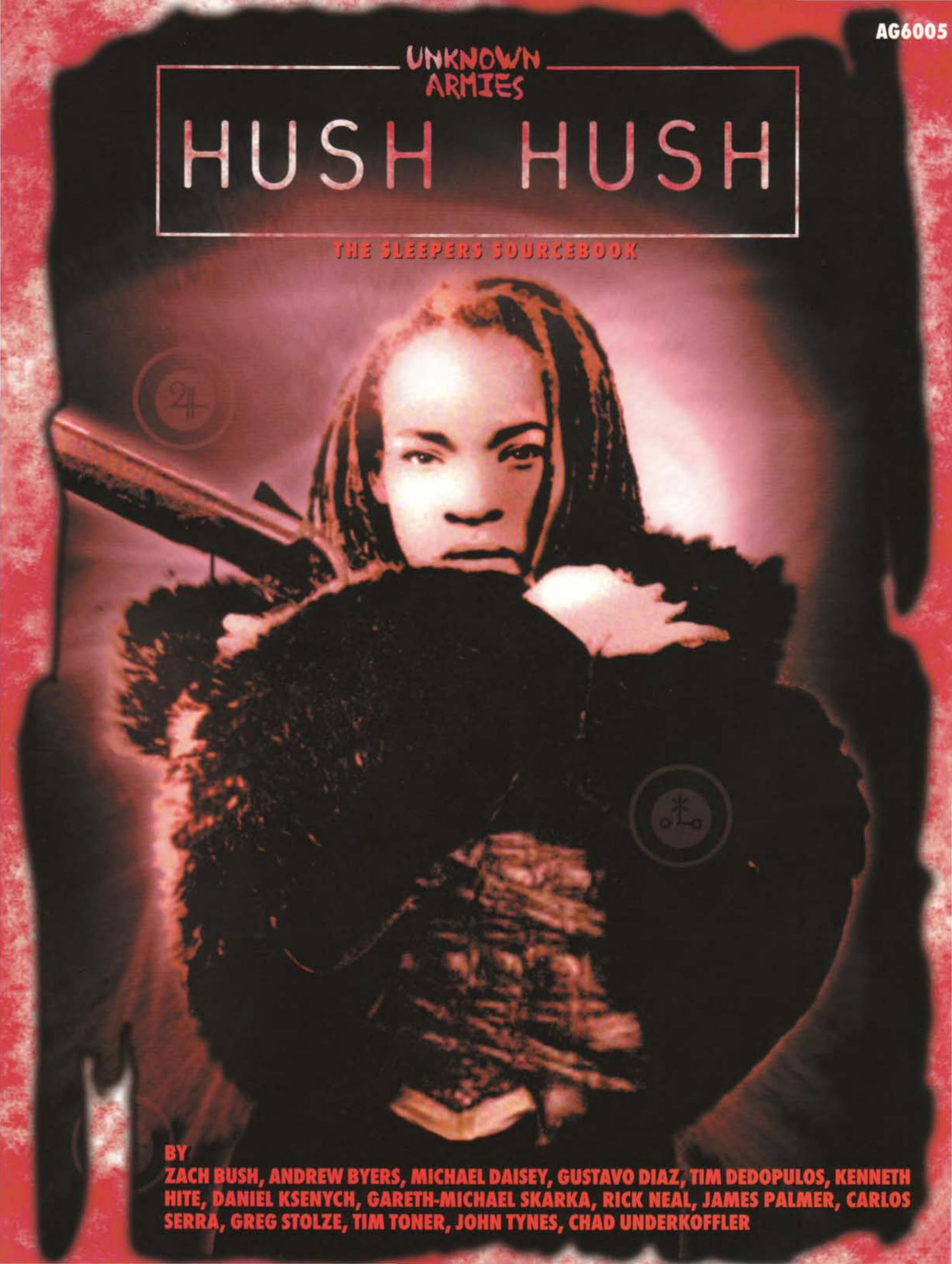


UNKNOWN
ARMIES

HUSH HUSH

THE SLEEPERS SOURCEBOOK



BY
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*Life is a
horizontal fall.*

The Dog in the Night-Time 2

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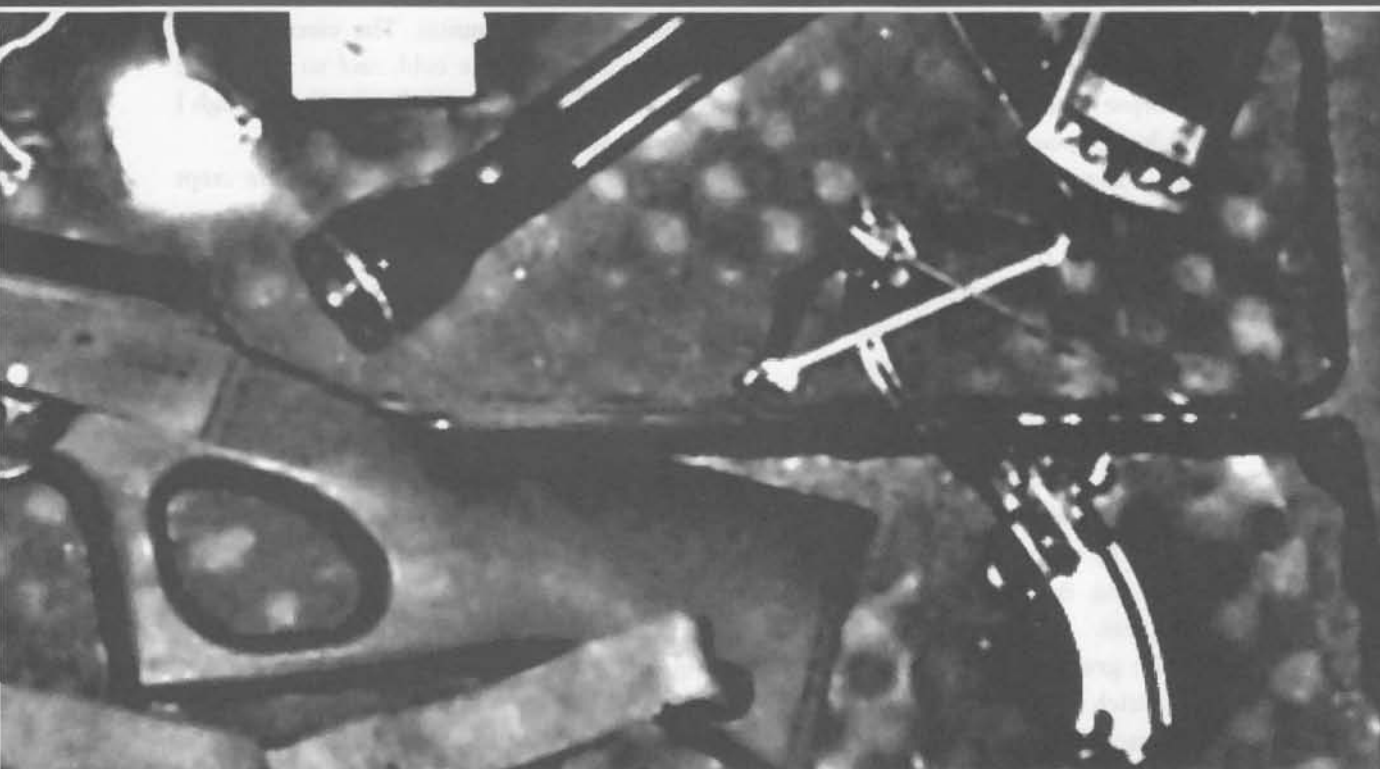
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THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

BY JOHN TYNES

THE HEDGE MAZE here at the Hamilton estate has two options but only one solution. The options are success or escape. The solution is to turn left at every intersection until you reach the center.

My jaws do not move when I speak out loud. This carcass I inhabit has few connections to the matter that contains my essence. Some tendons to tug, a skull to heft. My fur smells rank. The maids leave the room when I enter. Occasionally in summer I am infested by maggots.

I remember the first time I killed someone. I was in a different corpse then, that of a man. A criminal, I am told, hung upon the gallows. One of my first challenges was to make the head sit up straight lest I draw attention to my lord's work. He sent me out into the fields, through the woods, and across the river so that I might strangle a bishop in his nightgown. As I walked through the dark I clenched my fingers again and again, getting used to the sensation. When they found his throat there was no problem of operation. The fingers did as I commanded them, and soon the bishop ceased breathing and his tongue lolled from his mouth. In retrospect I would say that he looked like a dog. But at the time I did not know what a dog was.

I pad through the grass in springtime. Dew collects on my fur. I watch bees.

My lady Antoinette plays a game with me sometimes. She is blind. She tore out her eyes. Now she sees through mine. I go to the summer house at the center of the hedge maze and wait for her, staring at the final intersection. She wanders blind, navigating the maze by memory and touch. Finally, through my eyes, she sees herself reach the center and she smiles. She sits on a chair and I lie on the ground at her feet. Sometimes she reads a book that I lay between my paws. Sometimes she just listens while I recite a book I have read. Occasionally she asks me questions.

"Lucifuge?"

"Yes, my lady."

"What is the greatest marvel you have seen?"

"In 1648, Roger Hamilton commissioned an artisan from Poland to make a clockwork dragon for his daughter. It was the size of a horse and breathed fire on command, though it could not fly."

"Did you ever inhabit it?"

"I did."

"What happened to it?"

"In 1663 Roger Hamilton lost his wife and his mind. He bade me enter the dragon and destroy him with flames, and so I did. His daughter had the dragon dismantled. It appeared to upset her."

"I see."

Winter comes a caution. The carcass of the mastiff can stiffen in the cold, and so I must be careful. I stay indoors and lie by the fire, though I am told the stink is then worse.

Last month there was an intruder. He crept onto the estate by night. I saw him slinking across the grounds. I moved to intercept him. When he saw me approaching, he took a raw steak from his bag and threw it before me.

"Good dog," he said, smiling in a way that I believe signaled malicious intent. I am not the best judge of human emotions and facial expressions, but I have learned a few things in my time.

The steak had no interest for me. I made to sniff it, then looked up at the man. Somewhere within my mind, my lady Antoinette told me to kill him.

When an intruder must be dispatched, I find it helpful to chase him into the hedge maze so that we may transact our business in private, safely screened from the eyes of all but my lady Antoinette. Looking up at him, I saw that he appeared to be still eagerly thinking of the steak and the notion that I would eat it. Perhaps it was poisoned.

"Run," I said. "Run fast or I will catch you and kill you." Of course, I would kill him regardless. But intruders need incentive to employ the discretion of the hedge maze.

The man looked around sharply, trying to place the voice.

"Here, you fool," I said. "Now run."

The intruder stared at me, his mouth opening slowly.

I moved one of my forepaws forward and

growled. "Run." Finally, he did. The look of panic on his face—it made my lady Antoinette laugh.

As the man ran, I followed. I chased him to and fro, guiding him ever towards the hedge maze. The night was cloudy and I do not believe he realized quite where he was going until he was well within the maze. For the better part of ten minutes I hunted him there. I know all the turns and twists, and even the secret ways. My lady Antoinette's excitement was bright inside me, a hunger deep. Somewhere in the manor she was sitting up in bed, her empty eye sockets gazing on nothing. And at the same time she was with me, racing after our prey, playing a different sort of game.

Finally I drove him into the center of the maze, where the summer house sits. He ran wildly up the steps and banged furiously on the door, pleading and screaming for someone to save him. I walked up behind him slowly.

"There is no one in that house," I said. "And you have not run fast enough to escape me. I have caught you."

He started to say something then, but my lady Antoinette shot a bright spark of fury through my flesh. I leapt upon him and brought him down, then tore at his throat until he bled freely and could not breathe.

I killed the bishop five and a half centuries ago. Across my years I have slain four hundred and eighty-three men, including this one. The throat of a man is a tender place, ripe for the exposure of fluid and wind. Again and again, the kill is at the throat.

The following afternoon there is a meeting of the Cabinet. I am in attendance as always. I have been to every meeting since 1956 and I remember them all perfectly. Of course, my lady Antoinette watches the proceedings through my eyes from her bedroom. I know this annoys her brother Charles, but it is an argument he has never won.

I listen to their discussions and commit them to memory, but I do not pay attention. I have not been told to pay attention.

Instead I stare at a crack in the wall. Ants issue from it and meander to and fro. I stare at them because they are intruders, and therefore deserving of

notice, but I have sufficient judgement to know they are not a threat. Nevertheless I stare at the ants for the next two hours. Human voices drone on nearby, within my perception but beyond my concentration.

Finally—"Lucifuge?" It is Gerlinde who addresses me. I look away from the ants and stare at her instead. She is seated in an armchair. Around her are Charles, Wu, and Joao.

"Yes?"

"The matter we are discussing—we are at an impasse. What is your opinion?"

A moment ago I had none. Now I sift through my memories, nearly six centuries of violence and magick and secrets, ever glimpsed through these dead eyes. Something forms that could be called an opinion. Finally I speak.

"In my experience, fleshworkers are the most unstable and vicious of adepts. You have little to gain by trusting this one, and the mere fact that he is conversing with you means he knows too much. Kill him immediately."

Gerlinde smiles and nods. I see Charles frown, and then I hear the laughter of my lady Antoinette across the aether that both divides us and joins us.

I know enough to understand that it is an odd thing for a creature such as I to have these arbitrary powers of life and death. Seventy-six of the men I have killed did not die beneath my slashing jaws. They died because someone asked me a question, and I gave an answer.

One day my lady Antoinette will die. Perhaps it will fall to me to kill her. Perhaps it will be a simple accident. Another lord or lady shall command me, shall order this mass of flesh and bone and fur to take form and thought, shall send me into the night to savage our foes.

It matters not to me. I do as I am told. Killing and living, death and life, all are as one. My existence is a serial of carrion that contains and defines me.

I am Lucifuge, the Hanged Man.

I am Lucifuge, the Empty Child.

I am Lucifuge, the Brass Dragon.

I am Lucifuge, the Black Dog.

I am at your service, master.

Now and forever.

Amen.



harpold

CHAPTER ONE

OUR LIVES

AND TIMES

UNKNOWN ARMIES

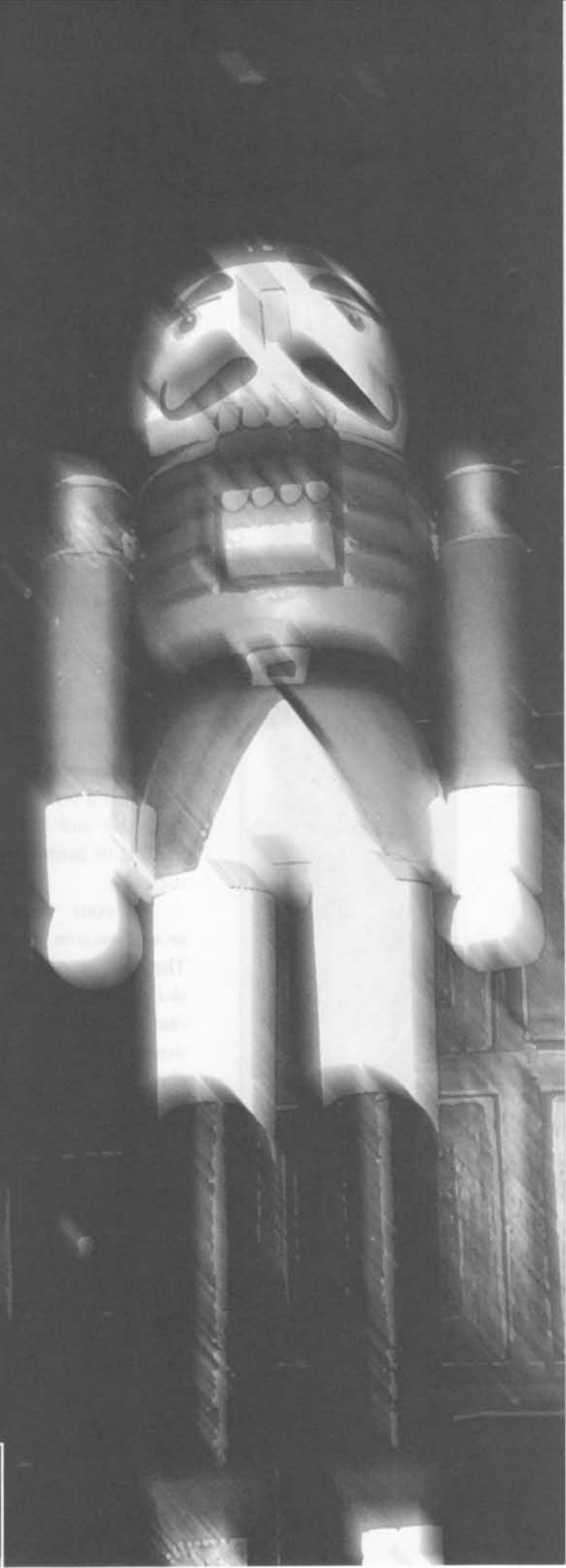


"HUMAN BLUNDERS USUALLY
DO MORE TO SHAPE HISTORY
THAN HUMAN WICKEDNESS."

—A.J.P. TAYLOR

"PEOPLE DO NOT FIGHT
FOR KING AND COUNTRY.
THEY FIGHT FOR THE STORIES
THEY WANT TO BE TOLD."

—WU ZHANHAN



Most people know nothing about the Sleepers.

That's a no-brainer: most people get up in the morning, eat their bran cereal with too much sugar, have a cup of coffee and go to work, day after day, for most of their adult lives without ever encountering a single unnatural person, place or thing. The average woman or man in the "civilized" world spends far more minutes per year thinking "Is this shirt clean enough to wear again?" than he or she spends contemplating the existence of magick. Maybe on Halloween, or right after watching *Angel Heart*, but many days go by in which nothing more magickal than car payments and crabgrass crosses their minds.

Of course, most people know nothing about the Sleepers.

But even those who are In The Know about magick don't know much about the Sleepers. They've heard rumors. They might have met one, but probably not. If they've done something on the border between obtuse and acceptable, they might get a warning. On the other hand, if it's a rainy day and the Sleeper is grouchy or impatient, their introduction might just be a bullet to the neck.

Everyone knows that the Sleepers are around—unseen but felt, invisible but inescapable. They're like gravity, or a bad reputation. They skulk around the cities like urban legends. Everyone seems to know a friend who had an apprentice get kacked by one. Everyone's heard the story about the badass adept in Tampa who used to be able to call a rain of burning sulfur from the sky, and who now can't do anything but whisper, "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry," over and over while he waits for the nurse to change his diapers.

Everybody knows. And yet no one knows enough to name names or sketch a face or give a concrete date.

The greatest irony, perhaps, is how little the Sleepers themselves know.

Who?

Who are the Sleepers? That's a question with a lot of answers. The vague answer is that they're a clued-in cabal of mystics (and their mundane hangers-on) who have decided to police the Occult Underground for abuses that might lead to public exposure of true magick. The arrogant answer is that they're a pack of self-righteous bullies whose vanity drives them to destroy by stealth anyone whose power is greater than their own.

The trusting answer is that they're the heroes of a modern age—the thin unknown army between the occult and the mundane, keeping each safe from the other. The unsatisfying answer is some sort of portentous mishmash of all the above, along with a couple caveats and insinuations for good measure.

The plain answer? The Sleepers are an international group comprised of about seventy people with paranormal powers and another hundred with no such powers. Some of them pursue their

Witness: Hector Samson

I used to be afraid of the New Inquisition. An organization of thugs and adepts with bucks and bullets, right? Tough stuff, friend, not to be trifled with. But I had a run-in with one of their teams a while back, and you know what? They aren't that big a deal. I mean, sure, they're something to worry about. The trick is that you're only gonna run into them if you're both after the same thing. The time they came to town, I was this close to snagging the *Book of Hungry Thoughts* from an estate auction. Just before things got started, a couple enforcers took me aside, explained they were here for the book, and I'd better stay out of the bidding. They needn't have bothered—with their bank account, they had it sewn up anyway. But I did as they asked and kept my trap shut. They got the book, and that was it. No harm, no foul. TNI you can deal with. You can even negotiate. Alex Abel's a businessman, right?

But the Sleepers. They're something else.

I was just minding my own business. I'd found the Ritual of Murderer's Crows, see, and witched up this .45 a buddy of mine used in a stickup that went bad. He stashed it at my pad before the cops picked him up. When the Six Who Dare tried to wack me in the stands at a Bears game, I cut loose with the crow. People freaked and I got away. Nobody even got killed. I skipped town, laid low in Indiana for a few days, and all was well. Then one night I'm in a bowling alley in Gary having a cheese sandwich and I get the sweats, start feeling like somebody's kicking me in the heart or something. This guy in jogging clothes walks over while I'm sitting there freaking out. He sits down and says, gimme the crow. So I pass it under the table. He dumps the bullets out of the magazine so the crow dies, then sticks it in a tote bag. I ask him who the fuck he is but he just puts his finger to his lips and smiles. When he leaves, the pain leaves with him. I just watched him go and tried not to piss myself.

I get back to the motel and there's cops everywhere. Maid found a John Doe corpse in my room with his neck broken. Some punk kid catches my eye across the parking lot and puts his finger to his lips just like his buddy at the bowling alley. I take off for the Greyhound station and buy a ticket home. When I get back, I hear the Six Who Dare are now the Four Who Don't Do Jack Shit And The Two Who Push Up Daisies, and that was that.

The Sleepers didn't give a crap about me or the Six or our feud. There was no agenda at stake, nothing they were after. We just got a little noisy and they slapped us down like we were nothing. I don't even know how many of 'em there were—two for sure, maybe six? Twelve? Who the fuck knows?

That's why I'm afraid of the Sleepers. They came for me and they got me, but good, and I still don't know who the hell they are.

Sleeper duties full time. Others pitch in when they can. Some travel the globe under direct orders from the Cabinet. Others are stationed permanently in magickal “hot spots” like London, Berlin, and Rome.

The Cabinet

“The Cabinet” is the name of the ruling council of the Sleepers. It’s composed of four people—Charles Hamilton, Gerlinde Unger, Joao dos Prazeres, and Wu Zhanhan. The organization of the Cabinet is extremely loose—basically, it’s catch-as-catch-can when problems arise. Major decisions are decided democratically, with the Black Dog breaking ties if necessary. For more on Charles, Gerlinde, Joao, Wu, and the Black Dog, see Chapter 3.

What?

What do the Sleepers do, exactly? Generally, much less than they’re presumed to have done. That’s one of their great and dirty secrets: for ev-

ery Sleeper who actually goes out and leaves a corpse in some loudmouthed adept’s dingy basement, there are two who are making sure word gets around about how dire the dead adept’s fate was. Indeed, the Sleepers engaged in rumor-mongering rarely feel the need to restrict themselves to fact—it’s much less efficient than well-crafted propaganda (or, for that matter, judicious use of the spells Gnostic Gossip and Urban Legend).

But there’s more to the Sleepers than just killing and lying. There’s also research. When there’s less than two hundred of you taking care of a whole planet, it’s necessary to pick targets judiciously.

When?

A lot of things in the Occult Underground are secret, or at best muddled. Stories conflict, witnesses recant, and there are a lot of flat-out lies. Curiously, though, the origin of the Sleepers isn’t like that. Oh, it’s a little short on details, but the basics are pretty consistent no matter who you talk to. Funny how that works.



RICHARD PACE

The Sleepers were founded in the 1600s in England, during the great witch-hunting hysteria that swept through Europe at the time. Even someone as foolish as the great mages of those ages could readily see the threat posed by mobs of ordinary people enraged by fear of magick. Rather than face the mobs directly—a suicidal proposition—the sorcerers of antiquity decided to take the rather simpler tack of eliminating anyone who was casting curses, blighting farms, and generally getting his ya-yas out scaring the neighbors. Subtlety was their safety, and their greatest trick was convincing the masses that they did not exist.

Given their centuries-long history, the Sleepers are one of the world's oldest surviving cabals. Their agenda of subtlety mixed with the occasional smackdown has a lot to do with their unusual longevity.

Where?

If the Sleepers can be said to have a headquarters, it's Gleeson House, the Hamilton estate in Lancashire, England. Individual Sleepers have homes (or hideouts) elsewhere, but since the Cabinet can usually be found at Gleeson House, that's Sleeper central. Of course, no one outside the organization is supposed to know that, and only three people outside the group actually do.

The members of the Council, except for Wu Zhanhan, also maintain homes in their native countries. This means that Berlin (birthplace of Gerlinde Unger) and Lisbon (the current home of Joao dos Prazeres) receive a disproportionate amount of Sleeper attention.

Throughout its history, the Sleeper organization has traditionally focused on Europe. After all, that was the center of world culture, right? All the noteworthy books, philosophies, and poems came from Europe, and therefore only Europe could give birth to a permanent threat to magick. Legendary Sleeper Dugan Forsythe is admired for making the Sleepers relevant to the twentieth century by recognizing the importance of radio and newsreels. He's also credited with recognizing the threat posed by adepts in the United States.

Unfortunately for the Sleepers, they haven't had nearly the success outside Europe that they've had in it. The war in the late 1980s between adepts in L.A. and San Francisco caught them completely by surprise, indicating the sorry state of their contacts in Los Angeles. New York City was a stronghold from the 1950s, when it was the magickal capital of the U.S., until the 1970s. Now it's barely worth the bother. They dismissed the "flyover states" as unimportant, and are now scrambling for a purchase in Chicago to keep the Cult of the Naked Goddess under control. They're still a force to be reckoned with in New Orleans, and Port au Prince (in Haiti) has as many Sleeper agents as any other city in the world. Their grip on South America isn't as strong, since they don't consider South America important; Cabinet member Joao dos Prazeres considers it his personal territory just as much as Portugal is. Santeria and Candomblé worry them somewhat, but they're happy that widespread political unrest and violence tend to taint any reports out of that part of the world. As far as they can tell, Australia is either mystically barren, or the adepts there are extremely subtle. Either way, it's fine with them. Africa is much like South America, only much more so. As for Asia, the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose seem to have matters under control—except for those damn Falun Gong and the students of Enlightened Tai Chi.

Why?

Being a Sleeper may sound glamorous and exciting. But like so many dangerous jobs, if you do the math it turns out to be 99% boredom and 1% absolute terror. The boredom comes from the tedious hours spent reading newspapers, magazines, and Usenet posts looking for the magick needle in the haystack of crap. The terror comes when you sneak into some adept's house to put a pillow over her face and realize that (1) she's not asleep, (2) she's not surprised you're there, and (3) she's not going to listen to your cheap excuses. No one ever says "good job"

or “thank you for saving the town” because if you do a good job, the town never knows it was in danger. You can’t tell anyone, “hey, I’m a Sleeper,” because if you do, most of them won’t know what the hell it means, and most of the few In The Know will want to kick your ass. The tiny minority who admire the Sleepers tend to be kind of creepy, too, like the civilians who hang out in cop bars because they couldn’t make the cut at the police academy. It’s dangerous, it’s aggravating, the pay is nonexistent, the retirement plan sucks, and it doesn’t get you laid.

So the question is, why do it?

As with most questions involving the Sleepers, there’s more than one answer.

True Belief

Some Sleepers truly, deeply, and honestly believe that their job is necessary for the stability of society. Just as the world needs cops, firemen, and nurses, it needs the Sleepers to help the innocent and keep them safe from predators. This is doubly true when the predators can break your heart (or rupture your kidneys) with an effort of will and some decent charges.

The true believers tend to interpret the Sleeper mandate broadly and loosely. For example, suppose one adept is trying to cash in on Jerry Springer and another is gambling with the lives of a bus full of school kids. The true believer is probably going to go hunting the latter—even though the former is a more pressing problem by the strictest interpretation of Sleeper philosophy.

True believers are definitely a minority in the Sleepers, and they’re often the greenest agents. Their purity tends to corrode over the years—if they don’t die fast and fabulous in a blaze of glory. Older Sleepers who are closer to burning out like to have the true believers around; it reminds them of how good life could seem, back when they had the faith.

Blake Winstead (p. 100) is an example of a true believer.

Ulterior Motive

A surprisingly common consideration among the Sleepers is, “what’s in it for *me*?” For all their high-falutin’ talk of justice and safety and their selfless sacrifices for a noble common cause, a fair number of Sleepers are actually making those sacrifices for profoundly personal agendas.

This isn’t to say they’re not behind the Sleepers’ mission. Many are strongly committed, because the Sleepers serve their own goals so well. If you want to use magick to attain immortality, for instance, it’s certainly not out of character to hook up with an outfit willing to keep unnatural longevity out of the limelight. Many of these manipulators are secretive about their real goals, but it’s not a necessity. Being a fairly loosely organized group, the Sleepers as a whole have very few “opinions” on anything (other than the whole “Shut up about yer ‘majik powerz’ already!” agenda). Individual Sleepers may (and assuredly do) hate one another, and the power struggles can be pretty nasty. Nonetheless, as long as you’re toeing the line, keeping magick suppressed, and fighting the good fight, some Sleepers don’t care if you’re a thrill killer, a bank robber, or a compulsive seducer of innocent underage schoolgirls.

Gerlinde Unger (p. 83), a member of the Cabinet, is a fine example of a prominent Sleeper who acts primarily from selfish motives.

Urge to Kill

There are also a few Sleepers who simply live up to the nastiest Sleeper stereotypes. They’re bullies and head cases who love to threaten, torment and eliminate other human beings. The worst of this lot are simply crafty psychopaths who happened to fixate on adepts instead of blonde hookers or waitresses named “Jenny.” There are only two of these really hardcore nuts working for the Sleepers. Only one of them has any actual mystic powers, and he’s an Avatar. Kill-crazy adepts have a bad tendency to indulge in the kind of excesses that the Sleepers exist to prevent (or, failing that, conceal).

Far more common than the real gone neck-slashers are people who have some sadistic and authoritarian tendencies, but who still retain enough moral training to feel the need for an excuse. In more mundane circumstances, these folks would have probably become brutal corrections officers, hardass highway patrolmen, or tract-writing ideologues for some extremist political party.

Joey Dunes (p. 102) is one of the Sleepers' two true-blue nutjobs. An example of the much more common "bullying asshole" type is Hidako Yamasongai (p. 91).

All Mixed Up

Of course, very few people are pure—even when it comes to motivation. The Sleepers who fit tidily into one of the above categories are actually few and far between. Rather, there's a continuum between the three extremes, and the greater part of the group falls in that central space. It's perfectly possible to mix and match motivations—in fact, it's a great idea. It can lead to hours of sleepless-night fun as characters try to figure out if they pegged that guy for the Good of Mankind, or out

of jealousy because he was the one that got the Ritual of Seven Crosses to work.

Urge to Kill + True Believer: A surprisingly potent brew is the zealot who believes his murderous actions are totally necessary for the protection of all humanity. These types really, *really* need to believe that their brutality is prompted solely by righteous outrage at the crimes of their victims. (I mean, targets. Did I say victims?) The deep and abiding pleasure they take in their cruelty is seen as just a side effect.

Urge to Kill + Ulterior Motive: Quite often, the urge to kill *is* the ulterior motive. If, for some reason, a person wanted to settle the score with a powerful adept (or group of them), she could do a lot worse than to hook up with the Sleepers for some advice and backup.

True Believer + Ulterior Motive: These motives can also go together like pie and ice cream. Take, for example, someone who fights long and hard to prevent a tract of virgin timber from being sold to a logging company. This person may have deep ecological beliefs. But those beliefs are only encouraged into action if the person has a house overlooking the timber and knows that his property value will plummet if the nice view gets clear-cut.

Witness: Jane Allyson

I run the Moondawn Bookstore on Elm, a full line of occult/new-age titles plus some jewelry and trinkets. It's a quiet little place, just right for a young entrepreneur and her three cats. My sister Sarah comes in and does tarot on the weekends, I host a book-signing occasionally, just this and that. We get a lot of really cool people in, plus the usual assortment of teenage death-metal geeks and the occasional creep. About a year ago I expanded and added a coffeeshop when the store next door went bust. Now the store is becoming a hangout, and it's kind of nice. I like providing a safe place for people to discuss their beliefs. I know most of my customers by name.

Last month one of them, a guy named Matt, was in a car wreck and died. We held a little wake of sorts, or at least a vigil. His friends came in the day after and talked about him, cried a little, and again I was really happy to make this space of meaning available when it's needed. But then this couple came in, both in their thirties, that I'd never seen before. They walked right up to the group of Matt's friends and said some really nasty things—threats, really, about how Matt's death wasn't an accident and blah blah, real creep weirdo stuff. I told them to get the hell out of my shop but Gretchen, Matt's girlfriend, yelled for me to shut up. She and the others were really pale. The lady looked at me and smiled, then just put her finger to her lips. They left right after.

I haven't seen that couple again, and I hope I never do. Jerks.



How?

There are several stages to every Sleeper action. There are exceptions, of course, but typically it goes in a vague pattern like this.

Notice: The Sleepers hear about (or discover through other means) some sort of mystic brouhaha that threatens to provide concrete evidence of paranormal power to a large number of people. Sometimes they find out about this before the fact, and have the luxury of trying to prevent the “spillage” from happening. More often they hear too late to stop it and have to go in and clean up the mess.

Decision: The Sleepers hear about mystic shit going down all the time. If they decided to go in with wands wiggling every time someone magically learned how to speak ancient Greek or became ten years older overnight, they’d be swamped trying to deal with a tenth of the reports they receive—furthermore, most of the reports they hear are false. It takes some keen judgement to discern the difference between a

real sighting and some typical mass hysteria. Naturally, mistakes get made. (“Giant wolf-headed serpent in Washington state? Yeah, sure.”)

Action: If Sleepers determine that action is merited, they do what they judge to be necessary. If a case is egregious enough to catch the attention of the Cabinet (or, alternately, if it touches on their personal hot buttons) then an order might come down. But generally Sleeper work is undertaken voluntarily. Even those who follow orders do so out of a sense of obligation, not compulsion.

The extent of the action often depends on the “offense.” A first-time violator, or one whose actions were fairly minor (but happened to act up right in front of an antsy Sleeper, or who did the bad deed in Lisbon) may get a stern warning. A more serious infraction may get the offender beaten up or even tortured (either paranormally or through more prosaic means). However, the more powerful an adept or avatar is, the less likely the Sleepers are to go half way. It’s okay to kick around minor pissant dukes and let them live, be-



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cause they go on to tell stories about how omniscient and omnipresent the Sleepers are. (Generally they *want* to believe this—it salves the embarrassment of getting beat on.) But for someone with genuine power, you do not fuck around. You don't give him any warning. You just wait for a moment of weakness, flush him of charges if possible, then arrange a "car wreck," "wild animal attack," or "rare allergic reaction."

Being a Sleeper

Being a Sleeper is somewhat like being a member of the New Inquisition, only without so much moral ambiguity and without a charismatic public figure like Alex Abel in charge. You get or create assignments, do nasty things to nasty people, and keep your ass out of the fire as much as you can. In return, you get to satisfy whatever drive brought you to the Sleepers in the first place, pursue whatever private agendas you may have, and get some material benefits to compensate you for your time and trouble.

Recruitment

There are two kinds of Sleeper recruits: volunteers and targets. Volunteers are people who hear about the Sleepers somehow and ask for a job. That's not easy, since they aren't exactly in the phone book. You can't just spread the rumor that you're interested, since that pretty much blows your potential cover right from the start. Generally, a volunteer spends weeks or months chasing rumors of Sleeper activity, trying to find somebody who might actually be one. Clever or crazy volunteers do something to get the Sleepers' attention, such as committing some sort of public magick act. The clever ones do this in a way that will get a little attention, but will also have a plausible explanation ready to go so that the Sleepers who show up will have an easy time of it and be impressed at the volunteer's resourcefulness. (The crazy ones do something stupid and aren't likely to be recruited in any event.) Targets, on the other hand, are people the Sleepers encounter in the

course of their work who look useful and intelligent. In a given Sleeper operation, there's probably somebody doing something blatant and stupid and somebody else who is affiliated with that person, but not involved in the stupidity directly; guess which one looks more like a recruit.

One way or the other, you end up with a potential recruit and one or more Sleepers having a quiet drink in a bar. The Sleepers ask the recruit a lot of questions about her life and abilities, don't reveal anything useful, and call it a night. They pass the information up to the Cabinet and over the next month, the Cabinet does a battery of background checks on the recruit: criminal record, taxes, education, and some magickal snooping as well. If the recruit checks out and looks good, one of the Sleepers who first interviewed her gets back in touch and arranges for the recruit to take a trip to England. If the recruit doesn't check out, she never hears from the Sleepers again—unless, of course, she does something stupid.

The initial trip is a four-day visit to London. Wu Zhanhan (see p. 88) questions her with several henchmen handy. They pretty much talk about life, the universe, and everything. Wu has a few drinks and reveals some stories from the Sleepers' history, to impress the recruit with the age and power of the organization and to demonstrate some of the reasons why their work is so important. One day is spent just walking around London, with Wu pointing out situations or locations around them and asking the recruit for how she'd deal with hypothetical scenarios. At the end of the trip, Wu says goodbye and no promises are made.

If the recruit still looks good, and has passed various surreptitious magickal examinations conducted by Wu's henchmen in London, a second trip is set up a few months later. (The Sleepers like to stress the value of patience.) This invitation is the first time the recruit has heard from the Sleepers since she got on the plane in London, and it's going to be for two weeks.

Training

Although the Sleepers refer to this two-week trip



as training, it's also evaluation. They set up a battery of tests and scenarios to examine the recruit's abilities, magickal or mundane. Adepts demonstrate their powers, enforcers their marksmanship, and so on. Much of the time is spent giving the recruit an overview of common Sleeper techniques: how to rig a target's car to stage an accident, how to move silently through a house, how to keep cool under fire, and so on. The goal of the brief training is not to produce experts—it's just to give the recruit a taste of these various disciplines and also to foster a sense of professionalism and caution. Many of the scenarios contain unpleasant surprises that end with the "death" of the recruit, and in every area subtlety is urged.

A few nights before the end of the trip, Wu turns up. He says an operation is being launched in London, and the recruit is to come along as an observer only. Of course, it's another training exercise—but the Sleepers pull out the magickal stops to create a situation where everything seems to go wrong, the other Sleepers are seemingly injured or killed, and the recruit is finally faced with a choice: kill or be killed. By the time that happens, the recruit is convinced of the reality of the situation. If the recruit "kills" the target, all is well. If the recruit balks and is "killed," she awakens back at home, alone, and never hears from the Sleepers again.

Successful recruits spend their last couple of days at the Hamilton Estate. They go through a mumbo-jumbo ceremony handed down from the Sleepers' founders involving robes and a slaughtered chicken, meet the Cabinet, and get their heads filled with impressive stories bloody, bold, and resolute. Much of it is nonsense, but it does the job. The goal is for the new recruit to come away just as impressed and even scared by the Sleepers' power as any duke would be, with the mitigating factor that she's now on the inside of this seemingly omnipotent organization.

Rewards

Everyone who joins the Sleepers wins the lottery—literally. The Sleepers operate a small lottery com-

pany based in the Cayman Islands and the new recruit is a winner, although there is no publicity: she gets a flat \$25,000 up front and \$500 a month for life. (That isn't meant to be a full-time salary, just a little sugar on top of the recruit's mundane career earnings. Don't quit your day job.) All of it is legal, taxable income. The \$25,000 is intended for a shopping trip, since the Sleepers require their operatives to have a good, reliable car (used is fine), usually a nondescript four-door sedan. The rest of the after-tax windfall goes to the operative's living space, which needs to be secure. Often this means moving to an apartment or condo in a well-secured building, but it might mean adding a security system to her existing house. The recruit has a year to make these lifestyle adjustments so they don't all happen at once, drawing attention.

Further training is also in order. This is advanced work in James Bond stuff like offensive driving, assassination techniques, and so on. The training isn't extensive enough to produce a James Bond, but it at least gives the new Sleeper an advantage over most of her targets. (Alex Abel has the luxury of hiring trained specialists; the Sleepers don't get to be so picky.) The training is usually conducted one-on-one by a visiting Sleeper in the evenings or weekends, so as to avoid mysterious absences. In countries where this is possible, the recruit receives firearms training, a weapon, and a license for things like concealed-carry of guns. The Sleepers consider their work to be too important for merely talented amateurs, and their long-term view means that all this training is seen as an investment that will pay off in the long run. For the first five years of her career, the Sleeper undergoes a training session about once per quarter, gaining 10 skill points each time. The training sessions are also useful for ongoing evaluation, to make sure the Sleeper isn't flaking out or otherwise becoming unsuitable. Training after five years is more flexible, according to the needs of the operative and her role in the cabal.

A big enticement to join the Sleepers is *magickal* training. The Sleepers have both rituals and experienced adepts, after all, and are one of the

only groups in the world who can teach you true magick and even some avatar paths. Of course, teaching all their agents magick could lead to flare-ups that might wake the tiger, putting the Cabinet in something of a bind. Their solution is to promise magickal training to interested recruits, but not to deliver until they have some dirt on the would-be initiate. In other words, they wait until you've killed someone, then collect the evidence and file it away—so that if you flake out and start working magick on television, they can nail you and fast. Once you've made your bones, so to speak, they'll slowly begin showing you some tricks. Proven agents can get one-on-one training with an adept, instruction in rituals, or a week's vacation with an avatar.

Naturally, the Sleepers don't have *Ye Big Book Of All Magick*. They talk pretty big, but in practical terms their ability to teach a certain type of magick is limited to the knowledge held by their agents. In other words, it's an each-one-teach-one situation. If they don't have any Amoro-

mancer agents, you don't get to learn Amoromancy. In game terms, the magickal training resources of the Sleepers are entirely up to the GM: if you don't like it, they don't teach it.

Organization

Like the occult underground, Sleepers fall into two organizational categories: cabals and dukes. About a dozen of the industrialized world's largest cities have a cabal of three or four Sleepers, including a Cabinet-designated leader. They divvy up responsibilities such as maintaining a safe-house, watching the local media for interesting reports, and collecting rumors from the city's underground. Cabals work together on operations, though not all may be directly involved in the hands-on work of a given situation.

Dukes are lone Sleepers, and they make up the majority of the organization. They may be summoned to work with a cabal or some other dukes, either in their home city or some other lo-

Witness: Margaret Andrews

I knew Eric was bad news from the start but, y'know, I've always kinda dug dangerous guys. Not beat-me-up-and-call-me-a-whore dangerous, but the barroom brawlers, the petty criminals. What can I say? That's what Catholic school gets you. Eric was a satanist. He had a little flock of gothy kids that hung around him, doing blood rituals and dropping acid. I figured it was all an act, but it was a pretty cool act. We hooked up at a nightclub and were together about six months I guess. Eric liked to pretend he had some demon servant. Maybe he was schizo or something, or maybe it was all part of the act. I dunno. He'd announce that "Mordekai" was visiting, then he'd roll his eyes and get this weird look and go into Mordekai-mode. Me and Mordy got it on a few times, and it was some of the best sex Eric and I ever had. Anyway, Eric had this schtick where he'd go Mordy and do tricks. When Mordekai had the reins, Eric could speak in Latin and Greek and talk about old historical stuff like he'd seen it firsthand. He started going Mordy more and more often, even in public, and pretty soon he was doing regular Mordy tricks at the club. Lots of folks came to see him rant and roll his eyes, even some grad students who thought they could pull a Kreskin and expose him by asking tough questions. He fooled 'em all. Then one night I came over to his apartment late after work and heard noises in the bedroom. I walked in, expecting to surprise Eric getting it on with one of his little twists, and found this pudgy guy wearing gloves straddling Eric on the bed. You know what my first thought was, but then the guy takes a glass ashtray from the bedside table and smashes Eric's face in, giggling and sweating the whole time. I screamed or something—hey, I was high—and the guy turns around and looks at me with this big idiot smile. He just puts a finger to his lips like he wanted me to shut up. I turned and got the hell outta there. The cops found Eric's body and I skipped town. Fucking loser.



cation, or they may serve as the local contact and ally for visiting Sleepers. Dukes can be found anywhere, from the largest cities to the smallest towns. Rivalries occur and are generally ignored by the Cabinet as long as they don't interfere with the goals of the organization.

Operations

Although the Cabinet leads the Sleepers, most Sleeper activity is generated from the bottom up. A Sleeper gets word of some local trouble, informs the Cabinet, and takes care of business. If the business in question looks like more than the agent can handle, she can contact the Cabinet and ask for help.

In this regard, the Cabinet functions more like an insurance company than a police department. If you dent your car on a pillar in a parking garage, it's probably not worth calling your claims adjuster; you just fork over a little cash to a body shop and the problem is solved. But when you're in a head-on collision and your car gets totaled,

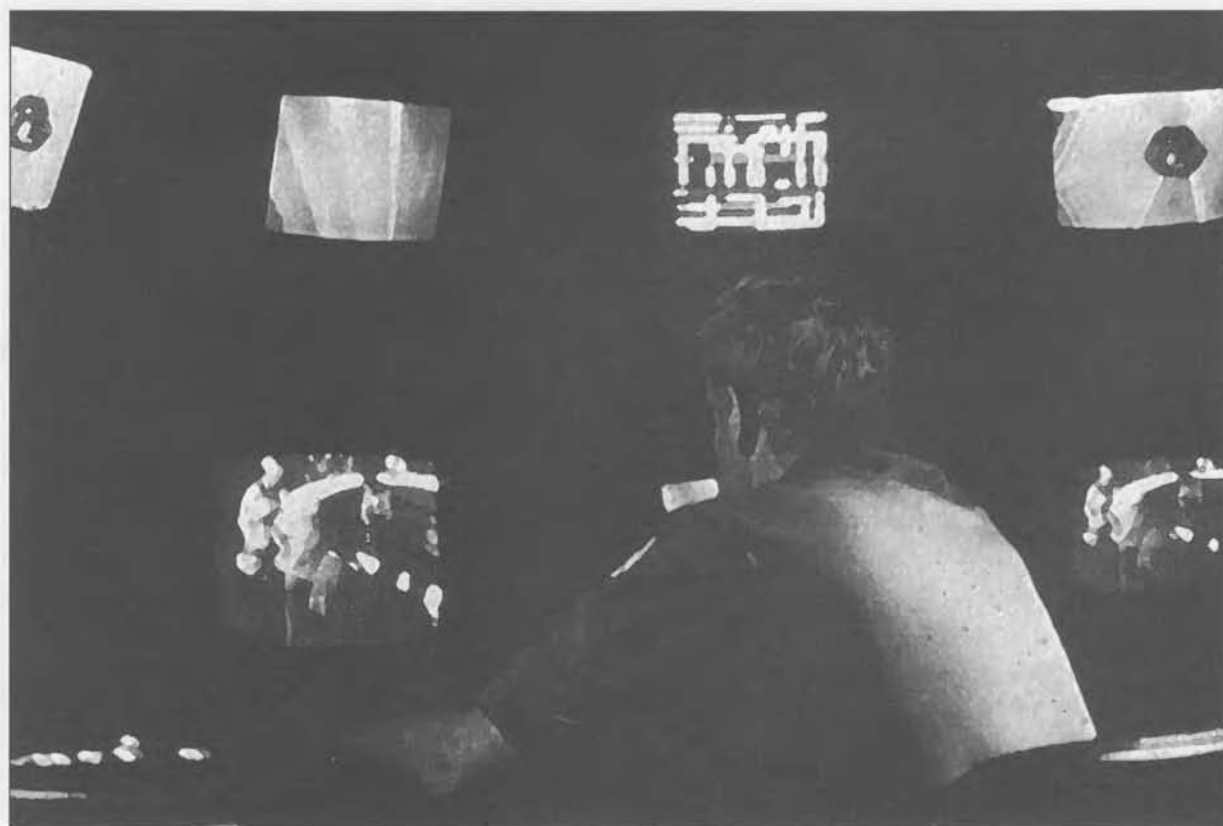
you want your insurance company to be Johnny on the spot.

Sleeper agents have a lot of independence, and they are expected to find and deal with minor trouble on their own. The Cabinet wants to be informed before you get started—so they have something to go on if you turn up dead—but they're not going to break out the fire axes every time there's a little smoke.

The Cabinet *does* organize larger operations, or ops in locations where no Sleeper agents are handy, but even then they just put a team together and send them in. It's up to the team to do the grunt work of research, resolution, and cover-up.

When an operation is launched, each agent is given anywhere from \$0-\$5,000, depending on costs like airplane tickets or car rentals. More money is available on request, but is rarely needed. At the end of an operation, each Sleeper is paid a variable bonus of \$500-\$2000 (the lottery again) and the thanks of a grateful nation—or at least, a grateful cabal.

Miscellaneous equipment and weapons are up to the agents to supply, ranging from surveillance



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cameras to smoke grenades to bulletproof vests. Sleeper training includes brief instruction with a variety of handy items, but if you want to use them yourself you'll have to buy them. Typically, much of the cash they front you (if any) is put towards gear, which you hang on to for the next op. After a half-dozen ops, most agents have amassed a nice little toolbox of equipment (typical Sleeper gear is covered in the next chapter). For unusual or important ops, the Cabinet may send you unusual or important equipment, but the Cabinet prefers to just send you another agent with appropriate experience who already has plenty of gear. Magick items are rarely given out, and must always be returned.

Communication

Sleepers are typically contacted by telephone or by mail. Email is not currently allowed for intercabal communication, though this may change in the next few years.

Direct communication with the members of the Cabinet is very rare. The Cabinet has assistants who serve as contact points and intermediaries, and they maintain phone numbers for incident reports and rapid response.

Retirement

Unlike, say, TNI, Sleeper agents are rarely unceremoniously killed and dumped in ditches for the crows by other members of their "team." One of the advantages of being an all-volunteer organization is that you can bow out at any time. They just ask that you swing by Gleeson House for a "debriefing" that, incidentally, involves wiping your memory clear of any potentially compromising information—which pretty much means you won't remember any members of the Sleepers. Once you're done with that, you're out, good luck, *et cetera*. Don't expect your former buddies to haul your fat out of the fire if you get into occult bullshit on your own time. On the other hand, if you were a standup guy and always paid when it was your turn to buy a round, you just

might get rescued by some mysterious strangers who seem oddly familiar.

The other retirement option is, of course, death. When a Sleeper dies, the organization pays for the funeral—or at least for part of it. Specifically, it pays for your embalming, your coffin, and your tombstone, all of which undergo special preparations.

The tombstone has not one, not two, but *three* separate Entropics bound into it. When placed over your mortal remains, the Entropics become attuned to your life history. Anyone who successfully reads that life history through magick, Avatar channels, ritual, or any other supernatural means gets two overlapping visions of what happened: one that's true, and one that's a plausible but misleading forgery. He also gets an Entropic stuck on him, screwing with his memories and making his life merry hell until he dies or shakes it off. When either of those happens, the Entropic returns to the tombstone. If three people have all pulled Entropics off your tombstone, the fourth adept can get a clear reading, but this is rare. It's also possible to smash the tombstone open and get at the talisman inside. (Possible, but not easy. These tombstones are granite, about one meter on a side.) The talisman is a skull with a demon bound within it. Specifically, it's the ghost of the person who used the skull in life. The skull donors are all people who pissed the Sleepers off in particularly acute or novel ways; their punishment is not only to die, but to be trapped in their skull with three tormenting Entropics. Smash the skull and you can get a clear reading. However, you also get three Entropics on you, not to mention you open yourself to attack by a demon that is, by that point, almost certainly 100% batshit crazy.

Of course, the tombstone can't protect a Sleeper if an adept decides to call back her ghost personally. That's what the embalming process is for. Using ancient (but still perfectly serviceable) canopic rituals from Egypt, Sleeper embalmers remove the brain, heart and other mystic vitals in a fashion that ensures your soul's connection is solely to them—not to the bones or eyes or anything else. When these organs are burned, the



soul is completely severed from its ties to its one-time body. It's quite effective: no one has ever called a Sleeper back from beyond the veil.

As for the coffins? They're booby trapped. The type of trap depends on the year. The oldest ones have curses, but since many adepts expect that kind of thing the Sleepers switched to old, unstable dynamite (ready to explode if handled roughly). There was a brief vogue for poison gas in the 1980s, but these days they're using modified Soviet landmines. They won't explode if you walk over the grave, but once you dig through the first four feet, any further probing is likely to set it off.

Final Notes

Although the preceding sections may give the appearance of the Sleepers as a massive group with limitless resources, this is far from the truth—although the Cabinet certainly does everything it can to create this impression, to the extent of directly lying to operatives about the group's abilities. The reality of being a Sleeper is that you're unlikely to work on more than a couple of operations a year, though the bigger Sleeper cabals are exceptions. The substantial amount of support and resources available is simply not called upon all that often, since it's rare for more than one or two operations to be underway simultaneously—which is good for the Sleepers, because if that support and resources were stretched thin the group couldn't handle the demands of such a situation.

As important as the Sleepers' regular work is, their most important agenda is simply to create a network of dedicated operatives with the training to do the job. Should the proverbial shit hit the fan, and a major situation erupt, the Cabinet wants to ensure that they can call on plenty of reliable people. They are willing to invest heavily in the training and abilities of their operatives so that, in the long term, the group can keep the tiger safely asleep.

The Occult Underground

The Sleepers do their best to keep tabs on the occult underground, always looking for people or situations that could awaken the sleeping tiger (see UA, p. 111). The following sections explore what the Sleepers know about various aspects of the underground, as well as what they might do about them if push comes to shove—or what they've already done.

Dirk Allen

Dirk Allen spends a lot of his time searching for the ever-elusive Big Juice—some potable concoction that's spent enough years stewing in historical narrative, mystic rumor, and pure, potent human. He wants to find it, drink it, and open the universe like a drunk cracking an egg into a dubious hangover cure.

It's not likely he'll succeed. Mystic beverages of sufficient potency are rare, and very seldom does a Dipsomancer get a *second* shot at one.

Dirk Allen got his first major charge way back in 1966, when he was young enough to be handsome and dynamic, but old enough to be seasoned and, frankly, very damn dangerous. Back then he wasn't looking for a new liver and hoping for another decade. He was looking for The Truth.

The Sleepers had already crossed paths with Allen once, back in 1957. At that time they weren't crazy about this ballsy young duke running around and getting into trouble, crashing the occult party scene in Chicago with a pack of lies and some deadly flying billiard balls, publicly turning invisible while drinking from a hollowed-out skull, and—worst of all—shooting his mouth off *all the time*.

The local Sleepers for 1957 Chicago were Lucky Pierre and the Sweet Boys, who tracked Allen back down to New Orleans. They got there just in time for a three-way fight between Allen, the freshly double-crossed mentor who'd sent him to Chicago in the first place, and a Brazilian cult that had been seeking him for years.

Initially, the Sleepers figured they'd let Allen's teacher, Dr. Ugly Mouth, take him to school for

the final lesson, but the Brazilians weren't going to let anyone else have the pleasure of killing their quarry. Dr. Ug barely escaped with his own life, and one of the Sweet Boys wound up looking not-so-sweet any more. But the Sleepers got Allen. They sobered him up and were ready to hand him over to the Brazilians on a silver platter when they made one big fat mistake.

They let him talk.

At first Allen didn't sound all that persuasive. Lucky Pierre had, in his time, heard a lot of men beg, and after Sweet Sweeny got disfigured he wasn't in a merciful mood. But Allen pointed out that he'd described the Brazilians very accurately in his first book and that if they killed him (no doubt in their own idiosyncratic and ritualized fashion) his writings would look a lot less like a novel and a lot more like the thin fictionalizations they actually were. Letting him get killed would only make people take his work *more* seriously.

So Lucky Pierre broke Allen's left hand and stole his money and fixed it so his cock wouldn't get hard for a year—then got him away from the

cult and fixed *their* hash. That was Dirk's first warning.

By 1966 Lucky Pierre was dead, the Brazilians having gotten the last laugh before Dirk tricked them into a suicide showdown with a gang of corrupt cops in Mexico City. Dirk was on the trail of something in Florida that purported to be the source of Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth quest, though the actual effects of the fountain's discharge were far more complicated. The Freak was involved, a Dipsomantic cult called the Fellows of the Bottle were involved, some big hairy biker-type named Dion was involved, and the Sleepers got involved, too—just to make it a party.

Short version: big clusterfuck. Dirk got everyone fighting everyone else, grabbed the liquid, drank it, and used his major charge for a glimpse of the cosmos's true nature. As he was putting the final touches on a "novel" based on his new understanding, Angela Forsythe, Charles Hamilton, and a third Sleeper walked into his London flat to have an exceptionally frank discussion, ending with an agreement.



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The Sleepers got the manuscript of 333, Dirk got his memories shredded, and agreed to make such an incredible ass of himself on his scheduled BBC appearance that no one would ever take him seriously again.

In return, Charles put his gun away unfired.

That, then, is the real explanation for the footage of an utterly drunk Dirk on the BBC, promising to prove the reality of magick once and for all, but instead providing only the spectacle of himself throwing up behind the host's desk.

Dirk doesn't remember the fountain, doesn't remember talking with Charles and Angela, and doesn't remember writing 333. Thanks to his lifestyle, he's not even particularly suspicious about a three-week blackout. The third agent and her electrodes show up in his nightmares sometimes, but that's all.

Consigned to the fringe for the last three decades, Dirk Allen doesn't worry the Sleepers much these days. They know his powers and they respect them, but they aren't losing any sleep over him at present.

The Sect of the Naked Goddess

In 1998, the Sect of the Naked Goddess had about forty members, mostly in Chicago. By the beginning of the year 2000, that number had doubled—and that's not even counting the dead.

The subtle magick and comparatively small size of the Sect kept it off the Sleepers' radar for a while. In fact, it was TNI's bitter interest that revealed the Naked Goddess cult to the Sleepers (that's one more strike against the New Inquisition if the Sect ever finds out). Once they learned about the Naked Goddess tape, however, they quickly realized the threat it posed and took steps to acquire it. Unfortunately (for them) some other thief had beaten them to the punch. The original tape's whereabouts are unknown.

Determined not to be outmaneuvered again, the Sleepers were on the set of *Nights Templar*, a porn video financed by TNI and designed to be a metaphysical "magick bullet" against the cult, from the beginning. It was completed recently and they stole the original tapes, but still haven't



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figured out precisely what (if anything) it does.

The Sleepers would be pleased as punch if the New Inquisition would liquefy the Sect, hopefully getting mauled badly enough in the process that the Sleepers could readily finish it off. A recent confrontation in Chicago (over a pillow, of all things) has had a serious impact on their plans, but there hasn't been an open conflict—yet.* The counter-impulse comes from their desire to keep the truth about magick concealed. An open shooting war between two of the more powerful occult elements isn't the way to meet that goal.

So, while they try to get TNI to strike slowly but thoroughly, the Sleepers have also moved to put the Sect in check. They've done this with a pair of infiltrators (Erica Jones and Vikram Ramrakhiani, neither of whom is an adept or avatar) and by compromising Andrea Deutsch (see UA, p. 189).

Andrea got a Polaroid in the mail in the fall of 1999. It was her mom, leaving her house and going to work, with a crosshairs drawn around her head. The picture faded ten minutes after Andrea looked at it.

Frantic, Andrea called and was reassured that nothing was wrong, no one was "lurking," everything was normal. She succeeded in alarming her mom, but a perfunctory police investigation turned up absolutely nothing.

The next photo was her dad, in the shower, oblivious to the photographer. Again, there was a crosshairs drawn on it and it faded soon after she first saw it. After that one she went home and did her own investigation, but still—nothing.

The third photo was taken at extreme close range and it showed Andrea hugging her mom when she arrived to check up on her. Andrea knows—*knows*—that no one else was in the house. She would have seen a stranger. But there's the

*This refers to the scenario "Exhausted" in *Lawyers, Guns, and Money*. If you've run it and it *did* end up sparking a mystic war between TNI and the Pornomancers, assume that the Sleepers are busy trying to keep the fight as quiet as possible—and as evenly matched. After all, if TNI simply rolls over the cult then they're much less weakened than if they beat the cult after a long, protracted struggle. If you haven't run it but plan to, assume this text refers to the *status quo* after you're done.

picture, and this time the crosshairs are on her. Until the picture faded like the rest.

All the pictures were mailed from the town of Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. Typed on the outside of each envelope was the phrase, "Broadcast Pornography is Bad."

Mak Attax

There are, at best, a couple hundred occultists worldwide who know about both the Sleepers and Mak Attax without belonging to either. Their general consensus is that a hard, Sleepy rain is going to fall on Mak Attax—and probably soon.

They are not correct. The Sleepers' beef with Mak Attax isn't sufficient for a single fast-food burger, even with soy filler. Sure, the Macks claim they want to reveal magick to the world, which nominally puts them on the Sleeper hit list. But the organization itself is so counterproductive that the Sleepers feel no need to do anything but provide an occasional nudge in this direction or that. That's all that's required to keep Mak Attax chasing its own tail.

Consider the following. Membership is fairly open, which means the signal-to-noise ratio of their discussions is already dismally low. Almost every Sleeper with a computer is on their mailing list through dummy Hotmail accounts. This not only lets them muddy the waters with plausible-but-fraudulent posts, it also gives them access to the one forum where real occult showoffs are most likely to boast and brag. It's not a perfect system, but a couple times posts on the Mak Attax open list have led the Sleepers straight to the door of a culprit.

The private inner-circle mailing list is a lot harder to penetrate, but they've got one guy in. His name is Hannibal Prepajchal. It's not perfect, since he had to get his knowledge of being a Sleeper erased to pass the Macks' admission test, but that part of his identity has been kept in an enchanted brain coral. Whenever his roommate touches him with the coral, Hannibal "wakes up" and makes a report to Wu Zhanhan about Mak Attax's plans. So far Mak Attax has been very circumspect about

their operations, like the quietly notorious “Safe and Happy New Year” program (see “Two Thousand Zero Zero” in *Postmodern Magick*), and the Sleepers have seen no reason to trounce them. They are, however, getting a mundane operative ready to meet Derek Jackson and become his girlfriend. If Mak Attax takes a hardline turn, they’ll be ready to chop it off at the neck.

As for Mak Attax’s policy of slipping charges on unsuspecting people . . . well, the Cabinet was uneasy at first, but there didn’t seem to be a good way to stop Mak Attax without creating more disruption than they’d prevent. Besides, the oozing burger charges don’t provide widespread *proof*. Sure, individuals have freaky things happen to them. But so what? Near as the Sleepers can tell—mainly from the investigations of their sociologist ally, Dr. Glenda Hayes—people who get charges dropped on them are more likely to confabulate some kind of rational explanation than they are to accept the mystic truth. The Sleepers are all in favor of teaching people how to lie to themselves about magick.

The Freak

Like Dirk Allen, the Freak has also made something of a personal bargain with the Sleepers. It has agreed to keep its head down and its activities subtle—on occasion, it has even agreed to give new faces to their operatives or (rarely) to help them with someone particularly dangerous. In return, the Sleepers have agreed that the Freak can generally pursue whatever ends it wants, provided it uses nice, deniable means.

That’s the deal the Freak made with the Sleeper organization—the same sort of non-aggression pact it has with TNI, basically. Its personal deal with Gerlinde Unger (who was the point of contact between the Sleepers and the Freak) has a few more details. The Freak has agreed not to rip Gerlinde’s arm off—Marta Schlichter had to make do with a hook after 1969—or otherwise harm her. Gerlinde has agreed that the Freak is the Hermaphrodite Godwalker, absolutely, no doubt, without question, without challenge, until the end

of the world, amen. She’s not that happy about the bargain, of course, but her agenda doesn’t yet include ascendance to the Clergy.

The New Inquisition

The Sleepers consider the New Inquisition a far greater threat than Mak Attax. Mak Attax is a gaggle of poorly-motivated ding-dongs who would *like* to provoke a magical renaissance—but not at the cost of getting killed or, indeed, missing this week’s episode of *Buffy*.

TNI, on the other hand, consists of two sorts of people. Some are going to be killed or tossed in the hoosegow if they don’t do exactly what Alex Able says. The others are moral burnouts with in-demand skills who are in it for the money—and who also know that they will be killed or tossed for disobedience. Both types are strongly motivated.

The ugly fact, however, is that while the Sleepers outnumber TNI, the New Inquisition can outgun and (more importantly) outspend them. If the Sleepers concentrated on TNI and Alex Abel, they could probably bring the whole thing crashing down—but not quickly, not easily, not quietly, and not without letting a host of smaller problems get much, much bigger.

A direct confrontation is out of the question. The Sleepers have therefore adopted a policy along the lines of “If you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em, bring their point of view in line with your own, and *then* decide if you want to lick ‘em.”

To accomplish this, they have assigned groups to focus on individual TNI squads. This is expensive and hazardous, and they can’t keep it up for long, but squads that seem to carry out their business with a minimum of flash, fuss, and viable witnesses are soon abandoned for more dangerous prey. Those who make public problems are dispatched as gruesomely and painfully as possible. Those on the borderline are threatened, with references made to the aforementioned gruesome and painful dispatches. In this fashion, they hope to form a Skinner Box around TNI that will extinguish undesired behaviors and promote more-subtle methods.

Their aces in the hole, of course, are their agents within TNI itself. Dutch Teague, a non-magickal scumbag from Sydney, has recently been recruited by the Seattle TNI office, though like Hannibal Prepaichal he's had some memories hidden. Yeardeley Jones, an Amoromancer and Two-Faced Woman avatar, has been making a big splash in their operations on the East Coast. But the most important asset the Sleepers have applied to the TNI problem is Kaiyo Atsui (see *Lawyers, Guns & Money*, p. 65).

Kaiyo has been a Sleeper for years, even studying under Gladys Geyer. (Geyer was the psychologist who worked over Dirk Allen in 1966, making sure that even if Angela Forsythe's magickal memory erasure was reversed, the mundane agony and humiliation associated with those memories would ensure either traumatic amnesia or catatonia.) While Atsui's skill at ravaging memories and creating indecision is nowhere near the level of her mentor, she has still given a great number of TNI agents psychological burdens when it comes to getting caught using magick. Those she deems irrevoc-

able showoffs are given subtle hangups designed to make them hesitate in lethal situations.

The Order of Saint Cecil

Two organized, secretive, profoundly dedicated organizations interested in positioning themselves between the unaware and the magickally capable. It would seem like a match made in Heaven, right? Or at least Vatican City.

The key difference, however, is that one group persecutes renegade mystics for the same reasons gangsters kack stoolies: it spoils the party for everyone else. The other group persecutes blatant sorcery because they want to scour it from the face of God's green Earth and kick it back to the Hell that spawned it.

So what you actually have are two groups that act like people in a sick romance. They despise one another but they keep winding up tangled in the sheets because it's so damn good.

Make no mistake: the Catholic Church has everything the Sleepers lack. Money? Got it. Per-



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sonnel? Out the wazoo. Political influence? Heck yeah. Information from the squares? Hell, who do you think people call when something obviously magickal goes down? (Those guys in *The Exorcist* weren't Methodists, buddy.) The Sleepers, on the other hand, have got an inside track on the Occult Underground that the Order hasn't been able to establish despite decades—make that *centuries*—of trying. The Order isn't even aware that TNI is behind Alex Abel's "Christabel Society," and probably won't be until the Sleepers decide to tip the balance of power. Add that to an ability to cope with magick that you really only get from practicing it, and you get an awfully tempting ally from the Order's point of view as well.

So the two of them team up when they come across something they can't handle separately. In between, though, the Sleepers try to hide subtle magick from the priests, while the priests continue their "seek and destroy" policy.

The Sleepers pride themselves on their subtlety and deviousness, but it should be noted that

until 1970, they had four major strongholds in Europe. On November 19th of that year, their safe-house in Rome was emptied out in the course of one night. Nine Sleepers inside were silently killed, their books burned, their amulets smashed, and their bodies buried in nameless graves—with full Catholic burials. It's quite possible that their killers said the funeral masses.

The Sleepers have tried to corrupt or co-opt members of the Order, but they have not yet succeeded in luring a priest to their side. They have, however, had more success with the non-ordained support staff the Order employs. It is heavily compromised, with Sleeper agents either getting information from them or actually working for the Order in Spain, Argentina, Israel, and in the U.S. state of Florida.

On the other hand, the Cabinet has uncovered at least two major leaks to the Order from within their own structure in just the last decade, and there's strong evidence that more are in place. The question of who is the tool of whom is still very much open to debate.



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New York

The Sleepers themselves are divided on the matter of New York City. Some consider it their greatest success. Others regard it as a cautionary example illustrating exactly what *not* to do.

Most agree that something had to be done in the early 1950s. A lot of soldiers got seriously shell-shocked in World War II, and some of their minds cracked in just the right way to let in magickal knowledge. Organized crime, having experienced a growth spurt during Prohibition, was consolidating its gains—and providing a safe haven for several violent adepts. Add to the mix a large number of European immigrants, some of whom had brought knowledge of everything from Clockwork to Kabbalah with them, and the situation became very volatile very quickly.

Several spectacularly grim Sleeper assassinations in the summer of 1954 created a brief period of quiet in which other Sleeper specialists went to work. During this lull, Cliomancers and other character assassins drove a wedge between the Mafia families and their adept associates—in one case, driving a desperate adept to curse her onetime patron with a spell that made his bones grow until they split his skin. It didn't save her, and only disinclined other mobsters from similar alliances.

While the criminal underground was turning on the occult underground, the Sleepers blanketed the city with thaumophages (see p. 50), making it dicey for an adept to even charge up. The result was that, over the next two decades, many adepts left the city for more hospitable regions. Since a large part of the problem was simply the concentration of too many adepts in one area, incidents of "documented magick" declined sharply.

Unfortunately for New York (or, in sober consideration, maybe not), the exodus was so thorough that the NYC occult community seemed to drop beneath a certain level needed for stability. There are still real occultists—any city that big has a few—but there aren't enough to create a dynamic and exciting "scene." Even today, the Mafia families consider any practicing adept to be a tar-

get, to be swiftly eliminated before he or she becomes a threat.

Los Angeles

Los Angeles, California, used to be a fairly hot and sticky spot to practice magick in the United States. All of America's desires, overt and hidden, idealized and desecrated, seem to slouch to Los Angeles to be born as movies and TV shows—or to be aborted into missed opportunities and broken promises.

An area of such looming cultural consciousness draws mystics of all stripes, of course, but in the late 1980s there were four major groups in the L.A. occult underground. There were the Sternos, a group of Annihilomancers, busily trying to tear down everything they could get their hands on and rejoicing their way through a decade of mudslides, fires, earthquakes, and riots. An Irascimancer cult, the Fellowship of Bad Traffic, didn't have quite as fine a time as the Sternos, but they did find it quite handy when highway shootings entered the mass consciousness. The largest occult-oriented group in the area was and still is the Church of Death Triumphant, a Satanic deathcult that's well-organized, has lots of money, a brilliant leader called Mordecai Thanatos (not his real name), and no paranormal powers whatsoever. Of course, that doesn't mean that the Fellowship of Bad Traffic didn't draw back a bloody stump when they crossed the Satanists, proving once again that (1) magick doesn't fix every problem, any more than violence does and (2) you can't beat a prick at a pissing contest.

Sitting on top of the two clued-in cabals was a secretive third order—old moneyed Rosicrucians, if you can believe it—who knew a bit about Authentic Thaumaturgy (see p. 82) and ritual and who were interested in doing more. Specifically, they had created (or re-discovered) Tilts (see *Statosphere*, p. 40) and thought they were on the trail of creating their own rituals. They believed (or hoped) that the old-school magi in San Francisco could help them out, but when they were snootily rebuffed they decided to take what they



couldn't bargain for. Between co-opting L.A.'s reasonable occultists and manipulating the unreasonable ones, they got the Fellowship of Bad Traffic and the Sternos to target San Francisco, migrate up there *en masse*, and kick the shit out of the occult underground there in the course of one week in 1994. Under cover of this massacre, the Rosicrucians kidnapped San Francisco's leading occult scholar and ransacked his library.

It didn't have the effect they wanted. They still can't write their own rituals, and that's too bad because the stink their patsies caused has gotten a whole lot of Sleeper attention. The Sleepers haven't tracked it back to the Rosicrucians yet, but if they do the suffering will be legendary.

In the meantime, L.A. has become rather quiet. The Church of Death Triumphant is the dominant force in the local underground, and they aren't proving magick real because they *can't*.

Sleeper Caesar Costello (see *Statosphere*, p. 94) showed up in L.A. after the fireworks in 1994, and he's been working hard to keep the scene quiet—be it through persuasion or with recourse to his powers as an Agent of Renunciation. He's made a few day trips to San Francisco, but the Sleepers seem to want more blunt action there—and Caesar rarely does things bluntly anymore.

San Francisco

For a while, it seemed like San Francisco was an occult Utopia. The occult underground there was very large, but it didn't have the hard-edged competition so common to the "mystic scene" in New Orleans or Jerusalem or Tokyo. People there were actually *tolerant*. Everyone did their own thing, by and large, and got along doing it. Sure, there were conflicts. But when they occurred, the general response was to isolate the combatants and scold or disdain them for their childishness. (This is a stark contrast with most other cities, where the general reaction is to choose sides and try to screw as much as possible without getting screwed yourself.)

There was no formal leader, of course, but everyone respected the Comte de Saint-Germain,

and his mediation kept a lot of little incidents from collecting into big problems. A respected occult researcher, publisher, and formal practitioner, the Comte organized the San Francisco magi, even if he didn't rule them in name.

In 1994 it all came crashing down. Two "magick mafias" from Los Angeles suddenly took it into their heads to invade San Francisco, kill Saint-Germain, plunder his library, and waste anybody who got in their way—or who simply didn't get out of their way fast enough.

The very things that had made San Francisco so strong—its openness, its forgiveness, its lack of central authority—made it weak against an outside attack. Saint-Germain was burned alive in his own home. Bronwyn Glendower and her coven managed to take down a surprising number of Sternos before she was overcome. (Specifically, she transformed them into a lovely grove of trees. When the real Saint-Germain stopped by San Francisco in 1996, he bought the land with the grove on it, cut them all down, and made them into some truly lovely musical instruments that have peculiar properties when played in concert.) The weirdo known as **The Fruit**, as he had always promised, ran away as soon as danger was apparent. He didn't stop running until he'd reached Des Moines. Christine Rosencroix was killed, **Bick the Slick** was killed, and even **The Sharpener** barely escaped with his life. It was a massacre.

Now the Sternos and the Fellowship of Bad Traffic have settled into the city on the bay, but they aren't exactly comfortable. Their numbers are depleted, and even though they got rid of the most powerful adepts there are still a few San Fran sorcerers lurking around with little power but long memories. Most importantly, without a common enemy the two groups have begun struggling with one another. (After all, Irascimancy and Annihilomancy don't exactly encourage friendly and pleasant lifestyles.)

The Sleepers have been encouraging this schism as much as they can, which is quite a bit, even to the extent of sending in Angela Forsythe to breed bad memories between the two groups. Since San Fran's resident Cliomancers got killed

or driven out, Angela has had the Golden Gate bridge and Alcatraz all to herself, and she's been busy indeed. It hasn't taken many memory tweaks to get major Sternos chucked in jail for arson—and in jail, with few personal possessions to destroy, the Annihilomancers are defenseless against prisoners who suddenly remember the Sternos stealing their smokes and making fun of their racial heritage. As for the Bad Traffickers, one of their number has been compromised. (She should have cut all ties with her daughters—the Sternos could have told her that.) She's giving the Sleepers the names and locations of her fellow cultists, and she's using the spell Zero Tolerance to empty them out right before the hits come. She's been told that once the Fellowship falls apart, her daughters will recover from the mysterious exhaustion that's been so scary and expensive.

The Midwest Chaos Connection

No one's sure if that scary old WWII vet is honest or full of crap when he claims he "invented" En-

tropomancy, and honestly not all that many people care. Most occultists say it's here, it's queer (in the old-fashioned sense of the word), so get used to it.

Sherm Cheslow isn't most occultists. A Sleeper living in Gary, Indiana, one of his hobbies is tracking the provenance of Entropomancers, who seem slightly more common in the American Midwest than they do elsewhere. Sherm attributes this to one woman: **Big Betsy Ficarro**.

He hasn't managed to find out who taught chaos magick to Big Betsy, but he has verified that she had no fewer than *four* apprentices. That's not an impressive number by itself, but all of them—Stealin' Dan McKay, Uriel Sterne (now a member of TNI's Weather Channelers), Fred Mundy, and the infamous Carlos LaDuke (arguably the source of the slang term "duke" for an adept)—could *actually do it*. Many other adepts have gathered huge gangs of acolytes, all trying to master this -mancy or that -urgy, with few succeeding. Big Betsy may not have been a great sorceress—her record isn't that thrilling—but she was



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apparently the best teacher the occult underground had seen since Dugan Forsythe himself. And she did it without memory implantation.

Sherm doesn't know if Carlos or Uriel ever trained anyone, but Stealin' Dan was successful in illuminating two trainees of his own, Neil Brinker and Harvey Duopulous (leader of Mak Attax). As for Fred Mundy, he taught his wife Kate and tried (unsuccessfully) to educate his son Leslie. (Neil

and Stealin' Dan appear in "Roll Your Bones" in *Lawyers, Guns, and Money*.)

Big Betsy is probably dead—if she's alive she's in her nineties, and Entropomancers aren't known for longevity—but Sherm is disturbed that he can't find out how she passed on. The thought that she's still around, a potential source for more of the notoriously flamboyant bodybags, is not a comfortable one for Sherm or his fellow Sleepers.



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The Tiger Wakes

So what's the big deal?

A lot of adepts don't even acknowledge that the Sleepers exist, or figure that if they do they're a bunch of misguided grammaws with their baggy old-woman panties in a twist over a problem that is not (on closer inspection) a problem at all. Who's afraid of a bunch of mundanes?

It's not all that surprising. If you're an epideromancer, you can walk right by your "Ten Most

Wanted" poster with a new face. Oneiromancers can just put any inconvenient witnesses to sleep before doing their dirty deeds. High-powered Demagogue avatars don't even need to worry about surviving witnesses—they'll think whatever she tells them to think. So what's the BFD? Compared to Alex Abel's gunslinging nutjobs and Naked Goddess priestesses who can yank your chain until the only thought you've got left is "Yes ma'am," the average ignorant schmoe seems like the least of a young adept's worries.

Individually, that's quite correct. Individual clueless, non-avatar, magick-free occult virgins are (all other things equal) less of a headache than someone In The Know.

Thing is, though, those normal folks have a kind of synergistic quality, and it gets underestimated. Adepts do unconscious math that says "1 normal = 0 problem, therefore 1000 normals = (1000 x 0) problem = still 0 problem." But it just doesn't work that way.

In 1992, an L.A. jury acquitted four police officers who had been videotaped beating the royal crap out of a suspect named Rodney King. (That wasn't the official charge, of course.) Many people of color were upset. In the course of displaying their displeasure, 58 people died, over 2,000 people were injured and more than a thousand buildings in L.A. basin were destroyed. The riots did over a billion dollars worth of damage.

Why did the rioters do it? Surely it wasn't an overwhelming surprise to them that the court system favors white cops over black suspects. They weren't astonished. They were just mad as hell.

People find out some bad facts they already really knew, and thousands go apeshit in an orgy of violence and destruction. That was 1992.

Now imagine instead that they'd learned something that's not just shocking and scary, but completely unexpected. Suppose the people of L.A. saw the Naked Goddess tape and realized that there's an ex-porn star with her hand on reality's DELETE key. Suppose they saw an epidemancer shifting faces and realized she could take the form of their wife, daughter, or mother. Suppose they learned that there are people out there who can break their will as easily as they break the cellophane on a pack of smokes.

It would make 1992 look like a love-in.

It would look like Germany in the 1550s.

Riots

If someone in the occult underground gets sloppy, a lot of so-called "normal people" may show off an ugly side that few—including the rioters themselves—even suspect they possess.

When an obviously paranormal event occurs with a hundred or more witnesses, there is a good chance that things will go out of control. As a GM, here's how you can model that.

The Riot Roll

If a hundred people are gathered in close quarters and see an undeniably supernatural event or individual, there's a flat 50% chance that they riot. The GM simply rolls to see the effect. This is called the "riot roll."

Riot Roll Results

- 1-25: Things are eerily calm as most of the witnesses just stand staring, dumbstruck.
- 26-50: Any witness who doesn't have at least one Hard notch in the Unnatural gauge stampedes away from the scene at top speed. Add the dice rolled together: that's how many people get seriously hurt in the confusion. (See "Casualties," nearby.)
- 51+: Hope your health insurance is paid up. See *How Bad Is It?*, below.

Riot Roll Modifiers

That's assuming a fairly static set of circumstances, of course. There are many, *many* factors that can adjust those odds one way or the other. What follows is just a list of basics; other factors can adjust the roll up or down as the GM sees fit. For each of the factors that applies, the GM adds or subtracts from the riot roll.

The crowd's been drinking a lot: Add or subtract 10-20, depending on the type of display.

It's a big crowd: Add 10 for every additional fifty people above a hundred.

It's a hostile crowd: Add 10-30, depending. 10 for a crowd that didn't like the speech the adept was making before he demonstrated his powers. 30 for a bunch of Pentecostal Christians who think the End Is Nigh.

It's close quarters: If the crowd is jammed together, they're more likely to panic. Add 10.

The unnatural effect hurt someone: Add 30.



The unnatural effect hurt someone, and it was a child: Add 50.

The crowd is exhausted: Subtract 10.

It's a receptive crowd: Subtract 10. A fast-thinking character with a bull horn who makes a speech pleading for understanding (or better yet, offering a faintly plausible explanation) could reduce the roll by 10 with a success, by 15 with a matched success, and by 20 with an OACOWA.

The unnatural effect was beautiful: Subtract 10.

The unnatural effect was beneficial to someone: Subtract 10.

Riot Casualties

Any time you get mob rule, people get hurt and/or killed. When you combine those categories together, you get the number of "casualties." The difference between dying in the riots and simply being badly hurt depends (as do so many things) on how developed your area is. If you're rioting in an industrialized nation with a good health care infrastructure (Canada, for instance) one casualty in fifty dies. In a less developed nation, the odds get much worse. In a riot in Haiti, say, one person in ten does not survive. In a desperately poor developing nation, or an area that's war-torn, the proportion could be as high as one in two.

Riot Severity

If an actual no-shit riot result comes up (51+ on the riot roll), the GM needs to gauge how bad it is. This isn't too hard: it's all based on the roll.

The result of the modified riot roll indicates how many people in the crowd are *seriously* freaked out by what's happening. The others in the crowd are disturbed and upset, to be sure, but the riot roll basically shows how many have blown a stress check. That's the hard core who are incapable of rational thought. They're screaming. They're pushing. They're grabbing rocks and smashing windows. What they are not doing is listening to rational persuasion. Nor are they letting anyone else listen. Someone with a bullhorn or a really epic set of pipes might be able to communi-

cate two syllables ("Get him!" or "That way!" or the like) to the crowd, but no Demagogue channels or Charm rolls are going to do jack. If they didn't stop the initial riot roll, they aren't going to work now.

About a quarter of these hard core rioters become casualties, as described earlier. Property damage varies widely, depending on how nice the area where the riot occurs, but \$100,000 for each point in the modified roll is a good start. For each million dollars of damage, a building gets reduced to rubble and ash.

Any major character (PC or GMC) in the crowd takes damage equal to the sum of the modified riot roll. (That is, if it all added up to a 71, the character takes 8 points of damage.) This is usually in the form of bruises, scratches, and knocks on the head. This damage is taken every fifteen minutes for the first hour that the character is in the mob. After that, the crowd has dispersed enough that less damage is being done to unintended targets.

Players should, of course, be describing how their characters are dealing with this abuse. Players who think of inventive strategies, or characters who behave in a rational and plausible fashion, can get out quicker than those who just duck and cover. Dodge rolls can be made for characters who are only protecting themselves. Just dodging automatically halves this random damage, while successful Dodge rolls reduce it to 1-2 points.

Anyone who is identified in the mob mind as being "one of them"—someone associated with or responsible for the paranormal event—takes damage equal to the modified roll every ten minutes. In the above example, that would be 71 points. (What will your next character be like? More subtle, perhaps?) This damage can be reduced with the Dodge skill: a successful roll halves the damage, but there's no way to avoid it entirely.

(Incidentally, it's perfectly possible to get tarred with the "one of them" brush even if you were trying to *stop* the manifestation. Remember, a mob is *at least* as stupid as the dumbest person in it.)

Determining how long a riot lasts depends (surprise, surprise) on the riot roll. It lasts at least a

number of minutes equal to the modified roll. However, riots tend to develop a life of their own: at the end of the time span, the GM rolls again, this time without any modifiers. If the number rolled is half the previous riot roll or less, the riot continues, with this second roll as the new riot roll. This is bad because it means that people are still getting hurt and there's still civil disorder, but it does mean that riots wind down eventually.

A Real-Life Example

There's no good way to know how many people actually saw the Rodney King verdict live on TV

in 1992 Los Angeles. (Well, the local stations may have the figures, if they weren't lost in the riots or the subsequent earthquakes, fires, and mudslides.) Even if we had the figures, there's no way to tell how many of the viewers were pissed off enough to actually start smashing things. However, we do know that about five thousand people were arrested, and that the riot lasted six days. Assuming the '92 LAPD was efficient at throwing black people in jail (certainly they were enthusiastic), it looks like a hypothetical modified riot roll result for the L.A. riots would be something around the 8,700 mark. Doing the math backwards—assuming a base crowd of 100 and +10 to the roll for every

What Happens When The Tiger Wakes

- 186 BC. Rome. Senate reacts to rumors of magick use and cannibalism by Dionysian cults; executes at least 7,000 Bacchantes.
- 1307. Paris, France. Knights Templar arrested and executed for alleged sorcery and heresy.
- 1513. Geneva, Switzerland. 500 accused witches burnt.
- 1586 Trier, Germany. 120 accused witches burnt for prolonging the winter.
- 1621. Heidelberg, Germany and Paris, France. Suspected "Rosicrucians" stoned by mobs; philosopher René Descartes narrowly escapes mob justice in 1623.
- 1628. London, England. Accused sorcerer John Lambe stoned to death by a mob.
- 1645. Chelmsford, England. 19 accused witches hanged by self-appointed "Witch-Finder General" Matthew Hopkins.
- 1651. Niesse, Silesia. 42 accused witches burnt alive in an oven.
- 1666 Westminster, England. Astrologer William Lilly questioned by Parliament for predicting the Fire of London; narrowly escapes execution.
- 1680. Paris, France. 37 executed and 146 imprisoned after a three-year investigation by the Paris secret police into Black Masses and witchcraft covens reaching into Versailles itself.
- 1692. Salem Village, Massachusetts. 19 accused witches hung.
- 1727. Serbia. Accused vampires murdered throughout the country; similar "vampire panics" strike Istria, Slovenia, Hungary, and East Prussia.
- 1844. Carthage, Illinois. Mormonism founder and angelic contactee Joseph Smith lynched by angry mob.
- 1941. Berlin, Germany. Hitler orders all astrologers, Freemasons, and other occultists into the camps, fearing astrological influence on Hess' defection.
- 1945. Warwickshire, England. Alleged witch Charles Walton killed.
- 1948. St. Andre-de-Briouse, France. Alleged witch Leon Bunot killed by a fearful neighbor.
- 1949. Quito, Ecuador. Five people are burned alive in a radio station after a War of the Worlds hoax is broadcast; 11 others badly injured.
- 1991. Chicago, Illinois. Romanian secret police murder leading scholar of magick Ioan Culianu.
- 1998 Java, Indonesia. Over 200 people lynched as suspected "ninja sorcerers" by angry mobs.



fifty additional members—would indicate that about 43–44,000 angry inner-city residents were eagerly waiting to see what the jury would say.

The lesson in this for adepts is obvious. Don't strut your stuff in front of an audience of 44,000.

A Hypothetical UA Example

Let's suppose the group 101001101 (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 152) decides to go for broke by holding a very large rave. They invite a hundred sophisticates, knowing that for each of their chosen artiste-types, another five loose enders will show up looking for drugs, good dancing, a quickie, or a night on the town. That makes for a crowd of about 600 people, 500 of whom aren't prepared for a genuine magickal onslaught.

The leaders of 101001101 aren't fools, so they wait until the crowd has thinned out a bit before unveiling the *real* deal. We'll say those 500 psychic virgins have dwindled to 350. It's late, so the potential rioters are exhausted. They're also receptive to what's going to happen, both because of

the warm-up stuff and because their brains have been getting heavy-bag work from booze and dope all night. Finally, the climactic display is a thing of beauty, rather than a thing of terror. Adding it up, you get a balance.

Pro-Riot Factors

Big crowd
([100 base +250] +50)

Anti-Riot Factors

They're exhausted -10
They're drunk -20
They're receptive -10
It's a beautiful display -10

Thus, the GM rolls and gets a 46, which isn't modified. The club kids freak out and stampede for the exits. Ten of them (4+6) are badly injured in the process, but none of the leaders of the group get hurt. Neither do any invited guests who keep their wits about them. However, 101001101 may want to consider keeping their fetes a little more contained. If they can reduce the number of mystically ignorant scenesters from 350 to 200, they get a -30 modifier on the riot roll—in this case, that 46 would have been a 16, the kids



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would have just stared awestruck, and the next day they'd marvel at how great the Ecstasy was last night.

Another Hypothetical UA Example

Let's suppose a duke takes a cue from Simon Diulio (see *One Shots*, "Fly to Heaven") and performs some kind of child-murdering public ritual. By whatever means, he gets into the middle of a stadium before a college football game with his victim and his cult of twenty followers. Before he can be stopped, he performs the sacrifice and blows a couple major charges, causing a fifty-foot tall oak tree to spring into being from the dead child's body.

This, then, is undeniable proof that magick is real, performed in front of a crowd of two thousand witnesses.

Pro-Riot Factors

Big crowd
($[100 \text{ base} + 1900] + 380$)
They're hostile +10
Bastard hurt a child +50

Anti-Riot Factors

Surely you jest.

The GM rolls a nice low 09, but it doesn't matter because the riot number is modified by 440, giving us a Roaring Tiger of a 449 result. The duke and his cult don't have a freakin' prayer unless they can get out of there before the crowd converges on them from all sides. Furthermore, PCs in the crowd are going to take 17 points of damage from being mauled around ($4+4+9$) four times in the first hour. Around a hundred and ten people are badly hurt in the rioting, two of whom die—probably trampled or mis-identified as cultists. The riot lasts for at least seven hours as the maddened fans burn the tree, wreck the stadium, fight the police, or storm out looking for more cultists. In this time, they do \$44,900,000 worth of damage to area homes, businesses, public areas, and private property. Forty-four buildings are completely destroyed.

At the end of that time, the riot is automatically going to continue because the GM is defi-

nately going to roll under 224 (half the old riot number). This time the GM rolls an 88, meaning that 88 people are either still seriously bugshit, or have been swept up into the mass hysteria. That core keeps the general disorder going. PCs who haven't gotten out in the last seven hours are going to take 16 points of damage (at this point probably courtesy of smoke inhalation or rubber bullets from the National Guard). Cultists who weren't present for the initial butchery, but who have been found in the meantime, are going to take 88 points of mob justice damage every ten minutes until they're safely torn limb from limb. The riot's lifespan extends for another hour and a half, doing an additional \$8,800,000 worth of damage as the fires spread to eight more buildings. The GM rolls again and this time gets a 56—higher than 44 (again, half the old riot number) and enough to restore civil order.

What Would You Do?

Riots are seriously scary. Panicked hysteria tends to be highly contagious. (To explain it through game terms, about a third of the people who fail sanity checks become violent. This causes other people witnessing or experiencing their violence to make sanity checks on the Violence or Helplessness meters. Some of these witnesses fail their checks, and a third of *those* failures become violent in response. Lather, rinse, repeat.) Your PCs may choose a wide variety of options for escape or survival. Some of the more common choices are examined here.

Run Away. This is pretty smart, if you do it in a controlled fashion instead of a stampede. Even if you blow a Sanity check and flee in panic, it's not *too* bad. Of course, a lot of other people are going to be trying the same thing. (This is one reason riots rapidly expand from ground zero.) Characters who are just trying to get away and who haven't been fingered as "One of Them" take the normal damage as they run. Every ten minutes they can make a Run or General Athletics roll. Once they've got five successful rolls completed, they're outside the riot-stricken area.



Of course, this raises a question: I'm with my buddy, I make my Run roll but he fails his. What happens? The answer is, you can either forfeit your success and stay back with him, or keep it and get separated. Simple, huh?

Go With the Flow. Forty million Elvis fans can't be wrong, right? By extending that logic, it seems reasonable to say that most of the rioters are probably going to come out all right. Those who just give in to the mob mentality (including those who fail madness checks of their own and opt for frenzy) take the standard damage for the first hour. They may also get into personal combat with the cops, when they show up. Run that as a normal combat.

Turtle. The dumbest thing you can do is to cover your head and curl up on the ground. That's a recipe for getting trampled to death. However, if you can find a hiding place, you might be able to ride out the worst of it. It all depends on how secure your bolt-hole is. Remember that riots produce tremendous amounts of property damage. That nice secure broom closet isn't going to protect you much if the building gets burned down.

Kick Some Ass. Hey, it's anarchy, why not just start beating on people? Characters who do this do not take the normal damage. Instead, they enter into combat with the crowd itself. This starts out as a one-on-one fight with some average rioting Joe—assume Body 40, Speed 40 (F), Struggle 15%, Throw 15%, armed with a 2x4 or a piece of rubble. Once Joe has taken 20 points of damage, he's out of it—either running away or trampled underfoot. However, two other guys have seen their friend Joe getting hurt and have decided to thrash the PC for it. If the PCs whoops ass on these two (and they have the same stats and skills as Joe, also running away after 20 points of damage), three more show up to settle his hash. This progression continues until (1) the PC quits fighting and does something else or (2) the PC has personally knocked down a number of average guys equal to the riot number. When that happens, the riot starts to wind down.

Use Magick to Save Myself. Smooth move if it works. But if it's something obvious, the crowd

is going to peg the adept character as "One of Them" and the serious abuse begins.

Zoloff For Everyone

Being in a riot causes rank-4 stress checks in both Violence and Helplessness every hour. Of course, there's also the initial Unnatural stress check caused by witnessing whatever it was that woke the tiger in the first place.

The Secret History of the Sleepers

If someone was to get access to the library at Gleeson House, that person might find a few books on the history of the Sleepers. It's not very likely, since the kind of person who gets into that library at all probably doesn't have a burning desire for books with "history" and "edification" and "memoirs" in the titles. Most adepts these days make a beeline for title words like "power" or "unhallowed" or "grate mysterie."

But supposing someone did go down there looking for *An History of the Most Devout Brotherhood of Sleepers* or *Edifying Lessons of Great Sleepers Past* or even *Memoirs of Dugan Forsythe*: they're there, they're available, and they're at least as coherent and well written as *Spear of Destiny* or *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.

However, if this person was very sharp, she might notice certain discrepancies. Nothing jarring, nothing major, just little slip-ups and contradictions between history as presented and history as recorded by the rest of the world.

As it happens, Antoinette Hamilton (p. 98) has both read the books and noticed the discrepancies. There are anachronisms in the histories—individually, they can be chalked up to shoddy memory, exaggeration, translation errors, or any of the other factors that make historical research so thrill-packed. But collectively they seem a little harder to ignore.

Antoinette has concluded that the Sleepers of days past were truly the mightiest and most subtle of sorcerers, whose will was so powerful that they have warped—slightly, but significantly—the accepted version of many historical events.

It has not crossed her mind, even briefly, that those errors are perfectly consistent with a fictionalized account.

But that is what the known history of the Sleepers from the 1600s to today really is—completely false. It's all lies, and the only member of the modern Cabinet who knows it is Wu Zhanhan. In reality, the Sleepers have only existed since the end of World War II.

According to the official history, the Sleepers were founded at the height of the European witch-hunting hysteria. There are some stirring stories in there. There's the one about the bold British Sleepers who saved the Empire from Zulu witch doctors. There's a whole cycle about the swashbuckling Sleepers who kept the Conquistadors from bringing the *real* story of El Dorado back to Europe. Not to mention the yarns about the gunslinging Sleepers of the Old West who broke the paranormal resistance of the natives during the Trail of Tears.

Crap, crap, and more crap. The imperial expansion of Europeans in Africa, Australia, and the

Americas took place blithely unaware of the paranormal abilities of indigenous people. Did they have magick? Sure. It just didn't do a damn bit of good against trains, guns, and smallpox.

In truth, the Sleepers were never officially founded, but they came into existence between the two World Wars. The honorary title of "founder" falls on a man with two names. His mother called him Xue Li Chan, but to Dugan Forsythe and the cabal that would unwittingly become the Sleepers, he went by the name Hubert Lee.

Hubert was born in southwest China in 1859, right about the time the Opium Wars were getting settled once and for all. His father was a British officer named Glen Widdoes, and his mother, Mai Li Chan, was a Chinese housekeeper who caught Glen's eye. It certainly wasn't a rape, but it wasn't exactly a love match either. Glen was horny, and he'd heard the kinds of rumors that always seem to spring up about the cunning bedroom wiles of "native women" (regardless of the country they're native to). For her part, Mai just knew which way the winds of war were blowing.



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Glen was embarrassed by his unintended fecundity, and even more embarrassed when the "half-breed" grew up looking enough like Daddy to pass for white. Lucky for Glen, the burgeoning opium trade made it very easy for a British officer to make money, and lots of it. Mai was bought off comfortably, and Xue/Hubert's position at the crossroads of European and Chinese culture made him valuable to both sides. Lots of people had uses for a bright young Chinese man who could pass for European and was fluent in several languages. Eventually, he caught the eyes of the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose.

The nutshell history of the Brotherhood goes something like this. Some of the people who were smart enough to pass the Sui dynasty bureaucratic exams were also smart enough to learn magick. They did so, and used their occult powers to cement their temporal power. Today, there's no way of knowing how many ancient Mandarins were sorcerers as well. The Brotherhood claims that it was a lot of them. Then again, the Brotherhood's record of honesty is spotty at best.

Anyhow, while European occultists were living in dirt huts, avoiding priests, and hoping to get hired as court alchemists, their Chinese counterparts were quietly running the world's greatest empire. Or at least, they were involved in running it. The most diligent historians of the Brotherhood suspect that most of their ancient members considered the conspiracy a convenient forum to identify and screw with other sorcerous governors. But in any event, they never had to put up with the kind of widespread panic and mob action that characterized medieval witchcraft in the west.

Being sorcerers, the Brotherhood mandarins figured the only thing they had to worry about was other sorcerers, so they were completely blindsided by the mundane onslaught of the round-eyed barbarians. They fought back as best they could, both politically and mystically, but they just wound up learning something most European adepts could have told them: magick is all very well and good, but it's a poor tool to use against thousands.



RICHARD PAGE

Gwailo invaders were bad enough, but skulking in the shadows were scummy adepts from every crowded, polluted nation west of Asia Minor, all eager to plumb the secrets of the Orient. The opium wars are the parts that made it into the history books. What few recorded was the brutal magickal infighting that went on underneath.

The Brotherhood, being many and united, generally did quite well on the mystic battlefield, even as China's military suffered defeat after humiliating defeat. Bolstered by their covert successes, the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose decided the solution to China's woes lay in combining magick might with military force.

The result was the Boxer Rebellion of 1899, and it's still a sore point with the Brotherhood today.

The Boxer Rebellion was pretty much their last, best chance of beating back the foreigners, and it was a big, sorry flop. The remaining Brothers started bunkering. Sure, the foreign devils had stolen or ruined everything else—but China was at least going to keep its *magickal* secrets.

So the Brotherhood skulked around the edges of China's government-in-decline, identifying foreign adepts and alternately lying to them, driving them crazy (or often, simply crazier), scaring them away, or butchering them like pigs.

While that was going on, Dugan Forsythe was growing up the son of modest wealth and privilege in Merrie Olde England. Born in 1865, he traveled east and was one of those "occultic seekers" that got chased out of China by things that gave him recurrent nightmares for the rest of his life. Still, his experiences in China, disappointing as they were, did have genuine mystic elements. That got him in with Europe's occult renaissance, which was blossoming at just about that time. Starting with the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875, interest in Spiritualism and the supernatural made it across the pond and fell on fertile soil at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dugan Forsythe was right there in the middle of it. Sure, he wasn't an adept (yet), but neither was W.B. Yeats, and neither were most of the other members of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* and the Order of the Silver Star. The jury is still out on

Aleister Crowley, but Forsythe definitely knew him. There were also tentative ties between Forsythe, Crowley, and the mysterious British Cryptomancers, but (as with so many things in the history of the crypts) no one knows for sure.

Forsythe was a lifelong student of the occult, but it didn't do him much good until 1915. He'd just gotten back from the beginnings of the Great War in time to watch his second wife give birth to his only child—a daughter, Angela.

Something clicked in Dugan Forsythe's brain. Some conjunction of all the old-school magick crap he'd fruitlessly studied for years, something about watching the bloody birth of ugly history in France, something about the tiny, personal miracle of his daughter's birth in England . . . somehow it all fused into an epiphany.

1915, then, was the birth of Cliomancy.

The records of Forsythe's actions in the First World War are fragmentary. All that's known for sure is that he came out of it richer, younger, and stronger than he went in. By the time his daughter was twenty-two, they were the premier Cliomancers on the planet, but hardly the only ones. Forsythe's old Theosophical/OTO/Silver Star contacts were rusty, but still good for a few seekers. He also found followers among the veterans of the recent conflict: men accustomed to killing and willing to do just about anything to blunt the edges of their wartime memories.

So it was that in 1938 Dugan Forsythe, his daughter, and his cabal of twenty adepts and hangers-on set out on a journey to the east. His followers were looking for truth, enlightenment, and possibly even lost Atlantis itself. As for Forsythe, he was looking for major charges.

The Brotherhood noticed him eventually, but their reaction was neither as swift nor as overwhelming as it would have been before 1937. You see, the Brotherhood was headquartered in Nanking, and the Japanese were busy brutalizing the city the whole time Forsythe was in China. Perhaps if they'd caught him earlier in his career they could have killed him or at least stopped him. But by the time they realized that they were facing a true archmage, Forsythe had entered Jerusalem



looking fifty years old and came out looking younger than his daughter. It seemed like Dugan could craft major magicks with the ease of rubbing a rabbit's foot. He'd also set his sights on the biggest Cliomantic prize yet: the Forbidden City.

The Brotherhood made several limited attacks and were utterly confounded each time. Eventually, they changed strategies. Instead of a direct assault, they sent in their best infiltrator: 78-year-old Xue Li Chan, alias Hubert Lee.

Xue/Huey didn't look 78. He didn't look a day older than forty, and came across as dangerously charming and knowledgeable—particularly to Angela Forsythe.

Angela introduced Huey to Dugan, and Huey helped Dugan and his cult bunker down between the Asian and European fronts of World War II. He also introduced Dugan to a few of the more expendable secrets of the Statosphere. Specifically, Huey told him that it existed and that channeling Avatars was one route to power. Despite all his experience and research, Dugan had never heard of such a thing—but it made a lot of sense when he compared it to his experiences with the Crypts . . .

Having bought Dugan's trust by demonstrating his own powers as a Mystic Hermaphrodite, Huey proceeded to learn Cliomancy from its founder. He also started banging his teacher's daughter, but that's neither here nor there.

Dugan was slowly pushing east, despite the world turmoil, and gaining more and more power. Xue's reports to the Brotherhood only alarmed them further, but there seemed to be little they could do to stop him.

Early in 1945, Dugan asked his knowledgeable friend Huey if there was any way he could gain access to the seat of Imperial power for the oldest nation known at the time. Huey frowned, wrinkled his brow, and said it would be difficult. He would go on ahead and see if arrangements could be made.

The first arrangement Huey made, of course, was to drain the Forbidden City's major charge himself.

The second was to bind in a thaumophage (see p. 50).

Thus, when Dugan Forsythe attempted to reap what he thought might be the biggest charge of them all, he found himself suddenly stripped of his power. That was when his apprentice turned on him and cast a spell on both the Forsythes and their followers.

The spell made each of them remember, distinctly and vividly, their induction into that most secret of secret societies, that most sacred of trusts, that most noble of organizations: the Sleepers.

After that spell, the Brotherhood counterattacked. With Dugan drained, their main target was Angela, who suffered terrible torments by their will. Dugan on his own might have stayed to fight, but seeing his daughter in pain was too much. The Cliomancers decamped and returned to England.

(At least, many of them did. A few who were morally unprepared for the Sleeper lifestyle snuck off to seek major Cliomantic charges of their own, and to found their own cults and secret societies. Ironically, some of those organizations became the first targets of the Sleepers.)

Huey/Xue went with them openly, his deception unrevealed. Covertly, about a dozen Brothers of Harmonious Repose came along too. Their mission: fabricate evidence that the great Sleeper organization had really existed—and that it had been destroyed while Dugan was out of the country.

The twelve Brothers did a bang-up job of building, aging, and destroying the "secret hide-out" of the "venerable Sleepers." They did such a great job, in fact, that Dugan and the loyalists among his adepts were stricken with terrible guilt that this tragedy had occurred while they were selfishly traveling in the Orient. They immediately set out to rebuild and recruit new Sleepers. Their success astonished Huey and the twelve Brothers, and caused a great deal of relieved amusement to the main body of Brothers back in Nanking.

The falsely resurgent Sleepers spread rapidly through England and got started in the rest of Europe during the chaos following the Second World War. They were cut off from some of their foreign offices when the Berlin Wall went up, and

in fact the German branch of the Sleepers launched covert hostilities against the founding branch for much of the early Cold War. They weren't brought back into the fold until 1966, when their leader, Marta Schlichter, had an extreme change of heart after beating a young adept named Theresa Falcotti in a magickal duel. By the 1970s, the Sleepers had members in every country in Europe and the Americas, and were a force to be reckoned with worldwide.

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose had dwindled to only fifteen members.

What happened? World War II happened. The Rape of Nanking happened. While those left the Brotherhood weakened, it was rebuilding its strength when the People's Republic of China happened. The important thing that *didn't* happen was that unlike the European adepts, who'd been living with a healthy dose of paranoia since the Inquisition, the Brotherhood had been keeping secret out of cunning, not out of fear. Their self-confidence blinded them to the mundane perils posed by Japan, and when that didn't teach them their lesson the Communists nearly finished them off.

Thus, in the year 2000 the Sleepers are about sixty years old but have a fictional history stretching back centuries. Most of the people who know

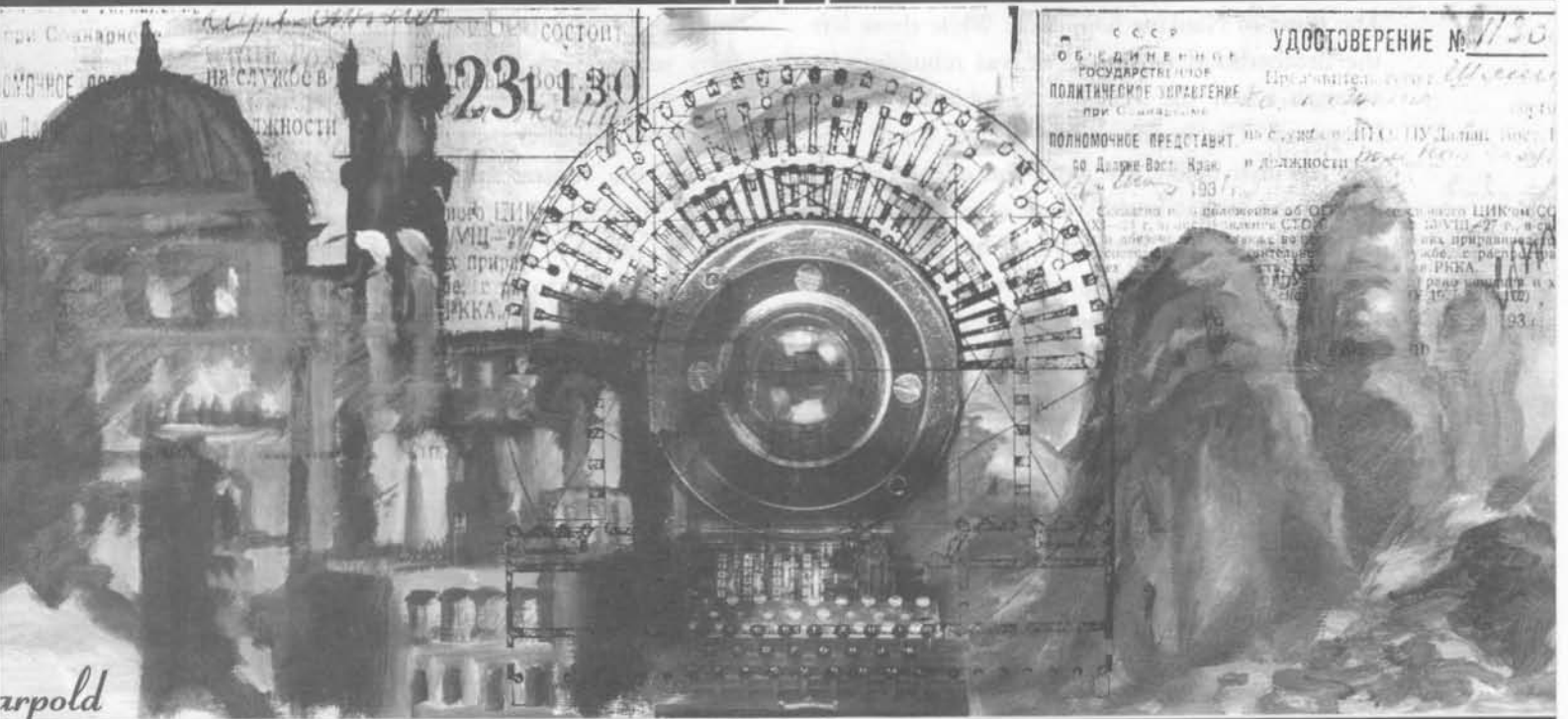
the truth died in the Second World War or the Cultural Revolution. The Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose has slowly regained some strength, but still accounts for only a quarter to a fifth of the Sleepers' membership as a whole. Fully half of the Sleepers worldwide are in Europe—many of those around Lisbon, Berlin, or scattered through southern England.

Dugan Forsythe died in 1989, at the ripe old age of a hundred and twenty-four. He looked like he was in his middle fifties. He fell off a chair while changing a light bulb and cracked his head open on a granite-topped end table.

Xue Li Chan beat him to the grave by a good forty years. While investigating reports of a revived Aztec blood cult, he came down with a terrible fever and died after six days.

Of the twelve Brothers who accompanied Xue to London to set up the fake Sleepers, only two are still alive, and neither of them had the resources needed to fend off old age like Xue and the Forsythes did. One, the father of Wu Zhanhan, is in a nursing home in Bristol, where his son visits him every week to be castigated for neglecting his filial obligations. The other lives in Beijing, in the home of his son, where only his great-granddaughter pays attention to his rambling stories of magick and adventure.





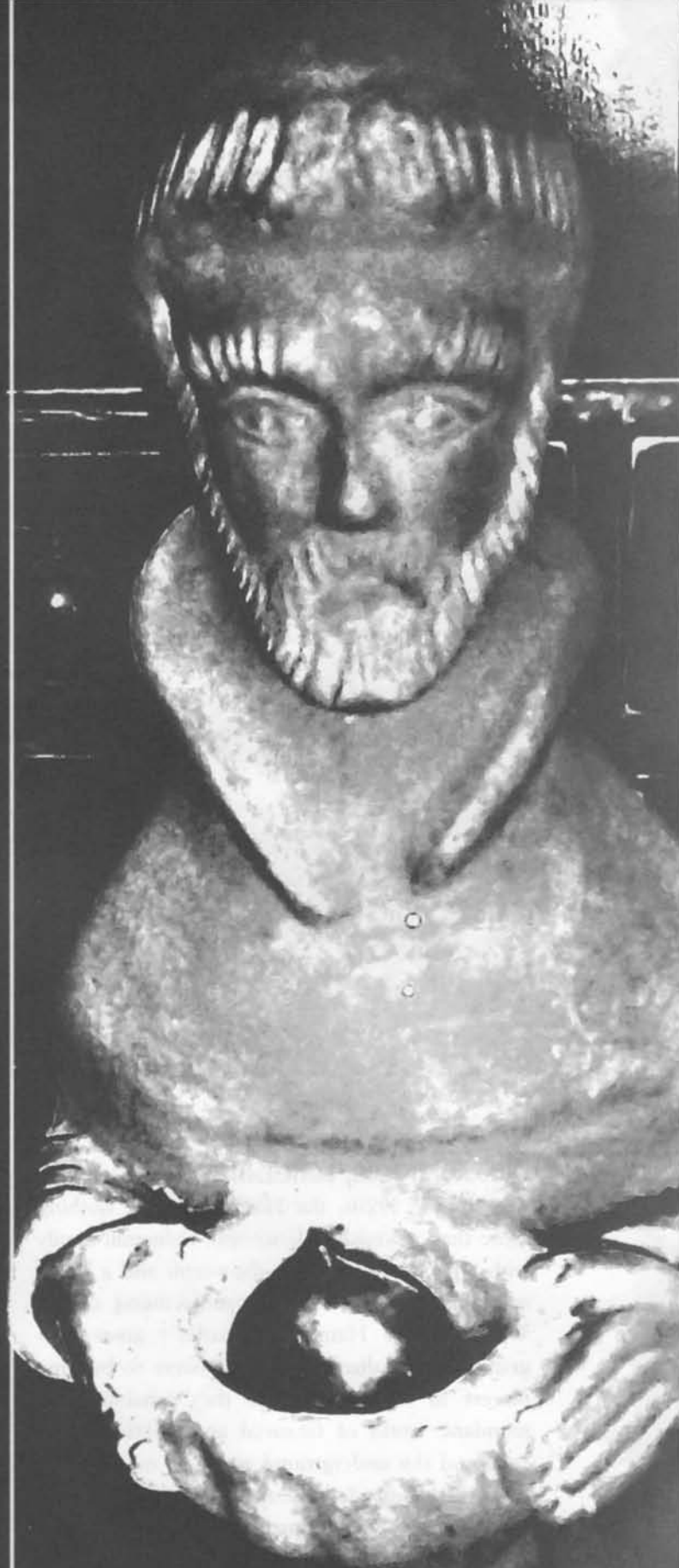
CHAPTER TWO
OUR TREASURES
OF AGES UNTOLD

UNKNOWN
ARMIES



"AND THE BEST AND THE WORST OF THIS IS
THAT NEITHER IS MOST TO BLAME,
IF YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN MY KISSES,
AND I HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR NAME."
—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

"TRUE POWER IS AN AGGREGATE
OF THINGS BEST FORGOTTEN."
—ANTOINETTE HAMILTON



You don't become a global cabal with a major

agenda without accumulating a few trinkets along the way. The Sleepers have a number of physical and magical resources to draw on, which are described in this chapter.

Locations

The Sleepers have four strongholds of particular interest, each of which is keyed to a member of the Cabinet. They are located in England, Germany, Portugal, and China.



DREW BAKER

Gleeson House, Lancashire

Back in the 1920s, the Hamiltons were nothing more than a wealthy Manchester industrial family with a peculiar interest in the occult and a lot of spare cash from weapons manufacturing during WWI. George Hamilton, Charles's great-great-grandfather, realized that if they were to become players in the two worlds they inhabited—the mundane world of financial and political influence and the underground world of magical influence—they needed a seat of power, somewhere old, respectable, and preferably safe. Occultists are often a snobby lot, and nothing impresses them quite as much as the appearance of ancient

wisdom. He searched around for a good-sized country manor and eventually found Gleeson House. Its owner, Bertram Gleeson-White, was an impoverished and cocaine-addicted dilettante, and only too keen to convert bricks and mortar into solid cash.

Gleeson House is a reasonably well-crafted Tudor country house at its core, remodelled several times and complete with two large and somewhat hideous Georgian wings, built in the Classically vulgar style of the times. It is located in a pleasant part of Lancashire, in northern England, and is surrounded by gently rolling hills and occasional patches of woodland. It has a decent estate attached to it, some four hundred and sixty acres,

and controls the rents of many local farmers and about seventy percent of the houses in the nearest village, Lower Crowham. Technically, Charles Hamilton is the local lord of the manor, which comes with a number of quirky rights, including the ownership of any and all *deodands*—objects involved in a human death, such as a ladder from which a man slipped and broke his neck, or the baseball bat used to batter a local storekeeper to death. Unusually for these modern times, his sister Antoinette takes the trouble to actually *claim* these tokens—passing it off as an eccentricity—because they come in handy for several nasty rituals.

The house has the normal features of an English country manor: a huge dining room, a largish but still intimate kitchen, drafty huge guest bedrooms with hideous paintings (and peep holes), a billiards room, a library, a kennel, a stable, a gun room, an excellent wine cellar, an uncomfortable living room, a servant's quarter, some antiquated toilets, and so forth—but also some more unusual features. The first that most people notice is the thin, phallic, five-story tower with a large bell at the top, on a small hill about two hundred yards from the house. This is a Victorian folly, erected at the whim of one of the Gleasons, which Charles Hamilton's father Lawrence took the trouble to enchant one night when drunk; the bell rings loudly if a significant or major unnatural being ever steps foot on the estate. (The Black Dog helped his besotted master with the ritual, ensuring that it would not set off the bell itself.)

There is also a beautifully tended and attractive hedge-maze and attached knot-garden, which incidentally provides an excellent selection of herbs. The maze is used as part of the Sleeper initiation ritual; initiates pass through it blindfolded to the pleasing summer-house in the center, which is suitably decked out in occult paraphernalia for the occasion. It has no mystic properties, but it's impressive and somewhat terrifying at night.

The Gleasons were a Catholic family, and so the manor has three well-concealed and secure priest-holes, which the Sleepers now use as convenient prisons for those they wish to interrogate. The enchanted skin of a Pilgrim avatar is normally used for a cover for the holes on these occasions, entirely preventing magickal exit or entry from the prison. Finally, the manor has a small forensic lab and excellent computing facilities, both of which Charles gladly lends to fellow Sleepers, and two rooms, formerly studies, used mainly for the practice of ritual magick and kept secure from all except a very few of the staff.

Because two public roads pass through the estate, and in order to avoid drawing unwanted attention, defenses on the estate are not obviously heavy. There is, however, an extremely well-paid, discreet, and loyal staff of about sixty, drawn from the local area. They know that a successful man like Mr. Hamilton attracts unwanted attention sometimes and one might occasionally run into things other than poachers when out keeping a watch at night, so it's best to keep your shotgun

Witness: Ken Samuels

Well, I left to go to university in Brum, but you've got to come back, haven't you? It's in the blood; my family have been keepers for years and years, right back to the Gleasons. And it pays bloody well, I tell you, better than any other job you're going to find in the county at the moment, and old Charles is a good boss.

Yes, we get some funny goings-on round here. People turning up at all hours of the day and night without warning, and some right odd noises coming from the locked rooms upstairs. But that's nothing to do with me—that's the Hamiltons' business. Whatever's going on, it does no harm, as far as I can tell, and they're light on the rents for the locals, so they're popular 'round here and always turn out for the fete. So I wouldn't go talking them down if I were you, nor pushing your nose in where it's not wanted.



loaded—sometimes with silver. The actual house is, naturally, equipped with the most modern and sophisticated security systems—though the alarms are rarely put on, due to the comings and goings of the large staff—as well as somewhat more esoteric defenses.

Casting a spell on the house is a very bad idea. It's been extensively warded over the years, and any magick used on it or its inhabitants is at a -30% shift. If the magick fails, various things happen. If the spell is a scrying one, a false image of the house is provided, close in general details but lacking any inhabitants but the most mundane. An automatic "No" answer is sent back to questioning spells (as in "Is Charles Hamilton in the house? No."). Hostile magicks trigger retaliatory blasts, significant if the caster is in the house, minor otherwise, which attempt to choke the caster to death with dust. All others simply fail. These defenses can be bypassed by simply saying the word "Ashborne" before casting the spell, something all magick-using Sleepers who visit are taught. (In case of traitors, however, Charles could change the magical password with a three-hour long ritual in the basement of the house.) There are no specific defenses against the abilities of Avatars, however.

The hungry ghosts are another good reason not to attempt an assault on the estate. When he built a small extension in the 1960s, Lawrence Hamilton also killed, buried in the foundations, and magically enslaved three traitorous local employees: Old George Cowley, Young George Cowley, and Marsha Wick, who had betrayed the house to an enterprising and now-destroyed magical cabal. They have become demons of an exceptionally vicious nature, and are kept in constant pain when not released to hunt intruders. All know magick by now: the Georges are Entropomancers (40% for Old George, 50% for Young George), and Marsha an Epideromancer (40%); they are adept at possessing one or two intruders (which they can do automatically on the estate itself, at a skill of 55%) and using their magick to destroy the rest. They are bound to a Kikuyu spirit-summoning rattle kept in a safe in Charles

Hamilton's bedroom; destroying this would free them to go on a short but horrific rampage against anyone at hand.

For Sleepers, Gleeson House provides a convenient center in England, complete with a chance to enjoy all the amenities of English country life: huntin', shootin', fishin', and sleepin' around. The beds are large and comfortable, and the sense of security strong. Training courses are occasionally run on the estate grounds, under the cover of being paintball and assault course exercises for rich businessmen. The Cabinet prefers to meet here, and most English Sleepers visit once or twice a year. Charles welcomes guests, but gets angry if they cause trouble, especially with the locals or his staff, with which he has gone to some lengths to build up a strong relationship. (This relationship, combined with being Lord of the Manor, would allow Charles to make a fairly strong bid at becoming a True King if he ever so desired.)

Treasures in the Hamilton Collection

The pride and joy of Gleeson House is, of course, the superbly tended hedge maze—unless you're a Sleeper. Then it's the Hamilton Collection—a series of three large basement rooms hidden behind a secret door in the wine cellar.

The secret door is concealed within a stone wall, behind a rack of old but middling vintage wines. The rack can be muscled out of the way, though it is very heavy and tips over if handled improperly, covering the would-be mover with broken glass and aged Claret. Alternately, if the small lever in the left corner of the second to bottom shelf is tripped, a set of gears and casters engages and the rack can be rolled smoothly aside with one hand.

The wall thus revealed is dusty and covered with cobwebs. There are a dozen tiny, black clockwork spiders that hide within its recesses. If a shirt or an old rag is left anywhere nearby, the spiders have it torn apart within an hour. With the material from the shirt, they quickly spin cobwebs over the wall and spread dust on the floor wherever it's been disturbed. Thus, one can brush

aside cobwebs to enter the library, stay for an hour, and exit through another curtain of webs. It's inconvenient sometimes, but on several occasions it has deterred searchers from finding the library. (This is doubly true because there's another wall in the wine cellar that is kept intriguingly free of cobwebs, behind a wine rack that always pivots easily out of the way.)

Once the wall has been revealed, the library patron must look for a gap between the sixth and seventh bricks on the fifth row from the ground. Charles stores the key, four inches long, in his safe. It's inserted into the gap and turned thrice right, pushed another inch in, and turned once left, to open the door. (Actually, the lock mechanism is so ancient that you can get in with a bent coat hanger—if you know how and where to stick it.) Once the lock is worked, pushing on the wall reveals a doorway in the stone. It's very heavy—anyone with Body 30 or less can't open it without a specific skill in the “move heavy objects” baliwick.

(There's also a gap between corresponding stones in the “intriguingly clean” wall. Turning the key there used to drop a hundred-pound slab of granite out of the ceiling. However, the last time the trap was sprung, in 1962, it also dropped a shower of rusty cogs and termite-eaten beams. Charles's father didn't bother replacing it. He just hooked the fake lock to a big battery, so that anyone who sticks in a piece of metal gets electrocuted. Roll as firearm damage, with a maximum of 50. The unlucky victim takes damage every round until he lets go of the key—and letting go unaided requires a successful Body check.)

The first room of the library is the Chamber of Wisdom. It's actually rather cozy: the beeswax candles of yesteryear have been replaced with track lighting and a Mr. Coffee. There are four overstuffed chairs around a large marble-topped table. Charles added a small table with a chessboard inlay when he began allowing more Sleepers to access the library. Two of the walls are lined with glass-fronted bookshelves. The shelves on the right side have handles carved like angels, and contain about a hundred and thirty religious texts. The shelves on the left have devil handles,

and contain a like number of works on infernalism and the occult. If any of the books in this chamber contain functional rituals, however, generations of Hamiltons have failed to make them work. That's not to say they're worthless. Indeed, selling off the contents of the Chamber of Wisdom would net the Hamiltons many millions of dollars—or more, if an expert would confirm that the marginal notes in the first edition King James *Bible* were indeed written by Nostradamus, despite the fact that Nostradamus died in 1566 and the King James wasn't translated until 1607.

The next chamber is the Chamber of Knowledge, and the door between is quite impressive. It's thick oak, black with age, and carved into its surface are the words “Quale praeium scientiae?” (Translated from the Latin, “What is the price of knowledge?”) There is neither lock nor knob, just a sliding partition about waist height. If opened, there is a dark gap to the left side. If you want, you can stick your hand in there and feel three cold metal switches. If you depress the top or bottom switch, a blade drops down and chops off whatever you pressed it with. (If it's a finger, that's six points of damage plus possible losses to skills, even if you get the fingers reattached.) If, however, you depress the middle switch while saying the word “silentia” (Latin for “silence”), the door opens to the real meat of the Hamilton collection.

The Chamber of Knowledge contains books that have working rituals, contain information that is verified true about the paranormal, or are magickal in and of themselves. *Das Garten?* (See UA, p. 182.) It's here, chained to the shelf and locked shut. (The key is missing. Not surprising, since a Hamilton in the 1800s threw it down a well after fighting to kick Rebekah Krzynski out of his wife's mind.) *The Marriage of Hermes and Aphrodite?* It's here. *Histoire de St. Germain?* Yep. *Das Überkult?* They've got it. A complete copy of Emil Dodustov's *The Invisible Clergy?* Sure. A third-generation Naked Goddess tape? It's locked in a hermetically sealed, magnetically shielded glass case with a cheap TV/VCR combo stored discreetly in a cabinet nearby. Signed copies of the complete works of Dirk Allen, including



the only existing draft of 333, the “novel” he himself doesn’t remember writing? They’re all here.

There are perhaps a hundred books in the Chamber of Knowledge, along with two dozen scrolls, clay tablets, wax records, and other miscellaneous media. The collection here wouldn’t net you as much as the Chamber of Wisdom on the open market, but that’s just because religion has more buyers, and religious folks tend to have more money than genuine occultists. (Which just might tell you something. Or not.) There are, however, a lot more people who’d be willing to kill for a look at the Knowledge books.

Incidentally, if you want to *leave* the Chamber of Knowledge, you have to stick your finger (or, if you’re smart, a pair of needle-nose pliers) into another alcove on the left side of the door. Again, there’s three switches and a riddle worked into the door in gold relief. This time it’s “Quale praeium prudentiae?” (“What is the price of wisdom?”) This time you want the top switch and the word “inaestimabilis,” which is Latin for “priceless.”

Between those two chambers, there’s about as much collected occult knowledge as you’ll find outside the skull of the Comte de Saint-Germain. It’s still a drop in the bucket of all the things there are to know, but it’s as big a drop as anyone has. Thus, if you roll “Occult Knowledge” or some similar research and lore skill while your character is consulting the Hamilton Collection, you may flip-flop the roll.

Rituals in the Chamber of Knowledge

In addition to any already-published rituals the GM wants to include in the Hamilton Collection, the following new rituals are available to the Sleepers and may be found in the collection.

The Knife That Drinks (Minor)

Cost: 1 minor charge

Ritual Action: Prepare a knife by moonlight. The knife can be of any material—bronze, steel, stone, whatever. The moon can be in any phase other than new, but the night must be clear enough that the moon is visible. Seeing it through clouds is

fine, but the knife cannot be prepared on a completely overcast night. To consecrate the knife, bring a pan of water to a roiling boil and, using a plant seed (any type) as a stylus, write your name forwards on one side of the knife and backwards on the other side, using the water from the pan.

Effect: If you stab someone with the knife and roll lower than your Soul stat, you gain a significant charge. (If you do this in combat, use the roll you made for the attack as the Soul check, too.) If you gain the charge, you temporarily lose points off your Soul stat equal to sum of the dice rolled. You recover lost Soul points at the rate of one per day. If your Soul drops below 10, you go into a coma.

If an adept uses this ritual, it is considered a violation of his school’s taboo. He does not lose the charge gained by the ritual, but he does lose all other charges.

Foul Stench of Sorcery (Minor)

Cost: 2 minor charges

Ritual Action: Melt a cup of unsalted butter until it’s completely liquid, but don’t let it boil. Add a drop of vinegar and stir it with your own bleeding finger. Using the same finger, paint a circle on the sole of your left foot, on the spot acupuncturists call the “bubbling well.” It doesn’t have to be an exact circle or an exact size, but one inch in diameter is about right. On the other foot, paint a cross—same size, same location, same finger used to paint it. Chant the words “ebus jackley” until the butter dries.

Effect: The next time an adept successfully casts a spell on you, you catch a whiff of a terrible, acrid stench—imagine the smell of burning hair being put out by asparagus piss. At the same time, the adept who cast it begins to exude the same aroma, which persists for about an hour. The smell coming off the adept can be detected by anyone around him. The “warning whiff” you receive is perceptible to you alone.

In order to trigger this ritual, the adept’s spell has to be specifically directed at the protected person. A spell that affected a crowd the Sleeper happened to be in would not set it off.



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Once activated, the ritual must be performed again for the effect to be reinstated.

Resonant Bleeding (Minor)

Cost: 2 minor charges

Ritual Action: Mix the ash of a burnt oak leaf with blue ink. Using that ink, draw the Greek letter gamma on the tip of your left middle finger. Then draw the Greek letter tau on the base of your left thumb. The gamma must be drawn before the tau, and the ritual does not function if the ink has become smudged or wiped off.

Effect: When you snap the fingers of your left hand so that the two Greek letters touch, any avatar within ten feet gets a nosebleed. This is not a gushing, life-threatening nosebleed. However, it is enough to be visible if not wiped, and it's usually unexpected. Once you've snapped your fingers, the ritual is done and cannot be cast again without spending more charges and redrawing the letters.

Fires of Pure Will (Minor)

Cost: 2 minor charges

Ritual Action: Play a game of solitaire with the minor arcana of a Tarot deck. (The rules of the game don't matter, as long as it's some form of solitaire.) When the Page of Swords comes up, induce vomiting in yourself using an unwashed owl feather. If you cough up blood, it means the ritual worked.

Effect: On a successful roll, the caster gains a significant charge. He also takes damage equal to the sum of the dice. It also may not be out of place to require a Body roll just to see if the caster picked up any nasty diseases from the unwashed owl feather.

If an adept uses this ritual, it is considered a violation of his school's taboo. He does not lose the charge gained by the ritual, but he does lose all other charges.

Order of the Wild (Minor)

Cost: 7 minor charges

Ritual Action: Casting Order of the Wild requires one to sing a lengthy song while constructing a complicated wicker cage. (It has to be wicker.) If

the song is in any particular language, it's an unidentified one, and the meaning is not known. It's actually rather dull sounding, too: it alternates between monotonous plodding sections and frenetic clots of notes with no discernible melody, harmony, or pattern.

Effect: When the cage is constructed, it's about a foot and a half on a side, with a wide door on the front. If the ritual is successful, small animals present themselves and crowd into the cage, where they wait until the cage is full. The animals who arrive are all native to the area: if you cast it in a city, expect rats, mice, pigeons and squirrels. Of course, that's what you're likely to get in the country as well.

When the cage is full, the animals sit in a docile fashion. Predators and prey exist harmoniously within the cage of Order of the Wild, and do so until they're released into an area defined by the caster. This area cannot be bigger than 2,000 square feet.

When let go in the target area, the caster can command the animals to bring him everything in that area of one particular type. This can be concrete ("Bring me every grain of millet in this clearing!") or abstract ("Bring me any physical evidence that indicates I was here!") Over the course of about an hour, the animals diligently search the defined space at top speed, missing nothing, obeying the commands of the caster. There is, however, one odd side effect to their search. Whereas most searches leave the searched area messy (it's not called "tossing an apartment" for nothing), this ritual leaves the area preternaturally neat. If cast in an apartment, the books are all pulled off the shelves—then put back on the shelves in some order, be it by color, size, or alphabetical by title. Similarly, clothes searched in a closet are hung back up in an anal-retentive fashion. Even garbage is packed back into the cans folded and sorted by size.

Once the search is complete, the animals snap out of it and return to their natural state. (Most users of this spell like to leave some windows and doors open for the animals to exit.) The spell also breaks if the caster leaves the designated area.

Coming home to find your rooms eerily tidy, but with dirty little paw marks on every surface, is a rank-5 Unnatural check.

Harmonious Alignment (Minor)

Cost: 8 minor charges

Ritual Action: The ritual actions required for Harmonious Alignment vary from month to month and depend on the zodiac sign of the caster. The ritual can be invoked on the date anniversary of the caster's birth. (That is, if you were born on the fourth of July, you can cast it on the fourth of every month. Damn shame if you were born on the thirty-first.)

The equipment and actions needed express the difference and the consonance between "you" (as placed by the time and date of your birth) and "the world" (as placed by the current time and date). The lexicon for expressing these relationships gets more involved the farther you are from your birthdate. On your birthday, you don't need *anything* to cast the ritual—you just need to go out under the open sky at noon and say six words in Latin. Six months from your birthday, it requires particular herbs and crystals, a robe of certain colors in certain patterns, made of certain materials, along with an elaborate three-color chalk pattern that must be drawn and then danced upon while reciting a fifty-one word litany (again, in Latin).

Effect: If the ritual is cast successfully, the caster gains one significant charge.

If an adept uses this ritual, it is considered a violation of his school's taboo. He does not lose the charge gained by the ritual, but he does lose all other charges.

Bind Thaumophage (Significant)

Cost: 1 significant charge

Ritual Action: To cast this spell, an elaborate pattern is painted on a stone floor with the blood of freshly-slaughtered birds. It doesn't matter what type of bird. A woman who is biologically capable of bearing children must paint the pattern. (She does not have to be the caster of the ritual, though she can be. Also, it doesn't matter if she's

on the pill or using Norplant: those won't interfere with her ritual potency. A hysterectomy, however, makes her unsuitable.) The woman (who is referred to in the ritual texts as "the vessel") creates the pattern in a proscribed order, which ends with her painted in the center of it.

Flies settle on the blood. Even if it's the middle of winter, they show up from somewhere—thousands of them. The ritual caster must listen to their buzzing and interpret it to learn the chant he or she must speak. Once that chant is spoken, an astral parasite attaches itself to the caster. If the caster is also the vessel, the transformation from parasite to thaumophage begins immediately. Otherwise, the caster must cross the pattern and embrace the vessel. When this happens, the parasite passes to her and begins its metamorphosis.

Effect: The change from astral parasite to thaumophage takes twenty-two days. During that time, the appetites of the parasite affect the carrier (see UA, p. 147), though it cannot detach itself if it becomes fully fed. At the end of that time, the thaumophage is ready to be planted. To plant it, the woman must touch the person, place, or thing with her stomach, below her navel, while concentrating on expelling the thaumophage.

There is an important side effect to this ritual. Any woman who has served as a vessel is at drastically increased risk of birth defects. Charles Hamilton is the first to really scan the hard data on this, but his numbers support the rough estimate that the child of a thaumophage vessel has only a 50% chance of a normal birth. The defects range from correctable (esophageal atresia) to the survivable but debilitating (craniofacial deformities or talipes equinovarus) to the simply devastating (spina bifida or hydrocephaly).

Cripple the Soul (Significant)

Cost: 1 significant charge

Ritual Action: Obtain a part of your victim's body. Even a single hair or a toenail clipping is good enough. Create a clay doll that represents the victim, made of at least three kinds of clay. First, white clay must be formed into the shape of a skeleton, then fired in a kiln with birch shav-

ings. Next, red clay must be formed into the heart, which is put into the skeleton chest and fired in a kiln with red maple leaves. Finally, gray or brown clay is used to cover the skeleton and heart. (Use a clay that closely matches the victim's skin tone.) The doll does not need to be fired. Press the body part into an appropriate area of the clay doll, and feed the doll to a carnivorous animal at midnight under a new moon. (Naturally, this is easiest with a small doll—but small dolls are also harder to make.) As the animal swallows the doll, injure yourself.

Effect: When the animal swallows the doll, an astral parasite attaches itself to the victim. The Body stat of the astral parasite depends on how badly the caster injured himself. Bigger hurt equals badder parasite. Use the Epideromancy charge guidelines (see UA, p. 93). If the caster does minor-charge damage to himself, the astral parasite's Body is 30. If the caster does significant-charge damage, the parasite's Body is equal to the highest number that can be assembled from the die roll (with a maximum of 60 and a minimum of 30). Thus, if you roll a 5 and a 2, it's got Body 52, but if you roll a pair of sevens, it's got Body 60. If you do major-charge damage, it's got Body 60.

Inner Screaming (Significant)

Cost: 1 significant charge

Ritual Action: Poke two holes in opposite ends of an unfertilized hen's egg and blow out the interior, until the egg is completely hollow. Mix the goo from the egg with the milk of a white cow. Paint the letter "S" on the eggshell. Crush the eggshell into fine powder, mix it with the contents and the milk, and swallow the mixture. When you've swallowed it all, tilt your head back as far as it goes, take a deep breath, and scream as loudly as you can until your lungs are completely empty.

Effect: The next time someone successfully casts a spell on you, that adept is wracked with painful psychic static. (One Irish adept likened it to having someone put a metal bucket on your head and then repeatedly hit the bucket, hard, with a hammer. Since he'd experienced that particular torture, he knew what he was talking about.) The



Thaumophages

(This unnatural being was first presented in *Postmodern Magick*. Since it's such an important resource for the Sleepers, we are reprinting it here for those who don't have *PoMoMa*.)

Arguably the most powerful weapon in the Sleepers' arsenal is the spell that creates a Thaumophage. This ritual (penned, it's said, by the Comte de Saint-Germain himself) captures an Astral Parasite and turns it from an annoyance into a truly *colossal* annoyance: A creature that eats magick.

While not as physically dangerous as the naturally occurring Thaumovore (as described in *One Shots*), Thaumophages are even more ravenous, capable of swallowing up all of an adept's charges—significant, minor and major—in a single gulp. Fortunately for all concerned (including their creators) the transformation from Parasite to Thaumophage requires a definite and permanent binding into an object, location, or individual. Any time an adept tries to gain a charge from that person, place or thing, the Thaumophage awakens and drains off all the adept's charges instead.

So if (for example), the Sleepers created a Thaumophage in Red Square (and they have), any cliomancer who tried to reap Red Square for charges would not only gain nothing, he'd *lose* any and all charges he was holding. Similarly, if a sorcerer got the cup that gave Socrates his last drink of hemlock, he could bind a Thaumophage into it and permanently ruin it for dipsomancy.

Thaumophages automatically succeed at their charge-sucking—but other than that they're pretty defenseless. They're vulnerable to Soul Sipping, especially since they can't run away when injured. (Yes, this means that a Dipsomancer who drinks one down can take a skill in Drain All Your Charges If You Try To Charge Up Off Me.) Bargain of Pyrrhus offers no protection, but some payback: The creature still gets all your charges, but then drains itself and loses its future ability to feed. After a few days (or weeks, depending on how many charges it got) it withers and dies. A Plutomancer probably couldn't kill one with random magick, but would have a real good chance of moving it into a new container (possibly himself). Cliomancy, Pornomancy, Epideromancy and Entropomancy have no good way to deal with Thaumophages (though they rarely threaten bodybags), and Dipsomancy random magick doesn't have much effect either.

Mechanomancers are in a bit of an interesting position when it comes to Thaumophages. If an object occupied by a Thaumophage is incorporated into a clockwork for its historical properties, the clockwork fails to function. (For instance, if the above mentioned Socratic cup was put into a philosophy machine.) If the Mechanomancer is aware of the Thaumophage, however, he can "short circuit" the curse by using the Thaumophage itself as an element in the clockwork. (The Socratic cup couldn't be put into a philosophy machine, but it would work rather well for a machine that's supposed to be a pain in the neck to sorcerers.

Even in death, Thaumophages are dangerous, because when killed they release all their charges in a storm of unnatural phenomena. The phenomena are generally random, and their severity all depends on what type of charges were held—and how many.

When seen on the astral plane, Thaumophages look a bit like what you'd get if you took a lamprey eel, enlarged its mouth until it could swallow a hubcap, then turned it inside out so that the organs and teeth were exterior.

Thaumophage (Minor)

Astral Killjoy

Points: 110-200

Body: 30-60

Speed: 20-50

Mind: 10-30

Soul: 30-60



RICHARD PAGE

adept must make a stress check on the Violence or Helplessness gauge (whichever has fewer hardened marks). The difficulty of the check is equal to the higher of the dice the adept rolled to cast the spell. The spell still operates normally.

Mask of Shadows (Significant)

Cost: 1 significant charge

Ritual Action: This ritual requires soot, cobwebs, and the corpse of someone who died unloved and unmissed. Rub the soot on the corpse's face, then place the cobwebs on top. Recite nine syllables in ancient Chinese (Mandarin dialect) and, if the ritual is successful, the cobwebs thicken and weave together to form an eyeless black mask from which no light can escape.

Effect: The mask created by the ritual is a lure and beacon to tenebrae (see UA, p. 154), but its pull is not strong enough to call them into light or convince them to attack a group of people. However, the holder of the mask is quite likely to hear a lot of skittering around in the evenings, and would be well advised not to go out alone without a powerful flashlight.

The true power of the mask is only revealed when it is placed on the face of a corpse. That corpse is perceived by all tenebrae in the area as an unmourned, unloved one—in other words, their ideal meal. Given that the area is likely to have an unusually large population of the critters (called by the mask), they're likely to rip the body to pieces as soon as it's in a dark place.

This ritual is used by the Sleepers to get rid of bodies (or to at least monkeywrench the medical examiners about cause of death). It should be noted that the original corpse—the forgotten person from whom the mask was made—is not molested by tenebrae after the ritual. Crows and rats may go at him, but not the shadows.

Sterile Begetting (Significant)

Cost: 1 significant charge

Ritual Action: Gather together a pile of trash weighing at least eight pounds. At least half the trash has to be organic in nature. Form it into a human outline, using denser materials as "bones"

and lighter stuff as "tissue." Sprinkle some of your blood on it, along with some blood from someone of the opposite gender.

Effect: The trash transforms into a fresh, dead human body. Its age depends on how much trash was used: a small amount yields a young child's corpse, while more matter yields an older (and bigger) body. In no event does the body appear older than either of the people who donated blood for the ritual. This body cannot be brought to life by any means, though demons or Unspeakable Servants can occupy it.

If subjected to an autopsy, there's no clear cause of death. Genetic testing, however, identifies the two people whose blood was used as the corpse's parents.

When not using this spell to house unnatural beings, the Sleepers have been known to use it to frame people for murder: sneak into someone's house, make a corpse, quickly break its neck, and phone in a tip to the police. Easy.

Murderer's Crows (Significant)

Cost: 3 significant charges

Ritual Action: This ritual requires a black handgun that was used to kill a human being. But not just any murderer's gun works: the killer has to have been captured by authorities after the crime. Specifically, he has to have been nicked on suspicion of that killing. (Getting arrested for tax evasion doesn't cut it.) Conviction or punishment are not necessary, but you can't use the gun of someone who got away with it clean.

To cast the ritual, the caster must tie black crow feathers to the barrel and the handle, keep the gun in a birdcage and treat it like a bird for one lunar month. This means offering it water and food (bullets, in this case), talking to it in an affectionate tone, and changing the papers periodically. After the requisite time and charges have been invested, the caster rolls. If the roll fails, all the charges and effort are wasted, though the caster can try again with the same pistol.

Effect: If the ritual works, the gun becomes "alive" in a primitive fashion and is capable of independent movement. It can sleep comfortably in

a holster, just as a pigeon sleeps in a magician's sleeve. However, if roused and directed at a target, it flies at that person like a bat or a raven, turning aside at the last moment to present the barrel and fire.

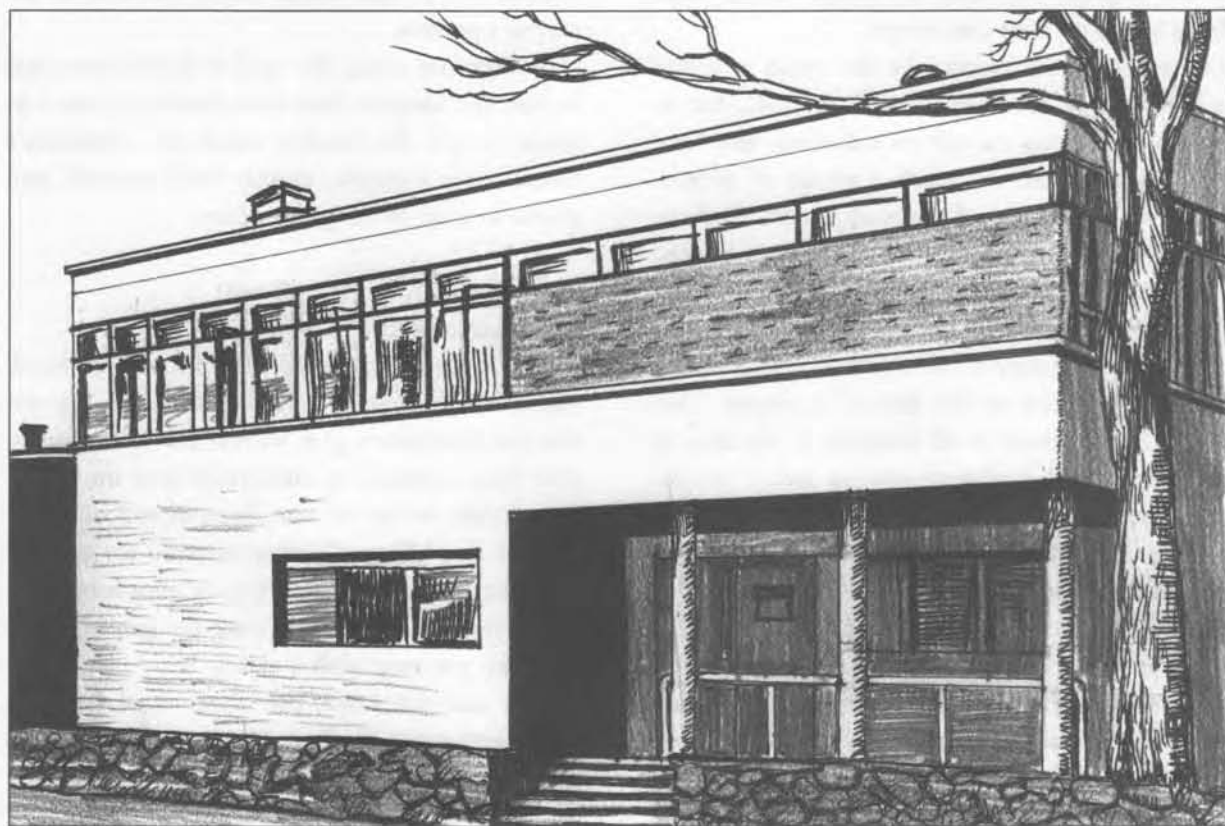
Being attacked by a Murderer's Crow is a rank-5 Unnatural challenge.

The Murderer's Crow continues to attack until called back by its master. If it ever runs out of ammo, however, it "dies"—stops flying and cannot be resuscitated or re-enchanted. It attacks with the same skill used by the killer who owned it before it was "awakened." (Given their history of

capture, often these aren't professionals at the top of their game. A skill of 35% is standard.)

It's possible, though difficult, to knock a Murderer's Crow out of the air. If struck in this fashion, the enchantment is broken and it's just a pistol again. However, due to its small size and constant movement, any attack roll under 40% fails.

The enchantment is also broken if the feathers are removed or destroyed. Spells do not work on Murderer's Crows unless they affect both animals *and* machines, or unless they somehow disturb or ruin the feathers.



Der Berliner Wahrheitstempel

(The Berlin Temple of Truth)

Der Berliner Wahrheitstempel, or the Berlin Temple of Truth, is a small, two-story office building in the Bauhaus style, located in the neighborhood of Kreuzberg, the center of Turkish Berlin. The building management offices take up the entire second

floor. The first floor has a number of clean, spare meeting rooms, rented at a very reasonable price to twelve-step programs, support groups, and religious organizations. The basement houses *Fünf*, a *geheimtip* club—literally “secret tip”: a sort of secret bar/party that only those who know about it can attend which opens exclusively during the nights of the fifth week in a month.

The Sleepers “inherited” the building from the defunct remnants of one of the last major eastern Cryptomancer cabals, through the actions of Gerlinde Unger—then known as Marta Schlichter. The Temple of Truth is—what else?—a lie. The building hides rooms, corridors, and even an elevator that are completely inaccessible from the rest of the structure. The Sleepers have installed covert audio and video devices throughout the mundane rooms, and the clueless company that manages the building is dismissive of these “secret rooms” due to judicious usage of Cliomantic magick. In fact, the Sleeper Temple of Truth can only be entered through the coffee-shop next door, the Café Löwenstein.

The Café Löwenstein is open from 9 a.m. to 5 a.m. daily. It’s a cybercafé, with five connections for a modest charge. Being a typical Berlin café, the place gets swamped during the regular *Kaffee und Kuchen* (“coffee and cake”) break that everybody takes each mid-afternoon. There’s also a mild rush each night around nine as a regular group of students from a nearby acting studio grab some coffee on the way home. The kitchen is small but good, with a number of delicious Turkish desserts. Despite the line between a café and bar being fuzzy in Berlin, the Café Löwenstein’s pathetic selection of alcohol, minuscule dance floor, and woeful jukebox ensures that few people come out to party there at night. Which is all for the best, since they are only excuses to keep open until the wee hours.

The manager of the Café Löwenstein (Rudy Ostermann) is a Sleeper, but the assistant managers and the rest of the staff aren’t. They have been mildly magicked to ignore anyone entering the Sleeper Temple. To enter the Sleeper Temple, one must order a Turkish coffee and take at least one sip. Then one proceeds to a small corridor in the back of the café which holds the bathrooms. In between the two restrooms is a janitor’s closet filled with mops, buckets, cleaners, and a large tub in the back corner with three spigots. The center spigot must be turned counterclockwise while saying the word “open.” (The word for “open” from any language can be used, including synonyms.)

If all three qualities align—coffee drunk, spigot open, and word said—the tub and its wall spin around, depositing the entrant into a gloomy corridor lit by a single 25-watt incandescent bulb. As the entrant walks down the corridor, if they’re carrying any metal more than a few coins they may hear (Notice -10%) a mild buzz as they pass the midpoint of the hallway. They have just passed through a metal detector, which is monitored—like the infrared cameras and motion detectors hidden in the shadowy upper corners of the hall—from a guard station in the Sleeper Temple.

At the far end of the corridor, there is an iron gate, partially hidden by a curtain of chains. Dangling from the end of each chain is a key. The twenty-third key from the left is the correct key to open the gate; none of the others work. Furthermore, if the entrant set off the metal detector then a wrong key stuns him with a mild electric shock, equivalent to that of a taser. Incapacitated characters are taken to a room for interrogation.

The final hurdle to pass is a tiny, well-lit concrete room. The floor is painted brown, and there is a drain with a grill in front of the gate. Next to the door in the corner is a pile of books (philosophical and religious works, in numerous languages). A statue squats on a pillar, reading; the wall behind it is incised with the words *Cogito, ergo sum*. The statue is a misshapen humanoid midget of reddish clay, which looks slick to the touch and studded with shards of broken glass and mirrors. This is the golem Kristall—a horrific fusion of magick, madness, and horror (see the nearby boxed text). He only lets those past who greet him by name—those who do not are attacked as Kristall leaps from his pedestal and begins slashing.

Through the door that Kristall guards is the ground floor of the Sleeper Temple. Not very large, it consists solely of the guard post (where all the audio and video feeds from the mundane Temple and the entry corridor are displayed), an interrogation room (with numerous restraints and occult countermeasures to hold intruders), and an elevator.



Kristall, Guardian Golem

Summary: Kristall came into being on 9 November 1938, during a “spontaneous” wave of vandalism and violence—*Kristallnacht*. Under the cover of the mundane assaults on Berlin Jews, a German Phobomancer named Maximilian Wolff decided to destroy a minor Jewish foe named Rabbi Isaac Liebkind and take the rabbi’s golem for his own. It didn’t quite work out that way.

Rabbi Liebkind turned out to be a master of gematria and the Kabbalah (see Simeon bar Yohai in *Postmodern Magick*, p. 165), and was anything but a pushover. Having precisely divined the day that he and Wolff would meet in mortal, magickal combat, the rabbi had carefully prepared. During the course of the fighting, the rabbi’s golem was ripped in half by one of Wolff’s nightmare magicks. The rabbi managed to strangle Wolff, but not before taking a mortal wound from the Phobomancer’s knife. As his life’s blood streamed onto the twitching clay, the rioters reached his house. The rabbi sketched Kabbalistic symbols into the halved golem with his own blood as the glass windows of his house shattered and fell around him. The firebombs thrown by the vandals finally killed him, helped cover all the evidence . . . and give birth to Kristall.

Somehow, the rabbi’s blood, the frantic last Kabbalistic symbols, Wolff’s magick, and the fires and hate of the rioters gave birth to a golem. He is somewhat guided by the last command of Rabbi Liebkind—“Destroy the intruders!”—but strangely, while Kristall shares his kind’s tirelessness and lack of need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe, he does not share their subservience. He has initiative and a modicum of free will. Indeed, he works for the Sleepers by choice. Kristall’s overriding wish is to discover if he has a soul. (In his darker moments, he suspects that he may have Rabbi Liebkind’s amnesiac spirit.) In return for all the books he wishes to read, he’s offered to guard the last entrance to the Cryptomancer’s (now Sleeper’s) Temple of Truth.

He appears as nothing more than a mildly humanoid figure of slick reddish clay, studded all over with shards of glass and mirror. Two largish oval shards of smoked glass serve as eyes on Kristall’s face. His voice is very beautiful, and tinkles like tiny bells.

Personality: Kristall doesn’t really have much of one. He’s rather driven, and a tad sardonic. He is courteous to Sleepers he recognizes, and often poses them a question on the nature of the human soul.

Obsession: Kristall is obsessed with two things—guarding his door and researching the existence of the soul.

Wound Points: 75

Stats

Body: 75 (Remarkably Strong)

Speed: 50 (Fast) (S)

Mind: 65 (Insightful)

Soul: ?? (Driven)

Notes

Kristall uses his Body score when attacking. He does an additional +3 damage due to all of the shards of glass and mirror sticking out of him. He also has a remarkable knowledge of Philosophy and Theology, equal to his Mind score.



TOREN ATKINSON

The top floor is larger, and holds Gerlinde Unger's office, the office of her assistant (Omar Bey), a computer room, a file room, and a telecommunications cubicle. The computer room has two computers in it: the first is entirely blank of anything but a web browser (the connection is secretly passed through the Café Löwenstein's router), while the second is used for sensitive Sleeper business. There is absolutely no connection between these machines, and the latter computer has no internet connection at all. The telecommunications cubicle has a heavy-duty switchboard and contact phone lists for Sleepers under the nominal jurisdiction of Der Berliner Wahrheitstempel.

The basement contains a small armory closet with mundane guns, ammo, riot gear, and other such things. There are also two small conference rooms, used for mission briefings and meetings. The power generators for the Sleeper Temple are also in the basement.

The sub-basement is where all the fun stuff is. Firstly, the elevator stops at the basement, and the

entrance to the sub-basement is concealed behind the humming generators. Then you proceed down a dank spiral stairway until you reach a thick steel door, with the word "Rampart" stamped in the middle of it. The "p" is actually a lock. This lock and its key are interlocking clockworks, created by a long-dead Mechanomancer. When the lock was constructed, the designer made three identical keys. Gerlinde Unger has one of the keys and the Black Dog has another. But the third has been missing for decades and the Sleepers cannot find it, despite a massive annual search. If someone tries to pick the lock, they fail. Nothing less than a demolition charge would blow open the door, and that would bring the entire building down on the intruder(s).

Once past the Rampart door, there is a short hallway, paneled in rich woods. Two oak doors face each other at the far end of the hall. The one on the left bears a brass plate with the words *das vereinigung Kammer* (the Merging Chamber); the plate of the rightmost room reads *das fabelhafte Zimmer* (the Fabulous Room). The Merging

Witness: Johann Markov

So there I was, at the German Tattoo Convention in Tempelhof, freelancing a segment for this Australian tabloid show called *Hard Edition* or somesuch on the European bodyart scene. The whole thing was actually kind of dull and prosaic. Hard to believe, huh? Anyway, it's a December evening, right, so it's nut-freezing cold, so instead of being out there sightseeing, I'm warm and safe in a local bar across the Platz der Luftbrücke with some of the other convention-goers, chewing the fat and slowly getting blitzed. Now I know that this next bit is going to sound unbelievable, but I saw it, okay?

There was this drunk chick in the corner, bald and just covered with pretty nifty tattoos. And she had about six people around her that were just kinda looking at her and oohing and ahing. So I saunter over there to see what's the buzz, and my jaw nearly hit the floor. She had two tattoos—one of a cartoon mouse, the other of a cartoon cat, and they were *chasing* each other over her body. I'm not talking about those cheesy little "tattoo tricks" where you make the Hawaiian girl hula; I mean that these two tattoos were running all over her body: belly to chest to arm to head and back.

Well, even through my buzz I knew this would be a much cooler story for *Hard Edition*, so I jogged across the Platz to the convention, grabbed my cameraman Stuey, and ran back over to the bar. Of course, she and her little entourage are gone. So I have to buy Stuey enough booze to calm him down from humping that camera across the snowy Platz at double-time speed.

We ended up hanging there for a couple more hours—it was a nice place, and like I said, warm. About 3 a.m. the bartender carries some trash out to the alley behind the bar, and comes back in looking like hell. He says something about a dead body and goes to call the police. Stuey grabs his camera and follows me out the back door.

The bald tattoo chick is there. Dead. She's missing her left ear and her throat's been slit. And here's the extra-special weird part: her hand is tied to her face with wire, with her finger held up to her lips like she was shushing someone. It was really freaky, let me tell you.

Stuey got some nice shots of the body, and we worked up a little "Is there a new serial killer in German?" bit to jazz up the bodyart piece. *Hard Edition* loved it. But man, that still twists my brain when I think about it.

Chamber is simply the arena used for Rituals of Union by Gerlinde Unger, burned into the floor's surface in her contest with Marta Schlichter. The Fabulous Room contains a number of artifacts: as the Hamilton Collection is the Sleeper repository for rituals, the Fabulous Room is the resting place of recovered artifacts. On very rare occasions, they may be loaned out for particularly dangerous missions; however, the team bearing one of the rare artifacts of the Fabulous Room is under the direct scrutiny of the Cabinet.

Treasures in the Fabulous Room

The Fabulous Room has a number of the more-

common magickal items that are floating around the occult underground: a few Hands of Glory (see UA, p. 181), some Aura Film photos and Psychic Bullets (see *Lawyers, Guns, and Money*, pp. 45 and 46), and a number of Wooden Nickels (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 139). And in a place of honor sits the Knocking Box, stolen by the Cryptomancers during its mission to Dachau (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 144).

There's also a single, anonymously authored book titled *Wahrheit!* (Truth!), discussing a bizarre occult Hitler theory. In short, *Wahrheit!* claims that Hitler was initiated into the Western Cryptomancers while in prison, which sparked his fascination with fringe subjects and started him

on the path of the Demagogue. His searching for secrets led him to the Eastern Cryptomancers, and not knowing any better began studying their lore, which drove him even further over the edge of insanity. It's probably nonsense, or a powerful Cryptomancer artifact, or both. No one knows.

Other artifacts residing in the Fabulous Room include:

Bullet Bugs (Significant): About the size of a golf ball, these American-made clockwork bees must be wound up by hand. They can be held in hand indefinitely, but after they are released they orbit the user for 1-10 combat rounds. During that time, they can each intercept, catch, and drop a single bullet fired at the caster. If the attacker rolls a matched success, the Bullet Bug is destroyed; if he rolls an OACOWA, the Bug is driven back into the defender, doing full firearms damage plus an extra die. The Fabulous Room has 17 of these Bugs left.

The Marienkirche Weapons (Significant): The bells of the Marienkirche were twice melted down into weapons of last resort during the reign of the Hohenzollerns. The Knife of Marienkirche was forged in 1411, during the command of Friedrich, the first Hohenzollern leader. The Gun of Marienkirche, a 7.92mm Mauser bolt-action rifle, was forged in 1917, during the reign of Kaiser

Wilhelm II, the last of the Hohenzollerns to rule. Both of these weapons do normal damage for their type, but they do 2 additional points of damage for each Hardened mark the wielder has in their Violence Meter.

The Ruby Eyes (Significant): These glasses bear lenses of "ruby glass" developed by alchemist Johann Kunckel von Löwenstein in the 1600s. These mystical lenses allow a wearer with a Soul stat of 55+ to see the symbols of the Archetypes around the Avatars channeling them. For instance, someone wearing the Ruby Eyes could see an Avatar of the True King wearing a glowing crown, or see an Avatar of the Flying Woman with large white wings, or an Avatar of the Mystic Hermaphrodite split perfectly down the middle, male on one side, female on the other.

The Stopwatch (Major): This is a silver pocket watch of Swiss construction, dating from the early 1800s. It has a silver chain with an aluminum fob in the shape of an ankh. It is also a mighty clockwork. Once per day, the winding stem of the watch can be completely depressed. This causes a tiny, ankh-headed green hand under the second hand to spin for five full seconds. During that time, the holder of the Stopwatch cannot die, by any means. All is not wine and roses, however: every use of this ability ages the holder by 1d10 years.





MOISES DONOSO

Hotel Inter Caetera, Lisbon

The dos Prazeres bloodline has been in the coffee business since the early 19th century, but their dealings have not been restricted to agriculture. Although there has always been a scion of the primary branch of the family tree heading the firm, the firm's different branches are more often than not commanded by other family members. These branches include interests in Brazil's tourist industry, real estate in Portugal, and various enterprises in other European countries and former Portuguese colonies.

The person heading the Brazilian coffee agricultural empire—the family's most important business—has always lived in Lisbon (*Lisboa* in Portuguese), dealing with business matters in a private floor at what was once known as the Hotel dos Prazeres, the oldest and most luxurious family possession. The building, sited in the western part of downtown Lisbon (in *Rua das Janelas Verdes*, a stone's throw from the docks), was built in the 18th century. It's only four floors high, sitting

atop a semi-basement parking garage, and has just seventeen spacious and luxurious suites. Old-world elegance permeates the hotel's common areas. Although located in one of the lowest parts of this old city, which is spread over several hills, the hotel's top floor and roof have an excellent view of the *Tejo* river's mouth and the April 25th bridge which spans it.

In 1927, after being at the helm of the family's business for five years, Sebastiao dos Prazeres, grandfather of the building's current owner, chose to change its name to Hotel Inter Caetera. Sebastiao had a well-known love for history that led him to finance several cultural projects with part of his fortune, and the name change was taken as a sign of the influence history exerted on the eccentric businessman. (*Inter Caetera* is the name given to two papal bulls from the time of the discovery of America, the second of which moved the Line of Demarcation dividing the Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence in the New World; as a result of this change, Brazil became a Portuguese possession.) In secret, Sebastiao was a Cliomancer. The

few members of the occult underground who had knowledge of this fact were amazed at the amount of power that the Portuguese Cliomancer was amassing without ever seeming to leave Lisbon.

Avelino, his father's worthy heir (both in a magickal and mundane sense), took the reins of the firm upon Sebastiao's death in 1941. In 1949, an ambitious Spanish Cliomancer became a danger to Avelino's secrets, threatening him with exposure if he would not share with him his power source. That was the moment chosen by an acquaintance of his father's, Angela Forsythe, to convince Avelino to join the Sleepers in exchange for helping him get rid of the Spanish adept. The negotiations between Avelino and Angela were lengthy and convoluted, and there are still some Sleepers who are convinced that neither of them revealed all the details of their bargain. The fact remains that from that year onwards, the Sleepers had use of both the Hotel Inter Caetera and of Avelino's greatest secret, which now benefits the organization: a magickal gate that allows instantaneous mind transmission between users in Lisbon and Brazil. Although the gate had some limitations, it enabled the Sleepers to take immediate action on urgent matters arising in South America. Nowadays, of course, it is possible to travel there quickly by plane—but the gate still allows the use of another person's body, with obvious benefits.

Right from the start, Avelino made it clear that he would be the one to teach his son magick and everything he had to know about the organization. Upon Avelino's death in 1978, Joao inherited all of his father's possessions as well as his position in the Sleepers, for he was endorsed by Angela Forsythe herself—because she was the one person who knew that thanks to the mind gate, the young man's body now housed the mind of his wily grandfather Sebastiao, just as the body of his father Avelino had.

Joao quite literally has the same head for business as his father and grandfather. He fulfills the same role his father did within the Sleeper organization: he operates the Lisbon base, acts as a liaison for European operations, and supervises the use of the mind gate. Joao/Sebastiao joined the Cabinet in 1987. He cheerfully expects to hold that post for centuries.

Hotel Inter Caetera is simultaneously a place for members of the organization to relax, headquarters for Joao's business empire, and the place from which Sleepers can "jump" their minds to South America. The hotel's ground floor could be considered the building's most mundane; it is typical of a high-class hotel, and has everything guests could need. Many a business lunch is held in its spacious lounge and café—although the Sleepers prefer Joao's private floor for *their* meetings.

The sixteen guest rooms, all situated on the second and third floors, are of varying sizes and are furnished in 18th and 19th century style, with some Manueline-style motifs (shells, corals, waves, and rope knots) that characterized 16th century Portuguese architecture. However, all the rooms have the most advanced comforts, which have been tastefully integrated within the overall style. In fact, Joao has one room on the third floor set up with miniature cameras and microphones, almost impossible to detect, for extra-special guests of the Sleepers.

The most spacious room in the building takes up the entire fourth floor, and it all belongs to Joao. This area serves as both his living space and his vast private office, from which he handles all his mundane and magickal affairs. It is a private floor, and even the rooftop terrace is off-limits to guests (although they are welcome to use the wide balcony off the second floor). The fourth floor can only be accessed using a security key in either of the two elevators, or in the reinforced door that closes off the stairwell. Joao's meetings with prominent Sleepers take place on the fourth floor, as does the questioning of any stray members of the European occult underground.

The building's first basement floor, which is partially exposed to the street, is for parking. However, a second basement floor's existence is a secret, and can only be reached by means of the elevators using the aforementioned security keys.

The Secret Basement

This secret basement has several rooms that the Sleepers put to different uses. One houses troublesome people pending a burial at sea or in a



quicklime well. Another is a strongroom where Joao keeps sundry documents related to his mundane affairs. There is a small secret compartment in the wall where Joao stores some artifacts and manuscripts. A third room holds the entrance to a long tunnel leading to a nearby warehouse on the docks. This tunnel is several decades old, but its depth and proximity to the river have prevented any public works from compromising its secrecy. Objects or people needing quiet entrance or exit travel via this tunnel rather than through the lobby. A second tunnel veers off to the sealed warehouse basement, wherein lies the mind-gate.

Artifacts in the Secret Basement

The Old Shirt (significant)

The Old Shirt is no shirt at all, but merely what is left of one: an ornamental jewel. Its curious history is up to the challenge posed by its name.

Isabella the Catholic (of the Catholic kings of Castille and Aragón) not only founded the Spanish "New Inquisition" (in 1478) and deported the Spanish Jews (in 1492), she also made a religious vow: she swore not to wash herself until she had conquered the Kingdom of Granada from the Moors. When the capital city, Granada, surrendered on January 2nd, 1492, some time had elapsed since the Queen's promise; her determination, among other emanations, pervaded the outfit she wore during the solemn act of the city's surrender.

The only part of this "old shirt" still in existence is the ornamental jewel that hung from its ruff, now in Joao's possession. He has occasionally loaned it to female Sleepers willing to use it.

This artifact, which can only be used by women, allows the PC to obtain positive shifts in her skills while in pursuit of some specific, stated goal. In return, the user may not wash herself at all for the duration of the Old Shirt's use. The shifts are a cumulative +1% every two days to skills directly useful in the pursuit of her goal, to a maximum of +15% per skill. (The Old Shirt may improve Skills even above their parent attributes.) When the goal is achieved or renounced, the skill shifts are re-

moved; renouncement prevents the user from ever gaining power from the Old Shirt again.

If the woman using the artifact is an avatar of the Flying Woman, the skill shift is +1% every day, to a maximum of +30% per skill.

Jug of Britannicus (Significant)

Nero had already been named as heir to the Roman Empire by the emperor Claudius when, at the tender age of sixteen, he poisoned Claudius's son Britannicus, the only threat to his goals. Although the boy had a food taster who drank the spiced wine first, it was too hot, and Britannicus had some water added to it to cool it off a little. This golden jug is the one used to pour the poisoned water which put an end to the possible heir's life. When poison or narcotics are added to the liquid in this jug, any skill used to examine or detect their presence is at a -30% shift. Joao has never handed the jug to a Dipso-mancer and would prefer to not do so.

The Lisboa-Santos Mind Gate

This strange effect, the only one of its kind to date, is the result of a conceptual mistake more than of a voluntary act. (The major charge which was used to create it did not allow the creation of the desired effect using Cliomancy; see Joao dos Prazeres on p. 86.) Instead of achieving a physical communication between the docks of Santos, Brazil, and Lisbon, Portugal, Joao only managed to create a mind conduit; to be precise, the effect generated was a mind exchange between two living humans located at each end of the magical gate.

The exits on both ends are very similar: an old wall in a room in the basement of a dockside warehouse owned by the dos Prazeres family. Sebastiao dos Prazeres placed the entrances in a wide surface so that he could transport merchandise through them, and brought them into existence in the basement so he could more easily keep them hidden. His intention was simple commerce, albeit with a competitive advantage.

After discovering the gate's limitations, he sealed both basements and rebuilt the walls and

floors where stairs and doors once stood, then installed secret tunnels from nearby family properties. It has been decades since any of the warehouse workers have suspected the existence of basement rooms under their working place, as the builders and architects went to their graves without any memories of their work there—thanks to Sebastiao's Cliomantic meddling.

To activate the gate from either end, the user must know of its existence and simply press his hands against it. The other user must do the same. When both are touching the walls, the mind transfer occurs. If there is more than one person touching a wall, the one who activated the gate would take over the body with the lowest Soul score amongst those eligible. The target need not be willing; if others merely force his hands against the wall after telling him of its purpose, the transfer can occur.

The only problem Sebastiao had was the mind he swapped with, since it would retain free will but be in his body—an unfortunate situation. He soon learned to use his Cliomantic powers to implant the habit of activating the gate at regular intervals in the

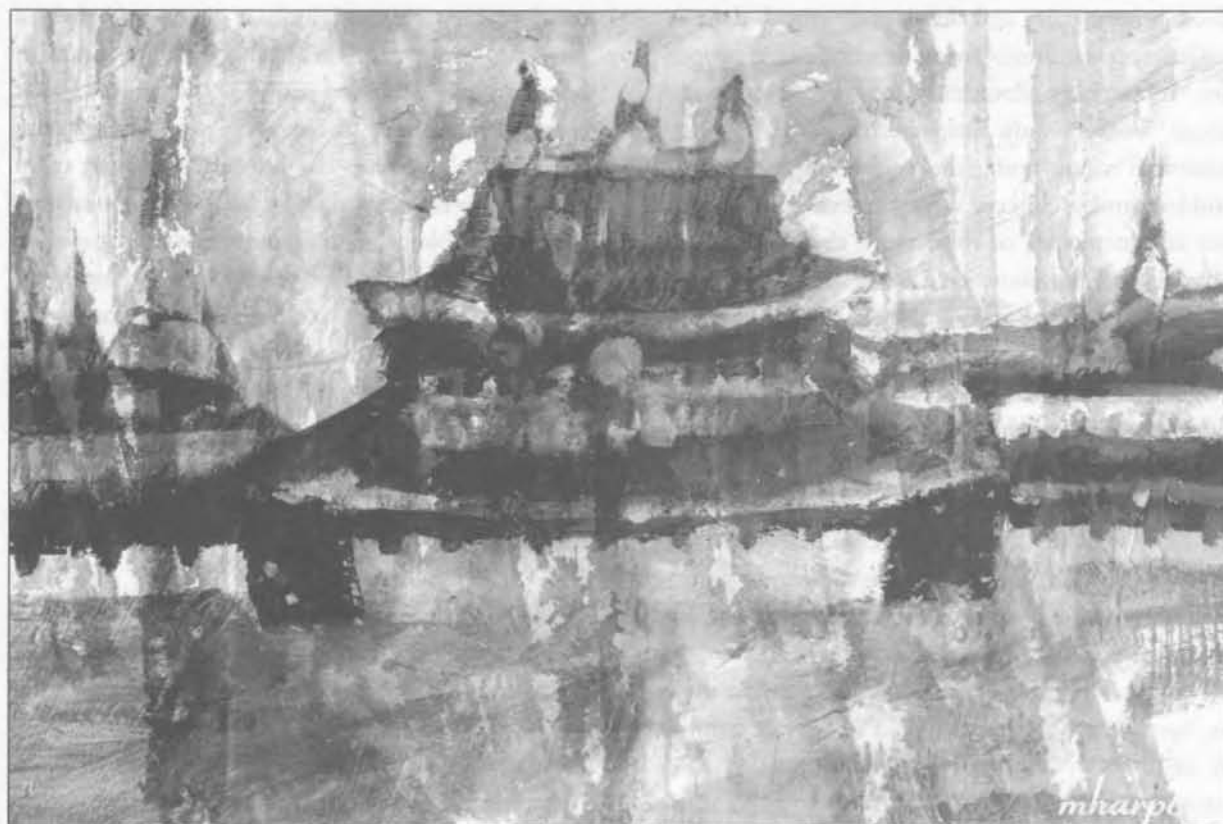
mind of his target, originally a cousin who held a post of importance in the company's Brazilian branch. When Sebastiao activated the gate and took over the other body, the cousin's mind sat lethargic in Sebastiao's body in the Lisbon warehouse; upon returning to his rightful body, he'd only have memories of a couple of hours spent reviewing paperwork in the company's archives which he was strangely unable to ever bring up to date. With the coming of transatlantic telephone service, Sebastiao opted for placing a keyword in his target's mind so that he would visit the Brazilian basement after hearing it on the phone. Nowadays, Joao/Sebastiao has five such people programmed in the Brazilian end and two in the Portuguese one.

Today, the gate is at the Sleepers' disposal. But Sebastiao has kept a further secret. As Avelino and now as Joao, he maintains the fiction that the mind transfer can only last about a month without dire consequences. In truth, the effect is indefinite. Sebastiao merely wants to keep his eternal-life goldmine to himself, and the only other person who knows the truth is Angela Forsythe.



MOISES DONOSO





MATT HARPOLO

The Temple of the Reposing Buddha, Beijing

Currently, there are less than 35 members of the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose to patrol the world's most populous country—more than 1.3 billion people. This tends to make the Brothers the most hard-line and merciless branch of the Sleepers: they simply don't have the time or the manpower to waste on subtlety. Luckily, most of the postmodern schools of magick have yet to penetrate into China's occult underground (except for the Hong Kong cabal, described in the nearby boxed text), and village hedge-adepts are usually best ignored. The dangerous threats that the Brotherhood deals with instead revolve around the unquiet dead—ghosts, revenants, demons—and Avatars. With so many people living and dying in essentially one place, simple probabilities dictate that China is the motherlode of such things.

The Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose has needed to move around a lot during the 20th Century. Formerly headquartered in Nanking, they

took incredible losses in 1937, not only during the Japanese occupation but also because of their assaults on the entourage of Dugan Forsythe. After the wise actions of Xue Li Chan and his departure from the Middle Kingdom, the Brotherhood began rebuilding, this time in Peking/Beijing. Then, in 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the creation of the People's Republic of China.

This knocked the Brotherhood for a loop: many of their less circumspect members were dragged off to reeducation camps and never came out. The following decades were followed by a number of disastrous political campaigns like the 1957 *Anti-Rightist Movement* (persecution of capitalists and pro-Western intellectuals), the *Great Leap Forward* of 1958 through 1960 (an attempt to mobilize overnight industrialization that led to mass starvation), and the *creme de la creme*, the *Cultural Revolution*, which lasted from 1966 to 1976 (where the angry, youthful Red Guard went on a rampage, destroying cultural landmarks, closing schools, and holding political trials). People—including Brothers—were dying, artifacts and plac-

es of power were being destroyed or lost, and paranoia ruled. China became closed to the West.

The last remnants of the Brotherhood managed to make it into Hong Kong in 1968, and they began the slow process of rebuilding yet again. There were fifteen of them. One of them was the teen-aged Wu Zhanhan (p. 88). The access to Western culture and thoughts allowed the Brotherhood closer contact with their European Sleeper brethren, and it also allowed them a window into the revolutions happening in the occult underground. Western postmodern magick began leaking into Hong Kong and was seized upon hungrily, then raised to almost an art form; in particular, Iconomancy found a number of adherents. Things began to improve, if slowly.

Then, in 1989, Tiananmen Square happened. The eyes of the world had suddenly turned to Beijing again. Indeed, the enigmatic Wang Weilin—the man in the famous photo who is standing with hand uplifted to prevent a tank's advance—who mysteriously disappeared soon after, and is one of only two Chinese people on *Time* magazine's list of the major figures of the 20th Century, may very well have ascended as the new Peacemaker (or Rebel). Knowing the ramifications of Ascensions better than perhaps anybody (see below), the Brotherhood decided it was time to return to Beijing. Leaving only a small cabal to police Hong Kong, they transferred their headquarters in 1992 to the newly-built Temple of the Repos-

ing Buddha—not to be confused with *Wo Fo Si* (The Temple of the Sleeping Buddha) in Xi Shan, the Western Hills.

The Temple of the Reposing Buddha is located in the Yangfang *hutong* (narrow, twisty, walled east-west lanes and alleys of old Beijing) of the *Shi Sha Hai*, or “Back Lakes” district, which used to be the exclusive beachfront property of Qing Dynasty royalty alone. Over its walls topped with broken glass, it overlooks Houhai Lake. It was formerly a *siheyuan* (courtyard house), but judicious uses of Cliomantic and Iconomantic magicks have “discovered” that a small temple of the Sui Dynasty once existed there. The destruction of the *siheyuan* and “restoration” of the Temple took about three years. The construction of the ten-foot-deep artificial pond was a minor miracle in itself.

The Temple of the Reposing Buddha and its grounds fills a large rectangular courtyard, perhaps 100 yards by 50 yards. The south wall has a large arched entry gate of wrought iron; another secret gate opens in the north wall into a concealed niche hidden right on the shore of Houhai Lake. The grounds are laid out with attention to excellent feng shui. Other than the Temple, its bell tower, and the attached dormitory for the monks is a rose garden, a rock garden, a ginseng garden/greenhouse, and a small pond. A small teahouse sits in the center of the pond on a tiny island. The island can only be reached by a crooked bridge (the monks tell visitors

The Hong Kong Sleeper Cabal

The four-person cabal left in charge of the former British colony of Hong Kong is a mixed bag of danger. Even among the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose, their speed and deadliness is held in awe.

They are led by Dr. Neville Fotheringay, a British psychiatrist and Cliomancer. Gong Kao is a middle-aged Chinese female Iconomancer who has managed to access the powers of Marilyn Monroe, Mao, and Princess Diana. Sita O'Connor is the most deadly Irish-Indian assassin on the planet, and Wang Kung is a Moon Dragon Triad member turned Sleeper.

The Hong Kong Cabal operates out of an office directly above Dr. Fotheringay's office suite. They rarely hold onto any magickal items that fall into their hands: often, they just courier such things directly to London, ignoring the Beijing headquarters entirely. This seems to suit Wu Zhanhan, but it upsets the abbot of the Temple of the Reposing Buddha intensely. At this point, the Brotherhood regards Hong Kong with the same mixture of ambition and resentment that the Chinese government does.



that the bridge is to confuse angry ghosts). A small waterfall splashes down into the pond, and a babbling brook weaves between the gardens.

The Temple is open by invitation only—and the waiting list for aspiring Sinologists is long, the application for access is both voluminous and tedious (as well as expensive), and only one non-Sleeper researcher is allowed on the grounds at a time. That being said, the Temple grounds are a wonderful repository of mundane Sui and Tang Dynasty artifacts, preserved by the Brotherhood from their founders. The entire compound is fully protected by the best top-of-the-line modern security systems.

The Temple proper has three main halls. The first is the Hall of Jade and Pearls, and contains numerous Sui and Tang Dynasty objects made of either or both of those materials, often with substantial historical or religious context. The Hall of the Root of Lightning is a large room dedicated to the power and folklore related to the humble *chang-diang shen*—ginseng. Materials range from alchemical scrolls to ginseng fairy tales to paintings and statues to the actual root itself. (Of course, none of these materials is magical in the slightest—all the best stuff has either been used, destroyed, or shipped off to the Cabinet). The final chamber is the Hall of the Reposing Buddha itself. Cast entirely from brass, this reclining statue is four times the size of a man, and dates from nearly the end of the Ming Dynasty. It's also a clockwork of epic proportions. Powered by a hidden mill-wheel under the pond's waterfall, the constant grind of silent gears generates a strong magical effect: any spell cast by an adept whom the clockwork does not recognize as a friend costs twice as many charges. If this increases the number of charges above what the adept is holding, the spell fails. Significant or major charges are broken down for change if necessary. This effect extends in a fifty-yard radius around the statue.

The small dormitory area is simple, as befits a Buddhist temple, and can support about 20 monks. All of the monks are Brotherhood Sleepers of various capabilities; the abbot, Deng Zhou, is a competent Entropomancer. There are modern

conveniences available for the monks, and the complex security systems are always being monitored. The generators that supply the power for the above-ground portions of the complex are located here as well.

The gardens and greenhouse are exactly what they seem, and the monks are often busy there.

The teahouse is a smallish hut, containing two benches, a table, and a three-foot diameter, three-foot tall copper tea kettle from the Yuan Dynasty. Its avowed use is for meditation, but if one knows the correct flanges and bas-reliefs to manipulate on the kettle, the hearth itself swings up on counterbalanced pulleys and stone steps lead down beneath the surface of the pond.

The Brotherhood keep their important treasures in this artificial cavern beneath the teahouse. It is called the Hall of Imprisoned Spirits. It holds materials related to the Brotherhood's specialties amongst the Sleepers—ghosts, demons, and Avatars—and at least one book that may be the most dangerous volume on earth.

Treasures in the Hall of Imprisoned Spirits

The Hall holds several artifacts and books, described below.

The Red Bats of Good Fortune (Minor): A large porcelain bowl on a pedestal holds about twenty of these painted clay bats. Each is about the size of a silver dollar. They're limited-use Lucky Charms (see UA, p. 181). They are available for use by all the Sleepers currently working in China; if they retain any charge after a mission, they are returned to the bowl.

Ghost String (Minor): In Chinese folklore, these twisted strings were used to refasten a wandering soul to a body, so that it would not wander again. About one hundred and fifty years ago, this Ghost String was used by a demon named Chu-K'uang (Mad Dog) to bind himself into his host's body such that he could not be exorcised. Even the fragrance of the Orchids of Cheng (see below) proved useless at first. Only by cutting the cord was the perfume effective, sending the Mad Dog howling back beyond the Veil.



MATT HARPOLD

Tiantan Kite (Significant): Formerly an Imperial Treasure, this Qing (also known as the Manchu) Dynasty Kite was flown only by emperors. If flown for one hour, it brings the flier into harmony with the cosmos. This means that until nightfall, the flier gains a +10% bonus to all Mind/Soul rolls (though not associated skills, at the GM's option).

The Orchids of Cheng (Significant): Where the rivers Chen and Wei meet at the foot of Mount Tu-liang there used to flourish an orchid, whose fragrance was said to be so sweet as to repel evil spirits. Here, under glass and artificial light, is the last collection of those orchids, perhaps fifty of them. Demons are unable to come within smell-range of these flowers (about twenty yards), and any possessed person inhaling the aroma of these orchids immediately may attempt a Soul check to expel the demon. There is also a small atomizer bottle of Cheng Orchid Essence here, with perhaps four sprays left in it, which was created to deal with the demon Chu-Kuang. It would take over a hundred orchids to distill

down enough essence to refill that bottle, so for now it's a limited resource.

Behind a wooden door bearing warning ideographs that read, "Beware offers of power, they are a lie!" lies a carefully sound-proofed gallery of items that have been used to cage or entrap demons and harmful revenants (some Splits, a few Wronged, and other things forgotten or unknown to the western occult underground). These items include bottles, kettles, teapots, rings, hairpins, robes, masks, Damnation Rounds (see *Lawyers, Guns, and Money*, p. 46), and more, nearly thirty-seven of them, each with a bound demon or ghost. While resting upon one of the ancient forty-nine rune-carved pedestals of the gallery, the spirit-objects can speak aloud and can hear people speaking to them. The result is a tumult of noise as they swear and curse at one another. Part of the monks' duty is to convince the ghosts and revenants to release their hold on the mundane world and slip back beyond the Veil; the mystic runes of the pedestals are known to permit this transmigration. It has happened twenty-eight

Witness: Li Shen

When I was a child in Miyun, there was a venerable grandfather who could lay his hands upon you and take off any sickness or injury. One spring, he vanished without a trace, leaving his son's family. The rumor was that the Sleepers had sent an invisible tiger to devour him. His ghost may even be wandering yet!

times since the Brotherhood has begun keeping records of such galleries; those spirits that pass on have their names recorded in the Scroll of Repose located on the first pedestal.

The last item in the Hall of Imprisoned Spirits is a secret even to the rest of the Sleepers; only those in the Brotherhood know of its existence. It lies in an iron-hard leather suitcase covered in blood red sigils in a titanium-steel bank vault, in a niche of solid rock, whose walls are covered with nailed-up lab coats, televisions, newspapers, computers, scrolls, books, and video tapes. It is *The Book of Celestial Etiquette of Heavenly Beings as They Walk Upon the Perfumed Earth*. It is a large scroll, written in Mandarin, on the finest linen; it is hand-copied once every sixty years to a new scroll to ensure its preservation. The transcriptionist always comes to a bad end, so they are chosen by lot. At that time additions and further information gleaned over the half-century may be added to it. Information on what? Avatars.

The Book of Celestial Etiquette of Heavenly Beings as They Walk Upon the Perfumed Earth is the most complete catalog of Avatars, their abilities, and even former godwalkers' unique channels on the face of the planet. The Brotherhood has been amassing this highly-volatile information for over twelve centuries. It makes Emil Dodustov's *Invisible Clergy* look like a children's book. (Some Brothers theorize that Dirk Allen's draft of 333—currently held in the Hamilton Collection—was partially a Westernized version produced when the deceased Brother who had copied and annotated the book to its latest new scroll possessed Allen as a Ghost Writer—see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 131.) The only reason the Clergy have not utterly destroyed this volume and all who know of it is because two of their own stand against them: the as-

cended archetypes of the Chronicler and the Scholar. In addition, the Judge, the Messenger, and the Necessary Servant have all been rumored to aid in protecting this book. Suffice to say that anyone who reads this book is bound to attract the attentions of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Statosphere (see *Statosphere*, pp. 17-20 for ideas). That's why many of the Brothers unlucky enough to draw the short yarrow stalk for transcription duty die in terribly bizarre ways, and why few Brothers ever read the full text.

Gear & Weapons

Sleeper agents have an unusual challenge. They must locate, confront, and even kill their targets, but few agents have any training in such work outside of what they get from the Sleepers. The ranks of the cabal aren't exactly swelling with SEAL veterans and intrusion experts, after all, so they have to make do as best reasonably ordinary men and women can.

Fortunately, the modern world offers a host of equipment that can augment their meager skills. The following sections describe an assortment of useful items, most of which are legal and commercially available in the United States. Specialized or hypothetical gear restricted to use by military, law-enforcement, or intelligence professionals is generally excluded. Approximate costs are provided for each item, since the Sleepers can't afford to fully equip every agent all the time. Sleeper training, however, typically includes coverage of many of these items.

Each item includes notes on the legality of ownership and/or use. These notes are based on conditions common in the U.S., though local laws and those of other countries may vary widely.



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Preferred Firearms

Firearms are a tricky issue with the Sleepers. Their predilection for silence over clamor contradicts their frequent usage of firearms as a means of problem resolution. After all, an assault or murder with a firearm draws more police attention than other methods, particularly in many European nations where firearms are harder to get than in the U.S. Still, a messy adept with a bullet in his brain is better than a messy adept who's only short a few teeth, and guns don't need difficult or time-consuming charges to activate.

That being said, Sleeper policy is to train its agents in the proper use of firearms where time and opportunity allow. Like most large organizations with some sort of enforcement function, the Sleepers have standardized on a few firearms that their agents are expected to learn and use. Common weapons across multiple Sleeper cabals ensures that ammunition and magazines can be shared, and that training won't go to waste if an agent has to borrow another agent's weapon. The

best weapon for the job, after all, is the one you have the most experience with, especially when you're talking about ambitious amateurs rather than experienced professionals.

(This is not to say that all Sleepers use these firearms. After all, how do you keep them down on the farm once they've seen the big city? But this is where new recruits start, at least.)

Specifically, the Sleepers have tried to standardize on three firearms—a handgun, a rifle, and a shotgun—and three calibers of ammunition:

Glock Model 17 Pistol, 9mm Parabellum

This semi-automatic Austrian handgun is popular with law-enforcement organizations around the world, with good reason. It's compact, sturdy, and very functional, and the lack of a traditional hammer makes it less likely to catch on your clothes during a fast draw. Its standard sold-in-the-U.S. magazine holds 10 rounds—aftermarket magazines holding 17 rounds are available in many locales—offering ample opportunity to hit



your target, and its design offers proven reliability. It uses 9mm Parabellum ammunition, which is common to numerous semi-auto handguns from manufacturers around the world.

To operate, you insert a magazine into the handle and work the slide action on the top of the weapon. This chambers a round. Each subsequent shot works the action itself, giving you one shot per trigger pull. The final shot leaves the slide action in the distinctive back position, giving instant visual confirmation that it's time to reload. A safety catch prevents firing unless deselected.

Price: \$500-\$600 new. High-capacity magazines (17 rounds, sometimes more) sell for \$50-\$150 depending on condition and seller.

Game Effects: Max damage for 9mm Parabellum is 50.

Availability: Gun shops. High-capacity magazines are available in some shops, at gun shows, and on internet auction sites.

Legality: New Glocks are sold with 10-round magazines only. Hi-cap mags may be illegal to buy or own in some communities, but are not federally prohibited on the aftermarket.

AK-47 Rifle, 7.62x39mm

Numerous versions of the venerable AK-47 rifle have been manufactured by many countries for five decades, primarily in the former U.S.S.R. and its allied nations. While not known for long-range accuracy, the AK is a cheap and reliable weapon for antipersonnel purposes other than sniper work. (Trained snipers being rather rare in the Sleepers, they use their own rifles of choice.) 30 and 40 round magazines are easy to find in most countries, though not always legally. 75 and 100 round drums (often Chinese) can also be purchased. More importantly, AKs are absolutely ubiquitous. More have been manufactured than any other firearm in history, and are available either legally or on the black market all over the planet for surprisingly little money: on the streets of East Bloc states in turmoil, they can be had for as little as fifteen American dollars. They are also easy to maintain and repair, and replacement parts and accessories are affordable and common. The Sleepers have no favorite manufacturer, since

they're pretty similar across the board. However, they do insist on the use of semi-automatic versions intended for civilians, rather than the fully automatic versions used by militaries, since full-auto weapons draw substantially higher attention. If you end up having to buy a full-auto version during an op—a likely possibility on the black market—it has a switch for either full-auto or semi-auto fire, so make the smart choice.

When a magazine is inserted, the sliding operating lever must be worked manually, which takes only a moment. After that, the rifle fires one shot for each pull of the trigger with no further manual action needed; the escaping force of the shot fired works the action automatically. A safety catch prevents firing unless deselected.

Price: \$400 new for semi-auto. High-capacity magazine prices vary by size: 30-round, \$20; 40-round, \$50; 75-round drum, \$125; 100-round drum, \$200.

Game Effects: Max damage for 7.62x39mm is 60.

Availability: Gun shops. High-capacity magazines are available in some shops, at gun shows, and on internet auction sites.

Legality: New AKs are sold with 5-round magazines only. Hi-cap mags may be illegal to buy or own in some communities, but are not federally prohibited on the aftermarket.

12-gauge Pump-Action Shotgun, buckshot

Like the AK, this shotgun is manufactured around the world in reasonably similar versions. Beretta, Browning, Mossberg, and Winchester, just for starters, have all manufactured this weapon. Typically, this side-loading firearm holds five cartridges. Its legitimacy as a hunting and sporting weapon makes it easier to explain in many situations than the AK would be.

As is familiar from countless movies, the slide action is worked before each shot is fired to load the next cartridge. A safety catch prevents firing unless deselected.

Price: \$350 new.

Game Effects: Max damage for 12g buckshot is 120.

Availability: Gun shops and some department stores, such as Wal-Mart.

Legality: Legal.

Nonlethal Weapons

Batons

A 3-foot length of black polycarbonate, the standard-issue police baton is valued for its psychological impact as much as it is for its solid heft. Perfectly balanced for hand-to-hand combat, the baton is a piece of police gear that's fun for the whole family.

Price: \$100

Game Effects: None. A baton is basically a club (+3 damage shift), and can be treated as such for attack considerations. Law-enforcement officials generally have extensive training in fighting with batons, moving its use from a simple blunt object to something resembling a martial art.

Availability: Uncommon, generally only through law-enforcement supply stores. Knockoffs of lesser quality are common.

Legality: Legal, but cops really don't like it.

Pepper Spray

Pepper spray has generally replaced the older chlorine-based Mace, which is not as effective against individuals on drugs, high adrenaline, or other extreme circumstances. Pepper spray's active ingredient is 5%-10% *oleoresin capsicum*, a variety of hot pepper, suspended in an aerosol solution. Clinical and field evidence shows that a direct hit with pepper spray is incapacitating for up to 45 minutes; even indirect exposure can easily keep you bleary and confused for 5-10 minutes.

It is intended to be shot into the face, where it impairs vision, causing a burning sensation in the skin and affected mucous membranes. Inhaling pepper spray immediately drops the victim; their lungs react by filling with liquid in a similar manner to mustard gas inhalation, though thankfully this is a non-lethal situation. Most commercially available pepper spray comes in small hand-held canisters that have a range of 8 to 10 feet and capacity for 10 to 15 shots.

Price: \$15-\$30

Game Effects: Hitting someone with pepper spray takes a successful Struggle roll, which can-

not be Dodged. A person who gets hit by the pepper spray must make a matched, successful Soul roll or lose their next two actions while clutching their face and howling. Someone in this state is not a sitting duck: rolls still have to be made to attack him, but the spray victim can't use the Dodge skill because he can't see what's coming. Failing the Soul roll is a rank-3 Helplessness stress check.

Availability: Common, at self-defense and espionage stores.

Legality: Legal

Smoke Grenades

A commercially available version of standard police equipment, smoke grenades generate up to 40,000 cubic feet (roughly a 35' cube) within 30 seconds of detonation. Smoke grenades come with a 10-second fuse delay, which allows them to be thrown ahead or placed in position prior to detonation.

Price: \$20 per grenade

Game Effects: Generates a large amount of smoke, which impedes visibility. General -20 shift for all maneuvers that rely on vision and combat, but the smoke must have 20-30 seconds to properly spread—this is a grenade, not a Batman toy.

Availability: Common, at self-defense and espionage stores.

Legality: Legal, but hard to explain.

Stun Guns

Hand-held weapons that deliver an electrical shock when they are pressed against an assailant, stun guns are very effective in the right circumstances. They electrify the opponent with 80,000 to 300,000 watts of direct current, which results in the victim's muscles locking into place, paralyzing them. As this makes breathing impossible, prolonged and sadistic use of a stun gun can cause brain damage from oxygen deprivation and, eventually, death.

Unfortunately, the effectiveness of stun guns is compromised by their need for direct physical contact and their inability to penetrate more than a light layer of clothing. Most defense manuals





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recommend that a stun gun be used on the neck of an attacker—not an easy target in a confrontation.

Price: \$40-\$130, depending on wattage and features.

Game Effects: It's a normal Struggle roll to hit someone with the stun gun. The stun gun does no damage, but the target automatically loses their next two actions while jitterbugging around uncontrollably. The victim also has to make a Body roll; failure means they pass out. Being knocked unconscious by a stun gun lasts anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour; make a Body check every fifteen minutes until you succeed or an hour has passed.

Availability: Uncommon, at self-defense and espionage stores.

Legality: Legal.

Tasers

A ranged version of the stun gun, these hand-held defensive weapons have seen use in police and

tactical units for the last two decades, but only in the last few years have commercial versions become street legal in the U.S.

A taser works by firing two metal probes into the victim's skin. These probes are connected by insulated wire back to the weapon, which then sends a 300,000-watt current through the victim, immediately incapacitating him. Tasers have a 15' range, and are only good for one shot; you fire the taser and then get about your business while the unit continues to electrify your attacker for the next 30 seconds. Unlike stun guns, tasers work through up to two inches of clothing, making even Arctic explorers vulnerable to its dubious charms.

Tasers are becoming increasingly common with security forces, and police departments are beginning to equip officers on the street with tasers to avoid excessive force charges when subduing unarmed perps.

Price: \$150-\$600, with the more expensive versions featuring laser sights and pistol grips. Car-

tridges are available for reloading at \$30 a pop.

Game Effects: If the attack succeeds, the victim is incapacitated up to 30 seconds, or until contact is broken. Recovery takes five minutes for someone with a 50 Body; season to taste. Only victims with supernatural defenses (100+ Body, magical toughness) should have some chance to avoid incapacitation.

Availability: Uncommon, at self-defense and espionage stores.

Legality: Legal.

Car Tasers

Technically a stun gun that is mounted to the steering wheel of any motor vehicle, the car taser ensures that thieves have maximum trouble stealing your ride.

Price: \$300

Game Effects: As per the stun gun, activating when the thief attempts to manipulate the ignition. It is possible to avoid the car taser by cracking the ignition case on older cars.

Availability: Common, at security stores.

Legality: Legal.

Tactical Clothing

Sharp and succinct rules for bulletproof vests may be found in the main UA rulebook, p. 58. In summary, a bulletproof vest reduces gunshot damage to martial-arts damage, so a 58-damage attack instead becomes a 13 (5+8). Aimed attacks negate this advantage.

Though these rules cover the essentials of bulletproof vests, it rests in the GM's hands to keep kevlar realistic. Kevlar is a ballistic fabric weave that can help stop projectiles—it is not a force field that provides magic karma armor. No conventional suit of ballistic kevlar on the market today is rated for more than one projectile at a time: they are designed to stop a single projectile travelling between 1000 and 1400 feet per second, dispersing the kinetic energy across the chest of the wearer. The task of absorbing one bullet burns out the warranty on all kevlar vests—expecting them to absorb a magazine of automatic gun-

fire results in a pained expression and chunky low-fat salsa all over the wall. Players should consider themselves lucky when the vest absorbs a single bullet and spares their lives—GMs should use their discretion as to whether the suit continues to function with further impacts.

Another problem is that bulletproof clothing is by no means easy to come by. Most vests are sold by manufacturers directly to the police and security companies; private individuals need to find a bribable contact at a security provider or else forge some paperwork to get possession of this gear.

Finally, don't forget armor-piercing bullets, which leave a teflon "skin" behind as they penetrate the weave of even the best kevlar vests. You round down damage for these (45 becomes 40), but they can ignore bulletproof vests.

Oh, one more thing: bulletproof vests don't do a thing against knives. Some of the latest suits on the market are trying to improve their record against knife attacks, but the suits can't stop the sharp edge of a well-honed knife—it slips right through the fabric.

In short, it is still far preferable not to get shot than to be wearing bulletproof clothing.

Kevlar Vest, Light

The only type of kevlar that can conceivably be worn and look natural, light kevlar vests are useful for stopping small-arms fire and in situations when advertising the possession of such equipment is unwise. They are rarely fashionable and give the torso a slightly boxy form. High-profile security firms have unpleasantly heavy trenchcoats that do much the same thing in a slightly more stylish form.

Price: \$900-\$1400, with more expensive versions offering tailoring for inconspicuous use.

Game Effects: Standard bulletproof vest effects versus ammunition up to a .38 special, 12-gauge shotgun, and other low-velocity weapons, with larger calibers such as a .30-06 rifle round achieving penetration.

Availability: Rare, through law enforcement and direct from limited manufacturers or security

companies.

Legality: Legal to own, but illegal to purchase for private use.

Kevlar Vest, Tactical

SWAT teams and other government agencies have access to this, which forms most everyone's idea of tactical body armor from the movies. Think black, heavy, tough, and unconcealable. Most are equipped with a sweat or body-heat triggered cooling system, as they're rough to wear for extended periods.

Price: \$2000

Game Effects: Standard bulletproof vest effects versus ammunition from all handguns, as well as protection from single (non-automatic) rifle shots.

Availability: Get real. Chances are it says "SWAT" on the back from whomever it was stolen from, unless Alex Abel owns the manufacturing plant through a front company.

Legality: Show-up-on-the-cover-of-a-national-newspaper-illegal.

Kevlar Curtains

No, we're not joking. Kevlar curtains are now commercially available, so that the style-conscious and paranoid can shield themselves from both telephoto lenses and sniper shots with style.

Price: \$200 per square yard, which really adds up quickly.

Game Effects: Provides protection as per the light Kevlar vest. Stronger weaves are not yet available, and note the obvious: curtains must be drawn to achieve coverage.

Availability: Rare, through select security manufacturers.

Legality: Legal.

Tactical Webbing

SWAT teams also have this great bandolier that can be filled with smoke grenades, stun grenades, extra magazines, multipurpose tools, and anything else that they might feel like carrying on a raid.

Price: \$100

Game Effects: Handy storage for up to 8 hand-held items, as well as clip-on locations for using

belaying equipment and ropes.

Availability: Uncommon, at some gun shops and spy stores; most available products are cheaper but serviceable imitations.

Legality: Legal.

Miscellaneous Equipment

Animal Repellent

There are a number of substances available. They all work on the same basis: they smell so foul that they make the wearer seem unpleasant or frightening. Canine Repellent and general purpose Animal Repellent are the most common and can be found in hunting & camping stores. The proper stuff costs more than \$50. At best these products deter casual animals, but don't stop trained ones. Pepper spray, described earlier, is the stuff to use on guard dogs.

Price: \$50-\$75

Game Effects: -15% skill shift to attacking or trailing animals.

Availability: Easy to obtain.

Legality: Legal.

Bug Detector

Bugs can be spotted in several different ways. Wireless ones transmit signals back to a receiver unit, and these signals can be identified. Microphones are susceptible to induced feedback, and can be made to let out a high-pitched whine. Induction coils often drain power, and can be shorted by spikes. Phone taps show up as an extra junction on electronic maps of the line. Bug detectors make use of some or all of these features to identify the presence of bugs in a room or on a phone line. \$200 buys you a cheap single-function detector that reveals one type of device; \$2000 gets you sophisticated equipment that can identify and neutralize all bugs and taps.

Price: \$200-\$2000

Game Effects: Locate all of one or more types of bugs, perhaps neutralize identified bugs. High-end equipment requires a Mind check to operate properly, unless you have a 15+ skill in something

like Electronic Countermeasures or Spycraft.

Availability: Uncommon, through counter-espionage shops.

Legality: Legal.

Cellular Telephone Jammer

Using simple broadband static across the range of cellular frequencies, it is extremely easy to overpower cell-phone signals in your immediate surroundings. You just need a blanket transmitter to overwhelm the carrier's RF signal. It's mostly a matter of having a large power source and a good aerial to push the jamming signals through. Range can be adjusted to as low as 2m, and can be tuned up to 4km on top-specification models.

Price: \$4,500-\$6,000

Game Effects: No cellular phones or pagers have a signal within the jammed area.

Availability: Rare, via counter-espionage specialists or dodgy tech importers.

Legality: Illegal.

Covert Video Cameras

Video cameras and recorders can be disguised as just about anything, from teddy bears and briefcases to mirrors and parts of the wall. Cameras can be wired up to television monitors for live observation, passed via a radio transmitter to a snoopster in a different location, or, where subtlety is vital, recorded onto built-in videocassette or digital storage for later recovery and playback.

Price: \$250-\$800

Game Effects: None.

Availability: Uncommon, from surveillance stores.

Legality: Legal, although not admissible as evidence in some states and undisclosed use may violate privacy laws.

Dry Ice Spray

Strictly one for the specialists, dry ice sprays are used to detect the light and laser beams so beloved of super-expensive alarm systems. By spraying a mist of dry ice into the air, light particles are diffracted and a beam of light shows up in the same way as it does when you shine a flashlight into an extremely dusty room. Dry ice sprays have

no other useful application, unless you need to appear wreathed in smoke for a few moments. (Cigarette smoke also works, but if you don't know just where the beams are you may spend too much time sucking and blowing; cigarettes could also set off smoke alarms or the smell might alert guards.)

Price: \$80

Game Effects: Laser & optical trip beams are made visible.

Availability: Rare.

Legality: Legal, but has little credible utility other than criminal applications and security installation & maintenance.

Electronic Countermeasures Suit

ECM suits are extremely impressive. By almost completely muffling the radiation traces from a human body, they make it very difficult for specialized observation technology to spot the wearer. There are no heat traces, residual IRs, or anything else to betray the person's position short of plain old video or audio observation. ECM suits appear like large jumpsuits with a veil in front of the face, and can be colored black for night use or camouflaged for day wear.

Price: \$100,000

Game Effects: While standing still, the wearer is invisible to infra-red, ultra-violet, and night sights. When moving, detection is at a -25% shift.

Availability: Military only.

Legality: Military only.

Glass Cutter

The cheapest type of glass-cutter is a simple diamond-tipped tool used for scratching a fault line into a window. The more expensive versions come with a special tool for delivering a sharp blow to the cut-out section so that it can be snapped loose, and some even have special suction-cup attachments to hold the cut-out and stop it falling to the floor inside, but those are really just frills.

Price: \$5-\$1500

Game Effects: Cut through a pane of glass without any shattering and without too much noise.



Note that the edge created can still happily slice through flesh, however.

Availability: Uncommon, from craft stores.

Legality: Illegal in some states.

Grappling Hook

A great favorite of movie producers, a grappling hook is a collection of spiked bars welded together and tied to a stout rope. The idea is that by throwing the grapple over an edge, it may be possible to hook a spike onto something and use the rope for support to climb up. The process can be aided with a rappel gun to shoot the hook a further distance or by attaching proper climbing harness to the rope, but if the spike is not secure you can still easily fall to your death.

Price: \$50–\$3,000

Game Effects: +20% shift to climbing if an initial throw is passed successfully.

Availability: Uncommon.

Legality: Legal, but tricky to explain.

HERF Pulse Generator

High Energy Radio Frequency pulses are known to induce overload in computer circuitry, shorting out the equipment and even reducing the entire machine to scrap metal. This effect can create a “bomb” that destroys all active computer circuitry within a certain radius, or to focus a narrow-beam gun-like blast on a specific machine. This technology is not easily available, but can be made by a skilled enthusiast without too much difficulty.

Price: \$100,000 purchased, \$2,000 jury-rigged.

Game Effects: Destroy computer equipment within the target area.

Availability: Military.

Legality: Illegal.

ID Laminator

A vital piece of equipment for anyone with forgery on their mind, simple laminating machines are used to convert photocopied or laser-printed fake documents into authentic-looking plastic-coated ID cards, driver's licenses, and so on. Although laminators can be purchased in any size, larger sizes are only really useful for producing menus for

cheap diners.

Price: \$150

Game Effects: Prerequisite for forging laminated ID cards.

Availability: Common, from office-supply or technology stores.

Legality: Legal.

Laser Bugging

Sound within a room causes minute vibration of any windows present. These vibrations can be scanned with the aid of a laser range-finding system specially calibrated for the purpose, and decoded back into an audio signal. Low-power lasers are hard to detect, but won't give much range; higher-power lasers can blind anyone who accidentally sees even a reflection of the light, but can work at distances of up to half a mile. On the plus side, infiltration of the target room is not necessary. On the minus side, taping a vibrator or two to the window—or even some pillows—can defeat this technology, as can sufficient ambient room noise.

Price: \$25,000

Game Effects: A trained user can eavesdrop on the conversation behind any window.

Availability: Rare.

Legality: Illegal.

Lockpicks

The simplest type of lockpick is basically a very stiff piece of wire with a kink in the end. When used with a slim, hard wire pushed into the center of the lock, the pick can be used to tease the tumblers open and spring the lock. Skeleton keys are slightly more advanced: the same idea, but in a range of thicknesses, lengths, and stiffnesses. Lock drills are the most advanced, and do it all automatically, but are not sold to civilians.

Price: \$5 (simple pick)–\$50 (skeleton keys)

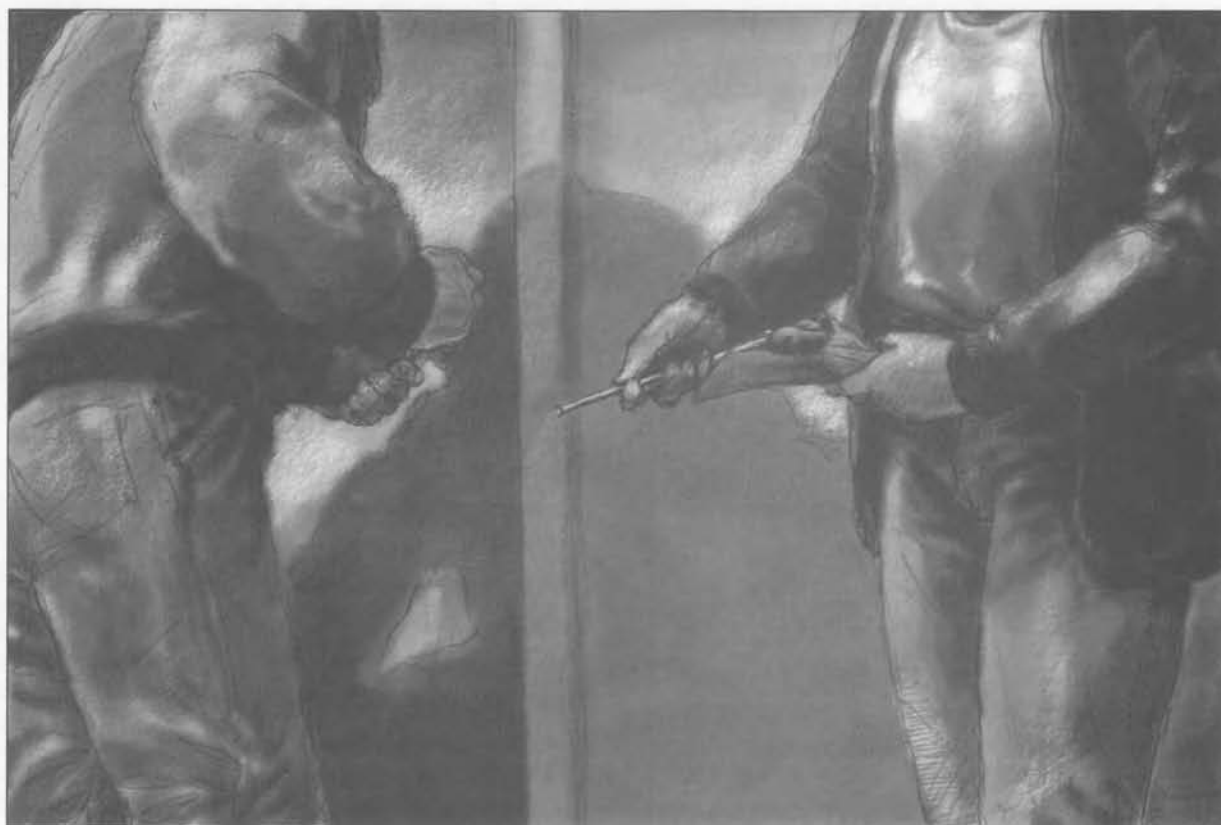
Game Effects: Prerequisite for lockpicking skills; +10% shift with skeleton keys.

Availability: Uncommon.

Legality: Mostly legal.

Personal Microphone

The body-worn microphone, or wire, is a com-



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mon fixture in police dramas. A small microphone on a lead is taped to the front of the wearer's chest, with leads going to a cassette recorder or microtransmitter and power supply taped in the pit of the wearer's back. They're undetectable to a casual glance, but wearing tight clothing, removing your shirt, or getting frisked reveals the wire immediately.

Price: \$100

Game Effects: Wearer may tape up to 90 minutes of conversation that they are present for.

Availability: Common.

Legality: Legal to own, illegal to use without consent of recorded parties.

Phone Tap

It's surprisingly easy to tap a telephone. You can insert a microphone transmitter into a handset, place a recording device on a socket, even use electromagnetic induction to copy signals passing through the phone wire. All useful phone taps start recording when the handset is lifted and stop when replaced; cheaper ones cannot operate

via a switchboard, only a direct line. Output is generally to tape cassette, for later review, but they can be wired to microtransmitters for nearby listening.

Price: \$500 - \$2,000

Game Effects: Record telephone calls.

Availability: Uncommon, from surveillance stores.

Legality: Legal to own, illegal to use without consent of recorded parties.

Recording Device

Much like covert video cameras, microphones and cassette systems can be built into just about any piece of equipment you choose. Attaché cases are considered traditional, but cigarette packs, umbrellas, pens, glasses, and just about anything else have been used. Smaller, more exotic devices cost more, as do ones with a greater recording capacity than about 30 minutes.

Price: \$20-\$10,000 (depending on how fancy you want it)

Game Effects: Record conversations at which you are present.

Availability: Common, from surveillance stores.

Legality: Legal to own, illegal to use without consent of recorded parties.

Room Bug

Like phone taps, bugs come in a range of different styles. The only real differences between them lie in detection and removal. They all let you listen to what's going on in the room that the bug is planted in, recording everything from whispers to shouted conversation clearly. There are tape-recording bugs (you pick them back up afterwards), wireless transmitters (which broadcast to your receiver), multi-room systems, two-way transmitters (so you can talk back), and even bugs that you can call up on the phone from anywhere in the world to listen to. As always, smaller, subtler, longer-lasting, or more versatile items are more expensive.

Price: \$150 - \$6,000

Game Effects: Record conversations in a room

Availability: Common to Rare, depending on quality and specification

Legality: Legal to own, illegal to use without consent of recorded parties

Tempest

Tempest is a computer monitor scanning system that works by picking up the UHF and VHF frequencies thrown off by unshielded monitors. It duplicates whatever is being shown on the computer screen that it is aimed at—from up to 100 yards away. Shielding systems cost about \$500 and are very easy to fit, so even the best Tempest scanner system cannot guarantee results.

Price: \$2,000-\$10,000

Game Effects: See what is being displayed on a computer monitor within line-of-sight, up to 100 yards away.

Availability: Rare.

Legality: Military and police.

Voice Scrambler

Simple circuitry can step the frequencies in a human voice up or down without any real need for frills, making a person sound higher, lower, electronic, or pretty much anything else. Cheap systems are recognizably false and modified, and tend to be limited to just one type of change. Top-end professional systems can be far more versatile, and some are even difficult to identify as scrambled. It is impossible to make your voice sound like a specific person's, however.

Price: \$40-\$5,000

Game Effects: -50% to any attempt to identify the speaker.

Availability: Common.

Legality: Legal.

Whisper Mike

By stepping up the signals from a conventional microphone, it is possible to produce a unit capable of clearly recording the quietest whispers at up to 50'. Good whisper units also contain high-end filtering, which means that all conversation is recorded at more or less the same volume so that shouting won't blow the mike. Some units—parabolic mikes—can be directed, and pick up conversations they are pointed at from up to 150' away. A whisper mike can be added to any standard microphone, bug, or other live recording device.

Price: \$25-\$150

Game Effects: Make distant whispers clearly audible.

Availability: Uncommon.

Legality: Legal to own, illegal to use without consent of recorded parties.



CHAPTER THREE

OUR GRAND AND

SECRET COMPANY

UNKNOWN ARMIES

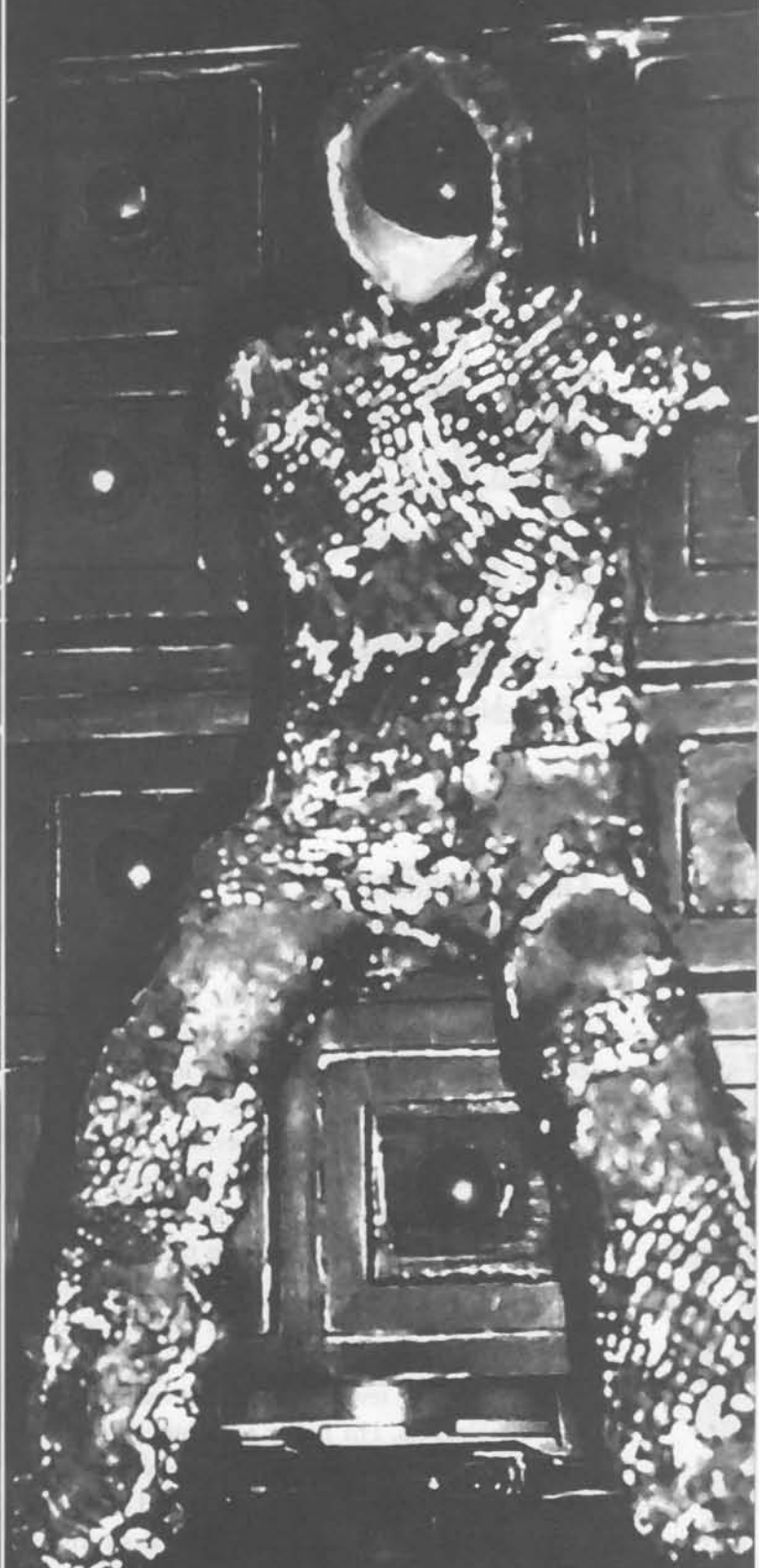


"As I WAS GOING UP THE STAIR
I MET A MAN WHO WASN'T THERE.
HE WASN'T THERE AGAIN TODAY.
I WISH, I WISH HE'D STAY AWAY."

—HUGHES MEARNS

"IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE THAT
ALL HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS SPRING
FROM THE LOATHING OF SOLITUDE."

—LUCIFUGE, THE BLACK DOG





TOREN ATKINSON

The Cabinet: Wu Zhanhan, Gerlinde Unger, Charles Hamilton, Joao dos Prazeres (not pictured: Lucifuge)

The Cabinet

Charles Hamilton

Family is everything to Charles Hamilton. At least, it's supposed to be. His father, also named Charles, constantly harped on the theme that the Hamilton family name was going to give the younger Charles everything that mattered in his life, and he'd better by damn give back just as much.

This seemed pretty hypocritical to young Charles, who could see (even as a teenager) that his father was neglecting his wife for his vague "business trips." Not only that, but the trips didn't seem to be doing a lot of good, as Hamilton Manufacturing Inc. took a round beating in the marketplace.

Then, at age seventeen, Charles was initiated into the Sleepers. His father took him through a secret door in the wine cellar of Gleeson House into an underground library that he had never, in all his life, suspected of existing. He was sworn to

secrecy, ritually anointed, and taught the ancient practice of Authentic Thaumaturgy.

As it turned out, he was a lousy thaumaturge and (initially) not a very good conspirator. Within six months, his younger sister Antoinette had succeeded in following him into the secret library. There followed an uncomfortable year in which he tried to hide his sister's knowledge from their father and vice versa—despite her knack for magic.

It couldn't last, of course. Charles the elder found out eventually, prompting an ugly scene involving yelling, cursing, a beating that left Charles the younger with a dislocated shoulder, and a fatal coronary infarction for the head of the Hamilton family.

Charles and Antoinette have sworn to never reveal what prompted their father's heart attack, but both of them sometimes suspect their mother knew. In any event, she came down with leukemia and died within two years of her husband's demise.

Charles—now no longer Charles the younger—became determined to work harder in his father's

memory than he ever had for the man alive. His dedication to the Sleepers was proven with a double homicide in Athens during the spring break of his first year at university. (It's true that Gerlinde Unger—then known as Lavinia Truelove—helped him through it. But it was Charles who pulled the trigger.)

Unlike his father, however, Charles felt that Gleeson House was an ideal headquarters for the Sleepers. Not only did Charles permit far more access to his home (and its secret library) than his father did, he also paid a great deal more attention to Hamilton Manufacturing. He studied business at university, did quite well, made many prominent connections, and is now a wealthy man. To put this in perspective, Alex Abel could buy him out and turn him into a pauper in about two weeks, if he ever perceived Charles as a threat. But then, how likely is that? Ever since being trailed by his sister, Charles has never, *ever* allowed himself to be careless with his secrets.

Just like every good magus should.

Charles's appearance is unremarkable. He's a chubby Brit with a ruddy complexion, a walrus moustache, and a bald spot. Nowhere on his person does he carry anything that would lead you to suspect he's an occultist. He doesn't watch horror movies or talk about *The X-Files*—his casual conversation inevitably runs to sport, politics, or business the way that water runs to the sea. Unless you saw him in action, you'd never guess.

Personality: Charles is a bluff, hearty, "Hail fellow well met" type who likes to connect (and get connected) with everyone he meets. An outsider might say he's building a web of favors, but Charles doesn't see it that way. To him, he's just forming synergies. If he helps you out, good. If you can't pay him back, that's fine, but if you're in a position to do him a good turn later, well—he's made you want to, hasn't he?

Obsession: Surpassing his father by being a better businessman, father, and Sleeper than he was.

Wound Points: 65

Passions

Rage Stimulus: When innocent people get killed

for being "witches" or "warlocks."

Fear Stimulus: Spirits that return from across the Veil. Unconsciously, he's terrified that his father could come back some day.

Noble Stimulus: Charles is quick to give a hand up to the less-fortunate.

Stats

Body: 65 (Portly)

Speed: 40 (Doughy) (F)

Mind: 65 (Thoughtful)

Soul: 65 (Cheery)

Skills

Body Skills: Box Your Ears 40%, General Athletics 20%

Speed Skills: Dodge 20%, Drive 15%, Shooting 35%

Mind Skills: Notice 50%, General Education 45%, **Organize** 65%, Authentic Thaumaturgy 35%, Occult Lore 50%, Run a Business 45%

Soul Skills: Charm 65%, Lie 60%

Organize: This represents his ability to arrange events so that things go his way. He does this by setting priorities, delegating authority, matching people's skills with the jobs that need doing, and performing all the other dull minutiae that any group with a goal requires. He can roll it to recognize which small problems will take care of themselves and which are only going to get worse unless nipped in the bud. Since he's nominally in charge of an occult organization, he can also use this skill to sniff out relevant occult underground gossip.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
3 Hard	6 Hard	4 Hard	0 Hard	3 Hard
3 Failed	2 Failed	1 Failed	0 Failed	1 Failed

Notes

Charles doesn't really care much for thaumaturgy, but he was thoroughly trained. He can perform the following rituals from memory:

Authentic Thaumaturgy

Both Charles and Antoinette Hamilton possess a skill called “Authentic Thaumaturgy.” This is very much like a school of magick, but at the same time it’s less restrictive and less versatile. Thaumaturgy is based entirely on rituals. There is no underlying ethos or contradiction or paradox—and therefore no taboos. On the other hand, there’s no random magick, and the spells generally take a long, *long* time to cast.

Authentic Thaumaturgy is Mind-based, and it does not have to be an obsession skill. It is possible to learn another school of magick after learning Authentic Thaumaturgy, but anyone who is an adept in another school can’t learn Authentic Thaumaturgy later (if, for whatever reason, she should want to). Essentially, a thaumaturge can make the jump to becoming an adept, but the mind-warping experienced by adepts precludes them from learning genuine thaumaturgy.

Stats

Generate a Minor Charge: Thaumaturges do not use minor charges. Instead, they cast minor rituals simply by performing the actions and rolling their Authentic Thaumaturgy skill. A successful roll yields a successful ritual.

Generate a Significant Charge: To cast significant rituals, the thaumaturge needs significant charges. Unlike the meaning-based charges acquired by modern adepts, thaumaturges generate significant charges by performing charging rituals (of which there are several). If they roll correctly while performing the ritual, they get the charge (or charges), with which they can then perform significant rituals.

Generate a Major Charge: If there’s a ritual for gaining a major charge, it’s lost for good. Which is just as well, since no one seems to know of any major rituals, either.

Taboo: Thaumaturges don’t have taboos. Once they get a charge, it’s theirs until they use it or die with it.

Random Magick Domain: None. Thaumaturgy is not random.

Starting Charges: Beginning thaumaturges start out with no charges. However, unlike the other schools, they also don’t start out with a demeaning nickname like “bodybag” or “love pirate.” They begin play knowing three minor rituals of the GM’s choosing. Other rituals must be acquired during the course of play—and be aware that charging rituals are among the most closely guarded secrets in the occult underground.

Blast Style: There is not, nor can there ever be, a Blast ritual.

Memorizing Rituals: Instead of lugging around moldering books and scrolls, you can memorize rituals for ease of use. Memorized rituals still require the same procedures, but you can cast them without having a copy of the ritual at hand. Given that most rituals run for pages and pages of rather hermetic text with a frequent disdain for modernist niceties such as recipes, precise measurements, or step-by-step instructions, the task of committing a ritual to memory in a way that preserves its symbolic penumbra is a daunting one; mere rote memorization of the text itself would help you to write it down again, but isn’t as useful when you’re swinging a dead dog around your head and have to recall the names inscribed on the Pillars of Wisdom with meaningful understanding of their historical context and folkloric resonance.

Authentic Thaumaturgists may memorize a ritual by spending experience points. (Non-Thaumaturgists may do so at the GM’s discretion.) As a rough guide, each ritual costs 1–5XP to memorize depending on complexity. Rituals that require little time or materials, such as Fires of Pure Will (see p. 47), only cost 1XP. Order of the Wild (see p. 47) would cost 3XP, while Harmonious Alignment (see p. 48) would be 5XP, owing to its substantial complexity and variable content.

Poison Ward (see UA, p. 81)
 Spellbreaker (see UA, p. 82)
 Portal Glyph (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 44)
 Purifying Bath (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 44)
 Bind Thaumophage (see p. 48)
 The Knife That Drinks (see p. 46)
 Harmonious Alignment (see p. 48)
 Inner Screaming (see p. 49)
 Foul Stench of Sorcery (see p. 46)

In addition, he can (of course) look up any of the rituals in the Hamilton Collection (see p. 46).

Possessions

Lots. Charles has several cars, a nice condo in London as well as his comfortable estate at Gleeson House. The latter, of course, is where he's got his guns ("For a spot of fowling, old sport"), his horses, his many dogs (a dozen Dobermans outside and several well-trained pit bulls inside, all of whom run whining if the Black Dog comes near), and enough occult paraphernalia to outfit several simultaneous performances of *Faust*. The only occult item he routinely carries on his person, however, is a penknife prepared for use as a Knife That Drinks (see p. 46).

Most importantly, Gleeson House is home to the immense Hamilton Collection of occult books. It's not famous—most of the books in the collection are listed as "lost" or "destroyed" in the official catalogs. It's also not the largest in the world; the Vatican's is definitely bigger. But of all the occult libraries in the world, the Hamilton definitely has the highest truth/crap ratio. (See p. 44 for more on the Hamilton Collection.)

Modus Operandi

Charles doesn't get his hands dirty any more, but back in the day his favored method was to study troublemaking adepts to see how, where, and when they were charging up. Then he'd try to plant a thaumophage in their path. Once he knew the 'phage had done its work, he'd pick a fight somewhere inconspicuous, beat the guy unconscious, and finish him with a neck break.

Gerlinde Unger

Gerlinde Unger is in her mid-twenties. She is also over a hundred years old. She is also Lavinia True-love, Anna Krongeld, Karla Monserrat, Marta Schlicter, Theresa Falcotti, and Lewis Schmidt.

How these contradictory statements all came to be true is a rather complicated story.

Gerlinde started out as Anna Krongeld, born in Germany in 1883. Her parents were well-to-do and educated, but a bit too conservative to be true "intellectuals." The Krongelds can't be blamed too much for being old-fashioned, of course: their daughter was born just as Germany's industrial revolution was settling down. It seemed like a time of tremendous promise, with German goods being produced at an astounding rate for German colonies in Africa.

Anna grew up hearing wonderful stories about the exotic lands and mysterious peoples of the colonies, but whenever she spoke of seeing them herself, her parents nixed the idea. After all, she was only a girl.

Growing up, Anna rejected the nationalistic mores of her parents and associated herself with the people most likely to piss them off: the decadent German occult underground of the early 1900s. They were shocked, appalled, and—when they learned the exact nature of some of the Ordo Templi Orientis' ceremonies—enraged. Their anger played out in the courts and resulted in a number of arrests, which made Anna rather unpopular with her peers.

She faced a difficult choice: go slinking back to her parents and be "only a girl" or shun their protection and go it alone—in the face of abandonment by her friends. To everyone's surprise (including her own) she chose the second option. She robbed her parents and ran away to Italy, where she reinvented herself as Karla Monserrat. She served coffee by day, waited tables by night, and pursued the arcane every moment in between. During the First World War she befriended Lewis Schmidt—another German expatriate who despised his parents, though in his case it was because they rejected his homosexuality—and introduced him to occultism. Together they were ac-



cepted into an Italian secret society called La Chiesa di Nuova Anima. That was where Anna/Karla learned the Knife That Drinks ritual and (eventually) the Ritual of Union. While La Chiesa di Nuova Anima had those two spells accurately preserved, their grasp of thaumaturgy was weak enough that they could not perform them reliably. Anna/Karla did better than most, due mainly to a natural knack, but even she only succeeded in creating occasional random unnatural effects. Still, that was good enough for La Chiesa.

During the war, times were hard for Anna/Karla and Lewis, but they persevered. Anna/Karla gained more and more influence in La Chiesa. This was critical when Lewis caught the Spanish Flu in 1918: it was at Anna's urging that members of La Chiesa nursed him back to health when she was forced to work to keep him fed.

At the war's end, Anna was the sole surviving leader of La Chiesa, which broke apart when most members were unwilling to follow the orders of a woman. She and Lewis both looked for another group, but it was Lewis who eventually found them: a Bavarian cabal of Eastern Cryptomancers (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 71).

The German crypts were as sexually biased as the Italians had been, and Lewis had a terrible time learning the occult secrets. If only (he thought) there was some way to combine his gender with Anna's obvious talent for sorcery.

It took him two years to persuade her, but eventually her hunger for mystic knowledge led her to cast the Ritual of Union (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 49) on herself and him—hoping, as he did, that this spell would combine them and keep them together for the rest of their lives.

They meant it to be a beautiful union, but as the spell progressed it became clear that only one consciousness could survive. Lewis caved in early, allowing Anna to defeat him. She regrets it to this day, but she also loves his memory all the more for allowing her to consume him.

Anna/Lewis stayed with the crypts long enough to learn the fundamentals of their powers, but the Second World War seemed like a bad time to be a known homosexual in Bavaria.

Anna/Lewis fled back to Italy, where she started a new mystic organization, open to both sexes, based around the ritual of the Knife that Drinks and the concept of the Mystic Hermaphrodite (which she was beginning to channel personally). By the end of the war, Lewis's body was in its sixties, and s/he made a fateful decision to use the Ritual of Union again.

His/her choice was simplified by simultaneous disgust for his/her ritual partner, and recognition of the benefits of taking her body. Theresa Falcotti was young, arrogant, pretty (prettier than Anna/Karla had ever been, a factor that contributed to her decision), wealthy, and had ambitions to take over the cult. Anna/Lewis explained the Ritual of Union and offered to perform it with her, if Theresa would use the Knife that Drinks to power the ritual. Theresa (who coveted Anna/Lewis' knowledge) eagerly agreed, unaware that using the Knife that Drinks six times would leave her spirit weak and easily conquered by Anna.

Where her first use of the Ritual was a painful loss and a bittersweet realization, consuming Theresa Falcotti was all triumph. Unfortunately, her cult reacted very badly towards the "usurper" and kicked her out, but Anna/Theresa didn't really care. She went back to Germany as a wealthy Italian, eventually uncovered the Berlin Sleepers, and joined them. When she perceived the conflict with the non-German Sleepers, she offered to sell the Berlin branch out if the mainline Sleepers would offer her their protection. (In reality, she was itching for a chance to consume another human spirit.) The Sleepers agreed and stuck an Astral Parasite on Marta Schlichter the week before her Union duel with Anna/Theresa. Anna won again, and Anna/Marta quickly brought the German Sleepers back into the fold; she then smashed the remaining Berlin Cryptomancers and took possession of their temple as her headquarters. However, Marta's body was old, creaky and (eventually) one armed, so it didn't take Anna/Marta long to start casting around for a more suitable one. She thought she found it in Lavinia Truelove in 1970: Lavinia was young, healthy,

pretty enough, and weak-willed. She was happy as Lavinia until 1993, when she successfully persuaded a nineteen-year-old named Gerlinde Unger to compete with her for the ultimate prize.

Anna/Gerlinde is old, but looks like she's in her twenties. She's crafty, but seems naïve and inexperienced. She's terribly powerful, but comes across as a rank neophyte. Living out all these deceptions makes it less difficult to keep her Cryptomancer taboo intact, but even that she often disregards in order to strengthen her Mystic Hermaphrodite connection. While a total dedication to her Sleeper role would weaken her link to the Hermaphrodite, Gerlinde is happily (for her anyhow) not particularly dedicated to the Sleeper cause: they just provide some very handy backup when she wants to take down a rival in the German occult scene. Gerlinde is looking out for Gerlinde, pure and simple, and keeping her identities as Sleeper, Hermaphrodite, Cryptomancer, and cabal leader working together is all part of her self-serving plan.

Of course, all this has made her as crazy as a shithouse rat.

Gerlinde appears to be an athletic, blue-eyed blonde woman in her mid-twenties. She's studying history at the University and doing very well indeed, thanks in part to a generous grant from the Falcotti foundation. Her parents had a bit of a scare last year when, two days after a Judo competition, Gerlinde fell into a three-day coma. The doctors called it a residual head trauma effect, but privately shrugged and wondered what the hell had happened. Since then, Gerlinde has seemed different and has become somewhat estranged from her parents.

Personality: Anna's morals have gradually eroded to the point that she judges every woman she meets as a potential target for assimilation. (She doesn't want to be a man again—it was just too weird and yucky.) She's tried the Ritual of Union at least a dozen times in her life, and is always enraged by those who "flinch" and derail it before she can devour them. She wants to live forever, and she thinks the Ritual has put her on the right track.

Obsession: She's obsessed with the power of magick, pure and simple. Currently, this manifests itself through her hunger to use the Ritual of Union.

Wound Points: 65

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Being outdone in a feat of sorcery.

Fear Stimulus: Failing the Ritual of Union and being consumed.

Noble Stimulus: Protecting the world from dangerous adepts—especially those who can do things she can't do.

Stats

Body: 65 (Strong)

Speed: 65 (Quick) (S)

Mind: 65 (Crafty)

Soul: 75 (Magnetic)

Skills

Body Skills: Judo 50%, General Athletics 30%, Pretty Young Frau 15%, Swimming 35%, Knifeplay 25%

Speed Skills: Dodge 30%, Drive 20%, Firearms 45%, Snatch 45%, Horseback Riding 30%, Sprint 40%

Mind Skills: Notice 40%, General Education 55%, Memories of Lewis Schmidt 60%, Memories of Lavinia Truelove 25%, Memories of Marta Schlichter 55%, Memories of Theresa Falcotti 30%, Speak English 65%, Speak Italian 65%, Speak Spanish 42%, Speak Portuguese 36%, Read Latin 20%, Read Greek 35%, Authentic Thaumaturgy 65%, Cult Leader 60%, Occult Underground Gossip 40%

Soul Skills: Charm 25%, Lie 45%, Seduce 45%, Cryptomancy 35%, Avatar: Mystic Hermaphrodite 55%

Cult Leader: This skill gives her influence over about fifteen or twenty people in the Berlin Temple of Truth. Just two of them are actual adepts. There are only about three of them who would risk serious injury on her behalf, and neither of the adepts are included in that number.

Snatch: see UA, p. 42.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
6 Hard	8 Hard	3 Hard	3 Hard	7 Hard
2 Failed	3 Failed	1 Failed	2 Failed	5 Failed

Notes

While Gerlinde is a Cryptomancer, she isn't very faithful in her practice. Generally, if she needs a minor charge she gets one and spends it immediately. If she needs a significant charge, she uses the Knife that Drinks.

Gerlinde knows the following rituals:

The Knife that Drinks (see p. 46)

The Ritual of Union (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 49)

Cripple the Soul (see p. 49)

Resonant Bleeding (see p. 47)

Foul Stench of Sorcery (see p. 46)

She's insane. Specifically, her sense of self is so badly eroded that she automatically looks around expectantly whenever someone is addressed as "Gerlinde," "Theresa," "Marta," "Lavinia" or "Lewis." She hates being photographed or recorded and dislikes having mirrors around, but these are mere eccentricities. Worst of all is when she hears the name "Anna." If it's just someone in the area being called "Anna," she can make a Mind check to control herself. Failure means she freaks out, and probably freezes or flees the scene. If someone calls *her* Anna—or worse, says her full name or shows her some proof from her old life—she loses her cool automatically. Her reaction depends on the circumstances, but is likely to be quite extreme. Fortunately for her, she took Lewis's body before a photograph could ever be taken of her old Anna self.

Her adherence to the Mystic Hermaphrodite is often in flux, since she can be no more dedicated to it than anything else lest she break taboo. This means her Avatar skill fluctuates by +/-10% from the stated level.

Possessions

Gerlinde generally carries a penknife that has been prepared as a Knife That Drinks. She is fairly well

off personally, and can often draw upon the funds of the Berlin Temple of Truth for larger expenses.

Modus Operandi

Whenever possible, Gerlinde simply approaches her target, explains the Ritual of Union, and issues a bald challenge. If the challenge is taken up, she tells her target that it will take her a little while to charge up for the ritual. In actuality, what she wants to do is cast Cripple the Soul on her target to soften her up for the Ritual. If the Ritual fails, well, she's got the victim alone in an isolated area and can probably take her out in the confusion.

If the target doesn't accept the challenge (or isn't worth devouring) Gerlinde plays it by ear. The "pretend to be a drunk innocent college girl until the guy takes you back to his apartment" game works surprisingly well on many adepts.

Joao/Sebastiao dos Prazeres

Joao dos Prazeres is the scion of one of Portugal's wealthiest families, specializing in Brazilian coffee farming. However, he not only inherited his family's business empire—he also "inherited" his grandfather Sebastiao's mind.

Sebastiao dos Prazeres (born in 1893) had always been keenly interested in history, and his command of it drew the attention of one of his teachers while he was studying at Lisbon University. This Portuguese professor, Jeronimo de Fora, was one of the first apprentices to Dugan Forsythe, the founder of Cliomancy. With de Fora making the introductions, Forsythe initiated Sebastiao in the school's secrets in 1919.

After his father's death in 1922, Sebastiao took command of the family business, traveling to Brazil on numerous occasions to oversee the coffee plantations that the family owned in Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais. A few months later he married Maria, who belonged to a rich Portuguese family, and who bore him a son the following year. He kept his magickal pursuits a secret from his wife.

The long voyages between Lisbon and Sao Paulo made it hard for him to gather charges, and he began to wonder if he could find a magickal

solution. In 1927, after harvesting a major charge from an Incan city (it was rather easier in those early days of the school), he constructed a magic gate between family warehouses in Santos (a port near Sao Paulo) and Lisbon that he hoped would allow him to transport cargo in the blink of an eye. Unfortunately, the strictures of Cliomancy didn't cooperate: the gate would transfer minds, but not objects.

The situation almost got out of his hands when he took over the body of a worker at the Lisbon warehouse; luckily he had the presence of mind to switch back immediately, leaving his distant employee disoriented and confused but ignorant. Despite the disappointment, he was more than ready to make use of what he had obtained: he could control his empire from Lisbon and regularly gather charges from the virgin Cliomantic territory of South America (although he had to use somebody else's body to do that, and use his magick to rinse their minds afterwards).

The years slipped by, and word spread throughout the European occult underground that the Lisbon Cliomancer was more powerful than he ought to be for a man who rarely left home. In 1940, Sebastiao had a cardiac arrest that almost killed him, and survival became his main priority. Unwilling to go quietly into that good night, he named his young son Avelino as his only heir, and used his magick to overcome any resistance. The following year, upon Avelino's coming of age, Sebastiao sent him to Brazil to see the family's coffee plantations—and swapped minds after ingesting arsenic and leaving a suicide note. His son died in Sebastiao's body. (A workman obediently carried the body & note to Sebastiao's favorite orchard for discovery.) Maria followed three years later, heartbroken by her husband's suicide. Avelino/Sebastiao soldiered on.

In 1949, Jose Aznar Villalonga—a rival Cliomancer from Valladolid—sniffed around the young man's mind and realized his secret. Villalonga anonymously threatened Avelino/Sebastiao with exposure unless he could have access to the mind gate. That was when young Angela Forsythe, seeking her fa-

ther's disciples, proposed a plan: to rid him of the annoying adept, in exchange for his joining her organization, the Sleepers. Avelino agreed to collaborate with the Sleepers as long as he could retain dominion over the charges of Brazil.

In 1953 Avelino married Gabriela, mulatto daughter of a Brazilian tycoon. She bore him a son the following year, whom they named Joao. Before Avelino's death in 1978, Sebastiao's mind had already been switched with Joao's. After Gabriela passed away, Joao married Fatima, another Brazilian, who gave birth to twins Antonio and Josefa in 1984.

Joao is a handsome fortysomething mulatto whose stare could scare anybody. He has to make an effort to hide the indifference he feels for almost everybody (including his own family, who are no more than tools to him). However, he is a master of deception and charm, and although most Sleepers know that he does not belong to the organization out of the goodness of his heart, they are unaware of the fact that he cares as little for them as he does for everybody else.

Personality: Joao is a man more attracted to business than he is to people (he is often told that he is "just like your father and your grandfather"). He is adept at putting on a good face and at telling people what they want to hear, but often resorts to mind manipulation when he is unable to achieve his goals. People are merely puppets to him, but what is truly unfortunate is that people *trust* him, or at least they trust him as much as a workaholic businessman can be trusted.

On the downside, he has increasingly stepped away from running his importing business. The speed of modern communications appeals to his Cliomantic interests, but they merely make the shipping of coffee a constant bother. He's *tired* of coffee and tired of his family business. These days, he gets much more enjoyment out of running his hotel and being a Sleeper.

Obsession: History and the influence that historical events have on current events, including the extension of his life and work. His fear of death is a consequence of his desire for immortality and to become one with history.

Wound Points: 50



Passions

Rage Stimulus: That his secrets should come to light. Very few people know he is a Cliomancer (his family is unaware of it), and only one other person (Angela Forsythe) knows that he is really Sebastiao.

Fear Stimulus: Death. That heart attack left its mark on him forever; in fact, he would have had more sons if that did not entail his empire's partition. In case of an emergency, he would adopt a child without thinking twice about it. "Reincarnating" in someone of his lineage is a matter of preference; survival is the most important matter. Since his first transfer, he has tried to keep his body in a good shape.

Noble Stimulus: The dissemination of historical culture. In the bottom of his heart there is something apart from selfishness, something which compels him to fund any kind of culture and historical heritage preservation project. It cannot be said, however, that he does it for people, but rather for the great love of his unnatural life: history itself.

Stats

Body: 50 (Fit)

Speed: 50 (Deft) (S)

Mind: 65 (Brilliant)

Soul: 75 (Confident)

Skills

Body Skills: General Athletics 50%, Struggle 30%

Speed Skills: Dodge 40%, Drive 40%

Mind Skills: Business 50%, English 50%, Notice 30%, History 65%, Portuguese 65%, Spanish 40%

Soul Skills: Charm 55%, Cliomancy 65%, Lie 75%

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness
Isolation	Self	
4 Hardened	3 Hardened	2 Hardened
3 Hardened	7 Hardened	
2 Failed	1 Failed	3 Failed
1 Failed	2 Failed	1 Failed

Possessions

Basically the same as any business tycoon's. Fine

clothes, cars, and the like, although he is not lavish so much as he is motivated to keep up appearance. This is draining his finances, however, especially since he has begun to step away from the coffee business.

Modus Operandi

Whenever he has to talk to somebody important, he meets with him in the private floor of his hotel. He never gets his hands dirty, preferring to manipulate the minds of his targets as needed. He can pay for assassins against mundane targets, and use the Sleepers against magickal ones.

Wu Zhanhan

Back in the day, Wu Zhanhan was one stone badass. A tough cop of the guns-blazing/ass-kicking/suspect-pummeling variety, Wu spent the late sixties and early seventies making life as hard as possible for the gangsters and smugglers of his native Hong Kong. Someone who only knew part of Wu's story might find this a little odd, particularly if he only knew the part where Wu pledged fealty to the drug-smuggling Seven Door Triad in the early sixties.

The fact that makes it all understandable was young Wu's induction into the Brotherhood of Harmonious Repose. As a Brother, Wu signed on with the triad to keep its magick use subtle and concealed. When the Seven Door Triad decided to eschew subtlety in favor of making some of their thugs bulletproof, it was time for them to be smashed into a thousand pieces and scattered to the winds—a task Wu performed with relish. Since he was tight with many of their members and had the Brotherhood guarding him from astral parasites and other hassles, he succeeded against the Seven Doors like no cop before him.

His success against the Seven Doors put him on the fast track, and by the 1990s he was the captain of one of Hong Kong's toughest precincts. He was also internationally recognized as an expert on Triad methods and operations. Police departments from Sydney to Los Angeles flew him in to consult about Golden Triangle heroin smuggling.

All the time, Wu used his police influence to support the goals of the Brotherhood. At the same time, he persuaded the Brotherhood that the best way to pursue their goals was to protect the police from magick. As long as the police weren't getting hurt, there was no reason for them to believe, right?

When Great Britain returned Hong Kong to China in 1997, Wu Zhanhan retired to London. A lifelong Anglophile, Wu had sent his two children to University in England, and both of them stayed after graduation. Now he has joined them and can focus the full force of his considerable intellect, experience, and influence on the affairs of the Sleepers.

While one of his longtime U.S. colleagues referred to Wu as "the Chinese John Shaft," he's gotten considerably subtler since his "Up against the wall, motherfucker!" days. Now he reads, writes books on oriental gang culture, sits on panels at conferences, and serves as a guest lecturer for the FBI and CIGN. He's slower on the draw and he doesn't box anymore, but he's still nowhere near as harmless as he looks.

Wu is a trim-looking man in his early sixties. He speaks impeccable English with a proper, upper-class Brit accent. He's urbane, intelligent, and charming. Almost everyone he meets thinks he's a fine old gentleman. There's only one time the dark side of his life shows through. If a conversation should happen to turn to violent crime, Wu just might tell some stories of his days in Triad enforcement that just aren't appropriate for decent people to hear. He doesn't spare a detail, and tells it with the calm interest of a man recounting a cricket match.

Personality: Calm, calculating and utterly confident in the rightness of his cause.

Obsession: Making the world safe for the little guy.

Wound Points: 50

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Somewhat the sexist, Wu can't stand watching a woman being physically abused or loudly insulted. He's not crazy about snide comments to women either, but it doesn't push

his buttons the way shouting (or hitting) does.

Fear Stimulus: He's afraid of losing his credibility if his mundane law enforcement contacts learn of his connection to the occult.

Noble Stimulus: Making the world safe for magick—and safe from it.

Stats

Body: 50 (Fit)

Speed: 50 (Deft) (S)

Mind: 75 (Brilliant)

Soul: 65 (Confident)

Skills

Body Skills: Boxing 50%, General Athletics 30%, Long Distance Running 20%, Swimming 40%, Drink You Under The Table 50%, Wrestling 35%
Speed Skills: Gunfighting 50%, Dodge 50%, Drive 50%, Fast Draw 50%, Sprint 20%

Mind Skills: Authority 25%, Influence 70%, Notice 70%, General Education 25%, Occult Studies 50%, Knowledge of Eastern Crime Syndicates 75%, English Language 75%, Cantonese Language 75%, French Language 45%, German Language 20%, Various Chinese Dialects 30%, Japanese Language 20%

Soul Skills: Charm 55%, Lie 65%, Interrogate 65%

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
10 Hard	6 Hard	2 Hard	3 Hard	3 Hard
3 Failed	1 Failed	0 Failed	0 Failed	1 Failed

Notes

Wu's Influence skill lets him do things like keep stories out of the papers, get certain criminal cases prioritized or soft-pedaled, and get your PCs put on the FBI's Most Wanted list.

Wu has a thaumophage bound into his body, which may come as a nasty surprise to any Entropomancers, Amoromancers, or other adepts who try to charge up off him.

Wu keeps a coded diary. Every day he writes down what he's done and what happened to him, and every day he reads a month chosen at random. He never puts down specifics of his crimi-



nal cases or Sleeper projects—it's more like "Stopped by Yaumatei and asked R. about White Tiger" or "Talked to M. about the Lisbon situation." He goes into more detail about his social engagements. Wu hopes that by keeping this journal, he may be able to discern if his memories are tampered with. So far, he hasn't noticed anything, which he hopes is a good sign.

Possessions

Wu carries a fully licensed Beretta 9mm pistol. It holds 15 bullets and its maximum damage is 50.

More importantly, Wu possesses a powerful magick amulet taken from the cooling corpse of the Seven Doors kingpin.

The Seven Doors Amulet (Significant): This is an artlessly carved pendant of low-grade jade. It's flat, round, and about an inch and a half across. It appears to be an exaggerated bas-relief of a naked woman in a vulgar pose. Sold on the open market, it might get you a hundred bucks, since it's poorly executed and the woman's proportions are kind of wrong. However, anyone who wears the amulet has a measure of protection from any deliberate attack—mundane or magickal. Specifically, any successful attack roll is flipped. If this makes the result higher than the attacker's skill, it's a failure. Even if the attacker used a Passion, Obsession, or other means to flip the roll already, the amulet acts last and flips it back. In some cases this can actually make an attack better, but by and large it provides significant protection.

Modus Operandi

Back when he was a cop, things were pretty rough and tumble. Lots of suspects got "shot while resisting arrest," so once Wu took care of any magickal hangups, it wasn't too hard to pound or shoot the crap out of someone.

Nowadays, Wu doesn't confront anyone directly. He just pulls strings with his buddies in international law enforcement. Once an adept is on the lam from John Law, charging and/or taboo is more likely to be a problem. Once the quarry is tired, a group of Wu's Brotherhood underlings can close in for the lead-pipe massage.

Lucifuge, the Black Dog

One of the rituals in the vast Hamilton library is "Sumone Ye Utter Foulness." A harrowing odyssey of black magick, the spell requires the caster to mutilate herself to summon forth a monster of repellent aspect, but unquestioned loyalty.

"Sumone Ye Utter Foulness" is also commonly known as "Summon Unspeakable Servant," and many centuries ago, at least one magus cast it properly. Having created an Unspeakable Servant of the greater variety, this sorcerer bound it into the body of a hanged man and used it to wreak merry havoc on his many enemies.

Things were different, back then.

Against all odds, that Unspeakable Servant—summoned in the year of our lord 1459—has survived into the new millennium. Named Lucifuge by its summoner (who may well have believed he was compelling the one and only Prince of Darkness) it has served the Hamilton family since the 1500s, and the Sleepers ever since the Hamilton family signed on with them in the 1950s. Of course, the Hamiltons wouldn't put it in a human body without a really compelling reason—killing people to get a host for some kind of paranormal parasite isn't really their style—so Lucifuge has spent much of the last several hundred years confined in the bodies of dogs. Once the Hamilton Collection acquired the spell "Sterile Begetting," Lucifuge was sometimes given human form again. He currently serves as Antoinette Hamilton's (see p. 98) seeing-eye dog (in more ways than one).

Lucifuge is a calm, unflappable being who never exhibits the least iota of emotion. In fact, he rarely displays *interest*. He does what he's told with perfect skill, and when he's done he stops and waits for the next order. He's not creative or intuitive, but he does have a great deal of experience with human beings and the occult underground. Knowing that his perspective is completely unemotional, the Cabinet sometimes solicits his advice on matters of controversy. Naturally, he never volunteers his opinions—if he even has opinions before being ordered to form them.

Personality: Lucifuge cannot properly be said to have a "personality." It just does what it's told.

Wound Points: 140

Stats

Body: 70 (Powerful)
Speed: 60 (Quick) (S)
Mind: 50 (Icy)
Soul: 50 (Utterly Inhuman)

Skills

Body Skills: Bite 70%, General Athletics 70%
Speed Skills: Dodge 60%
Mind Skills: Notice 50%, Been Around For Centuries 35%, Occult Lore 25%
Soul Skills: Lie 50%

Notes

When the Black Dog bites, it does +3 damage. GMs may, if they wish, have those bitten make Body rolls to resist the kinds of diseases that thrive in a dead dog's mouth.

Lucifuge's "Been Around For Centuries" skill is a sort of general knowledge skill. It covers book learning less than any trivia or observations it's picked up in the last five-and-a-half centuries.



Magickal Operatives: Agnes Flynn, Vernon Henshaw, Hidako Yamasongai, Antoinette Hamilton

Magickal Operatives

Hidako Yamasongai

There's nothing that was really unusual about Hidako's upbringing. She didn't get a lot of personal attention from Mom and Dad, but they were important, busy people. She had to dress up and act nice for company, but so did everyone.

She had to pretend to like the lame presents her parents gave her, but at least they gave her presents. She spent a lot of her time playing alone, but that meant that she could take all the roles for herself, and make sure that the stories came out the way she wanted.

There's nothing you can point to and say, "That's what did it." Lots of kids grow up having

to take on different roles for their parents, teachers, and friends. Lots of kids have vibrant, diverse fantasy lives where they can be anyone they want. Maybe there was nothing that did it. Maybe it just happened.

Whatever happened, Hidako became a Personamancer. Somehow, the acting out of people's expectations and her solitary pretending melded to let her do amazing things. She was able to look like other people, think like other people, find out people's secrets, and generally get away with anything she wanted.

The unfortunate part was that she was only thirteen years old when it happened.

Teenagers tend to test boundaries and try to get their own way. When they establish what the rules are, they can define their place in society, and get along with people. Hidako made the discovery that there were no boundaries or limits when you could do what she could. It turned her into a stone-cold bitch.

It's easy to get away with being a bitch with Personamancy. A teacher gives you detention, you make your teacher hit on one of the students in front of witnesses. The guy you like is infatuated with one of your friends? Be her, and get the guy for yourself. Go clubbing using your bus pass as ID. If someone complains, show them what they most fear.

So, Hidako got into the school drama club, and got some TV commercials, and pretended to be other people in front of the mirror, and ruled her family and friends. That got boring after a while, so she began looking for new challenges. In university, she found that there were other people out there who could do magick, and the world got a lot more interesting. Suddenly, there were new people to play with, new games to play. She set into the occult underground of her hometown Tokyo with the same lack of impulse control that characterized her other actions.

She got her heinie spanked.

As the bag lady Urbanomancer who beat her into the pavement said, "That may work with the rest of them, but you're on *my* turf. Play nice or go home." Hidako was lucky that she'd met a relatively benign adept first time out the door.

Her second foray into the underground was more cautious, but the Avatar of the Pilgrim that she wanted to push off the path led her three times around the block, which pissed her off so much it broke her taboo. As she stood there, empty of charges, he walked up behind her and said, "Age and experience, little girl. Remember."

She decided that she would have her revenge on the entirety of the magickal world that wouldn't acknowledge her place in it. To that end, she began insinuating herself into it with much more caution, always playing the part of the eager young student. She played nice, simpered at the lecherous old men, paid awe and respect to the women in the know, and slept with a fair number of both sexes, looking for the edge she needed. Then she heard about the Sleepers.

Overnight, she abandoned the circle of occult friends she had made and went looking for the Sleepers. When she found them, she put on her most righteous face, her most dedicated mien, and went and asked for a job. They gave it to her. Now, she has all the opportunity in the world to make the people who slighted her pay. And she will.

Hidako works for a Japanese entertainment company that supplies actors for children's parties and special events. If you want the Sailor Scouts at your mall, these are the people to call. Hidako has the physique and skill to pull off pretty much any role they throw at her, from Power Ranger to Pokémon, so she gets a lot of work, even if her co-stars aren't all that fond of her. It keeps her in minor charges.

When she needs a significant charge, she takes a few days off work and puts her theatrical training to the test. She usually only does this if she's making a new mask or if she's got a heavy assignment coming up. Otherwise, she gets by with her minor charges and her collection of masks.

Personality: Hidako is on the road to becoming a true sociopath. The only thing that truly matters to her is achieving her revenge on the occult underground that refused to be her plaything. The face she shows other people, however, is one of true belief and fanatical devotion to the cause. She's not a beautiful woman, but she *acts* like

one—and that's enough to get you on her side. When she looks up at you and bats her lashes, you believe in her. And inside, she laughs at you for doing it.

Obsession: Revenge. She will crush the practitioners of magick under her heel, and claim her rightful place as the mystic bitch-queen of the occult world.

Wound Points: 55

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Being played. She's got over not always being able to turn people into her playthings, but she refuses to allow herself to be used by anyone else. Even a hint of it will drive her into a screaming fury.

Fear Stimulus: (Unnatural) Epideromancers. She's only recently found out about them, and the idea of people doing that sort of thing to themselves (or worse, to her) just gives her the willies.

Noble Stimulus: Despite her severely maladjusted attitude to most of the world, Hidako has a real soft spot for animals. She likes them, and will do anything to keep them from being hurt or exploited. She's even a Vegan.

Stats

Body: 55 (Great Muscle Tone)

Speed: 60 (Supple and Quick) (S)

Mind: 50 (Not Just a Pretty Face)

Soul: 70 (Burning Inside)

Skills

Body Skills: Karate 30%, General Athletics 40%

Speed Skills: Dodge 20%, Drive 15%, Dancing 30%, Firearms 25%

Mind Skills: Notice 20%, General Education 15%, Mystical Weaknesses 40%, Memorization 35%, Theatrical Makeup 40%

Soul Skills: Charm 65%, Lie 50%, Acting 30%, Mask Making 45%, Personamancy 60%

Mystical Weaknesses: This skill is something she's been developing steadily since joining the Sleepers. She's been taking advantage of the vast wealth of knowledge they have to learn all about taboos for the various schools

of magick and for the different archetypes, to have an ace in the hole when she goes up against someone with one of these abilities. It also gives her some knowledge of the limitations of various forms of magick, rituals, and artifacts.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
6 Hard	5 Hard	1 Hard	7 Hard	8 Hard
1 Failed	0 Failed	1 Failed	2 Failed	2 Failed

Possessions

Hidako has spent a fair bit of time building herself a valuable collection of masks. She has animal masks of an Eagle (Flight), a Fish (Swimming and Water-Breathing), and a Tiger (Claws and Teeth). More valuable are her Avatar masks, which consist of The Pilgrim, The Hunter, and The Messenger. These are kept in a set of special bulletproof suitcases with eight-digit combination locks that Hidako brings with her on assignments. She also owns a number of handguns and rifles, as well as an assortment of martial-arts weapons. She is able to use all of them.

Modus Operandi

Hidako is usually given assignments that require that the power of the Sleepers be impressed upon the poor, misguided adept in question. She loves those. She'll start with a vague, simple warning; the kind she hopes will be disregarded by the target.

When the poor schmuck ignores her, she'll systematically take his life apart, piece by piece, bringing it down around his ears. Suddenly, his wife sees him cheating on her. The local police see him selling crack on the street corner. He hits on the boss. He freaks out on the bus to work, when a little old lady touches his face. Whatever works to shake him loose from his feeling of safety and power.

After a few days of this, she revisits the quivering wreck that was once a duke, and gives the warning again. If he listens this time, good. She's won. If not, she kills him, and she's won.

She finds it a very fulfilling life.



Vernon Henshaw

Vernon Henshaw was born a bright, sensitive, but sickly child in a well-to-do family. For large portions of his youth, he was bedridden. Learning to read at age four, he escaped from his sickbed the only way he could: through books. During his periods of mobility, he would haunt libraries and bookstores, seeking out new books of adventure, mystery, and fantasy.

While reading a book on faith healing, he found a folded-up piece of paper inside the book. Written in rusty brown ink was the ritual of Medicine Bag (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 43). Vernon performed the ritual successfully, and his health rapidly improved. He was ten years old, and touched by true magick.

He began searching out all the esoteric and occult books he could find, seeking out more magick with the intensity only a ten-year-old has. Looking back, this is probably the point when Vernon started channeling the archetype of the Hunter (see *Statosphere*, p. 56).

While pursuing his degree in English at Berkeley, working in a dingy New Age bookshop in Oakland, Vernon met the man that would become his mentor in Bibliomancy: David Robertson. Robertson recognized the boy's potential instantly. Within days, Vernon was juggling school and a magical apprenticeship. After graduation, he joined Robertson Bookfinders as a full associate . . . and Bibliomancer. Vernon was good—very good—at the job, due to his connection to the Hunter.

Three years later, Robertson was dead. A powerful Epideromancer slapped his face right off his skull in front of a bar full of people, causing a minor riot. That's where the Sleepers came in. They tracked down the fleshworker and left her drooling mindlessly in her apartment, reciting "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep" over and over. Vernon, while Hunting his mentor's murderer, came upon the catatonic Epideromancer. He was furious. He began to Hunt whoever had stolen his chance to avenge Robertson's death.

Vernon was relentless: the combination of his frustration, Avatar abilities, and Bibliomancy was a force to be reckoned with. Within a week and a

half, he had tracked down the Sleeper who had mind-fried the Epideromancer. The Sleeper, highly impressed with Vernon's abilities, calmed the young bookworm down and began the recruitment process. The philosophy and mission of the Sleepers appealed strongly to Vernon, and he quickly volunteered.

He's just completed his first year of post-training Sleeper-hood. He's learned the rudiments of self-defense and firearms, as well as some Sleeper rituals. Since his talents lend themselves mostly to research and detection, Vernon is usually tapped to locate targets and run them down for another Sleeper, although he has gotten his hands dirty.

In the last six months, Vernon discovered *The Powwow Book of Whispers*, by Wolfgang Vespermann (described later), and gleaned his first Major charge. He immediately used the juice to grant himself the Easy Reader skill. His Sleeper masters do not currently know that he's gained this ability.

Finally, Vernon *really* wants to get close to the Hamilton Collection, especially the Chamber of Knowledge. He caught a brief glimpse of the Collection during the last phase of his initiation, and his mouth just watered. The three Sleeper rituals he's learned whet his appetite further. Currently, he's trying to get himself in good with Antoinette Hamilton so he can gain regular access to those marvelous tomes and grimoires. And with his new Easy Reader ability, who knows what he could discover?

Vernon is tallish and skinny, with blonde hair and brown eyes behind wire-frames. He's sort of cute, in a "gangly geek" way. He dresses well, if bit rumpled. He's fairly easygoing, and loves to talk to people about the books they're reading or have read. He also loves the Marx Brothers, Woody Allen, and *film noir*. **Personality:** A nebbish with a relentless side.

Obsession: The transforming power of the written word (Bibliomancy).

Wound Points: 40

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Seeing someone strong attack/abuse someone weak.

Fear Stimulus: (Helplessness) Vernon is terrified of going blind.

Noble Stimulus: Vernon is kind and helpful to the weak, the infirm, and the aged.

Stats

Body: 40 (Skinny)
Speed: 43 (Twitchy) (F)
Mind: 80 (Wicked Smart)
Soul: 73 (Compelling)

Skills

Body Skills: General Athletics 18%, Struggle 20%, Kinda Cute 33%
Speed Skills: Dodge 15%, Drive 17%, Pistols 15%
Mind Skills: Literature (General Education) 40%, Detection (Notice) 45%, Antiquarian Book Lore 35%, Easy Reader 40%
Soul Skills: Bibliomancy 49%, Charm 30%, Lie 20%, Avatar: Hunter 72%

Easy Reader: This skill operates as if Vernon had the 71%-90% channel of the Scholar (see *Statosphere*, p. 75): he can read and understand any written language with a roll against this skill. A strange side effect—whether caused by his Bibliomancy, his connection to the Hunter, or something else—is that Vernon knows if a text is purposefully written to mislead, deceive, or misdirect. If the writer of the text truly believed the lies he wrote, however, Vernon does not sense the falsehood.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
4 Hard	5 Hard	2 Hard	3 Hard	2 Hard
2 Failed	2 Failed	1 Failed	2 Failed	1 Failed

Notes

Charges: Vernon carries approximately 8 minor charges and 3 significant charges around at all times.

Vernon knows the following rituals:

Cripple the Soul (p. 49)
 The Knife That Drinks (p. 46)
 Lead into Gold (see UA, p. 82)
 Medicine Bag (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 43)
 Poison Ward (see UA, p. 81)

Seek the Lost Tome (see UA, p. 81)

Possessions

Vernon keeps his Medicine Bag on him at all times, on a thong around his neck. He also carries 2 gold-coated lead sinkers, a cell phone, a pocket notebook and pen, a Swiss Army knife prepared as a Knife That Drinks, and a Colt Viper .38 Special with ammo, licensed for conceal/carry. Ever-present are his battered trenchcoat and his leather book satchel.

Library

Vernon's main Bibliomantic Library is located in his Pittsburgh apartment, and guarded with a number of traps, snares, and occult gewgaws. As a Bibliomancer, he was way ahead on home security even before he joined the Sleepers. It looks a lot like your stereotypical *noir* detective's office, only with the addition of a few stuffed trophy animal heads and archaic hunting weapons. Each wall is jam-packed with books. Vernon's total Library size is 10,500 volumes. The prize of the collection is *The Powwow Book of Whispers*, by Wolfgang Vespermann (a book on Hexencraft, or making hex signs, an old-school Pennsylvania Dutch type of ritual magick), which resides in a glass-fronted, locked, and booby-trapped shelf with other valuable treasures, like a copy of *Foucault's Pendulum* bearing strange marginalia by "Welldon," and a first edition of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

Vernon inherited many books from Robertson, but the two most impressive are a photocopy of an unpublished Dirk Allen novel called *Djinn Blossoms* (it appears to be a barely fictionalized account of one of the many games of Rome & Carthage; see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 181), and Robert Louis Stevenson's treasured copy of *Le Vi-comte de Bragelonne*, by Alexandre Dumas.

Vernon's Traveling Library (within his satchel) contains a number books of value sufficient to hold 10 minor and 4 significant charges. The overall value of those books is approximately \$4,200. Volumes of particular interest include *Scouts of the Prairie*, by Ned Buntline (signed by Buntline and James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok), a signed copy of *Goldfinger*, and a nice, old copy of the

Malleus Maleficarum. Purely for Book Learning utility, he also carries *The Great Houdini*, *The Anarchist's Cookbook*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and *The Boy Scout Handbook*.

Vernon also has three books prepared with the Book Burn spell that he could take along on a dangerous mission: *The City of God* by St. Augustine, with *Break Your Mother's Back* (see *Post-modern Magick*, p. 118); *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* with *Urban Legend* (see *UA*, p. 85); and a fine quarto of *The Merchant of Venice* with *Bankrupt Will* (see *UA*, p. 99).

Modus Operandi

Vernon does more research and detective work for other Sleeper agents. He always starts by casting the Cross-reference spell on his assigned target and spending the extra two charges to make the volume permanent (he's amassed about a half-dozen books of this type thus far). After reading the Cross-referenced material, he declares the target his Quarry and begins using his Avatar abilities and detective skills to track them. When he finds his Quarry, he observes them for at least a week and then turns over all the relevant information to the primary disposal team.

If Vernon is working solo, he uses Cripple the Soul to slap an astral parasite on the subject. He waits about a week, or until the target tries to dislodge the astral parasite, and then hit him with the spell *The Sorrows of Young Werther* to make the target feel utterly depressed. As the target is moping, he shoots him from ambush with an unregistered gun, using the Book Learning spell to channel Wild Bill Hickok's Pistols skill.

Agnes Flynn

Agnes grew up on stories of the fight for Irish home rule. Even though her family lived in Liverpool, her father regaled her with stories and songs of the Easter Uprising, of Michael Collins and James Connolly, and of the noble cause they embraced. She learned of Oliver Cromwell and Captain Moonlight, and could sing all the verses of *The Foggy Dew*, *The Wearing of the Green*, *The Peeler and the Goat*, and, of course, *The Croppy Boy*.

She learned also about the enemies of the great and glorious cause, about Quislings, Orangemen, and the Black and Tans. She learned how Michael Collins had faltered at the end, betraying the dreams of the Republic, and had to be executed by his former colleagues. She both praised and cursed his name, as did so many of her compatriots in the IRA.

Don't look so surprised. With her head full of such propaganda, where else was she going to end up? She taught herself to shoot, fight, and hide. She hardened herself to do what needed. She left Liverpool after secondary school and hooked up with the IRA.

After a few operations against the English, she found her true calling when her cell leader singled her out to kill a former cell member who had been talking to the police. She knew this was her big test, and prepared stringently for it. She got a nice, big handgun, a pair of dark glasses, and a long coat with big pockets. Then, one day as the fellow was leaving the police station, she walked up to him, said, "Quislings die," and shot him in the face. She was already walking away by the time he hit the pavement.

The execution made a real impression on everyone involved. Her cell leader was pleased that she had handled it so quickly and cleanly. The other members of her cell were shocked that she could be so cold about it. Agnes was surprised that it hadn't bothered her more than it did. And, of course, the authorities were furious.

Things carried on in this fashion for a couple of years. When a person needed to meet an untimely end, Agnes was sent to deal with him. "Talking to Agnes," became the euphemism of choice for murder in the closed little community of the Dublin IRA. Agnes herself became more reserved, more withdrawn, and more frightening. She embraced her role as the chosen Executioner.

Next time she looked up, she found that she had killed over fifty people. Her cell leader had fingered each of them, and she had calmly blown them away. In retrospect, she was unsure whether or not all of them had been actual threats to the IRA. She brought her concerns to her cell leader, now one of

the most powerful men in the IRA, with aspirations for joining the political branch, Sinn Féin.

Seeing that his ready access to political murders was in jeopardy, he shot Agnes. She was quicker than he, however, and escaped out the back room of the pub they had met in, dripping blood from her shoulder, fingers too numb to hold her pistol. Her cell leader didn't come after her himself; he had enough time to slap an Urban Legend on her (yeah, the wily old guy was a Cliomancer), fingering her as a mole, before the Sleepers kicked in his door and greased him.

Agnes's bridges in Ireland were well and truly burnt. She had no one to turn to, and no where to go. She was still running three days later, when the Sleepers caught up with her and gave her the option of joining them and continuing to use her talents. At this point, her disillusionment with the struggle for home rule and her attachment to the power of being the hand of death led her to make her choice quickly. She joined the Sleepers.

Agnes has since learned a whole lot about the Archetype she embodies. She has immersed herself in the study of the role of executioners throughout history, and reads a great deal about hit men in the modern age. Her methods and mannerisms have become ritualized to bring her closer to the ideal she strives to emulate. Her blond hair is cut short, and she wears no makeup, emphasizing her stark appearance. She is never without her sunglasses and black coat, and drives a white Ford Mustang by choice. She goes a little further, as well, often granting those who ask for it a last cigarette, meal, or simple request, and tries to stage the executions in a dramatically appropriate manner. She does not, however, let any of these things interfere with her mission.

Personality: (Sagittarius) Driven only begins to describe Agnes. Since she realized that she is tapping into the wellspring of myth and legend simply by following her own predilections and desires, she has let that pursuit overwhelm every other consideration in her life. She has left behind her Liverpoolian and Irish past, schooling herself to affect what dialect coaches call a "Mid-Atlantic Accent," a sort of generic British accent that betrays no sense

of her origins. She has abandoned all pretence at a social life and has lost touch with her family, existing only to follow the calling of her soul. She is very much a self-contained killing machine.

Obsession: Being the right hand of Death. Agnes views her position as a sacred calling, and pursues it with all the reverence and single-minded dedication one generally finds in stories of saints.

Wound Points: 60

Passions

Rage Stimulus: People who question her right to kill as she does infuriate her. She has no patience for arguments about right and wrong, fair and unfair, kindness or cruelty. Begging and pleading don't phase her, but those who try to get her to admit the injustice of her actions are in real danger of dying in a messy and painful manner.

Fear Stimulus: (Self) Agnes is sometimes afraid that the cold mask of death she uses to hide her real self is just a lie she tells to keep from thinking about all the people she's left behind her, both living and dead.

Noble Stimulus: True innocents. She doesn't think she's ever met anyone who is truly innocent, and really doesn't expect to in her line of work, but the ideal tantalizes her. Should she meet someone with an unsullied soul and conscience, she would make sure that nothing upset that state.

Stats

Body: 70 (Hard)

Speed: 75 (Lightning) (S)

Mind: 40 (One Track)

Soul: 65 (Imposing)

Skills

Body Skills: Street Fighting 40%, General Athletics 60%

Speed Skills: Dodge 50%, Drive 30%, Run 45%, Sneak 30%, Hide 25%, Firearms 75%

Mind Skills: Notice 30%, General Education 15%, Executioner Lore 40%, Intrusion 35%

Soul Skills: Charm 15%, Lie 15%, Avatar: The Executioner 65%, Fade In The Crowd 40%

Executioner Lore: Agnes has studied the role of Executioner throughout history and in modern times. This skill reflects her familiarity with the symbols, methods, and meanings of the Archetype. She takes her role very seriously.

Fade In The Crowd: This is her ability to disappear into a group of people, regardless of who's watching. It doesn't make her invisible or impossible to follow, because it's more a matter of attitude and behavior than anything else, but it does make her hard to keep track of. Agnes cannot use this skill while invoking one of her Avatar channels, because the Executioner does not kill by stealth. Taking on the aspect of the Executioner makes her very noticeable indeed. She usually uses this skill to leave the scene of a public execution.

Intrusion: This is her skill for getting into places where she doesn't belong, and encompasses opening locks, bypassing security devices, and avoiding guards.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
7 Hard	4 Hard	2 Hard	4 Hard	6 Hard
2 Failed	0 Failed	1 Failed	1 Failed	0 Failed

Notes

Agnes is very familiar with Tilting (see *Statosphere*, p. 40), and can perform any of the types at any of the power levels.

Possessions

Surprisingly little. In her London flat she keeps several suits of "working clothes" and her weapons. Other than that, her home is stark and empty, decorated only with the symbols of her Archetype. She is partial to a chrome-finish AMT Automag as her weapon for executions.

Modus Operandi

Pretty simple. The Cabinet gives Agnes a list, and she goes and kills them. The names on the list are all people who have received a warning by the Sleepers that they have chosen to disregard. There is no second warning.

As for the manner of Execution, Agnes generally finds the victim alone, introduces herself, explains why she's there, and kills them. She uses her Avatar channels to try to immobilize anyone thinking of fleeing, but even if they do run, they never get far.

Antoinette Hamilton

One would have to look pretty hard to find someone willing to gouge an eye out for a magickal ritual. Finding someone willing to gouge out an eye for a ritual that didn't work, then gouge out the other one to try it again . . . well, such a person may be unique in all the world.

Antoinette was pretty upset when her first attempt to create an Unspeakable Servant (see UA, p. 82) didn't work, but she couldn't let it go. In fact, she's pathologically unable to let anything go. It's something like an abstract, large-scale Obsessive Compulsive Behavior. If she doesn't get a ritual right the first time, she tries it again. And again. And again, until she's mastered it. If she'd failed at her second attempt to make an Unspeakable Servant, she might have gone catatonic from pure frustration.

Needless to say, the prospect of Antoinette hunting you down is not much fun. Her personality has worn down to the smoothness of an egg, upon which she adeptly paints the face she needs for her work—usually something along the lines of "harmless, frumpy, blind, and dear." She often seems a bit distracted to those around her, because she usually is—focusing on her next magickal challenge, or on her next mission. If she's paying you her full attention, look out.

How did Antoinette become so damaged? For starters, she blames herself for her parents' deaths, she blames herself for the savage beating Charles got from his dad, and she blames herself every time magick doesn't work right for her. It doesn't help that she feels anger and love simultaneously when she thinks of Charles and her parents. Why did her father—so smart, so powerful, so important—have to lock her out of the most wonderful thing she could imagine? Why did

Charles, the favorite son, have to be so incompetent at what matters and still be so successful? Why did her mother have to be so ignorant of what was really going on? She blames herself for every failure and setback because the other possibility—that the world is beyond her control and that there was nothing she could have done differently to avoid failure—is too scary to contemplate.

She's a very lonely young woman. She's a virgin—less by choice than by lack of opportunity. She's as hesitant in her social dealings as she is decisive in her Sleeper pursuits. She envies Charles his ability to interact with a normal world, even as she despises him for leaning on the crutch of the mundane. Wu Zhanhan has always been kind to her and is perhaps her closest friend. She also likes Alice Rybak quite a bit, but is unsure just how to pursue a friendship with someone.

Personality: Glenn Close in the movie *Fatal Attraction* if she was focused on mystic mayhem instead of sex with Michael Douglas.

Obsession: Mastery of the difficult. Antoinette wants total control of something; she happened to fixate upon magick.

Wound Points: 60

Passions

Fear: That her magickal inadequacy will become apparent.

Rage: Anyone who's better at magick than she is. The random effects of postmodern adepts irritate her to no end.

Noble: She is inspired to protect knowledge as much as she is to control it.

Stats

Body: 60 (Compact)

Speed: 55 (Good Balance) (S)

Mind: 65 (Focused)

Soul: 45 (Inarticulate)

Skills

Body Skills: Fight Like A Fuckin' Wildcat 40%*, General Athletics 40%*, Yoga 25%

Speed Skills: Firearms 35%*, Sprint 40%*, Dodge 30%*, Drive 15%*, Horseback Riding 20%*

Mind Skills: Visual Notice 15%*, Nonvisual Notice 55%, General Education 25%, Occult Education 55%, **Authentic Thaumaturgy** 65%, French Language 45%, German Language 25%, Computer Operation 25%, Illegal Entry 50%

Soul Skills: Charm 15%, Lie 45%

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
7 Hard	8 Hard	5 Hard	2 Hard	4 Hard
2 Failed	3 Failed	5 Failed	2 Failed	4 Failed

Notes

All skills marked with an asterisk (*) suffer a -30% shift if she cannot see what's going on. However, her familiarity with seeing through the eyes of her Unspeakable Servants negates this penalty if either of them is in her presence. (Normally a person seeing from this other perspective would take a penalty. It is disorienting, however, and accounts for a few of her notches on the Self meter.)

Antoinette can perform any of the rituals in Chapter 2 from memory.

Possessions

In addition to the services of Lucifuge (see p. 90), Antoinette has a second Greater Unspeakable Servant who has no name. She always carries a Knife That Drinks. When on a mission, she sometimes carries a Murderer's Crow as well. She likes to use Travel Bonds and usually has a couple of them on her person.

Modus Operandi

Antoinette usually starts off by putting a travel bond and an astral parasite on her target if possible, followed up by a thaumophage if it's an adept. After giving the parasite two or three days to soften up the target, she sends in one (or both) of the Servants. Lucifuge usually stays in a dog body, while she puts the second in a human form with Sterile Begetting. If they get into too much trouble, either Servant can use Missing Time (see UA, p. 145) to banish either themselves or their pursuers temporarily.





TODD ATKINSON

Mundane Operatives: Blake Winstead, Joey Dunes, Oscar Callachi, Alice Rybak

Mundane Operatives

Blake Winstead

When Blake was a boy in San Diego, he really wanted to be a fireman. Most kids do, but they grow out of it. Not Blake. Unfortunately, nature had gifted Blake with a decidedly sub-par physique. He dreams of being a ninety-eight pound weakling, because that's three pounds heavier than he actually weighs. He never had a chance of passing the fire fighter physical screening.

The fire fighters didn't want him, nor did the police, nor the EMT. Still, he craved a career close to the action, where he could serve the community and help people. He wound up working in the 911 Call Center.

Blake had a good phone manner, able to keep the callers on topic and get the necessary information from them to pass on to police, fire fighters, and ambulances. He got very good at taking detailed notes in the Computer-Assisted

Dispatch (CAD) system, typing at well over 90 words per minute.

After a year of that, he took his experience and applied to be a radio dispatcher for an ambulance service. He had a good framework for interpreting the notes in the CAD and dividing the wheat from the chaff. He became fiercely protective of the drivers on his shift, going above and beyond to track down necessary details and never losing track of where "his" people were. The drivers took to thinking of Blake as their guardian angel, always in control, always watching their backs.

When the San Diego Police Department went looking for a radio dispatcher, Blake took stock. He had trained two assistants who were starting to meet Blake's stringent standards of acceptability, and he knew he was up to the challenge. Blake applied, was hired as a police radio dispatcher, and his ambulance-driving buddies threw him an epic farewell party.

The first week convinced him that he had made a mistake. Handling thirty-five police was

far beyond what he was used to with twelve ambulances under his care. He worked constantly in a state of panic, convinced that at any moment he would make a mistake that would end with a call of "Officer down!"

He stuck it out, with manic intensity and desperate energy, never making that fatal mistake. He became adept at handling three and four simultaneous conversations while jumping through the radio frequencies and keeping careful notes. He learned to close his eyes and see each of his units and their relative positions and actions on a map of the city in his head. He began to move them like chess pieces, always maintaining back-up, listening carefully to the chatter and reading between the lines of the CAD notes to anticipate and respond to problems. He soon attained the mastery of the situation he felt his people deserved, and once again became the guardian angel he aspired to be.

Of course, that's when it went to hell.

A nasty Annihilomancer blew up three cruisers, complete with officers, on Blake's shift. In five minutes, Blake's security in his position was destroyed. He heard the reports of a homeless man, the yelled threats, the explosions. He had two units moving to intercept when the first one went up, and they arrived less than a minute after the explosion to meet the same fate.

He marshaled his remaining forces with icy desperation, bringing them in from all sides, with warnings about military hardware. He stood at his desk, tears streaming down his face, terror in his eyes, but his voice and tone didn't change. His people needed him cool and in control and by God, they would have him cool and in control.

The cars came from different directions and contained the area, while half of the officers advanced on foot. When the suspect was shot while resisting arrest, no one asked any questions about explosives.

"He must have used them all on the first three cars," said the Lieutenant, and he put his finger to his lips.

So the Sleepers decided that Blake would be a valuable asset. He never bought the story about explosives. He was ready to believe the Lieutenant

when he talked about magick, and was eager to sign on with the Sleepers. He went through the training, driven by the same determination that had brought him to the police department. Now he protects people from things they can't possibly fight by themselves.

And to think he wanted to be a fireman.

Personality: Blake is a small man. He's five feet tall and weighs less than 100 pounds. He has seen his dreams denied to him simply because of his body. He's got a big chip on his shoulder, but it manifests itself as a drive to overcome the limits of his body, not as bitterness over lost opportunities. He thrives on the tension-filled life he has made for himself, and tends to get depressed when he doesn't have enough to do. Now that he's working with the Sleepers, keeping the world safe from dangers that he never even imagined existed, he's in his glory. To him, he's working in the most important job there is.

Obsession: Being on top of the action. Not only does he need to be in the game, he needs to be making the plays. Since he can't be quarterback, he's going to be the best damn coach anyone has ever seen.

Wound Points: 30

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Being discounted. Blake's a little guy who doesn't make much of an impression physically, but his contributions must be acknowledged.

Fear Stimulus: (Helplessness) Letting his people down.

Noble Stimulus: Blake will go to any lengths, overcome any obstacles, risk any personal loss, to keep his people safe.

Stats

Body: 30 (95lb Weakling)

Speed: 60 (Wired) (S)

Mind: 80 (In the Zone)

Soul: 55 (Confident)

Skills

Body Skills: Struggle 20%, General Athletics 15%,



Go Without Sleep 30%

Speed Skills: Dodge 15%, Drive 50%, Type Like The Devil 60%, Firearms 15%

Mind Skills: Notice 30%, General Education 30%, Multi-Tasking 65%, Electronic Communications 55%

Soul Skills: Charm 20%, Lie 15%, Remain Calm 40%

Electronic Communications: This skill is Blake's ability to configure electronic communications gear into the set-up most appropriate for the purpose at hand, and then use it efficiently once the action starts.

Multi-Tasking: This skill is his ability to keep on top of several different situations at once, including carrying on multiple conversations, taking notes on all of them, and keeping track of the relative locations of all involved parties. It's the kind of skill that lets chess grandmasters play forty simultaneous games while blindfolded, except that Blake doesn't play chess. He plays real life.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
4 Hard	3 Hard	2 Hard	0 Hard	1 Hard
1 Failed	0 Failed	2 Failed	1 Failed	2 Failed

Possessions

The most important possessions for Blake are his workshop and his van. The workshop contains pretty much every electronic communications gadget available on the consumer market. While Blake is not an electronics engineer, he has availed himself of Sleeper training to become a skilled technician, able to build systems and networks out of the components he has for whatever the job at hand requires.

His van is his command center when he's in the field. It's got enough communications and surveillance gear to make the NSA get nervous, and turn the guys at work green with envy. There's also a 9mm pistol under the seat. He's taken several training sessions with the Sleepers, learning how to drive the thing like James Bond, and is proud of that ability. No one drives Blake's van but Blake.

Modus Operandi

Blake doesn't really have a modus operandi of his own. He's still fairly new to the Sleeper game, and the shine hasn't worn off him yet. He's the person the Sleepers bring in when they need someone coordinating comms and surveillance. Blake is given a day or so notice, with an explanation of what sort of job needs his expertise. He puts together the gear he needs, sets it up the way he needs to, and then packs some spare kit (because you never know). His Lieutenant is always understanding when Blake needs to take a little personal time off.

When he and his van arrive on the scene, Blake distributes the goodies, sets himself up in a convenient place, and does his job with complete attention to detail. To date, Blake hasn't lost a single agent while on the job. Those working with him know that, but some of them still chuckle at his earnest, dedicated demeanor. The new ones are always so cute, with their zeal and their idealism. General opinion is that it'll vanish the first time he loses someone, and become just as jaded and cynical as the rest of them. He's determined to prove them wrong.

Joey Dunes

Joey does not fit the profile of a serial killer. True, he tortured animals as a kid in Toronto—but he does not kill compulsively, he derives no sexual satisfaction from butchering people, and he does not have a mentally fixed "scenario" that he wishes to enact.

The label "spree killer" doesn't really fit either. He has no desire to just grab an M-16 and take out a fast-food joint. It wouldn't *bother* him, on an emotional level, but he sees no point or challenge to that kind of mass murder. Plus, jail is such a fucking drag.

Joey thinks of himself as an "übermensch." He saw the movie *Rope* when he was young and it made quite an impression. If given half a chance, he natters on about how he's read Nietzsche and about how the truly superior man is not bound by law or conventional "slave morali-

ty.” (Rather than “read” it’s probably more accurate to say that Joey “looked at all the words” in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *Genealogy of Morals* and *Ecce Homo*. He did get the gist of things from the Cliff’s Notes though.) Beneath the half-baked philosophical rationale, however, Joey is an amoral thug who likes to prove he’s better than other people. What better way than the way that really counts—by taking their lives?

Joey was a fat kid, and being bigger than the others he quickly became a nasty little bully. That was when he first learned that having power was fun. As he aged, however, the other kids caught up with him developmentally, and his size became less of an asset and more of a burden. Being surrounded by a gang of his former victims, chanting “Fatty! Fatty!” taught him that having no power was *no* fun.

This was about eighth grade, and Joey decided to attach himself to the current bully so that he could at least be on the right side. That was okay for a while, but his new leader was as dumb as a lemming, always got caught, and got his “friends” (mostly toadies like Joey) in trouble too. On the bus to juvenile hall, Joey decided that being smart was just as important as having power—or rather, that brains were another, equally important, type of power.

Joey came out of juvie one damaged little bastard, but he had transformed sixty pounds of ugly fat into forty pounds of hard muscle. Bored with bullying, he started housebreaking, but he was always very careful. While he was robbing people’s jewel boxes and liquor cabinets by night, by day he was busily convincing his parole officer and guidance counselor that he had Learned His Lesson.

It seemed, for a while, that young Joey had straightened out. Then one day he snuck out of study hall and broke into a house in the middle of the day. He helped himself to a bottle of scotch from the liquor cabinet and made himself a big ham ‘n’ cheese. He was just settling down to see if they got any premium cable channels when he heard a scream behind him.

It was the lady of the house. She’d called in sick and spent the day crashed out in the bed-

room. When she got up to take a mid-afternoon piss, she found a big, young stranger lounging on the couch.

Joey jumped up and chased her back into the bedroom. With a bad case of the flu, she was no match for Joey: he knocked her down and smothered her with a pillow before he even really realized what was happening.

When it was done, Joey felt a weird mix of terror and elation. Terror, because he knew there was not going to be any kind of pity for an eighteen-year-old punkass who skipped school to commit murder. Elation, because he’d finally done it: he’d killed someone. He’d used the ultimate power—the power of life and death.

Where a dumber little monster might have freaked out and fled, Joey paused to take stock. No fingerprints—he always put on gloves before doing his housebreaking. He didn’t have a motive, there was nothing to connect him to the crime . . . except the booze and the sandwich. He took both with him and was careful not to be seen or to leave any footprints.

Then he waited.

It was tense, excruciating—but exhilarating too. Naturally, when a woman gets smothered in her own home, the police make a big deal out of it. Even the Mounties got involved eventually, but there was no reason to suspect Joey. Besides, he had an alibi—he hadn’t been missed from study hall.

Having gotten away with murder once (mostly, he admitted, through luck) he just couldn’t rest until he’d gotten away with it again—on purpose this time.

By the time he was twenty-five and certified as a locksmith (ironic, that), he’d killed five people and was getting a little bored with it. There wasn’t a lot of *challenge*, unless he started hunting cops—and he knew that was a tough skate even for someone with his admitted knack for assassination.

That was when he ran afoul of the Eye Biting Man and discovered that magick was as real as popcorn and toenail fungus. Once he knew that, he knew what he was supposed to do. Magick fuckos were the perfect prey. On one hand, people generally didn’t kick up a fuss when they

croaked. On the other hand, they were thrilling challenges—unpredictable, dangerous, but each constrained by some weird code of conduct. He delighted in stalking them, solving the puzzles that rendered them helpless, then putting his theories to the lethal test.

Joey was putting the final hurt on a Quebecois Kleptomancer when a door behind him opened. A man stepped out, gave Joey a surprised look, then stepped back in. Pausing only to finish smothering the duke, Joey went through the door, taser in hand, ready to kill the witness. The door led into a closet, empty of everything but coats and galoshes.

"Over here," he heard. He spun around just in time to see the closet man taking his picture. He ran after him, but the closet man vanished again.

The closet man was Clarence Heddington, a powerful avatar of the Pilgrim—and a Sleeper. Heddington started out blackmailing Joey into killing troublesome adepts, but they soon learned they had a real "your chocolate and my peanut butter" situation. After five very good years of working together, Clarence finally gave Joey the negatives and prints of the incriminating photos. Then Joey killed him and told the Cabinet that The Bad Man did it.

Since that time, he's been bumming around North America, killing adepts and stealing their stuff. It's a hardscrabble existence, since most adepts aren't really worth robbing, but Joey is very content with his life.

Personality: A white trash Hannibal Lecter, minus the cannibalism and about forty IQ points.

Obsession: Killing people cleverly.

Wound Points: 65

Passions

Note that Joey can no longer use his Passions.

Rage Stimulus: Selfless acts of bravery to protect loved ones. No one ever cared about *him* enough to do anything courageous . . .

Fear Stimulus: Falling in love.

Noble Stimulus: Being chunky himself, Joey has a modicum of sympathy for overweight people.

Stats

Body: 65 (Round Mound of Pound)

Speed: 50 (Delicate Touch) (S)

Mind: 60 (Cunning)

Soul: 45 (Emotionally Vaporlocked)

Skills

Body Skills: General Athletics 30%, Murder 55%

Speed Skills: Dodge 20%, Drive 30%, Firearms 25%, Quiet Step 45%

Mind Skills: Notice 50%, General Education 25%, Locksmith and Uninvited Guest 55%, Occult Lore 20%

Soul Skills: Charm 25%, Lie 45%

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
10 Hard	10 Hard	10 Hard	10 Hard	10 Hard
2 Failed	3 Failed	4 Failed	1 Failed	2 Failed

Notes

Joey is a sociopath, with all that entails.

Possessions

A big dusty pickup truck with a mattress and a key cutter with a lot of blanks, in the back under a camper top. Several tasers. About a week's worth of clothing changes.

More importantly, Joey has a device he scavenged off a dead duke in Saskatchewan. It looks like a slightly dented, unfired .22 bullet. It's painted black. If he keeps it fed, it protects him by disabling every firearm within sight distance of him—semi-automatics jam, revolvers hit a dud, shotguns have the trigger freeze up or the pin come loose. This means that Joey can't use a gun either, but he has the decided advantage of knowing in advance that it's going to be hand to hand and not gunplay.

The amulet is "fed" by bathing it in someone's death sweat. As long as he can rub the bullet against an unwashed dead person once every season, the amulet protects him.

Modus Operandi

Joey's a stalker. He likes to spend anywhere from a week to a month scoping out his target, learning its

powers and trying to suss out its taboos and restrictions. Unfortunately (for him), this often isn't feasible and he has to rely on reports from other Sleeper spies. He still insists on some personal surveillance, of course: he's fully aware how easy it would be to set him up with disinformation.

Once he's confident that he knows what he's facing, he tries to trick or coerce his victim into breaking taboo. (The difficulty of this can depend, of course, on the sorcerer's path.) That done, it's time to put on his gloves, enter the residence late at night, and sneak up on the (hopefully sleeping) adept. If the adept is asleep, it's chloroform and a pillow across the face. If the adept is awake, it's the taser until the adept passes out. Such struggles usually get Joey's blood heated up, prompting him to grab some nearby blunt object for the *coup de grace*.

Oscar Collachi

Oscar's done it all. At least, that's how it feels to him. Wrestled an Unspeakable Servant? Done it. Gotten into a knife fight on a speeding bus with what seemed to be a no-shit-there-I-was *vampire*? You betcha. Gotten a leg over with an Agent of Renunciation? He thinks so. Either that, or she was just crazy.

Oscar is very tired.

He joined the Sleepers more than thirty years ago, with stars in his eyes and plans to change the world, make it a better place. He doesn't talk about those days anymore. He may have changed the world, may even have made it a better place, but he's done some cold shit. It's not like it used to be.

See, back in the day, he ran with a good group of Sleepers, not the fucked-up messes you find today. There was Mickey the Mouth, who could talk his way into and out of anything, and Leonard, who was the best knife fighter Oscar has ever seen. And Judy, who would sit at a blackjack table for four hours and get up humming with power, mischief leaking from her eyes and smile. Judy, who could suck dead people back from the grave, and stick them in mason jars until she needed them.

Judy, whom he loved.

They're all gone, now. Mickey lost his nerve when an operation went south and all the people involved turned out to be wind-up toys. He lost a leg above the knee, and sits in a retirement home down in Boca Raton, not talking. Leonard turned out to be just a little bit worse knife fighter than some kid in a bar. And one day Judy put a revolver with a single bullet in the cylinder to her head and pulled the trigger. Oscar tells himself that she was rolling her bones, looking for the big score, but she hadn't been the same since the Cairo job.

That was a run, no doubt there. Some butcher in Egypt, hacking up tourists, street people, whatever she could find, was building an army of mummies, for Christ's sake. The team had been clicking in those days: Mickey schmoozing them past customs and the cops, Leonard watching their backs for the bad guys, sticking any that showed their faces, Judy trading mystical gunfire with the adept, and Oscar always there with the right piece of paper at the right time.

But Judy kept crying afterward, because the butcher had hit her with something that made her feel just like one of the chopped-up victims. She stopped talking to ghosts and demons, and got scared at the thought of going up against another adept. She stayed on the game for another five years, but she was slipping. When Mickey tossed it in, she quit going on the field trips and cashed in her chips just before Leonard bit it.

Oscar soldiers on. What else is he going to do? Leonard's not there to off people, so now Oscar does it. Mickey's not there to con the marks, so Oscar's learned how to do it. Judy's not there to toss the juice around, so Oscar does without. He's been doing without a lot since she checked out.

They've tried hooking him up with other Sleepers, but it never takes. Some of the kids are okay, but they're not like the gang he ran with. And a few of the new ones are so gung-ho save-the-world that he just wants to puke. Kind of like he used to be.

Oscar knows that he's about ready to be put out to pasture, but he holds on to what he's doing because he can't imagine sitting home alone,

with nothing to do but think about all the things he's done. Especially since Judy's gone.

He's not sure when it changed from a grand adventure into a nasty job, but it did, and it's made him a nasty person. He doesn't like all of the things he's had to do, and regrets having to kill so many people, but the stupid fucks had their warnings. You don't get the Sleepers on your ass unless you start poking the Tiger, and the Tiger is not to be poked.

Three times a year, Oscar goes into a local bar and gets royally shit-faced. When he is well and truly maudlin, he begins toasting his fallen friends. He usually winds up sleeping it off on top of Judy's grave, dreaming about holding her again.

He thinks it'll be soon.

Personality: Oscar is the distillation of every cynical old bastard you have ever met. Nothing today is as good as it was in his day, and no one knows as much about the behind-the-scenes attempts of the universe to screw you as he does. He once looked like a dapper little crook, with a sparkling sense of fun in his eyes, but now he's had all the softness and joy burned away, leaving a tall, spare man with uncombed hair and bloodshot eyes. It's not that he drinks a lot; in fact, he never touches the stuff but for the anniversaries of his comrades' departures. It's just that he has a lot of trouble sleeping.

Obsession: Oscar is obsessed with handwriting, oddly enough.

Wound Points: 55

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Snot-nosed Sleepers who think this is a game. He's got scars he owes directly to people like that, and he will not abide them.

Fear Stimulus: (Isolation) The destruction of his soul. Oscar's only hope for peace right now is the dream that he will be reunited with the gang on the other side of the Veil. Any threat to that hope terrifies him.

Noble Stimulus: Doing the job. Underneath everything, Oscar still believes that he's doing something that needs to be done, and that there are

few who can do it. He's one of them, and he'll keep doing the job as long as he can.

Stats

Body: 55 (Ropy)

Speed: 65 (Slick) (F)

Mind: 60 (Street Smarts)

Soul: 65 (Grizzled)

Skills

Body Skills: Street Fightin' Man 50%, General Athletics 20%

Speed Skills: Dodge 40%, Drive 40%, Forgery 65%, Gunfight 45%, Sneaking Around 50%

Mind Skills: Notice 55%, General Education 25%, Stealin' Cars an' Breakin' Into Yo' House 55%

Soul Skills: Writing Reading 60%, Charm 55%, Lie 65%

Writing Reading: This skill requires a little explanation. It's not just that Oscar can read what's written: if it was written by hand, Oscar can also judge how the writer *felt* about what he was writing. If he gets hold of your diary, he doesn't just know what you put in the text—he can see the subtext, in all its complex contradictions. He could dig out the feelings you don't admit to yourself. (Naturally, his fascination with handwriting analysis is part of what makes him such a skilled forger.)

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
7 Hard	4 Hard	6 Hard	8 Hard	5 Hard
2 Failed	1 Failed	2 Failed	4 Failed	2 Failed

Possessions

Oscar keeps souvenirs of every operation he went on with his comrades. His little apartment is cluttered with knick-knacks and photos, most of them showing the same four people. For his work, he keeps a wide range of writing materials and a set-up for producing made-to-order picture ID. He's also got a stockpile of guns, both for work and just in case. He drives around in a refitted taxicab he bought at an auction.

Modus Operandi

Oscar's in a bit of a rut. He lets himself into the target's house while the victim-to-be is away and checks around to see what's going on in the target's life. He particularly likes to examine checkbooks to find out if the target is mad or upset about anything. Once he has an idea for a plausible motive, he forges a suicide note in the target's handwriting. If he can find a gun in the house, he takes that and waits. Otherwise, he uses an expendable gun of his own.

When the adept comes home, Oscar waits to see if he's alone. If so, Oscar makes his move. If not, he hides and waits until the adept's guests leave. Then he plays it by ear, either threatening the adept with the gun to get him into a chair, or waiting until he's asleep and doing him then. He tries to get the bullet in the temple, under the chin, or in the heart. When the deed is done, he takes out a second gun—this one with a silencer, loaded with blanks. He wraps the victim's hand around the gun, puts the barrel right up to the injury, and uses a pencil to pull the trigger. Then he takes that gun away, puts the murder weapon in the hand, and takes off. The police find a suicide note, powder burns on the dead adept's hands, and gunpowder tattooing on the injury consistent with a close shot.

Alice Rybak

Alice's father was a successful Eastern European Plutomancer. A little too successful, truth be told. His abilities soon came to the attention of the Sleepers, who imparted a very stern warning to him. They terrified him, which was what they had wanted, but they may have gone a bit overboard. When the agent asked him how they could trust him to keep his promises of discretion, Rybak gave the Sleepers his daughter as a hostage.

Now the Sleepers live and die by their image of omniscience and omnipotence. The agent, floundering in the deep water of the truly unexpected, agreed to the hostage, and took Alice with him back to England to get some guidance on what to do next from the Cabinet.

No one was ready for this kind of development, and no one really wanted to take a sweet little eight-year-old girl away from her daddy, but returning her would be a sign that the Sleepers weren't ready to do whatever it took to keep the Tiger sleeping. They had a reputation for ruthlessness to maintain, after all.

The Cabinet agreed that the Sleepers would take charge of raising the child, seeing to her education, and bringing her into the Sleeper fold when the time was right. Charles Hamilton arranged for her schooling at a prestigious girl's school, and took charge of her during the school holidays. That doesn't mean that Charles had much to do with Alice himself. He let her stay in one or another of the houses, as fancy took her, and arranged for her care and amusement. He showed up, playing the part of guardian before school committees, but was otherwise quite distant. (The one moment of emotional contact he established with Alice was when he came to tell her that her father had died of cancer. She was fourteen at the time, and spent the night weeping in Charles's arms, as he tearfully comforted her and apologized.)

Alice didn't really mind the isolation. After the uncertainty and strange restrictions she had faced growing up with her only parent being a money-obsessed wacko, the environment she found herself in now seemed positively healthy by comparison. She enjoyed the structure that a residential school provided for her life, and she definitely wanted for nothing as far as possessions went; Charles was quite generous when it came to clothes, books, toys, and trips. Her accommodations were much finer than she had ever known; she made a great deal of friends, and generally grew up with all the benefits of an upper class British lifestyle.

When she turned eighteen, Charles and the Cabinet called her into a meeting to discuss her future. She had grown up knowing about magick, had learned about the Sleepers from Charles many years before, and now was given the option to join the team. Alice informed them that she wasn't really interested, having no desire to play

secret agent and shoot people, and she certainly wasn't going to roam the world stealing little girls from their parents just because she wanted to look tough.

Needless to say, this caused a great deal of consternation amongst the Cabinet. Amongst the arguments, accusations, and demands, Alice stood firm. Then, Wu Zhanhan picked up a thick file, handed it to her, and said they'd reconvene after she had read it. If she still wanted no part of the Sleepers, she had his word that there would be no more pressure applied.

The file was a number of accounts, taken from the past five years, of incidents of everyday people running afoul of magick. Many of these victims were peripheral at best to the action, but still paid dearly because some hopped-up adept couldn't keep it in his pants. A soccer mom from North Carolina run off the road by a Dipso-mancer running from the New Inquisition, both her sons killed. German tourists in Stockholm gunned down in a running battle between two cabals after the same runestone. A magickal ritual in Belize going wrong and leveling three blocks in a slum, leaving hundreds homeless. On the inside back of the file folder was a post-it note that said, in Wu Zhanhan's careful printing, "We didn't have the manpower to stop these. Are you content to merely live a life instead of saving one?"

Yes, it was a dirty trick. Yes, it was overtly manipulative and cheap. Yes, it worked.

Alice started training to be a general-purpose agent. She has no desire to mess with magick personally, but she wants to be ready for any task that may be thrown at her. She's studied intelligence gathering and analysis, covert operations, interrogation tactics, languages, psychology, and combat techniques. If the Sleepers are unsure just what may be entailed in a given operation, Alice is one of the best bets for the job, because her skills run the gamut of possible requirements.

She still won't speak to Wu Zhanhan, though. **Personality:** Alice is the epitome of the well-bred, well-raised British aristocrat. Her manners are impeccable, her appearance immaculate, and her behavior reserved. She has no real close friends, and

doesn't socialize with other Sleepers. In fact, the only Sleeper she's well disposed towards is Charles, and she doesn't really show that, either. She's an iceberg, and shows no signs of thawing.

Obsession: Being normal. She's always wanted to be a regular person, and clings to the idea that she can somehow manage it; if nothing else, she can keep anyone from finding out that she's not normal.

Wound Points: 55

Passions

Rage Stimulus: Threats to children. This just strikes too close to home for her.

Fear Stimulus: (Unnatural) Being affected by magick really upsets her. It makes a lie of her carefully constructed normality.

Noble Stimulus: While Alice knows that she can't save the whole world, she also knows that she has to try, because no one else can, either. She is ready to give her all in service of protecting normal people from the magick-wielding freaks who don't seem to care who they hurt.

Stats

Body: 55 (Well-Toned)

Speed: 60 (Co-ordinated) (F)

Mind: 65 (Sharp)

Soul: 50 (Sure Of Herself)

Skills

Body Skills: Unarmed Combat 40%, General Athletics 30%, Endurance 45%

Speed Skills: Dodge 30%, Drive 60%, Stealth 50%, Projectile Weapons 50%

Mind Skills: Notice 25%, General Education 25%, French Language 40%, German Language 35%, Italian Language 30%, Spanish Language 45%, Russian Language 60%, Greek Language 30%, Intelligence Gathering and Analysis 60%, Security Systems Bypassing 40%

Soul Skills: Charm 40%, Lie 50%, Read People 35%, Interrogation 30%, Acting 50%

Endurance: This skill lets her keep going after getting hurt, when she's tired and hungry, or when her will is ready to collapse. It helps keep

ATLAS GAMES PRESENTS

UNKNOWN
ARMIES

HUSH HUSH

THE SLEEPERS SOURCEBOOK
BY ZACH BUSH, ANDREW BYERS, MICHAEL DAISEY, GUSTAVO DIAZ, TIM DEDOPULOS,
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her going until the end of the assignment.

Intelligence Gathering and Analysis: This skill allows her to use standard surveillance techniques and equipment, including cameras, listening devices, and careful questioning and research. It also lets her try to make sense of the information she acquires in this manner, and construct a coherent picture of what is going on.

Read People: This is the skill of determining what makes a person tick by paying attention to what they say, how they say it, and how they behave. It requires that she spend at least half an hour listening to the subject, whether she's part of the conversation or not. A successful roll will allow Alice to determine the Obsession of the subject or one of the stimuli. How she makes use of this is up to her, but she is known for driving people into a petrified state by picking up on and applying the Fear Stimulus.

Madness Meter

Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
2 Hard	0 Hard	1 Hard	5 Hard	2 Hard
0 Failed	2 Failed	0 Failed	1 Failed	3 Failed

Possessions

Alice lives in a nice little cottage in a quaint village in East Anglia. In the cellar of the cottage is a walk-in bank vault that contains several passports, a hundred thousand pounds in cash from her father's estate, an assortment of weapons, and various communication and infiltration gear. The vault is hidden behind a rack of homemade preserves. She drives an older model Jaguar, and relies on the Sleepers to provide her with specialized equipment as the situation warrants.

Modus Operandi

Alice likes lead-time on her targets: a chance to get into position, find out the real lay of the land, and get inside her target's head. Because of her insistence on working in this manner, she is often used as a scout, getting a fix on the situation before calling in the heavy hitters. In a crisis, however, she is equipped to ably deliver either warning or punishment to errant mystics.





CHAPTER FOUR

OUR GLORIOUS

ENTERPRISE

UNKNOWN ARMIES



"WE'RE ALL OF US GUINEA PIGS IN THE
LABORATORY OF GOD. HUMANITY IS
JUST A WORK IN PROGRESS."

—TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

"SHUT UP AND KILL SOMETHING."

—JOEY DUNES



Sleeping is a dangerous business. This chapter presents twelve op files to suggest just *how* dangerous a business it can be. Each op file is a summary of a scenario, ready for you to expand and run or just mug it for ideas. Every file begins with a Flashpoint, a pithy teaser that sets up the scenario, followed by a Summary that explains what the PCs can learn by investigating, and concluded with Targets, a description of the op's perps and what they're really up to.

Showdown

Flashpoint

The word is out in the underground. Two Avatars of the Masterless Man, both adepts, both getting close to Godwalker status, are calling each other out. And it promises to be messy.

Summary

Everybody's talking about it, but few have the real story. Facts are hard to come by in the underground and your average duke's knowledge of Avatars and Clergy business is spotty at best. What's clear from the initial rumors is that two powerful adepts are planning to have it out, it's going down soon, and they don't care who sees it.

Finding out who, when, and where are the priorities for the Sleepers. Enough drink-buying, data-sharing, and leg-breaking will produce more information, though it's not necessarily reliable. (It's a showdown between TNI and the Naked Goddess crew. It's a grudge match between Paragon of Team Salvation and a self-styled supervillain. It's between two rival Iconomancers, each claiming the supremacy of their chosen idol.) Whoever the combatants are, the clock is ticking.

Complicating the Sleepers' efforts to pinpoint ground zero is their own reputation. Few underground-dwellers are eager to deal with the Sleepers or to be labeled as snitches and informants. If the investigating team plays it cool, ei-

ther through deception or assurances of anonymity, they will find the occasional adept willing to talk. The local 'mancers aren't exactly thrilled at the prospect of the showdown waking the tiger. With enough guile, style, or force, the Sleepers will eventually uncover the true worst-case scenario: one Avatar is a chaos mage, the other a sterno. A duel promises lots of explosions and casualties. High profile.

The Sleepers will also get a name, not of either duelist but of someone who knows their identities: Amy Swartzkoff, Avatar of the Chronicler. Amy's keeping the information to herself; she's got a shot at chronicling a major event and doesn't want anyone, especially the Sleepers, to rob her of the opportunity. She knows who's involved, where it's going down, and why. Strong-arm tactics won't get much play; Amy's devoted to her Archetype. Trickery has a better chance of succeeding, and negotiation is perhaps the best. Amy doesn't care where the fight happens so long as it does, and that she has a ringside seat. If the Sleepers can convince her they only want to confine the action to a private venue, and give her access, Amy could talk.

Targets

The fur flies at dawn: a main street in the downtown core during morning rush. The combatants are both in the low 90s of Avatar skill, meaning they're both closing in on the current Godwalker; not only is secrecy irrelevant to them, it's actually a hindrance to demonstrating their desire for the title. The bigger the show, the better the winner's chance of taking down the Godwalker later on. The combatants are:

Marcus Renault, Annihilomancer and Avatar of the Masterless Man. He doesn't take orders from anyone, and that includes the sleeping tiger. He'll level city blocks to reveal the truth as he sees it—that he's the biggest badass that ever walked the land.

Stanislav Orzewski, Entropomancer and Avatar of the Masterless Man. What greater risk could there be than going toe-to-toe with Renault

in a public place, slinging spells in his Archetype's name for everyone to see?

If the Sleepers identify the duelists and contact either of them prior to game time, the team has two obvious options: talk the boys out of it or kill them. The first would require a Herculean feat of persuasion or cunning. The second is even more difficult: both guys are extremely powerful and opt for escape over making a stand, since they've got a better match waiting. If the circumstances warranted, the duelists would even ally against the Sleepers to guarantee their duel. Any direct attack against either Avatar has a chance of being as big a spectacle as the one the Sleepers are trying to prevent.

Extreme ingenuity is necessary. Can they somehow lure the combatants to a secure location? Can they shut down the main street and concoct a cover story for the damage? Can they rally other occultists against the two Avatars (the ones who aren't pro-showdown, that is)? Just how good at their jobs are they? Maximum damage control.

The wake-up call's at dawn.

Silver

Flashpoint

That old drunk Jeeter noticed it first: a flock of pigeons sitting in a row above an apartment building. Pretty typical, except they were sitting on *nothing*. It seems the building has suddenly sprouted an invisible but tangible structure on its roof. There isn't any way to get in . . . or is there?

Summary

1412 Lincoln Avenue appears to be a normal four-story apartment building in a fairly low-rent part of the city. It's not exactly the Ritz, but it's not falling down yet, either. It houses nineteen residents in fourteen broadly similar units (ten singles, three couples, and a trio)—plenty of space for one person, livable for two, and unpleasantly cramped for the three students. Most of the resi-



dents are in their twenties, working in the neighborhood, studying, or doing odd jobs to get by. They don't mix with each other and don't talk much to strangers.

The residents are a pretty mixed bag. One guy is a compulsive gambler who spends all day trying to beat the odds on horse races, and has his place stacked up with calculations, tipster reports, and so on. Another is something of a paranoid who won't answer the door and whose apartment is littered with melee weaponry, kung-fu magazines, and other stuff. A third is a struggling writer who's currently doing a book on the Salem witch trials and has all sorts of reference material lying around, from Cotton Mather to the *Grimoire of Armadel*. One of the couples are crystal-hugging Wiccans who've filled their love-nest with all the usual paraphernalia. Everyone else appears pretty straight, although the students have a lot of cats and seem to spend most of their time sleeping.

There's a fire door up onto the roof, and the structure is smack in the middle. It's undetectable except by touch, and feels like a cylinder ten feet in diameter at ambient temperature. The surface is uneven, and the cylinder can soon be recognized as actually being a coil of braided, slender cords that feel metallic to the touch. Walking into it briskly will hurt. Under examination, it proves to be ten feet high and roofless. It is possible to scale the structure and drop down inside it; anyone doing so will discover that it seems to be just an empty shell. It is impervious to physical and magical damage.

Targets

One of the students is a quiet girl named Anna, who has been experimenting with astral projection. After several exciting meetings with a luminous being she met on the astral plane who introduced himself as a Spirit Sage (but was, in reality, a demon), she was taught a wondrous ritual to create her own personal astral realm. She performed the ritual—it has to be done during astral projection—and created the realm, without knowing that she cannot leave it. The ritual creates an-

chors for the new realm, and these have manifested as the structure on the roof (which is over Anna's room) and a strange mirrored panel mounted in the ceiling above Anna's bed. She has been stuck in her new realm since she created it two days ago, but her slacker roommates haven't clued in to her constant sleep.

PCs can gain entry to the realm by placing their hand on the mirrored panel, at which point they will be drawn bodily into it, vanishing from the real world. Anna hasn't really noticed how much time has passed—she expects her body to draw her back when she's thirsty—and is having a great time playing the fairy princess in an enchanted woodland kingdom. Because it's her realm she has all the powers that a fairy princess should, as well as adoring fairy subjects who also have powers. There is no obvious way back, for her or the PCs.

When Anna's body becomes critically weak, its defenses will drop and the demon will be able to take it over permanently. She'll be left stuck in her realm for ever, locked away from whatever fate awaits the dead. The realm has to be destroyed if the PCs are to return to reality—which will also remove the invisible structure and the mirrored panel. Killing Anna is one way to do it, but she is a sympathetic character and, in her realm, extremely powerful, with glammers, charms, and enchantments straight out of fairy tales at her disposal. With enough initiative, the PCs may be able to find another way, perhaps by completing a symbolic quest to the heart of the realm that will break the spell and awaken the princess to her old life once more.

Truth at 24fps

Flashpoint

There's a buzz about a movie now in production at a major studio, a buzz so soft yet strong that jaded Hollywood types speak of it in reverent whispers. The sets are closed, the script can only be read with ultraviolet light, and no one's ever heard of the cast. The only thing that has escaped

is a rumor: the film is about the rebirth of magick in the world.

Summary

The movie is said to be based on an obscure novel called *The Room of Five Houses*—a novel so obscure that it doesn't even exist, to which the rumor responds that the manuscript is passed hand-to-hand among the cognoscenti and thus came to the attention of the studio. The project is seemingly impervious to rational analysis, bouncing back one rumor to explain another.

Avant garde director Milos Ruran, never known for working within the Hollywood system, demanded unprecedented control over the development of this project and received it. His script is printed black on black, with special UV lights needed to read the words. The actors are all unknowns, and the special effects team has been working in seclusion for months to perfect a look and feel for the act of magick which borders on the transcendent. The director has not made a single statement to the press about the film, but a month prior to agreeing to do the project he launched a vitriolic verbal attack against Hollywood, claiming that it was "robbing the wonder from the world." Everyone involved with the project has signed lengthy non-disclosure agreements, and one bit-part player who was to meet with a reporter cancelled at the last minute—and hasn't been seen since.

Targets

There is a ritual called the Celluloid Exorcism, which comes fleetingly and unconsciously to those obsessed not only with cinema but also with its power to transform the world. Its first unwitting practitioner was D.W. Griffith, whose *Birth of a Nation* tried to evoke a simpler time but instead breathed new life into the Ku Klux Klan. There have been others—Leni Riefenstahl with *Triumph of the Will* and Alfred Hitchcock with *Psycho*. These creators were not the cause of what was to come, but rather put a pleasing face

on those aspects of humanity best shunned, and planted seeds in the already fertile soil that would blossom in future years.

The idea behind the Celluloid Exorcism is a simple one: to attack a climate that pervades a society, lifting it from its malaise with a new vision of how things could be. Of course, those who enact the ritual seldom know that they're doing it. Instead, they become inspired with a vision unlike anything the world has seen before, a vision that nevertheless may not be in the world's best interests. This often prompts them to try new tricks with the camera, to make the viewer invest more of himself into the film. It is no accident that these films are landmarks in cinema; all the best pills have a sugar coating.

In this case, not everything is so innocent. Milos Ruran is a scholar of the cinema and has studied the personal notes of Griffith, Hitchcock, Riefenstahl, and others rumored to have performed the Exorcism. He knows full well what he's doing—possibly the first to do so—and what the outcome might be. He is also aware that, more often than not, the vision received by the audience varies from the one proffered by the director. Once the ritual is released, there's no controlling it. It doesn't matter at all to him, though. A world without wonder, without the empowerment of the everyman through simple miracles, isn't one worth living in. To him, those who have the power and the vision have an obligation to bring it to fruition, regardless of cost.

Ruran, then, is the lynchpin of the ritual. If the auteur dies, the work is left incomplete. However, Ruran has left notes and acolytes, who may try to steal the fire from heaven in years to come. There are infinitely more subtle ways to sabotage the film that do not involve killing. First, it is possible to erode the wonder of the film by leaking details well in advance. The leaks have to be genuine, which is why Ruran had to act so swiftly and permanently when it seemed one of his actors was ready to divulge secrets to the press. Second, the Hollywood hype machine, if turned on well in advance with action figures and fast food tie-ins, will make the film seem too commercial and the



fickle public may reject it out of hand. Third, any scandal involved with the film will most certainly detract from its message, as happened with Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*—which was intended as a stab against fascism but instead was screened by Hitler . . . twice. Once any of these possibilities occur, Ruran is forevermore neutralized, since lightning such as this never strikes twice. Further, his loyal assistants eventually become disillusioned that the vision he once crowed about failed to materialize, and many future problems are averted.

There's also the issue of the alleged novel's presumed author. Beyond Ruran's cinematic ambitions there may still lie another secret and another agenda altogether.

The Writing on the Walls

Flashpoint

Graffiti murals are drawing an ornate pattern throughout the city. Are they the precursor to an elaborate occult ritual or simply art?

Summary

Large graffiti murals depicting urban decay, gang warfare, starvation, and the indifference of the masses are showing up all over the city. Each mural is composed of thousands of intricate graffiti tags worked together, overlapping each other in such a way that they produce elaborate images, and each mural seems to tell a story continued from the previous one. They've appeared in well-traveled, public areas that don't normally lend themselves to graffiti—commuter rail stations in upscale neighborhoods, war memorials in parks, retaining walls along the interstate, billboards, office buildings, school buses, and even the Masonic temple downtown have served as canvases.

The murals often have unflattering representations of public servants. Most notable are those of the mayor and the director of Housing and Urban Development, neither of whom have followed through on vague campaign promises to "clean up the streets." Local-media editorialists

are labeling this as a cry for help from the forgotten, and with the election approaching the murals have become a hot-button issue. The identity of the artist or artists is still unknown.

The local artistic community also has much to say about the murals. Most vocal is Philo Bassingthwaite, a professor of dismediated arts. He likens the style to a derivation of pointillism, and refers to the unknown artist as "the pomo Thomas Nast." He fought with the city council and the property owners to have the murals deemed "public art" and protected from "preemptive whitewashing," and until the matter is settled in court the murals remain where they are.

Police haven't been able to predict where the next mural will go up, as the pattern seems to be entirely random. However, the Sleepers noticed that the sequence of the mural placements and their symbolic locations are drawing an ornate pattern throughout the city. Examination of the pattern matches some geometries used in rituals traditionally thought to affect the mind, and this can be backed up by studying the murals themselves, which all have subtle occult symbology worked into the patterns. Unfortunately, the explicit ritual hasn't been pinned down, so there are no hard and fast predictions of where and when the next murals will appear.

Targets

Bassingthwaite is exactly what he seems—an academic fascinated by this fresh expression of art.

The artist is sixteen-year-old Cedric Foster, a street kid who's had a rough life. He never knew his father, just a successive string of his mother's boyfriends who treated him somewhere between bad and worse. He joined a gang for protection when he was twelve and left home soon after. He's a heavy kid with a distrust of authority figures, a bit of a sweet tooth, and a newborn daughter he fathered with his girlfriend.

He's also an Avatar of the Chronicler. He's limited by his own experiences, his medium, and how he can reach his audience, but he's painting the tragedy that surrounds him. He has absolutely

no comprehension of the Clergy or the occult. Consequently he tends to skirt dangerously close to breaking Chronicler taboo, and with a little change of focus he could easily become an avatar of the Rebel, the Outsider, or even the Martyr. He doesn't realize that the pattern of the murals are completing a ritual intended to align the thoughts of the local populace to actively thinking of the problems he sees daily—he simply paints where he thinks he should because it feels right to do so. The birth of his daughter was the impetus for the murals, as he wants his child to grow up in a different world than he did. His innocent use of magick is only for the good—but do the Sleepers figure that out before they get spooky and whack him?

Smash the Rahyab

Flashpoint

A teenager in Cincinnati can speak the language of any person she comes in contact with, and is getting written up on paranormal and psychic phenomena websites.

Summary

Betsy Cullen was a boring teenager up until two months ago, when her French teacher discovered the girl had suddenly become fluent. Betsy can respond in kind to any language spoken to her, with perfect pronunciation. When not in a foreign-language conversation with another person, she can't speak any language other than English.

Through investigation the agents can discover that the week before her power manifested Betsy was admitted to a local hospital, where she was treated for a severe migraine brought on after an evening at an all-night rave club her ex-boyfriend convinced her to try.

Backtracking reveals that the club, Ephemeris, was under investigation by Cincinnati police for "possible drug activities," which resulted in it going out of business after its licenses were pulled following a bust six weeks ago. There are no re-

ports of arrests for drugs related to the club—but there are a large number of incident reports where clubgoers behaved in manners that the police can only attribute to drugs.

What freaked the cops out was that officers were being affected, indicating that the psychoactive drugs used in the club must have been in the air. Interviews with cops on the scene will reveal reticent, halting stories of "acid trip" strangeness, all explainable until a scared Officer Jeffers, first man on the scene the night the bust went down, shows the agents the robin's-egg-sized pearl that's been growing underneath his pillow every night since the incident. He doesn't know why—he keeps throwing them away and new ones keep appearing.

Targets

The group 101001101 (see *Postmodern Magick*, p. 152) has made its latest and possibly last mistake. Audacious in the extreme, their brand of psychoreactive magickal environmental theater fueled by the delirium-magick Oneiromancy (see PM, p. 101) tried to break out of the fringe art world and into the downtown of a mid-sized American city with disastrous consequences. By the time Cincinnati PD decided to bust the club, more than a dozen casual visitors to Ephemeris had been infected by out-of-control magickal phenomena. 101001101 has fled, trying to vanish back into Europe's rave scene and keeping their distance from America.

Unfortunately for the sleepwalkers, both Officer Jeffers and Betsy Cullen are linked to the cabal's collective and can be used to magickally track down the center of the disturbance: the Rahyab, a set of fraternal twins who form the core of Oneiromancy (see PM, p. 154).

(One devilish possibility: Angela Forsythe lets the agents pursue 101001101, but uses her Cliomancy to "program" members of the team to be susceptible to indoctrination by the Oneiromancers. Then, when the agents are fully inserted, a second team is dispatched with the word-codes needed to hack into the subconscious of these



“moles,” gaining the Sleepers the ultimate in inside intelligence.)

The Sleepers cannot allow Betsy Cullen to see her next birthday unless she keeps her mouth shut, which is both sad and necessary.

The Gullyhooter

Flashpoint

In the archives of the Hamilton Collection there is a yellowed page from a grade-school notebook, bearing scribbles of juvenile handwriting, in a protective plastic sleeve. The sleeve bears a label reading “J. Armand v.2, p. 17” and the date of January 12, 1955. The scribbles are a poem:

*The Gullyhooter is a bitch to kill,
So McGwire hid it beneath the hill.
He dug a hole six fathoms deep,
And laid a trap to summon sleep.
For fifty years it's been down in Hell,
But soon the 'hooter'll escape the well.
Walkin' down the hill, caked with mud,
And the streets of the village run with blood.*

Immediately below the poem is a date with a question mark—and it's only three days away.

Summary

This is a page from the journal of Canadian precognitive Jeanette Armand, which has been in the Sleeper archives since her brief media heyday in the 1960s. The attached research notes detail repeated failed attempts to find information on the Gullyhooter and McGwire. However, the most recent note references a literature search last month for “Gullyhooter” by a Meg Rawdon of UCLA.

An abbreviated background report on Rawdon is included; she is utterly middle-class mundane, an academic folklorist up for tenure. Her personality is solid Virgo (see UA, p. 32). If asked about the Gullyhooter, she will go through three stages:

Excited. She grills the PCs for what they know about the legend.

Wary. If the PCs start interrogating her, she thinks they may be trying to steal her research/thesis.

Proud. When she's assured they're not working on a competing thesis, she spills her guts, showing off.

Rawdon has an eighty-year-old diary of Louise Beaumont, who recounts stories her grandfather told her about growing up in Raspberry Notch, Tennessee. One of them mentions the Gullyhooter—a bear-like monster that walks like a man and burns with green fire. The legend has it that the creature is a white trapper who fell under an Indian curse, and the stories about it are reminiscent of “The Hook” or other campfire tales.

Targets

Raspberry Notch is a small rural town in the Smoky Mountains with about 2,000 residents. Points of interest include a gas station, a drug store, and a factory-outlet shop for a nearby walnut-bowl manufacturer. Most residents have heard of the Gullyhooter: it's an old ghost story their grandparents told them.

Older residents remember a guy named McGwire. He's a long-dead bum who used to wander around town asking people what his name was. (He used to be the fix-it man, but lost his marbles after his wife was murdered back in the 1940s.) McGwire died in the early 1960s. His old house is up Sunny Hollow, a lonely wreck completely overgrown by kudzu and weeds.

In the backyard is an overgrown well made of river stones. If the PCs clear the vines away, they find a narrow set of steps mounted on the inside wall of the well. The steps lead down fifteen feet to a low brick passageway running back into the hill; the well continues down another twelve feet to water.

A few yards down the passageway, there's a wooden door to the right leading into McGwire's workshop. From the two decrepit clockworks that ineffectually attempt to defend the room from the intruders, it's obvious McGwire was a Mechanomancer. There are also other clockworks, tools, and parts lying around, all rusted into uselessness.

The passageway continues another ten yards beyond the workroom, ending at a thick copper door. It has recently been smashed off its hinges, apparently from the inside. Close observation spots a remnant of ooze or slime upon the crumpled door.

The tiny chamber beyond has a pit leading down into darkness. Suspended above the pit is the shattered remains of a clockwork made of greenish copper, which appears to have exploded. This device was a free-energy clockwork (see *Post-modern Magick*, p. 127) called the Cage of Sleep.

Old Man McGwire waged a mountainside battle against the Gullyhooter in 1948, after the thing killed his beloved wife Lucille. When his clockworks were unable to kill the thing, McGwire burned almost all of his memories to build the Cage of Sleep. The Cage kept the beast asleep for weeks at a time. When the Gullyhooter would start to wake the Cage would zap it, knocking it out for another few weeks. As McGwire was a fine craftsman, the power requirements had been carefully calculated in advance. Unfortunately, decades-long exposure to the Cage's magick made the Gullyhooter susceptible, and over time it took fractionally *less* power to put it under. The tiny bits of excess power built up until the Cage went boom. The beast woke up from its last slumber this week, just as Jeanette Armand foresaw.

The Gullyhooter itself is a powerful Unspeakable Servant. Its last master, Lucius Stockwell, died in 1764 of dysentery after reaching the Colonies. The Gullyhooter survived and soon thrived, working its way into the frontier in its master's absence. Currently, its only real desire is to eat—it's awful hungry and will eat most anything. But it likes the taste of people.

The Gullyhooter shares all of the abilities of the Greater type of Unspeakable Servant, with three changes: it may cause three significant unnatural phenomena per day; firearms only do hand-to-hand damage against it; and after long exposure to the Cage of Sleep, the Gullyhooter is narcoleptic. Soothing noises, hypnosis, sleep spells, and even lullabies will put the creature out for up to ten minutes.

The Hunt

Flashpoint

Over the last two weeks, three Sleeper surveillance operations have been compromised. The Cabinet suspects that the groups under observation were tipped off by someone with inside information.

Summary

Three minor cabals, each recently making inroads into the underground, were under surveillance to determine their potential threat level: Yggdrasil, an Odinist militant cult; the Chainborn, anti-consensus reality psychoterrorists; and the House of Seven Bridges, a neo-Gnostic sect of enlightenment seekers. Each of the cabals, over a two-week period, shook their surveillance. The Chainborn and the House simply disappeared. Yggdrasil staged an assault against the watchpost. The ease with which the cabals evaded and countered the observation teams suggests they had intelligence on Sleeper routines and tactics.

Furthermore, surveillance never registered any meetings or communications revealing the source of the information. An internal leak would be able to bypass the monitors in such a fashion.

Magickal and mundane inquiries soon point to Diana Tower as the leak. Diana was a long-serving Sleeper agent with an exemplary record who ceased communications with the group two weeks ago. Searches of her apartment and regular contact locales reveal they've been unused during that time.

Diana helped establish the surveillance ops on the three cabals. She also has knowledge of numerous safehouses, undercover field agents, magickal lore, and details of the underground. This information not only poses a great risk to the Sleepers—its revelation could threaten their agenda by dramatically increasing productive interest in the unnatural.



Targets

Neutralizing Diana is paramount. She is highly skilled and has cultivated her own contacts in the underground, which is to say she should be considered armed and dangerous. More than simply stopping her, the Sleepers need to learn why she went rogue, since there could be another organization involved in her betrayal. Capture, followed by diplomacy or interrogation, is the preferred course of action.

The explanation is simple: after years of monitoring desperate wannabes and hopeless dreamers, all the while holding the answer to their prayers—proof of the magickal—Diana simply had enough. She decided the world was ready for the truth, that they deserved it, even needed it, and that it was time for the Sleepers to get a taste of their own medicine.

This is Diana's final card. If confronted she has the sleeping tiger itself as a hostage, and tries to ensure that her takedown is as noisily public as possible.

Finding her, however, will not be easy. There is also the matter of the three cabals she's shepherding. Fortunately, one leads to the other, since Diana meets with each of them to help them escape the Sleepers.

The Chainborn are actively attempting to meet with members of the underground in order to barter the new information Diana has given them. They're outfitted with countersurveillance gear, an arsenal of mind-altering drugs, and may have an adept or two on tap by the time the PCs find them. Their biggest vulnerability is their eagerness to ingratiate themselves into the underground, an eagerness that can be exploited to lead them into a trap.

The House of Seven Bridges was mostly composed of neo-pagan types. When they learned that a secret and violent organization was investigating them, they ran scared and returned to their mundane lives. If any members can be located, via legwork or magickal means, it's clear that they are unlikely to spread any secrets, despite Diana's encouragement. A healthy dose of intimidation makes it certain.

Yggdrasil are the real problem. Fascist, racist, and convinced of their place in Valhalla, compromise isn't an option with them; they are armed and itching for battle. Yggdrasil are planning strikes against the safe-houses and undercover Sleeper operatives. Foresight could turn these into opportunities to trap the group.

As valuable as hitting the cabals themselves is learning how Diana contacts them. Delicate subterfuge may allow the Sleepers to lure her out of hiding. The stress is on delicacy; Diana is seasoned, cautious, and justifiably paranoid. The Sleepers have, in essence, three chances to draw her out, one through each group. Failure to do so puts the ball in Diana's court; the Sleepers must wait until she resurfaces to spread more secrets.

A possible complication is whether or not Diana has worked with any of the team assigned to hunt her. A former co-worker may help the PCs in tracking down and manipulating Diana, but may also compromise their ability to trick her.

Eat It All

Flashpoint

A famous horror author hasn't been seen in weeks, but the chapters for his new novel keep rolling in. A supermarket tabloid reports he's dead but won't rest easy until his book is finished—and they have a grainy photo of a skull-faced figure skulking around his home.

Summary

Andrew Cray writes bestsellers. His female protagonists are generally large-breasted exhibitionists, and his male characters tend to be stylishly competent supernatural predators. Blood, boobs, bombast—there's something for everyone.

He's been holed up in his luxury condo working on *Rambling*—the fourth book in his trilogy. No one has seen him outside for at least three weeks. Given his good looks and notorious sex life, that's not normal.

Cray, you see, is arguably one of his city's most prolific cocksmen. Sure, there's that forward

on the basketball team, but Cray's peccadilloes are more public and more juicy. According to the tabloids, he's a bondage freak, a drug addict, he screwed his agent's wife, his editor's wife, the basketball forward's girlfriend, the mayor's wife and daughter, *et cetera*.

So his legions of fans (mostly female) are worried. You can say what you like about Cray's purple prose, his antimatter sexual morals, his posing and posturing and self-promoting—but he's always done right by his fans. He's always charming and patient, even to the inarticulate 300-pound teens with more whiteheads than the congressional barbershop. The fact that he hasn't come out to reassure them is even more suspicious than a sudden bout of celibacy.

A group of fans has basically surrounded his condo building for the last week, getting some national media attention. The crowd swells and shrinks—as many as thirty when school's just let out, as few as five during the night. They've started seeing some weird stuff, and the tabloids are picking up on it.

Specifically, they report the following:

- They've seen a skull-headed figure sneaking around the gardens behind the building. One enterprising dropout even got a picture.
- The lights in his condo go on and off. *Someone* is up there.
- If you listen to the crickets at midnight around there, they whisper passages from his books—always passages describing death.

The Sleepers have checked into Cray before: he has, in the past, associated himself with *genuine* occultists. But he's never provided the kind of conclusive proof that the Sleepers fear. He seemed content to spook himself and his entourage, but perhaps it's gone beyond that now.

Here's what the Sleepers can learn from various people.

His Fans and Stalkers

- Andrew was recently seeing this woman named Marcy McLaughlin. For a while, they

were inseparable, though she didn't seem like his normal type—"Real plain, except for great legs," opines one gothed-out fanboy. For a while it looked like they'd even moved in together. But then she caught him screwing a model in a cloakroom.

- Cray was, without a doubt, into BDSM, specifically into being "the master." He preferred humiliation and psychological torture to physical stuff, and professed to believe that women were all dependent at the core, and could only be truly fulfilled when they'd been shown their submissive nature by a commanding man.
- He was an avid collector of weapons, both antique and modern. He's rumored to own one of the guns used to kill John Dillinger, and a knife used by Jeffrey Dahmer.

His Entourage

- He's been turning in his chapters on time, faxing them in from his condo, and the stuff is *good*. Talking to him on the phone, he sounds kind of spacey and weird, but it's him.
- Marcy McLaughlin was damaged goods. Andrew really liked that. She hasn't been around either.
- He's been getting groceries delivered, but won't let anyone look at him.

His Neighbors

- They wish he *was* gone. This was a nice, classy five-story building before he moved in and started having cat-howl sex at all hours. With his latest "girlfriend" Marcy, the shrieking and thumping was even worse—"If I didn't know what that sicko was into, I would have called the cops. Any other apartment, I'd figure it was someone getting murdered." Judging by what the neighbors have heard, the wild sex is still going on.
- Pensioner Travis Murdoch lives right below Cray, and he's the explanation for the "skull-headed figure." He's a lonely, kooky, dirty old man with no



friends and few social skills. He has an uncomfortable prosthetic nose and leaves it off when nobody's around (that is, most of the time). If pressed, he admits that he'd found a good place in the garden where he could climb up a tree and see into Cray's bedroom. He hasn't seen anything lately though—he's stopped peeping since getting photographed.

Targets

The truth is this: Cray bit off more than he could chew. He and Marcy fell into an extremely intense codependency. If he'd been able to keep it in his pants, it might have worked itself out, one way or the other. But the fight over the cloakroom model escalated all the way home. It ended when Marcy picked up one of his antique axes and chopped off his right hand.

He passed out from the shock and when he woke up, Marcy (a medical school dropout) had managed to bandage and suture his injury. She'd also chained him to the bed.

At first he resisted being her prisoner and tried like hell to escape, but his helplessness and her guilty ministrations turned some tumbler in his psyche, unlocked something that had been hidden behind all his womanizing and macho posturing. He realized that he *needed* this, *wanted* it—that all his life he'd been longing for a woman strong enough to show him his real need for submission.

Neither one remembers whose idea it was for Marcy to cook and eat the hand. But it brought them closer together. (The sex has been fantastic ever since.) She's taken off one of his feet and, when he's a little stronger, she'll do the leg. They plan for her to slowly reduce and consume him until he's dead and they are only a single organism.

This is their true will. They have to keep it secret, of course—most people won't understand. But if anybody (like, say, a Sleeper team) gets into the condo and confronts them, they explain everything. They're almost relieved to have an audience.

There's nothing paranormal going on. Just two people who want nothing more than for one of them to cannibalize the other.

Hard Landing

Flashpoint

Word on the street is that something big is coming. The *entire* occult underground is buzzing about Celine's Bird, a clockwork with the distinction of being the first man-made object in Earth orbit. Apparently the spring has finally wound down, and Celine's Bird is coming home.

Summary

In 1894, Giacomo Celine, a Neapolitan Clockworker, launched his greatest achievement. It's a twenty-foot long brass bird, and it became the first man-made object to achieve orbit. It's been up there for over a century, but now the spring has wound down and it's starting to fall. Somehow, word of it has spread all through the Occult Underground, inciting avarice of epic proportions.

Rumors are flying about the contents of the bird. Some say it's full of all the rituals Celine was able to collect in his life, others that it holds a number of clockworks that have been surveying the magickal fields of the earth. The modern Mechanomancers don't really care about what it contains; the item itself would be a valuable resource for building their own devices. At least two Entropomancers have offered their services to the highest bidder, ensuring that the thing lands where the patron wants. Cliomancers are waging quiet campaigns of disinformation about the contents and landing point of the thing as they race to take possession.

A full-scale occult war is heating up over the thing, and the Sleepers are concerned both about that and the fact that the thing will become visible to mundane radar when it re-enters the atmosphere. God knows how durable the thing is, but if it survives re-entry the best calculations have it landing in the wilderness of a national park.

Targets

Sandra Haddad found Giacomo's notebooks

while she was doing research for her doctorate in Naples. She pieced together his hints and references to his masterwork and started doing the calculations, discovering that the Bird should be re-entering the atmosphere in a few weeks. She made plans to locate the Bird upon its landing to see what she could salvage, contacting a friend of hers who knew something about orbits and physics to help her plot the location. Armed with this information, she's set herself up to wait.

That didn't work, though. Erik Isford is a Cliomancer who has been tailing Sandra. He's long suspected her of being an unaware Avatar of the Scholar, and is eager for the chance to benefit from any powerful sites she leads him to. He listened in on her conversations, stole peeks at her notes, and figured out what was going on. He wants the Bird for himself, figuring that if nothing else, he can barter it in the occult underground for some significant mojo. To help him get his hands on it, he started using his Gnostic Gossip spell to spread rumors about the Bird, hoping that the resultant stories and involvement of other adepts would muddy the water enough for him to steal the prize from under everyone's nose.

It's got even more tangled since then. The response generated is far beyond what Erik had intended, and it's making things complicated. He's enlisted the help of Dan Despina, an Entropomancer, to guarantee that the Bird lands near enough to him that he can claim it, but Dan has told him that at least two other Entropomancers he knows have been employed for the same purpose by others.

When the Bird comes down safe and slow, the Entropomancers start burning charges wildly, trying to bring the thing down nearest them. Unnatural phenomena run rampant through the park, possibly sparking a forest fire or riot. If more than one Entropomancer is at this business the Bird is destroyed by the struggle, scattering gears far and wide over the forest. If one or fewer Entropomancers are acting on the Bird, it touches down quite lightly, sculling its wings.

Celine's Bird is a twenty-foot long brass nightingale, with beautiful feathers each formed from a

separate piece of brass. The eyes are quartz crystals, and it sings softly once it lands for about thirty seconds before the spring winds down. On the breast of the Bird is an access panel, revealing a switch with three settings and a key. The pointer is currently set towards a circle around a picture of the earth. The other two settings show a crescent moon and the astrological symbol for Mars. The key can, of course, be used to wind the Bird's spring, allowing it to fly again. A full winding takes twenty minutes. The bird has no abilities beyond the power to fly through space, and contains nothing but its gears, springs, rods, and levers.

Bibliomancer War

Flashpoint

Two wealthy, rival Bibliomancers, one based in London, the other in New York, have recently escalated their personal, decades-long feud. Their use of Bibliomantic magick has begun to have a ripple effect among the upper echelons of the rare-book community.

Summary

The international community of rare-book collectors has always attracted odd individuals, including the occasional adept or avatar. Two of the most prominent—and ruthless—book collectors are Emil Jacobsen and Paul Van Dorn. Both are extremely wealthy and extremely obsessive collectors of rare books. They also both happen to be Bibliomancers. Over the years they have often sought the same books, and both men have resorted to lying, bribery, and outright theft to ensure that they, and not their rival, get the books they want. The two are evenly matched in power, but until recently have only thwarted each other's efforts through purely mundane means.

Three weeks ago, Van Dorn hired a cat burglar to enter Jacobsen's Bibliomantic library and steal the three-volume set of Howard Hughes' diaries that Jacobsen had recently acquired from one of Hughes' old CIA associates. The cat burglar



was caught, though not before several of Jacobsen's most valuable books were destroyed. Before the burglar died, he revealed that an associate of Van Dorn's had hired him. At that point, Jacobsen took the kid gloves off and began working bookworm magicks against Van Dorn, subtly thwarting his efforts to acquire new books and corrupting those in Van Dorn's library. Van Dorn has responded in kind, and their struggle has quickly escalated. Many of their mundane associates have begun to suspect that there is more than meets the eye to their rivalry.

The enmity of the two Bibliomancers and their growing use of magick against each other have begun to leach into the upper echelons of the book-collecting community, and several unnatural occurrences have popped up at various rare-book auctions around the world. Dealers and collectors have begun squabbling more than usual, and formerly good-natured competition has turned decidedly nasty. There have been several articles in the press about increased tensions in this rarefied and obscure group.

Targets

Emil Jacobsen lives in a large penthouse apartment in London. He has a small staff who looks after his business interests and never goes anywhere without his henchman, a small, sneaky Steve Buscemi-type named Edgar.

Paul Van Dorn lives in New York City and also has a fairly large vacation home upstate. He is always accompanied on his travels by his bodyguard, Mr. Thorn, who is big, burly, and loves knives. Van Dorn has begun training a young orphan he found in a public library to be a Bibliomancer; though she is only ten, she is fiercely protective of her mentor.

The two routinely spy on each other using both mundane agents and technology as well as magickal means. Because the two are essentially evenly matched in capability, it is very difficult for one to gain the upper hand over the other, and their struggles have cost both severely. They remain formidable threats, however, and Sleepers

are advised that it would be unwise to attack either bookworm in their libraries. Both send agents to rare-book shows and auctions to make acquisitions, though the promise of a particularly rare book could bring them to inspect the item personally.

The Ripped-Off Head Riot

Flashpoint

Last week, an Epideromancer ripped another man's head completely off his body in front of over a hundred people, kicking off a major freak-out stampede. The fleshworker walked through the crowd like a hot knife through butter, twisting flesh as he went. All the while, he drank the blood from the ripped-off head he grasped by the hair.

Summary

Once the PCs start snooping around, they'll find that the local occult underground is all abuzz with the details. The victim and the attacker are both known: the victim was Willy Jackson, a booze-hound on the decline, and the attacker could only have been Radu Lopez, a pumped-up braggart of a fleshworker. Lopez is described as swarthy, short, and built like a brick bulldog.

They were sitting out at the street-side tables in front of Jackson's favorite hangout. The bar is next to Kalifornica, a hip dance club with a killer house sound. The queue to get in was crowded and tense. The hundred and twenty people waiting were not in a positive mood to start with when Lopez reached over and calmly twisted Jackson's head off like a soda cap.

Fourteen people were injured in the riot, some by magick. Eyewitnesses describe how Lopez plowed through the crowd, batting people aside without effort, ripping gobbets of flesh from some rioters and *eating* them with enthusiasm. The police are on the wrong trail—they're searching for a psychopath with a machete who escaped from prison last year.

After the PCs hit the streets, they get word from the Sleepers that the Order of St. Cecil (see UA, p. 19) has sent *their* agents in, too, for reasons as yet unknown.

Targets

People of interest in this case include the two St. Cecil agents, Father Etienne Destinè and Father Sean O'Brien, and featured headcase Radu Lopez.

Father Etienne Destinè is a hulking French priest. A master of *savate* and *tae kwon do*, he also carries a Colt .45 under his cassock. He's an enforcer-type who doesn't skimp on the holy water, silver bullets, and grenades. Father Sean O'Brien is a charming smooth-talker of an Irish scholar-priest. A natural detective, he can stitch clues together into a seamless whole, even if it involves magick. The Order of St. Cecil wants Radu Lopez for his known participation in a Black Mass demon-summoning and his desecration of a chapel by using its altar as a picnic table to chow down on its pastor.

Radu Lopez is a cannibal Mexican-Hungarian Epideromancer from San Antonio. He's pumped himself up with his magick, surpassing normal human maxima in Body and Speed. If that weren't enough, he's macho, arrogant, dumb as a rock, hair-trigger homophobic, and makes ludicrous claims like having invented Epideromancy, having had sex with the Freak, and being over a century old.

It's all true, sort of. You see, Lopez is a vampire (see UA, p. 164). He's been cutting himself for kicks since he was a skinny albino kid picked on by his macho father and cousins. His mother died in childbirth, so he only discovered his noble heritage in his mid-thirties from his Aunt Margot, whom his father called Blanca Margot behind her back. This would have been around the turn of the century. His self-mutilation habits, combined with the knowledge of his family's bloody legacy, led him to investigate the darker sorts of black magick, blood rituals, and anthrophagy. He didn't invent Epideromancy, but he was a pupil of the guy who did. And Lopez and the Freak did the horizontal mambo in November of 1988, in De-

troit. Lopez claims the Freak was all-woman that night; the Freak just smiles if asked. If pressed on the subject, Lopez's homophobia ignites and he flips out on the questioner.

Lopez has used his magick to eliminate his albinism and reshape his body. The inside of his apartment contains a lot of body-building posters, tattoo magazines, and a refrigerator full of people parts prepared Tex-Mex style. He also has a shrine to Vlad Tepes, complete with flowers, burning candles, and vampire-movie photos ripped from magazines.

The real deal behind the event is that Lopez was quizzing Jackson—a devout Catholic—on the miracle of transubstantiation. They disagreed, Lopez mentioned his Black Mass activities, and Jackson was shocked. The argument grew heated. Jackson called him a cocksucker and Lopez ripped off his head. End of story.

Currently, Lopez is "hiding out" at a tattoo convention in Tulsa. He's wounded from his recent endeavors and is presently slap out of charges, but that doesn't stop him from connecting with the underground there and bragging about how much of a badass he is—perhaps not noticing the two grim priests with their hands in their pockets or the cabal of Sleepers across the room, all of whom want a piece of this sick loser and fast.

Sycamore Street is Missing

Flashpoint

Reports have come in from a nearby suburb that an entire street has disappeared. Sycamore Street was a quiet, idyllic example of the American dream, lined with trees and quaint single-family homes with picket fences. The only problem is, it apparently never existed.

Summary

The situation is bizarre, to say the least. The PCs discover that everyone in town knows of the existence of Sycamore Street, though nobody seems to recall exactly how to get there. The street appears

on no maps of the town, for as far back as any records have been kept. There are no mentions of the street in any of the town's newspapers or police reports, either. As far as can be ascertained the street has never been a part of the town, despite the townspeople's vague belief.

The curious thing, however, is that there is ample documentation in the form of missing-persons reports. Friends and family members who live elsewhere have filed reports on loved ones who are listed as having lived on Sycamore Street. No one who lives in the town, however, has any recollection of any of these people, and besides the recent missing-persons reports there are no official or personal records of any sort documenting their existence, anywhere. Family photos no longer show the missing people, and even their relatives who filed the reports are swiftly losing their memories; within a few weeks, those memories are gone and only the reports in the files of the local cops will remain.

Interviews with the out-of-town friends and family members of the missing will result in the discovery that these people do recall the missing, as

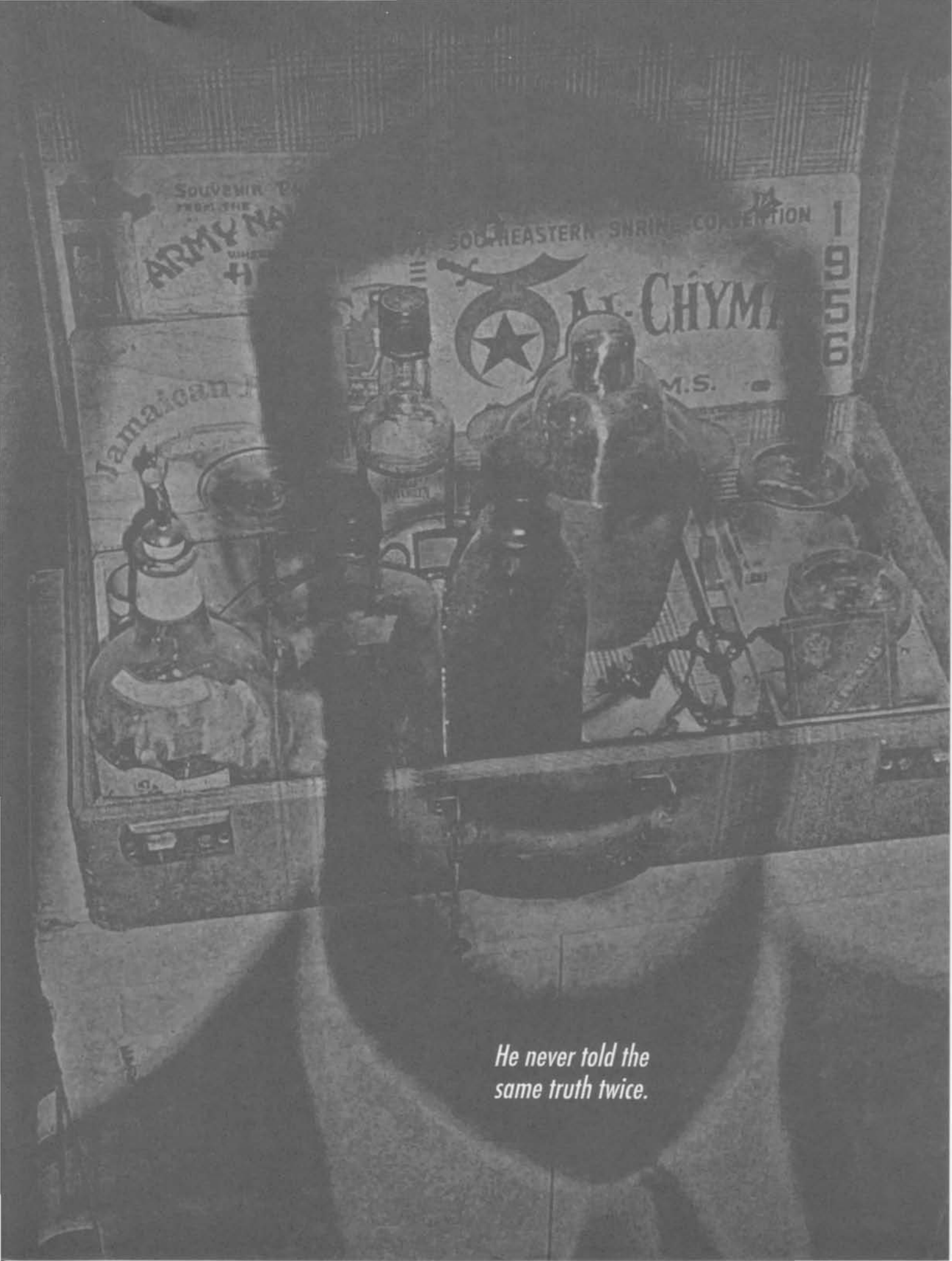
well as the street, though even at this point they already seem less concerned and connected to their missing loved ones than the PCs would expect. If the PCs ask them for directions to Sycamore Street, they reply that the street lies between Oak and Maple on the west side of town. However, investigation will reveal that there *are* no streets between Oak and Maple; they are adjacent.

The result: some two dozen men, women, and children have disappeared, all of whom apparently lived on a street that doesn't exist and never has.

Targets

This is a story without an ending. The PCs can investigate, interview the relatives, and collect as much information as they can. In the end, their notes go into the Sleepers' files in the hopes that they may prove useful in the future. But Sycamore Street is lost forever.

Standing on the sidewalk between Oak and Maple, the PCs receive their only clue: a small garter snake lying in the shape of a circle, slowly devouring its own tail.



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SOUTHEASTERN SHRINE CONVENTION

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CHYM

M.S.

Jamaican

*He never told the
same truth twice.*

UNKNOWN
ARMIES

the
sleepers
sourcebook

UNKNOWN
ARMIES

...MY SOUL to KEEP...



IF I DIE IN MY SLEEP, AT LEAST I'LL KNOW WHO DID IT. THE SLEEPERS ARE THE BEDTIME-STORY BOGEYMEN OF THE OCCULT UNDERGROUND. THEY KEEP THE EXISTENCE OF MAGICK A SECRET FROM THE MUNDANE WORLD, LEST THE SLEEPING TIGER WAKE AND DEVOUR US ALL. IF YOU MAKE TOO MUCH UNNATURAL NOISE, IF YOU LEAVE WITNESSES TO YOUR WORKINGS, OR IF YOU JUST CAN'T SHUT YOUR PIE HOLE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN MELT YOUR FACE ON COMMAND, THE SLEEPERS WILL COME FOR YOU IN THE DEEPS OF NIGHT AND TELL IT YOU STRAIGHT: HUSH HUSH, LITTLE MAGE, FOR DEAD MEN CAST NO SPELLS. LISTEN CLOSE AND YOU CAN HEAR THEIR SECRETS: STORIES OF THE SLEEPERS, TRUE & OTHERWISE • RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND OPS • STRONGHOLDS, PERSONNEL, AND EQUIPMENT • TWELVE CASE FILES • **BUT KEEP IT TO YOURSELF—OR ELSE.**

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