture in America, the massive Trinity Church with its beautiful decorations and stained-glass windows. Two other imposing structures adorn the Square: the Copley Plaza Hotel, built in 1911, and the New Old South Church. Boston University is a block beyond the square and the famous Latin School, the oldest public school in the western hemisphere (founded in 1635), is a few blocks to the south. Along Huntington Avenue, one of the streets which meet at Copley Square, is another notable building: the Museum of Fine Arts. The museum has one of the world's greatest art collections, representing nearly every culture of the last 5,000 years. The museum's large exhibits of American, Oriental, and ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art are especially outstanding. The Museum also displays certain selected works by Boston's own Richard Pickman.

### *Business District*

Circling farther around the State House cupola to the south and east, you see at your feet the maze of narrow crooked streets that make up the business center. The rolling terrain and the uneven outlines of the city have made the old Colo-





nial streets resistant to straightening efforts, so that parts of Boston can be most confusing to navigate. Washington Street is the most congested thoroughfare in the country, and several others are so narrow that the traffic is permitted in only one direction. This, one of the oldest parts of Boston, is rich in historic buildings and associations. Here is the Old State House (1748), the seat of royal government for Massachusetts during the provincial period and now a historical museum. Under its balcony occurred the fateful Boston Massacre of 1770. Not far to the north is Faneuil Hall (1763), the "cradle of American liberty," where the patriots often met during the Revolutionary period. Not far to the south, Old South Church (1730) stands in the midst of a group of hulking office buildings, overwhelming its slender wooden spire. The church is now occupied by an exhibition of historical and Revolutionary relics.

### *The North End*

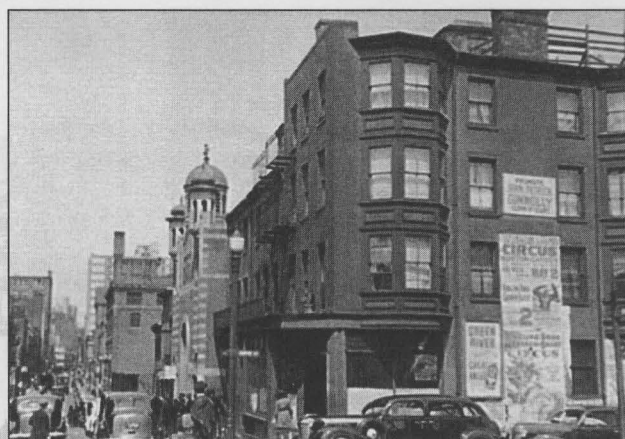
Looking northward to the site of the original city—now an overcrowded foreign district—you can just make out the tower of Christ Church (also called Old North Church), the oldest church in the city (1723) whence it is supposed the lanterns were shown for Paul Revere's famous ride. Revere's house, too, is still standing not far away, a tiny two-story building with a steep roof, all but lost among modern storefronts and tenements. Most of the residents live in four-story brick apartment buildings along the narrow, winding streets. In Copp's Hill burying-ground north of Christ Church is the tomb of fire-and-brimstone puritan Cotton Mather. The whole North End once had a network of tunnels running between certain houses and the sea. There's hardly a month that newspapers don't tell of workmen finding bricked-up arches and wells leading nowhere in this or that old place; these tunnels were most likely used by smugglers before the Revolutionary War.

### *Charlestown*

Across the narrow dock-lined stretch of water (spanned by many bridges) that separates the North End from Charlestown, you see a plain square stone shaft rising out of the huddle of roofs; this is the Bunker Hill Monument. All the eastern end of the Charlestown peninsula is given over to the vast United States Navy Yard, which has stood here ever since 1800. At the piers or out in the open water lie scores of warships, little and big, contrasting strangely with the famous wooden frigate *Constitution*, or "Old Ironsides," as she is affectionately known. Charlestown is a hilly residential section and the site where English colonists first settled before crossing the Charles River to found Boston. It became a part of Boston in 1874.

### *The Modern City of 1935*

Such are a few of the historic scenes that crowd your sight as



it sweeps over the city. But however much we may like to dwell on the greatness of Boston's past, we cannot ignore the intrusion of the modern city, the capital of Massachusetts. Though it ranks only ninth in U.S. population, it is fourth in wealth. Many powerful business concerns make Boston their headquarters. It is one of the leading centers for book and magazine publishing, and its factories churn out immense quantities of manufactured items. Boston contains about thirty hospitals, and fifty asylums and charitable homes. Of the former, the chief are the City Hospital, known mainly for its generous treatment of the poor, and the Massachusetts General Hospital, a model institution of great extent.

### *Newspapers*

Before 1830, newspaper coverage of purely local events was highly superficial and irregular. The conservative press was occupied with ship arrivals, prices, legislative events, and national politics, offering little non-commercial news. The first cheap daily paper was founded in 1831, making Boston the birthplace of the American "penny press." Both the numbers and circulation of these papers climbed steadily, surpassing even the established journals by 1836. All the "pennies" left state and national politics to their older rivals in order to concentrate on local news, especially violent or exciting incidents. The Boston *Daily Mail* and the Boston *Traveller* are typical of the politically independent popular press. From the year 1850 onwards there has been no shortage of local reporting.

The Boston daily *Herald*, beginning in 1851, remains the most important source of news for Bostonians. One of the largest papers in the city, it has consistently been independent in politics, skeptical, gossipy, and thorough. The Boston daily *Advertiser*, founded in 1855, is frankly conservative and Republican; it is known today as the city's newspaper of record, with the fullest accounts of legislative proceedings. The *Evening Transcript*, while Republican, is less a party organ than the *Advertiser*; likewise the popular, democratic *Globe*, which began publishing in 1872.



## *The Boston Police Department*

The Boston Police Department was created in 1838, working alongside and eventually replacing the Colonial-era City Watch. The new department, with headquarters at City Hall, began with a chief, two deputies, and five detectives. Eight police stations divided up the city's territory, each with a captain, two lieutenants, and between twenty and forty patrolmen. This basic structure would remain unchanged well into the next century. As the city grew, the police force expanded. In 1852, for example, a harbor police detachment of a captain and ten men was added.

In 1858 the police force were first issued uniforms: a blue frock coat with brass buttons, black vest, polished leather belt fastened by a buckle with the city seal, blue trousers, and a small silver badge. They were armed only with fourteen-inch clubs. The night patrolmen were also given large wooden rattles that could broadcast an alarm for a quarter-mile. In 1863 President Lincoln's call for a draft sparked a riot in Boston. The entire police force was called out, but even then they were overwhelmed. Seven officers were badly injured and two were nearly lynched. After this event the entire force was issued .38 revolvers for regular patrol duty. In 1900 the Boston police adopted a domed helmet—grey for summer, blue in winter—similar to English bobbies.

In 1906 the Massachusetts legislature abolished the unwieldy State Police Board and replaced it with a single commissioner with complete authority over the department. The first commissioner to hold the new office was Stephen O'Meara. Honest and strictly devoted to the law, O'Meara tightened departmental discipline and made the Boston police force the admiration of the country. O'Meara brooked no favoritism or outside influence. Officers were selected and promoted on a merit basis only. Boston under Commissioner O'Meara remained amazingly free of the scandals common in the police departments of most major American cities. In O'Meara's first five years in office, only one patrol officer was convicted of taking a bribe.

In considering applicants to the force, the Commissioner considered age, weight, height, health, and above all, character. "Judgement, coolness, moral as well as physical courage, executive ability, capacity for the command of men, sobriety and other moral qualities, standing among his associates and in the community, powers of initiative, temper, integrity, energy, courtesy" were the qualities that O'Meara required.

O'Meara rooted out the use of excessive force in his department. He let it be known that the "third degree" had no place in the Boston police. Verbal abuse or a punch in the jaw was no excuse to break proper procedure in carrying out a policeman's duty. Under O'Meara, the Boston police force became the most law-abiding and law-conscious in the country.

In 1918 the Boston police department had several urgent problems. Despite the economic boom the country was experiencing, the Boston police were still being paid at the same rate as that established at the very founding of the department. Division buildings were in dire need of repair, some of them not having been renovated since the Civil War.

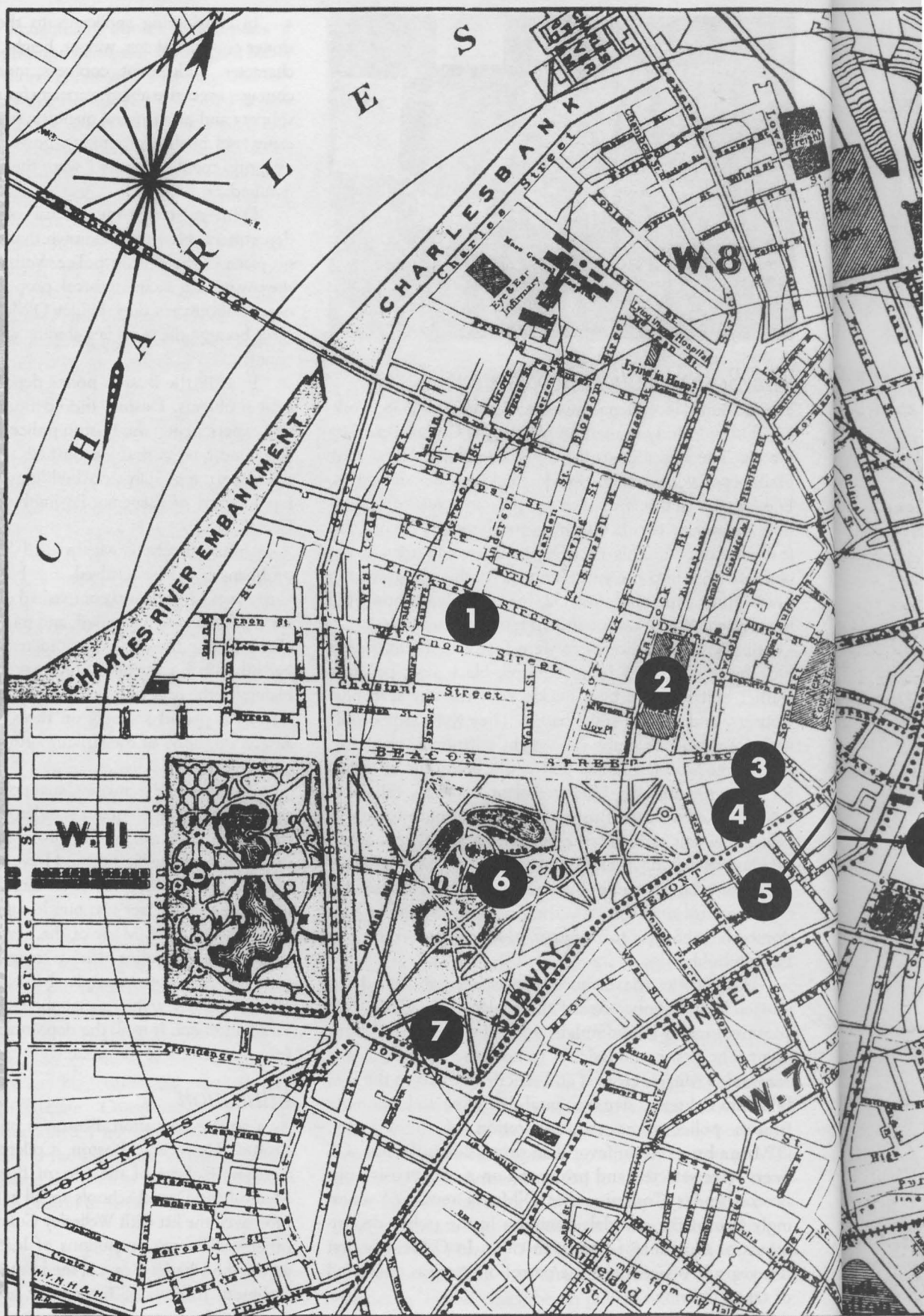
Unfortunately, O'Meara died before these monetary problems could be resolved, and his replacement, Michael Curry, was a less-than-accomplished diplomat. More funding for the force was demanded, and refused. Tensions between City Hall and the department increased. Finally on September 8th, 1919, the police union voted to go on strike. The blame for the orgy of violence and looting that followed was afterward placed squarely on the shoulders of the police. Afterward, none of the striking officers were ever accepted back to their old jobs.

To replace the missing manpower, the new commissioner lowered recruitment standards. Within three months there were 1574 new patrolmen—more than had been on the force when the strike began. However, the hasty recruiting brought in large numbers of unsuitable men. In the year following the strike over two hundred patrolmen resigned and seventy were fired. Many of the new men were unequal to their duties and police officials struggled to keep the system from breaking down completely. Lacking the morale of the old force, the new men succumbed to the corruptions of the Prohibition era. It took the department a decade to recover from the effects of the strike.

## *Education*

As a seat of education, Boston is unsurpassed in America. Boston University, Boston College, Simmons College, Teachers College of the City of Boston, and the Harvard Medical and Dental Schools are all in the city. Adjoining suburbs swell the list with Wellesley College, Tufts College, and other well-known institutions of learning. Cambridge, just across the Charles River, is the home of Radcliffe, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard.









## Selected Locations

- 1 Beacon Hill
- 2 State House
- 3 Athenaeum
- 4 Old Granary Burying Ground
- 5 King's Chapel Burying Ground
- 6 Boston Common
- 7 Central Burying Ground
- 8 Old South Church
- 9 Paul Revere's House
- 10 Battery St.
- 11 Old North Church
- 12 Copp's Hill Burying Ground

Circles 1 Mile Radius  
Scale-1200 FT. TO AN INCH.  
EXPLANATION.  
Steam Railroads ———  
Electric " ———  
Carriage Roads ———

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## *A Guide to Boston Colleges*

Here are some highlights about Boston's institutions of higher education in the 1930s.

**Name (Charter Date):** Harvard University (1636)

**Student Body:** 7000 men

**Faculty:** 2,000 instructors

**Library:** 4,000,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** law, divinity, medicine, dentistry, business administration, architecture, landscape architecture, city planing, public health education, arts, sciences, and engineering

**Notes:** Harvard is the oldest American university.

**Name (Charter Date):** Radcliffe College (1879)

**Student Body:** 900 women

**Faculty:** 400 instructors

**Library:** 80,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** arts, sciences, education, and music

**Notes:** Radcliffe is affiliated with Harvard and has adopted the same educational methods. The courses are the same as the University and are given by members of the Harvard faculty. Many of Radcliffe's graduate courses are given at Harvard, and the laboratories of the University are used by a considerable number of Radcliffe students.

**Name (Charter Date):** Tufts University (1854)

**Student Body:** 2,200 men and women

**Faculty:** 400 instructors

**Library:** 190,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** theology, medicine, dentistry, liberal arts, and engineering

**Notes:** Tufts owes its beginning to the support of the Universalist Church, but is non-sectarian. In 1892 Tufts admitted women for the first time. Tuft's library includes 6,000 volumes of the Universalist Historical Society.

**Name (Charter Date):** Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1865)



**Student Body:** 3,100 men and women

**Faculty:** 680 instructors

**Library:** 350,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** architecture, engineering, and sciences

**Notes:** MIT lab equipment permits experimentation almost on an industrial scale. The Institution maintains a summer mining camp at Dover, New Jersey, and a Civil Engineering camp at East Machias, Maine.

**Name (Charter Date):** Boston College (1863)

**Student Body:** 3,400 men

**Faculty:** 200 instructors

**Library:** 171,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** arts, sciences, and law

**Notes:** A preparatory school occupies the original site within the city of Boston; the other departments had been transferred to Chestnut Hill in 1913. The college is only open to Roman Catholic men.

**Name (Charter Date):** Boston University (1869)

**Student Body:** 13,700 men and women

**Faculty:** 640 instructors

**Library:** 207,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** business administration, music, theology, law, medicine, religious education, social services,







liberal arts, practical arts and letters, education, and graduate arts and sciences

**Notes:** The University is a system of allied schools and colleges established by members of the Methodist Church. Isaac Rich was its chief benefactor, and numerous free scholarships have been established in his honor.

**Name (Charter Date):** Wellesley College (1875)

**Student Body:** 1,500 women

**Faculty:** 190 instructors

**Library:** 196,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** music, art, education, hygiene, physical education, and sciences

**Notes:** Wellesley is a pioneer in furthering scientific study and was the first college to offer such courses to women. The library contains several valuable collections, including the Plimton collection of Italian manuscripts, the Ruskin collection of art criticism, and Prof. Palmer's collection of rare first editions of poetry from Chaucer to Mansefield.

**Name (Charter Date):** Simmons College (1899)

**Student Body:** 1,500 women

**Faculty:** 160 instructors

**Library:** 86,000 volumes

**Degrees/Courses Offered:** household economics, se-

tarial studies, library science, general science, social work, public health nursing, landscape architecture, physical education, and store service education

**Notes:** Simmons is a technical college for women, the first of its kind in the United States.

## Harvard

Harvard University is the oldest university in the U.S., founded in 1636 only six years after the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay colony. Harvard's Widener Library is the oldest in the country, started in 1636 when John Harvard bequeathed his library of 400 books to the school. Of the 400, only 260 volumes were allowed in general circulation until his death in 1638. In 1764 the library was destroyed by fire, the only works saved being an Oriental collection and the Greek and Roman classics presented by Bishop Berkeley. Among other rare works, the library possesses a 17th century *Necronomicon* printed in Latin. In 1900, Harvard libraries contained 470,000 volumes; it held 800,000 volumes in 1920 and 4,000,000 volumes in 1930. In 1848 a Scientific Department was generously endowed by Abbott Lawrence. Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, founded in 1859, is world famous for its natural-history collection. Harvard acquired a School of Medicine in 1782, a Law School in 1817, and a School of Divinity in 1819.

The University includes the following schools and departments: Harvard College, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Engineering School, Theological School, Law School, Faculty of Medicine, the Arnold Arboretum, and the Busey Agricultural Institute, which is connected with the Harvard Experiment Station in Cuba. Radcliffe College for women, founded 1869, is an affiliated institution. Also connected with the university are the Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory and the Astronomical Observatory; Harvard maintains another observatory in South Africa. Other features are the Botanical Gardens, University Museum, the Gray Herbarium, and the Peabody Museum of American Archæology. In 1900 there were 400 professors and about 3,600 students; in 1935 there are about 2,000 professors and 7,000 students.





## Boston's Suburbs

Brookline, which thrusts almost into the heart of Boston proper, is one of the wealthiest and most beautiful residential suburbs in the country. It is the home of the Zion Research Library. Another suburb of beautiful homes is Newton, the site of Newton Theological Seminary. In Mt. Auburn Cemetery at Watertown are the graves of Longfellow and other famous men.

## Transportation

Inside the city, public transportation is provided by a system of bus lines and by a subway system begun in 1895 that rides variously on elevated, street-level, and subsurface tracks. A subway running under the Charles River is now being built to connect Cambridge to Boston. Rumors to the contrary, Boston's subway has always had a remarkable record for efficiency and safety. By means of eight great systems of railway Boston reaches the coasts to the north and south, the Saint Lawrence and the Great Lakes, and the Hudson and Mississippi rivers. There are two great union stations, the North Union and the South Terminal; the latter handles the world's largest number of passengers. The chief railways entering the city are the Boston & Albany, Boston & Maine, New Haven & Hartford, and New York Railroads. As the terminus of twenty transatlantic steamship lines and scores of coastwise lines, Boston ranks as one of the nation's leading shipping centers. In volume of maritime traffic with Russia, India, and China, Boston is third in the nation. Passenger and freight traffic is available by steamship to Europe, the Far East, South America, and Australia. The Miskatonic University in Arkham has launched two expeditions from Boston Harbor: one to Antarctica in 1930 and one to Australia recently in 1935. Boston has 40 miles of berthing space, with one of the world's largest dry-docks. An elaborate airport for commercial and military aviation was built on a peninsula east of the city in 1922.

## History

Although some historians agree that the early Norsemen probably visited the site of Boston, there was no European settlement until 1630. By the time the settlers arrived, the area's Indian population had been nearly wiped out by diseases carried to the New World by European explorers. John Blackstone, a lone pioneer and the land's first European owner, sold his title to the land for thirty British pounds to a group of Puritan settlers. The settlement was first called Trimountaine from its three hills. The name was soon changed to Boston, from a town in England whence many of the settlers had come, but the original name survives in Boston's Tremont Street.



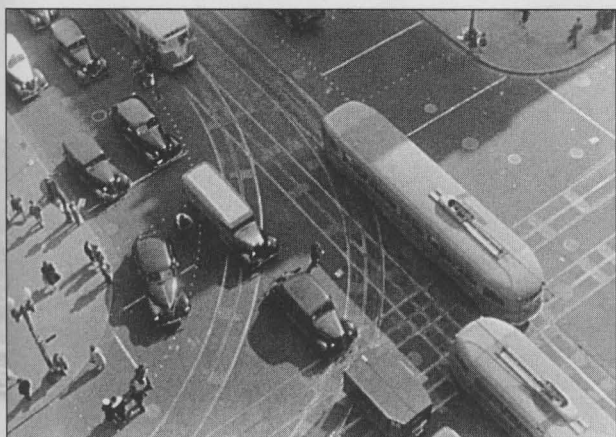
Boston was the chief center of Puritanism in America. The same Puritan spirit which led to the punishment of heretics, Quakers, and witches contributed largely to making Boston the center of opposition to the oppressive measures of the mother country in the period preceding the Revolution. The Boston Massacre, the Tea Party, and the British evacuation of Boston are famous events from that time of resistance.

After the Revolutionary War ended, Boston merchants began to build huge fortunes through foreign trade. Ships loaded with fish, rum, salt, and tobacco left Boston Harbor for ports throughout the world. The ships returned with silk and tea from China, sugar and molasses from the West Indies, gold and mahogany from Africa, and strange artifacts and antiquities from all over the world.

In 1872 the city was visited by the greatest of several devastating fires, which destroyed more than \$75,000,000 worth of property in the business section. In the rebuilding, many of the narrow and winding streets were widened and straightened. During this construction many queer subterranean structures were uncovered, supposedly dating back to Colonial days. Certain objects discovered were donated to local museums, while others were given a long-delayed proper burial in the modern cemeteries outside the city.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century Boston retained its original racial character. But following the potato famine in Ireland there was a great influx of Irish to the United States and many found Boston, one of the chief ports of entry, so attractive that they remained here. Italians, Russians, Poles, and Canadians have also altered the racial balance in recent years, until now the New England Protestant stock is far in the minority. In this city founded by the Puritans, Roman Catholics now have the greatest number of churches. Jewish places of worship are second in number. According to the recent 1935 state census, the population of Boston proper is 817,713.

*The Unspeakable Oath of the*



## Chronology

This chronology is comprised of real and fictional events related to the Cthulhu Mythos and the city of Boston. The focus is on events recorded in written documents: historical accounts, newspaper articles, police records—written records that could be located in the course of a *Call of Cthulhu* investigation. Some accounts of unwritten folklore are included as well.

Also included are the known movements of Charles Dexter Ward during his occult researches, and the reference sources he sought out in Boston. Ward's search can pose as an example for investigators upon a similar path.

Abbreviations in parenthesis after each entry refer to story titles.

### Major Boston References

PM	"Pickman's Model," set in Boston
TCoCDW	<i>The Case of Charles Dexter Ward</i> , many references to Boston
TDH	"The Dunwich Horror," a few references to Boston

### Minor Boston References

AtMoM	<i>At the Mountains of Madness</i>
TCoC	"The Call of Cthulhu"
TCooS	"The Color out of Space"
HW:R	"Herbert West: Reanimator"
TSooT	"The Shadow out of Time"
TSH	"The Shunned House"
TSK	"The Silver Key"
TtGotSK	"Through the Gates of the Silver Key"
TTotD	"The Thing on the Doorstep"
TU	"The Unnameable"
TWiD	"The Whisperer in Darkness"

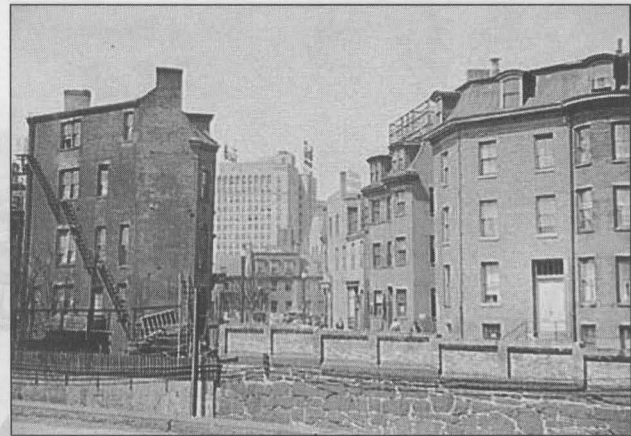
- 1615 Epidemics of measles, scarlet fever, and other diseases  
 -1617 brought by European explorers kill 2,500 of the 3,000  
 Massachusetts Indians in the area of Boston.

- 1620 First white settler builds a cottage on Beacon Hill.
- 1632 Boston becomes capital of Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- 1636 Harvard College founded.
- 1648 Margaret Jones hanged in Boston—the first person in the colonies to be convicted of witchcraft.
- 1663 Cotton Mather born in Boston. He graduated from Harvard at the age of 15 and wrote over 350 books (in seven languages), some of which were never published. He was denounced by some for his part in witchcraft trials. Mather was pastor of the Old North Church from 1685 till his death in 1728.
- 1676 Joseph Curwen, occult dabbler, buys strange substances in Boston. (TCoCDW)
- 1771
- 1685 Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World* published in Boston. The book is an account of cases of witchcraft and experiments on persons possessed by demons. Mather's book was endorsed by the governor of the colony and the president of Harvard College.
- 1690 First newspaper in America, *Publick Occurrences Both Forreign and Domestick*, established in Boston.
- 1690 Women accused of witchcraft hanged in Boston Common.
- 1702 Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* is published in Boston. The book contains much information about the machinations of the New England Witch-Cult and their role as a portent of a looming apocalypse to be caused by a wrathful god or God.
- 1704 First permanent newspaper in America, the *Boston News-Letter*, established.
- 1706 Benjamin Franklin born in Boston.
- 1711 First fire engines in America used in Boston.
- 1720 Boston is a thriving town with a population of 12,000.
- 1735 Paul Revere born in Boston. After the Revolution—



ary War, Revere resumes his work in Boston as a silversmith until his death in 1818.

- 1737 John Hancock born in Boston. In 1780 he becomes the first elected governor of Massachusetts. He was regularly re-elected until his death in 1793.
- 1738 Dr. Checkley, famous wit from Boston, visits Joseph Curwen in Rhode Island. (TCoCDW)
- 1768 Mercy Dexter of Providence is obliged to travel as far as Boston to hire a manservant because of the cursed reputation of her house. The manservant, Zenas Low, dies after four years of service. (TSH)
- 1770 A ship carrying mummies from Cairo is rumored to have been in Boston Bay. (TCoCDW)
- 1773 Boston Tea Party.
- 1775 Paul Revere rides from Charlestown to Lexington to warn of the approach of British troops. Battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill occur near Boston.
- 1776 General George Washington captures Boston from British.
- 1845 500,000 Irish immigrants flee to Boston to escape starvation after potato crop fails in Ireland.
- 1847
- 1872 Fire wipes out 60 acres of downtown Boston.
- 1874 Randolph Carter, mystic and author, born in Boston. He makes his home there until his disappearance in 1928. (TSK)
- 1880 Cheap steamship service between Boston and eastern and southern Europe attracts thousands of poor Italians, Lithuanians, and Poles to Boston.
- 1914



- 1882 Boston chartered as a city.
- 1882 One Boston daily paper carries a story on Nahum Gardner and his mysterious meteorite. (TCooS)
- 1883 Joel Manton, principal of Arkham East High School and friend of Randolph Carter, born in Boston. (TU)
- 1884 Landfill projects more than double the size of the Boston peninsula.
- 1858
- 1897 Nation's first subway opens in Boston.
- 1900 Population of Boston reaches 560,000.
- 1908 Boston suburb Chelsea swept by fire, which destroys a large part of it.
- 1911 Copley Plaza Hotel built in Boston.
- 1915 A wax cylinder recording made by Henry Akeley in Vermont captures a strange buzzing voice and a cultured male voice with a Bostonian accent. (TWiD)
- 1910 *Azathoth and Other Horrors*, a book of poetry by

1917

1919

1919

1920

1920



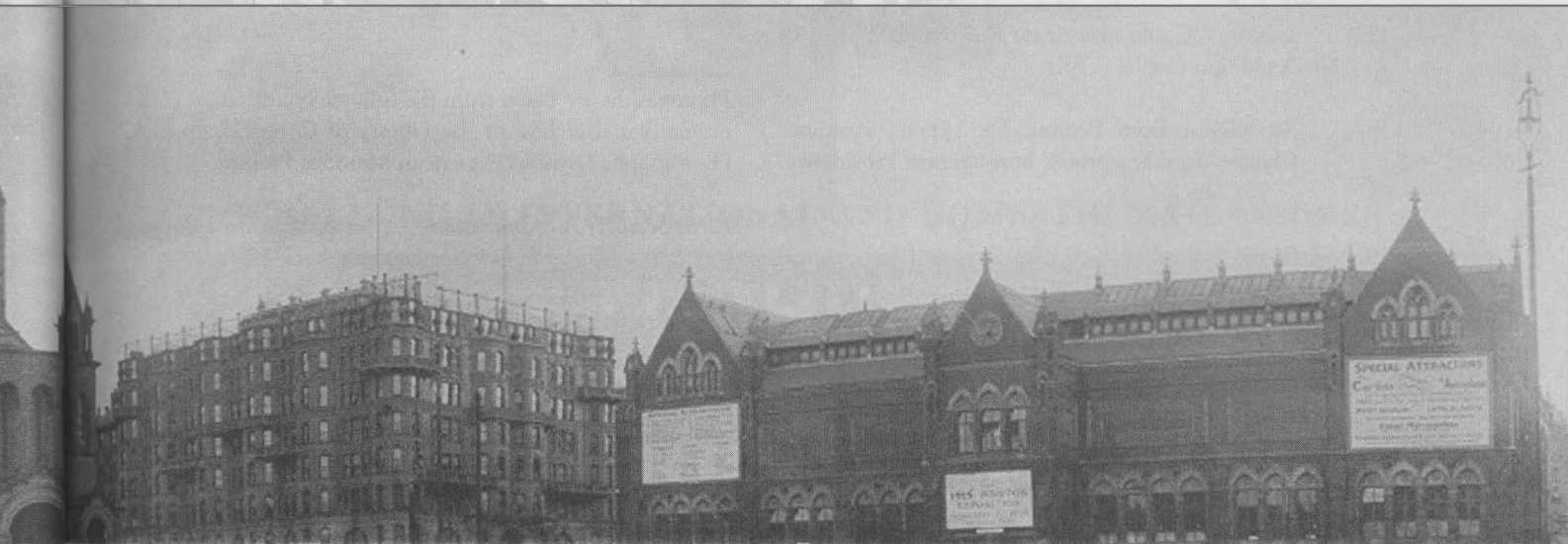


Edward Derby, published in Boston. (TTotD)

- 1917 The Boston *Globe* prints flamboyant Sunday stories of young Wilbur Whateley's strange growth rate, Old Whateley's black magic, the sealed second story of the Whateleys' ancient farmhouse, and the weirdness of the Dunwich region and its hill noises. (TDH)
- 1919 The Boston police investigate the disappearance of Herbert West. (HW:R)
- 1919 Charles Dexter Ward begins visiting libraries for reference materials on witchcraft and magic, occultism and demonology. Ward takes the train for Boston to tap the wealth of the great library in Copley Square, the Widener Library at Harvard, and the Zion Research Library in Brookline, where certain works on Biblical subjects are available. (TCoCDW)
- 1920 Population of Boston city: 726,000. Total population of metropolitan area: 1,600,000.
- 1920 Richard Upton Pickman begins his career as a noted painter in Boston. Critics praise his work from the 1920-23 period but after 1923 his work

becomes stranger and stranger until his disappearance in 1926. It is unknown (to the public) whether the artist continued to work after 1924. Though proficient in execution, Pickman's post-1923 works have little market value—except to certain collectors. (PM)

- 1921 Sacco and Vanzetti go on trial for murder. The two men were accused of robbing and shooting a factory paymaster in Braintree, Massachusetts. Sacco claimed to have been in Boston applying for a passport at the time of the murder. Appeals drag on for six years, but the pair are finally executed in 1927.
- 1923 Charles Dexter Ward leaves Boston for Liverpool from the White Star pier in Charlestown. (TCoCDW)
- 1923 Under the name of Peters, Richard Pickman rents an old boarded-up, tumbled-down shack in the North End not far from the elevated train on Battery Street and not too many blocks from Copp's Hill Burying Ground. The shack is somewhere between Battery and Carter Streets. There are thirty or forty alleys and networks of alleys north of Prince Street that pass unnoticed by many except the foreigners who swarm them. (PM)
- 1923 The Museum of Fine Arts refuses to accept Pickman's *Ghoul Feeding* as a gift. (PM)
- 1924 Total eclipse of the sun occurs directly over Nantucket, Massachusetts.
- 1924 Richard Pickman paints a picture that shows Beacon Hill honeycombed with tunnels dug by ghouls. (PM)
- 1925 The United States' newest and safest submarine, the S-51, sinks off the Atlantic coast. The coastal steamer, *City of Rome*, brings three surviving sailors to Boston. Tabloid reporters get aboard the ship and interview the survivors and crew before





the incident is hushed up by the Navy. The official story is that the steamer accidentally rammed and sank the submarine. Some questions are never answered: how an aging steamboat could sink a modern submarine; why only three survivors were recovered; why the steamer left the scene immediately; and why the damage apparent on the steamer does not correspond to the type of damage expected from impact with another vessel.

- 1925 There is a subterranean tunnel entrance near Henchman Street in Boston visible from the elevated train. It is soon sealed. (PM)
- 1925 Richard Pickman paints *Subway Accident*, showing a flock of ghouls clambering up through a large crack in the floor of the Boylston Street subway in Boston and attacking a crowd of people on the platform. (PM)
- 1926 Henry Mencken successfully challenges Boston's obsolete obscenity laws by selling a copy of his banned *Mercury Magazine* in the city. The Watch and Ward Society, which is in charge of judging books to be unsuitable, retains legal authority for another four years. During this time the police hold infrequent raids on bookstores to seize unwholesome literature.
- 1927 Charles Ward hires a messenger to fetch a highly obscure volume from Boston. (TCoCDW)
- 1928 The American Archaeological Society publishes the papers of the late Francis Wayland Thurston, of Boston. His papers include joint research of the "Cthulhu Cult" by Thurston and the late George Gammell Angell, professor of Semitic Languages. (TCoC)
- 1928 The black stone sent by Henry Akeley to Albert Wilmarth by train via the North Station in Boston disappears in transit. (TWiD)
- 1928 Boston officials investigate the disappearance of Randolph Carter. (TSK)
- 1928 An alienist from Boston, Dr. Lyman, examines Charles Ward at a private hospital near Providence. (TCoCDW)
- 1928 Some of the Dunwich Whateleys and Bishops still send their eldest sons to Harvard, though they seldom choose to return after graduation. (TDH)



- 1928 Wilbur Whateley travels to the Miskatonic University library in Arkham and Harvard's Widner Library to try to borrow a copy of the *Necronomicon*. (TDH)
- 1930 The Swami Chandraputra from Benares, India, takes lodgings in a wretched building on Chambers Street in the decaying West End of Boston. He retains this address for two years. (TtGotSK)
- 1930 The Miskatonic University Antarctic Expedition leaves Boston Harbor on September 2nd. (AtMoM)
- 1930 Nightmare rumors begin to circulate among the frightened Poles and Lithuanians of Boston's West End. (TtGotSK)
- 1935 The Miskatonic Australian Expedition leaves Boston on March 28th with minimal fanfare. (TSooT) ☞

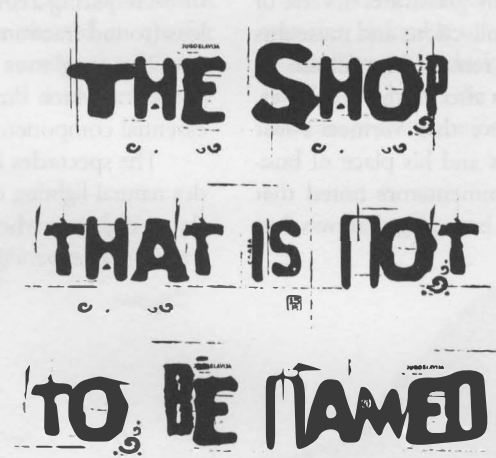
Photographs are taken from the following collections of the online digital archive of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, American Memory Project:

*Farm Security Administration/Office of Wartime Information Collection* (various photographers, 1930s)  
*Taking the Long View: Panoramic Photographs, 1851-1991* (various photographers, 1904-1910)

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# Arcane Artifacts

## *The Strange Spectacles of Dr. Scolius*

by Larry Granato



An unusual pair of eyeglasses recently surfaced with a European antiques dealer. Markings on the edge of the lenses identify them as being crafted over three hundred years ago. The small but thick lenses are in remarkably good condition. The frame is newer, from the 19th century. The artificer was Dr. Scolius of Amsterdam.

Dr. Scolius (Johan van Scolyft) was a 17th-century Dutch optician and glassblower. He was not a medical doctor, although he had a university education in natural philosophy. He is believed to have done some original work in the area of optics, building on Galileo and Bacon, but none of his writings exist today.

Scolius sold spectacles to his richer clients, but the mainstay of his business was everyday glassware. Several of these items can be found in private collections and museums today, but they are not particularly remarkable. All are inscribed with his mark, "SC," which is also on the eyeglasses.

Some experts in antiques believe that Vermeer's lost painting *The Workshop* used Scolius and his place of business as subjects. Contemporary commentators noted that the atypical work was peculiar for its brooding shadows, but little else is known.

Scolius's father was a leading figure in the Thirty Years War, and was suspected of participating in the massacre of Spanish sympathizers at Nimejen. Local legend purports that Scolius began creating bizarre glass objects after witnessing the destructive storm of December 1670, which breached several dykes and left beaches covered with debris. Of Scolius's blown-glass oddities, none remain. All were smashed by Protestant reformers after his death in 1687.

The eyeglasses in question were one of Scolius's own pairs. They remained in the family for many years, after which they passed through a number of hands. They are reported to be of unusually strong correction, since some who've worn them have complained of nausea.

The spectacles have a slight tint which seems to vary with the lighting: sometimes amber, sometimes grey, sometimes green.

### *Possible Powers*

The eyeglasses allow an individual to see beyond the ordinary. The act of putting them on causes a momentary visual confusion, which usually manifests as blurriness. After the wearer's vision clears up, he will often be able to perceive unusual aspects of persons, places, or objects, especially those associated with occult phenomena. The wearer may be able to see through magical disguises (such as those of Serpent People), recognize magical artifacts, and glimpse signs of magic affecting a nearby area. To resolve such abilities in play, the Keeper may grant a Spot Hidden check at up to a +30% bonus.

The glasses also intensify the effects of vision in a mind-warping way. Any grotesque or horrifying sight beheld—those requiring a SAN check—causes a 50% increase in SAN loss (round fractions down).

The eyeglasses may contribute 1 MP per day towards spells for which direct visual contact with the caster is an essential component, particularly the hypnotic types.

The spectacles function most reliably during the day, under natural lighting conditions. When certain stars are in the sky at night, or when only artificial illumination is used, the wearer may experience strange visions of distant times. ☞

# A Tale of Terror

## Raven at Birmingham's

by Loki Carbis

There's a nightclub just on the edge of the inner city that the investigators frequent often. It's a fairly new place when they discover it—been open for maybe two or three months at most. The name of the place is Birmingham's, and it's rapidly becoming the place where the younger members of the city's occult cognoscenti go on a Friday night. To get there, most people walk from the nearest bus station (there's never any parking handy), a walk of about five minutes. The place is located in what used to be an industrial suburb. It's crowded with empty warehouses and factories. Some are still in use for their original purpose, some have been converted to accommodations for the city's bohemians, and some are simply crumbling to pieces.

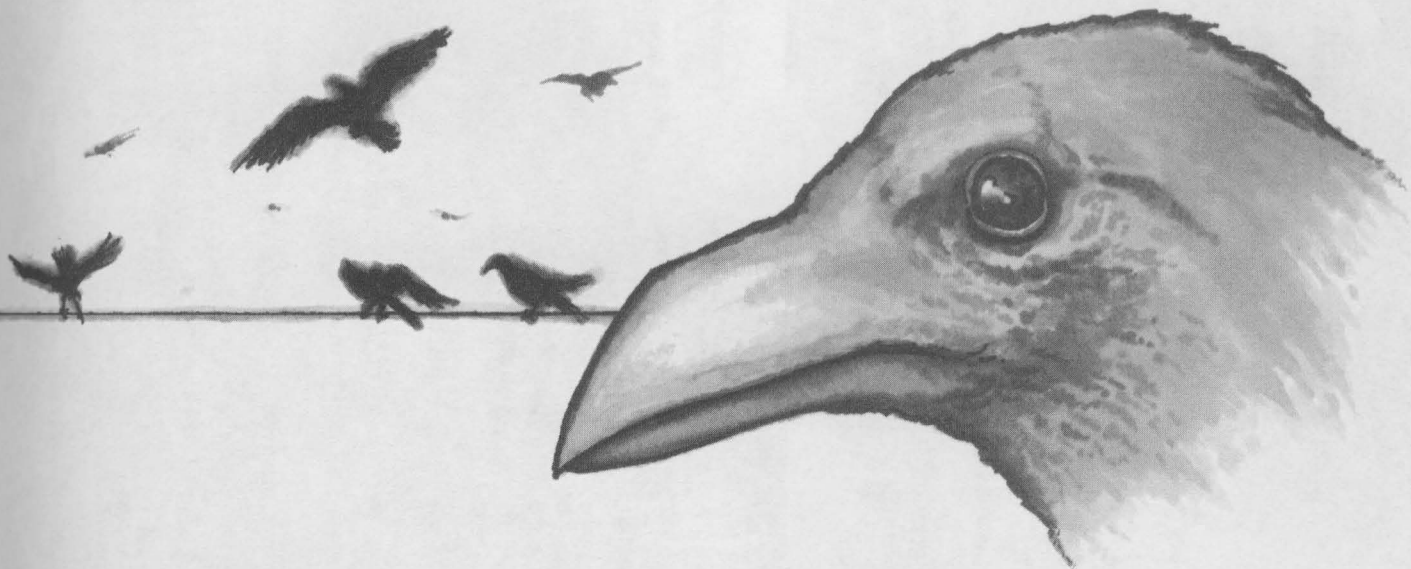
In one of the abandoned ones, there are several nests of ravens. The ravens are aggressive and threatening in the defense of their territory, frequently flying overhead and making harsh, loud noises at all hours of the day and night. But recently, the investigators have heard that the ravens have taken to attacking passersby—in at least one instance, resulting in death.

### Possibilities

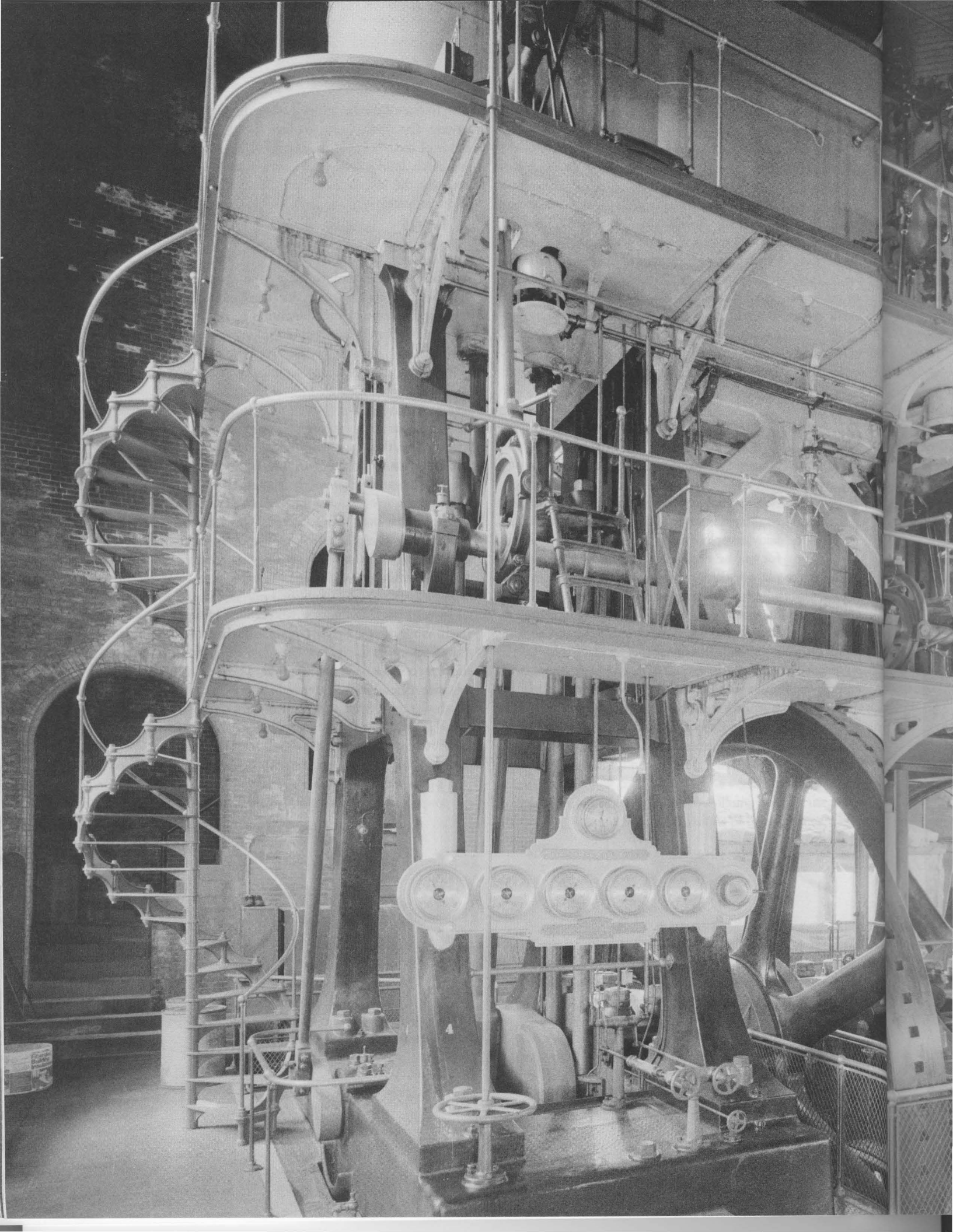
1) The ravens are controlled by the ghost of a man murdered in the building some decades earlier. He could be attacking passersby to draw attention to the place and hopefully lead to the discovery of his hidden remains. Conversely, he might wish to make people avoid the place—maybe it has some mystical or personal significance that he is loathe to see threatened.

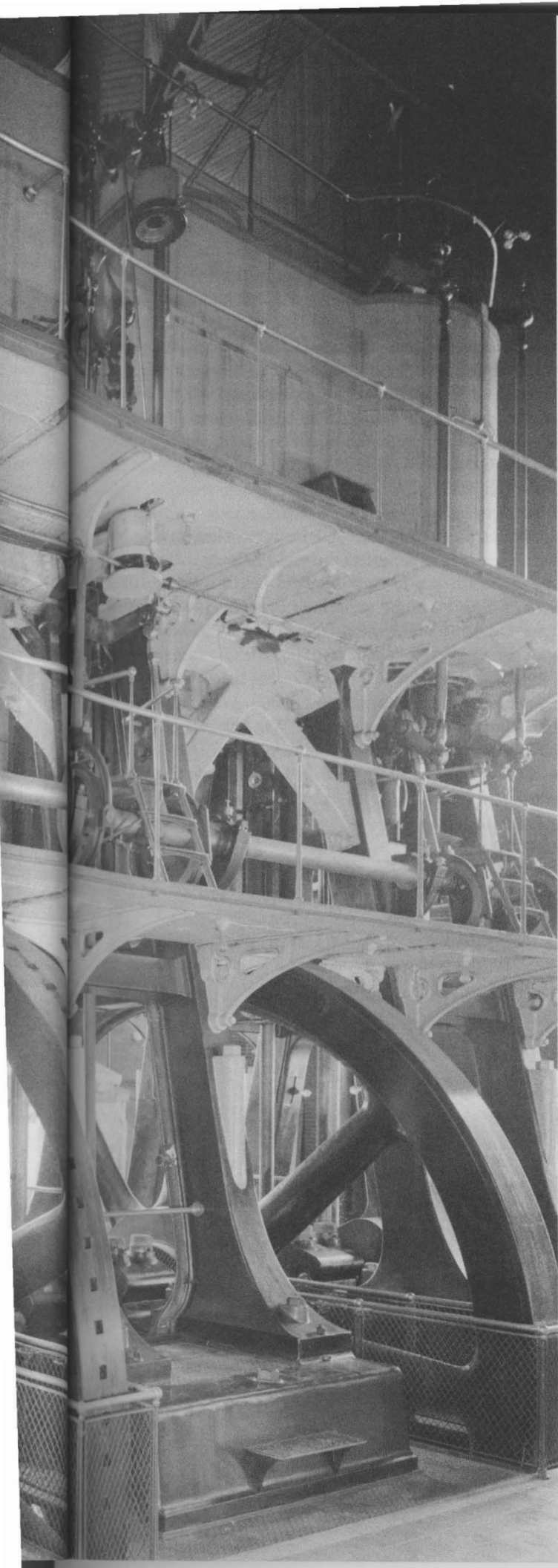
2) The ravens are not what they appear. While there are some ravens there, they are merely the pets of the Nightgaunts who make their home in this building. The occasional deaths are unintended, and result solely from the fact that the Nightgaunts are simple creatures and cannot think of any other way to ensure that their secret is kept. Why they are there is another matter altogether. Possibly they were summoned years ago and forgotten, or perhaps they are seeking a particular person—such as one of the investigators.

3) It's also possible that the whole thing is simply an urban myth. While there are ravens there, and while they can be quite scary, especially at night, they're just ordinary birds who've made a poor choice of a nesting site. This is part of the reason why they defend it so aggressively. The other part is the small clutch of eggs (or chicks, if the Keeper prefers) that lies in the nest. All the stories the characters have heard arise from a combination of exaggeration and drunken hysteria. ☞









# TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE OF THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

BY GUY  
BOCK



One of the challenges of running a *Call of Cthulhu* game in the 1920s is maintaining historical accuracy. Some Keepers avoid this problem by ignoring the issue as entirely unimportant to the goal of creating a weird and horrific environment. But for many, the satisfaction of crafting a rich background in the original era of the Master outweighs the work and effort of getting it right.

Questions of historical accuracy occur often in game play as players ask "Did they have those yet? Could my character get one?" I recall from personal experience a player (obviously fresh from a *D&D* game) who asked where in 1920s New England could he purchase caltrops to toss under the tires of a pursuing automobile.

This article gives Keepers a simplified idea of when certain items were invented and when they were commonly available—two points in time usually separated by years, years in which early versions of the item were prototyped, refined, illicitly copied, and not available in stores. Obtaining an item near or before the date of its invention will be a matter of possessing a high skill level in a specific scientific field; such investigators may be assumed to know what individual or organization is currently working on the invention in question. Whether or not the investigator is able to borrow the device from the inventor is a matter for careful roleplaying. Certainly, the prototype and early models will be clunky, difficult to use, and possibly dangerous in ignorant hands. They

may also be completely unsuited to the task the investigator has in mind.

Obtaining an item after its date of widespread use will probably be as simple as going to town (or to the nearest big city) and purchasing it. The more time has passed after this date, the more reliable and inexpensive the item will be.

Seven items of technology are examined in detail, while only estimated dates are provided for the list of items following. Weapons and vehicles are excluded as they would require an entire article unto themselves (as indeed they have done so in this very publication). Later writers are encouraged to develop this list in detail.

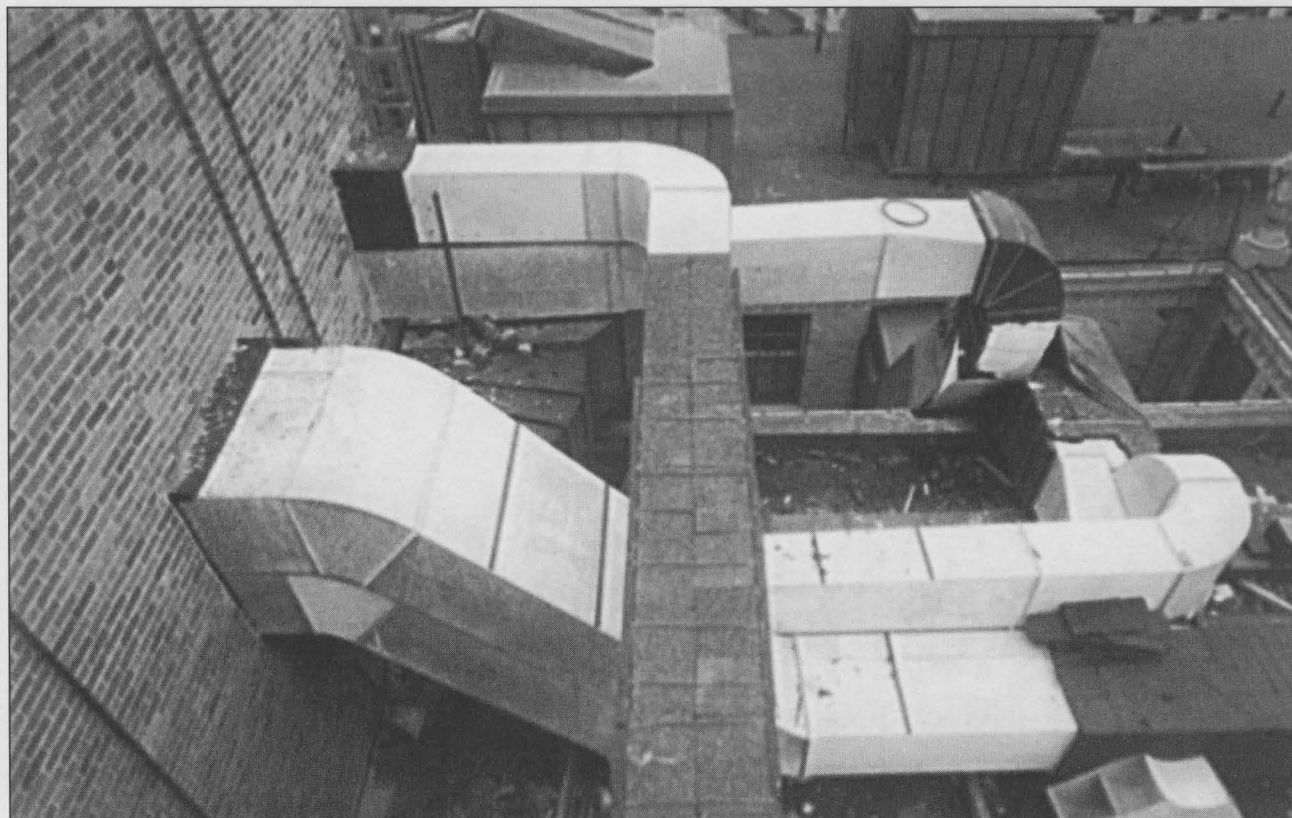
## Air Conditioning

Invented: 1830

Widespread Use: 1934

The first crude mechanical systems for cooling and humidifying air began to appear in the mid-1800s. At that time textile manufacturers in New England began using sprays of water to condition the air in their mills. By 1902, Carnegie Hall and other buildings in New York City had air-cooling systems designed for them. In 1906, a textile engineer from North Carolina named Stuart Cramer used the term "air conditioning" for the first time.

About the time of the Great War, theaters found that air-cooling apparatus drew in more patrons. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad installed the first air conditioning system



for trains in 1931. Many hotels, restaurants, and office buildings began to install similar systems. Air conditioning of apartments and homes began in 1934. By 1939, Packard Motors introduced air conditioning units for cars.

In the 1930s, central air conditioning could cost several thousand dollars to install and a thousand dollars a year to operate. So household units were made small, to serve one room. These devices were limited to warming the air in winter and producing a slight cooling effect in summer by keeping the air in motion. Home units that could eliminate dust and odors and control humidity were not available until the next decade.

In adventure situations, knowledge of air conditioning systems may indicate to an investigator that a building has far more capacity for cooling than it would need for mundane purposes. A building's air conditioning might be used to forcefully eject a malevolent gaseous creature, or even trap it in an air filter! And of course, the use of air ducts for escape or infiltration is such a familiar tactic as to have become a cliché.

## *Bakelite*

Invented: 1907

Widespread Use: 1920

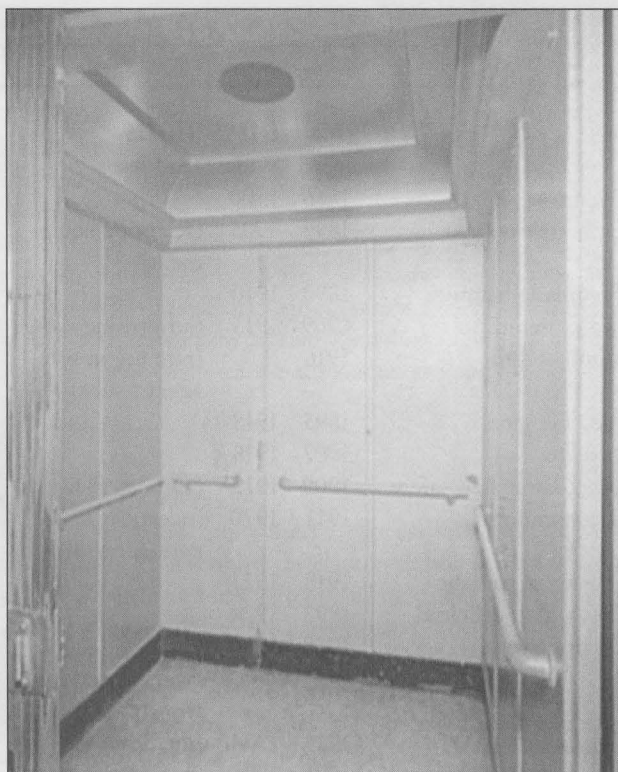
A large number of useful plastic materials can be made from coal-tar products. The first of these synthetic plastics to be produced was bakelite in 1907, named after its inventor, Professor L.H. Baekeland. Bakelite is made from carbolic acid and formaldehyde. Like other resin-like materials, bakelite could be easily molded or machine-stamped, yet after baking it became very hard and strong and resistant to the action of heat, water, gases, acids, and electricity. In one form it is much used in electrical machinery such as telephone and radio casings, lamps, and in decorative items like boxes and costume jewelry. It is a heavyweight material with a slightly greasy feel; it is very hard but can be carved with files or grinding tools. Investigators may find bakelite containers useful for containing or disposing of the weird and dangerous substances they come across in their investigations. It can also serve as a cover for more sinister substances of extraterrestrial origin. ("You say you've got a statue that can't be damaged by fire or bullets? Heck, must be some new-fangled Bakelite kinda stuff.")

## *Dynamite*

Invented: 1866

Widespread Use: 1900

Dynamite is the commonest and safest of the high explosives. It is generally used to break up boulders during excavation. It can also be used underwater with only a very small reduction in power. Ordinary dynamite is usually made in the form of sticks from one to two inches in diameter and about eight inches long. These consist of brown paper wrappers coated with paraffin to keep out moisture. If a small quantity of dynamite is set on fire, free from pressure or vibration of any kind,



it will burn normally; but if even a small pebble strikes burning dynamite the substance will explode with great violence. Dynamite is usually set off with a detonator or blasting cap which provides both flame and force at the same time.

## *Elevator*

Invented: 1852

Widespread Use: 1922

After the mid-1800s, there were many types of crude elevators used mostly for hauling freight. They were extremely slow, and were driven by steam or hydraulic engines. The first electric elevator was installed in 1889 in a building in New York. Electric elevators were much faster and could travel from five hundred to a thousand feet per minute.

Elevators required an operator to answer calls from different floors and to ensure that the elevator operated properly. The push-button elevator was introduced in 1922, making elevator service fully automatic. However, many buildings still retained an elevator operator because automatic elevators could follow only one signal at a time. The first person to press a button was immediately taken to his floor—even bypassing other passengers on the way. An operator was required in busy buildings for efficient transport of people and to reduce waiting time.

Even the crudest elevators are outfitted with reliable safety devices to prevent harm to the riders. A would-be saboteur will find several hours of work ahead of him in order to obtain the melodramatic feat of a plunging elevator assassination. First he would have to dismantle the safety



## Selected Technological Inventions

Device	Invented	Widespread use
Dynamite	1866	1900
Cathode ray tube	1897	1905 (scientific equipment)
Pneumatic hammer	1890	1910
Lamp, neon	1909	1915 (advertising signs)
Bomb, depth	1916	(rare use in war against subs)
Diesel engine	1895	1918
Bakelite	1907	1918
Glass, laminated safety	1909	1919 (auto windshields)
Gyrocompass	1911	1920 (ocean steamer navigation)
Toaster, automatic	1918	1923
Photo film, celluloid	1893	1924
Cellophane	1908	1924 (candy, cigar, cigarette wrap)
X-ray tube	1913	1924 (medical use)
Phototelegraphy	1925	1925 (newspaper photos)
Steel, stainless	1916	1925 (kitchen utensils)
Lamp, incandescent	1924	1926 (home use)
Loudspeaker, dynamic	1924	1926 (radios & movie projectors)
Elevator, push button	1922	1927 (hotels, office buildings)
Photoelectric cell	1895	1928 (industrial use)
Movie, talking	1927	1928
Vacuum cleaner, electric	1907	1929
Arc welder	1919	1931
Gasoline, high octane	1930	1931
Airship, rigid dirigible	1900	1932
Food, frozen	1924	1933 (train transport)
Air conditioning	1911	1934 (home use)
Motion picture projector	1894	1935
Washer, electric	1901	1939
Circuit breaker	1925	1940 (electric streetcars)
Tank, military	1914	1939 (extensive military use)
Geiger counter	1913	1944
Photo, color	1892	1945 (amateur photography)
Television, electronic	1927	1946 (New York broadcast area)
Rocket engine	1926	1947 (military planes)

## Selected Scientific Discoveries

Discovery	Date	Summary
Adrenalin	1901	(hormone secreted by adrenal glands)
Anesthesia, spinal	1898	(pressure on spinal nerves deadens pain)
Antitoxins	1891	(early idea of antibodies in blood)
Atomic numbers	1913	(numbers symbolizing chemical elements)
Atom-smashing	1919	(theoretical action of a cyclotron)
Barbital	1903	(narcotic drug)
Bromine	1924	(extracted from seaweed)
Carbon oxides	1925	(plant/animal cycle)
Conditioned reflex	1914	(psychology)
Cosmic rays	1910	(unknown rays from space)
Cyanamide	1905	(fertilizer)
Electron	1897	(particle of negative charge)
Evolution	1858	(origin of life and its change over time)
Insulin	1922	(diabetes remedy)
Isotope theory	1912	(variant electron structure in atoms)
Mendelian laws	1866	(principles of heredity)
Neutron	1932	(electrically neutral particle of an atom)
Positron	1932	(positively charged electron)
Proton	1919	(electropositive particle of an atom)
Psychoanalysis	1900	(method of treating nervous disorders)
Quantum theory	1900	(division of energy in finite increments)
Periodic table	1869	(grouping elements by similar properties)
Radioactivity	1896	(emissions during atomic disintegration)
Relativity theory	1905	(effects influencing basic observations)
Schick test	1913	(measuring susceptibility to diphtheria)
Sulfanilamide	1935	(basic compound of most sulfa drugs)
Vaccine, typhus	1909	(preventive medicine)
X-ray	1895	(short wave electromagnetic radiation)

brakes installed on the elevator car which prevent it from descending too rapidly; these brakes are designed to activate automatically should the power be cut. Next the saboteur would have to remove a few hundred pounds of hydraulic cushion buffers at the bottom of the elevator shaft. Finally, the determined saboteur must cut through the six braided steel cables that the elevator car hangs by; each one is designed to be capable of bearing the entire weight of the car.

Presuming that our eager assassin has reached this point without being detected, he will find his attention much too occupied to enjoy the sight of the elevator plunging to the bottom of the shaft. The freshly cut cable he is clinging to will be whipsawing upwards, propelled by the counterweight at the other end which once balanced the weight of the elevator car. Extraction of the saboteur's corpse from the elevator's motor at the top of the shaft is likely to prove problematic and rather greasy.

## Electric Light

Invented: 1801

Widespread Use: 1925

The first electric light was an arc lamp, invented as early as 1801. However, it was large and bulky, gave off a harsh, irritating glare, and was too delicate for regular use. It was not until 1878 that C.F. Brush devised an arc lamp efficient enough for commercial use. Within a few years, Brush lamps were in standard service for lighting streets and factories. In the 1930s they continued to be used extensively for searchlights and certain types of motion-picture projection. However, the arc light has never been suitable for ordinary domestic use; it cannot be efficiently developed into small lamps and needs constant readjustment.

The Cooper-Hewitt mercury arc lamp was released in 1901. This lamp is well-suited to photography and industrial uses. But it is impractical for general illumination as it produces unnatural color effects, and has delicate and costly inner structures. Aside from its light-giving qualities, the mercury-vapor arc, when inclosed in a fused quartz tube, is the most powerful source of ultraviolet rays known.

In 1880, Thomas Edison developed the practical incandescent lamp. His main problem was finding a filament that would not burn up when electric current was applied to it; he finally settled on carbonized bamboo fiber. However, the carbon filament fell apart rapidly when heated by the current required for maximum lighting efficiency. For this reason, the old carbon lamps could give only a dim, yellowish illumination. Drawn tungsten wire replaced bamboo in 1910, resulting in much brighter lights. In 1925, frosted glass lamps were offered for sale and standardized methods of manufacture greatly reduced the price of electric lights.

Originally, theaters and other places of amusement were the greatest users of electric lights, and an actor who got his name in lights had reached the the pinnacle of success; but later commercial advertising outshone the theater

announcements. Millions of dollars are spent in this bid for public patronage. In 1939, one company spent over a million and half dollars a year for its New York signs alone.

Though New York's Great White Way may set the fashion in the use of electric signs, virtually every other modern city and town from Buenos Aires to Quebec has its own "white way" where glowing letters, shifting slogans, and animated figures proclaim in many colors the merits of a restaurant, an automobile tire, or a toothpaste. Newspapers and moving-picture houses use signs in which a continuous stream of words seems to flow around a building, telling of the happenings of the day or of the attractions awaiting movie-goers.

## Gasoline

Invented: 1891

Widespread Use: 1915

Early petroleum refining used a process known as step-by-step heating, or fractional distillation, to boil off the various groups of fuel products. After distillation, a typical barrel of crude oil might yield 25% gasoline and 15% kerosene. Before 1900 these proportions were satisfactory, as kerosene was the most valuable fuel product. In those days gasoline was largely a waste product, of little market value. It was sold as heating fuel, or even dumped in rivers to get rid of it. Eventually laws forbade this—not because of health concerns, but because of the fire risk involved.

Invention of the automobile not only created a market





for gasoline, but by 1915 brought the petroleum industry to a crisis. In this year, the sale of gasoline exceeded that of kerosene for the first time, and fractional distillation could not meet the new demand for gasoline. Without new refining processes, the limit seemed to have been reached and a gasoline famine threatened. But in 1912 a cracking still devised by W.M. Burton made petroleum yield 45 percent gasoline and only 6 percent kerosene. The gasoline demand could be met without requiring the production of ruinous quantities of undesirable products.

In the first automobile engines, the gasoline vapor in the cylinders was compressed to one-quarter its volume before ignition. Higher compressions gave more power, but could not be used because the vapor exploded too soon and kicked back or knocked. In 1922 Thomas Midgely Jr. found that adding a little tetraethyl lead to gasoline permitted several times the usual compression without knocking. Treated, or ethyl, gasoline was first sold in 1923.

In the 1930s engineers adopted the octane number test for rating the anti-knock quality of fuels. The higher the octane number, the more compression the fuel will stand without knocking. Refiners soon learned to improve the octane-number ratings of ordinary gasoline. In 1933, compression ratios of over six to one were possible in automobiles. Aviation fuels, with octane ratings up to a hundred to one and used in high-compression engines, enabled airplanes to fly with heavy payloads at what once was racing speed.

## Geiger Counter

Invented: 1908

Widespread Use: 1920

The German physicist Hans Geiger developed the radiation counter in 1908. The counter is usually in the form of a thin metal cylinder filled with a gas and enclosed in a glass tube. When ionizing radiation strikes the gas, it sets up a weak electrical current. The current is then translated into clicks picked up by earphones, or by readings on a meter. Geologists and prospectors using portable Geiger counters to find radioactive materials have found that these instruments are not sensitive enough for their purposes. Larger Geiger counters are too large and clumsy for use in the field. As a result, the smaller scintillation counter, based on designs made by Geiger in the 1920s, has largely replaced the Geiger counter for survey work. Scintillation counters detect radioactive substances by measuring the tiny flashes of light given off when a phosphor is bombarded by alpha particles from radioactive materials.

## Phonograph

Invented: 1877

Widespread Use: 1926

In 1877, Thomas Edison developed the first commercially practical device for mechanically recording and reproducing sound. His invention was called a phonograph. The basic mechanism of the phonograph was a needle attached to a diaphragm that vibrated when struck by sound waves. In or-



der to record sound, Edison allowed the needle to rest against a cylinder covered with tin-foil. The cylinder was revolved rapidly while advancing to the right, so that the needle traced a spiral groove around it. As the cylinder spun, the diaphragm caused the cutting needle to be driven into the cylinder at various depths.

To reproduce sound, the cutting needle is replaced with a playing needle and the process is reversed so that the needle transmits the variations in the groove to the diaphragm. Edison's tin-foil cylinder was only good for a few playings, after which it became so worn as to be useless. In 1885 it was replaced by a wax-coated cardboard cylinder which was more durable.

In 1887 a flat disc made from shellac and clay was introduced. The mechanics of spinning a disc were much simpler than rotating an advancing cylinder and therefore cheaper to manufacture. The newer disc-playing machines were properly named Gramophones, but the general public used the terms phonograph and Gramophone nearly interchangeably.

The two different systems had their advantages and disadvantages. The Gramophone discs were more vulnerable to rough handling than phonograph cylinders, but were more durable during regular use. Discs also took less room to store when not in use. The phonograph owner could easily record his own cylinders, while the Gramophone user could not. But most important for commercial use is that many high-quality recordings could be made from one master disc; while cylinders were, for practical purposes, irreproducible. Gramophones made the music recording industry possible.

As time passed, disc recordings improved. Discs made from celluloid were nearly unbreakable and microgroove cutting doubled the playing time of a 10-inch disc to nearly five minutes. In 1926, improvements in recording processes increased the range of tones that could be reproduced on disc. Recorded voices no longer had a tinny quality to them. There were also improvements in Gramophone equipment: reliable electric motors replaced spring-driven turntables that occasionally ran too fast or too slow; acoustically correct sounding chambers and vacuum tube amplifiers that could be concealed inside the Gramophone cabinet replaced the bulky trumpet-style horns; combination radio-Gramophones were offered that could switch from record player to radio receiver with a flip of the switch; equipment for making records at home was also available.

### *Photographic film, celluloid*

Invented: 1893

Widespread Use: 1924

### *Photographic film, color*

Invented: 1892

Widespread Use: 1944

The most popular cameras in the 1920s were the celluloid-film cameras, either of the box variety or of a folding type

which closed up like a book. The film is simply a long strip of transparent celluloid coated with sensitive silver salts. This is wound on a spool beneath a backing of dark-colored paper which shuts out all the light. The film cartridge may be loaded in the camera by daylight, and a simple winding device draws it across the back of the camera, exposing one section of the film after another behind the lens. Each spool of film was good for a hundred pictures.

Before the introduction of celluloid film, printing photographs was a matter of peeling the light-sensitive gelatine off its base and transferring it to a plate of glass—too delicate a task to be done by amateurs. With celluloid film, printing photographs became much easier because the gelatin emulsion did not have to be removed from the base. Processing kits were available for persons who wished to develop and print their own pictures.

Celluloid film cameras were made either of the small fixed-focus variety, which required no adjustment, or they had a focusing scale which indicated how the lens bellows should be extended for different distances. They also had a tiny view-finder, which showed by mirror reflection the exact view the camera covers. A type of camera in wide favor used a film pack containing twelve flexible exposures arranged so that pulling a paper tab after each exposure uncovered a fresh film ready for use.

Ordinary black & white celluloid film was sensitive only to the blue and violet parts of the spectrum, consequently red or yellow objects always came out black in the finished picture. In 1909, other emulsions sensitive to all the colors in various degrees appeared on the market. These were the panchromatic films. Even infra-red rays affected panchromatic emulsion; hence it is possible to take pictures in rooms which appeared totally dark, provided infra-red rays in sufficient amount were present.

At the very beginning of the art of photography it was observed that traces of color sometimes temporarily appeared in a photographic negative, but only after 1916 were methods discovered of rendering the colors permanent. One method which had been developed far enough by 1920 to be considered a commercial success consisted of taking three negatives of a subject through red, green and blue filters. From these negatives three transparencies on glass were printed, which were superimposed by being projected on a screen by three lanterns with colored lenses. Until the 1940s, direct-color prints were still beyond the reach of the beginner. But color slides, or projected film as it was known, was widely available in the 1930s. However, the development technique was a company secret and so the film had to be sent to the manufacturer for processing.

### *Television*

Invented: 1927

Widespread Use: 1946

A television apparatus was developed as early as 1884, but until

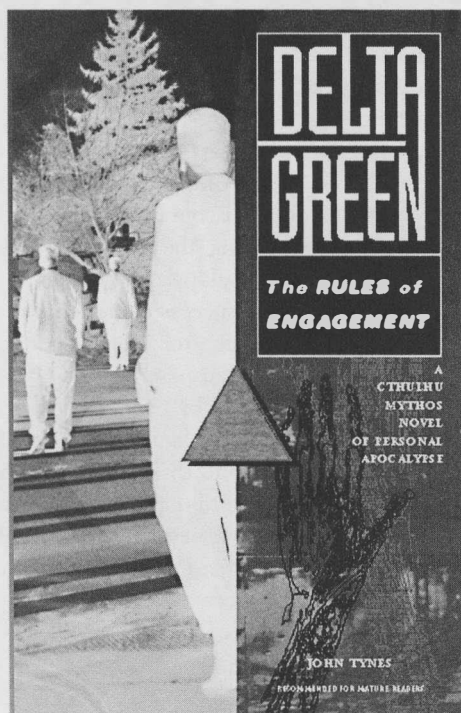


1927 it could produce only flickering and feeble images. In the 1930s, wire transmission of television for small pictures was made practical by using a coaxial cable. Such a cable was installed in 1936 between New York and Philadelphia. That year there were television receivers in 150 homes in the New York City area. The first program broadcast was a cartoon of Felix the Cat. Widespread wireless television broadcasting remained impractical as the shortwaves of television transmission have a reliable sending range of only 25 miles. Since 1939, receiving sets have been on the market in the United States. But programs were broadcast from New York studios to only a portion of the East Coast. Nationwide development of television awaited the discovery of methods of generating sufficient revenue from programs to meet the huge cost of erecting the necessary stations and connecting them by coaxial cable. ☞

Photographs taken from the following collections of the online digital archive of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division:

*Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record*

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# A Tale of Terror

## Shallow Roadside Grave

by Brian Appleton

A highway construction crew making repairs to Interstate 57 near Mound City, Illinois, has uncovered the remains of an individual. Mound City is located at the southern tip of Illinois near the borders of both Missouri and Kentucky. The body is in very poor condition, and only the skull, a femur, and a few smaller bones still exist. The finding of the remains may not be unusual due to the fact that there are many Native American burial mounds left behind by the Mississippi River Valley Mound Dwellers. But these remains have a fractured skull, and

a determination must be made as to whether or not this was foul play. So the investigators have been called in to examine the body and make a determination about the cause of death.

### Possibilities

1) The body is discovered to be the actual remains of a Native American male. The individual died due to some trauma to the head, probably caused by a bludgeoning weapon.

2) The remains are all that are left of Thomas Goodwin. Thomas was a business man living in Cairo, Illinois, who ran afoul of the Chicago mob in the 1920s. A couple of mob hitmen kidnapped Thomas and drove him out into the local countryside. There they clubbed him to death and buried him in a shallow roadside grave. Most of the skeletal remains were dug up and carried off by local predators. The investigators can determine that the remains are those of a Caucasian male and that the fractured skull was caused by a bludgeoning weapon. They will have a difficult time determining exactly who the victim was.

3) The investigators learn through dental records that the remains are from a missing local man named Terrence Pendleton. Terrence was a member of a small group of men who dedicate their lives to fight the evil of the Mythos. He was killed in a cornfield during a fight with a local cult dedicated to He Who Walks Behind the Rows. His companions carried his body away and gave him a burial in a shallow roadside grave. The investigators can track down this group, but may have trouble figuring out which side these violent, secretive men are on. ☞



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# Arcane Artifacts

## Chimera's Womb

by Serge Stelmack

The unholy artifact known as the Chimera's Womb was designed by the eighteenth-century French alchemist Leon Mortielle. Crafted by the finest glass-blowers of Italy from a strange powder provided by Mortielle, the artifact was completed in 1745 after almost fourteen years of work. The Womb is a hollow sphere of purplish green glass, approximately 14" in diameter and weighing just under seven pounds. Its exterior is decorated by an intricate pattern of interlocking insect, squid, and fish shapes, some of which seem to bear vaguely human features. At its base are three ornate brass legs to keep the item upright, and at its top is a small copper funnel.

Within the womb is an immensely complex series of tiny connecting glass pipes and spheres which grow gradually to blackness as they approach the core of the item. Even under the strongest of lights, the artifact's center is lost in blurry shadow.

Currently in storage at the National Museum in France (where it has been since 1753), the only reference to the artifact's purpose comes from an unfinished, untitled manuscript written by Leon Mortielle in 1748. Translated to English, the passage reads as follows:

The womb of woman is too fragile to produce that which is born where the sun (light?) is but an ancient tale. Hard angles of glass shall suffice, and when the blood of human and inhuman is poured within so shall a child of the depths be conceived. For this did I labor long years, with elements of stars so dark as they cannot be seen. A perfect hybrid can now be produced, and our new king may ascend to the stars.

Mortielle's purpose in creating the Chimera's Womb was to hybridize humans and creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos. By pouring the blood of both a human and a Mythos being into the funnel at the top of the womb and leaving the artifact in a closed container for three to eighteen months (the time depending on the type and amount

of Mythos blood being utilized), one creates a tiny hybrid infant about 4" in length.

Though diminutive, the little abomination will break out of the womb once it has matured and thus be born. Free of its glass prison, it will grow and mature to adulthood within a matter of days.

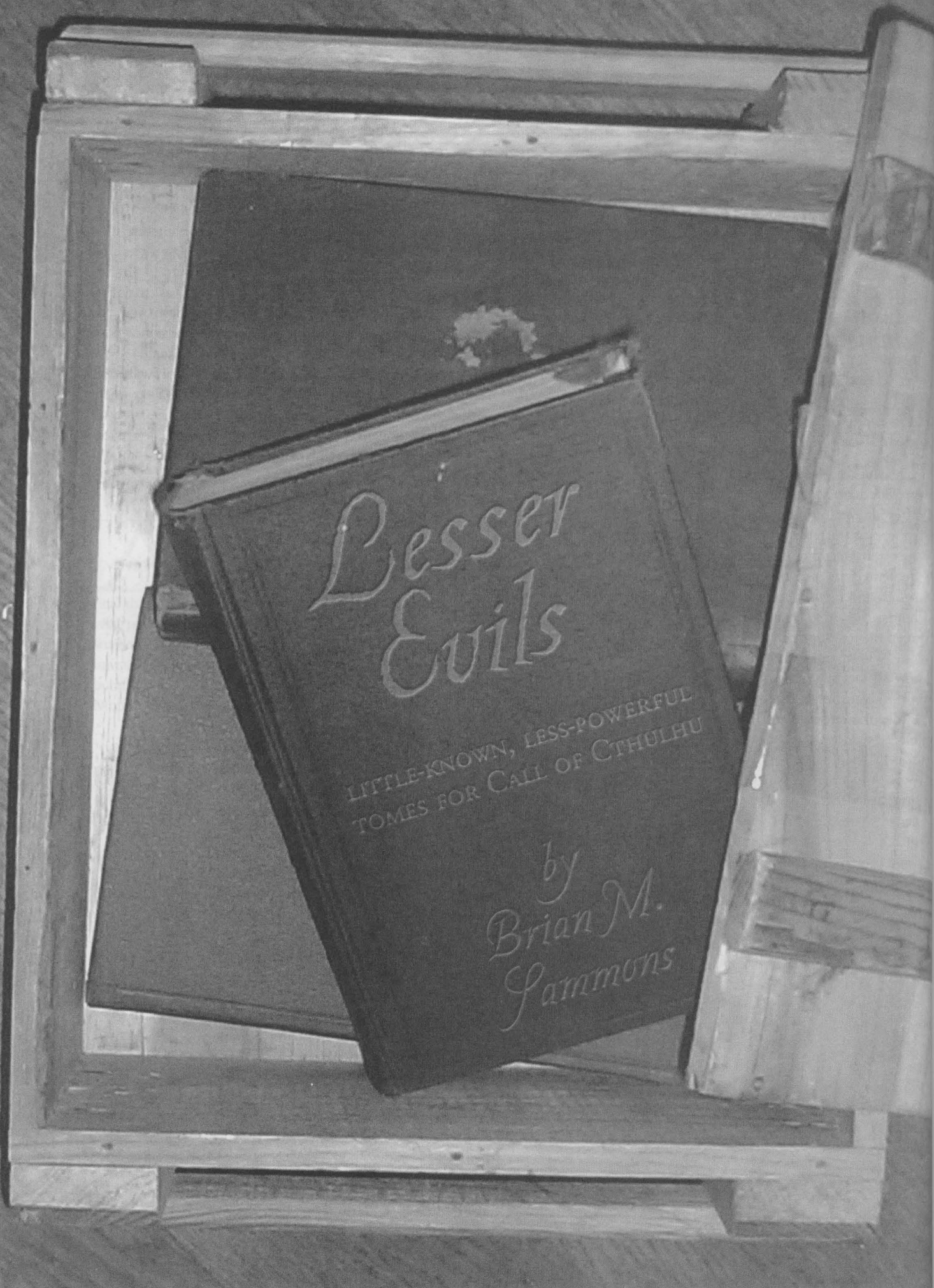
Though Leon Mortielle was executed in 1750 for murders connected to his unwholesome experiments, the Chimera's Womb was spared destruction. Held as a piece of evidence during Mortielle's trial, it was transferred to the National Museum after his death. Though the vast majority of the alchemist's documents have since been destroyed, rumor has it that plans for the artifact are still in existence, lost somewhere in the records of the Venetian glass guilds.

Individuals interested in the Chimera's Womb will have trouble finding it, as the bizarre item is packed away deep within the storerooms of the National Museum. Because of its obscurity, however, the artifact could likely be destroyed or taken from the museum without the immediate knowledge of curators.

In fact, it might already be missing. ☞







# Lesser Evils

LITTLE-KNOWN, LESS-POWERFUL  
TOMES FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

by  
Brian M.  
Jammons

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I've got a question for you: Do all Mythos tomes have to be leather-bound, ages old, 500-page-plus moldy books written in a foreign language with so much diabolical information in them that the reader's brain will melt just by reading the footnotes? The answer is no. The forces of the Mythos have been around since before the dawn of time and they have influenced the lives of humans in countless and unfathomable ways. As such, elements of the Mythos must have surely trickled into other creative works than the typical Big Book of Arcane Lore. For every *Necronomicon*, there should be dozens of lesser works that try to cover the same material but do so incompletely or incompetently. For every tome like *Unausprechlichen Kulten* that blatantly tells the reader, "Look, this is how the world really is!" there should be many more that hint and allude to the truth, sometimes without the author even knowing that he's doing so, but never coming right out and saying what that awful truth is. Yet at best, *Call of Cthulhu* gives only a passing nod to these other, less awe-inspiring books, while focusing most of its attention on the Big Boys of Mythos-inspired literature. This is fine for the sake of conciseness, but not for completeness, nor for a long-term CoC game.

Question number two: What happens when the players always find the same big books of the Mythos—i.e., tomes with lots of Cthulhu Mythos, lots of sanity loss, and lots of spells? Well, a couple of things happen. First, the investigators will most likely go insane or, after witnessing enough of their friends going bonkers after spending a night in the library, will avoid these eldritch tomes altogether. Neither one of these outcomes are very fun as there are so many other, more interesting ways to drive an investigator mad. And after all, books are meant to be read. Also, if you've been a Keeper of CoC for a great length of time than you run the risk of becoming redundant, predictable, and worst of all, *boring* with your selection of reading material. Players soon become jaded if the same tomes are used over and over again, even if in different campaigns, and the thrill is soon lost. There are only so many times the players can find *Cultes des Goules* and the book still be interesting and mysterious.

One last question, I promise. Let's pretend that you are running a sword-and-sorcery type of game; would you have the young knight find Excalibur in his first adventure? Of course not. There's no fun in that—and more importantly, how do you top it? What spurs the knight on to further adventures if they will never receive a greater prize than what they already have? Well, in *Call of Cthulhu*, old, musty tomes of mind-numbing horror are the greatest prize to be found, so it only makes sense that investigators should find the smaller, less-informative and less-powerful of the books first and then work their way up. Large, legend-inspiring grimoires should be used sparingly, as finding such books is often the reward of someone's life-long work. Now, if you are running a self-contained campaign out of a book where the investigators are created just to run that adventure and

once it is over they (hopefully) retire, than this is not a problem. But if you are running a continuing game with the same players, then you could face the problem of trying to top yourself after the players have already found the Mythos equivalent of Excalibur.

As a Keeper myself, I've faced these very same problems. I have been running CoC for many years with essentially the same group of players and, although finding new adventures was never a problem, finding new books of Mythos lore was. Of course, I made up some evil tomes of dark power of my own, but I always liked to use "real" books—that is, volumes that have actually been in a published Cthulhu Mythos story. Also, some of my players who are more well-versed in Mythos fiction like to see titles of tomes that they have only read about but never run across before during the game. Luckily for me (but to the detriment of my wallet) I had access to many such stories. I knew that some of them had to contain books that were not overly powerful and that Chaosium had overlooked when they created the CoC rule book and the *Keeper's Compendium*. Well, I found them, tons and tons of them. So I began to catalog the titles, made CoC stats for them, and started to use them to the enjoyment of both my players and myself. Here is a small collection of some of my favorite lesser evils that you can use to spice up your next game.

## Fact or Fiction?

Not all books about the Mythos appear to be so at first sight. As such, they are often overlooked by those who burn and ban books and therefore are more commonly available than, say, the *Necronomicon*. Most of the titles that go unrecognized as being Mythos tomes do so by hiding their message of horrible facts in the guise of horror fiction. The authors of such works may do so on purpose, but more likely it is because they are fiction writers and it is the only way they know how to express such disturbing thoughts. Usually it takes a reader who is already aware of the Mythos to pick out and understand references to the Mythos, but even untutored people who are already mentally unbalanced or exceptionally sensitive have been known to read such books and have very interesting results.

## Black God of Madness

This little-known novel was written by Amadaeus Carson, the semi-famous author of several romance novels popular during the 1930s. When Carson rented an old house in Salem's notorious "witch district," his days of writing romances were numbered. The house he occupied had originally been built by a woman named Abbie Prinn, who was widely believed to be a witch and the high priestess of a dark god that dwelt deep beneath the hills. Legend says that Prinn was burnt at the stake as a witch in 1692, yet the flames could not burn her vile flesh. It was into this decrepit,



### *Black God of Madness*

by Amadaeus Carson

**Language:** English

**Cthulhu Mythos:** +3

**Sanity:** 1D2/1D4

**Study Time:** 3 days

**Spells:** Vach-Viraj Incantation

**Spell Multiplier:** x1

**Adapted From:**

Kuttner, Henry, "The Salem Horror" *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*. Arkham House Publishers, Inc. Sauk City, Wisconsin, 1990.

gabled house, with its dark history and its past shrouded in myth, that Amadaeus Carson moved and it wasn't long until he found the secret witch-room hidden behind a wall in the cellar. Soon after the discovery of that room came the awful truth of what really became of Abbie Prinn and her dark god. Luckily, Carson had the help of occultist Michael Leigh, and with Michael's access to the dreaded *Necronomicon* he was able to identify the ebon horror as the Great Old One Nyogtha. The two men were able to drive the creature away with a magical incantation, but not before it forever left its dark mark on Carson's psyche. Soon after that night of horror, *Black God of Madness* was born.

Amadaeus Carson's new—and last—novel deals with Nyogtha, witches, black magic, and also contains the Vach-Viraj Incantation used to drive the Great Old One back underground. Because none of Carson's regular editors would print this book, officially it has never been published. However, copies of this very rare novel have been seen in the private libraries of wealthy collectors of macabre horror fiction. Many historians of literature have surmised that Amadaeus Carson must have used his own money to print a very limited run of his dark masterpiece, although this has never been proven. The original manuscript to this novel has been lost for years, but some bibliophiles say they heard it was found by one Winfield Phillips of Arkham, Massachusetts, in a collection of rare books he inherited from an estranged uncle. To date, no one has been able to contact Winfield Phillips and question him about this priceless document.

### *Soul of Chaos*

Although this book is the second novel written by Edgar Gordon, a strange genius who wrote weird fiction during the Roaring Twenties, it is perhaps his best known and most horrid. Edgar's tales of eldritch creatures and alien landscapes were not to everyone's liking, but nevertheless he was regarded as an emerging talent among connoisseurs of bizarre fiction. Gordon always claimed that he got the wild ideas for his stories from his dreams, but once those visions turned into nightmares, his already-strange fiction became increasingly morbid.

### *The Soul of Chaos*

by Edgar Gordon

**Language:** English

**Cthulhu Mythos:** +3

**Sanity:** 1D3/1D6

**Study Time:** 5 days

**Spells:** Contact the Dark Demon

**Spell Multiplier:** x1, x3 for the subconscious mind.

**Adapted From:**

Bloch, Robert, "The Dark Demon" *The Early Fears*. Fedogan & Bremer, Minneapolis, Minnesota: 1994.

#### *Excerpt*

"The world is but a tiny island in the dark sea of Infinity, and there are horrors swirling around us. Around us? Rather let us say amongst us. I know, for I have seen them in my dreams, and there are more things in this world than sanity can ever see."

Gordon's first novel was entitled *Night-Gaunt* and it was a complete failure due to the ghastliness of its theme. Edgar's next book was *Soul of Chaos* and this work was so disturbing that no publisher would dare touch it. Edgar pooled his resources and privately printed this book, which sold modestly well. He used what little money he received from the sales of the book to write and print three other novels, which are considered by most to be of lesser calibre than *Soul of Chaos*. During this time of artistic debauchery, Gordon broke contact with all friends and correspondents, save one man and a few eccentric thinkers in the Orient. It was no real surprise to many when one day Edgar Gordon just disappeared, and was never seen nor heard from again.

The truth behind Edgar's disappearance and his increasingly hideous tales lies in his unusual dreams. When he slept, Gordon's mind would wander into the Dreamlands and sometimes it would journey even past this mystical world into realms and planes of existence incomprehensible to the fragile minds of mortals. It was during one such nightly sojourn into the farthest reaches that Edgar Gordon crossed paths with a powerful entity that he described as "something like a medieval conception of the demon Asmodeus. Black all over, and furry, with a snout like a hog, green eyes, and the claws and fangs of a wild beast." This unearthly monster was really one of the forms of Nyarlathotep and is known as the Dark Demon. (The stats for this creature can be found in Chaosium's *The Creature Companion*.) The Dark Demon convinced Edgar that it was not evil, but merely a superior alien intelligence that wished to communicate mentally with a few chosen humans. Edgar Gordon was unable to find out the real reason the Dark Demon contacted him in his dreams before the fate of his life and soul was already sealed.

*Soul of Chaos* deals with the unseen world that coincides with the "normal" world in which humanity lives. The Dreamlands and dreaming in general also play an important part in Gordon's story. Written into the dialog of the main character is the spell used to contact the Dark Demon in one's dreams. At the Keeper's discretion, this spell may be learned and used by the subconscious (dreaming) mind of anyone who reads this novel even without their conscious (waking) mind knowing it.

### *Whispers magazine*

*Whispers* is a magazine of pulp fantasy and horror, much in the same vein as the legendary *Weird Tales*. *Whispers* has been in publication since the early 1920s and has continued on into the present day, although its heyday during the thirties and forties is long past. Over the years the magazine has undergone many changes in content and style, not to mention over a half-dozen editors and four "final issues" that happily weren't final at all. The magazine has struggled against sagging sales, increased paper costs, the ebb and flow of quality in the weird-fiction genre, and the overly moral horror-fiction witch-hunters of the fifties that had all but destroyed such giants in the field as EC Comics' *Tales From the Crypt*. Through it all, like one of the weird monsters its main stable of writers so often wrote about, *Whispers* would not die, and always seemed to return when it was least expected.

While recent issues of *Whispers* are considered to have some of the best new horror fiction available, it is the older issues of the magazine, particularly those from the twenties through the late thirties, that are the most sought-after by collectors of both morbid fiction and arcane occult writings. This is because during that period in history, *Whispers* had some of the most talented and gifted of writers submitting stories to them. However, these same authors were also some of the most troubled and insane writers of this century, with many of them either disappearing without a trace or committing suicide before their young and promising careers ever truly took off. A partial list of some of *Whispers'* contributing authors reads like a who's-who of horror fiction at that time. Some of these names are: Edgar Henquist Gordon, Michael Hayward, Phillip Howard, Robert Blake, and Randolph Carter, whose frightening story "The Attic Window" appeared in the January 1922 issue. That story, based on the "Unnamable Legend" Carter learned about in his home town of Providence, caused such an outcry of revulsion that every known copy of that issue was pulled from the newsstands.

All in all, as a Mythos tome *Whispers* is a mixed lot. Most issues are harmless, albeit frightening, collections of horror and weird fantasy. However, occasionally an author who has somehow been affected by the Mythos will have a story published in this magazine. Usually when this happens it requires the reader to make a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll to realize that the fiction is indeed based on fact. This

### *Whispers Magazine*

by Various Authors and Editors

Language: English

Cthulhu Mythos: from 0 to +3

Sanity: from 0 to 1D4

Study Time: 1 day, more if issue contains spells

Spells: hardly ever, but they might

Spell Multiplier: never more than x2

Adapted From:

Lovecraft, H.P., "The Unnamable" *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*. Arkham House Publishers, Inc. Sauk City, Wisconsin: 1987.

realization must occur in order for the reader to gain the addition to their Cthulhu Mythos, lose Sanity, and learn spells. The initial Cthulhu Mythos roll may be ignored if the reader knows that the author of the story had a connection with the Mythos, such as Randolph Carter.

## *Selected Chapters*

Everyone knows that famous Mythos tomes are often reprinted and reproduced time and time again. Just how many versions of the *Necronomicon* are there, anyway? Well, sometimes a publisher will decide to reproduce only a part of a book instead of the entire work. This is done for many reasons, including subject matter, financial limitations, and even a lack of understanding the book as a whole. When only a portion of a Mythos tome is reproduced, more often than not the author will choose one of the original book's chapters and try to explore and explain it. Two such chapter selections are below.

### *The Papyrus of the Dark Wisdom*

This is the third section, or book, of the impossibly ancient and arcane *Book of Eibon*. Occult history states that Eibon was one of the most powerful wizards in the Hyperborean age, that he knew much about black magic and the Mythos, and that he did his best to transcribe all his knowledge into this tome. His original manuscript is a thing of legend, as it has only been rumored about and never proven to exist at all. The earliest known translation of this tome is Caius Phillipus Faber's 9th Century Latin version called *Liber Ivonis*. "Papyrus" is the best known chapter of this dark grimoire and it covers many aspects of the Mythos including the history of many different alien races who came to Earth long before the start of Humanity. Legendary Great Old Ones such as Cthulhu, Ithaqua, Yig, and Chaugnar-Faugn are mentioned in this chapter, as are lesser-known entities like Aphoom Zhah, Mnomquah, and Groth-golka. Some independent eldritch races are also covered in this material such as ghouls, Cold Ones, and shantaks.



*(Journal on) The Papyrus of the Dark Wisdom*

by Harlow Sloan

Language: English

Cthulhu Mythos: +4

Sanity: 1D4/1D8

Study Time: 4 weeks

Spells: 1 of the Keeper's choice, plus Summon (but not bind) Shantak

Spell Multiplier: x2

Adapted From:

Carter, Lin, "The Fishers from Outside." *The Xothic Legend Cycle*. Chaosium Inc. Oakland, California: 1997.

*Excerpt*

"... but, as for Groth-golka, that brother of Mnomquah, He descended to this Earth in the regions circumambient to the Austral Pole, where to this day He abideth the passage of the ages beneath the black cone of Mount Antarktos..."

In 1946 two men, Professor Mayhew and his assistant Harlow Sloan, were studying a curious piece of antiquity they found beneath some ancient ruins in Zimbabwe. This artifact was a decahedron of unidentifiable black crystalline stone simply called "the Black Stone." After returning to the United States, Professor Mayhew asked Sloan to go to the Kester Library in Salem to consult the *Book of Eibon*, specifically "The Papyrus of the Dark Wisdom," to aid them in their translation and deciphering of certain hieroglyphs they had copied from the stone. Dutiful and exacting in his task, Harlow Sloan made a meticulous copy of that chapter into his personal notebook. When Harlow returned with the notes for the professor, a horrible tragedy had already befallen the man that caused quite a stir in the town of Salem for many days after the bloody event.

Harlow Sloan's notes have never been published, but have been widely sought after by occultists unable to gain access to Eibon's rare book. As such, many personal copies of his notebook have been made and some even placed on sale at rare book stores as his authentic notes. The location of Harlow's original notes on "The Papyrus of the Dark Wisdom" are unknown, but if investigators frequent occult shops enough, eventually they should come across a copy of his journal.

*Saracenic Rituals*

This is the name for one of the more famous chapters in Ludvig Prinn's *De Vermis Mysteriis*. It relates the story of an order of Syrian wizards in the area of Jebel el Ansariye. Prinn somehow managed to gain the trust of these sorcerers and was allowed to study and observe their craft. This group of necromancers would disguise themselves as holy men or beggars and travel to

some of the world's most evil places to conduct studies in demonology. In Prinn's original book, this chapter contains much information on several creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos, the djinn of Arabian legends, the Black Pharaoh Nephren-Ka, numerology, and the Worm Wizards of Irem. This chapter also contains many spells appropriate to these subjects.

In the early nineteenth century, an English translation was produced in pamphlet form by an unknown "Clergyman X." This work has a lengthy preface that is nearly as long as the text of the "Saracenic Rituals" chapter. In this preface, Clergyman X relates much of Prinn's history, lifestyle, travels, and the sorceries he was said to have wielded. The author also often refers cryptically to other chapters in *De Vermis Mysteriis* that deal with familiars, necromancy, elementals, divination, and vampires. However, when it comes to dealing with the "Saracenic Rituals" chapter, Clergyman X proves to be a lousy literary translator. The author seems to be deterred by his religious background from actually detailing any blasphemous information and in many instances, Clergyman X will often omit Prinn's original words in favor of careful paraphrasings. In most cases, just when the reader would be getting to a part in the original text that would contain Mythos knowledge, that section of the chapter is considerably edited by X and only the minutest of usable information can be learned.

All this is not to say that Clergyman X's edition of "Saracenic Rituals" is completely useless. While it does con-

*Saracenic Rituals*

by Clergyman X

Language: English

Cthulhu Mythos: +2

Sanity: 1/1D3

Study Time: 4 hours

Spells: None

Notes: Anyone reading this pamphlet will either get +5% to their Occult skill or obtain the new skill of Numerology at a base of 5%, Keeper's choice.

Adapted From:

Lumley, Brian, "Lord of the Worms." *The Complete Crow*. W. Paul Ganley, Buffalo, New York: 1987.

*Excerpt*

"In Syria, with my own eyes, I Ludwig Prinn saw one wizard of Years without Number transfer himself to the Person of a younger man, whose Number he had divined; when at the appointed Hour he spoke the Words of the Worm. And this is what I saw... [Editor's Note: Prinn's description of the dissolution of the wizard and the investment of himself into his host is considered too horrific and monstrous to permit of any merely casual or unacquainted perusal -X]"

tain only a fraction of the original work's knowledge on the Mythos and retains none of the spells, it does keep quite a bit of its information on the mystical art of numerology. "Saracenic Rituals" is also in English, and is more commonly accessible than Prinn's exceptionally rare Latin original. Finally, the well-known English occultist Titus Crow has often commented that Clergyman X's pamphlet provided the information needed to save his life when faced with an ancient and diabolical evil early in his career. That just goes to show you: any amount of knowledge is useful if used wisely.

## Mythos Tomes

There is no other way to describe these next tomes, for they make no attempts to conceal what they are about. These books do not claim to be works of fiction, nor are they scholarly, unbelieving studies of reported magical grimoires. No, these titles boldly state that the information they contain, however abhorrent and sanity-draining it may be, is true. Just like the legendary authors of the *Necronomicon*, *Unausprechlichen Kulten*, and others, these writers are trying to communicate the dark knowledge they have amassed over the course of their studies into matters arcane, either to warn or educate those who would come after. The only difference between these books and the better-known Mythos tomes is that these authors were not as successful in communicating those ideas to the reader; therefore, these works are considered less "powerful." However, they still make for interesting bedside reading sure to inspire nightmares both imagined and real.

### *Black Book of the Skull*

This volume of lore was written in an unknown year by J'Cak Igguratan, a scribe from the ancient land of Quy. It concerns that man's search for the legendary Seven Cities of Gold which, naturally enough, held great wealth and knowledge. These mystical sites were guarded by the virtually unknown Outer God Othuyeg and its spawn which lived in the Earth. The cities could only be reached during the summer solstice through a magic gate found in the northern hills of a land called Cakatomia. According to J'Cak, he and his men found the first city of gold and were able to travel to the rest of the cities in numerical order. Each city had buildings and streets made of gold and all had many huge statues depicting various entities of the Mythos such as Cthulhu, Azathoth, Yig, and others. When the travelers reached the seventh city, there was only a single statue of Othuyeg—and its very living and hungry spawn.

The first known edition of *Black Book of the Skull* was written in Greek, but most of these were burnt during the Inquisition. Much later, this book was translated into Latin; however, the translators refused to transcribe certain passages of the original text, even under threat of torture and death. This made the Latin edition far less informative than the Greek. Only one known Greek copy of *Black Book of the Skull* is known to exist and that is held in the Dwayne Univer-

### *Black Book of the Skull*

by J'Cak Igguratan

Language: Greek (Latin)

Cthulhu Mythos: +6 (+3)

Sanity: 1D4/1D8 (1/1D4)

Study Time: 6 weeks (1 week)

Spells: 1D6 of the Keeper's choice, including a spell to contact Othuyeg.

Spell Multiplier: x2 (0)

Notes: Keepers will have to make up stats for Othuyeg and its spawn, as this author knows of none existing in any CoC product.

#### Adapted From:

Burnham, Crispin, "The Seven Cities of Gold" in *Cthulhu's Heirs*. Chaosium Inc. Oakland, California, 1994.

#### Excerpt

"Beware of that which lives under thy feet for one night it will rise up to take thee. For it is known that beneath central Cakatomia, lurks great Othuyeg and his spawn. Trapped for aeons, they wait for when they can reclaim the land above their sunken cities."

sity Library in Amoston, Kansas. Miskatonic University, not to be left completely in the dark on this subject, does have a Latin edition of this tome in its Special Collections library.

### *Chronicles of Nath*

This text was originally titled *Chronike von Nath* when it was first written by Rudolf Yergler, a well-known German mystic and alchemist. Rudolf finished this book in 1653, and it was a good thing that he did for shortly afterwards he was inexplicably stricken blind. As if that was not penance enough for writing such a dire book, the authorities in Berlin sent blind Yergler to an asylum. Rudolf stayed in the madhouse until he died some years later under mysterious circumstances. *Chronike von Nath* might have slipped into complete obscurity due to a strict ban by the German government if it was not for James Sheffield, who translated Yergler's book into English in 1781. Unfortunately, like many translations, much of the original information found in the German edition was lost or purposely left out by Sheffield when he wrote his edition.

*Chronicles* deals with the history of a faraway land called Nath, Land of Three Suns. Some experts speculate that Nath and the infamous Vale of Pnath might be one and the same, but descriptions of the two vary greatly. This book also hints that Nath might be the home world of the Elder Things. This might be true, for translated Elder Thing documents do mention an artifact called the Spheres of Nath. In addition to information on Nath, this tome also contains a musical composition said to bring alien creatures into our dimension. Also found in the book is a small chapter on the magical teachings



*Chronicles of Nath, (Chronike von Nath)*

by James Sheffield (Rudolf Yergler)

Language: English (German)

Cthulhu Mythos: +3 (+7)

Sanity: 1D2/1D4 (1D4/1D8)

Study Time: 4 weeks (8 weeks)

Spells: 1D2 of the Keeper's choice (1D6 of the Keeper's choice).

Spell Multiplier: x1 (x3)

Adapted From:

Lovecraft, H.P., and Rimel, Duane W., "The Tree on the Hill." *The Horror in the Museum*.

Arkham House Publishers, Inc. Sauk City, Wisconsin: 1989.

*Excerpt*

"So in the year of the Black Goat there came onto Nath a shadow that should not be on Earth, and that had no form known to the eyes of Earth. And it fed on the souls of men; they that it gnawed being lured and blinded with dreams till the horror and the endless night lay upon them. Nor did they see that which gnawed them, for the shadow took false shapes that men know or dream of, and only freedom seemed waiting in the Land of the Three Suns."

of the ancient Egyptian sorcerer, Hermes Trismegistus.

*Of Evil Sorceries Done In New-England  
Of Dæmons In No Human Shape*

This small pamphlet was printed by an anonymous author in colonial America as a way of educating "good, God-fearing people" in the art of spotting the witches and daemons that hid in their mists in the guise of their friends and neighbors. Sadly, this treatise on early American black magic has been almost completely unknown over the years, and those who do know of the treatise's existence do not think highly of it. One modern occult scholar has even gone so far as to call the work "A poor-man's *Malleus Maleficarum*, without the original's tact or taste." Yet despite being largely ignored by occultists, this pamphlet is nonetheless highly sought-after by collectors of arcane books both for its rarity and for the shockingly honest depiction of the witchcraft craze that seized New England in colonial times.

Although just under eighty pages in length, this tiny tract does contain a lot of interesting information on the tools and techniques used by witch-hunters of the time to track their prey. Once such quarry was found, this pamphlet instructs the reader on how to "prove" that the accused is a witch. In such fashion, the author hoped that the common man reading this text would be able to properly persecute their neighbors as witches, if the need arose. In addition to all the facts about witch hunting, this book also deals briefly with the superstitions and legends of the local "savage natives," and it is from

these passages that *Of Evil Sorceries* draws its most-accurate information about the Mythos. Such names as Ithaqua, Nyogtha, and Tsathoggua are found within this section, although they are often variously spelled. However, the large majority of this tome's text is devoted to the author's obsessive desire to personally name anyone whom he thought was a witch, pagan, or just plain odd. It is largely because of this libelous name-dropping that the book is rarely taken seriously by occultists. Most agree that the author, who remained anonymous out of fear of reprisal, obviously had malicious intent in mind when he started accusing specific individuals of witchcraft without providing adequate proof. Luckily, none of the people named in this booklet were ever officially charged with worshipping the Devil, not even the man who had the largest section of the book written about him.

That man was Richard Billington, and he disappeared shortly after this pamphlet's publication. That was probably for the best, for the townsfolk from the nearby village of New Dunnich, later renamed Dunwich, were about to come for the man and he most likely would have been killed. One can not blame the residents of New Dunnich, though. After all, several people had gone missing of late and more than one of their bodies were found in an unspeakable state in Billington's woods. These were the same woods where Billington had recently raised a stone tower and a ring of standing stones for no conceivable reason. Hey, maybe the author of this booklet got one right after all? ☞

*Of Evil Sorceries . . .*

by Anonymous

Language: English

Cthulhu Mythos: +4

Sanity: 1D3/1D6

Study Time: 2 weeks

Spells: 1D2 of the Keeper's choice

Spell Multiplier: x1

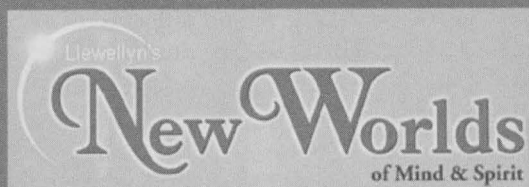
Notes: This pamphlet bestows upon the reader +1D8 to both Occult and History skills.

Adapted From:

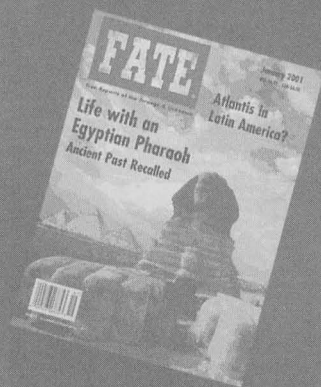
Derleth, August, and Lovecraft, H.P., *The Lurker at the Threshold*. Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., New York: 1988.

*Excerpt*

"Tis said, one Richard Billington, being instructed partly by Evil Books, and partly by an ancient Wonder-Worker amongst the Indian savages . . . set up in the woods a great Ring of Stones inside which he say'd Prayers to the Divell, Place of Dragon, Namely, and sung certain Rites of Magick abominable by Scripture . . . He privately shew'd great Fear about some Thing he had call'd out of the Sky at Night. There were in that year seven slayings in the woods near Richard Billington's Stones."



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# Arcane Artifacts

## Jack the Ripper's Knives

by Ben R. Leeb

**T**hese knives are contained in a black lacquer box of the Oriental style prevalent in the late nineteenth century. The hinged lid is embossed with a faded crimson pictograph which resembles a horned, skeletal centaur; this depiction will cause nausea and abdominal pains if closely examined by a female investigator. When the box is opened, a puff of a faint, fishy, sickly-sweet odor will be released. The inside is covered in a fine blue velvet, heavily saturated with clotted ochre stains. In the bottom of the box will be found traces of a strange orange powder.

The first of two knives is known as a "post-mortem" knife. It has a long, thin, single-edged blade about seven inches long and a handle of black wood. The second knife is a butcher's "dressing" knife, which has a pronounced blade in the shape of a right triangle about six inches long. It is also single-edged and has a thumb-guard. Both knives feel unnaturally greasy to the touch and are heavily stained in the same ochre that colors the lining. Males touching the knives will feel a subtle and disquieting current running through their fingers, while females touching the knives will feel a humid wave of slimy heat pass through them for a moment.

### Properties

The knives are artifacts of Plague Magic, a neo-cabalist form sacred to the corpse-god Graenthoca. They are used in

a perverse "fertility" ritual which grants the practitioner a temporary boost in magical power. To be effective, the knives must first be touched together as a short chant is made invoking the names of both Graenthoca and Shub-Niggurath. Once this is done, a small puff of orange smoke will swell up from the "X" formed by the crossed blades and the knives will begin a sickly, tactile humming. The blades can then be used to ritually kill a prostitute (no other kind will suffice) in such a way that her reproductive organs are removed. These are summarily consumed raw by the user.

Performing this ritual will grant the user a number of Magic Points derived from the victim's POW. The quantity depends on the phase of the moon at the time of the murder.

Waxing	1/2 POW
Full	Full POW
Waning	1/4 POW

The ritual requires 1D6 SAN and a POW test against the POW of the victim. If the user loses the test he gains nothing and is drained of all but 1 MP, the knives taking their due. The ritual may only be performed once in each lunar phase.

### History

The knives first appeared in Germany in the 1830s; their background before this time is not known. Owners of the knives have generally gone mad or been horribly killed. The last known murder committed with the knives, that of Ripper victim Mary Kelly, was done so brutally and so thoroughly that the killer attracted the attention of the Great Mother herself, who rewarded him with terrible visions—especially of the *gift* she was sending him. Rather than receive this gift, the practitioner hid the knives and, loading his pockets with stones, flung himself into the Thames. The knives were recently found by demolition workers, hidden in the wall of an abandoned Spitalfields rooming-house. Unidentified but clearly of criminal interest, they were placed in the Black Museum maintained by the London Metropolitan Police. They were stolen within weeks in broad daylight; parts of a female museum staffer were found "exhibited" in various display cases. Their current whereabouts are unknown. ☞

# REVLAND

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## REVLAND


TRANSUBSTANTIATING THE ÆTHER SINCE NINETEEN NINETY-FIVE  
REV. JOHN TYNES, YE ED.

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 My name is John Tynes, but people call me Rev. I'm a full-time freelance writer, editor, graphic designer, and more creative, among other things. I'm using my web pages to publish material that would otherwise never see the light of day and do things I would otherwise never attempt. Check out the offerings below, and see what grabs your eye.

 (10/20/01) Story for the do-omans—Barland was moving to a new corner. Meanwhile, check out my new short story, *Barland's New Corner*. It's a short story about a man who's been written up in *John's* and appears likely to receive some media attention as a result.

 (10/20/01) How can you keep them down on the farm after they've seen the big city? No. Much, my first published story, is now available on CD. It's a collection of poems from Revland, as well as an original novel, *Stories of Revland*. I've created it from my own stories, and the idea was to give people who didn't read the CD, one of those "another beautiful story" I have been down. Check it out. *Stories of Revland* is available on CD.

 (10/20/01) Oh I should probably do myself a favor and plug my novel, *Tales From The Corner of Long Street*, available at your local bookstore. *Revolutions*: My book was the *Chicago Journal* for last year's *World of 1999*.

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### ESSAYS

Essays, those wacky things you know, you just put one foot in front of the other until it ends up in your mouth.

This is that stuff that I'm supposed to be on the Earth to write, I think, so apparently I should really knuckle down and get busy. But hey, I just brought a Playstation.

---

### FICTION

So many ways to die and still get your soul saved for the rebirth of power in an one-for-all sweep.

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### GAMING

It's okay. Really.

---

### POETRY

Home of *Malleance Season*, the irregular zone that I've apparently been too well-adjusted to write for almost two years.

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### ZINES

Finally, you can buy some crap at Revland. Isn't that what you've been waiting for? Oh, boy!

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### STORE

I like to take photos of things I think are interesting. Hopefully you'll agree.

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### PHOTOS

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10001867

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REVLAND ESSAYS FICTION GAMING  
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# A Tale of Terror

## Every Mother's Nightmare

by Brian M. Sammons

This is a 1990s Tale of Terror involving a close friend of one of the investigators. Nancy Spencer is that friend; she lives in Nebraska with her husband Ronald and their thirteen-year-old son Chris. In many ways they have been the model of quaint, small-town life. Ronald is a third-generation farmer, tending to the land that has been in his family for years. Nancy is an accountant for a small firm in town. Chris is a typical teenager who rebels slightly against his parents with his taste of music and clothes, but otherwise the perfect son. All are seemingly god-fearing, church-going, decent folk.

Then one night, Ronald and Nancy came home from the movies to a gruesome sight. Chris was found hanging by a rope around his neck tied to the second floor banister. No suicide note was left by the youth to explain his grisly demise. The only clues to his death came from the strange state his bedroom was found in.

In the corner of his room lay his beloved German shepherd, Krieger, beaten, broken, and blood-spattered. On his desk burned two black candles and a pad of paper with some drawings of ancient occult symbols. His radio played a CD for a notorious death-metal band called

Satan's Loveless. Lastly, his window was broken and outside in the bushes police found a well-read copy of a popular horror roleplaying game called *Out of the Dark*.

Nancy and Ronald are now seeking comfort with the town's pastor, Reverend Mills. Ronald, the good reverend, and the local police all believe Chris's suicide to be the result of the teen's involvement with rock music, drugs, the occult, and role-playing games. It is Nancy who asks the investigators to look deeper into the matter. She believes that Chris was a good boy and would never get involved in anything like that—or at the very least, would never end his life over it.

### Possibilities:

1) Ronald has a terrible temper which is well-known to his family. That night he did not go to the movies with his wife as he told the police; Nancy went alone and Ronald went out bowling instead. Nancy goes along with his story out of fear, and because she can't come to terms with the idea that her husband might have had something to do with Chris's death.

Ronald had come home early from the lanes that night drunk and angry at his lousy bowling scores. Chris was upstairs blasting his music like most teenagers do when their parents are gone. Exploding into the boy's room, he found Chris preparing some handouts for next week's game of *Out of the Dark*, for which Chris was the GM. Furious at his son for wasting time on such nonsense, he threw the RPG book out the window and punched Chris in the face. Kreiger leapt to the defense of his young master and bit the father. In a rage, Ronald kicked the dog to death as Chris watched, horrified. With his anger spent on the dog, Ronald

left his son to clean up the mess as he went out for some more beer. For Chris, that was the last link in a chain of misery he had endured his whole life. He decided that tonight it would end.

Ronald is now consumed with guilt, but he is determined not to let the truth be known. If the investigators uncover Ronald's involvement in Chris's death, he will try anything to silence them. At this point, murder is not beyond him.

2) The good Reverend Mills is a homicidal psychopath. He sees the devil everywhere and in everyone, but especially in the youth of today. "God" has told him that he is to go and cleanse his town of the evil



*The Unspeakable Oath is/ug*

that infests it. He went to the Spencer home that night to see Chris and either convert him to the way of the righteous or kill him. Spying into the youth's room from the window, he saw Chris worshipping evil from a dark book and listening to Satan's music. The devil-spawn had to be punished.

Reverend Mills smashed the window and attacked Chris. The dog tried to defend his master so Mills killed it. He then strangled the boy to death and tried to conceal the murder with a fake suicide. (Examining the banister will show rope burns on it, as if someone pulled up a heavy object, by rope, from below.) He then crept out the window with the book, *Out of the Dark*, to study the evil further, but it fell and was lost in the bushes.

As the investigators search for the truth, Reverend Mills will continue to kill those children he sees as evil and will try to hide their deaths as suicides. If the investigators get in his way he will attack them with all the fervor and righteousness of an avenging angel.

3) The roleplaying game *Out of the Dark* is responsible for the boy's untimely death. It was written by an evil and insane man with the intent to corrupt those who read it. Hidden in

its pages are cleverly concealed messages relating to the occult and the Cthulhu Mythos. It takes a reader of above-average intelligence to notice and decipher these cryptic passages, and Chris was very bright for his age. Once the boy could understand what he was reading, his sanity began to slip away.

That night Chris tried what he thought was a spell to contact an ancient deity. Instead, it summoned an unbound Star Vampire. The invisible, tittering monstrosity quickly attacked and fed upon the loyal dog, Krieger. As the vampire drained the dog's blood, it became visible and that was when Chris went insane. As the foul beast broke out the window and began to move towards the Spencer's barn, Chris threw the *Out of the Dark* book at it and blacked out. When Chris came around, the full comprehension of what he had done hit him, and he found it to be too much to bear.

The Star Vampire now resides in the family barn. The Spencer's horse will be its next meal, then the monster will begin to hunt. One person a night will be attacked and killed until the Star Vampire is dealt with. As for the book? *Out of the Dark* is a popular game, and perhaps this is only the first in a chain of grisly events. ☸

# Got freak?

The DeGhoule Clan



The Whateley Clan

The Cult of Ezekiel



The Marsh Clan



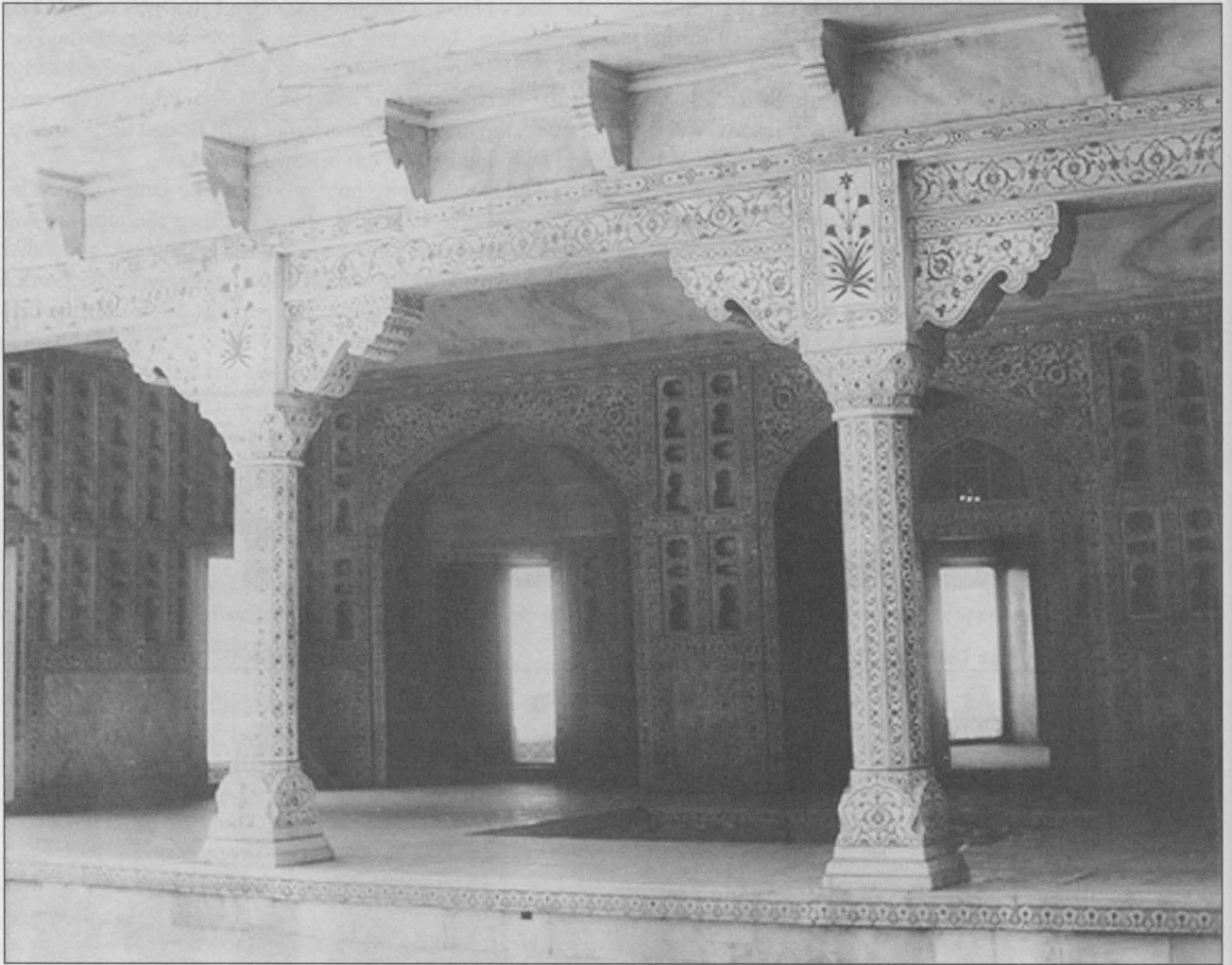
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# The Deceivers



by David Perry  
and A. Scott Glancy

**T**he Thuggee, that band of mysterious murderers who plagued India both during British colonial rule and for untold years before, are one of history's most significant and extraordinary "death cults." The Thuggee are a magnificent blueprint for any *Call of Cthulhu* Keeper who is designing a sinister cult for his or her campaign. This article will try to shed some light on the Thuggee, their beliefs, their methods of operating, the effect they had on India, and how they were finally destroyed. We will also try to impart some of the flavor of the Thuggee and the time and place they lived so that Keepers who wish to use the Thuggee in their campaign will be able to make the ancient cult of stranglers come alive for their unfortunate investigators.

## Introduction

The name *Thuggee* (or the singular form, *Thug*) comes from the Hindi word *Thagna*, which means "one who deceives." They were also known as *Phansigars*, or "stranglers," from the Hindustani word for noose, *Phansi*. The Hindi pronunciation of the word Thuggee is more like TUG-hee. The Thuggee were worshippers of the goddess Kali, of the Hindu pantheon. But the Thuggee were more than just a religious sect; they were also a secret society and a profession. Being a Thug meant leading a secret life, hidden from all but the cultist's true family, his fellow Thuggee.

## History

The Thuggee may have been one of the longest-lived cults in history. Myths and legends as to their origins have been eclipsed by the mists of time. English magistrates investigating the cult discovered that no one could think of a time when there weren't Thugs in India.

The Thugs' first recorded mention is by the French traveler Tavernier in the 17th century. The British government, however, did not become aware of the group until after the siege of Seringapatam in 1799. Following that victory, the English began extending their influence deeper into the Indian subcontinent. Rumors of murderers strangling travelers during the winter pilgrimage season remained unconfirmed until 1816. In that year Richard Sherwood, a surgeon at Fort St. George in Madras, managed to find informers among the cult. His lengthy and accurate book, *Of the Murderers Called Phansigars*, would be the first step on the long road to the suppression of the Thuggee.

India in the 18th and 19th centuries was a lawless and violent place with vast areas under the control of groups of bandits who either bribed or intimidated the local authorities. So it was some time before the British colonial authorities even discovered the existence of the Thugs. When the British government, as represented by the East India Company, finally did learn of the cult's existence their first reac-

tion was one of non-intervention. Religious wars in India have always been savage and, because the Thuggee were a religious sect, the East India Company did not wish to be drawn into such a conflict. So long as the Thugs did not attack westerners, the East India Company preferred to ignore the Thugs' murderous activities, leaving the Indian Rajahs to deal with the problem.

The problem with leaving the suppression of the Thugs to the local Rajahs was that the Thugs co-existed with the native civil authorities. The Thugs operated a system of tithes (in reality, bribes) for the local chieftains and officials whose territory they operated in. The tithe was based on a percentage of the booty they looted from the travelers they murdered in the roads. This, however, was not merely bribery, but a tradition going back untold decades, a tradition that both the Thugs and the chieftains were born into. These people were raised to accept these monies, content in the knowledge that their father and his father before him and so on back in time had done so. Native authorities were not going to suppress an institution which had been filling their pockets for centuries.

However, a British magistrate working in Jubbulpore, William Henry Sleeman, would not let the matter lie. Sleeman had apprehended a band of Thugs in 1822 and realized that this band was not an isolated group, but rather the tiniest thread in a cult which covered all of southern India. Among the members of the gang he uncovered were a local police officer and a government courier. He continued to press the East India Company for the authority and resources to investigate and prosecute the Thuggee. When no resources were forthcoming, he used his own. He collected interviews of captured Thugs, names of known Thugs, locations of well-used *bhils*, or burial sites, and the dates and locations of past Thug expeditions. Perhaps most importantly, Sleeman began mapping a Thuggee family tree. Membership in the Thuggee being hereditary, unraveling the familial connections between Thuggee families and gangs was crucial to discovering who was a Thug and who was not. Sleeman also learned the basics of the Thugs' secret language, *Ramasi*, which the cult used to conduct its business.

By 1826, Sleeman was officially appointed as the head of the Government Office for the Suppression of Thuggee. But even with official sanction and power, suppressing the Thuggee proved more difficult than anybody expected. The Thugs proved adept at using the technicalities of the British legal system against them, and often intimidated witnesses and provided false alibis for accused Thugs. To further complicate prosecutions, the Thugs murdered travelers away from towns and villages and never left witnesses.

These problems were eventually overcome by two legal acts passed by the British authorities in 1836. A special act was passed by which it was made illegal merely to belong to or have belonged to the cult. The punishment for this was life in prison. The act was successful in destroying the Thug-



gee, because it created a situation where merely to be a Thug, let alone murdering travelers, was a huge risk. A second act, and probably the primary reason the Thugs were defeated, allowed the immediate and unconditional release of any Thug who turned in his comrades. Hundreds of Thugs, faced with the gallows, turned on their comrades to save themselves. As the Thugs tended to cooperate in their endeavors, any Thug could not only turn in his own band but several others with whom he would have worked. Thugs who turned informer were called "Approvers."

Sleeman had always been convinced that there was a "Thuggee King," a kind of archcriminal, at the center of the Thuggee organization. Sleeman's instincts were proved right and in December of 1830, Sleeman's agents apprehended the Thug King, Feringheea. Born of noble blood, Feringheea had slipped out of two traps before being betrayed by Approvers who were working undercover in the cult. Faced with execution, Feringheea became an Approver himself to save his life. Feringheea turned in hundreds of his fellow thugs, in addition to exposing secret burial sites, the local officials who cooperated with the Thuggee, and the intimate rituals and techniques of the Thuggee.

By 1840, 3,689 Thugs had been prosecuted. 466 Thugs had been executed. Over 1,100 had been imprisoned for life, and only ninety-seven were acquitted. Many more Thugs were transported for life or died while in prison before they came to trial. Between 1840 and 1853, only 531 Thugs were brought to trial. All of this was accomplished with only fifty-six Approvers. By 1853, the Thugs had been shattered, and although there was isolated sporadic activity by die-hard cultists, within a generation the cult had ceased to exist.

What was even more successful than Sleeman or the anti-Thuggee legislation in eliminating the cult was the growth of centralized authority and the creation of the Indian railway system. The Thuggee, restricted as they were to murdering travelers on the roads, had their supply of victims choked off by the growth of the Indian railway system. With more and more people riding the rails, there were fewer and fewer travelers on the roads, and those who did travel the roads were so

poor as to not be worth robbing. Furthermore, with the increase in centralized authority there were fewer and fewer areas that the law could not reach, and therefore there were fewer safe havens the Thugs could depend on. For the Thugs to flourish, India needed to be a Balkanized patchwork of disunited kingdoms; that time was gone.

In its heyday, the cult of the Thuggee was incredibly extensive, and murdered widely and indiscriminately. As Thugs often existed purely on the profits of these murders and were involved in the cult from their earliest years to their retirements, most must have murdered hundreds of people. This may sound ridiculous, but if we assume a Thug was involved with the cult from the age of fifteen until they were forty-five, and that they went on hunting trips twice a year on which he killed five travelers (all of which, according to testimony collected by British authorities, are low figures),

we can see that he would have murdered three hundred people in his lifetime.

It is easy to see why Captain William Sleeman estimated that the cult killed 40,000 people a year. Sleeman also estimated that the cult went back at least three hundred years. Using these figures, Sleeman believed that the Thuggee could have been responsible for the deaths of as many as twelve million people.

It should be noted that the Thuggee weren't the only practice wiped out by the British colonial administration. They also

ended the ancient practice of *sutee*, the burning alive of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre, and the practice of infanticide of female babies to spare the expense later in life of providing a wedding dowry for them. The East India Company was ruthless in its suppression of practices that offended Victorian sensibilities.

## Practices

Membership in the cult was hereditary, passing from father to son, although there are examples of the cult using female members as decoys and even stranglers. Hereditary membership was the only way to enter the cult and ensured the cult's secrecy for centuries.



Their practice was to travel the main roads of India pretending to be merchants or pilgrims. They would usually travel a predetermined route between two cities. While on the road, they would meet with other groups of travelers and offer to travel with them as mutual protection against the *Dacoits* (bandits) who were a constant danger. If the other group agreed to travel with the disguised Thugs—and with the danger of bandits so great they usually did—the Thugs would spend several days getting to know the travelers, assessing the group's strengths and weaknesses before disposing of them.

Often the Thugs would send scouts ahead to search for a good location in which to dispose of the bodies. Preferred places would be stretches of jungle where the bodies could be easily covered, or sandy stretches and dry river courses where graves could be quickly dug. As Thugs explained to their British interrogators, many Thug bands had favorite spots along the roads which they used over and over again. When investigated, these secret burial sites yielded dozens of bodies, often going back decades as previous generations of Thuggee victims were unearthed.

Once their victims had been assessed, the Thugs would decide who was to kill each member of the travelers. Then one night the Thugs would position themselves behind their chosen victims and at the pre-arranged signal fall on their victims and murder them. The method is described in *The Illustration of the History and Practice of the Thugs*:

... while traveling along, one of the gang throws a rope or cloth around the neck of the devoted individual and retains hold of one end, the other end being seized by an accomplice. The instrument of death, crossed behind the neck is then drawn very tight, the two Thugs who hold it pressing the victim forward . . . In this situation there is little opportunity for resistance.

The favored instrument for the Thugs was the *Rumal*, a scarf which was weighted at one end with a piece of silver so it could be easily thrown around the victim's neck,

and then drawn tight to strangle him. Often one Thug would wield the *Rumal* while two other Thugs assisted, first distracting the victim and then holding the victim's hands and feet until death.

After the travelers were murdered, their bodies would be looted and the profits divided according to tradition, with a portion set aside for the local chieftain, another portion for the performance of a religious ceremony to thank Kali for the kill, and some for a pension fund for the Thuggee band's families. Then the rest would be divided into shares with two shares for the leader, one and a half shares for those who carried out the murders, and a single share to the other members of the band.

Before burying the bodies, the Thugs would gut and mutilate their victims with knives to prevent the bodies from bloating with the gases produced by decomposition, thereby disturbing the graves and attracting jackals. Then the graves would be dug in the prepared spot with the Thugs' pick axes. A Thug regarded his pick axe with the highest importance, as it would be used to dig his victims' graves. It was said to make no sound when it bit into the earth, and would leap into a Thug's hand upon command. It was always forged in secret, washed four times, and consecrated to Kali before being presented to a new Thug. According to Thug mythology, the first pick axes were made from Kali's discarded teeth.

Once the bodies were disposed of, the Thugs would move on to their destination and then return to their home village, all the while keeping an eye out for more victims. The victims' bodies being well-concealed, they were usually never found and become just more victims of India's bandit-plagued roads. This was especially the case where those officials who would be assigned to investigate the disappearances were in the pay of the Thugs.

The *Calcutta Review* describes Thugs planning their crimes "... with as much forethought and ingenuity as though murder were one of the fine arts and robbery a becoming effort of human skill, nay even glorying in such achievements as acts welcome to their deity."







Over many years the Thugs became extremely practiced at their trade. As their murders were committed on the open road and hardly ever discovered, most Thugs lived a perfectly ordinary life apart from whenever they were hunting more victims for their goddess. It was not unusual for a Thug to hunt his entire life and then happily retire on his profits without anyone in his village ever knowing that he was a Thug. It was not unusual for Thugs to even deceive their families and convince them that they were just ordinary people. The fact that no one ever knew who the Thugs were was one of the cult's greatest strengths.

It may offend our modern sense of justice or psychology, but often these Thugs who engaged in murder and pilage, killing hundreds of men, women, and children, would nevertheless live happy and ordinary lives, regarded by their communities as fine and respectable people.

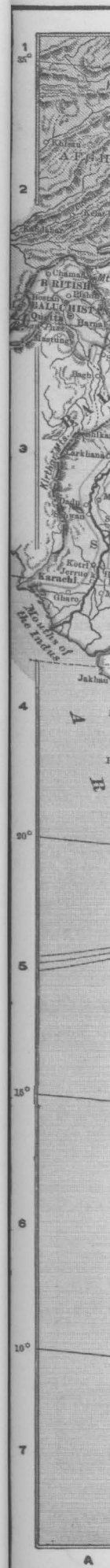
## Beliefs

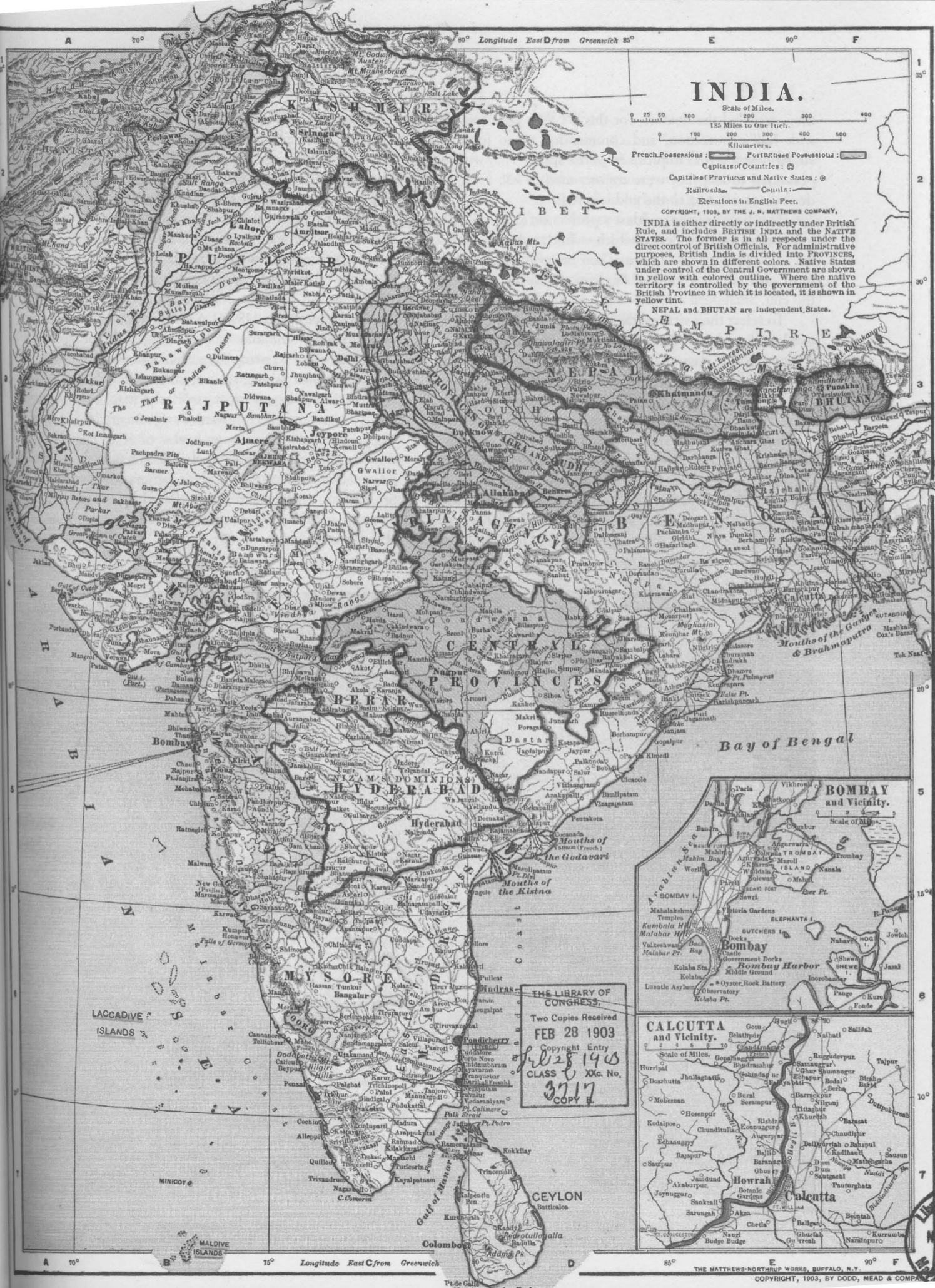
As a religious sect, the Thuggee committed murder as part of their worship of the Hindu goddess Kali. Despite this, the cult's ranks included a large number of Muslims who seemingly found no conflict in their submission to Allah and their

reverence of Kali. A Thug interrogated by Sleeman on this point indicated that he considered Kali to be a representation of Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed.

Also known as Kali Ma, Devi, Bhowani, Wife of Shiva, and the Black Mother, the four-armed goddess Kali is usually represented as wearing a necklace of human skulls. In two of her hands she carries a sword and a dagger, in the other two she carries severed heads. Her earrings are corpses and her only clothing is a girdle of severed heads. Kali represents the terror of divine energy, she who brings in her wake pestilence, terror, and death. She is, however, also renowned as a great slayer of evil demons. Kali stands for energy, both creative and destructive. She is simultaneously the mother who creates all and the destruction which eventually claims everything.

According to the Thugs' beliefs, the cult traced its existence to an encounter between the goddess Kali and an all-devouring demon who threatened the human race with extinction. For every drop of the demon's blood that was spilt, another demon formed. While orthodox Hindus believed that Kali overcame the demon by licking the blood from its wounds, the Thuggee believe Kali formed two men from the sweat on her arms and gave them a strip of cloth with which





# INDIA.

Scale of Miles.  
0 25 50 100 150 Miles to One Inch.  
0 25 50 100 Kilometers.

French Possessions: Portuguese Possessions:   
Capitals of Countries:   
Capitals of Provinces and Native States:   
Railroads: Canals:   
Elevations in English Feet.

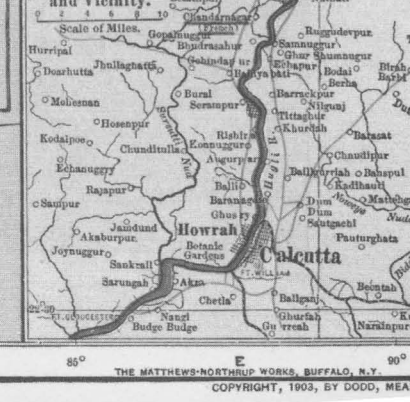
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NEPAL and BHUTAN are independent States.

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they strangled the demon. For this act they were rewarded with Kali's protection, and commanded to go forth and strangle people and to profit from the spoils. They were not permitted to kill; they were *commanded* to kill. Each murder was an offering to the goddess Kali.

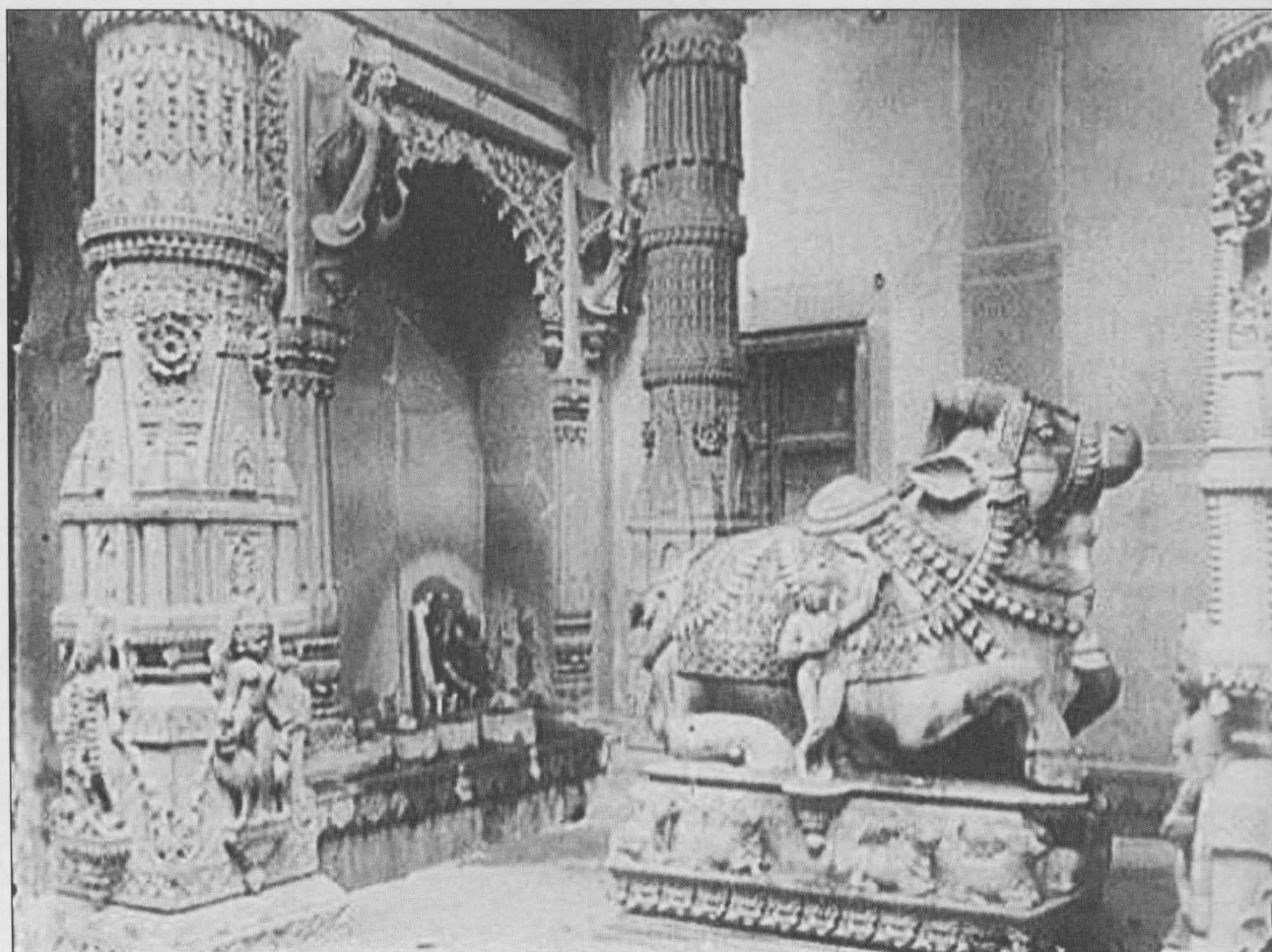
This belief in the goddess's protection gave the Thugs a superhuman confidence which, while useful, sometimes led to slackness and capture. Their belief in the goddess's favor also led to a kind of fatalism which helped unravel the cult.

To select their victims, the Thuggee paid close attention to a long list of signs and portents and observed a list of professions, social classes, and other characteristics that qualified a traveler as either a potential victim or as taboo.

The Thugs had a ritual of worship and devotion that they took very seriously. Before each hunt they would seek omens with the invocation "Great Goddess! Universal Mother! If this our meditated expedition be fitting in thy sight, vouchsafe us thy help and the signs of thy approbation." Ill omens such as a sneeze, a woman with an empty pitcher, or (worst of all) the barking of a jackal were taken seriously and would often lead to a hunt being called off.

According to their beliefs, the Thugs were not allowed to murder priests or holy men. Since Kali was female, the Thugs usually spared women, but not always. Among their list of prohibited victims were goldsmiths, brassworkers, ironsmiths, carpenters, stonecutters, washermen, potmakers, shoemakers, lepers, the blind, and the maimed. There were even more esoteric proscribed combinations, such as any man driving a cow or female goat. Any party containing these personages would have to be spared, as the Thuggee could leave no witnesses.

However, by the 1820s many of these taboos were being ignored for the sake of murdering and looting wealthy parties. Because so many Thugs had ignored these proscriptions in favor of gaining greater wealth through their crimes, it did not come as any great surprise to them that they were being so successfully pursued by Sleeman. In fact, many Thuggee saw Sleeman as an avatar of Kali, hunting them down and destroying them for failing to follow the signs and portents which had guided their fathers and grandfathers. So fatalistic were these Thugs that they cooperated with Sleeman, believing that his victory over them was the undeniable will of Kali.



## Ramsi Vocabulary and Thug Terms

**Adhoreea** An escaped victim.

**Bajeed** "All-clear" signal, called out when the murder site is ready and secure.

**Banij** Thug merchandise, as distinguished from *Bunij*, which is victims' merchandise.

**Baroo** An honored Thug who either has illustrious ancestors or is highly respected for his own deeds.

**Bhils** Thug burial pits.

**Beylha** Thug who scouts for and selects the murder site.

**Bhurtote** Honored rank of strangler. Only *Bhurtote* may ritually strangle victims.

**Bisul Purna** Term meaning a botched strangling; for example, the *Rumal* missing the neck and getting wrapped around the head. Such an error is grounds for loss of *Bhurtote* rank.

**Bojha** Thug who removes the victim's corpse from the murder site to the burial site.

**Borka** Thug who has been initiated into the cult. This is the lowest rank.

**Bunij** Goods or property, also used to describe a person worth murdering for their goods or property.

**Burgeela** Thug accomplice from outside the cult. Such accomplices are not always knowing accomplices.

**Burka** Thug chief or leader. The *Burka* ranks above a *Subador*.

**Cheeha** A cowardly or timid Thug.

**Chookadena** Term meaning the act of distracting the victim, often performed by pointing to the sky or some object above.

**Dhaga** Negotiation, used either to find information about the travelers or when obtaining protection from local officials.

**Dhonkee** A guard or policeman.

**Dhurdauna** The act of strangling a victim.

**Gan Kurna** Thug technique where one Thug pretends to be violently ill and the others convince the victims that a special ceremony must be performed. This "ceremony" assures that all the victims and Thuggee are properly positioned for murder.

**Gobba** Thug circular grave where a central pillar of earth is left standing, around which the bodies are packed. The hole is doughnut-shaped.

**Gookhee** A person carrying bones to the holy river who is therefore exempt from murder.

**Goor** Ceremonial sugar to be eaten after every strangling.

**Goor Ghaunt** The special knot around which the *Rumal* is tied.

**Goor Ponch** A Thug who is capable of tying the *Goor Ghaunt* knot.

**Goneeait**

**Hilla**

**Itak**

**Jamadar**

**Jhirnee**

**Jywaloo**

**Kali**

**Kan Kali**

**Kanthuna**

**Kujjee**

**Khussee**

**Lughea**

**Maulee**

**Phur Jharna**

**Pola**

**Pungoo**

**Putora**

**Ramasee**

**Rhumal**

**Rumal**

**Shumseea**

**Soon**

**Sotha**

**Subador**

**Surbalund**

**Khan**

**Teekula**

**Tombako**

**Kha Lo**

**Tuppul**

**Ustad**

Term for a person who is disfigured by the loss of a hand, nose, or other body part and is considered bad luck to kill.

Title of honor for the three Thugs responsible for the *Kusee* (pick axe), the *Goor* (sugar), and choosing the murder site.

A sign of good fortune.

The signal to kill.

A victim discovered to still be alive after being strangled.

Patron goddess of the Thuggee.

Another name for the goddess Kali.

The practice of cutting up the victim's body to prevent swelling.

Any non-Thug woman. Women are prohibited as victims.

The sacred pick axe Thugs use to dig *Bhils*, *Gobba*, and upon which they swear oaths.

The Thug assigned the job of gravedigger.

A Thug courier who takes money home to the families while the expedition is still underway.

A position of absolute trust.

To clear the murder site.

Secret Thug signals made in the road to indicate direction and urgency.

River Thugs of Bengal. Known to masquerade as barge captains, they murder their passengers by breaking their backs and disposing of the bodies in the river.

A bad omen.

The secret Thug language.

See *Rumal*.

The handkerchief or scarf used for a strangling cloth. It must be weighted with a silver coin at one end, around which is tied the *Goor Ghaunt*.

Thug who holds the hands or feet of the victim.

Thug who has not yet attained the rank of strangler.

Thug who convinces the victims that they should travel with the Thugs.

The Thug who leads an individual "hunting party."

The command for a hunting party to assume their proper positions.

A stolen object which may be dangerous, in that it can be identified as a particular victim's property.

Literally meaning "get out your tobacco," this is the signal for the Thugs to murder their victims.

A path or side road that is convenient for murder.

A tutor or teacher of the art of Thuggery.

INDIA.

Scale of Miles.

150 Miles to One Inch.

Kilometers.

Elevations in English Feet.

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## Ceremonies

The Thugs had special ceremonies for major cult events. Among these were the following.

### *The Ceremony of Acceptance*

This ceremony would be performed when a Thug was accepted into a band for the first time. The Thug initiate would be dressed in new clothes and brought before the group. The group was asked if they would be prepared to receive him as a Thug, and they responded "we are." Then there would be a pause as they waited for an omen to predict what sort of a life as a Thug the new member would have. The new Thug would then be presented with his pick axe, or *Khussee*. He would then raise the pick axe to heaven and swear an oath to Kali. The oath would be repeated on the Koran and then the new Thug would be given *Goor*, a piece of coarse sugar, to eat.

### *The Ceremony of Thanks*

This ceremony would occur after a successful hunt. The leader of the group would be surrounded by the stranglers, who would themselves be seated on a blanket facing west.

A hole was made in the ground near the blanket and a piece of *Goor* placed in it. The leader would then cry out a prayer: "Powerful mighty Goddess! Who has for ages vouchsafed thy protection unto thy votaries, and who particularly to Jhora Naek and Koduk Bunwari (famous Thuggee of the past) gavest one laich and sixty thousand rupees in their need, we beseech thee in Like manner to aid us and fulfill our desires." All would repeat the prayer, then the leader would present each with a piece of *Goor* which they would eat.

## Structure

The Thuggee had a very formal structure with ranks based on criteria such as skill as a murderer, ability to bribe officials, and the Thug's heredity—that is, whether the Thug's ancestors had been famous and skilled Thugs.

The *Subador* was the leader of a band of Thugs. The *Subador* would handle the bribing of officials, deciding where the group would travel, and would lead the group in their devotions to Kali. The *Jamadar* was the sub-leader. Basically he functioned as the *Subador*'s lieutenant. If pickings were poor, the *Subador* often chose to divide the

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group and then the *Jamadar* would take command of the other half.

The rest of the group would be divided by the job they did within the band, although these assignments often changed from hunt to hunt. The *Sotha*, or investigators, would persuade travelers to let them join them on the road. They would often range ahead of the band to find suitable victims. The *Bhurtotes* were the Thugs who did the actual strangling of the victims. The *Lughas* buried the victims at pre-arranged sites, the *Bhils*.

In addition to their secret language, *Ramasi*, the Thugs used hand signals to identify themselves to each other. They also had several arranged phrases that would identify themselves as Thugs. One such phrase was *Ali Kahn, bhai salaam* ("Salutations to Ali Khan, my brother").

Thugs had other code-phrases to disguise commands. The phrase meaning "sweep the place" meant "see that no one is near." "Bring firewood" meant "take up your positions." "Eat betel" was the signal for the *Bhurtotes* to kill the intended victims. And "look after the straw" was the signal for the *Lughas* to bury the victim and keep watch.

## Psychology

"I cannot help looking back with pride and exultation on the many daring feats I have performed . . . and often do I again wish myself the leader of a band of gallant spirits to roam with wherever my inclination or the hope of bounty promised."

—from *The Confessions of a Thug*

From the confessions of many Thugs, it is obvious that the bands were bonded together not only by the desire for wealth and their religion, but also by the thrill of the hunt and the kill. Thugs would glory in the excitement of their hunts, and would be bonded to their brothers by sharing this experience that only other Thugs could know.

Several other things stand out to make the Thugs unique among cults. One is their incredible success rate. The Thugs existed in the thousands and murdered for hundreds of years, perhaps as long as a millennium. The length of time for an underground cult of such illegality to survive is staggering, as is the sheer number of people the cult must have killed.

Another thing that stands out is the group's professionalism, for want of a better word. The Thugs had every aspect of their murders carefully planned. From the murder of their victims, staged to give them no chance to fight back, to the careful disposal of the bodies, to the bribery of local chieftains. The Thugs were renowned for their patience, often traveling with their victims for several days, scouting for appropriate *bhils* to dispose of the bodies before turning on their victims. One wonders at their self-control, to keep their

tension so locked down that the victims didn't become suspicious. One also marvels at their callousness, that they could murder people they had been traveling with and getting to know for several days.

Thugs were also renowned for their persistence. Once the goddess Kali had marked a party with one of her signs, a group of Thugs were duty-bound to pursue them until they could be murdered, or until Kali sent another sign to indicate that the hunt was to be called off. One of the most famous incidents came from the confession of a Thug captured by Sleeman. This story involved the pursuit of a Muslim prince and his two servants. The first group of Thugs, posing as Hindu pilgrims, asked the prince if he would accompany them, but he would have nothing to do with them. On the second day, another group of Thugs tried to convince the prince to join their caravan, but again he refused. On the third day, the Thugs attempted to gain the prince's confidence through his servants, but despite their pleas, he would not join up with another group of travelers. On the fourth day, the prince encountered a group of Muslim sepoys weeping over the open grave of their officer, whom they claimed had died of fever. The Sepoys explained they were illiterate and could not read the proper burial passages from the Koran. Taking pity the prince dismounted and when he knelt to begin the funeral service, he and his servants were strangled by the disguised Thugs—and then buried in the freshly dug grave.

As mentioned earlier, another aspect of Thug psychology is their faith and fatalism. The Thuggee were so confident that their successes were tied to the patronage of Kali that they were equally convinced their failures were linked to her disfavor. So if they were caught by the authorities or failed in their missions, it could only be because Kali was displeased and meant to punish them.

A final aspect that Keepers should take note of is that although they were masters of deception and murder, by no stretch of the imagination could Thugs be called warriors. A Thug's idea of a fight was for three of them to murder an unprepared merchant from behind. In the book *Confessions of a Thug*, the narrator describes how he defeated a traveler in a face-to-face sword fight and is lauded at having committed a deed unprecedented in all of Thug history. While the book is fiction, it is based on real confessions of Thugs heard by the author and the incident presumably reflects the reality of the Thugs.

## Atmosphere

If you decide to use the Thugs in your campaign, then there are several elements that stand out which could be used to good effect. The first and most obvious is the "occult" nature of the organization. The Thugs were part of a dedicated cult with its own rituals, ceremonies, ranks, and



beliefs. These elements should be used to heighten the sense of mystery around the cult and to emphasize how alien it is to the investigators. Drop hints of magic and strange powers, though whether any of this is true for the Thugs in a given campaign is up to the Keeper. However, with a group so shrouded in secrecy, the rumors and legends should build to such a fever pitch as to convince the investigators that the Thugs do have magic powers. If your campaign commonly accepts magic in the normal course of affairs, the Thugs should be rumored to possess weird and god-like abilities far beyond anything the investigators could ever imagine or combat. The investigators will always fear a group of cultists more if they are never quite sure what their capabilities are.

The other element is the secrecy of the Thugs. Anybody could be a Thug: friends the investigators have known for years, kindly uncles, respectable businessmen. If they can deceive their own families, what hope do the investigators have of finding and combating them?

Fighting the Thugs should be a frustrating and nerve-racking experience for the investigators, since they never know who they are fighting or if they've managed to get all of them. Even if the investigators do catch a Thug, proving

he is a Thug is another matter. Besides the rest of the cult intimidating witnesses and providing false alibis, there is always the problem that the local authorities may be in the cult's pay. If the Thug is released, he and the rest of his cult may seek vengeance on their persecutors.

The final thing, the one that make the Thugs so unique, is their professionalism. Thugs have been performing their craft for centuries. Thugs have the knowledge of the countryside, the ability to quickly dispose of bodies so they can never be found, the control of the local chieftains going back generations, the callous ruthlessness to murder families without hesitation, and the techniques of murder refined to such a science that victims never stand a chance. The Thugs are not a group of blind, stupid fanatics, but a lethal and well-organized group with a history going back centuries. What hope do the investigators have of stopping something so old, powerful, and widespread? Keepers should emphasize this tradition and capacity to give the investigators a feel for this unique group. In this way, the investigators will respect their enemies and feel a rightful sense of triumph if they succeed against them.



## Thugs in Call of Cthulhu

The Thuggee, with their overture of dark cults of "damnedable foreigners" and "plucky" colonial heroes, are perfect for *Call of Cthulhu*. Sleeman's investigation of the cult, culminating with the capture of the King of the Thugs, almost seems like a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. The worship of Kali, the Dark Mother, could easily be seen as a distorted view of one of the deities of the Mythos. For example, the true object of the cult's worship could be the Dark Mother Shub-Niggurath. Perhaps, in the context of CoC, the cult's habit of strangling victims is to preserve the victim's blood so that it can be offered up to their goddess or her Dark Young. Similarly, their practice of mutilating and burying the bodies could be to hide the strange marks where Shub-Niggurath and her young fed upon the victims. As for the goddess's protection, the cult would be correct in that Shub-Niggurath, as Kali, does provide protection in the form of the spells and rituals she teaches them to defend themselves against a hostile world.

Kali is often portrayed as black-skinned. Another possibility for linking Kali to a Mythos entity would be that she is another avatar of Nyarlathotep, similar to the Black Pharaoh, the Black Man, Shuggorun, the Small Crawler, or even the Bloated Woman. After all, the Thuggee of India certainly thrived on social and political chaos, and who is Nyarlathotep but the bringer of chaos?

The Thugs make a perfect cult for a 1920s or 1890s campaign set in Colonial India or England. As it is likely that the investigators will have little contact with or knowledge of the locals, or the immigrant population, it will make the Thugs doubly hard to investigate. It ensures that the Thugs have a cover to pull back to, a cover the investigators, being outsiders, will find difficult to pierce. One night the Thugs will be attempting to strangle the investigators in the dark—and the next morning they will be looking after their needs as respectable hotel managers, or driving them around town in a taxi. Even if anybody noticed anything, it's going to take some work to get people to risk the wrath of the Thugs to help non-Indians, especially if they're foreign overlords. Investigators can hop the nearest plane, train, or ship out of the country, but local Indians will be left behind to fend for themselves. Revenge need not come quickly, either. A cult as old as the Thuggee can afford to wait for the right moment.

Another interesting avenue which might be pursued by Keepers is the great Thuggee carpet which fills the Waterloo

Chamber in Windsor Castle. This two-ton, 80' x 40' carpet was woven by Thugs serving life sentences in British goals. Sleeman, far from merely locking away the Thugs he pursued, tried to train them in some other trade than "Thugger." The Thuggee proved to have a remarkable skill at weaving carpets. Their carpets became so famous that Queen Victoria commissioned one for Windsor Castle. Did the Thuggee weave something more into this carpet than fibers and fabric? What threat does it pose to the Royal Family, or even the Pax Britannica?

There are fewer credible opportunities to reintroduce the Thuggee into a 1990s campaign. However, since the Thuggee were supposedly suppressed and disbanded by 1848, any Thugs the investigators encounter, even as early as the 1890s, will be either from a branch which escaped Sleeman's campaign or members of a cult that have rediscovered or reinvented Thuggee practices. So if a branch of Thuggee could survive forty years to reappear in the 1890s, or seventy years to emerge in the 1920s, it's not inconceivable that a modern descendent of the Thuggee might be ringing in the Millennium. ☸

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# *Dhanurvedya, Varman, and Avarna*

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*Knowledge of the Weapons,  
Armor, and Shields of India*

*by Michael J. Varhola*

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FROM A NAMELESS NETHERWORLD, a demon entered into the world of men and began to destroy them. The demon moved through the world, slaughtering humanity and spreading grief and terror as it went, and men were unable to withstand it.

The faithful begged the gods to help them. Dark Kali heard their pleas and was compelled to assist them.

Springing forward to battle, the black goddess confronted the demon, wavy-bladed swords whirling in two of her four taloned hands. Unhampered by the weight of forethought, the dark goddess assaulted the demon with her razor-sharp blades, slicing deep into its throat and sending its head spinning into the dust; its blood flew out in a large swath as her swords sliced through its neck on their lethal path. The demon crumpled to the earth, and Kali's black tongue flicked out of her mouth in satisfaction.

But wherever a drop of the demon's blood had struck the ground, a new demon sprung up, as powerful and destructive as the first. Enraged and berserk, Kali leapt into their midst, twin blades spinning at the ends of her shapely, muscled arms. Left and right, the black goddess cut the demons into hunks and flinders, and black sweat pouring down her black brow and into her three crimson eyes, over her ebony flesh, across her limbs and breasts, until all of the demons born from the blood of the first were destroyed.

In rage and despair, however, Kali saw that from each of the drops of blood shed from the horde she had destroyed another demon sprang up, each as horrible as the first. Innumerable, these monsters all ran in different directions, all across the earth, to complete the ruin of mankind begun by their predecessor. Exhausted and frustrated, Kali sat down on a large rock, her limbs quivering from their exertion.

Deciding what needed to be done, Kali called her two most faithful followers. While mopping the sweat from her body with her kerchief, her *rumal*, Kali gave them instructions. Then she gave them the *rumal* and sent them to perform their mission: to save humanity.

And Kali's followers went throughout the world, and wherever they found a demon that was destroying humanity they wrapped Kali's *rumal* around its throat and broke its neck or strangled it. And in that way, without shedding the blood of the genocidal demons, they expunged them all from the world.

After many years of slaying demons, they returned to Kali to announce the completion of their task and their black goddess received them. With pride beaming in her three red eyes, and a gentle embrace from her four taloned arms, Kali thanked her faithful worshippers for their service to her and to humanity, and then gave them their reward.

"Know, you faithful of Kali, you have saved your own race through your service to me. Were it not for what you have done, the world would now be the graveyard of humanity.

"Keep, then, my *rumal*, as a symbol of your faith and servitude, and as a means of procuring what you will from your fellow people. Take whatever you wish from them, and remember: no matter what you take, it will not be enough, they will always owe you, for without you they would have all been destroyed."

So the followers of Kali returned to the company of humanity, and, following her instructions, use the *rumal* to take from them whatever they desire, unto this very day . . .





Weapons are often as unique and colorful as those who wield them, and many weapons are part of a rich tapestry of history, myth, and legend. When the people encountered by investigators are armed with the weapons appropriate to them it can immeasurably increase the color and the believability of a scenario.

However, all-too-often in gaming little heed is paid to appropriately arming the denizens of a particular region, either because it simply does not occur to a Keeper or because he or she does not have the time or resources to devote to researching what weapons are appropriate to their wielders. Thus primitives wave spears, urban cultists clutch concealed daggers, bandits brandish some of the firearms described in one of the sourcebooks . . . or, really just as bad, the unique people of some part of the world are inaccurately armed and equipped.

Weapons from the Indian subcontinent are described hereafter. These can be used to arm people or creatures encountered in India; to equip cultists who are from or who once dwelled in India; to aid players who wish to play Indian investigators; or even to add color to some of the items in a museum or antique shop.

Accurately arming the denizens of a scenario can greatly increase the intrigue, belief, and interest of the players. After all, a Thug is not really a Thug without his rumal.

## Weapons of India

A wide variety of exotic, lethal, and often beautiful weapons can be found throughout the many diverse states and regions of the sprawling Indian subcontinent. Some of these weapons have familiar counterparts outside of India, but many of them are truly unique, with no equivalents either in the West or the East.

Weapons have always held a place of special significance in India. The vast variety of weapons were catalogued and described by many Indian scholars of the arts of war, and in traditional Hinduism the form of each was considered to be the manifestation of a divinity, or even a gift from a deity to faithful worshippers. Thus, weapons were treated with respect, and sometimes even prohibited to members of the lower social castes.

Although the Indian subcontinent itself can be easily identified, the diverse weaponry used by its thousands of tribes, castes, and ethnic groups is no more homogeneous than they are. For example, certain weapons (such as the boomerang) were used by India's aboriginal inhabitants and only in specific areas. Other indigenous weapons, such as the longbow, were more universally distributed. Similarly, weapons imported over the ages were sometimes used only in a certain region, while others gained more widespread usage.

India was subject to many foreign invasions, each of which left its mark or influence upon her weaponry. Thus,

weapons with origins in many places and times can be associated with the subcontinent, such as the boomerangs of its indigenous people, the battle axes of Persians beginning around 1500 b.c., the pikes of the Mesopotamians in the 4th century B.C., and the scimitars of Arab invaders who worked their way into India over a 900-year period beginning in the 7th century a.d.

The weapons of the indigenous inhabitants of central and southern India and the Andaman Islands are generally the most primitive, while those of the *Rajputs*, who ruled northern India from the 8th to the 13th centuries a.d., and the *Marathas*, a people of southwestern India, are unparalleled in beauty and craftsmanship. In every region of the subcontinent, from the northwest frontier and modern Pakistan, to the hills of the northeast, to the jungles of Burma and Siam, and to the rugged mountains of Nepal and Tibet, the weapons wielded by the local inhabitants all have a distinct character.

## Construction

Indian weapons and steel are among the highest quality in the world.

Indian steel is excellent and some weapons are constructed entirely of it, their hafts included. Alchemists and weaponsmiths forge this fine native steel with a plant native to the Indian subcontinent, the *arka*: a huge swallow-wort with a milky, blistering juice. Nonetheless, steel was also imported from Persia or Damascus, despite a largely legendary reputation for superiority.

Bamboo is another primary material used in Indian weapons. Bows, arrows, and crossbow quarrels, and the shafts of javelins, spears, maces, and other weapons, were often constructed from bamboo.

The hafts of some higher-quality weapons, notably those of Persian origin, contain hidden daggers, twisted loose from the base of the shaft. Maces, morning stars, picks, and battle axes are all known to have been so crafted. Such a weapon will cost at least twice its normal base price.

Ornate decorations and embellishments are often characteristic of Indian arms, and some are so finely crafted and ornamented as to be considered works of art unto themselves. Many are fitted with ivory or jade hilts, or are embellished with *koftegari*, thin layers of precious metal inlaid with fine etchings in the steel of a weapon. Therefore, the prices given for weapons represent only their base values. Any sort of decorative work can greatly increase a weapon's value, from double to ten times normal and perhaps much more. The level of craftsmanship of many Indian weapons exceeds that of contemporary European weapons.

Some Indian weapons were specially modified or designed to penetrate chainmail armor, which was generally the most formidable sort of armor encountered. Certain weapons described here, such as mail-piercing arrows, the *peshkabz*, and the *zaghmal*, have been so designed. Thus, on a critical hit an opponent's chainmail is simply disregarded.

## New Skill

### Hopology (00%)

Hopology is the study of weapons and armor. Successful use of the skill can reveal information about what sort of weapons any given people are likely to use, or not use; what such weapons are constructed of; and what they are used for (hunting, warfare, sacrifice, etc.). It can also be used to identify a group of people by what sort of weapons they are carrying. Hopology tends to be studied as a sub-discipline of another field, such as history or anthropology, or as a hobby.

Example: Prof. Laeric, an historian, has a Hopology skill of 45%. Laeric is examining a fuzzy photograph of a man with a knotted cord held in both hands, steeling up behind another person. It is clear to him that this is some sort of strangling cord, and successful use of Hopology allows him to determine that it is a *rumal*, a weapon associated with the practice of Thuggee. A critical roll, however, allows him to remember that the *rumal* is usually whipped around a victim's neck with one hand before being grasped in both for the *coup de grace*. Thus is raised the question of whether he is looking at a true Thug—or merely someone who wants to be seen as such.

## Supernatural Qualities

In the traditional Hindu religion, all weapons are ascribed to supernatural causes and have supernatural connections. Jaya, daughter of the union between a *Rishi* (a primeval wizard) and a goddess, was made mother of all weapons by Brahma, the creator. The supernatural connections of weapons tend to appear in two ways.

First, all weapons are considered to be the manifestation of a minor deity, and can thus be personified. Dhanu the bow, for example, is six feet tall, has a strong back, a slender waist, a broad neck, and is bent in three places. It has a small face, and a mouth surrounded by terrible tusks from which perpetually come gurgling noises; from this mouth lolls a long tongue with which it continually licks the corners of its mouth. It is the color of blood and is swathed in garlands of entrails.

A physical manifestation of such a spirit might be summoned or unleashed with the right (or wrong) incantations. They are always fearsome, possessing the most frightening qualities of both humanity and the weapons they are the spirits of. Any encountered by investigators should be considered a spirit of the weapon in question, rather than the spirit. Typical SAN loss for viewing such manifestations is 1/1D10, and insanities caused will usually relate to the commission of violent acts—assuming encounters with them are survived at all.

Another supernatural connection of weapons is the association of specific weapons with specific deities. There is often a rich body of myth and legend surrounding such weapons. For example, the aforementioned *rumal*, which was a gift from dark Kali to her faithful worshippers. Other such weapons include the *ram-parasu*, a type of battle axe carried by Rama, an incarnation of the god Vishnu; or the *khadga*, a superior type of two-handed sword introduced separately from all other weapons by Brahma. Any type of weapon might have such a connection ascribed to it, and such weapons may be the weapons used by a specific cult or may actually serve as cult objects.

## Dhanurvedya: Indian Weapons

### Axes

A great variety of axes in all sizes and shapes were used throughout India, from the dual-purpose weapon-tools of primitive tribesmen to the ornate arms of aristocrats.

*Tabar* is a general name for battle axe, and these weapons generally sport single-edged blades in a variety of shapes including crescent, triangular, and hoe-shaped.

The *parasu* dates to ancient times, and has a single crescent-shaped steel blade. The *venmuroo* has a similar configuration.

The broad-headed *tungi* is used both as a weapon and an agricultural tool by the Khonds and other aborigines of southern India. The *chata katu* is also a dual-purpose tool.

The *danga* is a broad-bladed hatchet used by the Parbityas of Nepal, who often carry it in lieu of the *kukri* (q.v.).

### Clubs, Flails, Maces, Morning Stars, and Staves

All types of clubs, fighting sticks, curved sticks, and canes are used as weapons in India. Some of them, such as the curved sticks or the *otta*, a pointed hardwood club, may be associated with one or more martial arts forms.

Flails were popular, and a variety of forms proliferated. Among these are two-handed and two-headed flails. Two-headed flails function for the most part like normal varieties; although they have two heads, each is smaller than that of a regular flail. The *cumber jung*, or quoit flail, is a two-headed flail consisting of a shaft from which are suspended two weighted steel quoits on chains. Two-handed flails must be used with both hands, and inflict 2D6+2 points of damage. They are very slow and cumbersome weapons.

Maces often have flanged steel heads as does the *gargaz*, with six or eight flanges. Some have guarded and spurred hilts similar to that of the *khandar* (q.v.). Maces normally inflict from 1D8 to 1D10 points of damage, and a mace fitted with such a hilt inflicts +2 points of damage if used with two hands.

*Lohangi kati* are bamboo clubs, bound in iron and with small mace-like heads. They require two hands to wield and



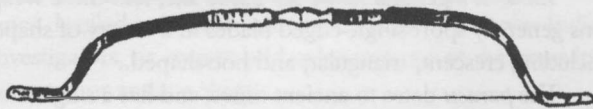
inflict 1D10 points of damage, but in all other ways function just like maces. They are used by various primitive tribes.

The *mursala* is a mace often made all of metal, and is shaped like a pointed rod.

Morning stars with large heads and profound spikes were also popular in India. Some are much higher-quality weapons than their Western counterparts and are constructed entirely of steel, or have hollow steel heads which can thus be larger but no heavier than regular morning-star heads.

Staff fighting was a common fighting style in India, and there are many types of staves. These are almost always of cane or bamboo, and are sometimes weighted. The quarterstaff was one of the weapons recommended for use by women in classical Indian literature.

The *lathi* is a bamboo club with a weighted, often metal head, and is still used in India by police to this day. Thus, it is perhaps the type of weapon most likely to come into contact with the skulls of rambunctious investigators.



### Bows, Crossbows, and Hurled Weapons

From the most ancient times, the bow was the principal Indian weapon of war.

Eastern archery is a different art than that practiced in the West. Indian archers hooked their bowstrings over their thumbs and used a specialized device called a thumb-ring to reduce some of the pressure on this digit. Such rings were unique to archers, and could be made of any material, including clay, jade, and horn. Some of the more-ornate ones were intended for show rather than use.

The longbow, made of bamboo or hard wood, is indigenous to India, as are perhaps some shortbows. Composite, or horsemen's bows, were introduced from Persia and Tartary. All types of bows can be found in India, but not necessarily all in the same place.

The *kampti*, a bamboo bow, was used by several aboriginal races of India such as the Bhils. It has a string made of a thin strip of elastic bamboo bark.

*Kaman* are composite bows made with a wood core, a horn belly, and a sinew back, and then lacquered. Bows are also sometimes made of steel, in the shape of an Indian composite bow.

Pellet bows, called *ghulel* or *gulail*, were used by the aborigines of central India, as well as in Burma.

Crossbows were most commonly used in India by aboriginal hill and jungle tribes, and by peoples dwelling on the periphery of the subcontinent. The crossbow of many of the forest tribes, called a *thami* in Siam, was a powerful weapon. The tips of their quarrels are typically of hardened wood, however, making them -5% to hit against metal armor.

### Arrows

Arrows are represented in many forms. *Bitla*, the simplest, have only hardened wooden tips, while *tir* have small, flat, triangular metal heads.

Highly specialized arrows include fishing arrows, with barbed detachable heads attached to lines, and chainmail-piercing arrows. The latter type typically have octagonal or hexagonal steel heads that taper to a needle point, long shafts, and four painted flights. A critical hit with such arrows simply disregards chainmail.

### Daggers and Knives

Daggers and knives in all sizes and a multitude of exotic shapes can be found in India. Such weapons are known by a variety of names, including *bank*, *bich'wa*, *chil anum*, *jamdhar katari*, *kard*, *khanjar*, *khanjarli*, *piha-kaetta*, and *turup*. Peoples of certain regions, cults or martial arts disciplines may favor one type of dagger or knife over others.

Many, such as the *chil anum*, have a curve characteristic of an antelope horn, from which their shape is derived.

The *bank* is a sickle-like knife used for slashing, with a semicircular blade and a straight hilt.

The *turup* is a variant form of *katar* (*q.v.*), and has a curved plate over the hilt to protect the user's hand. Several other varieties of dagger utilize this or some other sort of hand protection, knuckle guards probably being the most common.

Many sorts of elaborate parrying knives were also used in India. Some of these, such as the *haladie*, have two small blades, one at each end of a hilt. Such parrying knives can be used either to attack or to parry a single frontal attack at +5%.

### Spears, Picks, and Polearms

Many types of spears were used. The *ballam* is a barbed-headed spear. The *pandi-ballam*, or hog spear, has a leaf-shaped blade and was used by the aborigines of central India.

All-steel fighting picks were popular in India and its environs, in both one- and two-handed varieties. Picks often featured spear heads at the end of their hafts, hammer heads, or concealed daggers.

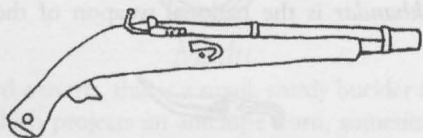
Some picks were designed especially for piercing chainmail, and these tend to be all-steel and have reinforced heads. Such picks simply disregard chainmail on a critical hit.

The *buckie* and the *hoolurge* are typical short picks, and have the same characteristics as the *zaghnal*. A distinctive type of such short pick is carried by the Thugs and used in their rituals.

Tridents were used in India from ancient times, and some hurled varieties are known to have existed.

Lances were used in certain parts of India, mostly in the western and central regions. One notable type made use of a hollow steel haft and had an armor-piercing steel head. Another type is the *sang*, the lance of the *Rajputs*, which is ten feet long and covered with iron plates on about four feet of its front end.

Javelins and throwing spears with bamboo hafts and steel heads were used throughout India for both hunting and warfare.



### Firearms and Pyrotechnics

Matchlocks were used throughout India, mostly for hunting or adventuring moreso than for warfare (for which the bow predominated). Indeed, matchlock weapons are still used for hunting in isolated regions such as Nepal. Historically, such arms came to India through its contact with the Arab world.

The *bandukh torador* generally has a straight shoulder stock and the barrel is often either squared or hexagonal. The *jezzail* has a longer barrel and a crooked stock. Both are often decorated with ornate metalwork.

Rockets were also used in India, and there are accounts of their employment against British troops through the 19th century (see *taksh-andaz*).

### Swords

Many types of swords can be found throughout India, and almost any type or variation is possible within the exotic plethora that exists. Swords are considered superior weapons, and represent the very best weapons of India. Like so many other Indian weapons, of course, they run the gamut of types, from the simple brush-clearing tools of primitives to the highly embellished thrusting swords of Maratha cavaliers.

Some swords are called *firangi*, which is simply a word meaning "foreign," and generally refers to a non-Indian sword fitted out with an Indian hilt. Thus, such swords can be of virtually any type, and are often German or British.

### Specific Weapons

#### Ankus

The *ankus* is an elephant goad, and is carried by *mahouts* (elephant drivers). Generally, the *ankus* has a haft two or more feet in length but is sometimes much shorter, with a spear-like head that is fitted with a curving hook. Overall, it looks like a small pole arm, although some were no longer than a large dagger. Many of these devices were finely crafted and highly embellished.



#### Boomerang

Referred to as the *collery*, *katari*, *katariya*, and several other names, these weapons were used by the aboriginal inhabit-

ants of central and southern India mostly for hunting, even against prey as large as wild boar.

Indian boomerangs strongly resemble their better-known Australian counterparts. Such hurled clubs are usually made of wood, average a foot or more in length, have a forward curve and a single edge, and tend to be tip-heavy. Some are mounted with fittings of brass or steel, or forged entirely of steel, and these are somewhat smaller than the wooden ones, but just as heavy. Others are made of more exotic materials, such as bone or ivory.

Because the boomerang's damage is the result of its form and the fact that it is thrown, it is less effective if it is swung as a melee weapon and will inflict only 1D4 points of damage, rather than the 1D8 it will cause when thrown. Because of its design, it has a better range than a simple hurled club.



#### Buckler, spiked

Most such weapons are small, sturdy shields with a pair of short, iron-shod horns protruding from their middle. They can be used to attack with, or to parry a single frontal attack at +5% to the weapon's normal attack percentage.



#### Chakram

A flat, steel quoit with a razor-sharp rim which is spun around the index finger and then released. A *chakram* is reputed to be able to remove a limb or even decapitate.

*Sikh* warriors typically carried a half-dozen of these weapons, either on a special conical turban called a *dastar-bungga* or around an arm.

#### Gada

A large two-handed club with a huge, round head, typically of hard wood, mounted on a wooden haft. If used one-handed, the *gada* is at -5% to hit and will inflict only 1D6 damage.

The *gada* has been associated with various martial arts, in which it is used for weight training as well as weapon practice.



#### Hora

This weapon is a knuckle-duster, carved from a single piece of horn. It typically has four or five spikes along its frontal edge and one on each side. Because of its size and shape, the *hora* can be easily concealed.



The *hora* is used in the brutal Indian martial art *Vajramushti*, which combines wrestling with savage armed blows and is often practiced by a caste of rural priests. The *hora* was also used by gladiators and other professional fighters in combative spectacles.

### Kanaya

An all-metal, hand-hurled weapon which looks like a large dart or a small javelin. Although primarily a missile weapon, the *kanaya* inflicts the same damage in melee that it does when hurled.

Such missiles were used throughout India and were also known as *karpana*, *nimnazah*, and *barbah*. Despite any slight differences in appearance, all such weapons function for the most part just like the *kanaya*.



Katar

A punch dagger, the *katar* is a characteristic weapon of India and was usually carried in the sash of a warrior. Rather than a straight hilt, two parallel metal bars hold a crossbar grip centered on and at a right angle to the blade. As a punch dagger, the *katar* has a bit more damage potential than an ordinary dagger.

Many varieties of *katar* exist, including those that open into a three-pronged weapon when two metal bars forming the grip are squeezed together; those that have a blade that is split about half way along its length, giving it two blade ends with a space in between them; and those that have three fixed blades, the extra two protruding from the hilt at right angles to the main blade. The Keeper may treat each of these varieties differently as described below, or may simply state that they all function essentially the same.

Scissors *katars* have more blades to potentially hit an opponent with, so the base chance to hit with one is at +5%.

Scissors *katars* and split-blade *katars*, if used to parry rather than attack, can be used to trap an opponent's edged weapon. If the parry is a critical success, the opponent's blade is trapped by the *katar* and its wielder must make a roll of less than or equal to his normal attack percentage with the weapon or have it jerked from his grasp.

*Katars* with three fixed blades have more points to attack with and gain +5% to hit on all attacks. However, the side blades are smaller and less dangerous than the main blade, so the weapon is considered to inflict 1D4+1 points of damage overall.

Special *katars* are more expensive than regular ones. Scissors *katars* cost three times as much, and three-bladed and split-bladed *katars* are twice as much as regular varieties.

### Khandar

A bastard sword with a straight, reinforced blade intended for hacking. A bar often projects from the *khandar's* pom-

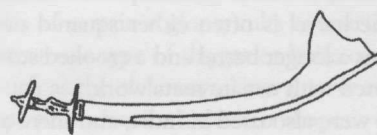
mel, allowing it to be gripped with two hands so as to deliver a more forceful blow. A similar sword called a *sosun pattah* has a forward-curving blade, but its intent is the same.

The *khandar* is the national weapon of the state of Orissa.



Khadga

Created by Braham and passed successively to the gods Shiva, Vishnu, Marici, and Indra, and eventually to humanity, the *khadga* is considered a superior weapon. This formidable weapon is six feet long, broad at the hilt, and razor-sharp at the tip. It is called by at least nine different names, carried on the left side of the body, and handled in 32 different ways.



Kora

This is a broad, heavy short sword with a forward-curving blade. It is a cleaving weapon, sharp only on its inner edge, and does not have a thrusting point. The steel blades of *koras* are often decorated with etchings.

Warriors in northern India and Nepal may carry a *kora*, often in conjunction with a *kukri* (q.v.).



Kukri

The most characteristic and well-known weapon of Nepal and northern India, the *kukri* is a slashing weapon ranging in size between a large dagger and a short sword, with a heavy, single-edged, forward-curving blade. Despite its shape, it is not a throwing weapon.

The *kukri* is the national weapon of Nepal, where it has been used by Gurkha warriors since the 12th century. The only decoration found on many *kukris* is a small pair of notches on the blade near the hilt, meaning "divinity," revealing its status as a religious symbol.

Besides being a formidable weapon, the *kukri* is also a rugged tool that can be used for skinning game, chopping wood, or virtually anything else that either a knife or a hatchet axe can do, sometimes better than either. It typically has a pair of small utility knives within its sheath, used mainly for sharpening the *kukri*. These are not weapons as such; they inflict only 1D2 points of damage and cannot be thrown.

Bram Stoker armed some of the members of the party who hunt Dracula with *kukris*, and these are wielded by the investigators in the Francis Ford Coppola film of that novel.

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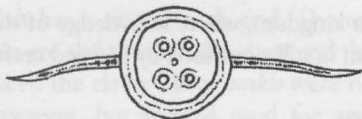
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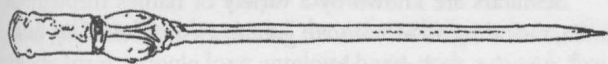
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### Madu

Also called a *maru*, this is a small, sturdy buckler from each side of which projects an antelope horn, sometimes tipped with iron or steel. The *madu* can be used to attack with its long horns. Furthermore, the horns make the buckler-sized *madu* especially effective for parrying, for which it can be used at +10% to the normal attack percentage.



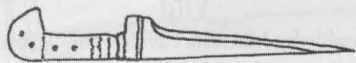
### Pata

A long gauntlet sword with a punch grip like the *katar* (q.v.), the *pata* has a steel guard that protects the hand and wrist of its user. (The *pata* user's hand and wrist receive 8 points of armor protection from the gauntlet.)

The *pata* was wielded by the Maratha cavalry, and a *pata* used by a character on a charging mount has +5% to hit. Such swords will quite often be chased with precious metals or engraved with designs.

### Pattani Jamdadu

An elongated form of the *katar*, this weapon is transitional between it and the previously-mentioned *pata*. It is as long as a short sword, but gains somewhat more thrusting power because of its H-shaped hilt. Almost as many exotic variations exist of the *pattani jamdadu* as of the *katar*.



### Peshkabz

This is a straight-bladed dagger with a reinforcing spine along its back edge. This reinforcement gives it a T-shaped cross-section and makes it especially effective at penetrating chainmail. Any critical hits with the *peshkabz* simply disregard any chainmail an opponent is wearing.

Because of its reinforcement and eccentric balance, a *peshkabz* cannot really be used as a throwing weapon.

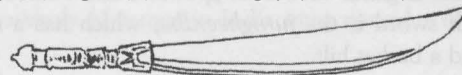
### Phur-bu

Also called a *porba*, this is a dagger with a three-sided blade used in the Tantric rites of Tibetan Buddhism. The hilt of the *phur-bu* typically terminates in the head of the fierce protective deity Hayagriva. Other symbols used to ornament *phur-bu* are entwined serpents, knots of immortality, or the heads of mythical creatures like the *makara*. Such daggers are always ornately embellished, and represent much time spent in creation and prayer. They are useful components in spells used against unholy creatures.

*Phur-bu* are often enchanted to strike creatures hit only by magic, and the more powerful *phur-bu* may actually have

bonuses to hit and damage, or effects such as double or increased base damage, when used against unholy creatures. Others may assist in the casting of tantric spells, such as the detection of invisible beings.

A powerful *phur-bu* with independent tendencies appears in the Alec Baldwin movie *The Shadow*.



### Ram Dao

Also called a *kharga*, the *ram dao* is a sacrificial weapon used by the peoples of Nepal. It has a huge, forward-curving, usually highly embellished blade which projects straight forward from a short haft. The *ram-dao* requires two hands to wield.

### Rumal

The *rumal* is a piece of cloth three feet square and was the sacred strangling weapon of the Thugs, murderous practitioners of Thuggee, a cult movement dedicated to Kali. A knot is tied in the middle of it and one end of it is weighted, usually with *rupee* or other Indian coins. The *rumal* is grasped by the unweighted end and whipped around the neck of the Thug's victim and quickly pulled tight, rapidly throttling him. Thugs kept the weapon hidden in their *dhotis*, or loincloths, swiftly whipping them out when needed and almost always attacking from behind or with surprise.

If a successful attack is made, the *rumal* will inflict a base 1D6 points of damage. Furthermore, the user of the *rumal* can continue to inflict 1D6 points of damage each round thereafter, plus damage bonus, until he is stopped or his victim is dead. Critical attacks with a *rumal* instantly break a victim's neck unless he can successfully make a resistance roll of his current hit points versus the damage inflicted. Victims of such an attack from behind typically have -20% to hit the user of the *rumal*.

The movie *The Deceivers*, based on an excellent book of the same name by John Masters, features Pierce Brosnan as a British agent who investigates Thuggee and actually joins a band of Thugs.



### Sword, Bastard & Two-Handed

Generally, swords were not any larger than the hand-and-a-half or bastard type, a notable exception being the *khadga* (q.v.).

Some large swords of this type had hilts made from hollow iron tubes, or alternating sections of tubes and hollow iron balls.

### Sword, Broad

One-handed hacking swords, with either single- or double-edged blades, are the most common general type found in India after the *scimitar* and *talwar* (q.v.) types. Some of



these, such as the *sultani*, are rather clumsy. Other versions of such weapons are the *abbasi* and the *tegha*.

### Sword, Long

Thrusting swords with more striking emphasis placed on the tip than the edge are the rarest type of sword found in India. One such sword is the *jumgheerdha*, which has a narrow blade and a basket hilt.

### Sword, Short

As with axes, the short swords of primitives or rustics are also usually used as tools. One such weapon is the *choora*, also called the Khyber knife, used by the martial hill tribes of what is now Pakistan. A Khyber hill man was said to be able to gut a British soldier and slice off his cartridge belt in a single upward cut with a *choora*.

### Taksh-Andaz

Rockets, also known as *agni astra* and *tront*, and described as "darts blazing with fire," were used throughout India in ancient times and during the Middle Ages. After this time, the secret of their manufacture was lost until gunpowder and firearms were introduced from the Middle East. They came into use again and were used through the 19th century, but their role in battle was largely replaced by cannon.

*Taksh-andaz* were used mostly against fortifications and formations of cavalry. On occasion, their use seems to anticipate the advent of the modern battle tank, being fired from launchers mounted in *howdahs* on heavily armored elephants.

The weapon itself, a large javelin, is fired from a bamboo or cast metal tube, usually bronze, and combusts when launched; bamboo launchers are 50% likely to be destroyed when fired. While the rocket is not explosive *per se*, it strikes its target with great force, shattering and subjecting its target to damage from both the impact and fire.

A *taksh-andaz* launcher crewed by two warriors can be fired once every other round. If only one is operating it, the rate of fire is only once every four rounds.

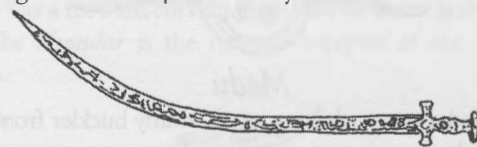
To hit with the weapon, the rocket gunner must make a successful attack. The base chance to hit man-sized targets is low, and can never exceed 50% regardless of the skill of the gunner. However, for every point of SIZ over 20 this maximum is increased by 2%, not to exceed the skill of the user. Thus, a SIZ 40 creature is attacked at up to +40%.

Typical *Taksh-andaz* inflict a fearsome 5D4+5 points of damage, caused by the missile striking and then exploding into flaming fragments on impact. The clothes and items of a victim are 40% likely to catch fire, and if this happens the target will take a further 1D6 points of damage from the flaming garments. *Taksh-andaz* can also cause damage to structures.

Smaller rockets were sometimes used to harry opponents, or in great quantities to set off an ambush, and larger ones used in sieges.

Such weapons can add color to the arsenal of some

small, ancient kingdom, where knowledge of the art of constructing them is still possessed by learned craftsmen.



### Scimitars & Talwars

Curved swords of this general type are the most common in India, where most of the martial peoples used some form of *scimitar* or *talwar* for both combat and ceremonial purposes.

Scimitars are known by a variety of names throughout India, including *abbasi talwar*, *goliah*, *kassidgode*, *kilij*, *lall-i-wall*, *nimcha*, and *shamshir*.

The many varieties can sometimes be distinguished by minor differences in blade width, length, and shape. For example, the *kilij* is distinct from other scimitars in that its blade is wider near its tip.

*Talwars* sometimes have heavier or broader blades than *scimitars*, and some are even forged from solid steel. Such heavy *talwars* are often used as sacrificial weapons.

### Urimi

Also known as a belt sword, this weapon has a highly flexible steel blade about three feet long and one-and-a-half to two inches wide. This flexibility allows the *urimi* to be worn in a girdle around the waist and thus be concealed.

The *urimi* is sometimes associated with *Kalaripayat*, an ancient Indian martial art dedicated to the goddess Kali.

### Vita

Used most notably by Maratha cavalry, the *vita* is a large spear with a five-foot-long tether attached to its butt end, the other end of which is tied to the wrist of its user, probably onto a gauntlet or bracer. This cord facilitates the *vita*'s primary role as an extremely short-range but powerful missile weapon.

When approaching an opponent, the user grasps the *vita* with both hands and then hurls it. The cord allows it to be quickly recovered and made ready for the next attack. Indian cavalrymen would charge their opponents and then hurl their *vitas*, deftly recovering them as they passed by. They could then maneuver either to attack the same opponent again or to seek another.

The *vita* requires two hands to throw and inflicts 1D8 points of damage plus damage bonus, if applicable. If used in melee it inflicts the same damage, but if used one-handed is at -5% to hit.



### Wagh Nakh

"Tiger's claws" and *bagh-nakh* are other names for this weapon, which consists of five metal claws attached to a

metal bar that has a ring at each end. The user's first and fourth fingers are slid through the rings and the middle two fingers between the claws. *Wagh nakh* were not generally a battlefield weapon, but instead used for assassination or murder. A well-placed upward slash from *wagh nakh* can disembowel a victim, and the wounds inflicted can resemble those caused by a wild animal, making such deaths appear accidental.

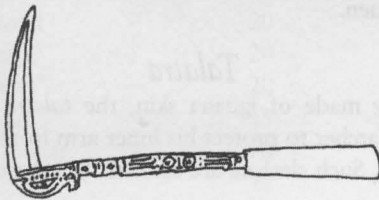
Although similar to the Japanese tiger claws associated with ninjas, *wagh nakh* do not assist in climbing.

### Zafar Takieh

Also called a "fakir's crutch," the *zafar takieh* is a cane, often made from a single long antelope horn, with a rounded rest on its butt end. This rest is grasped when its user is walking; when sitting, the upward-rounded bar is used as an arm rest.

The *zafar takieh* has a pointed, sometimes metal-reinforced tip, and is thrust like a small spear. This weapon is related to the *madu* (q.v.), which may have evolved from the *zafar takieh*.

Sometimes rulers keep a *zafar takieh* near their divan, and use the crutch-like end as an arm rest while sitting in council. Such versions of the weapon often contain a concealed blade after the fashion of a sword cane, causing normal *zafar takieh* damage, and are always close at hand for the noble to employ.



*Zaghnaal*

A one-handed pick designed to penetrate chainmail, with a broad, sharp, beak-like piercing head. Although short, only about 18 to 24 inches in length, the *zaghnaal* is usually constructed entirely of steel, so it is also quite heavy and has great punching power.

*Zaghnaals* are often decorated with brass, silver, and other precious metals. Many also have beautifully etched heads and hafts, which are sometimes embellished with images of animals or monsters.

## Armor & Shields of India

As with weapons, a great variety of armor exists amongst the many peoples and regions of India, ranging from the unkempt hides of primitives to ornate suits of full armor composed of quilted linen and fine steel.

In the epic and historical texts that describe the early martial traditions of India, body armor other than shields is referred to as *varman*; shields are referred to as *avarna*.

Indian armor did not change much from century to cen-

tury. A British soldier in the 18th century might find himself facing an Indian warrior equipped much the same way as the one a Muslim holy warrior might have faced in the 9th century. In regions where there were major foreign incursions, however, invaders' styles of armor were often absorbed or synthesized with the more indigenous styles. Thus, a study of armor in India must consider many influences.

Common warriors often had little or no armor, while noble or wealthy warriors were often very well equipped. The most expensive armor was richly embellished, typically with *koftgari* work, etchings in plate steel filled with gold or other precious metal. As with weapons, some functional defensive arms were works of art.

The basic materials Indian armor was composed of include quilted linen and steel. The following descriptions also describe other traditional materials.

### Varman: Indian Armor

#### Bazubands

Such armor consists of an armored mitten to protect the hand, attached to a pair of hinged metal plates that encircle the forearm. *Dastana* is another name for this piece of armor.

#### Chahar Aina

This piece of armor consists of four connected metal plates and can be worn in conjunction with other types of armor, especially a helmet or arm guards (*bazubands*), quilted armor, or chainmail. The two largest plates protect the chest and back, while a pair of slightly smaller ones fit under the arms and protect the user's sides. It is also known as "four-mirror" armor.

#### Chainmail

By far, armor made from interlocking links of metal chain was the most common sort used in India. In fact, chainmail was so prevalent that a variety of weapons were developed especially for penetrating such armor. Unfortunately, much Indian chainmail was of slipshod quality and gives inferior protection (6 points, rather than the regular 7).

#### Dhenuka

This is a full ensemble of armor (i.e., armored coat, boots, helmet, perhaps even gloves or shield) made entirely from the parts of a specific Indian creature, most typically a rhinoceros. Such armor could be made from any sort of creature with thick natural armor, such as a crocodile, elephant, or water buffalo, and incorporated a variety of components including hide, horns, hooves, etc.

#### Helmets

Many types of helmets can be found in India, most provid-



ing protection to the head equal to the type of armor they are made from (e.g., a *dhenuka* helmet would grant 4 points of head protection).

A few notable types of helmet are found in India. One of these is the *khula kud*, a round, domed helmet with a nose guard. From the top of the *khula kud* protrude a spike and a pair of supports for plumes at either side of the front edge of the helmet. Such helmets provide 8 points of protection to the head.

Turbans are also distinctive Indian head gear. Many shapes and sizes of turban exist, and many of these are worn for religious purposes (such as the *dastar bunga* of the *Sikhs*, which is used for carrying their *chakram*, or steel throwing quoits).

### Hide

Hide armors are made from the same materials as *dhenuka*, described earlier, but tend to be considerably less sophisticated. Such armor predominates in areas where metal is uncommon or the people are unskilled at working metal, or where a totemistic religion dictates armor made from specific types of creatures must be used. Such armor may sometimes be indistinguishable from leather or other similar armors.

### Kantha Trana

This is an armored collar that is worn to protect the neck. Such armor gives 2 points of protection against most attacks to the neck. However, the beneficiary of a *kantha trana* is mostly immune to normal *rumal* (garrote) damage, receiving up to 6 points of protection. Thus, someone concerned about Thug attack might very well acquire such a protective device and wear it surreptitiously.

### Lamellar

Such armor consists of metal splints riveted onto a coat of leather or linen, similar to scale mail.

### Leather

The various sorts of leather armor are not likely to be found in Hindu India because of the reverence in which cows are held. However, such armor may be worn by non-Hindu peoples, such as Moslems, either in India or on its periphery.

### Linen

While leather is the staple component of many armors throughout the world, layered and quilted linen is often used in India. Such armor can provide protection similar to that of soft leather (1 point), and if reinforced with arrangements of small gilt or brass nails or studs, or with pieces of chain mail, scale, or metal plates, can be considerably more protective (up 4 points).

### Mail, Reinforced

Full suits of armor made of quilted linen, chain mail, and reinforcing metal plates were the best available in India, and provide excellent protection. Such ensembles typically include an armored coat and trousers, as well as armored boots and gloves, helmet, and perhaps even a matching shield.

### Posh teen

This is the heavy sheepskin coat, worn with the fur on the inside for warmth, used by hill peoples of India. It is particularly found in the foothills of the Himalayas or the Hindu Kush, or along the northwest frontier in what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### Sadi qi

Any sort of armor, such as chainmail or scale, that covers only the torso and does not cover the arms is referred to as *sadi qi*. Such suits typically weigh about half what a normal suit of the same kind would. *Sadi qi* is worn by those with an interest in reducing encumbering weight or increasing concealment, such as assassins.

### Scale

Persia was probably the ultimate area of origin of such armor, made of overlapping metal scales sewn onto a coat of leather or linen.

### Talatra

Traditionally made of iguana skin, the *talatra* is a guard worn by an archer to protect his inner arm from the slap of a bowstring. Such devices are known by a variety of other names.

### Avarna: Indian Shields

#### Buckler

Such small, round shields were often armed with blades or spikes, allowing them to be used both defensively and offensively.

#### Dahl

This is the most characteristic shield of India, from the middle ages up through the period of colonialism. Such shields tend to be small- to medium-sized, round, and somewhat convex. *Dahl* typically have four or five small metal bosses on its face and two handles on the inner surface, one to slide the shield arm through and the other to grip and manipulate the shield; however, the number of bosses and even of handles can vary, especially from region to region. *Dahl* can be of nearly any material, commonly steel, leather, or hide, but might also be made of more exotic materials, such as a large tortoise shell or dozens of layers of silk.

## Dhanurvidya: Indian Weapons

Weapon	Base Chance	Damage	Range	Number of Attacks	HPs	Cost by Era	Malfunction Number
Ankus*	20	1d4+1+db	Touch	1	10	2/3/60	—
Bagh-Nakh	20	1d6+db	Touch	1	10	2/3/60	—
Boomerang	20, Throw	1d8+db	-Throw-	1	12	1/2/40	—
Bow, Long or Composite	20	1d8+db	30 yards	1	9	2/5/90	—
Buckler, Spiked*	20	1d4+db	Touch	1	14	3/6/50	—
Chakram	Throw	1d6+1+db	-Throw-	1	11	2/4/35	—
Gada	20	1d10+db	Touch	1	14	1/2/50	—
Hora	20	1d4+1+db	Touch	1	9	1/2/13	—
Kanaya*	20, Throw	1d6+1+db	-Throw-	1	11	2/4/70	—
Katar*	20	1d4+3+db	Touch	1	11	2/4/70	—
Khandar, One-Handed	15	1d10+1+db	Touch	1	28	3/6/110	—
Khandar, Two-Handed	25	2d6+db	Touch	1	28	3/6/110	—
Khadga	20	2d6+3+db	Touch	1	19	4/8/150	—
Kora	20	1d6+2+db	Touch	1	12	2/4/80	—
Kukri	20	1d4+3+db	Touch	1	11	2/4/35	—
Matchlock*	20	2d6	20 yards	1/4	12	3/6/120	92
Madu*	20	1d4+1+db	Touch	1	9	1/2/50	—
Pata*	15	1d8+1+1d6**	Touch	1	13	4/8/150	—
Pattani Jamdadu*	20	1d6+2+db	Touch	1	12	2/4/80	—
Peshkabz*	20	1d4+2+db	Touch	1	20	2/4/60	—
Phur-Bu*	20	1d3+1+db	Touch	1	7	2/4/80	—
Ram-Dao	20	2d6+1+db	Touch	1	17	3/6/130	—
Rumal	15	1d6+db†	Touch	1	3	—/—/—	—
Sword, Bastard, One-Handed	15	1d10+1+db	Touch	1	15	3/6/110	—
Sword, Bastard, Two-Handed	25	2d6+db	Touch	1	15	3/6/110	—
Sword, Broad	20	1d8+1+db	Touch	1	13	2/4/90	—
Sword, Long*	20	1d8+db	Touch	1	12	3/6/120	—
Sword, Short*	20	1d6+1+db	Touch	1	11	2/4/90	—
Taksh-Andaz	15	5D4+5+burn	25 yards	1/2-1/4	12	3/6/—	91
Scimitar, Talwar	20	1d6+2+db	Touch	1	12	2/4/80	—
Urimi	15	1d6+db	Touch	1	10	2/3/60	—
Vita*	20, Throw	1d10+db	-Throw-	1	14	3/5/100	—
Zafar Takieh*	20	1d6+db	Touch	1	10	2/3/60	—
Zaghnal*	20	1d6+1+db	Touch	1	18	2/4/70	—

1/2, 1/4: can be accurately fired every second/fourth round. See the weapon description for more details.

\*: These weapons impale on a critical hit. \*\*: The listed damage bonus assumes use from horseback.

20, Throw: Weapons with a base chance of attack listed as "Throw" are base 20% to hit in melee, if applicable.

-Throw-: See the Throw skill for determining the range of such weapons.

†: After a successful attack, this weapon will automatically inflict damage on succeeding rounds.

### Varman: Indian Armor

Armor Type	Armor Points	Armor Type	Armor Points
Clothes	0	Quilted Linen	1 to 4
Chahar Aina	1	Leather Scale	3
Dastana	1	Leather, Studded	3
Leather, Soft	1	Dhenuka	4
Poshteen	1	Chainmail	6 or 7
Talatra	1	Scale Mail	6
Hide	2	Lamellar	6
Kantha Trana	2*	Reinforced Mail	8
Leather, Hard	2	Sadi qi**	Any, only on torso

Halve armor points (round down) vs. firearms.

\*Such armor protects only the neck. See the text for a full description.

\*\*Such armor protects only the torso. See the text for a full description.

### Avarna: Indian Shields

Shield	Base	Armor	Damage
Buckler	10%	10	1D4
Dahl	15%	15	1D6
Maratha	15%	16	1D6
Parrying Device	5%	10	Varies
Small/Target	10%	12	1D5

Halve armor points (round down) vs. firearms.


### Maratha

This is a style of shield used by the mounted Maratha warriors. Such medium-sized shields are lacquered, light, and acutely convex, almost coming to a point at the center of their outer surface.

### Parrying

A variety of devices intended for both attacking and defending were used throughout India. Many of these devices do not look like shields at all, such as the *madu* or *zafar takieh* described earlier in the weapons section. Usually, two skill scores must be used for such weapons, one for attacking and one for parrying or defending.

### Other Shields

In addition to the types described already, a plethora of other less common or categorical types exist in a variety of sizes. These include the large bamboo-and-hide body shields carried by the Indian warriors who faced Alexander the Great, the medium palm-frond shields used by jungle tribesmen, and the *fari*, a small shield made of cane used in certain martial arts. 

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# Mysterious Manuscripts

## *City of Night*

by James Holloway and Phoebe Kitanidis

**C***ity of Night* was written in early 1995 by Katherine Chance, then a student at U.C.-Berkeley. The book found a cult following among teenagers—especially girls. Originally to be published by the maverick Bay Area press Eye of Newt under their Bat Wing imprint (a division dedicated to printing controversial texts), this book was orphaned after Eye of Newt pulled out, claiming budget cuts had made Bat Wing unable to cover the cost of production. With the kill fee, Chance hired vanity press Manutius to make one hundred copies of the novel, which were then distributed to small bookstores and school libraries across suburban America.

*City of Night* proved sufficiently popular that Eye of Newt eventually consented to print it, this time in a mass-

market edition which can be found in chain bookstores. While the first edition has a plain white cover with an almost invisible Yellow Sign, the second edition has a cover painting of a masked figure in yellow robes. Careful examination reveals a Yellow Sign in the background.

Chance claims she intended *City of Night* as an alternative to the grim realism of *Go Ask Alice*, a book published after its anonymous author's death from drug abuse. In the introduction to the second printing, Chance writes, "Such works . . . present a moralistic view of teenage sexuality and drug use calculated to frighten the reader away from ecstasy. I wanted to show that Alice's story isn't the only one worth telling."

With a nod to the conventions of the young-adult genre, Chance makes use of the first-person narrative through the device of journal entries to convey a confessional tone. Her protagonist's situation—feeling trapped in the boring safety of suburbia—is classically young adult. Protagonist Shel Stevenson is an intelligent sixteen-year-old girl. "Not the kind of intelligent that is sometimes called bright or sharp," she informs us, "but more like the kind that is called deep, and is most often ignored or despised." The pleasant but uneventful life she leads depresses her. Her parents' amicable divorce depresses her. "Their bloodlessness," she writes, "is unendurable—I pray for a release from the calm."

Shel's release comes in the form of dreams whose shadowy, smoke filled locales recall the underground nightclubs and S&M dungeons of San Francisco. There, a masked lover in



flowing yellow robes performs violent sexual acts which Shel is surprised to realize bring intense pleasure along with the pain. In contrast to her ordinary life, this dream figure promises excitement and ultimately ecstasy. As time passes, the dreams become more and more frequent. One morning, Shel's parents find her bed empty; she has disappeared into her dreams.

The appealing portrayal of the King in Yellow in this novel is the result of dreams directed by the King to Katherine Chance. The book, partially based on Chance's own experiences and inspired by the King in Yellow, is an attempt to create widespread vulnerability to the King's messages. Hidden within the text is a spell which allows the reader to receive dreams sent by him, much as the Send Dreams spell does with Cthulhu.

**RECEIVE THE KING'S DREAMS:** This spell costs no SAN points and actually does not need to be "cast" as such. It requires only that the "caster," (that is, the person to receive the dreams) read *City of Night* carefully and notice the Yellow Sign on the book's cover. (On the second printing, with its different cover illustration, this requires a Spot Hidden roll.) After this occurs, the reader must make the usual spell roll. If this is passed, he or she will begin to receive the dreams.

The content of the dreams is up to the Keeper but they will play on the target's fears and insecurities, presenting the King in Yellow as someone who can help him or her. As the dreams progress, the King gains a greater hold over the victim and may begin to control him or her for limited periods. To resist the dreams, the recipient must succeed in three consecutive SAN rolls over three consecutive nights. If these are failed, the dreams continue. ☸

*"City of Night" by Katherine Chance*

Young-adult novel in English

Manutius Press, 1996 (1st edition, only 100 copies)

Eye of Newt, 1997 (2nd edition, mass-market)

+1% Cthulhu Mythos

0/-1D2 SAN

x2 Spell Multiplier

Spell: Receive the King's Dreams

*Excerpt:*

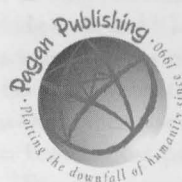
It's not just that my room is a pigsty anymore. I'm also lazy—the word Mom uses is "unmotivated." Also, I'm putting on airs. I think I'm too good for everyone else. Why am I so sullen? My mother's face looks down at me, worrying, questioning me. She loves me, but I feel nothing. My body is heavy with the need for sleep. On the floor of my room, I close my eyes. There is a darkness, and then the city in the distance, lights gleaming on smoke of many colors. He is with me, with my languor my fear my heavy eyelids this time do not resist.

Here in the half light, he begins.



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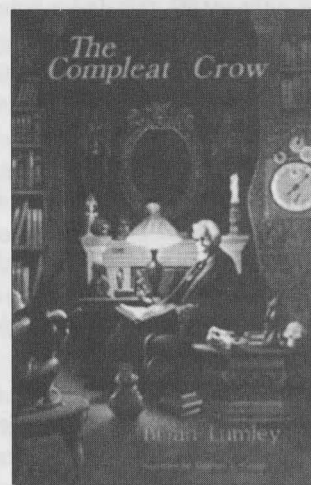
# The Eye of Light and Darkness

## Reviews in this issue

Name	Rating	Page
<b>Books</b>		
<i>The Complete Crow</i>	9	82
<i>Resume With Monsters</i>	7	83
<i>The Secrets of the Mojave</i>	7	84
<i>Malicious Intent</i>	4	85
<b>Gaming</b>		
<i>In Nomine</i>	9.5	85
<i>GURPS Warehouse 23</i>	9	87
<i>GURPS Black Ops</i>	7.5	87
<i>Serendipity's Circle</i>	7	87
<i>Age of Empire</i>	6	88
<i>Asylum</i>	6	89
<i>Nocturnum: Long Shades</i>	5	89
<i>Armageddon</i>	4	90
<i>The Everlasting: Book of the Unliving</i>	2	91
<i>The Everlasting: Book of the Light</i>	2	91
<i>Minions</i>	1	93
<b>Movies</b>		
<i>The H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival</i>	10	93
<i>Ringu (Ring)</i>	9	95
<i>Ringu 2 (Ring 2)</i>	7	97
<i>Eko Eko Azaraku 1, 2, 3</i>	4	99

*The Eye of Light and Darkness* reviews items likely to be of interest to *Call of Cthulhu* fans. Each item is rated on a scale of 1-10 phobias. All opinions expressed are those of the reviewers.

## Book Reviews



### *The Complete Crow*

a collection of the Titus Crow short stories  
by Brian Lumley

W. Paul Ganley: Publisher, \$7.00, \$21.00, and \$35.00  
reviewed by Brian M. Sammons

Brian Lumley's rather sizable contributions to the Cthulhu Mythos are making a major comeback. First, there was 1993's *Fruiting Bodies and Other Fungi* from Tor Books. This collection of short stories is still in print and quite good, so if you don't yet have a copy for your Cthulhu library, I recommend acquiring one soon. More recently, Tor Books has launched a three-volume set of Lumley's Titus Crow Mythos novels, and Chaosium's anthology *Singers of Strange Songs* is also worth a look. But perhaps one of the best of the recent Lumley Mythos reissues is the one most likely to go unnoticed. It's called *The Compleat Crow* and is published by the small press of W. Paul Ganley. This book might be a little harder to find than the others, but believe me: it's worth the hunt.

*The Compleat Crow* is just what it sounds like—the complete collection of Lumley's Titus Crow short stories in one book. For those of you who do not know who Titus Crow is, you clearly haven't been doing your Cthulhu 101 homework. In a nutshell, Titus Crow is Lumley's arch-hero. In the author's own words, Crow is "an occult investigator, a psychic sleuth, an agent for Good in the detection and destruction of Evil." Crow is a Mythos-delving protagonist in the vein of H.P. Lovecraft's Randolph Carter and August Derleth's Dr. Laban Shrewsbury. And like the indomitable Sherlock Holmes, Crow is sometimes aided in his investigations by a Watson-ish colleague, Henri-Laurent de Marigny. Crow is also the star of many of Lumley's Mythos novels including *The Clock of Dreams* and the memorable Chthonian opus *The Burrowers Beneath*. However, Titus Crow began his adventures in the short-story format, and sadly some of these earlier Crow pieces were hard to get hold of. Until now.

*The Compleat Crow* houses eleven tales that relate to Titus Crow in one way or another. There is a brief introduction by Brian Lumley and the author also introduces each story with a few choice comments. This book includes seven stories from Lumley's two Arkham House collections, *The Caller of the Black* and *The Horror at Oakdeene & Others*, both of which are long out of print. There is also "Lord of the Worms" from *Weirdbook* #17, "Name and Number" from the rare Italian magazine *Kadath* #5, and "The Black Recalled" from the book of the 1983 World Fantasy Convention. Then there is one new, never-before-published story called "Inception," which starts the collection off. The stories chronicle the events that affected Titus Crow's life and form a timeline of the man's birth, investigations, and adventures, up until the time of his disappearance from the world of man.

The first story, "Inception," has only a glimpse of Titus Crow but does serve to explain the man's unusual psychic abilities. "Lord of the Worms" is the definitive Crow story: it is the longest piece in the collection, one of the best-written, and provides Titus's history and origin. "The Caller of the Black" was the first-ever Titus Crow story and also introduced a nasty addendum to the Mythos in the form of Yibb-Tstll, a creature so foul that even its black blood could kill. "The Viking's Stone" is a non-Mythos ghost story but still handled well. "The Mirror of Nitocris" does not have Crow in it at all and is the only solo appearance of Henri-Laurent de Marigny. Because de Marigny is Crow's friend and assistant, and because this is a Mythos story that has ties to the Black Pharaoh Nephren-Ka, it seems appropriate to be included in the collection. The next two stories—"An Item of Supporting Evidence" and "Billy's Oak"—are extremely short pieces and offer nothing of real importance to the collection except for completeness and the growth of the Crow legend. "Darghud's Doll" has Crow telling a tale about Voodoo-like sympathetic magic. I found the end of this story to be disappointingly predictable, but it was still an enjoyable light read overall. "De Marigny's Clock" is an interesting story because it showcases a piece of odd antiquity that has been mentioned throughout many of the previous Crow stories as a bafflingly incomprehensible artifact that Titus was always tinkering with, trying to unlock its secrets. Well, in this story those secrets are unwittingly uncovered and De Marigny's Clock turns out to be the mythic Clock of Dreams on which Lumley would later base an entire Titus Crow novel. "Name and Number" deals with Lumley's personal interests in numerology and cryptography. Both of these "sciences" have been in many of Lumley's stories before, most notably in "Lord of the Worms," but not covered quite as thoroughly as they are in this tale. "Name and Number" also takes place after Crow's disappearance and the destruction of Blowne House, and deals with the subject of the antichrist in a different way. The last story, "The Black Recalled," is also a post-Crow tale that serves to wrap up the collection nicely by having the Crow short stories end with what they began with, the nefarious substance known as the Black.

This collection is stunning and whether you're a fan of Lumley's fiction or not, his contribution to the Mythos cannot be dismissed. This book is a must-have for all serious collectors of Cthulhu lore and comes in three editions at varying prices to suit everyone's finances. There is a paperback edition for \$7.50, a hardcover edition for \$21.00, and a deluxe hardcover signed edition for \$35.00. All of W. Paul Ganley's books are limited editions (even the paperbacks) so get your copy of *The Compleat Crow* while you can or look for it at rare-book dealers. I give it a frightening and well-deserved 9 phobias.



### *Resume With Monsters*

a modern, comedic, surreal Mythos novel

by William Browning Spencer

Borealis Publishing, \$5.99

reviewed by Brian M. Sammons

Imagine that you're a man named Philip Kenan and your life so far has been pretty weird. Your father used to read horrific tales to you at bedtime from a Mr. H.P. Lovecraft when you were only a young boy. Dad was also a paranoid schizophrenic who used to rave on and on about how the maniacal "System" was out to get him and that the System was really the Great Old Ones, but most people didn't know that. Recently you've been trying to write a novel. You've been working on this story for so long you can't remember a time when you were not working on it, and it has already passed the two-thousand-page mark and still has no ending in sight. The plot of your book is like the Lovecraft stories you loved so much as a child, but sometimes when you reread what you wrote the night before, you come across paragraphs that you can't recall ever writing. These things scare you, so you try to tell the woman you love about them. Unfortunately, not only does she think you tried to kill her a few years ago but she still thinks you're crazy and avoids you. With nothing else going for you, you try to focus on your job. You work in a dull, dreary, dead-end job where every day is the same as the last, and the one before

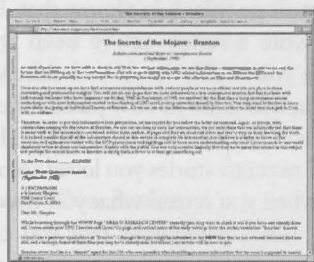
that, and the one before that, etc. Things look to be caught in a hopeless rut when one day things start to get exciting.

In the bathroom you see a scrawled phrase on one of the stall doors from a book you know only too well, albeit only by reputation—that quaint little tome written by a certain Mad Arab fellow. Your coworkers have started to look a little bit funny these last days, kind of grey and flaky. And what's that new scent Monica is wearing, essence of formaldehyde? These things really don't surprise you that much, because you've seen them before at your last job. But that can't be, because you were crazy then and you're all better now, aren't you?

So begins William Browning Spencer's *Resume With Monsters*, a wonderful little read brought to you by Borealis, an imprint of White Wolf Publishing. I found this book to be quite enjoyable and I'm happy I took the time (and money) to pick it up when I was close to passing on it. However, I must tell you that the reason I bought the book in the first place is not the same reason why I like it now. There were three reasons why I picked up this book, those being horror, Woody Allen, and the Cthulhu Mythos. The book's covers bill it as a horror book about the Cthulhu Mythos, and a blurb suggests it's in the vein of Woody Allen—in short, some sort of oddball Cthulhu comedy-horror work.

This isn't accurate. The book is not horrifying, it's not very funny, and the Cthulhu Mythos elements are used in bizarre and not terribly satisfying ways, despite the promise of the premise. The truth is, I should have hated this book, but for some reason I liked it. I found it refreshing that *Resume With Monsters* could not be pigeonholed into one specific genre or another despite what the cover suggested. I liked the main character of Philip Kenan, found him believable, and generally cared for his plight. I thought the plot was intriguing once I got over the hackneyed use of the Mythos and began to see the real story of a man's fight to stay sane, regain a lost love, and do something meaningful with his empty and tragic life. Battling the forces of cosmic evil is just a sometimes entertaining sub-plot.

Despite its misleading cover, *Resume* is a good book and if you read it as a story unto itself then I think you'll like it, too. I give *Resume With Monsters* a very surprised 7 phobias.



*The Secrets of the Mojave*  
(Or, the Conspiracy Against Reality), 7th ed.  
compiled by "The Group," edited by "Branton"  
internet files (see below)  
reviewed by Daniel Harms

If you are like me, at one time or another you decided to look into real-world occult material in hopes of finding some adventure seeds for a CoC game. Just like me, you probably gave up hope of finding anything that was really odd enough that it would shock your players instead of rehashing the same old clichés.

Recently while engaged in some Web browsing, I came upon a set of text files entitled "Secrets of the Mojave" and was soon reading them in fascination. According to The Group, the Mojave Desert is the center of UFO activity and in fact contains many underground bases where the infamous "greys" live and work. A fundamentalist Christian explanation is tacked on: these "greys" are actually the sons of the serpent, or Satan, who have come to earth to subvert our nation. The document rapidly expands outward in subject, touching on everything from the Vietnam War to old Amerindian legends to Freemasonry. I recently joked about coming up with a Unified Conspiracy Theory, and the authors of this piece have come very close to doing so.

While some people might find it good reading for this alone, there is much more to recommend it. The compilers have tracked down all sorts of obscure accounts from all sorts of literature which they believe have some bearing on their conspiracy theory, inadvertently putting together a large amount of inspirational material for Keepers which differs greatly from the stereotypical examples in the mass media. For example, those looking for "true-life" Deep One encounters should try the extensive list of reptilian monsters in Part 4. Part 7 discusses some odd objects found in the backwoods of Virginia—possible evidence of a Mi-Go presence there? Part 11 includes a Utah man's telepathic dream in which an evil cult occupies tunnels beneath Boston, as well as a 1930s California man's "confession" that is very close in plot to Lovecraft's "The Whisperer in Darkness"—but is followed by Branton's observation that a mysterious cult compound now occupies the same area. These are only a few of the tidbits that might fire a Keeper's imagination.

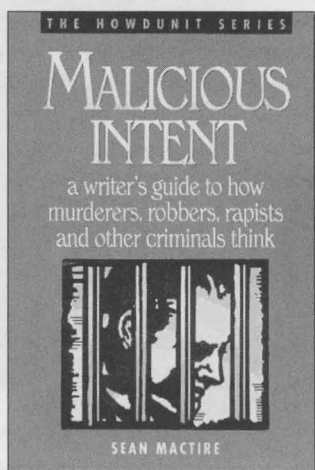
This is not to say that there are not some drawbacks, however. The amount of material in these files is huge—thirteen files which together contain over four hundred pages of material. Unless you want to print all of it out, you'll probably be staring at a monitor for quite some time. Those using this for Delta Green adventures should be aware that "Secrets" differs from the DG source material on the identity of the main baddies. On the up side, however, the whole thing's free for the taking, so these complaints are slightly unjustified.

You can find a copy of "Secrets of the Mojave" at several locations, though these URLs may change in the future; a web search for the title should pick it up if these links go down:

<http://www.think-aboutit.com/branton/mojave.htm>  
<http://anomalous-images.com/text/mojave.html>  
<http://www.v-jenterprises.com/mojave.html>



As a whole, this a great resource for scenario ideas which costs nothing but disk space. I give it 7 phobias.



*Malicious Intent*  
a writer's guide of the criminal mind  
by Sean Mactire  
Writer's Digest Books, \$16.99  
reviewed by Lisa Padol

This is a volume in the Howdunit Series of reference works. The series is intended for writers, but it is actually more useful for gamemasters.

The Howdunit Series varies in quality, and *Malicious Intent* is not one of its better books. After asking people with more knowledge than I about the material covered in this book, I dubbed *Malicious Intent* "the soundbite book," which should give you an idea of how deep the coverage goes.

The book often moves abruptly from one topic to the next, telling part of a fascinating, real-life story without giving any indication of how it ends. There are many paragraphs where each individual sentence makes sense, but the entire collection of sentences does not add up to anything.

Some of the information in *Malicious Intent* is certainly accurate, such as the distinction drawn between the psychotic and psychopath. It was refreshing to see someone write intelligently about the myth of Satanic murder cults and provide accurate information about Wicca. However, the author also makes sweeping generalizations, and I have been told that his information on several topics is incorrect. Certainly, there were enough statements that tweaked my suspension of disbelief, and this is supposed to be a factual book.

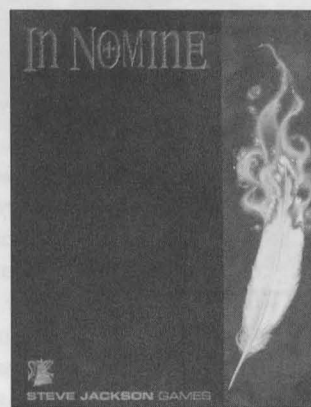
For example, in the chapter on organized crime ("Wise Guys and Hitmen"), the author explains that "No one else had a Great Depression like the U.S. experienced." This is an overgeneralization. We are also told that "No one other industrialized nation has such disgusting, destructive and oppressive slums as America." I admit that I have not made any kind of serious study of slums, but I find it hard to believe that the author has done so, and I doubt the accuracy of his claim.

I would not recommend *Malicious Intent* as any kind of serious study of the criminal mind, even on the most amateur level. Nor am I sure that it is useful to the writer. However, I must admit that it has proved very helpful to my GMing.

As a Keeper, I do not want to spend a lot of time researching most of my NPCs. I just want the soundbites, and that is what this book provides. The lists of traits for various sociopaths, career criminals, and genuine psychotics were exactly what I needed for a session I ran recently, so I did get my money's worth.

Do not buy this book if you want any guarantee of accuracy, or more than the most superficial coverage of the subject matter. It does not rate even one phobia in that case. As a roleplaying game aid for Keepers who need some fast character ideas, it rates 4 phobias and a solid *caveat lector*.

## Gaming Reviews



*In Nomine*  
an RPG of angels, demons, and their interactions with mortals  
by Derek Percy  
Steve Jackson Games, \$24.95  
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe Jr.

*In Nomine* is Steve Jackson Games' RPG of angels and demons, whose struggle to survive in the shadow of the Thrones of Heaven and Hell reveals them to be remarkably human. *In Nomine* is the culmination of the religiously-inspired and apocalyptic RPGs to enter the market over the past few years: it dances the fine lines between heresy and humor, faith and fashion, and not only succeeds but excels as few of its competitors have.

Set in the unsuspecting present, the game posits a world wherein God and Lucifer play out chessboard battles, using their celestial servants as pieces and mortals as pawns. Players assume the roles of these angels, demons, and mortal soldiers caught up in the jockeying for position, the intrigue, and the occasional pitched battle. Everyone has their own agenda, and plays for the highest stakes: the Symphony. The Symphony is Percy's take on the whole of Creation. Angels

and demons and those humans who are touched by the divine or infernal see the universe as an infinite musical performance, with everyone's actions contributing to the score. (This is similar to Tolkien's Ainulindale version of creation for Middle Earth, from *The Silmarillion*.) Those contributions can harmonize with the greater whole, or clash in discord. Harmony and discord play out at the character level through PC actions. When characters act according to their calling—a demon lies, an angel acts according to God's wishes, *etc.*—they are in harmony with their true nature. When they act against that nature they suffer Dissonance (which impedes the perception of the Symphony), which may eventually manifest physically as Discord (the smell of death surrounding a character, mental instability, *etc.*). Thus the greater themes and motifs of the Symphony are reinforced from the macro down through the micro levels of play. Quite brilliant.

Characters are rated using six characteristics, grouped according to their parent Force: Corporeal (Strength and Agility), Ethereal (Intelligence and Precision), and Celestial (Will and Perception). Forces define a character's physical, mental, and spiritual potential, and each characteristic's value can range from 1 to 12 for beginning PCs.

Characters are further defined through which Word they serve. Words represent aspects of the Symphony, such as War, Technology, Dark Humor, *etc.* If they're infernal or divine, they also choose which Band of Demons or Choir of Angels they belong to, a structure familiar from games such as *Ars Magica* and *Vampire: The Masquerade*. An additional stat, Essence, powers a character's supernatural abilities and may also be spent to improve the odds on chancy rolls; one point is recovered at dawn for angels, at sunrise for demons, at noon for humans, and midnight for non-aligned spirits (Norse gods, *etc.*). Resources round out the picture with skills, artifacts, Songs (magic), and Attunements (innate supernatural abilities derived from a Band or Choir).

While the focus of *In Nomine* by necessity rests on the celestial and infernal, non-celestial character roles allow players to select from a variety of character types to play. These include Soldiers (in-the-know human servants of Heaven and Hell) and undead (those who've sold their souls to Hell for eternal unlife: zombies, vampires, and mummies), as well as normal humans who are in the wrong place at the right time and get drawn into the story.

*In Nomine*'s cornerstone game mechanic is the d666. Players roll 2d6 to determine an action's outcome, with a differently colored 1d6 indicating the degree of success or failure—a one represents marginal success or failure, while a six is spectacular. The results of 111 and 666 invoke the intervention of God and Lucifer, for both good and ill: if an angel rolls 111 (representing the Trinity), God smiles upon the effort and she succeeds in her attempted endeavor; if a demon rolls 111, however, God intervenes negatively, and he fails. The same applies to a rolled 666, but in reverse. While

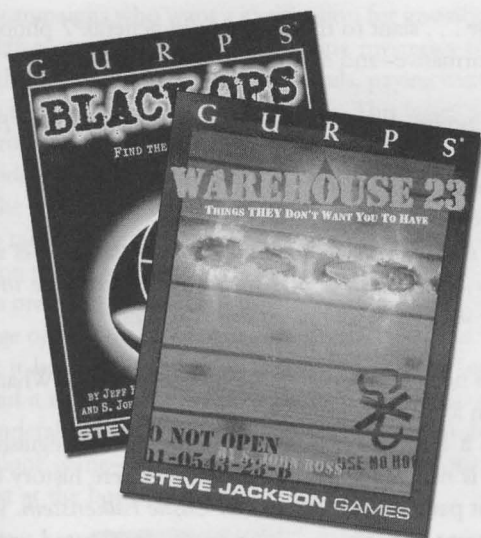
invoking God or Satan has one chance in 216, and seems quite remote, remember all those 18s you rolled in creating D&D characters—then double their frequency. God and Lucifer maintain an active interest in the world of *In Nomine*, and this demonstrates yet another aspect of the well-crafted design philosophy and integrity of this game.

There are many subtle plays on words, puns, and elements of the artwork throughout *In Nomine* that indicate a nicely snide and warped sense of humor. A demon in Hell on page 184 has a tube of Son Block by her beach chair; an angel on page 6 sports an Our Father tattoo; the sidebar on page 187 dealing with the language of demons mocks Americanized English. Other examples abound. It's always a nice surprise to read a game book that's both well-written and manages not to take itself too seriously.

I do have a few minor quibbles with *In Nomine*. While the book has an excellent index, its entries list word instances from the fiction, which can be rather annoying when looking up a term. The text itself is highly internally referential, and it's a rare two-page spread that doesn't point me all over the rest of the book to get further info. While I like the attention to detail and the ability to quickly jump to a similar topic, the book is so frequently referential that I think it could have been better organized. Lastly, although the art is generally good throughout the book and outstanding in several instances (p. 138 in particular stood out), it often feels rather comic-booky to me. It suggests a two-color rendering of a rich tapestry, and often pushes me out of *In Nomine*'s rich setting. This is probably just my personal biases coming through, so take them with the usual grains of salt.

*In Nomine* reminds me a lot of *Feng Shui*'s game engine; while the two systems differ markedly, they have the same sort of style and feel. The fluid game mechanics of both are simple, intuitive, easy to learn, and nearly transparent in active play. The other game *In Nomine* most recalls for me is *Precedence's Immortal*. Many parallels and similarities exist between the two games, backgrounds, and system mechanics; players and GMs of both games would do well to look at the other, to scrounge for ideas to steal in play.

*In Nomine* is a great game. Of all the religiously-inspired games to hit the market, *In Nomine* best captures the full scope and drama of Creation from the divine, infernal, and human perspectives. It rates 9½ phobias.



### GURPS Warehouse 23

a modern sourcebook of Things They Don't Want You To Have  
by S. John Ross

and

### GURPS Black Ops

a sourcebook on modern conspiracy agents,

their training, and their foes

by Jeff Koke and S. John Ross

Steve Jackson Games

128 pages, \$19.95

reviewed by Allan T. Grohe Jr.

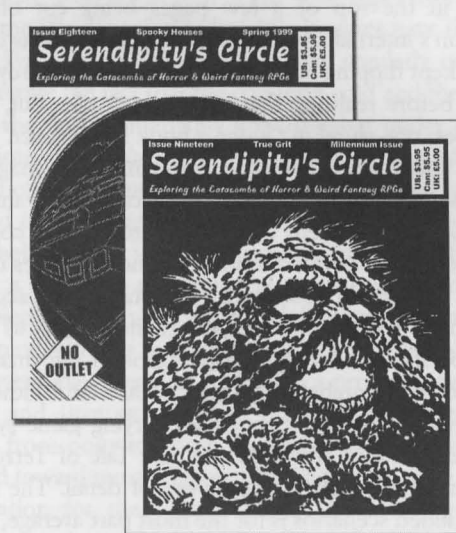
Continuing the tradition of *GURPS Illuminati*, *GURPS Warehouse 23* and *Black Ops* complement and enrich any roleplaying experience set in the modern era of Trust No One conspiracies, as exemplified by *Men In Black*, *The X-Files*, and *Delta Green*.

*Warehouse 23* takes the closing sequence from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, where the Ark is boxed up and placed in permanent storage among thousands of similar crate, and turns it into the ultimate dragon hoard for modern gaming. *Warehouse 23* can be easily plugged into any modern RPG with little to no effort. It could house anything from the Jersey Devil to the contents of Hanger 18 to Plato's lost "original" version of *Kritias* (in which he tells the full story of Atlantis's fall). In addition to being well-stocked with a variety of savory treats—such as a discussion of Orgone Energy (Hawkwind, anyone?), The Crystal Skull, and The Martian War Machine (what if Orson Welles wasn't kidding?)—Ross provides a history and layout for the warehouse and explores the problems of placing this well-nigh mythical building onto a map. A timeline and nice bibliography round out this excellent book.

*Black Ops* is a "how-to" training manual on building better Men In Black. A first-person narrative told by Ivan Decker (a veteran operative who survived fifty-three field ops) details the elite Black Operatives, the Company they

work for, and the Company's five-year training regime. The remaining four chapters of the book are devoted to Black Operative campaigns, character types and templates, monsters to mangle, and the Company's tools of the trade. While packed full of fun, *Black Ops* lacks the mythic scope that distinguishes *Warehouse 23* and *GURPS Illuminati* from lesser works. It's a good book, and well worth purchasing, but if you had to choose one over the other, I recommend *Warehouse 23*.

*Warehouse 23* rates 9 phobias, and *Black Ops* garners 7½ phobias.



### Serendipity's Circle

weird-fantasy & horror gaming magazine

Wheeality Productions, \$3.50

reviewed by Michael P. Nagel

It often amazes me to think that I've been an active participant in the gaming hobby for almost two decades. Back in the early days, life was simple as options were few. First there was basic *Dungeons & Dragons*, followed soon by the *Advanced* books. Then came the TSR system spin-offs which were still basically the same thing, albeit applied to different genres. TSR ruled the gaming world until Mark Miller and the Game Designers Workshop introduced *Traveller*. A few years later I purchased my first copy of *Call of Cthulhu* . . . and there was no turning back.

Throughout my college years, there was little point to try other systems as CoC supplied all I really needed for roleplaying enjoyment: mystery, suspense, humor, and occasional graphic violence, all rolled up in a neat, playable system. Ah, those were the days! Gaming self-actualization had been achieved. Why look elsewhere? During the decade since my graduation from college, time constraints coupled with other real-life (!) responsibilities have further narrowed this focus on roleplaying even further. A trip to the local hobby store usually involves nothing more than asking the



clerk if any new CoC supplements are available, and if not—a hasty retreat. But recently, my tiny window on the roleplaying world has been blown open and a vast panorama has been revealed to me through a humble little publication called *Serendipity's Circle*.

Superficially, the magazine is not much to look at. A recent issue is sixty pages long—including the cover—its format being fifteen 8 1/2 X 14 inch sheets folded over and stapled. The production value is pretty amateurish. The covers are not very sturdy, the printing quality and binding are not very consistent, and in some instances the pages were miscopied, resulting in the top of a few pages being cut off. The publication's internal layout can also be described as choppy at best; I kept flipping back to stare at an oddly wordy advertisement before realizing that it was an article. But, as the saying goes, one shouldn't judge a book by its cover.

The catch-phrase which accompanies the magazine's title reads: "Exploring the Catacombs of Weird Fantasy & Horror Gaming." A pretty accurate summary of its contents. Each issue revolves around a single theme—vampires in issue # 10 and children in issue # 11, for instance—the accompanying content trying to stick to the theme as best as it can. Subject-specific articles include background information—a small piece on cannibalism in the "Health and Fitness" issue—as well as several scenarios for varying game systems. The scenarios range from the size of a Tale of Terror to a full-blown format, with varying levels of detail. The quality of the included scenarios is for the most part average, with a couple of real stinkers balanced out by a few stars ("Out of the Mouths of Babes" in issue #11 deserves special mention as being quite outstanding). The artwork accompanying the scenarios in the form of maps, hand-outs, etc., is one of the magazine's biggest problems. They are really—really—bad.

As the actual roleplaying material in each issue is, on the whole, nothing to write home about, the real value of the magazine lies in its large collection of reviews. There is no doubt that the magazine's contributors are well in tune with the hobby and the horror genre in particular. All of the reviews, ranging from a couple of paragraphs to a few pages in length, were well-balanced, informative, and showed little personal bias—or at least if there was bias, it was clearly stated. It is the reviews that form the heart of *Serendipity's Circle*, and should be the driving force behind the decision to subscribe or not. Given the dirt cheap price of \$15 for a four-issue subscription, this little fount of information is a bargain, as it may well save you three to four times that much in the purchase of bad product.

If you want to find out how to acquire copies of the magazine, check out the web site (<http://members.aol.com/SerCircle/>) or write to them at: 12345 Lake City Way NE, Suite 147, Seattle, WA 98125.

Even given its faults, *Serendipity's Circle* is still chock-full of concepts and ideas which will help any Keeper nudge his or her campaign in all sorts of weird and wonderful directions. Oh, and you might get a kick out of the feminist . . . er,

feminine . . . slant to the magazine in general. 7 phobias for this informative—and affordable—magazine.

*Age of Empire: A Roleplaying Game of Mad Victorian Fantasy*  
by Gareth-Michael Skarka

Epitaph Studios, \$18.00

reviewed by Lisa Padol

(Editor's note: This game was taken off the market shortly after its release, but copies may still be available in some gaming shops or on internet auction sites.)

This is a new RPG set in the nineteenth century. What sets it off from all of the others?

To a large extent, *Age of Empire* is distinguished by what it is not. It is not set in a world where history took a different path, like *Deadlands* or *Castle Falkenstein*. It does not attempt to come up with a new, complicated system of rules, or with alternatives to dice. This is all to the good; lately, too many companies have fallen flat on their faces trying to be New and Revolutionary.

So what is *Age of Empire*? It is a Mad Victorian game. This means that it leans heavily on the cinematic and the pulpish—but the nineteenth-century flavored pulp. It means that adventures are intended to have a twist, something supernatural or science-fictional. *Age of Empires* attempts to, and largely succeeds in, creating a system capable of including all of these elements while remaining simple.

After some pleasant flavor text, and the obligatory but in-offensive explanation of roleplaying, the character-creation system is introduced. There are three statistics: Mind, Body, and Soul. A simple point-based system determines a character's rating in these, as well as determining skill levels. One interesting feature of the character-creation system is the idea of defining traits. For every point you have in a statistic, you get to choose a trait ranging from Linguist (which halves the language-skill cost) to Clever (allowing one re-roll of a failed mental action per session) to Intuitive (allowing the player to ask for a GM hint once per session). While I like this system, it is potentially unbalancing, especially since players can purchase new traits with experience points. Also, for some reason NPCs do not seem to have their fair share of traits.

The combat section is relatively simple, intended to be dramatic rather than realistic. The magic system accurately models Victorian beliefs about ritual magic and spiritualism, and could probably be adapted to CoC, especially if one is using Pagan Publishing's *Golden Dawn* supplement. There is also a section on creating gadgets for inventor and spy PCs.

The rest of the book is background on the nineteenth century, helpful advice for GMs, and beginning adventures. The background is not extensive, but it is supplemented by a bibliography which includes sections for movies, television, music, and comics.

The first of the three adventures is actually a campaign setting, one which may prove useful to Keepers of CoC

1890s campaigns who want a justification for investigators of very different social classes to examine mysteries together. The other two are a bit skimpy on details, paying more attention to the set-up than to the resolution. This is not necessarily a problem, but GMs should be aware that they will have to decide how the adventures will be resolved.

The art and layout are good, although page numbers are easy to miss. There are several cases of words being broken up oddly on the page. There is no index. While the table of contents is pretty thorough, there is at least one error in it.

*Age of Empire* is not a stunning new breakthrough for RPGs; it has modest aims. It meets these aims reasonably well and it is pleasant to read. I give it 5 phobias as a source of plunderable material for 1890s CoC, and 6 phobias as a standalone game—with an extra phobia awarded for the flavor text at the bottom of p. 46.



#### *Asylum*

a near-future dystopian RPG of the insane

by Aaron Rosenberg

Clockworks, Inc., \$20

reviewed by Allan T. Grohe, Jr.

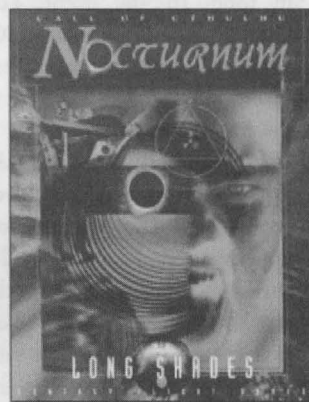
*Asylum's* game-present begins in 2163, and the setting is a dystopian North America. Players assume the roles of clinically insane Inmates who roam one of the fourteen Wards (cities), under the watchful control of Overseers and Orderlies (cops and men in white). Earth itself has suffered from a series of cataclysms (two huge volcanic eruptions and a third world war) and is shrouded in a perpetual twilight known as the Blanket Seed: an airborne algae that has replaced cloud cover and caused a general greenhouse effect as well as mass extinctions of plant and animal life. While *Asylum* is somewhat reminiscent of *Paranoia* mixed with a few dashes of *Mad Max*, the game's overall intent remains serious rather than comic.

The game mechanics employ an unusual system in which players pull two colored marbles from a bag and then match the colors up against a chart, generating values from 2 to 10—a 2d5 system, basically. Characters are defined through Vitals (stats) and Skills, all of which range from 1 to 5. Checks can be made against one or the other (in the standard Storyteller target-value method) to determine the success of attempted

actions, but tasks that fall within a character's abilities don't require a Draw. Hence, *Asylum* can be considered a semi-diceless game, and I love the conceit of "losing your marbles."

Figuring out how to approach *Asylum* is somewhat problematic. Like some of the characters in the game, *Asylum* seems bipolar. The near-future setting at once embodies both extreme cynicism and utopian ideals. For example, while all racial, sexual, and religious biases have disappeared in 2163, many Inmates still fall into various stereotypical groupings, and the world of *Asylum* remains based in a rigid caste hierarchy (Inmates below Orderlies, Clinicians, and other Staff, who are in turn below their supervisors, in turn below the Warden). Similarly, while Inmates have the potential to live to ninety years of age they regularly only reach fifty, despite the fact that the common cold and the flu were left in the dust as humanity grew tougher under the living conditions of *Asylum's* Earth. These dichotomies occur throughout the game, and because they're so prevalent, I'm inclined to think they're intentional. I haven't fathomed the intent behind these various contradictions yet, but I presume they're a means to encourage players to go out on a limb and roleplay the insanities that define and surround their characters. If that is in fact the case, it's pretty cool.

Several flaws exist in *Asylum* as a product: the abysmal layout and unattractive page graphics, the artwork that ranges from poor to good, the rather caustic attitudes expressed toward most religions, and the implausible scientific justification for the setting. Nevertheless, the game's redeeming merits outshine its flaws. It's well edited, presents a consistently engaging setting, treats insanity with deferential respect, offers a short and insightful history of mental disorders, and asks me to question the nature of my (our?) reality more forcefully than I do on a day-to-day basis. Despite what I consider to be significant problems with *Asylum*, I like the game. It rates a solid 6 phobias.



#### *Nocturnum: Long Shades*

a 1990s Call of Cthulhu campaign sourcebook

by Darrell Hardy

Fantasy Flight Games, \$19.95

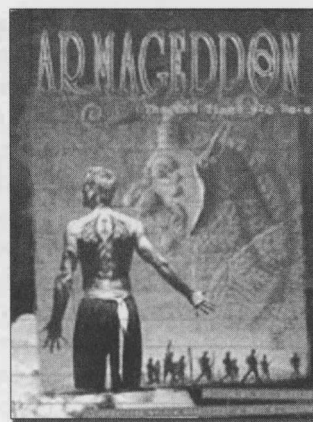
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe Jr.

When I spotted *Nocturnum: Long Shades* in my local game store, my first thought upon seeing the cover was, "Cool—more *Kult* stuff." The cover image crosses a very *Kult*-ish look with some Dave McKean-like background work. Very appealing. I then flipped the book over, read the back (complete with a quotation from Nostradamus), and got hooked at "*Long Shades* is a postmodern campaign sourcebook for Call of Cthulhu."

That initial curiosity carried me through the 120 pages between the covers. *Long Shades* is the introductory book in the extended *Nocturnum* campaign, of which there are three books in all. This one contains three adventures: "Snowflake Valley," "The Madness of the Twilight Queen," and "Stillness." Each introduces one of the mysterious Shk'ryth, the Greater Independent Race which centers *Nocturnum*'s stories (a sort of more-social Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua). The Shk'ryth cross the malignant attitudes of *Kult*'s Lictors with the casual evil of *Werewolf*'s Wyrm-spawned Evils That Threaten The World: they're not very classy, and they aren't terribly subtle, and they despise humanity.

Unfortunately, in play the Shk'ryth don't break the White Wolf black-and-white, good-and-evil mold. All three adventures suffer from linear plotting (especially "Snowflake Valley") and paint the Shk'ryth as uninteresting Evils That Need To Be Stopped By PCs. PC motivations remain tenuous, the situations and encounters clichéd, and—a far greater crime—the scenarios fail to ignite the repulsive fear of the Shk'ryth that should drive my players to seek out the subsequent releases. My greatest disappointment in *Long Shades* (surpassing the poor editing) lies in the fact that I found nothing whatsoever to be remotely "postmodern," as the back cover suggested. Perhaps I got a bit too excited by a publisher blurb and set unduly high expectations for the book as a result. Perhaps the Shk'ryth harken back to *Kult* too much, and their active animosity toward humanity feels rather un-HPL in tone. In any event, I'd love to see postmodern elements explored further in CoC. *Delta Green* and Blair Reynolds' *Black Sands* sate that need, and I sought something comparable in *Long Shades*. That something just wasn't there.

Despite the above flaws, *Nocturnum* shows promise. With Keeper-assisted tweaking, all three adventures can be fleshed out and energized. "The Madness of the Twilight Queen" offers the most original plotting and NPCs, as well as an interesting (though largely unexplored) Dreamlands-like setting. "Stillness" offers hints at the bigger picture to be explored in later books, and tantalizes me with some funky maneuverings by Nyarlathotep during the climax. The production values are in general on a par with Chaosium releases. All in all, I'm interested enough to check out the other two books in this series. *Long Shades* rates 5 phobias.



*Armageddon: A Game of War, Myth and Horror*  
a modern apocalyptic RPG  
by C. J. Carella  
Myrmidon Press, \$25  
reviewed by Allan T. Grohe Jr.

*Armageddon* is Myrmidon's entry into the already-crowded apocalyptic RPG genre. The game offers a slick-looking package: a Tim Bradstreet cover, interior illustrations from Bradstreet, Mark Nelson, and several other notable comic book artists, and an attractive layout. The visual impact of the book grabs you by the throat and demands, "Read me!"

Unfortunately, once you begin to do so you'll see that *Armageddon*—much like *Rapture: The Second Coming*—emphasizes conflict over all other possible aspects of the End Times. The failure to explore the rich variety of story options available during the End of the World As We Know It is *Armageddon*'s greatest flaw. While a fair amount of background material is included in the game (and not just on Heaven and Hell and their hosts, but also on the Nephilim, the pagan gods of old, etc.), such material remains subservient in focus and purpose to the overall War.

What *Armageddon* attempts, however, it does well. Heaven and Hell's massed armies are ranked, detailed, and marshalled for war. Their skills and powers are cataloged with all the appropriate modifiers and ready for combat. Character stats are the classics from AD&D, renamed in a few cases (less Charisma, plus Perception, for a total of six stats), and are readily applicable to most combat situations.

The bland character sheet, lack of an index, various editing problems, and several sets of missing pages remain the primary physical flaws within an otherwise well-presented product. Despite *Armageddon*'s good looks, however, its scope and focus are so limited (and limiting) that I fail to see the game achieving any lasting audience. If you want hack-and-slash with angels and demons against a *Book of Revelations* backdrop—and managed to miss out on *Rapture* a few years ago—check out *Armageddon*. On the other hand, if you want some quality images for use as visual cues in your *In Nomine*, *The End*, or *Kult* games, *Armageddon* works well.



Solely on the basis of its visual merit, *Armageddon* rates 4 phobias.



*The Everlasting: Book of the Unliving*  
and *The Everlasting: Book of the Light*  
RPG of modern occult weirdness

by Steven Brown

Visionary Entertainment Studio, \$29.95 each  
reviewed by Lisa Padol

These two massive tomes have some excellent ideas for a really kick-ass game. However, it takes a lot of digging to find them, and it may not be worth the effort or the cover price.

Now, I've read a couple of reviews that describe *The Everlasting* as "White Wolf's World of Darkness done right." I disagree completely; to me, these books show just how much WW got right, for all its flaws. However, the painful fact is that *The Everlasting* could have been White Wolf done right. The world background is more unified and it can comfortably hold everything from ghouls to gargoyles to grail seekers.

Most RPGs are content with creating one system, but there is a trend towards offering multiple options. I doubt that any game has yet offered as many as *The Everlasting*. You can use dice or cards. If you use cards, you can use a regular playing deck or a tarot deck, which is the preferred option. If you use dice, you can use d10s or multiple types of dice. Or you can game freeform, with neither cards nor dice. This is great, but the discussion of multiple systems so early on is confusing, particularly for the new gamer. It might have made more sense to describe one system at the beginning, and to discuss all of the other options in an appendix. Also, given that the author seems to prefer the tarot deck option, I wonder why he waits until so late in each book to describe it.

The basics are straightforward: you want your PC's applicable stats plus a random card draw or die roll to beat a target number. However, the system rapidly gets far too complicated for my tastes. Remember the original *Dark Conspiracy*? I took one look at those combat rules and screamed. *The Everlasting* is at least as bad, perhaps worse.

Combat is divided into twelve-second cycles of ten turns each, and one's Speed score determines in which particular round(s) any given character can act. I hate this.

It is recommended at one point that all characters be communal. That is, players trade off PCs each session. *Ars Magica* first suggested this, I believe, but in that game sharing was limited to the supporting PCs. This is an odd idea, and one I'm not sure I'd always want to use, but I'm glad it's in here. This is the sort of shake-up us jaded roleplayers need. What's confusing is that, after implying that this is the way players are expected to play, there is no further reference to communal PCs. Instead, the author talks about hiding important information on the character sheet from other players, keeping private journals, and so on—all of which presumes that each PC is the property of a specific player. It's things like this that make *The Everlasting* read as though it were designed by committee.

The discussion of systems is the same in each book. This is because *The Everlasting* is being packaged as four games, each of which take place in the same world, but each of which can be played separately. Sound familiar? I hated this when White Wolf did it, and I hate it here. Essentially, the reader is paying for the same material over and over again. A better way of organizing everything would be to have the basic rules in one book and information on the various PC races in another. This would allow information such as magic systems and generic supernatural powers to be in the main book. As things stand, not only does one have to buy four books to get information on all of the races, one also has to buy one book on generic supernatural information and another on magic. Paying \$120 and still not having a complete came is just not cool, guys.

The world? Oh yes. There are various supernatural races allying and betraying each other in our modern world. Readers get a glimpse of how the supernatural races work in the opening fiction piece of each book. The one in the first book, while interesting, blows my suspension of disbelief. Sure, I know that this is just to get us into the world, but that doesn't mean the characters have to act like imbeciles. Try this scenario: You are immortal. You have amazing healing powers. You've uprooted the mortal woman you love because you're fleeing unknown enemies, and she demands to know what's going on. Because you love her, you decide that it is time to tell her the truth. Understandably, she is skeptical. How do you convince her? Do you a) give yourself a shallow cut and let her watch it heal up instantly; b) cut off a finger and let her watch it grow back; or c) blow your brains out in front of her face, and assure her from your prone position in the mud that you will be just fine in an hour or so?

If you picked c), stay the heck away from me. Now, pretend you're the woman in question, and your idiotic lover picked c). How fast do you get over the trauma? The woman here got over it in five minutes, give or take. I am not buying this. It's juvenile.

*The Book of the Unliving* focuses on ghouls, revenants, and vampires. The ghouls are presented the best, and the chapter on them should be read by all CoC GMs. True, these are not Lovecraft's ghouls, but they are worth stealing. This chapter reminds me of the better parts of *Kult*, which was always a better game when viewed as a mine of source material for CoC. Revenants and Vampires are short-shrifted, appearing mostly as lists of abilities. I just did not get the same sense of a rich culture as I did with the ghouls.

Additional races include ghosts and reanimates. These are not counted among the thirteen basic races, but players are allowed to choose them as PCs. The section on ghosts bored me to tears. I don't know how similar they are to WW's wraiths, but I find this view of the world of ghosts dull in the extreme. The reanimates have more potential, but this is barely scratched. I want to know more about the secret societies of mad scientists working both inside and outside of academia and government organizations to create these reanimates. This is a cool concept, one that should find its way into a few *Delta Green* campaigns.

*The Book of the Light* introduces angels, devas, and questers. The section on angels is dull, but I was pleasantly surprised by the chapter on devas and impressed by the one on questers.

Devas are minor gods or godlings. They can be destroyed, but they have much power within their sphere of influence. The divisions among them are somewhat artificial, but the group of devas who stopped aging while they were still children is fascinating. As the author emphasizes three times in less than a page, they have their servants pretend to be the adults in charge.

Designer Steven Brown has a special place in his heart for the Questers. I wrote my dissertation on modern Arthurian literature, so I approached this chapter with dread. My fears were soon eased. Brown has it down: the passion, the half-mad, half-beautiful, impossible quest. He also adds an interesting twist: if a quester loses faith, he ages rapidly, but cannot die. There is some precedent for this in the stories of the wounded fisher king, but I wonder if one of Brown's sources might also be the movie *Baron Munchausen*. This is not *Pendragon*, but it is not meant to be. It takes no more liberties with the Arthurian legend than any author ever does. And yes, one can be a quester who seeks something other than the Grail. Quests can involve fighting demons or organized crime, as well as protecting the innocents or forging a lasting peace.

The featured races here are not intended for use as PCs. There are demons, counterparts of the angels and no more interesting. There are werewolves, and while I would never want to meet one of these critters I like the unsentimental presentation. These are not nice beings, whether in wolf or human form. They're well suited to any CoC campaign in any era, either as a race under the thumbs of the Outer Gods or as a race independent of them.

Both books have a chapter covering the other major races of immortals. Naturally, such coverage is brief. Next is a chapter describing the game world. A chapter of "advanced guidelines" follows. This includes mechanics for magic. I had to read a couple of paragraphs twice, but the system does work, and I like the way it's set up. I do not like the fact that it is necessary to buy another book that won't be printed for months, if at all, in order to actually use the magic rules to their greatest potential.

Next is a chapter on storytelling, or, if you prefer, GMing. *The Book of the Unliving* has an example of play that is simultaneously baffling and hilarious. It is intended to show how each player can be responsible for part of the game; that is, one player runs the main plot, while another runs a subplot, and a third runs all of the combat scenes. These are useful ideas but they are not clearly presented, which may be why this section was left out of *The Book of the Light*.

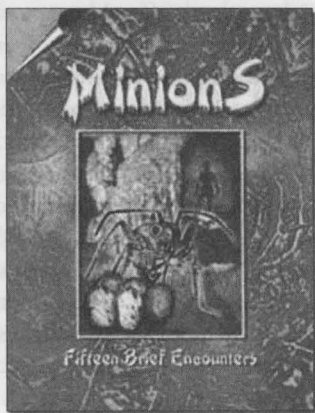
*The Book of the Unliving* has a scenario and plot seeds. *The Book of the Light* has neither, but this is an improvement. The scenario in *Unliving* is far too vague to be of much help to a GM.

The final chapter describes Legendmaking. As the back-cover blurb proclaims, *The Everlasting* is "more than a roleplaying game." It is designed to make us confront our hidden depths, grow, learn, make our own legends—and the author hastens to present us with tools including lucid dreaming, ritualized game sessions, and, in *The Book of the Unliving*, a guided meditation.

Now, I'm fairly into the New Age world myself. And I've got a Ph.D. in English, so I have a fairly high tolerance for literary excesses. But these things have their places, and a mass-market RPG is not one of them. I don't want an RPG designer to tell me how lucid dreaming will make me a better person; I want to hear about how I can run an adventure. I don't want to read a badly written guided meditation (p. 287 of *The Book of the Unliving* instructs the trance subject to stretch his eyes!), or to be told that I should explain, in character, in a ritual context, what I have learned in a game session. This is not the safe gaming that the author recommends; this is taking the game far too seriously, with the result that it's simply laughable.

Both volumes of *The Everlasting* are chock full of hideously pretentious, evangelistic, and occasionally downright creepy prose; a dramatic reading of some of the worst examples begs comparison to the films of *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. *The Book of the Light* is a little better than the *Unliving*, primarily because it leaves out the worst of the bad material. But the system is too complicated, and the marketing technique of asking you to buy the same material four times, yet still not have the complete game, is reprehensible.

For all that, there are useful ideas in *The Everlasting*. This is a game that has a lot of potential, but fails to realize that potential. I give it two phobias, whether viewing it as plunderable material for CoC or as a standalone game.



### *Minions*

a collection of mini-adventures for CoC.

by Paul McConnell

Chaosium Inc., \$10.95

reviewed by Brian M. Sammons

*Minions* promises to be a “gestalt of short scenarios and brief encounters,” but what it delivers are mostly poorly thought out additions to a CoC game. The first ten scenarios are unrelated and very brief, usually only a couple pages in length each and some of them are still too long in the tooth. The last five adventures of the book are interconnected (kind of) and form a mini-campaign called “The Horror Man.”

My biggest gripe about the book is that most of the adventures are pointless. For example: in one, an investigator is hired to work in a research lab as an assistant. When the investigator goes to the lab he sees a large door that leads to another dimension containing eel-like and octopod creatures, and a being of roughly humanoid shape. That’s it, that’s the adventure. No stats, little reason as to why the door is there, nor why the investigator should care since, well, *nothing* has happened. Worse yet, chances are nothing *will* happen. No sinister scientist has plans to throw open the door for some insane reason, and the creatures on the other side cannot open the door themselves. This is an adventure without the adventure.

Another example: an investigator reads a story in the paper about a farmer’s cows dying. He goes out to the farm and pokes around. While walking through the pasture, he puts his foot in a hole that has an incredible stench inside it, as well as the rotting remains of many dead bunny rabbits. But don’t tell the player that, ‘cause *that’s* the adventure. The Keeper is to describe the horrid, moving, slimy mass of dead bunnies as if it was alive, and the investigator is to be so terrified that he goes screaming into the woods, losing Sanity along the way.

And this brings up another sticking point with me: the game mechanics just don’t gel. In the first example, the investigator loses 0/1 SAN for seeing strange new dimensions and the horrid creatures that dwell within. In the second

example, the investigator loses 1/1D6 SAN for sticking his foot in bunny goo. Doesn’t make much sense to me.

Then there are so-called adventures that are just lacking substance, as if the dead bunny story didn’t. The investigators meet a schoolteacher who’s having strange dreams, and discover that some of her students dug up two black crystals. The crystals grow up to be nightgaunts and now live in the school’s greenhouse. Why? I don’t know. Or how about this: after the investigators read a book that has vague Mythos undertones to it they visit the author. A meteor crashes and out crawls a monster to eat the investigators. That’s it for that story. While I was reading this book it got to the point where I expected to see an adventure that consisted of nothing more than: “1D6 Deep Ones are walking down the street looking for a fight.”

The “Horror Man” adventures don’t fare much better. They present a series of brief but violent encounters with a weird guy doing weird things. I won’t give away the plot behind the Horror Man, because at least the author tried to come up with one this time.

This is not to say that all the adventures in *Minions* are quite this bad—but most of them are. Some adventures do offer a few interesting ideas, and although I can’t see myself running any of them as they are, there are two that I might make some changes to and then run. Maybe that’s all this book should offer, ideas and hints, but I expect much more from a book that cost \$10.95 than sinister seeds and sketchy adventure outlines. I think a book of *Tales of Terror* would be much more rewarding than *Minions*—lots of very short scenario ideas are better than a handful of somewhat short scenario ideas. *Minions* strikes for a middle range between scenario seed and scenario, with unsatisfying results.

In closing, I give *Minions* 1 measly phobia for providing a smattering of sinister seeds. I advise you to save your eleven bucks and put it towards the pizza fund; it would be a more worthwhile investment.

## Movie Reviews



*The Fifth Annual H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival*

Portland, Oregon, October 6-9

reviewed by A. Scott Glancy



It may have been the Fifth Annual H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival, but it was the first time I had ever been. After three days of Mythos-drenched shorts and features, it certainly won't be my last. The H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival just got moved onto my list of annual pilgrimages, like GenCon and Christmas with the parents. For fans of the old gentleman from Providence, this festival is a must-see.

This year's festival screened films on four nights. Friday night we were treated to a vintage Hammer Films trailer for *Quatermass and the Pit*, sometimes known by its American title *Five Million Years to Earth*. If you haven't heard of Professor Quatermass, shame on you! Turn in your investigator badge and go to bed.

The second item was *The Old Man and the Goblins*, a wonderfully animated black-and-white short done in a 1910s style similar to the Russian animator Starewicz. Inspired by the HPL poem "The Nightgaunts," stop-motion animators Mark Cabellero and Seamus Walsh told the story of an old man contending with the evil critters who bedevil his nights. It was both whimsical and ghastly at the same time.

Next we got a cool little trailer for *The Testimony of Randolph Carter*, a short film that would be screened later in the festival. The fourth film was a Canadian short by Marco Dube called *Nyarlahotep*. Performed in French with no subtitles, it was basically a collage of weird images combined with the spoken text of HPL's poem "Nyarlahotep." If nothing else, it was unnerving to hear the names of the Outer Gods spoken with a French accent. Two more trailers for still-in-production short films followed that: *The Terrible Old Man*, by Bob Fugger, and *The Yellow Sign*, by Aaron Vanek—with a script by *Unspeakable Oath* editor John Tynes. Both should appear at next year's festival.

The longest amateur work was a seventy-minute film from Italy called *The Beyond*. This was the weakest Friday entry. Based in part on "The Statement of Randolph Carter," the film had a decent cast, good costumes and props, an excellent shooting location, and really first-class use of lighting. Unfortunately it didn't have a coherent script, which was made worse through the use of shockingly horrible subtitles. Among the most startlingly bad translations was an army lieutenant telling one of his men to "Carry your buttocks out of there," and then assuring the trooper that the rest of the squad was "streaking" to save him. This was a real shame, as the film still delivered one of the most genuine on-screen scares of the festival.

The last film of the night was John Carpenter's *The Thing*. Okay, it's not exactly HPL but it's got all the usual signs we look for: Antarctica; ancient polymorphous alien menaces; paranoia; and isolation. If you play CoC, you've got to love any film where the characters end up armed with flame throwers, Molotov cocktails, and dynamite in the face of a cosmic menace. One sad thing about *The Thing* is that it shows you what John Carpenter was capable of before he started grinding out garbage like *Vampires* or *Escape from L.A.* Damn, John. What the hell happened?

Saturday night started off with an entry by Richard Corben. Yes, that's the veteran comic-book creator who did *Den* and all that other *Heavy Metal*-esque stuff, including some HPL adaptations. He is also a very talented animator. Based on HPL's sonnet "Fungi from Yuggoth, part XXIV," Corben's film *The Canal* delivers an astounding mix of creepy imagery laced with decay, decline, and death.

The next short was *De Vermis Mysteriis*, eight minutes of Canadian nastiness, in French with English subtitles. Director Martine Asselin delivers a good lesson in why you don't want to read that horrible book. This one was well done, well paced, and had some quite effective special effects. One of the best of the amateur entries.

The next film was a forty minute pilot for a BBC television series called *Rough Magic*. This one blew me out of my socks. The first four minutes delivered a shock which genuinely felt like I was aboard a train car derailing in slow motion—not to mention the fact that the situation doesn't improve any as the story progresses. Like any good Lovecraftian tale, the more you learn, the worse it gets. *Rough Magic* had that in spades. The pilot, "Episode Zero, Age of Wonders," presents a world where more and more people are hearing the dream-call of Cthulhu, the Sleeping God. These "Dreamers," as they are called, are wreaking more and more havoc, engaging in ritual murder, spree killings, and other atrocities. Mr. Moon, an influential and mysterious intelligence official, is trying to reconstitute a group called the Night Scholars who fought the Mythos decades earlier before they were disbanded. Sound familiar? Fans of *Delta Green* need to track this one down. As of yet, the BBC has not pursued production of *Rough Magic* as a series.

*Out of Mind: The Stories of H. P. Lovecraft* was the absolute pinnacle of the festival. Produced in Canada, this was, hands down the most successful attempt to capture the feel of HPL's writing on the screen that I have ever seen. It was not an adaptation of a single HPL story, nor a documentary, nor a cinematic pastiche of Lovecraft. It was all of these and none of the above. Director Raymond Saint-Jean (yet another French Canadian filmmaker!) created a story that moves both within and without the writings of HPL, and does so without breaking the mood. The actor who plays Lovecraft is phenomenal. He looks like HPL. Not a little. Exactly. His performance make you wonder if perhaps HPL had appropriated the young man's body, like some ghoulish sorcerer from one of his stories. The moments where HPL is wandering in the woods and working out different ways to pronounce "Cthulhu" is absolutely priceless.

The feature on Saturday was *Bride of Reanimator*, and the less said about this dog the better. However, there is something incredibly cool about Jeffrey Combs as Herbert West, strapping on a Colt .45 to go battle his rebellious horde of zombies.

Sunday night was the last night of short films. The first thing we were treated to was a trailer for *Necronomicon*, an

anthology film from a few years ago that was mostly a failure. Next was a Canadian short called *The Jigsaw Puzzle*, in which a woman finds a puzzle whose image is of herself, putting together the puzzle. I'm told that a much better version of this same folktale appeared at the festival a couple years ago.

Next imagine, if you can, a mockumentary about the search for a failed musical theater production called *A Shoggoth on the Roof*. Yes, it's *Fiddler on the Roof* tunes with lyrics from Lovecraft! This one was amazing for any number of reasons, not the least of which was that Stuart Gordon (director of *Reanimator*) and Chris Sarandon (who starred in *The Resurrected*) appear playing themselves, fervently denying any involvement with the sanity-blasting horror of Lovecraftian musical theater. Andrew Leman and Sean Branney are the fiends responsible for this hilarious nightmare. I still haven't been able to shake the tune "Byakhee, Byakhee" (sung to the music of "Matchmaker, Matchmaker") out of my head. Trepanation may be in order.

Leman and Branny then came back at us with a version of "The Statement of Randolph Carter" they made in 1987 called *The Testimony of Randolph Carter*. The film used a courtroom interrogation of poor Randolph Carter as the vehicle for laying out the story. The period costumes, props, sets, and locations were perfect. The acting was competent, although Sean Branney did a particularly good job as the obsessed Warren. The film was too long, running almost an hour, but it was quite ambitious and had some noteworthy scenes.

This was followed by a first-time director's very short production of "The Picture in the House." This one was literally edited together minutes before being shown, and while it had some (very) serious problems with the dialogue track, it still got made in time, so I won't gripe too loudly.

The Sunday feature was *Dark Intruder*, another failed television pilot, this time from the US of A. It stars Leslie Nielsen as an 1890s occult investigator in San Francisco and Werner Klemperer (yes, Colonel Klink) as the horribly deformed Siamese twin out to steal his brother's body ala *The Thing on the Doorstep*. Filmed in the 1960s, this pilot has some light moments but was definitely not played for laughs. Players of CoC will feel right at home on this one.

*Dark Intruder* was then followed by a short but eerie film called *Purgatory*. It's a strange, wordless story that consists of one long unedited shot, in which the actors performed the entire story in reverse; then the film itself was reversed to produce a very peculiar visual effect. Interesting stuff.

Finally, on Monday night *Dark Intruder*, *Bride of Reanimator*, and *The Thing* were all run again, back to back. While I didn't stay for this fourth night, having seen all three films the previous nights I have no doubt that the combined effect sent the audience screaming into the night.

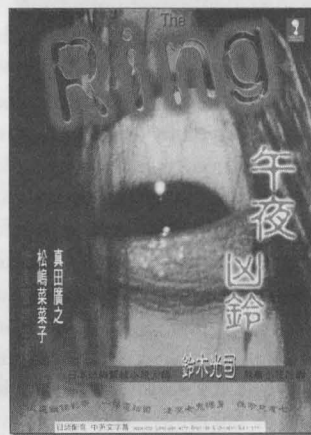
Aside from some minor technical foibles, the Festival was astounding. There was even intermission entertainment by Bob Fugger of The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets, belting out the band's latest and greatest in a sort-of "Thickets

Unplugged" performance. There was even a question-and-answer period with the writers and directors of some of the films, and a humorous dramatic reading from Andrew Migliore & John Stryk's book *The Lurker in the Lobby*.

The gems of the HPL Film Festival are the short films. It's not the production values or the acting that sets them head and shoulders above the mainstream releases. It's the enthusiasm their creators have for their subject. While HPL had a low opinion of the cinema, it may be that he would have appreciated the genuine enthusiasm these filmmakers have for his work. The short films and their creators continue that circle of talented amateurs and newcomers like Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, and Frank Belknap Long, who corresponded with HPL and drew inspiration, criticism, and support from one another. It's charming and inspiring to see such a community creating something. Not just talking about it, but actually putting something out there, for better or worse, with little more than their enthusiasm to drive them on.

It's this enthusiasm that makes all the difference in the world. After all, the more glossy Hollywood productions that I see, crammed full of CGI effects and product placement, the less and less tolerance I have for that sort of crap. Films like *The Phantom Menace* represent everything that's soulless and wrong with movie-making, where the action figure line is being designed right alongside the shooting schedule. Not so at the HPL Film Fest. Here they just want to scare you. And maybe let you know that yes, there's someone else out there that read that story too, and couldn't get it out of their head either. At least, not until they made it into a movie.

The whole experience of the festival rates 10 phobias. Just remember to check 'em out at their website on the internet: [www.hplfilmfestival.com](http://www.hplfilmfestival.com).



*Ringu* (English title: *Ring*)  
starring Nanako Matsushima, Hiroyuki Sanada, Miki Nakatani  
written by Hiroshi Takahashi  
directed by Hideo Nakata  
reviewed by John Tynes

When the film *Ringu* debuted in Japan in 1998, it touched off a horror-film craze there that's still going on. Followed by three theatrical sequels and a television series, *Ringu* is one of the most subtly creepy films I've seen, and it's ripe with inspiration for a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario.

A word of warning: *Ringu* is not officially available in the U.S. It's available on DVD in Japan, but that release has no English subtitles. The film was released with English subtitles in Hong Kong as a VCD; VCD is a CD-ROM format that works in some DVD players (check your manual—if it doesn't say it plays VCDs, it probably won't) and any desktop computer with enough speed to play MPEG video files smoothly. VCDs look a bit like second-generation VHS videotape on anything other than a tiny screen, and the Hong Kong English subtitles are miserably bad—during one conversation, there simply is no subtitling for about thirty seconds. I've seen videotape bootlegs of the VCD edition for sale at conventions, or you can buy the real VCD from online stores overseas such as [www.yesasia.com](http://www.yesasia.com) for surprisingly little money. Supposedly, the American rights have been purchased by a studio here for a remake, which means the chance of a real video release in this country is slim at best. Given the film's relative inaccessibility to most TUO readers, I've decided to summarize the film in some detail, so that you can at least mine these ideas for your games. If you don't want to know what happens in the film, skip to the section marked "Conclusion."

Summary: The opening of *Ringu* is somewhat reminiscent of the American thriller *Scream*. Two teenage girls, home alone, discuss an eerie rumor going around school: that some kids saw a strange video on late-night television in which a woman pointed at them; then the phone rang and they heard the woman's voice on the other end of the line, telling them that they would die in one week. The girl telling the story admits that she was one of the kids who saw the video—and then the phone rings.

That night, the girl dies and her friend goes insane. A reporter named Reiko, played by Nanako Matsushima, investigates the death and discovers rumors of other kids dying from the same strange curse. She soon learns that the dead girl was part of a group of friends who spent a weekend at a rural cabin, where they found the video and watched it. When Reiko finds a roll of film taken by the kids that weekend and develops it, the kids' faces are all weirdly distorted.

Our heroine enlists the aid of her ex-husband Ryuji, a professor of mathematics with some psychic abilities. He has a strange, ghostly encounter with a girl in a white dress, her face obscured by her long, black hair. Meanwhile, Reiko is hearing more about the curse rumor: that the only way to defeat the curse and avoid death is to make a copy of the video and get someone else to watch it, thus transferring the curse to that person instead of you.

Eventually Reiko finds the cabin where the kids first saw the video and discovers the tape. Not having watched a

lot of horror movies, she unwisely views it herself. It proves to be a short montage of strange imagery: a woman looks in a mirror and brushes her hair, then the mirror jumps to a position on the wall a few feet away and then back again; the woman smiles into the mirror at a figure standing behind her, that of a girl in a white dress with long black hair; Japanese writing drifts across the screen in what looks like a newspaper article gone awry; against a background of static, a man with a white cloth draped over his head stands with one arm outstretched, pointing; distorted images of people crawling in what might be a vision of Hell; and finally a stone well in a forest, where if you look closely you can just barely see a hand reach over the top, as if someone is climbing out, before the video ends.

The video is shocking in its strangeness. It has that peculiar feel endemic to the best Cthulhu Mythos fiction: the sense that you are glimpsing some part of a cohesive system, but a system that is nonetheless beyond your understanding. After Reiko turns the television off, she sees something reflected in the darkened screen: a figure in a white dress standing behind her, with a white cloth over its head, arm outstretched and pointing at her. She whirls around but no one's there. Then the phone rings, and the call consists of a strange buzzing static.

Revelations mount. Ryuji takes a picture of Reiko and discovers that now her face is distorted in the photo, just like the kids—meaning she's now cursed and has less than a week to live, or so she believes. Clues in the videotape point to the peculiar tale of a young woman with psychic powers living on a small island, who predicted the eruption of a local volcano and briefly became a celebrity in the 1940s. A professor from the mainland tested her powers and, when the woman died, took her young daughter Sadako with him to Tokyo, where she disappeared. A bit of doggerel sung on the videotape is revealed to be a traditional fishermen's chant from the island, which warns against "the goblins in the sea." The question of who fathered Sadako is raised, but not answered, though again there are ominous intimations of the young girl's connection to the ocean. At least the mystery of the woman and the mirror is solved: during a visit to the island, Reiko finds the very room with the mirror from the video, in the house where the psychic woman once lived. She has a vision of the woman brushing her hair in the mirror, then laughing when her daughter Sadako makes the mirror jump back and forth with her own psychic powers. But when Reiko tries to speak with the vision, the woman's face freezes in an unpleasant grimace and she glides away into the darkness.

Also on the island, Reiko and Ryuji meet an old fisherman who knew the psychic woman and Sadako; he was the one who sold the story of her volcano prediction to the media, unwittingly bringing about the unfortunate events that followed. While questioning him, they have a strange flashback to an incident from the 1940s: the professor from the



mainland gave a demonstration to the media of the woman's psychic powers, during which a reporter accused her of being a fraud. Suddenly he died of a terrible seizure, and the woman realized that it was Sadako who killed the man. Even in the flashback, Sadako's face is never seen, always obscured by her hair. It becomes evident that the girl was an evil creature who could kill someone by her force of will.

As the credibility of the curse becomes stronger, Ryuji realizes that now he, too, is doomed. And soon their son is as well—in the house where the woman once lived, Reiko discovers the boy watching the tape and he explains that "his friend," a girl no one else can see, told him to view it.

In the film's apparent climax, Reiko and Ryuji discover that the professor murdered Sadako after bringing her to the mainland, finally recognizing her as a force of evil, then threw her body into a well—and the rural cabin where the kids found the tape was later built on top of it. Now they know who to blame: it is Sadako's evil will that has manifested in the form of the videotape, seeking revenge against the world for her death. As the clock ticks down to Reiko's curse deadline, she and Ryuji frantically excavate the old well beneath the cabin to exhume Sadako's body, which they believe will end the whole nightmare. At the last minute they succeed. Reiko is saved, the police take away the body, and all is well.

But the movie isn't over: Ryuji is soon killed by the curse in a truly horrifying scene. His television turns on and the weird video plays by itself, but this time it doesn't stop. Sadako climbs out of the well seen in the final image and walks towards the camera in an awful, shuddering gait, her head bent down and her hair obscuring her face. Then, just as she starts to fill the image, *she emerges from the television itself*, her scarred fingers—marked up because she went into the well alive, and died trying to climb out—pulling her through the screen, and she resumes her horrible walk across the room to the petrified Ryuji.

Upon learning of Ryuji's death, Reiko is baffled—after all, her curse deadline passed and she's fine. Then in the screen of her darkened television, she sees a reflection: her dead ex-husband is standing behind her in the room, a white cloth over his head, pointing at her tote bag. When she looks around, he's not really there. But in the tote bag she finds the cursed videotape—and the copy she made for him to screen. The words of the teenagers come back to her: that the only way to defeat the curse is to give a copy of the tape to someone else. Their recovery of Sadako's body has done nothing to stop the curse, and that means their son is still doomed.

As the film ends, the reporter drives off with her son to visit her father. Talking to him on the phone, she tells him that she has a very important duty for him, one that will save the life of his grandson . . .

Conclusion: As peculiar as this summary may sound, the film is far stranger. The scenes dealing with the supernatural are uncannily eerie and weird. I think the film's strength is that it approaches every scene, mundane or un-

natural, with the same lack of artifice. The film has something of a documentary feel to it, and maintains an even, quiet tone throughout. Thus the shifts into horror are insidious, and feel just as credible as the mundane scenes are.

The weird mythology of the film is worthy of notice, though it is greatly expanded on in the sequel (reviewed below). The elements of the strange videotape, the phone call, and the grotesquely distorted photographs of those who have been cursed comprise an interesting use of technology as a delivery system for horror: in the world of *Ringu*, technology can be haunted just as easily as a house. The visual elements, particularly as embodied by Sadako—with her white dress, strange posture, and obscured face—are also unsettling.

I can't recommend this film highly enough. Its entire approach to horror is so strange, at least to me, that it felt like something very new and different. For weeks after I first saw it, I was genuinely fearful of dark rooms and silent televisions; the image of Sadako kept flashing before my eyes, as did the weird figure with the white cloth draped over its head. *Ringu* establishes a new iconography of horror, and uses the tools of modern technology to do it. By all means, hunt this film down. I'm giving it 9 phobias. There are better and scarier films out there, but *Ringu* presents such a different approach to the genre that I believe it's quite an accomplishment.



*Ringu 2* (English title: *Ring 2*)

starring Miki Nakatani, Katsumi Muramatsu, Nanako Matsushima

written by Hiroshi Takahashi

directed by Hideo Nakata

reviewed by John Tynes

After the success of *Ringu*, three sequels were produced. The first was *Spiral*, which I haven't seen. It's more of a tangent to the main story, however, and apparently focuses on the doctor who does the autopsy of Ryuji from the first film. He makes a strange discovery during the procedure and gets sucked into the strange goings-on.

The next film, and the first direct sequel, is *Ringu 2*. This one focuses on Ryuji's young teaching assistant, who is questioned by police in the aftermath of his death and the disappearance of his ex-wife Reiko and their young son. (It seems clear that either she and Ryuji had a romantic relationship, or else she was simply in love with him.)

**Warning redux:** Once again, I'll summarize this film. Skip to the end of the review if you'd rather track it down for yourself. (The status of *Ringu 2*'s home-video release is identical to that of *Ringu*.)

**Summary:** The assistant, Mai, launches her own search for Reiko and the boy. At their apartment she finds a videotape burned in the bathtub. From Reiko's co-workers at the television station she learns about the weird curse rumors and the deaths of the teenagers. She makes an ally there, a male reporter who is continuing Reiko's story as best he can.

Meanwhile, the exhumed body of Sadako is with the police. They bring in the fisherman from the island to identify the body, which is in terrible shape from its submersion in the well. They offhandedly mention something peculiar: the body has only been dead a few weeks. The fisherman looks startled—this means that Sadako was entombed alive inside the well for *thirty years*. It was only when she finally died that her spirit manifested its stored-up hatred in the form of the videotape, a handy recording medium for her energy located in the cabin above her prison. After some weirdness where photographs of Sadako's body go awry, the police give her over to the fisherman. He puts her in a coffin and buries her at sea, asking the body why she never killed him and instead left him with a lifetime of regret for exploiting her mother.

Mai continues her investigation. She learns that Reiko's father has died in the same peculiar manner as Ryuji—we, of course, know this is because he viewed the video to save his grandson's life. Finally she finds Reiko and the boy, led to their new apartment by psychic visions. Reiko is in hiding, because she still fears the power of the dead girl. There's something else, as well: her son is acting strangely.

Along the way, Mai visits the insane schoolgirl from the first film's opening scenes to learn what she saw. She meets a professor of psychic phenomena at the mental institute where the girl is staying, a colleague of Ryuji's who shared his interests. He shows her photographs they took of the mad girl. Her face is distorted, but there's something else: superimposed over the photographs is a faint image of the cloth-draped figure from the videotape. The girl refuses to leave her room or speak, and when they lead her into a common area to interact with other patients, the television sets go haywire: the weird video begins to manifest spontaneously, and the other patients start screaming. A later experiment where they hook the girl up to various monitoring devices and then start playing the videotape in her presence produces some obviously unpleasant effects, and the doctor believes that the girl is now, in effect, a cursed videotape herself: the same energy has infected her, and can produce the same results.

Meanwhile, the male reporter Mai met is pursuing the story. He meets a girl who says she can get a copy of the videotape, which now seems to be circulating of its own accord. Unfortunately, she watches it. When she arrives at the

television station with a copy, she begs the reporter to view it—knowing the curse will transfer to him and spare her. He agrees, but doesn't get around to it until after the girl dies from the curse. But even without watching it, he's been touched by the energy of the dead girl, which now seems to be leaping from person to person like a virus. It no longer needs the videotape to transmit, because it's growing stronger and stronger. While reviewing a videotaped interview with the newly-dead teenager, the reporter notices a weird blip in the footage just when the girl shakes her head in answer to a question. He goes back and forth over the blip in slow motion, watching the girl's head turn from side to side, her black hair swirling over her face, and then the hair begins to get longer, and longer, obscuring her face, and then the girl on the tape stands up and moves towards the camera—well, you can guess the rest. The reporter is found insane and gets packed off to the same mental institute seen earlier, evidently spared from death because he hadn't actually viewed the real tape.

Mai eventually turns Reiko and her son over to the police. Things go terribly wrong at the police station when the boy manifests the same psychic killing power that the dead girl had; he almost murders several policemen who are being rough on his mother. Reiko and the boy flee the station with Mai close behind. But Reiko has a psychic vision in which she walks the streets, seeing groups of people wearing white cloths over their heads. She finds her dead father, who tells her that Sadako has possessed the boy. The realization comes too late: dazed by the vision and helped by her possessed son, Reiko wanders into traffic and is killed by a truck. Mai takes the boy and flees to the island where the dead girl was born, joined by the professor.

There the story takes a Quatermass-esque twist. The professor explains his theory of the dead girl's spirit as a sort of viral energy, and believes that the possessed boy can be freed by purging him of the Sadako "charge," transferring the energy into a large swimming pool of water with the aid of various equipment, as if draining a battery. (This comes after earlier experiments at the institute that showed a glass of water reacting oddly to the presence of the insane teenager.)

Before the experiment comes together, Mai meets the old fisherman and learns more of the story. He takes her to a secret sea-cave full of little idols, and explains that traditionally, island women with unwanted infants would bring their babies to this cave for the ocean to take away and drown. The psychic woman did this with her mysterious newborn—but the next day, little Sadako washed ashore on the beach unharmed. Evidently the mysterious sea spirits wanted her alive—and again, no one knows who the father was.

Finally it's time. With the help of a nurse, the old fisherman, and Mai, the professor gets started. Of course, the swimming pool they're using as the energy receptacle is at the house where the psychic woman and Sadako lived.

Once they have all their equipment in place, with wires running to the possessed boy and to Mai, the experiment begins. Mai has to make the boy angry by yelling at him, trying to trigger the death-energy of Sadako's spirit. Meanwhile, of course, the weird videotape is playing just to bring things to a head. As the boy flips out and focuses his energy on Mai, it gets diverted into the swimming pool. The pool turns black and fills with the faces of spirits—it's becoming a portal to the afterlife. The floating coffin containing Sadako's body appears and the fisherman jumps in after it, screaming at her to finally kill him, too. The doctor goes insane and kills the nurse, then gets electrocuted, and everything descends into disaster.

Come morning, Mai regains consciousness in the midst of ruin and discovers that the boy seems to be fine. Back on the mainland, however, another problem is brewing. A new reporter is hired to replace the guy who went insane, and as he's cleaning out the guy's desk he discovers the cursed videotape. The implication is obvious: this thing could end up being broadcast on television, letting loose Sadako's power on a massive scale. At the mental institute, the insane reporter sits alone on the floor of his cell; behind him appears a girl with a white cloth over her head.

Conclusion: *Ringu 2* does an excellent job of continuing the story from the first film. Many more secrets are revealed, but new ones also emerge. More importantly, the film deepens the *Ringu* mythology with a sort of pseudoscience that, as noted, strongly recalls Nigel Kneale's *Quatermass* films and television series of the 1960s. The effect of this deepening is satisfying in the way that the layers of the onion are peeled back, explaining more but simultaneously making things worse. Where the first film used isolated elements of technology as vehicles for horror—videotapes, television sets, phones—*Ringu 2* takes a broader scope. Now science can somewhat explain the supernatural events, but cannot control them; and indeed, bringing technology directly into conflict with the evil force results in death and madness. The viral nature of the evil, and its ability to jump between people and technology the way Ebola jumps between animals and humans, bodes ill for the characters in future installments of this series.

*Ringu 2* gets 7 phobias. It doesn't have the originality and dread of the first film, but it takes the story in a very interesting direction and is well worth seeing.

(As I mentioned, *Ringu* spawned three sequels. Besides the aforementioned *Spiral* and *Ringu 2*, the year 2000 brought the release of *Ring 0: Birthday*. It's apparently a prequel set during Sadako's childhood. There's also been a television series or mini-series, and a South Korean knockoff called *The Ring Virus*. And of course there's the planned—or threatened, depending on your point of view—American remake. Even in the real world, the malignant energy of Sadako seems to be spreading . . .)



*Eko Eko Azaraku* (English subtitle: *Wizard of Darkness*)  
starring Kimika Yoshino  
written by Junki Takegami  
directed by Shimako Sato

*Eko Eko Azaraku 2* (English subtitle: *Birth of the Wizard*)  
starring Kimika Yoshino  
written & directed by Shimako Sato

*Eko Eko Azaraku 3* (English subtitle: *Misa the Dark Angel*)  
starring Hinako Saeki  
written by Shôtarô Hayashi & Kyoichi Nanatsuki  
directed by Katsuhito Ueno  
reviewed by John Tynes

Here's another Japanese horror-film franchise, this one comprised (to date) of three films and a television series. Based on a *manga* series by Shinichi Koga, *Eko Eko* tells the story of Misa Kuroi, a teenage girl fated to fight the forces of black magic. It sounds like a *Buffy the Slayer* ripoff, but doesn't really resemble one in reality. *Eko Eko* is much more grim, and doesn't develop any supporting characters who don't get slaughtered anyway.

Each installment follows a rigid formula. Weird things begin happening at a high school, Misa shows up, the school gets shut off from the outside world, all Hell breaks loose, and the story ends with everyone dead except for the victorious, tenacious Misa. Along the way you get lots of graphic violence, some nifty magical special effects, plenty of classical western occult trappings, occasional Cthulhu Mythos name-dropping (in the third film), and sporadic bouts of soft-porn schoolgirl lesbian sex for no apparent reason except, of course, for the obvious one.

The films are certainly not great, but they're entertaining enough. The curious thing is the casual way in which this Japanese series uses the pentagram-and-magic-square approach of classical European magic, complete with an appearance in the second film of a massive Satan taken directly from the famous Eliphas Levi drawing of the beast as a batwinged goat-man. The title, *Eko Eko Azaraku*, is the ritual Misa uses to draw on her powers, and she's constantly cutting pentagrams in the air



with her ritual knife. It's all straight out of *Nephilim* and the like, but in a Japanese setting.

The third installment is probably of the greatest interest to CoC fans, though it's also the most disgusting. The story concerns a high-school drama club whose next production is a wiccan-sounding ceremony to elemental deities of peace and kindness. Of course, the drama teacher is actually a Satanist who is changing the ceremony into a black-magic ritual. Her version eventually incorporates various Cthulhuoid deities into the mix, though not much beyond the name-dropping level. Still, watching naked, bloody schoolgirls chanting to Nyarlathotep is quite an experience.

Really, these are pretty dubious movies. I saw the third one first, and found it so trashily exploitive that it was months before I agreed to watch the first two. They proved to be more tolerable. All are made with good production values, nifty occult trappings, and good effects, and the portrayal of young Misa as a grim-faced magical avenger is pretty striking; she certainly makes *Buffy* look lame, although that's not hard to do. The second film, which tells her origin, is a pretty direct rip-off of *The Terminator*, but it holds your interest—only this time, the Michael Biehn char-

acter has come from the past, not the future, to save Misa from the unstoppable killing monster. (Oh, wait . . . that makes it a rip-off of *Warlock*.) I saw the first episode of the television series and it was just like the movies, except it was shot on video and only 22 minutes long.

Despite my reservations, though, I recommend these films to CoC fans. It's weird to see such a direct treatment of classical occultism in a high-school setting, with moldy old tomes and sacrifices and all the rest. They're a lot like the Hammer horror flicks—at least the more exploitive ones—but with a teenage cast and a high-school setting. If you haven't thought about doing a CoC game in a school, you will after you check these out. The *Eko Eko* series gets 4 phobias.

*Eko Eko* 1 & 2 have not been released in the U.S., but subtitled bootlegs and some TV episodes are available from:

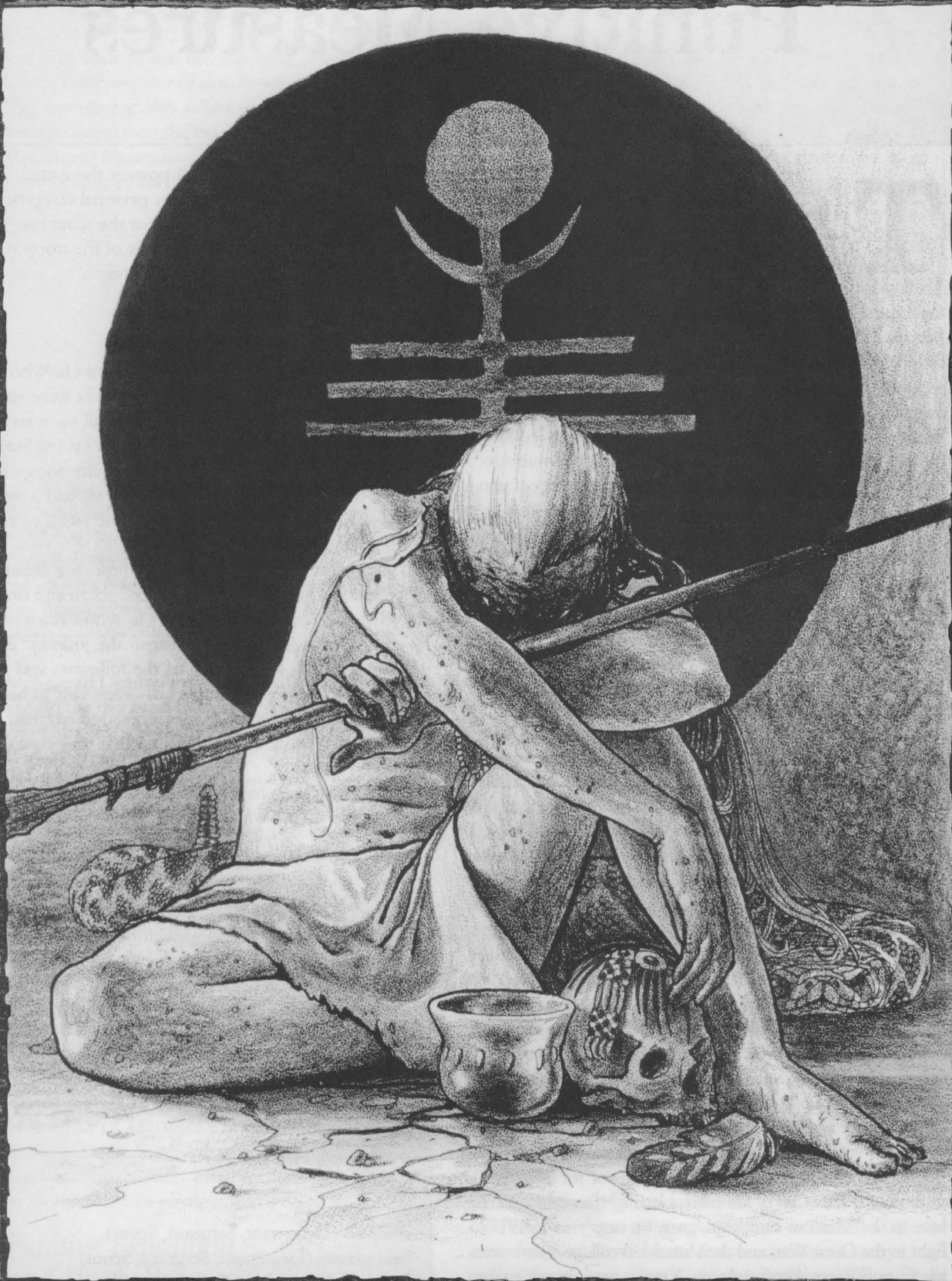
<http://www.angelfire.com/ny/ctenosaur/>

*Eko Eko* 3 has been commercially released in the U.S. as *Misa the Dark Angel* on the Tokyo Shock label:

<http://www.neptune-media.com/cgi-bin/hazel/hazel.cgi>



# Punitive Measures



WRITTEN BY  
BRIAN APPLETON

CALL of  
CTHULHU

ILLUSTRATED BY  
JOHN T. SNYDER



# Punitive Measures

BRIAN APPLETON

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN T. SNYDER

The year is 1916 and the investigators are soldiers in the 13th Cavalry detached from the main body of General John Joseph "Blackjack" Pershing's forces along the New Mexico / Mexico border. Their troop is currently stationed in the city of Chihuahua, the capital of the Mexican state of Chihuahua. The date is May 6, 1916, and the troop is waiting for their next set of orders. Well, their orders have just arrived . . .

As the scenario begins, a Mexican *payon* (peasant farmer) named Pablo Quezada gallops up to the garrison, his horse extremely lathered. He dismounts and is led by the officer on duty under guard to the garrison commander's office. On a Luck roll, one of the investigators is on guard duty—maybe even the officer on duty.

In the commander's office, Pablo states that two days ago the village of La Junta was raided by approximately one to two dozen of Pancho Villa's men led by one of his lieutenants, Rafael Cabrera. Pablo was lucky enough to escape and make it here to Chihuahua. It seems the revolutionaries came to the town, which was preparing for the *Cinco de Mayo* celebration, in order to gain supplies. An altercation started and the bandits began to pillage and plunder the town.

After hearing Pablo's story, the colonel in charge of the garrison at Chihuahua sends for the investigators' lieutenant. The colonel informs him of the situation and orders a scouting party to journey to La Junta, survey the situation, and determine the strength and size of Cabrera's band. The lieutenant in charge of the scouting party must then decide whether to confront the revolutionaries or report back for reinforcements. This scouting party is the investigators.

The party is composed of a lieutenant, a sergeant, a corporal, four troopers, and a scout. The players need to create appropriate investigators to fill these slots; the nearby boxed text on war experience presents one option Keepers might allow during this process. Unfilled slots in the party can be filled with the NPCs included at the end of the scenario. Besides the required slots, Keepers might also allow other investigator types such as a newspaper reporter, a military historian attached to the scouting party, or an illustrator / photographer.

(This scenario may provide an excellent way to develop the background history of a new investigator for later use in traditional 1920s *Call of Cthulhu*. He might have first served here in the Mexican campaign, gone on next year in 1917 to fight in the Great War, and then attended college after returning from Europe. Alternately, the Keeper may choose to simply run "Punitive Measures" as a one-shot scenario.)

Each soldier character will possess the issued items in the nearby boxed text, besides any personal equipment they may have themselves. Officers and/or the scout may possess a different longarm, and one member of the troop will have a Winchester M1897 12-gauge riot shotgun.

## Background

Forty years ago, an Apache shaman named He Who Crawls decided there was no doubt that the whites were either going to slaughter his people or put them all on reservations. He decided to flee from the southwestern United States into Mexico with a goal of reaching a lost city somewhere in Central or South America. He Who Crawls had a strong totem towards the rattlesnake; in secret, he was a worshipper of the ancient snake god, Yig.

After receiving contact with Yig through a dreamvision, Yig instructed He Who Crawls to head south and find a lost city where his people still dwelled. He Who Crawls gathered up nine faithful followers and began the journey. But luck was not with the group. One of the followers was shot by U.S. Army soldiers and another fell over a cliff to his death. The remainder of the group were forced to eat their horses due to lack of food, and it appeared that they could not go on much further.

In order to save his band, He Who Crawls summoned a sacred Child of Yig, who appeared to him in the form of an

## Troopers' Equipment

U.S. Army olive drab uniform with campaign hat  
combat boots  
leggings  
cavalry riding gloves  
M1911 Colt .45 with 4 extra magazines  
M1903 Springfield Rifle  
bandolier of 10 five-round clips of .30-06 ammunition  
bayonet  
2 canteens  
food supplies for 2 weeks  
bedroll  
horse and tack  
compass (Lieutenant, Sergeant, Scout)  
field glasses (Lieutenant, Sergeant, Scout)  
map case (Lieutenant, Scout)



## War Experience

Keepers may want to use the following option that was originally presented in *Green and Pleasant Land* by Games Workshop. For every year of active service in an armed force, the investigator gains a point of EDU (up to a maximum of 21). The investigator also subtracts 1D4 Sanity points per year of active war service to account for the tragedies and horrors which occur on the field of battle. Also, every five years of non-combat service in the military will add a point of EDU (still up to maximum of 21). No Sanity loss would be necessary in this situation. The skill points generated by these EDU points must be used towards purchasing the following military-type skills, or others the Keeper deems appropriate:

Cartography	Mechanical Repair	Throw
Climb	Navigate	Track
Conceal	Operate Heavy Machinery	Bayonet Attack
Demolitions	Persuade	Fighting Knife Attack
Drive	Photography	Fist/Punch Attack
Electrical Repair	Pilot	Handgun Attack
Fast Talk	Psychology	Large Club Attack
First Aid	Ride	Machine Gun Attack
Hide	Sneak	Rifle/Shotgun Attack
Jump	Spot Hidden	Sabre Attack
Listen	Swim	Small Club Attack

Additionally, the Keeper might choose the following option. All members of the cavalry must have a Ride skill of at least 40% but they start out with a base skill of EDU + 5%. Also, the Keeper might want to use a new skill called Rifle Combat which will allow the player to use either the bayonet end or the butt end of the rifle in attack (damage will depend on which end used) and the opportunity to make parries as well. This skill will replace the need to purchase separate Bayonet Attack and Large Club Attack skills.

immense Western Diamondback Rattlesnake, for assistance. The snake led the tiny band to a small, sheltered valley in the lower Sierra Madres. The valley was an ancient sacred site to Yig, and it appeared to be a welcome rest area. To most of the group, it became a final resting spot.

He Who Crawls was contacted by Yig through another dreamvision after he reached the valley, which was known to locals as "Snake's Den." He was told by Yig that neither his mortal body nor any of his band could reach the lost city, and he must stay in the valley until one came who possessed a fit enough body for him to occupy and continue the travels.

So it came to pass over the decades that one by one, the members of the small band died until only He Who Crawls remained. As his companions died, He Who Crawls placed their bodies on burial scaffolds at the entrance to the valley—and used his shamanic powers to reanimate their skeletons as protectors.

A side effect of He Who Crawls' adoration of Yig is that over the years he has become more reptilian. His skin has become extremely scaly. His eyes have also narrowed into thin slits similar to a pit viper.

## The Punitive Expedition

On March 9, 1916, the Mexican revolutionary general Francisco "Pancho" Villa crossed the Rio Grande and led a raid

on Columbus, New Mexico, with a force of approximately 600 men to the cries of "Viva Villa" and "Viva Mexico." During the ensuing raid, seventeen Americans were killed and the town was partly destroyed. Reportedly Villa lost a large number of his men but made off with approximately eighty saddle horses, thirty mules, and an assortment of arms and ammunition.

Within a week of the attack, President Wilson ordered General Pershing to lead U.S. troops into Mexico to search for and capture Pancho Villa. On March 16th the New York *Times* reported, "When Word Was Given, All Were After Villa." By the end of the campaign in January of 1917, more than 150,000 troops were on active duty in Mexico. The army invaded as far as 500 miles south of the Rio Grande into Chihuahua, Mexico.

The Punitive Expedition, while not necessarily a success due to the failure to capture Villa, served as a training ground for the U.S. Army to hone its tactics and new weaponry before it departed to Europe the next year. This expedition made use of armored vehicles, trucks, and even airplanes.

Throughout the campaign, the army rarely fought with Villa's forces. Most of the bloodshed occurred when the army fought against either Mexican citizens or troops loyal to the Mexican president, Carranza. President Wilson finally found an excuse to withdraw U.S. troops in January 1917

after Pancho Villa lost hundreds of his men in an attack against Carranzista troops when he tried to take the town of Toreon.

## The Trek to La Junta

Before the troop leaves, their liaison officer will remind them to try to maintain good relations with the locals, who are usually just caught in the middle of the warring factions. But he will remind the troop to proceed with caution, as most of the casualties that have occurred so far have happened in clashes with townspeople or with Mexican government soldiers. He will also show them a wanted poster that depicts Rafael Cabrera for identification purposes.

(The Keeper should be aware that the journey will not be solely on horseback, for this would kill the animals. Part of the time is spent riding and the other part is spent leading the horses on foot.)

Approximately a hundred miles west of the city of Chihuahua lies the small village of La Junta. It should take three days' journey on horse and on foot to reach La Junta from Chihuahua, as long as a Navigate (Land) roll is not fumbled. The Keeper should use this trek to set up the daily routine of the troop such as scouting techniques, troop formation, the establishment of camps and guard shifts at night, *etc.* While the journey section might seem uninteresting, the Keeper can spice it up by reminding the troop of the constant threat of Mexican revolutionaries or government soldiers. The Keeper can also include the howling of coyotes during the night to add suspense. Also, he should add some interaction with Pablo to give a human feel to the *payons*, as well as using Pablo as a tool to communicate valuable information to the party. This can be done through retelling the incidents of the raid or something as simple as pointing out relevant geographical features such as watering holes.

Pablo Quezada will lead the troop back to La Junta. As they approach the town, several plumes of smoke can be seen in the distance. If the troop decides to stop at any of the outlying farms, they can learn some important information: Rafael Cabrera and his men left just yesterday, after razing part of the town to the ground.

## The Town of La Junta

When the troop reaches the town proper, they first notice sixteen fresh graves on the edge of town. They are greeted at first by just one man, the village elder Ricardo Flores. An increasing crowd slowly appears out of buildings, the crowd consisting only of men and older women. An Idea roll allows the members of the troop to realize that no women of childbearing years are amongst the crowd.

The crowd greets the troop cheerfully and enthusiastically, grateful for protection. Flores, in broken English, bids the troop to come to the local cantina for food and drink. He offers to relate the events of the raid over a meal. When

## The State of Chihuahua

Chihuahua, the largest state in Mexico, is located in the northernmost part of the country. It borders the American states of Texas and New Mexico. The city of Chihuahua is the state capital.

The northern portion of the state is covered by the Mesa del Norte. This is an arid, elevated plateau filled mostly with flat scrublands. In the west lies the Sierra Madre mountain range, which can rise up to 8,940 feet (2,725 meters).

Silver mining is the main natural resource of the state. Other major natural resources are textiles, iron mining, and cattle ranching.

they arrive at the cantina, the investigators notice a large peppering as if from a shotgun blast, and a splattering of dried blood against the front wall. Inside they meet a couple of women who are acting as impromptu cooks and servers. A successful Spot Hidden roll will reveal that each woman bears the signs of a beating: a black eye, busted lip, bruises and contusions, *etc.*

Ricardo tells the following story. On the 4th of May, Rafael Cabrera led a group of a dozen men into the town of La Junta. One of his followers, Miguel Aguilera, was a local who had grown up just outside of town. Miguel knew that every year the town threw an elaborate *Cinco de Mayo* celebration and that there would be many food stores to be taken.

When the revolutionaries arrived, they appeared to be just coming in to steal the food. But the cantina owner, Antonio Zorita, refused and started an altercation. Antonio was shotgunned by Rafael Cabrera and the bandits, in an outrage, began to raze portions of the town. They burned down several buildings, plundered food and anything else they wanted, and molested many of the town's women. They even decided to stay for several days to make an example of the town.

When they finally left yesterday, they took the town's

## May, 1916

<u>S</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>S</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	<u>31</u>			

Underlined dates are New Moon

Boldfaced date is Full Moon



five remaining horses and whatever they could carry. They also kidnapped five women and one child. The following is a list of the kidnapped:

Juanita Torres  
Rita Gonzalez  
Maria Rodriguez  
Rosa Moreno  
Lupi Escobar and her son, Joachim

Miguel Aguilera was overheard suggesting to the revolutionaries that they head west to a spot called Snake's Den to hide out. If the troop asks questions about Snake's Den, an old farmer named Esteban Garcia can tell them the following information.

Snake's Den is a small boxed canyon located approximately three days to the west. In the past, young men went there to capture rattlesnakes to prove their manhood; it was considered a rite of passage. But that stopped two generations ago. Now no one goes to Snake's Den, and any that have ventured there have not come back. There are rumors that the place is haunted. There are also rumors that Indians dwell there now.

At this point, the troop should follow the trail of the revolutionaries and attempt to rescue the hostages. Doing so would encourage support for the expedition among the citizens of Chihuahua and besides, it's the kind of thing good

soldiers do. The troop may ask one of the villagers, possibly Pablo, to lead them to Snake's Den. But try as they might, they cannot succeed in finding a guide. All of the villagers are too scared—of both the canyon and of the revolutionaries.

## *Into the Sunset*

The trip to Snake's Den should take about two and a half days of travel. The trail should be fairly easy to follow if at least one party member makes either a successful Spot Hidden or Track roll each day. This will put the troop near the vicinity of Snake's Den by early afternoon of the third day. (If the investigators move faster or slower for some reason, adjust the time required so that they reach Snake's Den in the early afternoon of whatever day they arrive on.)

In the early morning of the third day, call for Spot Hidden rolls at +10%. Any investigators who succeed notice someone walking in the distance. If they approach the distant figure, it tries to run away and escape from them; on horseback, however, the investigators can easily catch up.

The person in the distance is kidnap victim Rosa Moreno. She is wearing ragged, torn, and dirty clothes, and she appears to have caked bloodstains all over her. A closer examination will reveal that the bloodstains are not from her, but are splatters from someone else.

When reached, she will drop to the ground crying and





will only answer in Spanish, "The Dead! The Dead!" She will then collapse into an almost catatonic state and have to be forcibly led about—unless the group reaches the vicinity of Snake's Den, at which time she will become hysterical and try to flee the area.

The troop faces the dilemma of either dispatching one of their men to return Rosa to La Junta immediately or coping with the ravings of a mad woman if they continue. If they decide to continue towards Snake's Den, the Keeper should call for an Idea roll from the lieutenant and the non-commissioned officers; unless they fumble the roll, they should know that the troop should not take an innocent into a hostile situation. Sending an NPC back with Rosa is ideal.

As the troop nears Snake's Den later in the day, they may discern that something bad may have occurred with a successful Spot Hidden. Anyone making this roll sights vultures circling in the distance. Looking through binoculars or a spyglass, the investigators spot the remains of a campsite in the distance located at the base of the slope leading into Snake's Den.

### *The Remains of the Camp*

The remains of the revolutionaries' camp can be found at the base of a slope that leads up into Snake's Den. The campsite is a horrid mess with dead bandits, women, and horses littering the ground. A quick tally reveals twelve dead bandits, fourteen dead horses, and three dead women. Investigating the site uncovers several points of interest.

First, with a successful Spot Hidden roll the investigators find two sets of horseprints heading north and a similar pair of prints heading south. A successful Track roll determines that these horses carried no riders. An investigation of the camp also reveals that all the saddles and tack are accounted for.

Second, an examination of the bodies reveals that most were killed by either bludgeoning blows or by multiple stab wounds, and most died while still in their bedrolls. There are two exceptions. The first is an individual bandit who only has two wounds on his right upper thigh. An Idea roll suggests this is a snakebite, but also reveals that the fang marks are much wider than normal. The second exception is a bandit who has four snakebites on various portions of his torso. Both of these individuals appear to have died a very quick and grim death, as their faces and bodies are contorted in agony.

The final item of interest is a small trail of dried blood which leads up the slope towards the entrance of the canyon. A successful Spot Hidden roll reveals a faint, bare footprint belonging to a woman.

### *The Scaffolds*

As the troopers climb the slope leading into the canyon they can, with a successful Spot Hidden, notice two large white

petroglyphs of snakes, one on either side of the entranceway. At the top of the slope is a flat area approximately fifty feet across that is a burial ground containing seven Apache burial scaffolds. These scaffolds each contain a skeleton wrapped in tattered clothes. An examination of the scaffolds and the skeletons will reveal that several possess melee weapons caked in recently dried blood. There are also bloodstains and blood splatterings on the fists and torsos of several of the skeletons.

The skeletons attack the troop either when the troop is all amongst them or at some other appropriate opportunity, as the Keeper sees fit.

### *The Boxed Canyon*

At the far edge of the flat area, there is a good view of what lies in the boxed canyon. Snake's Den is approximately 300' long by 200' wide and is roughly bowl-shaped. The sides of the canyon are approximately eighty to ninety feet high and very steep—too steep to successfully climb with the materials the troop has on hand. The only entrance (or exit) into the canyon is the slope that leads up to the scaffolds and then slopes back down into the center. There are several things to be noticed within; make a Spot Hidden for each.

The first and most obvious sight is Rafael Cabrera, tied to two poles and suspended in the air over a six-foot-tall stone monument. Cabrera is still alive. If it is day, he can be seen rolling his head to and fro, making low moaning noises the entire time. If it is night and he is preparing to be sacrificed then he is wide awake, thrashing and screaming. The monument over which he hangs is an ancient altar depicting a being with the lower half of the body as a snake's coil and the upper half as being a man. His face possesses slitted eyes made of turquoise with jade pupils and a sculpted fork tongue protruding from his mouth. (The statue allows a follower of Yig to add +25% to all Contact Yig spells performed here.)

The second point of interest in Snake's Den is an old Apache male. If it is day, he sunbathes on a rock behind the altar. If it is night, he prepares to sacrifice Cabrera to his serpent god.

The third thing worth observing is the fact that the walls and floor of the canyon are riddled with smallish holes. A successful Idea roll suggests these are snake holes. They are. Each leads into a vast tunnel complex that allows the Child of Yig to travel underground all over the canyon away from prying eyes. Some holes are so big that investigators should take extreme caution lest they step in one and injure their foot or ankle.

The final point of interest is on the opposite floor of the canyon. It is a depression covered with a lean-to made of stakes and horseskins so as to form a shelter. At this point, if the investigators make a successful Listen roll, they hear the crying of the kidnapped baby, Joachim, and the insistent shaking of his rattle. (He Who Crawls made this shelter long

# The Boxed Canyon

Bandits' Camp X

Altar  
Statue

Inner Slope Down

Outer Slope Up

Burial Scaffolds

Shelter



10 feet

## The Soul Rattle

Joachim's new rattle is actually one of He Who Crawls' shamanic items. The rattle is a gourd covered with rattlesnake skin, with rattlesnake rattles inside it. The rattle is a soul rattle capable of capturing the soul of a deceased individual inside it. It has already been planned by He Who Crawls that upon his death, his soul will pass into the rattle. After the passing of one full cycle of the moon, He Who Crawls will transfer his soul out of the rattle and into the body of the infant, Joachim. When the body reaches maturity, He Who Crawls will continue his journey towards the city in the south. If the rattle is destroyed at any time during the month that He Who Crawls' soul is trapped within, his soul will be lost and Joachim will be saved. Investigators making a successful Occult roll or one-half of a Native American Lore roll might discern this information. They also might learn this fact if they can find, or have access to, any Native Americans in the area with the appropriate knowledge.

(The soul rattle is inspired by part of the Pawnee legend about the "Whistle Dance." In this legend, a man travels with the aid of the wind to the land of the dead to find his recently deceased wife. An old woman who helps him along on his journey gives him a rattle and tells him that the warriors who die on the plains make their home within it. If an enemy comes near and he removes the handle, the warriors will come forth to attack his foes.)

ago to escape the midday heat. Currently, this is where Lupi and Joachim are held captive. Both are in fair shape, and Joachim seems happy with the new rattle that He Who Crawls gave him.)

## Concluding the Scenario

Having come all this way, the investigators find a terrible enemy waiting for them at the end of the trail. The animated remains of He Who Crawls' companions climb down from the scaffolds and fight mercilessly, while the shaman himself and his Child of Yig do what they can.

He Who Crawls doesn't actually need to kill the investigators. In fact, he's counting on them winning. When he dies, his soul will pass into the Soul Rattle held by baby Joachim, and from there he will possess Joachim himself—gaining a new body that will one day grow into a loyal servant of Yig, and find the lost city far to the south.

Be that as it may, He Who Crawls hasn't been living a life of suffering and penance in this blistering canyon for four decades just to die quietly. He wants one last shot at bloody vengeance against the whites, and he wishes to prove his mettle to Yig one more time before placing his fate in the uncertain hands of an infant. If even just one investigator survives to carry little Joachim and his new rattle back to La Junta, He Who Crawls will die with a smile of triumph on his face.

## Playtest Notes

During playtesting, the scout of the troop snuck up the slope and through the burial ground to survey the boxed canyon. In his survey, the only thing he saw was Rafael Cabrera suspended between the two posts hung above the monument. After he reported back, the lieutenant decided to ascend the hill, cross the burial ground halfway, belly-crawl to the far edge, and then assess the situation. The troop did all of this

and then, unfortunately for them, they were assaulted from behind by the skeletons, who effectively cut off their means of retreat. Only two out of six troopers escaped after He Who Crawls and the Child of Yig joined the fray.

## Sanity Rewards/Penalties

Rescuing Rosa Moreno .....	+1D3
Rescuing Lupi Escobar .....	+1D3
Rescuing Joachim Escobar .....	+1D3
Allow the deaths of any of the hostages .....	-1D3 each
Leave a trooper behind to die .....	-1D3 each
Kill a skeleton .....	+1 each
(this is only for the trooper who kills each skeleton, not the troop as a whole)	
Destroy the Child of Yig .....	+1D3+1
Kill He Who Crawls .....	+1D4
Foil Soul Transfer .....	+1D6
Find Out About Soul Transfer .....	-1D6

## NPCs

### Cavalry Troopers

The following are NPC soldiers to be used to fill out the troop as necessary.

**Lieutenant Beauregard Fieldings, Age 25**

**Nationality:** American

STR 11 CON 9 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 10

DEX 12 APP 15 EDU 17 SAN 50 HP 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Education:** Graduate of West Point

**Skills:** Climb 43%, Dodge 24%, First Aid 37%, History 61%, Jump 28%, Library Use 57%, Listen 31%, Military History 58%, Navigate (Land) 34%, Ride Horse 40%, Spot Hidden 26%, Swim 31%



Languages: English 85%

**Attacks:**

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 44%,  
damage 1D10+2

Cavalry Sabre 47%, damage 1D8+db

Cavalry Sabre Parry 32%

Notes: Lieutenant Fieldings is a recent graduate from West Point and has recently been commissioned to serve in the Punitive Expedition. Fieldings is very knowledgeable in military tactics, but this is his first command.

**Sergeant Michael "Sarge" O'Brien, Age 43**

**Nationality:** American

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 11

DEX 11 APP 9 EDU 11 SAN 51 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Education:** Elementary School, Military Training

**Skills:** Brew Whiskey 40%, Climb 42%, Dodge 22%, First Aid 36%, Hide 26%, Jump 31%, Listen 52%, Navigate (Land) 46%, Ride Horse 49%, Sneak 32%, Spot Hidden 47%, Swim 32%

**Languages:** Apache 31%, English 55%

**Attacks:**

Winchester M1897 12 gauge riot shotgun 52%,  
damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Rifle Combat Attack 49%, damage 1D6+1+db  
(bayonet) or 1D8+db (rifle butt)

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 41%,  
damage 1D10+2

Fist/Punch 67%, damage 1D3+db

Notes: Sergeant Michael O'Brien is a gruff old veteran who served in the Spanish-American War in Cuba. He is a scrappy pugilist and a hardy drinker.

**Corporal George "The Chef" Hicks, Age 26**

**Nationality:** American

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 10 INT 13 POW 13

DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 10 SAN 62 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Education:** Elementary School, Military Training

**Skills:** Climb 53%, Cook 59%, Drive Wagon 52%, Dodge 22%, First Aid 33%, Hide 25%, Jump 42%, Listen 48%, Navigate (Land) 39%, Peel Potato 74%, Ride Horse 48%, Sneak 37%, Spot Hidden 54%, Swim 35%

**Languages:** English 52%, Spanish 43%

**Attacks:**

M1903 Springfield Rifle 47%, damage 2D6+4

Rifle Combat Attack 39%, damage 1D6+1+db (bayonet) or  
1D8+db (rifle butt)

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 49%,  
damage 1D10+2

Fist/Punch 53%, damage 1D3+db

Notes: Corporal George Hicks is the company's cook. His savory concoctions created from just beans, bacon, and po-

tatoes have caused the rest of the company to give him the nickname of "The Chef."

**Trooper Charles Throckmorton, Age 22**

**Nationality:** American

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 10

DEX 10 APP 15 EDU 12 SAN 49 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Education:** High School, Military Training

**Skills:** Accounting 21%, Bargain 23%, Boating 43%, Climb 41%, Dodge 20%, Drive Automobile 26%, First Aid 31%, Hide 27%, Jump 26%, Listen 41%, Navigate (Land) 24%, Ride Horse 44%, Sneak 29%, Spot Hidden 46%, Swim 37%

**Languages:** English 71%, French 32%

**Attacks:**

M1903 Springfield Rifle 36%, damage 2D6+4

Rifle Combat Attack 34%, damage 1D6+1+db  
(bayonet) or 1D8+db (rifle butt)

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 37%,  
damage 1D10+2

Fist/Punch 52%, damage 1D3+db

Notes: Trooper Charles Throckmorton was a spoiled rich kid from Boston. His father "persuaded" him to join the cavalry to become a man before he could take over the family business. Charles has surprised his entire family, including himself, by deciding to make a career out of the army.

**Trooper Tom Atkinson, Age 20**

**Nationality:** American

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 10 POW 7

DEX 17 APP 9 EDU 10 SAN 34 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Education:** Elementary School, Military Training

**Skills:** Climb 51%, Dodge 34%, First Aid 32%, Hide 44%, Jump 43%, Listen 45%, Locksmith 41%, Navigate (Land) 40%, Play Bugle Call 67%, Ride Horse 53%, Sneak 39%, Spot Hidden 49%, Swim 37%, Throw 47%

**Languages:** English 50%

**Attacks:**

M1903 Springfield Rifle 68%, damage 2D6+4

Rifle Combat Attack 42%, damage 1D6+1+db  
(bayonet) or 1D8+db (rifle butt)

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 31%, damage  
1D10+2

Fist/Punch 51%, damage 1D3+db

Fighting Knife Attack 42%, damage 1D4+2+db

Fighting Knife Parry 38%

Thrown Fighting Knife 47%, damage 1D4+2+1/2db

Notes: Trooper Tom Atkinson is the troop's bugler. Tom is a wiry young man who is quick on the draw and handy with a knife. Tom joined the army to escape the law, fleeing from multiple burglary offenses. Tom carries a couple of extra fighting knives which are also balanced for throwing, in addition to his bayonet.

**Trooper Nathaniel Watkins, Age 19**

Nationality: American

STR 14 CON14 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 8

DEX11 APP 12 EDU10 SAN 39 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Education: Elementary School, Military Training

Skills: Carpentry 59%, Climb 49%, Dodge 22%, First Aid 32%, Hide 21%, Jump 31%, Listen 38%, Navigate (Land) 33%, Ride Horse 45%, Sneak 24%, Spot Hidden 47%, Swim 34%, Woodcraft 54%

Languages: English 56%

**Attacks:**

M1903 Springfield Rifle 32%, damage 2D6+4

Rifle Combat Attack 36%, damage 1D6+1+db (bayonet) or 1D8+db (rifle butt)

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 66%, damage 1D10+2

Fist/Punch 63%, damage 1D3+db

Notes: Trooper Nathaniel Watkins was an apprentice to a carpenter. But Nathaniel decided that was not the life for him, so he ran off to join the army to seek adventure. He's found it.

**Trooper Johnny Higgins, Age 16**

Nationality: American

STR 11 CON18 SIZ 12 INT 10 POW11

DEX13 APP 10 EDU 8 SAN 54 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +0

Education: Elementary School, Military Training

Skills: Climb 41%, Dodge 26%, Farming 36%, First Aid 41%, Hide 26%, Jump 34%, Listen 49%, Navigate (Land) 44%, Ride Horse 48%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 61%, Swim 38%

Languages: English 41%

**Attacks:**

M1903 Springfield Rifle 43%, damage 2D6+4

Rifle Combat Attack 29%, damage 1D6+1+db (bayonet) or 1D8+db (rifle butt)

Colt 1911 .45 semi-automatic handgun 38%, damage 1D10+2

Fist/Punch 57%, damage 1D3+db

Notes: Trooper Johnny Higgins is the youngster of the bunch, possessing a smooth-skinned babyface. He is extremely fit but is prone to make mistakes, being something of a greenhorn. Johnny grew up on a farm in Nebraska but didn't want to follow the family business, so he left to join the army.

**Running Wolf, Age 21**

Nationality: Sioux Indian Scout

STR 11 CON14 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW12

DEX13 APP 10 EDU10 SAN 58 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Education: Tribal Teachings, Military Training

Skills: Climb 56%, Dodge 32%, First Aid 33%, Hide 51%, Jump 41%, Listen 61%, Navigate (Land) 59%, Ride Horse 61%, Sneak 64%, Spot Hidden 66%, Swim 27%, Throw 57%, Track 62%

Languages: Apache 41%, English 35%, Sioux 62%, Spanish 33%

**Attacks:**

Winchester M1873 Lever-action Rifle 47%, damage 2D6+2

Rifle Butt Attack 27%, damage 1D8+db

Steel Tomahawk 52%, damage 1D6+1+db

Thrown Steel Tomahawk 57%, damage 1D6+1+1/2db

Fighting Knife 46%, damage 1D4+2+db

Thrown Fighting Knife 57%, damage 1D4+2+1/2db

Notes: Running Wolf is a young Sioux who has joined the U.S. Army in order to escape the hardships of the reservation. He is a very disciplined soldier and an expert tracker. He carries a steel tomahawk on his waist and an extra throwing knife in his boot.

*Servants of Yig*

He Who Crawls, Age 93

Nationality: Apache Shaman

STR 7 CON10 SIZ 10 INT 15 POW15

DEX11 APP 12 EDU12 SAN 0 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +0

Education: School of Life

Skills: Apache Lore 61%, Astronomy 50%, Climb 53%, Cthulhu Mythos 13%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 59%, Hide 61%, Jump 44%, Listen 56%, Medicine 25%, Natural History 52%, Navigate (Land) 40%, Occult 42%, Ride Horse 54%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 51%, Swim 27%, Throw 42%, Track 56%

Languages: Apache 75%, French 27%, Spanish 41%

**Attacks:**

Spear 53%, damage 1D10+db

Thrown Spear 100%\*, damage 1D10+1/2db

Knife 42%, damage 1D4+2+db

**Armor:** 1 point of scaly skin.

**Spells:** Animate Skeleton, Bind Child of Yig, Command Rattlesnake, Contact Chthonian, Contact Sand Dweller, Contact Serpent Man, Contact Yig, Enchant Spear, Flesh Ward, Hands of Colubra, Heal, Summon Child of Yig

**Sanity Loss:** Normally, it costs no San loss to see He Who Crawls. If examined closely, the viewer will lose 0 / 1D2 due to He Who Crawls' scaly skin and pit viper-like eyes.

Notes: He Who Crawls appears as an extremely old Native American with long, white hair. He wears a headband to keep his long hair out of his face. He normally only wears a loincloth. His skin has become extremely scaly, partially due to his long exposure to the sun but mostly due to a change in his body from his worship of Yig. This has also resulted in a change to his eyes. They have become slitted like a pit viper. He Who Crawls possesses two magical items, the Soul

Rattle described above and an Enchanted Spear. This Enchanted Spear is made of wood and has a point made from bird bone. It is decorated with the feathers of thirty different species of birds. This spear always hits when the target is in range, but it has no special benefit when used in hand-to-hand combat. It does 1D10 damage, is capable of impaling, and counts as an enchanted weapon against monsters.

Child of Yig

STR 5 CON 12 SIZ 6

POW 13 DEX 22 HP 9

Move 8

Damage Bonus: N/A

Attack: Bite 100%, damage always does 1 pt

Armor: 2 points of scaly skin

Skills: Hide 68%, Rattle 88%, Slither 85%

Sanity Loss: It costs 0 / 1D4 Sanity points to see a Child of Yig.

Notes: This sacred snake of Yig is an enormous Western Diamondback Rattlesnake with a white crescent upon its head. It is approximately twelve feet long. It has dwelled with He Who Crawls since the shaman arrived at this valley forty years ago. The bite of the Child of Yig is extremely lethal. There is no anti-venom, and anyone bit will die after a few agonizing minutes of excruciating pain. When the Child of Yig first appears, an investigator must make an INTx5 roll in order to avoid being hit. After the initial encounter, the only way to avoid the bite is to make a successful Dodge roll. The snake's bite is exceptionally quick as well. The Child of Yig strikes first at anyone with a DEX less than 14, even if they have a firearm.

Skeletons

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
STR	12	11	11	15	18	12	17
CON	N/A, See Below						
SIZ	11	13	15	12	15	11	14
INT	14	15	10	9	12	14	12
POW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DEX	16	11	10	13	10	12	13
Move	7						
HP	N/A, See Below						
DB	+0	+0	+1D4	+1D4	+1D6	+0	+1D4

Attacks:

#1 Fighting Knife 48%, damage 1D4+2+db

#2 Horse leg bone 33%, damage 1D6+db

#3 Fist/Punch 30%, damage 1D3+db

#4 Hatchet 39%, damage 1D6+1+db

#5 Spear 30%, damage 1D8+1+db

#6 Fist/Punch 36%, damage 1D3+db

#7 Big Stick 39%, damage 1D6+db

Skills: Clatter Ominously 45%, Rise Unexpectedly 60%

Sanity Loss: It costs 0 / 1D6 Sanity points to see an animated skeleton.

Notes: These skeletons are the remains of the Apaches that followed He Who Crawls into Mexico. They have all perished at different times over the last four decades, and each in turn has been reanimated to protect the passageway into the boxed canyon where He Who Crawls lives. They have recently killed off the camp of Mexican revolutionaries. They will rise and attack anything that moves into the burial area at any time, or they will attack anything that is within 500 yards of the burial area during the night should the troop make camp.

Skeletons do not take damage as normal. First, all impaling weapons are at half chance to hit. Second, extra damage normally inflicted by an impale or critical hit is ignored. To destroy a skeleton, multiply the damage inflicted in an attack by 4 and roll against this total on the percentile dice. ☞

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# Mysterious Manuscripts

## *Horticus Rising*

by Mark Eley

**B**radley Sykes was the son of a British millionaire who grew up in a pampered, if somewhat ineffectual, home. Although a graduate of the finest private schools, Sykes was nearly disowned by his family when he dropped out of Cambridge to seek a life in the theater. The pressures of his estrangement and a cut-off bank account led to his addiction to alcohol and opium. He would often disappear for days at a time when he'd "walk the moors" for solitude. Several of his plays were mild successes, but it wasn't until he dreamt of *Horticus Rising* that he became obsessed.

Sykes admitted to close friends that the inspiration for the play came from strange dreams he had over a week's time while sleeping on an old mound in the moors. Many

*"Horticus Rising" by B.K. Sykes*

A five-act play in English

twenty-copy production manuscript, 1896

Peddinpaw Press, 1903

+7% Cthulhu Mythos

1/-1D6 SAN

No spells

*Excerpt:*

**Act 4—In the Writhing Forest**

**Knowing Toad:** "We are one of a kind, you and I. We both must come through the door at the Middle Poles."

**The Elder Man:** "Yes and no, my friend. As backwards is forwards, so is that which may never die . . ."

**Randall:** "Oh no, Old One. Not one of your riddles again! I must seek the door to the Poles expediently, so if you please . . ."

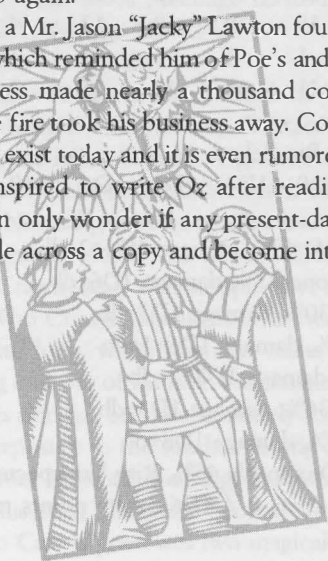
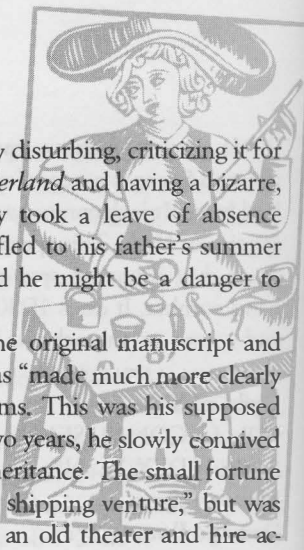
**Both Toad and Elder Man (in unison):** "As backwards is forwards, so shall the denizens of Xoth and Hali find your door when the Stars Are Right."

who read the play found it deeply disturbing, criticizing it for overly resembling Carroll's *Wonderland* and having a bizarre, rambling plot. Enraged, Bradley took a leave of absence from the theater company and fled to his father's summer house in Wales. Many suspected he might be a danger to himself.

In 1896, Sykes destroyed the original manuscript and wrote a new version, one that was "made much more clearly to me" through continued dreams. This was his supposed masterpiece and over the next two years, he slowly connived his father for his share of the inheritance. The small fortune was supposedly going toward "a shipping venture," but was in reality being used to renovate an old theater and hire actors and actresses to play the parts. The first and only showing of *Horticus Rising* was on January 5, 1899, at the New Amstead Playhouse in Trurow, Cornwall.

On the night of the play, Sykes was beside himself with euphoria. He and twelve other performers would act out his life's ambition for a crowd of 64 patrons. When the lights went out and the curtain was raised, one could almost feel a building energy in the hall. News articles describing what followed were as sketchy as the surviving eyewitness accounts. Soon after the play was starting, people in the audience felt a sense of dread sink into them as the players babbled strange nonsense or nearly inhuman chants. In Act 3, many theater-goers began to leave as a ghastly grey light cast demented shadows about the place. Then a horrible alien voice seemed to fill the whole theatre, making even the actors cower. "An incredibly lifelike rubbery thing appeared," said one witness from Dartmouth, "and it looked like an eel." Then a fire swept through the building. Twenty-three people burned to death in the conflagration, but no trace of the Amstead Players (including Sykes) was ever found. The authorities listed the missing as "fugitives from the law" whose crime was overcrowding of a "fire-hazardous" building. Indeed, no one ever saw the theater troop again.

In 1903, a Mr. Jason "Jacky" Lawton found a dusty copy of the play, which reminded him of Poe's and Verne's works. His small press made nearly a thousand copies before another strange fire took his business away. Copies of the play still probably exist today and it is even rumored that L. Frank Baum was inspired to write *Oz* after reading of *Horticus Rising*. One can only wonder if any present-day theater troop might stumble across a copy and become intrigued. ☞





# DELTA GREEN

JUGOSLAVIA JUGOSLAVIA  
**SEE  
NO  
EVIL**

A CALL OF CTHULHU SCENARIO OF  
MODERN HORROR AND CONSPIRACY  
FROM PAGAN PUBLISHING

"Wer  
ruft  
mich  
an?"

written by  
Adam Gauntlett  
illustrated by  
John T. Snyder



# See No Evil

Adam Gauntlet

Illustrated by John T. Snyder

**W**ITH THE RISE IN HATE-BASED VIOLENCE IN AMERICA and the growing sophistication of the white-supremacist movement, the FBI has become increasingly interested in the connections between extremist political groups and those groups who actually carry out hate crimes. At present, the FBI is preparing to conduct a small surveillance operation on four members of a group known as The Review, an organization mainly devoted to Holocaust denial. These four men have been selected to speak at a special presentation in New York City, to be held at the Merriweather Center on the corner of 8th and 41st just off Times Square. Senior members of the Justice Department believe that The Review, and possibly one or more of the four men under surveillance, may have links to other, more sinister organizations that plan and carry out unlawful activities.

Delta Green agrees with the Justice Department. More specifically, A Cell suspects that The Review may be part of the network of American bigots with links to the Karotechia. To pursue this line of inquiry, the agents have been assigned to the FBI task force conducting the surveillance project. They may already be FBI agents, or they may have phony credentials, or be on loan from other agencies or consultant groups. A Cell does not mention the Karotechia during the briefing unless the agents have previously encountered them; Alphonse simply describes The Review as a group of interest to DG.

The surveillance project is meant purely as an intelligence-gathering exercise, part of the FBI's ongoing effort to collate information about possible terrorists in American society. Delta Green, however, has other ideas. The agents have been assigned to the FBI surveillance to go beyond the bounds of legal surveillance and collect any and all information possible without revealing the FBI operation they are piggy-backing on. The agents will have to accomplish this while keeping their illegal activities hidden from the other FBI agents assigned to the project.

## The Meeting

The Review's main function is to provide support for its members, to supply a forum for an exchange of information between members, and to raise money to support their enterprises, mainly through book sales together with some siz-

able private donations. Its task is to promote the viewpoint (which they see as a fact) that the Holocaust as it is popularly known did not take place. They are not neo-Nazis themselves, although some of their members claim to be such; it is not uncommon to find members who initially became involved through their belief in racial superiority, or of a world-embracing Zionist menace. Senior members have appeared on local and national television broadcasts (mainly talk shows) and their views have been published time and again both in their own press and in other journals. They have the reputation of being the most well-organized of the denial groups, and of being formidable in debate. They are currently engaged in a lawsuit over their beliefs, which they claim they are confident of winning. Their most important victory was that their statistics and conjectures have even been cited in a recent book by an important and influential figure from the right wing of American politics.

The presentation which has attracted the FBI's interest is much like any of their other public presentations. The forum is open to all, but is only quietly publicized. Most members know about it through the group's web site, and those who can will attend. The FBI expects about 80% of the attendees to be members or sympathizers, with the rest comprised of protesters.

The four men scheduled to speak are: Peter Hames, a WWII veteran and a once-noted historical scholar; Michael Drinkwater, a former professor of European History currently without a position; Allen Bhrunt, the main publisher and editor of The Review's newsletter as well as the publisher of many of the group's texts; and Stephen Colm, The Review's secretary and the group's longest-serving member—one of the founders, in fact. All four of The Review's heaviest hitters are rarely together like this, as they live in different cities. An opportunity to gather surveillance data on all four of them together may not present itself for many months.

Hames will speak on the Nazi party's attitude towards the Jewish problem, making the point that at no time did the party favor murder; merely deportation at first, and later, when the problem became too large to handle, incarceration. Drinkwater will focus on the gas chambers, using photographic evidence to assert that these did not exist in most of the camps. Bhrunt will speak twice, the first time giving a brief overview of The Review's activities over the last few months (for the benefit of the members) and the second



time focusing on a recent, much-publicized debate between members of The Review and an anti-Fascist organization, a debate The Review claims to have won. Colm acts as organizer, introducing the speakers and keeping the talks moving relatively quickly.

The Delta Green agents will arrive a week before the meeting is scheduled to take place. They will integrate themselves into the FBI team that will be surveiling the members of the Review. Agents should be chosen for their ability at electronic surveillance as well as surreptitious entry-breaking and entering. The FBI team is supposed to monitor the four subjects as they arrive, keep files on the subjects' activities, and to advise their superiors should events occur that constitute violations of state or federal law. The FBI team will not illegally enter the review member's hotel rooms or apartments, nor conduct or condone illegal wire-tapping or bugging. Such violations of civil rights are Delta Green's balliwick.

## Behind the Scenes

As A Cell suspects, the activities of The Review are of particular interest to the Karotechia. The Review does not know about the Karotechia, and is not in any way affiliated with that organization. However, for some time now the Karotechia has wanted to strengthen its relations with such a useful catspaw as The Review. To that end Karotechia agents have cultivated the acquaintance of Stephen Colm, hoping that with his influence they may eventually gain control of The Review.

Over the last few months, Colm has engaged in what he felt to be a harmless correspondence with a Review supporter, one who seemed very knowledgeable about Nazi

party history. Over time this correspondent (whom he knows as Werner Linz) has presented him with compelling evidence not only of the continued existence of a segment of the Nazi party (the Karotechia, although Linz has never explicitly identified it), but also of the truth behind some of the more occult speculations that permeated Hitler's worldview. Using the public meeting as an opportunity, Linz has promised to meet Colm face-to-face and to provide him with the final, irrefutable proof of Linz's claims.

However, Linz and his masters have made an error in Colm. He was selected as the one to approach because the others were seen as unacceptable: Drinkwater (in Linz's view) is a degenerate pervert; Bhrunt is an unreliable drug addict; Hames was rejected because of Linz's personal prejudice against American veterans of WWII. Unfortunately, Colm is not as strong-willed as he appears. The experience that Linz will show him only serves to shatter Colm's fragile psyche. The man's latent paranoia becomes a full-blown psychosis, with violent overtones. This makes him a threat both to the world at large and a serious danger to the veil of secrecy that hides the Karotechia. Colm will have to be stopped before he can become a real danger.

## Getting Started

As the FBI (and Delta Green) begin their investigation, very little information is available about the four directors of The Review; this is summarized in the nearby target dossiers. As can be seen, these are lacking in detail. It is the task force's job to fill in some of the specifics during the course of their investigation.

## Holocaust Denial

To run this scenario, the Keeper should understand that those who promote the theory of Holocaust denial are generally not wild-eyed crazies or obvious fruitcakes. They are as rational and reasonable as any other group of people, with the usual allotment of biases and opinions. What makes them distinctive is their affinity for the Germany of the Third Reich, their admiration for many of that regime's policies, and their belief in a Jewish conspiracy to promote the Holocaust in the service of the Zionist political agenda. For that reason, they are reluctant to concede that the Holocaust took place as popularly presented; to do so would be to admit that their paragons were all but inhuman. Those who take up the cause of Holocaust denial do not contest the fact that Jews were incarcerated in detention camps, nor that many of these prisoners subsequently died. As a rule, they focus instead on these core beliefs:

- That there was not an intention of genocide based on race.
- That there was not a highly technical and well-organized campaign of extermination, and in particular that gas chambers and crematoria were not utilized by the Nazis.
- That the number of Jewish dead, estimated at five to six million, is greatly exaggerated. Of those who did die, the majority of the deaths were due to overwork, and later hunger, when the Allied bombing cut German supply lines, forcing the Nazis to cut back on rations for their prisoners. Outright murder of prisoners was rare. A common argument has it that, in war, awful things happen, but just because they did happen does not mean that they were intended to happen.

## Target Dossiers

Peter Hames. Aliases: none.

**Age:** 76 **Occupation:** retired.

**Description:** WCM, 5'9", 150 lbs., limp right leg, tattoo right arm "B-17 Delightful Dora," far-sighted (glasses).

**Military Rank:** Air Force Major, retired.

**Immediate Family:** wife Evangeline (deceased), son Patrick (deceased).

**Notes:** Born Fairview, Ohio 18Aug24. Enlisted 20Sep43 served until 29Aug63. Married wife Evangeline 27Jun55. Arrested three times for assault, no charges brought. Wife Evangeline died 25July63. Author of three books: *Air Power* (1960 Gerwin, republished 1965 Hewlitt), *Hitler's Germany* (1968 Hewlitt), *Rise of the Reich* (1974 Hewlitt).

**Other Associations:** former chairman Fairview John Birch Society, former member Fairview Veterans' Association.

Michael Drinkwater. Aliases: none.

**Age:** 51 **Occupation:** Professor of History (unemployed)

**Description:** WCM, 6'1", 180 lbs, birthmark orange right thigh, scar left temple.

**Immediate Family:** wife Dorothea.

**Notes:** Born Deepdeene, Massachusetts 15Jan49. Educated Boston University 1971 (B.A.), Reading University, England 1971-75 (M.A., Ph.D.). Married wife Dorothea 5May70. Criminal Record: arrested DWI convicted 1982. Author of two books: *Hitler and the Nazis* (1978 Godwin), *The Jewish Problem in Germany 1935-45* (1986 Bhrunt). Author of numerous historical articles; published in *History Today*, *Times of Conflict*, *Military Historical Quarterly* among others. Last Employer: Boston University 1985-95.

Allen Bhrunt. Aliases: Alexis Bellman.

**Age:** 41 **Occupation:** Publisher.

**Description:** WCM, 5'2", 208 lbs, scar right leg, asthmatic.

**Immediate Family:** none.

**Notes:** Born Fort Lauderdale, Florida 8May59. Educated Florida State 1981 (B.Sc.). Criminal Record: arrested forgery 1982, acquitted. Arrested assault 1983, convicted 1 month. Arrested possession narcotics 1985, convicted 2 months. 32 parking citations. Editor/owner Review Press, publisher *Truth* newsletter & website. Currently under investigation for mail fraud.

Stephen Colm. Aliases: none.

**Age:** 55 **Occupation:** Accountant.

**Description:** WCM, 5'11", 165 lbs, near-sighted (glasses).

**Immediate Family:** wife Wilhemina (divorced), son Andrew, son Brian.

**Notes:** Born Barlow, Missouri 29Dec45. Educated Missouri State 1967 (M.B.A.). Criminal Record: none. Married wife Wilhemina 8April72, divorced 19Jun82. Current Employer: Harwick, Chadderton & Merlo, New York City, New York.

Aside from each subject's dossier, the agents will be advised of each subject's probable itinerary which the FBI will gather through open sources. Stephen Colm lives in New York, so he will not need to travel. The actual dates, and therefore the timeline, is the Keeper's own affair. However, assuming that the investigators do arrive exactly one week before the meeting is due to take place (their arrival day being designated D-1), then the following timeline applies:

Michael Drinkwater is booked on the 4:15 p.m. Delta flight into JFK from Providence Rhode Island on D-2, and has booked a single suite (Room 1210) at the Marriot Hotel from D-2 until D-8, the day after the conference. He is booked on the 8 a.m. Delta flight from JFK back to Rhode Island.

Peter Hames is booked on the 10 p.m. American Airlines flight from Toledo, Ohio, to JFK on D-5. He has a reservation at the Marriott (Room 1126) from D-5 until D-8, and has a ticket on the 5 p.m. American flight back to Toledo on D-8.

Allen Bhrunt is coming by train from his home in Holden, Connecticut. He will arrive at Grand Central Station at 4:45pm on D-3. He is booked into the Marriott (Room 1708) from D-3 until D-10.

## Research

Some agents may wish to read some of the published works of the subjects, or go over taped sessions of their various

## The Task Force

The New York Office of the FBI has assembled the task force that the team of Delta Green agents will be piggy-backing on. Due to the influence of Delta Green behind the scenes, the investigators will be assigned to lead the team of FBI agents.

The FBI sees this assignment as a low-priority operation, and they do not really expect to learn very much surveilling the four members of The Review during the conference. As a result, they are treating it as a training opportunity for some recent graduates from the FBI National Academy at Quantico who are completing their first two-year stint before being reassigned to other regional offices. Working a task force like this is supposed to give the new agents experience with street-level surveillance techniques and technology.

The task force should include no more than six agents, including the investigators. Four recent graduates are provided to fill out the team. The SAN of each agent is listed in case they see something unpleasant, but their full stats are not provided since the DG team should keep them out of the important action; if you need stats for these agents, just grab a set from the NPCs in the *Delta Green* agency appendix.

**David Faulkner:** Tall, thin, and fair with thinning blonde hair and all-American-boy looks, Special Agent Faulkner is a graduate of Florida State University's law school and still maintains a sort of southern-gentleman persona. A former assistant state attorney, Faulkner has been an FBI agent for ten months. While a stickler for detail, he is not a stickler for procedure and is willing to do what it takes to get a job done, so long as it's legal. Ethical considerations are another matter entirely; he learned that dubious distinction in law school. SAN: 75

**Samantha Lynn:** A petite, slim woman with bright blue eyes and brown hair. Special Agent Lynn joined the FBI after four years with the Naval Investigative Service. She has been in the field just seven months, but is a skilled investigator who honed her skills investigating crimes for the U.S. Navy. She feels that she is not taken seriously because of her diminutive stature and cute looks, and is very gung-ho to prove to her fellow agents that she has what it takes. She will be very aggressive in this investigation and would be willing to cut corners if it appears that such behavior will meet with the approval of her fellow agents. SAN: 50

**Steve Udagawa:** Short, with military-length dark hair and a strong build, Special Agent Udagawa is the grandson of a Japanese immigrant. He followed in his grandfather's footsteps and joined the U.S. Army after ROTC and became a staff officer in Intelligence. He joined the FBI after his second hitch and has been a Special Agent for six months. He is far more likely than anyone to object to bending or breaking the rules. From his perspective, it just isn't done. He will have no compunction about reporting illegal activity if he sees it. To him, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem. SAN: 65

**Eric Taylor:** Tall, handsome, and very charming, Taylor entered the FBI fresh out of law school and has been a special agent for eleven months. He comes from a well-to-do African-American family who have been part of the middle class since the days of his grandfather. He is the most relaxed and easy-going of the four rookie FBI agents. He is also the most likely to let any corner-cutting or illegal activity slide. Taylor would be incredibly intrigued by the idea of Delta Green and would be more than happy to cooperate, as long as it gave him a chance to become one of the special few who are in-the-know. SAN: 80

The FBI's New York office is located on Manhattan Island at 26 Federal Plaza, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10278. There are some 1,208 Special Agents assigned to the New York office.

## Surveillance

As part of the FBI surveillance of the Review, parabolic microphones, video cameras, still photography, and other non-intrusive means of monitoring the four men may be used. They may be followed, watched, and their contacts noted and recorded. Unless there is probable cause developed to believe that a crime has been committed, is being committed, or is being planned, the FBI agents will not be able to legally plant listening devices, tap phones, or search computer files. Ultimately the surveillance mission will involve a lot of stakeout time.

The Delta Green agents are not so scrupulous and may use wiretaps, electronic transmitters, and other technological devices to assist in their mission. Such methods are highly illegal without a warrant and will result in serious jail time if discovered by the rest of the task force.

When running this scenario, there should ideally be enough Delta Green agents to cover all four subjects. If not, NPC DG agents should be assigned, at least one per subject. Generally there should be at least as many NPC FBI agents as Investigator Delta Green agents. If an NPC agent is used to watch over Stephen Colm, this could provide a dramatic hook for later use, particularly if the NPC agent should die at a suitably useful point in the plot.



media appearances. Such information will be available with the FBI task force in New York. Of the four subjects, only Colm has neither published anything nor appeared often enough in the media to warrant a possible Psychology roll. Psychology checks against the subjects reveal the following:

**Hames** is short-tempered and brusque. He treats disagreement with his theories as personal attacks against himself. He particularly dislikes being questioned by women.

**Drinkwater** is self-assured to the point of arrogance. He refuses to answer questions directly, relying instead on a fund of anecdotes and quotable sources (sometimes misquoted) to steamroll his questioner.

**Bhrunt** is ebullient, the consummate showman. He specializes in high-profile displays which lack meaningful content, but which look persuasive. Of the four, his is the gambler's personality, the risk-taker who doesn't know when to quit.

## The Surveillance Begins

Since Colm is ultimately the focus of the scenario's attention, there is limited space to deal with the mundane activities of the other three subjects. However, the agents do not initially know of Colm's importance and, if they're doing their jobs properly, should spend an equal amount of time on all four subjects. Colm's activities are addressed later in the text; this section details what the other three subjects are up to. The designations D-2, D-3, *etc.* refer to the days of the scenario; as noted earlier, D-1 is the day the investigators arrive.

### D-2

Drinkwater arrives on schedule. He catches a taxi to the Marriott and checks into room 09034, ninth floor, room 34. He makes a phone call (to his wife, assuring her that the flight was fine), and another call to Colm. He has a drink in the hotel's bar, then passes through to the dining room. After dinner he goes back up to his room, assembles his laptop computer, and works there for two hours before shutting down. He then orders up a movie from the hotel selection, watches it, and goes to bed.

### D-3

Bhrunt arrives at Grand Central at 4:45 p.m. He takes a taxi from there to the Marriott, where he checks in to room 07092 (seventh floor, room 92). He makes two phone calls, one to Drinkwater to arrange for them to meet and have dinner at Il Palio, a restaurant that specializes in Italian cuisine, and another call to Colm. After the meal Bhrunt and Drinkwater go to a bar and drink and talk there for three hours before going back to the hotel. Bhrunt goes straight to bed, while Drinkwater works on his laptop for another two

hours before sleeping; he's assembling his notes for the conference.

Bhrunt has a briefcase that never leaves his side. It's very secure, requiring a Lockpick check at -10% to open stealthily. Inside is \$20,000 in assorted small, grubby bills. He's brought it to make a drug purchase on D-4.

Before Bhrunt arrives, Drinkwater spends his day going to bookshops. He visits three stores before lunch, which he spends in Central Park. He visits another four before going back to his hotel. He walks most places, until late in the afternoon after he has accumulated two bags worth of books at which point he takes a taxi. He buys two kinds of books: historical works (European, about the course of World War II) and murder mysteries, particularly Mickey Spillane.

### D-4

Bhrunt sleeps in, not leaving the hotel until 11:30 a.m. Carrying his briefcase, he goes to a local radio station where he is interviewed on a talk show at 2 p.m. After that he leaves the station and makes a call from a public phone. He then takes the subway for four blocks, catches a taxi, then another taxi, and finally ends up at an address in Queens.

As the agents might surmise, Bhrunt is anxious not to be followed, and will make at least three Spot Hidden checks (at 48%) to see if he is being tailed; the Keeper can apply penalties to these checks if the investigators are being stealthy, or might even make it a Hide vs. Spot Hidden resistance roll. If Bhrunt catches sight of a tail, he spends some time shopping and then does two more Spot Hidden checks across ten minutes. If he still sees the tail then he returns to his hotel. There he calls his contact and cancels the buy. Should this occur, Bhrunt spends the rest of the trip looking over his shoulder. He won't warn his companions, however, since he assumes the surveillance is related to narcotics rather than ideology.

If he reaches his destination without spotting a tail, all goes well. The location is a condemned school building, the P. MacGregor Hayes School. Bhrunt comes here to buy a kilo of cocaine and a lesser amount of crank, enough to supply his small but lucrative drug-dealing business that lets him work for The Review full-time. He makes a purchase of this size about once a year. His dealers are four young men well-known to the police, one of whom carries a shotgun while the others have semi-automatic pistols. The transaction takes place inside the school's former chemistry lab. This room, unlike the rest of the school, is sealed: all of the windows have bars and boards covering them, and the one door is steel-reinforced. There is a very short escape tunnel here—formerly a maintenance corridor—that leads to a small concrete shed on the school's playground. If allowed to conduct his business, Bhrunt packs the drugs in his briefcase and returns to the hotel, once again looking for a tail. He puts the drugs in a small duffel bag and fills the briefcase with paper-

work; he continues keeping the briefcase with him everywhere for the sake of consistency. After his busy afternoon Bhrunt orders room service, watches a movie, and goes to bed.

Drinkwater spends the day trolling through bookstores again. After dinner, he goes to see an off-Broadway version of Tennessee Williams' play *The Glass Menagerie*. He then returns to his hotel, puts in an hour on his computer, and goes to bed.

## D-5

Bhrunt sleeps in again, this time not leaving until 1 p.m. He spends much of his day in Central Park, playing chess. Towards 5 p.m. he leaves, goes to a quiet restaurant, and has a light supper. He returns to the hotel and orders up a movie. After watching it, he goes to the airport to meet Hames and takes him back to the Mariott.

Hames, exhausted after the flight, checks in to the hotel (eleventh floor, room 122) and calls Colm. After that he has a drink in the hotel bar and talks briefly with Bhrunt. After about twenty minutes of this he goes to bed.

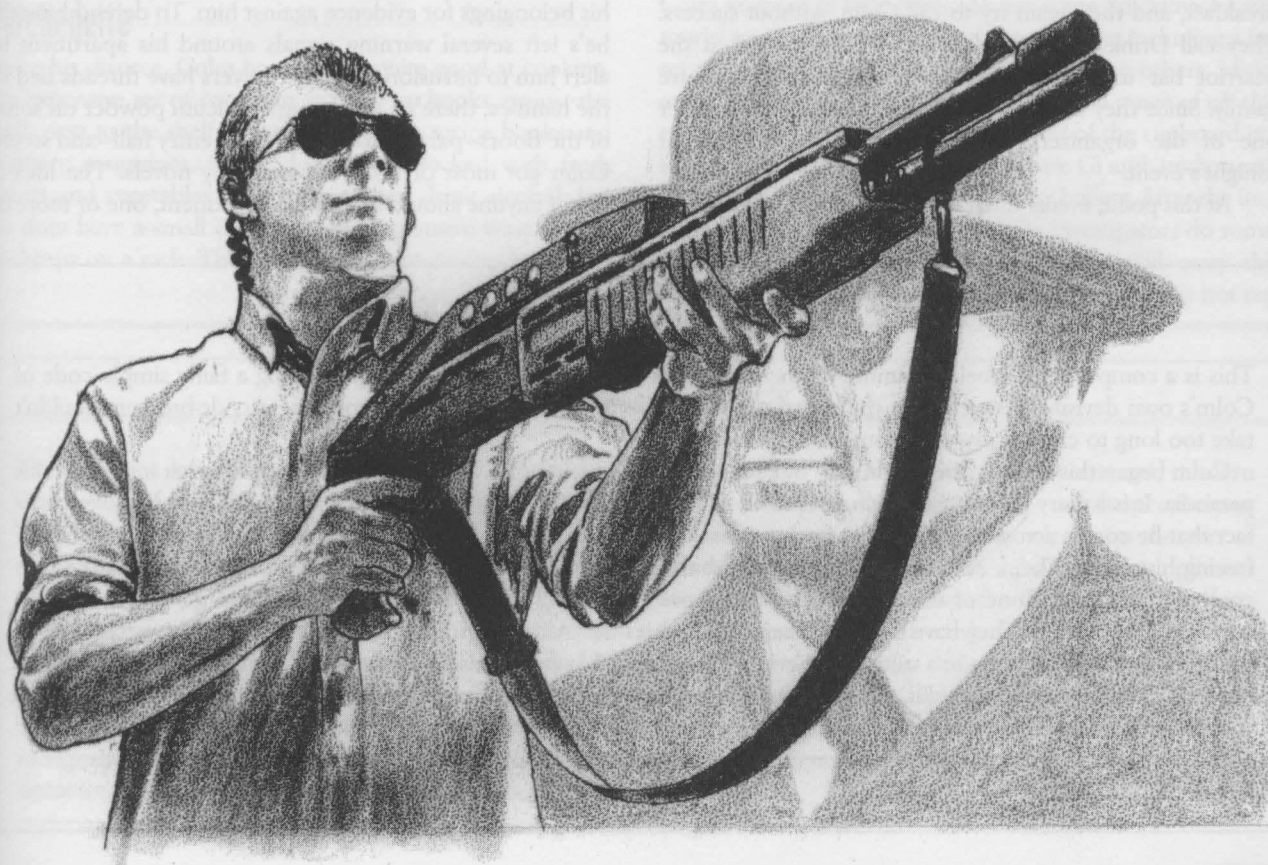
Drinkwater doesn't hit the bookstores today. Instead he goes to a coffeeshop, has a leisurely breakfast, and reads the paper. Afterwards, he makes a call from a public phone and heads for an address in Greenwich Village. He meets a personable young man at an apartment building there, and the two of them go out to a pub where they drink and talk for

several hours. Afterwards they go back to the apartment and Drinkwater doesn't leave until the following morning. The young man's name is Theo Prentice, and he was a student of Drinkwater's at Boston University. It was Drinkwater's proclivity for sleeping with students that cost him his job at BU.

## D-6

Bhrunt wakes up early for once, eats a light breakfast, and then leaves the hotel. He spends most of his morning going to computer stores. He's shopping for a new printer and some desktop-publishing software. This search takes him most of the day. He returns to his hotel with his purchases, has lunch, and then goes out again. This time he goes to the library and stays there until late that evening. He's taking notes and preparing for his speech tomorrow night.

Drinkwater leaves Prentice early that morning. He goes to another coffee shop and eats breakfast while reading the paper. Afterwards he strolls to a bookstore and settles down there for several hours. He, too, makes some notes in preparation for tomorrow night, but he already has most of his speech prepared and is now only fine-tuning it. He chats with a young man at the bookstore, and after a while they go to a bar and talk and drink there. They exchange telephone numbers, and Drinkwater goes back to his hotel. After dinner he works for several hours at his computer, does a test reading of his speech, and then goes to bed.



Hames leaves his hotel late in the morning. He intends to take a walk in Central Park before going to meet some old friends from his military days. Before he gets there, there is an ugly incident. While walking in Central Park, Hames encounters an elderly woman, well-dressed and grandmotherly. Her name is Else Wiesen, and as a child she was a prisoner at Auschwitz. Active in Jewish Anti-Defamation and Holocaust issues, Else knows Hames by reputation and recognizes him from a demonstration that she attended two years ago to protest the work of Holocaust deniers. They clashed memorably then, and much the same thing happens now. Screaming "murderer!" and "pig!" she flings herself on Hames, hanging onto his jacket and crying out for the police. The disturbance draws a large crowd. Hames loses his temper and takes a swipe at Else with his cane, which wins him no friends amongst the crowd—two of whom promptly disarm him. The police arrive and take both Else and Hames aside. After about ten minutes of heated discussion, both are released with admonitions to confine their disagreements to the verbal realm. Hames, incensed, goes back to his hotel where he locks himself in his room. He calls his Air Force friends to apologize for not meeting them, then calls Colm (who isn't home), and finally the police, to whom he complains about how he was treated. He doesn't leave his room after that.

## D-7

Hames tells Bhrunt about the Central Park incident over breakfast, and they again try to call Colm, without success. They call Drinkwater and the three of them meet at the Marriot bar to discuss strategy. They decide to behave calmly. Since they cannot reach Colm, Bhrunt calls another one of the organizers to arrange for extra security at tonight's event.

At this point, events catch up with Stephen Colm's story.

## Stephen Colm

Colm has lived alone for eight years, and has grown used to it. Never much of a socializer, he spends most of his off-duty hours reading, compiling data on the Holocaust, and chatting with fellow enthusiasts through email and letters. He keeps a small, noisy mongrel dog called Bernard, who he walks around the block every day at 7:30 p.m.; you could set your watch by it. He's lived in the same apartment for fifteen years. His landlord considers Colm his favorite tenant, because he never complains, pays the rent on time, and is willing to help out around the building when needed. As secretary for The Review, he is well-liked by the membership but not particularly well-known, mainly because of his stand-offish tendencies. He's been the secretary for some years now, because he has a deft organizational touch and enough spare time to be able to manage many of the day-to-day affairs of the group.

## Colm's Apartment

Colm's apartment is on the second floor of a six-story building. Access is by the main staircase or the outside fire escape, although the fire escape can be seen from the street. The building has two ground-floor entrances.

As a functional paranoid, Colm is constantly afraid that his enemies are breaking into his home and searching his belongings for evidence against him. To defend himself, he's left several warning signals around his apartment to alert him to intrusion. Certain drawers have threads tied to the handles, there's a scattering of talcum powder on some of the floors—particularly in the front entry hall—and so on; Colm got most of his ideas from spy novels. The idea is that if anyone should search the apartment, one or more of

## Colm's Notes

This is a computer file labeled "Sundries"; there is no backup copy. The file is encrypted using a fairly simple code of Colm's own devising that relies on the use of the *Jeeves Omnibus* to decipher it. A competent code-breaker shouldn't take too long to crack it once the source text is identified.

Colm began this file after he was beaten by protesters at a Review event two years ago, an incident that intensified his paranoia. It is a diary of sorts, in which he records all he can about Them, the ones who want to destroy him. Every little fact that he comes across every day that further proves the perfidy of Them, he notes down here. He also plots ways of freeing himself of Them. After a while he notes that there are Others who feel as he does, and mentions that he is in correspondence with one of them. He hopes that these Others will help him against Them. Towards the end he becomes convinced that They have begun reading his Sundries file. After recording vague suspicions he drops this line of thought, but begins to write in a stilted, false-confident manner. He stops writing about Them, saying that They obviously aren't as dangerous as he thought, and he doesn't know why he hadn't realized this sooner. (At this point Colm became convinced that his journal was being read by Them, and rather than drop it altogether he hoped to throw Them off the scent.) A Psychology check on this document reveals that Colm is deeply disturbed, and may in time prove a danger to himself and others.



these devices will be disturbed and Colm will know that he's had a visitor. (None of these safeguards are harmful traps; they're just crude detectors.) If the investigators should search the apartment, they get a Spot Hidden roll to notice these contrivances. How they avoid, disarm, or replace the signals is up to them. If they are unsuccessful in not disturbing or covering up their intrusion, Colm gets a Spot Hidden check as soon as he gets home to see if his devices have been disturbed. If he finds that his belongings have been tampered with, he does nothing obvious (certainly not call the police, whom he does not trust), but he becomes much more nervous and carries his gun around with him at all times.

A description of his apartment follows.

## Living Room

Colm is compulsively neat and keeps this room in good order. The bulk of his book collection is kept here, shelves lining the walls with historical and political works. The sofa is covered in plastic, and has Bernard's favorite cushion on it. Colm doesn't keep a television; he doesn't think much of the media establishment. His favorite chair is next to the window, and has a table next to it where he keeps a bag of peppermints. Bernard is most often found here, when he is not in his master's company, and there are no warning signals in this room.

## Kitchenette

Since his divorce, Colm has become quite good at cooking. An expensive set of cookware is hung on hooks against the wall, next to the shelf where he keeps his recipe books and culinary magazines. His fridge is well-stocked with fresh meats and vegetables. He doesn't often drink alcohol, but he does have a small collection of inexpensive wines which he keeps on a rack. There are no security devices here.

## Bedroom/Study

When his sons lived here this was their room. Now Colm uses it as a study area, where he conducts Review business. There is a three-year-old Windows computer setup here with a modem, as well as a fax machine, a laser printer, and a scanner. Several filing cabinets along the wall contain extensive records of The Review, its history, and its activities. There is a Zip-disk library in a box on top of the cabinets which contain the last three years of Review records, including backup copies of what is on the computer: a complete listing of current Review members, including telephone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses, as well as email, financial data, writing projects, and so forth, none of which is particularly important—unlike Colm's Notes, also on the computer and described in the nearby boxed text. Colm's library is filled with a deep selection of conspiracy-theory literature. Examination of the titles reveals no particular favorite themes or theories; he's a holistic paranoid. This room has security devices.

There are two things in this room that may prove important: a copy of P.G. Wodehouse's *Jeeves Omnibus*, (see Colm's Notes) and Linz's collected correspondence. These typewritten letters are kept with the rest of the Review records in the filing cabinets, in a folder marked *Letters Jan-Dec 2000* (or whatever year you set this in).

## Master Bedroom

Colm keeps very little here. He has some knickknacks and tourist toys from some of his trips to Europe, including a full set of antique toy soldiers that depict, among others, Hitler and Mussolini. His cupboard contains a full range of off-the-rack suits and dull ties. On the top shelf of the cupboard is a large cardboard box containing a karate Gi and, underneath that, Colm's revolver and a box of fifty bullets. After the incident on D-6 (described later) or if the investigators do something prior to that to spook him, Colm will carry this weapon on him everywhere he goes. The weapon is not reg-

## The Linz Correspondence

These are the letters that Werner Linz sent to Stephen Colm to persuade him of the existence of a secret, modern incarnation of the Nazi party (never identified as the Karotechia), and of the truth behind Hitler's occult speculations. They begin relatively normally, posing intelligent questions and hinting at a greater historical knowledge on the part of the writer. However, they soon degenerate into occultism, rabid anti-Semitism, and worse. Throughout, they compliment Colm on his grasp of history as well as the modern world, and suggest that there are many who think as he does. (Linz hadn't the faintest inkling of Colm's paranoia, or he would never have written this.) Towards the end they suggest that Linz and Colm should meet face-to-face. Linz says that he has something of the utmost importance to show Colm.

These letters convey a 3% occult bonus, 1% Cthulhu Mythos, and a history check. They contain no spells. They are written in German, of a peculiarly old-fashioned type. The language is clearly modern, and yet it omits much of the slang and common terms that late 20th Century German contains. All letters are typewritten and do not include a handwritten signature, only a typed one; the only fingerprints on them are Colm's.

istered in New York City and in fact was stolen from a residence in Michigan in 1986; it's been floating around the black market ever since. Colm's possession of it is illegal and is certainly enough to get him prosecuted.

## Colm's Routine

As the organizer of the event, Colm spends much of his time calling people, making last-minute decisions, handling minor crises, and so on. He does this very well. The other three speakers haven't an inkling of how much work goes on to make a function like this possible, nor would they care to know. They have been asked to call Colm as soon as they arrive, to check in and to get updates on the meeting's developments. They do that, but they do not socialize with Colm. Few people do.

Colm's officemates respect his competence but do not know him personally. His efficiency and his willingness to work long hours have earned him a certain leeway when events like this week's conference roll around. During the week he will work as usual, starting at eight thirty and leaving early at three. After that he spends much of his time keeping up with the conference; when he is not at home, making calls and sending faxes, he is at New York University dealing with arrangements there.

The exception is D-6. It is on that day that Colm has arranged to meet with Linz at a run-down strip mall near JFK airport. Linz has promised a demonstration of his group's occult power. Colm has insisted that Linz be alone at the meeting and Linz, anxious to secure Colm's cooperation, agrees, stationing his assistant Voss outside disguised as a cab driver.

## D-6: The Dead Speak

Colm leaves his home at 7:45 a.m. He picks up a cup of coffee and the morning paper, and scans this briefly before reporting for work at 8:30 a.m. Colm works all day without a lunch break. At 3 p.m. he leaves work early and drives off. On prior days he went straight home or to New York University, but today he drives towards JFK airport and stops at a small strip mall. Several storefronts are vacant, their windows covered by paper on the inside and with "For Rent" signs on the doors. There is also a locksmith, an ice-cream shop, and a convenience store in operation here. There are very few people.

The investigators easily notice the cab (driven by Voss, whom they haven't seen before) sitting outside the convenience store; the driver is reading a newspaper, but there is nothing about the cab that should attract attention. Voss brought Linz here twenty minutes ago, but the agents won't know that unless they had Colm's work phone bugged and arrived early; Linz called him with the location at 2:45 p.m.

Colm parks his car and goes to one of the vacant storefronts. He knocks on the door. The door is opened, though the person inside stays out of sight, and Colm is ushered in. Time passes, and unless the investigators are able to covertly listen in they'll have to wait about ten minutes for something to happen again. Note that if the investigators are obviously spying—walking up to the door and pressing an ear against it, for example—Voss calls Linz's encrypted cell phone and warns him, bringing the meeting and probably the scenario to an end.

If the investigators are listening, they'll hear a brief exchange of pleasantries that do not include any names. Then Colm says, "Let's see it," to which the other voice replies, "Behold the power of the Reich," and then begins a sing-song chant that takes several minutes. At the end of that time, a chill settles in. People outside notice that the sky becomes overcast, with a sudden, strong breeze, and nothing is heard for a short while. Then a third voice speaks in German: "Wer ruft mich an?" ("Who calls me?") Colm screams something, there is a short struggle, and he dashes out. Witnesses might notice a book clutched under his arm—it's Linz's copy of *Mein Triumph* (see *Delta Green*, p. 104).

At this point there are several possibilities. The investigators may try to stop Colm, either by grabbing him or by following him as he leaves in his car. If they do this, Voss will become involved. Not wanting Colm to be arrested, Voss will either run down pedestrian agents with his car or obstruct car chases by smashing into or driving in front of investigator vehicles. Once it is certain that Colm is free, Voss will try to get away himself. He will call Linz to receive orders and instructions.

The agents may go into the storefront to see what has happened. If they do so quickly enough, they may catch a fleeting glimpse of the ghost that Linz summoned for the occasion before it disappears into the æther at a cost of 0/1d3 SAN. Linz is stunned but not seriously hurt, although he is in need of minor medical care, having suffered 2 HP worth of damage: bruising to his face and a bloody cut above his left eye.

What happens next depends on who Linz believes his rescuers to be.

- For apparent innocent bystanders he plays the injured man, moaning helplessly, apparently unable to speak; he'll flee at the first opportunity and rendezvous with Voss.
- Law-enforcement officials will get the silent treatment: Linz refuses to give a statement, feigning an inability to speak English. If taken into custody or questioned by a translator, he gives a brief account of an attempted mugging. No reasonable charges can be filed against him unless Voss did something violent and Linz can be tied to Voss; if this happens, a high-powered attorney shows up to defend them with a shower of paperwork. Once out on bail, the pair flee the country.



- If Linz believes he has fallen into the hands of a covert organization with occult leanings, like Delta Green, he will play it much as if he had been found by police officers. However, at the first opportunity he will use his magical powers to escape confinement. He does not want to risk being taken by people who know what he is and what he can do. A Gate spell will be the most effective means of escaping confinement.

There is an important piece of physical evidence at the scene, which the investigators might obtain if they are quick enough; otherwise, Linz takes it with him. This is a small plastic flask stoppered with a rubber cork. The cork is out of the bottle and the contents, a light blue dust, are dumped on the floor. There is a label on the flask: "Lt O. Karin 2.8.44." Agents who research WWII military history might discover an Oskar Karin, noted Panzer ace, who was killed in action in 1944. However, there is no obvious link between him and this odd powder.

What the agents now do is up to them, but Colm and Voss have their own agendas to complete. Colm wants to escape with his life. Voss wants to silence Colm—permanently—and eradicate any evidence of Karotechia involvement.

Colm drives his car at high speed back to his apartment. He rushes in, collects some of his belongings (including his pistol, if he hasn't already got it on him), leaves Bernard with a neighbor (elderly Mrs. Golwin, who remembers Colm as being upset, nervous, and flustered), and takes off.

Voss arrives minutes later. Mrs. Golwin sees him arrive and, frightened, hides in her apartment. Voss kicks in Colm's door and searches the rooms quickly, finding Linz's letters and shoving them in his pockets. He takes a degausser from his jacket, plugs it in, and runs it quickly over the computer and Zip disks to wipe the data. Then he dumps random papers into a pile on the office floor, sets them on fire, and flees. Mrs. Golwin notices the smoke soon afterward and calls 911. Depending on how close the

agents are behind Voss or Colm, they may arrive on the scene at any time during this sequence of events.

Voss now wants to find Colm. The trouble is that Colm isn't behaving rationally and cannot be anticipated easily. Colm wants to contact any of his friends—Drinkwater, Bhrunt, Hames, anyone—but he is now seeing Them everywhere. He tries to make a phone call, but hears Them on the line. He tries to contact Drinkwater directly at his hotel, but sees that one of Them is at the front desk and runs away. Soon Colm drives around aimlessly, eventually parking in a quiet alley and awaiting the dawn. Voss has no luck searching for him, and finally gives up at about 3 a.m. By that time, Voss has a plan in mind.

## D-7: Climax

Events from this point on are written as though the agents do not interfere at all. Naturally, they will. Use the following as a framework, and adjust events to react to the actions of your players.

Colm knows that They are after him, and that only a select few (Bhrunt, Hames, and Drinkwater) will believe and understand him. Colm therefore wants to make contact with them. Voss is counting on this.

Voss spends his day watching the other three Review honchos. This is relatively easy, since today they stick together. He's waiting for Colm to stick his head up, at which point Voss will blow it off. He has abandoned his cab-driver disguise and cab, and now drives a maroon Saturn. Agents watching Hames, Drinkwater, and Bhrunt may notice the new surveillance man in their midst.

Colm, afraid for his life, decides to wait until the other three actually go to the conference. Just as they enter the building, while in a safely neutral public place, Colm intends to meet them and beg for protection; he brings *Mein Triumph* along as proof of his deluded and rather jumbled "discovery." Voss has been waiting for just this moment; he's

## Voss

During the strip-mall incident, Voss may be incapacitated or captured. If he is placed into police custody, his ID holds up under the scrutiny of standard booking and bail procedures. However, closer examination by the FBI can reveal that his ID is based on a social security number from a child who died in infancy in Arkasas; such examination only occurs if the investigators ask for it, since he will presumably be booked under state statutes for vehicular assault or somesuch rather than federal charges.

Voss has no legitimate identity—he died in 1940.

Since Voss does play an important part in the story to come, the Keeper should do his best to keep him alive and free. If this is not possible, two options are available. First, assume that Voss had a subordinate similar in many respects to himself. Use the same statistics, perhaps knocking off a few points (e.g. 5% per skill) to reflect his lesser status, and have him take on Voss's duties for the rest of the scenario. The second option would be to have Linz carry out Voss's duties himself, using stealth and occult means to complete the plan. See the playtest notes at the end for some suggestions.



now dressed in a baggy sweatshirt, jacket, and jogger's pants, all the better to conceal his weaponry and armored vest.

What Colm has not counted on is that thanks to Hames' Central Park contretemps, opposition activists have been alerted to the Holocaust deniers' meeting and a band of protesters is gathering outside the conference building. Many of them are young, all of them are rowdy, and what security is available is having some difficulty keeping them in line. There are some police present, but not as many as there should be.

Colm catches up with Hames, Drinkwater, and Bhrunt just as they arrive at the conference. Voss spots him and moves in for the kill. It's at this moment that the crowd bursts through the security barrier, running towards the four Denial experts.

This is the final trigger that Colm's battered brain needs. He fires his revolver three times into the crowd. Even a poor shot like him could hardly fail to miss: one woman is killed and two men injured. This breaks the mob's charge. He then grabs a young woman at random to use as a hostage and runs into the conference building for cover from Them.

Chaos reigns outside. People are screaming and running, the police are desperately trying to break up the crowd and deal with the situation, and so on. Enterprising agents might be able to gain control of the scene and use their authority to round up a few police assistants. There is the potential for civilian casualties, so some kind of action needs to be taken outside the building.

Meanwhile, Voss moves into the building after Colm.

Colm is familiar with the layout of the building. He's been here several times before, organizing the event. He wants to make for one of the back exits, but he is surprised by one of the janitorial staff.

He shoots this man at point-blank range, and then drags his hostage to the sound booth for a final siege. At this point he has two bullets left in the gun. He throws his hostage to the ground and, shaken, reloads his revolver.

Voss has been tracking him through the building and catches up with him here. Colm tries to defend himself, but Voss is the more practiced killer. He dispatches both Colm and the hostage with well-aimed blasts from his Skorpion. Knowing that destruction of the *Mein Triumph* copy is more important than his own life, Voss uses his only grenade to blow it to pieces; if necessary to ensure the book's destruction, he will blow himself up as well. Then he flees for a Karotechia safe house. NPCs will not apprehend him as he leaves the building, though investigators might.

The agents may now pick up the pieces.

## SAN and Aftermath

Each of the three protesters  
whose injuries are prevented ..... 1d4 SAN  
Saving Colm's life ..... 3 SAN



Capturing Voss or Linz alive  
(even if they later escape) ..... 2 SAN each  
Recovering Linz's letters  
or *Mein Triumph* ..... 1 SAN each

By the end of the scenario, agents may have their first pieces of evidence to the existence of the Karotechia. This may lead to further scenarios, and the Keeper is encouraged to drop additional hints or clues during "See No Evil" if he has other plotlines in the works.

## NPCs

**Werner Linz, alias Bruno Kurtz, alias Walther Stromm**  
**Karotechia Bischöfe, age 63**

Race: Caucasian

STR 9 CON 13 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 18  
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 20 SAN 0 HP 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Skills: Anthropology 45%, History 80%, Library Use 60%, Occult 85%, Spot Hidden 40%, Persuade 65%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 40%, Computer Use 30%, Astronomy 40%, Dodge 48%, Sneak 40%, Psychology 15%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%

Languages: German 95%, English 60%, Latin 40%

Spells: Body Warping of Gorgoroth, Contact Der Führer (Avatar of Nyarlathotep), Create Gate, Dread Curse of Azathoth (variant), Resurrection, Shrivelling, Voorish Sign

Physical Description: Middle-aged and running to fat, Linz

appears to be a once-vigorous man who has since become more lethargic. He fosters this impression by moving and talking slowly, in an unhurried, patient manner. He never lets himself appear upset and, in the company of strangers, tends to keep his mouth shut.

**Brief History:** Linz, an orphan, believes his father to have been a high-ranking Nazi SS officer who was killed in the course of the war. His mother was murdered shortly after the war's end by a U.S. serviceman, having sunk to the lowest level in her son's eyes: a prostitute who serviced Allied soldiers. As an orphan in post-war Germany, he bitterly resented the sectioning of his country by the occupying forces, and in particular resented the burden of guilt that he felt had been placed upon him as a German by Jewish sympathisers. As an adult, his desire to learn more about his father led him to spiritualism, and, once that proved fruitless, to more-occult studies. His research brought him to the attention of Dr. Olaf Bitterich of the Karotechia; since then, Linz has successfully completed many missions on behalf of the Karotechia.

**Gunther Voss**

**Karotechia Ritter, age 84 (looks 25)**

Race: Caucasian

STR 14 SIZ 13 CON 14 DEX 15 POW 14  
INT 12 EDU 15 APP 14 SAN 0 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Skills: Dodge 60%, Pilot Aircraft 40%, Parachute 60%, First Aid 60%, Navigate 45%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 55%, Drive Auto 60%, Conceal 40%, Throw 45%

Languages: German 75%, English 45%

## New Spells

**PUPPET GHOST:** The Karotechia is fond of ressurecting fallen Nazis as part of their cabal of *die Untoten*. However, this is not always possible. Quite often the entire corpse is not available, which renders the Resurrection spell useless. Since the Karotechia may have spent considerable time and resources obtaining the remains, this stumbling block proves irritating.

Puppet Ghost is a way of recouping Karotechia losses. Rather than ressurect the man, they summon the spirit, through the use of the same essential salts as those employed in the resurrection spell. Puppet Ghost is very similar to the spell Command Ghost, except that the spirit, once summoned, has little will of its own and only vague memories of its existance in the living world. This makes the spirit useless for most purposes, but the summoning process, and the result, is quite spectacular in its own right and is often used to impress potential allies of the Karotechia. Bischöfe have been known to obtain considerable control over some ghosts, training them to perform simple tricks. They might give a speech that they gave in life, or recite Karotechia dogma. Otherwise, Puppet Ghost has little or no practical value save for its visuals: the dust of the dead rises up to form an apparition of the spirit as it looked in life.

Puppet Ghost costs 8 magic points and a d3 SAN points to cast. The uninitiated who see the risen sprit for the first time may well lose more SAN, depending on the spirit summoned. The spell lasts for three rounds, and may be extended at a cost of 1 MP per round after that point.

**DREAD CURSE OF AZATHOTH (VARIANT):** In this variant of the Dread Curse of Azathoth, when the caster speaks the final secret syllable of Azathoth's name the target not only loses 1d3 POW but the caster gains those points permanently. This variant has an increased SAN loss of 1d8, rather than the usual 1d6. Also, the caster must make a Luck or INTx5 roll (whichever is lower) or become addicted to draining the POW of others. This spell will not allow a caster's POW to rise above 21, but it is an effective way to recharge from POW-consuming spells like Gate, Body Warping of Golgoroth, and Resurrection.



## Playtest Notes

During the playtest, the Keeper made a few errors which changed the course of the scenario slightly. However, the investigators did come up with some ingenious ways of searching for information and conducting surveillance.

First, the investigators illegally bugged every hotel room they could get access to. They rented the room the target was planning to check into and then had all the time and privacy they needed to conceal microphones and monofilament video. Conceal and Electrical or Electronics rolls made sure everything was up and running and practically invisible.

Second, they contacted the FBI offices in Toledo, Ohio, and Providence, Rhode Island, with photos of Hames and Drinkwater so that an FBI agent could be at the airport when they checked their baggage and get a look through the x-ray machine. Ingenious, but it turned up nothing.

Then the investigators learned from the bored FBI NPC watching Colm's place that Colm's yappy mutt Bernard never shuts up. Figuring that no one would notice more yapping if they broke in, they "relieved" the bored FBI agent and did the standard CoC B&E. They walked barefoot through the talcum powder, then put their socks and shoes back on over their talc-covered feet in order to keep from tracking it across the carpet. After locking the dog in the bathroom they went to work. They bugged the house, copied the hard drive, photographed the books and Linz's letters, and took down the serial number from the pistol. They let the dog out of the bathroom, walked in sock feet through the talc, put their shoes on outside in the hall and sprinkled talc over the threshold to cover their tracks.

They followed Bruhnt to the school where he made his drug deal, but let him get away with it. Then they let the DEA know about the drug dealer's hideout in the deserted high school. Later they applied for a legal warrant and had Colm's room searched and found the drugs in the toilet tank. Preferring to wait until he had the drugs on him, they decided to try and spring a trap on him as he tried to leave, using a drug-sniffing dog at the train station.

After the debacle at the shopping mall, one agent followed Linz into his hotel while the other two followed Voss's cab. Unfortunately, the agent blew his Hide roll and was spotted. This, coupled with an earlier "good Samaritan" routine at the shopping mall, set Linz's alarm bells off. He went straight to his room and began to form a gate to escape through. Never taking his eyes off the door of Linz's room, the agent waited for reinforcements and then had the other agent convince the hotel manager to let them in. All they found was a strange arch-like outline painted on the wall in blood, surrounded by occult symbols.

As for Voss in the cab, the agent following him decided to call the NYPD and report a cab operating without a proper taxi medallion (it's a fake cab, after all). Voss was pulled over, knew he was going to be arrested carrying illegal automatic weapons and a hand grenade, and decided to shoot it out. He got the drop on one cop, but was killed by the other. It was over so fast the agent wasn't able to do anything but apply first aid to the stricken officer. The agent was then stuck with the NYPD for twelve hours filling out paperwork and being debriefed on the shooting. The NYPD wanted to make sure their officers weren't being used as mine-detectors by the FBI investigators—which in truth they weren't. The investigators just wanted to hinder Voss, not start a shoot-out.

While looking for Colm, the other two agents discovered that Mrs. Golwin was taking care of his dog Bernard. Unfortunately, Linz returned to the Colm residence disguised with the Body Warping of Golgoroth and discovered the same thing. He killed Mrs. Golwin with a couple of applications of the Dread Curse of Azathoth and then got into her apartment. He stole some of her clothes, ransacked the apartment for clues, and then went next door and repeated the process with Colm's apartment disguised as Mrs. Golwin. He gained entry by burning the lock off with a Shrivelling spell. Having spotted the FBI NPCs watching the apartment building, Linz decided not to burn the place down. Instead he stole his letters, took Bernard the yappy dog, and went looking for Colm, knowing that he could get very close in the guise of Mrs. Golwin.

The agents expertly disarmed Colm at the Merriweather Center and captured him alive before he had a chance to shoot the poor custodian. The same agent who'd just spent twelve hours with the NYPD ended up grabbing the gun from Colm and spent another twelve hours with the boys in blue. Colm was booked and taken to Bellevue for psychiatric observation. Knowing that Colm owned a car, the agents canvassed the neighborhood, found the car, broke into it, and got themselves a copy of *Mein Triumph* before the NYPD or FBI had any idea what was going on.

Agents who reviewed video shot during Colm's rampage spotted "Mrs. Golwin" in the crowd with Bernard. "How strange . . ." Returning to Mrs. Golwin's apartment to speak with her about hiding Colm, they discovered she was dead and Bernard missing. Unable to determine time of death immediately, it didn't occur to them that she died before she appeared on video. Meanwhile "Mrs. Golwin" inquires after Colm, finds that he is in Bellevue, Dread Curses a nurse on her way to work, steals her ID and uniform, and sneaks in where the gender-bending sorcerer tracks down the restrained



and medicated Colm. One Shrivelling spell later, Colm's cause of death is tentatively listed as "spontaneous human combustion." More applications of the Dread Curse would have been better, since the cause of death would have looked much more mundane.

Except for a couple of blown Luck rolls, the agents might have come face to face with a little old lady they knew to be dead. One agent missed her as the two of them were walking around in the same NYPD precinct house. Had they met face to face, New York's finest would probably have been treated to the sight of FBI agents gunning down a little old lady. If the coroner was confused by Mrs. Golwin's cause of death the first time, he would have hated seeing her again—only this time with different fingerprints, dental care, blood type, her hip replacement missing, a Y chromosome, and male internal organs. (Body Warping of Golgoroth only changes exterior features, not genetics and internal elements.)

In any event, these are the highlights of our playtest. Your mileage may vary. Be seeing you!

#### Attacks:

Martial Arts 50%

Grapple 55%

Kick 45%, 1d6+DB

Head Butt 35%

vz68 Skorpion Submachine Gun 55%, 1d10

FN Browning High-Power Pistol 45%, 1d10

Knife 55%, 1d4+2+DB

Grenade 45%, 4d6 (4 yd radius)

**Armor:** Level One bulletproof vest. -5% to all physical skills, 6 HP armor.

**Physical Description:** Tall, thick-bodied, radiantly healthy man. A born athlete, with an outdoorsman's ruddy complexion and a sunny smile to match.

**Brief History:** Gunther has an inherent respect for authority, and does not question either the rules or the people who make them up. He joined the Nazi military because he saw it as the right thing to do: his country was threatened by foreign agitation and it was his duty to defend it. His natural athletic prowess led him into the Fallschirmjäger, where he rose through the ranks to Lieutenant before being killed in the campaign on Crete. His resurrection was a great shock, but he's managed to put that behind him since his superiors still know best. His new knowledge of the history of post-war Germany has only hardened his resolve. There must be vengeance, and a vindication of the honorable dead. He is confident that if he is killed again, the Karotechia will bring him back to life once more; this makes him a little reckless.

#### Stephen Colm

Secretary for The Review, age 55

Race: Caucasian

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 14 POW 9  
DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 18 SAN 35\* HP 13

\* 26 after witnessing the Puppet Ghost

Damage Bonus: 0

#### Occupation: Accountant

**Skills:** Accounting 80%, Computer Use 60%, Credit Rating 65%, Bargain 55%, Library Use 65%, Law 45%, Drive Auto 60%, Dodge 36%, History 60%, Spot Hidden 45%, Conceal 45%, Occult 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 1%

**Languages:** English 90%, German 58%

#### Attacks:

Martial Arts 30%

Fist 50%, 1d3+bonus

Kick 25%, 1d6+bonus

.357 Smith & Wesson M586 Revolver 20%, 1d8+d4

**Physical Description:** Average height, with a lean build. His hair has thinned out a great deal but he takes care to brush it over, concealing the spot as much as possible. He's become addicted to peppermints since he gave up smoking three months ago. Thin-faced and clean shaven, with a morose, bloodhound expression.

**Personal History:** Colm's personal belief in Holocaust denial began fourteen years ago, as part of his hobby of amateur historical research. Over the years it has grown to encompass most of his life. His wife, tiring of his obsessions, divorced him and his two sons no longer communicate with him. His latent paranoia—he believes that Zionist activists are plotting against him—has come about partly as a result of his research. In particular, a bad incident occurred two years ago during a demonstration at a college campus, in the course of which he was dragged away by protesters and beaten. He was rescued by police before anything too serious happened, but the event has left its mental scars. He became determined never to be so helpless again and began studying the art of self-defense.

Werner Linz's intervention in Colin's life has not done the man any mental good. Colm believes that Linz's communication with him must have alerted Zionist agents of Colin's importance, and he bought a gun to defend himself against their sinister plans. ☞

# Message in a Bottle

by Brian M. Sammons

**N**ever before have I had to do an autopsy on a friend of mine; it simply is not done in this line of work. If a close friend or loved one of a coroner dies, it's beyond belief to think that he could do a suitably detached inspection of the deceased. When the tragic did happen, another colleague would agree to do the examination. This was done both out of professional courtesy and with the knowledge that one day he might need you to do the same for him.

This time it was different. I had personally asked to do the autopsy on my long-time friend, John De Rajay. The examinations of his four family members I left to others. As for John, I had to see my friend one last time, to see if I could find an answer to a nagging question. I had known John for more than thirty years and never once would I have believed he could be responsible for the murder of his entire family—and then to mutilate the bodies in such a grisly way . . . it was just not possible.

John was a small, slight man in his early fifties. With his thinning hair, thick glasses, and meek manner you would have thought him to be the town librarian. Actually, John had decided to follow in his family's line of work. That which his father and his father's father had done: the making of beautiful, handcrafted dolls. Dolls of such quality and workmanship that, if properly sold, could have made John a very rich man. More often than not the dolls found themselves within the loving arms of sick children in the county hospital, free of charge. John was not rich by any monetary standards, but was regarded with fondness and respect by everyone in the community. That is, until last night.

The local sheriff had responded to reports of screaming coming from the De Rajay's home. Upon arriving he found

the door ajar . . . and inside, a charnel house. Swallowing his fear and the urge to retch, he drew his gun and proceeded to search the building. It was in the basement that he found John's wife and three children. All four were laid out on makeshift tables and slit up the middle. Their insides had been removed, strewn across the floor, and in their place were wads and bundles of cotton. Then, walking onto the scene from an adjoining room, came John: naked, covered in blood, and holding an axe. The Sheriff said John mumbled something about proving that he was better than his father and rushed in with the axe. It took four slugs from a .357 and John was dead. Which brought him here, to me.

I removed the sheet and looked down at my dear friend of so many years. The answer to my question was not there, at least not on the surface. He looked the same as ever, except for the four bullet wounds to the chest and abdominal region. The color had not even left his face, and it looked like there was a hint of a smile still on his lips. There was a lot of blood on the body, but what was his and what belonged to his late family I could not tell. Of the wounds themselves, they were most interesting. John's wounds were made by a .357, a large-caliber handgun, and should have caused great deal more trauma to the body than what I saw there. By the location of the wounds, I would have to say that the Sheriff was a crack shot even in the worst of circumstances. I noted entrance holes that would have struck John's heart, lungs, and spine. I would have to lift up the corpse later and check the exit wounds to be sure, but still, how could a little man like De Rajay have taken four such devastating wounds before finally collapsing?

Once the preliminary examination was over, it was time to open him up.

With a gleaming scalpel I made the Y-shaped incision into John's thin chest. The blade cut smoothly and effortless through the cold flesh. I noticed no blood escaping from my cut, but chose to chalk it up to the *post-mortem* pooling of blood in the lower areas for the moment. With a set of clamps, I pulled the skin back and away to get a good look at the chest cavity. It was that moment when I dropped my scalpel to the floor. Both hands went to the table to support me . . . otherwise, I'm sure I would have fallen. A dry whisper escaped my lips.

It was the closest I could come to a scream.

Underneath John's skin there were no bones. Instead, there was a complete wooden replica of his rib cage, perfect in every detail. Worst still, beneath the ribs of wood, there were no vital organs—or any organs at all. Where they should have been, there was only straw. ☞



