

INTERFACE

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THE MAGAZINE FOR CYBERPUNK 2020™ ENTHUSIASTS

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• EctoTech • Cults: Hopes and Horrors • A Policy of Pain •
• Conversion Rules to CoC • Reviews • Transference • Cult Profiles

INTERFACE

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THE DARKTIME

The Darktime or CyberCthulhu is a combination of those two classics, Cyberpunk and Call of Cthulhu. This particular issue of Interface, will offer this unusual mixture in varying degrees. Most of the material within will function quite well without any Mythos horrors, and others will be lost without them. Feel free to pick and choose and tell us what you think. There are some new rules scattered throughout the sidebars, so pay attention.

New Skill: Appraise

This skill allows one to judge the value and authenticity of gems, jewels, art, sculpture, furniture, even architecture, by looking closely and inspecting it. A successful roll will also tell the Appraiser a general history of the object being studied, like where it was made and by whom, and the rarity of the object. The difficulty of the roll depends on the relative obscurity of the object and how well the Appraiser gets to inspect it.

A final Dark Time Note:

Knowledge, not guns, is what will get you furthest in any CoC game, regardless of whether you are playing in the 1920's or the 2020's. PCs should be encouraged to buy multiple Expert skills, specializing in a number of knowledges not covered in the list of Cyberpunk 2020 skills. The following is a list of areas of knowledge which PCs may find useful in their investigations

Hidden behind the chaos of mans' making, something waits. Vibrations (like those made by something breathing) plague the dreams of the powerful, bringing nightmares, and haunt the waking hours of the weak, sowing madness. In the clubs of every urban sprawl and arcology alike, smiles waver and are forced into being. Beneath the surface of their thoughts they feel an inexplicable panic rise. The dancers hasten their gyrations. In the combat zones, lone madmen cry to the skies in succor, somehow knowing their calls have been answered. In the land of the beavers, nestled in among the uniform rows of two-bedroom homes, hardworking Stan, ax in hand, surveys his kingdom of blood, fulfilling the rules of his company's new corporate policy. Hidden behind the chaos of mans' making, something laughs.

The Darktime is the bastard offspring of first cousins. In it, two distinctly different, yet similar, worlds come together: the dark future of R. Talsorian's Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. and the dark gods of Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu.

For those of you who have been living in a cave or been playing too much AD&D, Call of Cthulhu is Chaosium's RPG set in the worlds created by the writer H. P. Lovecraft and the subsequent score of writers who kept Lovecraft's mythology alive. Call of Cthulhu (or CoC) is a RPG masterwork of setting and atmosphere. The game is supported by more than thirty well written and researched supplements and adventures world-wide.

In this world, set primarily in the 1920's, investigators (the PCs) uncover ghastly truths obscured by masks of normality. Through investigation, the PCs either directly or indirectly try to thwart the machinations of the

Great Old Ones and their worshippers. The Great Old Ones are powerful alien beings who possess incredible abilities. It is said that when "the stars are right" the Great Old Ones will range across the Earth, laying it to waste and devouring all who reside upon it. The Great Old Ones tend to act through servitor races and worshippers, as most Great Old Ones, like Cthulhu, are trapped or imprisoned in some way. Some of the more powerful and more widely worshipped Great Old Ones are Cthulhu, Cthugha, Hastur, Ithaqua, Y'goloanc, and Yig.

Less involved in the affairs of mankind, and therefore less widely worshipped are the Outer Gods, sometimes called the Other Gods. They resemble more the definition of "god," possessing incalculable power, yet the Outer Gods are far removed from humanity. Star-sized Azathoth, the daemon sultan, resides at the center of the Universe, writhing mindlessly to the piping of it's servants. Yog-Sothoth, who exists simultaneously in all space and time can only interact with the mundane universe when summoned with mighty magics. When something disturbs the Outer Gods they send Nyarlathotep, who is voice, heart, and soul to the Outer Gods. Of the Outer Gods, Nyarlathotep is the only one who both has a personality, granted, a mocking, capricious, and invariably malevolent one, who regularly interacts with humans.

There are a score of races who act as Companions to the Outer Gods and Great Old Ones, both acting as servitors of, or independent from, these powerful beings. At best these creatures are inimical to man, at worst they actively seek to do humanity harm.

In this issue of Interface, we are attempting to bring into being a world where the spires of corporate power metaphorically stand side by side with the ancient cities and temples of the Great Old Ones. In the Darktime, beware, the stars are right.▼

into the Cthulhu Mythos:

*Ancient Civilizations,
Ancient Languages
(Hieroglyphs, Sumerian
Ideographs)
Ancient Religions or Cults,
Archaeology,
Astrology,
Astronomy,
Cartography,
Demonology (by region: western,
Asian, Indian, African),
Egyptology, Linguistics,
Occult Texts,
Modern Cults,
Modern Cult Leaders,
Occult,
Unexplained Phenomenon,
UFOs,
Death Cults,
Myths & Mysticism (by region:
Aboriginal, African, American
Indian, Buddhist, Central
American, China, Druids,
Egyptian, Hindu, Japanese,
Pagan, South American, Zen),
Role-Playing Gamers, etc.▼*



ECTOTECH BY UNSPEAK CYBERWARE®

BUG EYES



You can have them too! Our Chiba-manufactured Bugeyes resemble the more mundane wrap-around visor, but give you that viscious insectoid look you want. In addition, the large size of the Bugeye allows it to mount more options than any previously mounted Cybereye. Only available in pairs.

Bug Eyes: 1,500 eb, HC = 4d6, mount up to 4 options per eye, SP is 8 for the eyes, with a roll of 1-3 on D10 to hit one of the eyes.

MANDIBLES

Not for the normal! Unspeak mandibles mount inside your mouth. Facial surgery allows you to look as normal as you ever do, yet allows your mouth to stretch to an awesome 12 cm wide. Then you extend giant bug mandibles for some serious fear and loathing! Caution; due to the large space inside a person's mouth these mandibles take up, the mandibles must be extended for eating.



Mandibles: 1,200 eb, HC = 5d6, Bite for 2D6 damage

THERMASKIN

Tired of being cold, but not cool? In conjunction with Gen-U-U Biotechnology, Unspeak is proud to present all-new Thermaskin. It's like having an insulated parka under your hide! Thermaskin is a protective layer of insulative material which is nanotechnically woven under your normal skin. Thermaskin is guaranteed safe in temperatures as low as 0° C (32° F). Caution; temperatures over 27° C (80° F) may be unbearably warm. Thermaskin is fully compatible with skinweave, and is available in all colors as well as Snake-Scale, Alligator and new Gila Monster.

Thermaskin: 2,000 eb, HC = 1/2d6, Character sweats profusely in hot weather.

TENTACLE FINGER

Similar to the Tentacle Arm, the Tentacle Finger is a scaled down version that's ideal for those who are a bit too restrained, or simply don't need, something as radical as the Tentacle Arm. Unspeak's Tentacle Fingers are 1.5 cm thick at the base, 10 cm long and every bit as flexible and articulated as the arm tentacles. The extendable Tentacle Fingers can extend up to 30 cm long. Without a cyberhand, Tentacle Fingers have the strength of normal fingers. With the reinforcements of a cyberhand (which you must have for the extendable Tentacle Fingers), Tentacle Fingers have the strength of a standard cyberhand.

Tentacle Finger: 500 eb, HC+1, May not mount any options except rippers on the ends of the tentacles (need at least four tentacles per hand for rippers, HC+2D6). Extendable fingers-750eb.

TENTACLE ARM SHEATH

The Tentacle Arm accessory for those who wish to remain discreet until the right moment. With the Tentacle Arm Sheath, your Tentacle Arm is indistinguishable from any other cyberarm until the proper mental command activates the Sheath's insta-flay feature to reveal the writhing surprise within and, with but a thought, to "reflesh" it just as quickly. While covering your Tentacle Arm, special circuitry within the Sheath modifies the Tentacle Arm's control firmware to insure proper range of motion for a "standard" cyberarm and hand. As only six of the tentacles are required to operate the Sheath (one for each finger and one to three for arm reinforcement), hidden openings allow the remaining one or two tentacles to function outside the Sheath, at full range of motion, while it disguises the remaining six (or seven) as a standard cyberarm and hand.

Tentacle Arm Sheath: 800 eb, HC=0, Rippers will function through the Sheath.



TENTACLE ARM:

It writhes, it creeps, it can reach through a sewer line! Unspeak's new tentacle arm consists of a shoulder attachment, from which 8 glistening plasteel and memory metals tentacles extend. Each tentacle is 70 cm long and 1.5 cm thick at the base, and is fully flexible and articulated. Each tentacle has a SDP of 5. The shoulder unit has a SDP of 20. Working in unison, the tentacles have the strength of a normal cyberarm. Separately each tentacle has a strength of 2. A character cannot lift more weight than his body type will allow. Likewise each tentacle has a Reflex of 2. Tentacles must be used in combination for full coordination up to the limit of the character's

reflex stat. New Unspeak's extensible tentacles cost only slightly more and can stretch up to 1.5 meters long.

Tentacle Arm: 4,000 eb, HC = 5d6, May not mount any options except rippers on the ends of the tentacles (d6 humanity loss instead of 2d6). Extensible tentacles cost 6,000 eb.

EIBON BIOSYSTEMS

BRINGING YOU A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HIDDEN WORLDS

ELDERVIEW IMPLANT

Breakthroughs in Mythos research have lead to the new Eibon Biosystems ElderView eye enhancements. Made from elderitch metals and woven with nanosurgeons through a natural eye or cybereye, this new system allows you to see the mystical radiation's of many otherworldly creatures. Day or night, your ElderView Implant can provide you with the general location and size of a variety of mythos beings, even through thin walls! Although it affects natural vision somewhat, it gives you the edge any investigator needs in the field. The implant, once woven in, replaces the iris with a ridged five pointed star of a pale yellow color that covers the pupil and acts as a filter for mystic radiations.

Normal images seen through the implant are blurry, -2 to Awareness/Notice rolls based on vision. Regardless of lighting conditions, images appear from red to deep violet and roughly the size of the entity viewed. The more powerful the entity, the deeper the color on the color spectrum. Non-corporeal entities may also be seen. Specific targeting bonuses are not available during the analysis phase. Images can be seen through walls of 10 SP or less. Note: ElderView only operates on independent races and servitor beings of a non-terrestrial origin, Ghouls, Serpentmen, Deep Ones, etc. cannot be detected by this implant.▼

Elderview Implant (MA) (ELVI) 5500eb. HC 3D6



CULTS: HOPES AND HORRORS

Information on Cults and Using Cults in Cyberpunk™ 2020
by Peter Christian

Creating Cults for the Game

When creating a cult for your Cyberpunk game, follow these simple steps:

1) What is the purpose of the cult? (Spiritual, Self-Help, Goal-Oriented) Does the Cult have a secret agenda which is not known to lower level members or outsiders? Is the cult basically harmless, or even good, or is it a sinister organization with twisted and evil goals?

2) How sincere is the leader or the cult? (Does he/she support the cult's avowed goal or have his own plans?)

3) Does the cult have a Charismatic Leader? Most cults do. If not, the cult must have an official dogma, or set of beliefs which it subscribes to, which ties the members of the cult together. To maintain cohesiveness, a cult must teach its members that they are different from outsiders, and that that difference is desirable. If you are determined to create a 'bad guy' cult, make the leader charismatic human slime who conveys his message of hate and dissolution in such a way that he recruits hundreds of NPC's. Alternatively, the original leader may be a peaceful and wise teacher who is being held captive by greedy corporates who are using his religious teachings as a tax shelter and his followers as slave labor. A Cyberpunk adventure which started as a mission to rescue a person from the cult could become an all-out war as the players try to free the cult 'leader' from the clutches he has fallen into. Dead charismatic leaders are less flexible, but you can use the cult leaders in a similar scenario to the above - perhaps there is an in-house war going on between the cult's senior members over who will take over the prestige and power of the leader.

For those of you who insist on a

Article I: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (Constitution of the United States of America, Amendment 1, 1795)

...when they're truly embittered, truly despairing...and that's when they come...run under one of two awnings-religion or dissipation-and guess who's waiting for them under both awnings at once... (Sevatividam, in "Dinner at Deviant's Palace" by Tim Powers, 1985)

WHAT ARE CULTS?



When you mention the word "cult" images instantly spring to mind: weird hippie gatherings, Charles Manson's killers and Jim Jones's suicidal mission. Bizarre rituals hidden in back alleys where arcane drugs and forbidden knowledge are peddled to gullible believers while gurus in robes and beads ride their chauffeured Rolls-Royces. Brainwashed adolescents shave their heads and chant and beg in airports for cynical masters who use and degrade them. Secret crimes and terrifying truths are protected by fanatical killers who hunt down anyone who tries to expose their crimes.

Sound about right, everybody?

Let's get real.

Cults are organizations, usually but not always religious in nature. A cult is defined by a code of beliefs, an ideology if you will. Most religious cults are variants on the dominant religion in the area e.g., Christianity in the United States. Membership in a cult is not necessarily a sign of mental illness. Cults are not necessarily harmful. Over 90% of the people recruited by cults in the United States quit within a few months of joining it - with no repercussions or recriminations. Most people who are members of cults eventually quit. Most of them look back on their membership as something that was fine at the time, but something that they eventually outgrew. There are some cults which collect, even demand, the money and lives of their members. Of the biggest 'cults' of this type, most are in fact from mainstream religion, and one is considered more of a self-help philosophy than a religion.

Not very cyberpunk, eh?

Every cult has a purpose; some reason that the cult exists and people willingly join it. Most cults are (superficially at least) spiritual cults. The cult is a religion. People join it to get some

sense of divine truth or spiritual security. A spiritual cult must have a distinct code of beliefs to distinguish it from other religions. A neighborhood bible study group is not a cult. A neighborhood bible study group that believes that the 'regular' church is corrupt and which deduces its own set of beliefs and accepted personal behavior from the bible has just made the shift into cultdom. Other 'cults' are self-help cults. People join these cults to overcome personal problems or to achieve goals. Finally, some cults are goal-oriented. The cultists are working together to achieve some goal. This could be as simple as raising money for the homeless to as sinister as world domination. We do not ordinarily think of self-help or goal-oriented organizations as cults, unless they also have a spiritual aspect. Most cults combine the aspects of spiritual, self-help and goal-oriented. Finally, cults can be divided into two groups: Sincere and Cynical. In a sincere cult, the leaders apply the same standards of behavior to themselves as to their followers. In a cynical cult, the leader's primary goal is different from what he tells his followers. A fine example of this kind of cult includes certain religious leaders who preach the virtues of poverty and giving, while riding around in chauffeured limousines and living in mansions.

LEADERSHIP OF THE CULT



A single thing that defines most cults is a charismatic leader. This is an individual, a teacher if you will, who attracts a following. I do not pretend to understand this force of charisma that some people have. Hitler used it to control a nation, preaching an ideology of hate that destroyed millions of lives. Mahatma Ghandi used it to bring about freedom for his people without violence. Some people simply have the power to make others want their approval and acceptance. When this person has a message, then other people begin to follow that person's teaching and direction. Most cults die out after the charismatic leader dies. If the original founder leaves his cult in good (or bad, depending on your viewpoint) hands, his teachings and message are carried on and spread. Eventually the 'cult' may expand far beyond what the original teacher ever conceived or intended. A cult that has gone beyond the original founder invariably has a sacred text of sayings, teachings and knowledge that the founder left his followers. The cult leaders will interpret these teachings and sayings to suit their perceived needs. Most cults will eventually break up over the teachings of the founder as different cult leaders interpret the original teachings in their own ways. Depending on the wealth, power and membership base of the cult it may become several different cults which co-exist, or it may simply dissolve.

MEMBERSHIP IN A CULT



Why cults accept members is another matter. As a GM you should decide whether the cult's leaders are sincere, and actually trying to teach a higher truth, or cynical, and merely trying to rake in as much money and power as

hard and fast "Charismatic Leader" rule, use this: A cult's charismatic leader always has an Empathy of 10. He also has the skill "Leadership" at 10. Any time a person spends more than a few minutes talking to him, the cult leader may attempt a skill roll on his Leadership skill, vs. the character's (Cool + Empathy + D10).

If the cult leader loses the roll by more than 8 points, the character is immune to the leader's persuasive powers forever. If he loses by 7 or fewer points, the character is immune to his persuasion for D10 days. If the cult leader wins the roll, the character is impressed, and will listen to what the leader has to say. If the cult leader wins the roll by 10 or more points the character will accept the leader as a holy man (or woman). The character will probably become a follower of that cult.

4) What sort of resources does the cult have? (People, money, property etc.)

Decide how large the cult is. A small cult may have 10-60 people. A medium sized cult should have 100-600 members. A large cult can have thousands, or even tens of thousands of members.

Assign the cult a control rating, from 1-100. This represents how much control over each member's life the cult insists on having. It is also the percentage of their income (above basic living expenses) that the cult takes. In Cyberpunk, typical incomes range from 12,000 a year to 84,000 a year. For a simple game rule of a cult's resources, multiply the number of members by the control rating by 200 euro. This gives the annual income. Multiply this by 1-3 for the amount of cash and resources that the cult has on hand. Half of the income goes to supporting the cult leaders in the lifestyle which they want to be accustomed to. The remainder can be used to print material, hire solos and lawyers, bribe medias, rent the meeting site and other cult business.

Money Summary: (Number of Members) x (Control Rating) x (200 euro); Multiply by 1-3 for amount of total resources on hand.

If the cult is corporate funded, create two separate control ratings: One for how much control the cult has over the lives of the members, and a second one for how much money it takes from them. Double the amount of money available to allow for what the corporation puts in.

Example: The Children of Saul is a small cult (50 members) which demands serious dedication from their members (40% control rating). The Children's annual income is (50) x (40) x 200 = 400,000 euro. Rolling a D3, we get a 1. The Children have 400,000 euro worth of resources: buildings owned, lawyers bankrolled and other necessities of modern religion. In addition, when the players try to break up the cult, 400,000 euro is the amount of money the cult can raise quickly to defend itself. That buys a lot of solos. The cult leader lives on 200,000 euro a year. Hope the skeptics don't catch him at it.

5) Decide whether or not you are going to have any supernatural powers in your cult. If you are running a straight Cyberpunk game, the answer is; probably not. Call of Cthulhu cults usually only have a couple of spells available to them. Insert whatever powers you want, then create a rationale for why the cult has these powers, and who else in the world might have them.

6) Take a good, critical look at your cult. Ask yourself: Would I enjoy having these people in the game if I was a player and not the GM? If the answer is no, then throw the cult out and start again.

Subordinate Character Classes

Antiquarian/Collector

1. Appraise (new skill: see below)
2. Education & General Know.
3. Expert: (personal specialty)
4. History
4. Know Language: (choose)
6. Library Search
7. Persuasion & Fast Talk

Author

1. Composition
2. Education & Gen. Know.
3. Expert: (personal specialty)
4. Human Perception
5. Library Search

they can. A sincere cult makes a less villainous organization than a cynical one. Remember that in a cynical cult it is the cult leaders who are cynical; the ordinary members of a cynical cult are usually more fanatical than the members of a sincere cult - after all, the leaders of a cynical cult will encourage fanaticism.

This leads to another key point. Most cults are variations on the standard religion in the area. In other words; most cults in the United States are variant beliefs of Christianity. Most people prefer to deal with familiar concepts. A person who was raised in one particular religion never really sheds the beliefs that he or she grew up with. You may deny them, but they are part of you. Any religion or cult that the person joins later in life will be compared to the religious standards that they grew up with. Can a Christian cult be 'evil'? Think of Reverend Jim Jones and the mass suicide in Guatemala. The People's Temple of Jim Jones is the classic example of a twisted cult with a charismatic leader.

Most cults try to grow and add new members. Some cults try the blatant approach. Has anyone out there never been approached by someone who walked up to you and said "Have you found Jesus?" and then tried to get you to go to their prayer meeting? Most people join cults because they are not satisfied with conventional expressions of religion. Teenagers may join a cult, not out of personal belief, but because they want to reject their parent's religious ideas. This is in fact the primary recruiting ground for cults. Other people drift into cults. Some cults recruit subtly. A person attends a function sponsored by a cult and meets people. They are introduced to the cult ideology slowly, through social functions and cult-sponsored meetings. Eventually they learn enough about the cult to either make a firm commitment to membership or not. One of the classic sleazeball methods of recruiting involves having a member of the cult who is young and sexually attractive allow themselves to be 'hit on' by the potential candidate. The cultist gives a short term relationship, and brings the target into the fold of the cult. This method is largely used by cynical cults who then proceed to fleece the new member of everything he has - sometimes by means of blackmail or threatened palimony suits. When a cult is recruiting people off the street they can do so by offering food, money, shelter, even just a friend. All of these techniques are very effective. But people recruited off the street by cynical cults are not being recruited to save their souls - they are to be used as meat and muscle for things the cults want done. A cults primary recruiting ground is not 'the streets' - it is the suburbs. Of course Robin Hood robs from the rich - there's no point in robbing the poor, is there?

MONEY FROM THE MASSES



Life costs money, time and effort. So do cults. A cult leader needs to have a place to live and work. Many cult leaders survive entirely on offerings from the faithful. Obviously, the larger the cult and the tighter hold it has on it's followers the more money the leader can collect. Traditionally, 10% of everything a person earns goes to their

church. Cults may take nothing, or may take everything the person has. Remember, a cult will not strong-arm money out of its members - they are giving the money voluntarily. That's in theory. More than one person has made huge donations to a cause, and then regretted it later. Only the kindest, most forgiving cult will return money that was donated unwisely. To collect this money, the cult leader must hold regular meetings of the faithful (normally, once a week). Large cults, with membership in many cities have separate meetings in each of those cities. Still, the local leaders must report to their own leaders - at least once a month, more often if the cult is tightly controlled. Spying on meetings of leaders can be an adventure in itself. Modern cults generally meet by teleconference. The meeting place of the cult may be as humble as the apartment of the leader, or it may be a marble temple. Secretive cults meet in basements, abandoned buildings, houses of members, anywhere that they can escape notice. However they must meet. They must coordinate their meetings. When trying to track down a secretive cult, trail suspected members and watch who they talk to, who they meet with, and when and where they go when they don't want to be seen.

Money is another thing that trips up secretive cults. Money has to be accounted for - to the IRS if nowhere else. If a cult is going to take advantage of the tax-free status religions are granted in most western countries, it has to be registered as a religion, and members want to record their donations when paying taxes (so they don't pay taxes on that money). Any well-off cult has an army of accountants to launder their money. This is done so the faithful do not realize how much is being skimmed off them. These accounts make good targets for people who are out to 'get' the cult. Odds are good that the money is being filtered through dummy corporations and fronts before ending up in the leader's pockets. Needless to say, these accounts are well protected. Incidentally, the accountants are rarely members of the cult. Even the most faithful can have their dedication shaken by taking too close a look at a cynical cult leader's books.

There is another way for a cult to have money. A corporation or government (outside the U.S.A.) may provide official support and funding. In this case, the cult may have a high control rating, while allowing members to keep most of their money. This is a good way to have an army of fanatics handy. The corporation can use the cult as a tax shelter. This assumes that the cult provides some sort of charity, somewhere.

MIND CONTROL AND BRAINWASHING



Brainwashing is the single most common charge leveled against cults. Many people believe that cults can take you in on a Friday, wipe your mind in a matter of minutes and send you out to sell flowers on street corners before Monday. Sorry guys; it just isn't so. There is some doubt among cult experts (Dr. Streiker and Dr. Galanter; see references) whether 'brainwashing' in the popular sense exists at all. Can you recondition a person's innermost beliefs? We

6. Social
7. plus one skill of choice

Parapsychologist

1. Anthropology
2. Expert: Occult
3. History
4. Human Perception or Interview
5. Know Language: (choose)
6. Library Search
7. Photo & Film

Professor

1. Composition
2. Education & General Know
3. Know Language: (choose)
4. Library Search
5. Persuasion & Fast Talk
6. Social or Oratory
7. Teaching
8. Any one of the following: Accounting, Anthropology, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Expert: selected field of study, Geology, History, Mathematics, Physics, Programming, System Knowledge, Zoology.

NEW CHARACTER ARCHTYPES

Clergyman/Cult Leader

1. Charismatic Leadership
2. Awareness/Notice
3. Expert: (chosen religion)
4. Human Perception
5. Intimidate, Interrogate, or Interview
6. Know Language (choose)
7. Library Search
8. Oratory
9. Perform
10. Persuasion & Fast Talk

Missionary Subpackage

1. Accounting
2. Basic Tech
3. Diagnose Illness
4. Expert (choose)
5. First Aid
6. History
7. Wilderness Survival or Streetwise

Lawyer

1. Credibility
2. Awareness/Notice
3. Education & General Know
4. Expert: Law
5. Human Perception
6. Interrogation or Interview
7. Library Search
8. Oratory
9. Personal Grooming/Wardrobe & Style
10. Persuasion & Fast Talk ▼

don't know. That is the simple truth. We don't know. The fact of the matter is a good salesman can talk any but the most resistant customer into trying or buying something. Selling an ideology is the same as selling anything else: Get the customer to accept your beliefs and take part in your organization. If they find the experience positive, they keep coming back. The characteristic charismatic cult commander can control copious cultists. He's a salesman, selling his personal spiritual views to willing customers. In fact, over 90% of all people who are recruited into cults leave on their own within the first few months. This probably wouldn't happen if cults brainwashed their members. Remember too, people generally try to repeat pleasant experiences. If the cult leader's advice is good, and the company is agreeable, a person will naturally find himself drawn further into the cult. Sometimes a cult has more - shall we say 'bizarre' practices. Degrading confessions and public punishments are a part of many cults. How can this be considered a pleasant experience? Well, look at it this way: Cyberpunk is a game where we pretend to be bums, thieves and murderers in a polluted apocalyptic world. Think about it. There is a fascination in the grotesque. You may not enjoy the thought of pollution and mindless violence, but it is very interesting. It draws and holds our attention. Bizarre cults are the same way.

Actually, a cult's most powerful tool for keeping members in line is peer pressure. C'mon now everybody, confess: How often have you done things just because 'everybody else was doing it'? Probably more often than you realize. The way you dress, the candidate you vote for, the role-playing games you play are all based largely on how other people will react to you. A cult can use peer pressure to great effect. I attended a cult function (disguised as a movie) a number of years ago. At the end of the film the cult leader made his pitch, asking people to come to the front of the theater if they "accepted Christ as their personal savior". A few people led the way (very likely 'skills' i.e., cultists who pretended to be audience for the explicit purpose of getting the ball rolling). Within minutes virtually the entire audience was up front - and being asked for donations - and giving them. It actually took more self-confidence and courage to remain in your seat than to walk down to the front of the theater. A member of a cult has friends in that cult. To reject cult teachings he must go against the wishes of his friends, his peers and that charismatic leader whom he respects and admires so much.

Some cults use drugs as part of their religious ceremony. The peyote cult of the Southwest is a prime example. Legitimate religions and cults that include drugs in their worship also restrict the use of these drugs to specific, controlled times and places. In the lean, mean twenty-first century of Cyberpunk, it is likely that some cults are essentially pusher organizations, keeping their members happy by keeping them addicted to weird designer drugs. A cult of this nature might be frighteningly evangelical, persuading its members to become pushers for the leader's private drug industry. Virtual realities can be used even more effectively than drugs. Imagine a cult leader who uses a superbly created virtual reality to show his followers what heaven will be like. Or one who punishes cult violators by treating them to a braindance chip of hell. Think about it. The reward vs. punishment plan has been used by religions for centuries (and by governments, police, your job, your parents, and so on). Proper use of braindance gear or super-realistic virtual reality can make the reward and the punishment incredibly vivid.

LEAVING THE CULT...OR NOT



As I said before, 90% of all people who join a cult quit after the first few months. Most of the remaining people are members for a few years. Their personal beliefs change, and they move on. This makes cults much less addictive than nicotine. In fact, most ex-cultists say that membership in the cult was fine when they did it, and they look back on the organization without regret. The more sincere the cult is, the more likely it has a large number of content ex-members. Cynical cults are another matter. People who leave a cynical cult are often disillusioned with the cult leader, finances and attitude. It is the cynical cult which tries the hardest to keep people in the fold. A leader who teaches spiritual advancement, and makes his students pay (heavily) for every step up the rung is not going to want to lose any cultist. At least, not until he has all of their money. Even then, he doesn't want them spreading tales. By keeping members in the cult the cult leader can get them to work for him as willing slave labor, prostitute themselves, sell drugs, commit robberies and turn all of the money over to him. And yes, cults which use these techniques do exist.

The first technique for keeping a person in a cult is persuading them that they don't really want to

quit. The cult leader(s) must persuade the reluctant member that he is mistaken in his doubts about the cult. Other members can be pressed into service to provide peer pressure. If the member cannot be 'salvaged' then he must be persuaded to keep quiet about what happens in the cult. Very few people are activists, so this is not generally a problem.

Now some cults turn nasty when a member tries to leave. If the cult has ample funds (most cynical cults do) then the member may suddenly find himself with his credit investigated, mysterious probes into his background, finances and moral character. One cult in the real world is particularly notorious for assaulting (legally and financially) anyone who tries to leave it, or who even tries to probe into its activities. I cannot say who they are in this publication, simply because they could (and probably would) squash us like a bug. Let it suffice to say you've heard of them and may have read one of the fiction books written by the cult's founder. In the world of Cyberpunk, cults can be especially nasty. One netrunner can make havoc of any person's employment record or finances. Leaving a particularly nasty cult probably wouldn't kill you (unless you 'know too much'), but even so, the remaining members can be stirred into a crusade against 'the unfaithful who betrayed our cause'.

Sometimes a person is brought out of a cult unwillingly. These are the 'brainwashed' members who preferred the company of their fellow cultists and the advice of the cult leader to the always sane and reasonable advice of their parents. Concerned parents or relatives have been known to hire people who call themselves "Deprogrammers". The mission of a deprogrammer is to pull a person out of the cult, and convince them to return to normal life. Depending on your viewpoint, deprogrammers are either heroes, or brutal kidnappers. Even the most respected deprogrammers are plagued by lawsuits and frequently skirt the law to do their jobs. Deprogrammers generally isolate the cult victim, sometimes by simple kidnapping. The deprogrammer then tries to break the 'programming' that the cult has inflicted on a person. In short, the deprogrammer tries to break the influence of the cult's charismatic leader, and encourage the cultist to think for themselves. Sometimes the deprogrammer is successful; and the person returns to normal. In other cases, the cultist escapes the deprogrammer, often returning to his cult with renewed vigor. After all, nothing makes a cult thrive like persecution.

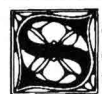
Deprogramming missions against evil cults make good potential adventures. Think of it as a low-funding extraction.

THE ILLUMINATI COMPLEX



Possibly the most popular form of cult in fiction is the super-secret organization that is plotting to control the world. As we discussed earlier, super-secret organizations that are plotting to control the world are unlikely. To take over the world this organization has to have tremendous manpower, incredible finances, and vast resources of information. Keeping manpower, finances and information gathering capability on this level secret is impossible. If you want to have a secret cult, give it a good cover identity. An innocuous organization (say, Freemasonry) could have an inner 'secret' agenda. Even then rumors will leak out about inner circles and hidden plans. If the secret society is going to accomplish its goal, it has to work towards it. Work of this sort inevitably leaves tracks. You can build an adventure out of this, by having the players come across some of the tracks of the secret agenda. If they follow them up, they can learn about the society and its goals. Even the most secretive cult has to meet sometimes. The primary reason why super-secret cults are not likely to take over the world is that current world leaders will not want to give up their power to some wacky religion. Nobody hands over power willingly. How can the cult take over? Bribery? They can bribe the people who are on their way up the ladder of power, but only if they have something tangible to offer. Blackmail? In the United States, we are very sensitive about our leader's morals. He is more likely to send a strike team of his own after the blackmailer than share his authority. The leader's second in command, and other aids are certainly going to notice any strange behavior on their leader's part. They will also resent any new aids brought in, investigate them, find evidence of secret plans - and act. The blackmailed or bribed leader will be the next one to go.

OKAY, PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS



So far we've been strictly dealing with cults as real-world organizations, i.e., with relatively sane leaders, no magic and no Cthulhoid monsters. Let's set aside these restrictions for a moment. When you are dealing

with insane cult leaders, first of all, remember that none of them considers themselves insane. Insanity is normally defined as a condition where your world-view is grossly out of sync with everyone else's. Never use insanity as a catch-all; the cultists may not agree with your logic, but they have their own. An insane cult leader might found an apocalyptic cult which is dedicated to destruction of the world. He still needs to attract followers - people to whom the end of the world seems desirable. This can be a little tricky. You might manage it by teaching that the world is going to end soon anyway, and the people who help bring it down will be favored in the eyes of chaos after the fall.

When you dip into magic and psionics you may radically alter the balance of your game world. Any time a group has a power that other people cannot counter, that group has a serious edge. If you are running pure Cyberpunk then you probably want to say that magic is non-existent, and the cult leader is simply putting one over on his followers. Better still, leave the players in constant doubt as to whether or not magic exists. Keeping the players in doubt is very difficult. Primarily because most players just assume that things like magic, psionics and supernatural monsters exist. Telling the players that such things don't exist does no good, because your players 'know better'. In Call of Cthulhu, magic is a strange and difficult force, that usually does as much damage to the caster as to the target of the magic. This is the best way to deal with cult magic. Keep it strange and rare.

Cthulhoid monsters may have infiltrated the world. But they're finding it harder and harder to escape notice. Let's face it, in the 19th century, there were few social ID's and a person could disappear and start life afresh simply by moving. In the year 2020, most people are tracked from birth, by credit rating, social position, job eligibility, not to mention school records, bank account, job record and we are still dealing with 20th century ID's - 1st alone the global communications net of the 21st century. To evade this matrix of information, a monster can either duck beneath it, by never owning property, having a job or collecting unemployment, or the monster can be wealthy enough to buy misinformation. For the monster to use the latter technique it must be able to pass itself off as human. Cults with monsters in them might be hiding the monster's presence and funding its activities. In fact, a cult with human members is a prime operation for monsters to skim information off of. But the monster had to come from somewhere, and it has to live somewhere and eat some-

thing. Monsters can hide most effectively in the largest of cities (where they can live as street people) or out in completely rural areas, where the computer matrix of information does not reach. Monsters who are covering up for themselves with phony medical records, birth certificates and other misinformation have an even harder time of it. Somebody knows that the records are false. That somebody may try to blackmail the monster. Killing off the person who created the misinformation file will be difficult (after all, he's probably expecting the attempt) and it may lead to an investigation which will uncover the phony records. It's not easy being different; even in the 21st century.

There is another form of cult that most players do not think of. This is the good cult. The good cult is usually sincere, may be spiritual, self-help or goal oriented, and is a group of people who you want to have in your neighborhood. Cults of this nature have a place in a Cyberpunk game. These cults can be used as safe havens for player characters (or people who the players are hunting). They may share many of the same qualities as darker cults but they generally work to promote an actual improvement in some condition and without the selfish motivation of the darker cults.

Bibliography

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A well-written, rational overview of cults and why people join them. Very readable, recommended to anyone who wants to make cults a part of their game.

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FROM THE DARK FUTURE TO GOTHIC HORROR

A CYBERPUNK TO CoC Crossover Rules Variation by Peter Christian

When converting characters and rules from one game system to another, gamers run into constant obstacles. Each game system has built-in assumptions of what works and what doesn't. Effective character design is often a matter of exploiting a game system effectively, without committing deeds which lead to everyone believing that you are trying to create a super-character.

This process is especially difficult when trying to convert two game systems that are as different in conception and mood as Call of Cthulhu and Cyberpunk. Is it possible to retain the flavor of eldritch terror which pervades a well-run CoC game while using the Cyberpunk game system? Is it possible to adopt existing Cyberpunk characters into a CoC game? What about the monsters of CoC; can they be used in Cyberpunk? The answer to all of these questions is "yes" but it takes a certain amount of effort and imagination on the part of the GM. In many cases the GM will have to simply say "This feels right" instead of following hard and fast rules for monsters and characters.

The intent with this conversion system was to adopt the feel of characters and creatures from the game systems, instead of a strict number by number conversion. Use common sense and fair judgment throughout the process. These conversion rules assume that the player has at least passing familiarity with both the Cyberpunk and Call of Cthulhu rules.

Whenever you are converting human characters from Call of Cthulhu to Cyberpunk any attributes or skills that convert to be 11+ should be reduced down to 10. Likewise, when converting from Cyberpunk to CoC, any attributes above 18 (except Education) should be reduced to 18, and any skills over 100% should be reduced to 100%. Cyberwear may break these limits.

CONVERTING CHARACTERS FROM CYBERPUNK 2020 TO CALL OF CTHULHU

ATTRIBUTES

Body in Cyberpunk converts to Size in CoC: Multiply a character's Body (not including cyberwear) rating by 1.2, and add 6. This is the character's SIZ rating. If the character does not have Strength Feat or Endurance Skills, then his ST and CN ratings are equal to his SIZ-3.

$$\text{SIZ} = (\text{Body} \times 1.2) + 6$$

Ex. Blackrip is a Cyberpunk Cop, with a Body of 8 (without modifications). $(8 \times 1.2) + 6 = 9.6 + 6 = 15.6$ which is rounded to 16. Blackrip has a Size of 16.

Strength in Cyberpunk is based on a character's Body attribute and his Strength Feat Skill. When converting a character from Cyberpunk to CoC, if he does not have any Strength Feat skill, his CoC Strength is equal to his SIZ-3. If the character has Strength Feat, add 1/2 of his STR Feat skill to his Call of Cthulhu STR rating. Round up in favor of the character.

STR = (SIZ rating -3) without Strength Feat or STR = (SIZ rating) + 1/2 Strength Feat

Ex. Blackrip has a Body of 8, Giving him a CoC Size of 16. He has Strength Feat +3. Blackrip's STR rating in CoC is $16 - 3 + (3/2) = 13 + 1.5 = 14.5$. This is rounded up to 15.

Constitution in Cyberpunk is based on a character's Body attribute and his Endurance Skill. When converting a character from Cyberpunk to CoC, if he does not have any Endurance skill, his CoC Constitution is equal to his SIZ-3. If the character has Endurance, add 1/2 of his skill to his Call of Cthulhu CON rating.

CON = (SIZ rating -3) without Endurance or CON = (SIZ rating) + 1/2 Endurance

Ex. Blackrip has a Body of 8, Giving him a CoC Size of 16. He has no Endurance skill. Blackrip's CON rating in CoC is $16 - 3 = 13$.

Reflex in Cyberpunk and Dexterity in Call of Cthulhu have a one to one conversion: Subtract 1 point from the character's reaction rating (not including cyberwear) and

multiply the remainder by 2. Attractiveness can be converted to Appearance using the same formula.

$$\text{DEX} = \text{Reflex-1} \times 2$$
$$\text{APP} = (\text{Attractiveness} - 1) \times 2$$

Ex. Blackgrip has a Reflex of 10. $(10-1) \times 2 = 18$, so Blackgrip has a DEX of 18. Blackgrip has an Attractiveness of 6 $(6-1) \times 2 = 10$, so Blackgrip has a APP of 10.

Intelligence and Technical Ability in Cyberpunk converts to Intelligence in Call of Cthulhu. Add the two attributes together, multiply by 0.6 and add 6.

$$\text{INT} = (\text{Intelligence} + \text{Tech}) \times 0.6 + 6$$

Ex. Blackgrip has an INT of 6 and a TECH of 3. $(6+3) = 9$, $9 \times 0.6 = 5.4$, $5.4 + 6 = 11.4$. Drop the fraction (0.5 or higher would round up). Blackgrip has an INT of 11 in Call of Cthulhu, making him rather average.

Cool, Luck and Empathy in Cyberpunk are all subsumed under Power in Call of Cthulhu. Add the three attributes (before cyberwear) together and multiply by 0.6.

$$\text{POW} = (\text{Cool} + \text{Luck} + \text{Empathy}) \times 0.6$$

Ex. Blackgrip has a Cool [7], Luck [6], EMP [10] (before cyberwear). $7 + 6 + 10 = 23$. $23 \times 0.6 = 13.8$. Blackgrip has a POW of 14.

Movement Allowance in Cyberpunk does not have an equivalent in CoC.

Education/General Knowledge is a skill in Cyberpunk and an attribute in Call of Cthulhu. To convert from Cyberpunk to CoC, add your INT attribute and your Education/General Knowledge skill. This total is your Education rating.

$$\text{EDU} = \text{INT} + \text{Education/General Knowledge}$$

Ex: Blackgrip has an Education/General Knowledge skill of +5, and an INT of 6. Added together gives him an Education rating of 11.

Idea, Luck and Knowledge rolls

Idea, Luck and Knowledge rolls are percentile rolls in Call of Cthulhu to aid players when the player is stuck. For Cyberpunk characters converted to CoC, calculate the rolls normally ($5\% \times \text{INT}$, POW & EDU, respectively).

SKILLS

To convert skills from Cyberpunk to CoC add the Attribute that the skill is based on, and the skill rating. Subtract 4, multiply the remainder by 6. Read this number as a percentage, and apply it to the most appropriate skill on the CoC character sheet. This is easier than it sounds. To repeat the formula:

$$(\text{Attribute} + \text{Skill Rating} - 4) \times 6$$

Ex: Blackgrip has a Stealth of +4 and Reflexes of 10. To convert this skill to CoC: $10 (\text{reflexes}) + 4 (\text{stealth skill}) = 14$, $14 - 4 = 8$, $8 \times 6 = 48$. Blackgrip has a Stealth skill of 48%. Stealth in CoC is divided into two skills; Hide and Sneak. We give Blackgrip the same percentage in both skills: Hide = 48%, Sneak = 48%.

Sometimes a converted skill is less than the CoC base percentage. In this case use $\text{Base}\% + 5\%$.

Specialty Skills

Cyberpunk specialty skills do not really convert to anything in Call of Cthulhu. In addition, these specialties are not really skills. Instead of using them as conventional skills, multiply the specialty rating by 2%, and use it as a skill modifier to any skills that are appropriate. Keep the specialty separate from all other skill ratings. A Cop would get his Authority skill as a bonus any time he was trying to intimidate or persuade people. He could use it as a bonus to his Persuade skill roll, or to his POW when attempting to overawe an individual. Or just forget the whole thing.

Equipment

Equipment does not generally have to be converted from one game system to another. Note that weapons do more damage in Cyberpunk than in Call of Cthulhu: A heavy pistol in Cyberpunk does 4D6 damage (average of 14 points). A heavy pistol in CoC does D10+2 damage (average of 7 points). Adjust unusual weapons and body armor to reflect this difference.

Cyberwear

Cyberware is an intrusion. Special chemicals are used to prevent the body from rejecting cyberware. There are no chemicals for the soul. A character's Maximum POW in Call of Cthulhu is 21, -1 for every 15 points of Humanity cost of Cyberware.

Ex. Blackgrip has cyberwear with a humanity cost of $67+15 = 4.47$, which rounds to 4. Blackgrip's Maximum POW is $21-4 = 17$.

Cyberwear for Cyberpunk is covered in detail in that game. Deciding just what the cyberwear does in Call of Cthulhu can be a little more difficult.

Fashionware has little effect on the game. A Biomonitor gives +20% to any rolls to resist torture or drugs.

Neuralware is fairly easy to integrate into the game. Boosterware and Speedware both give a +2 to DEX, only for determining initiative, for each +1 to initiative that they give in Cyberpunk. To determine the limit to the number of skill chips that a character can load into a socket, calculate what his Cyberpunk INT rating would be, and use that number. Or just halve his INT. Chipped skills have a percentage based on their Cyberpunk skill bonus: +1=20%, +2=30%, +3=40%. Higher skill chips (when available) give +5% per +1 over +3. A smartgun gives +20% to hit.

Implants have the same effect in CoC that they do in Cyberpunk. An Audiovox gives +10% to "Sing" skill.

Bioware is the hardest cyberwear to convert to CoC. Grafted muscle adds +4 ST and +2 SIZ. Muscle. Bone Lace adds +4 ST and +1 SIZ (which is not visible; the character is denser and more massive). Skin weave acts as 6 point armor. Enhanced Antibodies or Nanosurgeons raise the character's healing rate from D3 per week to D6 per week (combined they raise healing to D10/week). Toxin binders give +4 CON vs. poisons and toxins (only).

Cyberweapons do about half as much damage in CoC as they do in Cyberpunk. Scratchers and Big Knucks do D3+2 damage. Vampires do D3. Rippers and the Slice N' Dice do D6 damage. Wolverers do D8+1, and the infamous cybersnake does D4 damage. A character can apply his STR bonus to any of these weapons, except Vampires.

Cyberoptic and Cyberaudio, like implants, have the same effect in Call of Cthulhu as they do in Cyberpunk. A targeting scope gives +10% to hit with firearms. Otherwise, each +2 perception gives +15% to the character's detection chance with the appropriate skill (Listen, Search and/or See).

When converting Cyberlimbs, assume that the limb itself has a STR of 20. Thickened Myomar limbs have a STR of 25 and Hydraulic Limbs have a STR of 30. A cyberhand can do D3 damage crushing, plus the character's damage bonus. The hit points and armor of a cyberlimb can be calculated by halving the SDP and SP of the cyberlimb. Hydraulic Ram hands do D6 damage, a Buzzhand does D10+1, and a spike does damage like a dagger (D4+2).

Linear Frames raise the character's STR. Frame epsilon has a STR of 20, Frame beta has a STR of 25 and Frame omega has a STR of 30.

Body Plating gives 12 points of armor, or whatever the listed special effect is.

CONVERTING CALL OF CTHULHU CHARACTERS TO CYBERPUNK

To convert Call of Cthulhu to Cyberpunk, you use the same steps described above in reverse. The character's Body Rating is based on his SIZ, but may be modified by his STR and CON.

$$\text{BODY} = (\text{SIZ} - 6)/1.2$$

To get Body, subtract 6 from the character's SIZ rating, and divide by 1.2. If his STR or CON is 5 or more points lower than his SIZ, lower his Body rating -1 point (each). For every 1 point that STR or CON is greater than (SIZ-3), give the character +2 "Strength Feat" or "Endurance" (as appropriate).

Ex. Hirim Tor is a Call of Cthulhu character with a SIZ of 14. $14-6 = 8$, $8+1.2 = 6.67$, which rounds to 7. Hirim has a Body rating of 7 (for now). Hirim Tor has a STR of 10. This is very close to having a STR 3 points lower than SIZ, so Hirim's Body attribute is not affected and Hirim does not have the Strength Feat skill. If Hirim had had a STR of 12 or higher, he would have Strength Feat as a skill. Hirim Tor has a CON of 15. Hirim's CON is 4 points higher than his (SIZ-3). This gives him Endurance $+ (4 \times 2) = +8$ as a skill as a Cyberpunk character.

To convert a character's DEX to Reflex divide by 2, drop the fraction (if any) and add 1. The same system is used to convert Appearance to Attractiveness.

$$\text{REF} = (\text{DEX}/2)+1$$
$$\text{ATTR} = (\text{APP}/2)+1$$

Ex. Hirim has a DEX of 11. $(11/2)+1 = 6.5$,



dropping the fraction gives him a Reaction of 6. Hirim has a APP of 12. $(12/2)+1 = 7$, giving him an Attractiveness of 7.

CoC's Intelligence (INT) is converted into both INTELLIGENCE and TECH. Take the INT stat and Divide the points between the two attributes as you see fit.

INT and Tech = INT divided between the two.

Ex. Hirim has an INT of 13. Hirim has 13 points to divide between INT and TECH. We set INT=7 and TECH=6.

To convert Power to Cool, Luck and Empathy, multiply POW by 1.67, and then divide the points between the three Cyberpunk attributes as you see fit.

Cool, Luck and Empathy = POW x 1.67 divided among the three.

Ex. Hirim has a POW of 16. $16 \times 1.67 = 26.72$. Hirim has 27 points to divide between Cool, Luck and Empathy. He sets his attributes at: Cool = 8, Luck = 9, EMP = 10.

To create a Movement Allowance attribute, use the Reflex attribute (based on DEX), and then modify it with other CoC attributes. If your Call of Cthulhu Size rating is 8 to 10, subtract 1. If your Size is 16+, add +1. (People with longer legs can move faster). Now look at the ratio of the character's Size and Strength. If the character's ST is 5 or more points less than his Size, subtract 1 from his Movement Allowance. If it is 4 points less up to 1 point greater than his Size, do not modify his movement allowance. If it is 2 or more points greater than Size, add 1 point to MA.

Ex. Hirim has a Reflex of 6, based on his CoC DEX. Hirim's SIZ is not high enough to change his MA, nor is his ST enough points lower (or higher) than his SIZ to change his MA. Hirim has an MA of 6.

Education/General Knowledge skill is derived by subtracting your Cyberpunk INT rating (calculated above) from your CoC Education attribute.

Education & General Know = Cyberpunk INT stat - CoC Education stat.

Ex. Hirim has an Education attribute of 16 and a Cyberpunk INT of 7. $16-7 = 9$. Hirim has an Education/General Knowledge skill of +9.

Idea, Luck & Knowledge rolls

To simulate Idea, Luck and Knowledge rolls in Cyberpunk, use task difficulty roll with a target number of 12 on raw Luck or Intelligence.

Converting Skills

To convert CoC skills to Cyberpunk, divide the skill percentage by 8, dropping any fractions.

Ex. Hirim has a Handgun of 75%. $75/8 = 9.3$, rounded to 9.

Sometimes a converted skill is less +1. In this case, give the character a skill rating of +1.

Call of Cthulhu characters converted to Cyberpunk need to be given a role. Select the role that is most appropriate to the character and give him a +2 specialty skill rating in that skill. If the GM feels it is appropriate, he may give a character a higher specialty skill rating.

Cthulhu Mythos

Cthulhu Mythos is not really a skill in Call of Cthulhu. It is a measure of how much a character knows when he "knows too much". A character who is 50% in Cthulhu Mythos does not know 50% of what there is to know about the creatures/magic of the mythos, rather he has absorbed enough knowledge to drive a normal man insane. He only knows a tiny fraction of the awful immensity of the Cthulhu Mythos.

To reflect this, the Cthulhu Mythos skill is calculated differently from other skills. Take the character's Mythos percentage, divide by 10, and write that number on his Cyberpunk character sheet. Label this "Mythos Index". Subtract this number from his Cool or his Empathy, or some combination of the two. If the character's Mythos Index ever reaches 10, the character goes permanently insane.

Ex. Vicki Vimmers is an experienced (read: borderline psycho) Call of Cthulhu character. She has a Cthulhu Mythos of 42%, and a POW of 14. Converted to Cyberpunk, Vicki has a Cool, Luck and Empathy of 8, 7 and 8, respectively. Her Mythos skill of 42%, becomes a Mythos Index of 4.2. Vicki must subtract 4.2 points from her Cool and Empathy. She drops 2 points of Cool and 2.2 of Empathy. Vicki now has a Cool of 6 and an Empathy of 5.8 - for all Empathy skills she still uses a 6.

When converting Cyberpunk characters who have a Mythos Index, add back in the points lost from Empathy and Cool before the conversion.

Ex. Captain Jack had a Cool of 10, Luck of 6, and an Empathy of 9 before adding cyberwear, and gaining his Cthulhu index of 3.1. Now he has a Cool of 8 and an Empathy of 4. We still use Cool=10, Luck=6, Empathy=9, to calculate his POW of 15, and initial Sanity of 75. His Cthulhu Mythos score is 31%, which gives him a maximum Sanity of 68%, so his Sanity is dropped to 68%. The 39 points of Humanity cost of Cyberwear gives him a Cyber Rating of 3, and also adjusts his POW to 13.

Cyberwear

Characters from Call of Cthulhu rarely have any cybernetics. Use the normal Cyberpunk rules for cybernetics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE GAME

The Net

The Net from Cyberpunk is considered another dimension in Call of Cthulhu. A character can create a Gate spell that takes him into the net. Creatures which wander the dimensions freely can materialize inside the net just as well as outside of it. Equipment does not, normally, translate into programs, but one can challenge a program with hands and feet (or tooth and claw, as appropriate). Perform net movement normally.

Use the net as it is described in Cyberpunk. All programs retain their strength rating from Cyberpunk. Call of Cthulhu Initiative, in the net, uses INT instead of DEX. When comparing the strength of programs for stealth and evasion, or against systems or cyberdecks, compare the strength of the programs on the resistance table. When dealing with anti-personnel attacks and evasion, stealth and detection, compare the attacker's INT+(program strength) vs. the defender's INT+(program strength) on the resistance table. A being which enters the net without a cyberdeck, and therefore without any programs has program strength = 0 for all attacks and defenses.

Ex. Jackal has an INT of 16 and is using a Killer-IV program (strength = 4). He is up against a corporate decker with an INT of 14 and a Zombie program (strength = 5). The programs clash: Jackal has

a total of $16+4 = 20$, the corporate has $14+5 = 19$. 20 vs. 19 gives Jackal a 55% of winning this fight.

You can calculate the intelligence of an AI just like you would a normal person. AI's automatically start with a Sanity rating of 99. However, AI's must make sanity checks when confronted with the Cthulhu mythos. An AI's maximum sanity is $99 - (\text{Cthulhu Mythos})$. An AI cannot go temporarily insane: Any sanity loss or insanity on the part of an AI is permanent and can never be regained. AI's may never work magic: that requires a soul.

Books

One of the great treasures in Call of Cthulhu are those musty, awful books which "remove your character from the next scenario just by looking at the pictures". In CoC these books take points from your Sanity and give you points of Cthulhu Mythos. In Cyberpunk, they do the same thing. Use the Sanity loss and Cthulhu Mythos Index rules given above. The chance of gaining spells is based on an INT roll: Use an Easy INT roll for a 5* spell multiplier, Average for a 4*, Difficult for a 3* and so on. Remember, the spells are not laid out in a cookbook fashion, instead the character is deducing the needed knowledge from hints and clues in the book. AI's cannot deduce spells; their thought processes are simply not attuned to the magic.

A smart (but not very) player may slap a mythos book down under an OCR scanner, and load the book into a datachip. This is legal. The book can now be read in 1/2 the time (see the CoC 5th Ed. rules p.56-57 for why mythos books take so long to study). The spell index for the book is raised by +1 (i.e. a 3*INT index becomes 4*INT).

However, Sanity loss for the book is automatically maximum rollable. In other words, the Eltdown Shards has a Sanity loss of D4/D8, Cthulhu Mythos of +11% and a spell multiplier of *2. On a datachip, Eltdown Shards costs the character 8 points of Sanity points (no SAN Check or die roll allowed), gives Mythos +11% and has a spell multiplier of *3. In the Cyberpunk game system this book, on a datachip, costs the reader 0.8 points of Cool, Gives him a Mythos Index of 1.1 (which costs him another 1.1 points of Cool or EMP) and allows him to attempt a Difficult INT task to learn a spell. Books on datachips are more portable, too.

Magic

Magic in Call of Cthulhu is an arcane process, which the characters don't really understand. Like the magic in horror films and in Lovecraft's own work, the characters use the process and hope it works.

The easiest way to convert Call of Cthulhu magic to Cyberpunk, is not to. A character has magic points equal to his Luck + Empathy. Magic points, once spent, recover completely over a 24-hour period. If a character uses up all of his magic points, he falls unconscious. Summon and Contact spells have a 10% chance of success per point of magic put into them, just like in the Call of Cthulhu rules. Spells that Cost POW points in CoC, may reduce either the character's Luck or Empathy. Luck and Empathy lost to spell casting only may be raised back up to their original amounts by IP, just like raising a skill.

When a character has to make a POW vs. POW check to overcome a target's magic points, have the characters make resisted Luck rolls. High roll wins.

Monsters

The last conversion from Call of Cthulhu to Cyberpunk is the monsters of the game. Converting monsters presents special problems. After all, in Call of Cthulhu, every monster has attribute and skill percentages. In Cyberpunk, the only monsters are other humans.

Convert monsters from CoC the same way that you convert characters; take the monster's average attributes and shift them over to the Cyberpunk system. Ignore the maximum attributes and skills when converting monsters; they can go to any value. To convert the damage value of the monster's attacks, double the number of dice rolled. To convert the creature's natural armor, double the number of points of armor. Special abilities remain intact. Sanity loss remains the same. This system only works in the vaguest terms. Normally the GM will have to convert monsters on a 'this feels right' system.

Very large monsters have a Damage Divisor. Divide the monster's BOD rating by 10, dropping the fraction. This is the damage divisor. Any time the creature is hit with a weapon, divide the damage delivered by that weapon by the damage divisor. Then apply a BTM and

damage as if the creature had a BOD of 10.

Ex: Shoggoths are one of the quintessential Lovecraftian horrors. An 'average' Shoggoth is an amorphous blob of protoplasm five meters across. With a SIZ of 84, the average Shoggoth converts to a BODY of 65. The Shoggoth's Damage Divisor is (+6). Blackgrip shoots a Shoggoth with his Militech Arms RPG-A, for 6D10 damage. He rolls well, doing 39 points of damage to the creature. $39 \div 6 = 6.5$, drop the fraction, 6 points of damage. The Shoggoth has no armor. BTM (for a body of 10) is -4, $6 - 4 = 2$. Blackgrip does two points of damage, on a normal character damage track, to the Shoggoth; a light wound. However, a Shoggoth only takes 1 point of damage from physical weapons, and half damage from fire and electricity. This reduces damage to 1 point. The next turn it regenerates.

The Shoggoth lashes out with a pseudopod. With a D6 DEX, it only has a Reflex of 2. It has a 100% attack chance, however. $100 \div 6 = 17$, Which is +15 skill. A human can't have +15 skill. A Shoggoth can. The Shoggoth's attack roll is $17 + D10$ for a total of 25. Blackgrip's Dodge roll totals to 22. He's hit. Blackgrip rolls his BOD of 10 (cybernetics) vs. the Shoggoth's 65. $10 \div D10$ vs. $65 \div D10$ - we don't even roll.

Blackgrip is sucked into the Shoggoth and takes damage. A Shoggoth does 8D6 damage in Call of Cthulhu. In Cyberpunk this becomes 16D6 damage. We roll, and Blackgrip takes 56 points of damage. His Metalgear absorbs 25 points, his skinweave takes 12, his BTM takes another 4. Blackgrip still takes $(56 - 25 - 12 - 4) = 15$ points of damage on his damage track. He's at Mortal-0, and has to make a Death Save (no modifier). He makes the roll. Oh Goody, Blackgrip is still alive, and gets to experience in glorious slow motion the joys of being digested by a Shoggoth.

The next round he's being held helpless inside the thing. The Shoggoth rolls another 16D6 damage for 51 points. Thanks to staged penetration, Blackgrip's armor now stops 24 and 11 points of damage. Blackgrip takes $(51 - 24 - 11 - 4) = 12$ more points of damage. This puts him to Mortal -3. Blackgrip rolls D10 against his body of 10(-3), and gets a 5. He's made another Death Save! He's still alive! any of his friends nearby are treated to another Sanity Check, as Blackgrip's dissolving head rises momentarily from the ooze, screaming in agony.

Round 3, the Shoggoth rolls 60 points of damage. Blackgrip's armor stops 23 and 10, so the damage

is (60-23-10-4) = 23 more points. Mercifully, this is enough to push Blackgrip well past Mortal-8. Blackgrip is dead. But his outstanding armor, while it couldn't save him, was very effective in prolonging the agony. Despite the way this example is given, mass crushing-pulping attacks should probably reduce the damage value of armor faster than 1 point per attack.

Many Lovecraftian horrors are invisible, and are invulnerable to normal weapons. The GM has discretion on whether or not invisible creatures are seen by UV or IR cyberoptics. I generally say that UV sees them (with the attendant sanity loss), IR does not.

Sometimes the description of a monster says that it can only be attacked by magic or magic weapons. High-tech weaponry does not count as magic. Lasers and electricity do not bother the Hounds of Tindalos any more than guns, plastic explosives or cybersnakes. At the GM's option, strategic nuclear weapons may be considered 'magical'. An optional ruling allows technological weapons to do half damage. However, use of nuclear weapons always attracts the attention of Nyarlathotep. In general, the Cthulhu mythos must be out-thought, not out-fought.

Running the Game

When running Call of Cthulhu/Cyberpunk, your best bet is to set up the horror story, just as you would a non-mythos horror story, or a mystery game. Then make allowances for cyberwear. Evil cultists might have chromed bodyguards. A Net exploration of an old building reveals nothing unusual - because the computer can't detect the thing that lurks there. Improved weapons are generally not a bonus against the mythos creatures. But then, a serpent man might have an AKR-20 assault rifle and smartgoggles to back up his magic.

The two biggest changes that occur when running CoC in the Cyberpunk era are subtle, but profound. The first is the ability to see in the dark. Most Cyberpunk-era character use either cyberoptics or goggles and therefor don't need to worry about little things like the power going out. Remember that low-light vision still needs some light, and Cold-blooded creatures will show up very poorly on IR. Of course, certain creatures can always short-circuit a character's cybernetics. Turn the lights out in the building the characters are in to make them feel proud and tough as they have cybernetics.

Then turn the lights out on their cyberwear to scare them. The second big change in Cyberpunk/CoC is communications. Player characters carrying two-way radios and cellular phones can talk to each other. Players with proper equipment can even transmit their data straight into a databank in the net, or for live broadcast over TV. Use electrical storms and nearby heavy electrical machinery to break up character's radio signals. Have the creature approach from an angle where it cannot be picked up by the character's camera. Use NPC collected data and films as adventure hooks. Always ask yourself, "How will instant electronic communications affect this scenario?"

People do not believe in the supernatural (except for nutty new-agers who assure you that that tentacled horror is actually a beneficent being from Acturian Atlantis, who only wants to share his information on higher planes of consciousness with you) (burp). Not all of the evils of 21st century Night City can match the horror of a vampire on the prowl (anyone who says "Vampires are cool!" has never met one). Let alone the terror of the shambler from the stars, and other, less human, beings. Video and computer datadisks never really capture the awfulness of these beings.

A big part of horror is being alone. When you send players out to confront the mythos, keep them alone. NPC's do not believe them. Have the media company refuse to buy any of these 'cheap special effects and guys in rubber suits films'. Even when confronted with solid evidence (video tapes, footprints, mangled bodies) many people refuse to believe it or rationalize it away ("really weird boosters man, that's what it is."). Isolate the characters from other people. Send them into abandoned buildings or sewer systems. Worst of all, send the characters into big-city downtown crowds, where something that looks human is stalking them and nobody in the crowd will lift a finger to help them.

Whether you convert your favorite Call of Cthulhu scenarios into Cyberpunk, or use the Chaosium game system to run Cyberpunk scenarios, always remember that neither game system is perfect, and the conversion system relies as much on common sense as anything else. If something doesn't seem right to you and your players - change it! It's your game. ▼



a CyberCthulu/Darktime Scenario by Chris Hockabout and John Tynes

Transference is the second part of a two part story that started in issue #7 of The Unspeakable Oath. Transference is a stand alone scenario who's ideas are related to the scenario published in TUO #7: Convergence. One does not have to have read Convergence to run Transference, and the fact that Convergence takes place thirty years before Transference makes running them one after another a little implausible without modification. Transference serves best to kick start a Dark Time CyberCthulu campaign, with this scenario leading the players into deep and dangerous territory as they set out to uncover that which lies beneath...

WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

2 Billion - 5 Million years ago: The Elder Things arrive on Earth, building an undersea city. They use biological matter from the ocean floor to create Ubbo-Sathla "the unbegotten source", a mindless mass of fertility from which all life came. Later, the slave creations of the Elder Things, the Shoggoths, direct descendants of Ubbo-Sathla, revolt against their masters. The Elder Things win but their numbers are vastly reduced. Over the eons, the Elder Things retreat back into the depths of the oceans, abandoning all surface settlements. Only one of those settlements survives the ravages of time: the city locked under the glacial ice in Antarctica. This city is also the home of Ubbo-Sathla. Millennia later, the Mi-Go discover the lost city of the Elder Things, and Ubbo-Sathla.

1996: Refugees (many of them scientists) flee a Fascist coup in Argentina by sea. A few months later, the fleet of refugee ships arrive in Antarctica.

1998: The Mi-Go make contact with a select group of scientists, revealing to them the great potential to be found in what they call "Proto-Matter", matter culled from Ubbo-Sathla. With help from the Mi-Go, the scientists began work on this new, potent, biomass.

2017: The Antarcticans, genetically modified humans, reveal themselves to the world. Their genetics firm, Revolution Genetics Inc., also appears, marketing advanced bio-mods and genetic alterations.

2020: Revolution Genetics is one of the largest corporations on the globe, and the top genetics firm. The Antarctic Collective, though small, is gaining power and influence in world politics.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

The Mi-Go and their servant humans in the Antarctic Collective have tapped the limitless potentiality and malleability of Ubbo-Sathla, creating a biological matter, Proto-Matter, that can be changed into any biological structure, it bonds and imitates any cells it comes into contact with, and can provide a means of control and access to any implanted with it.

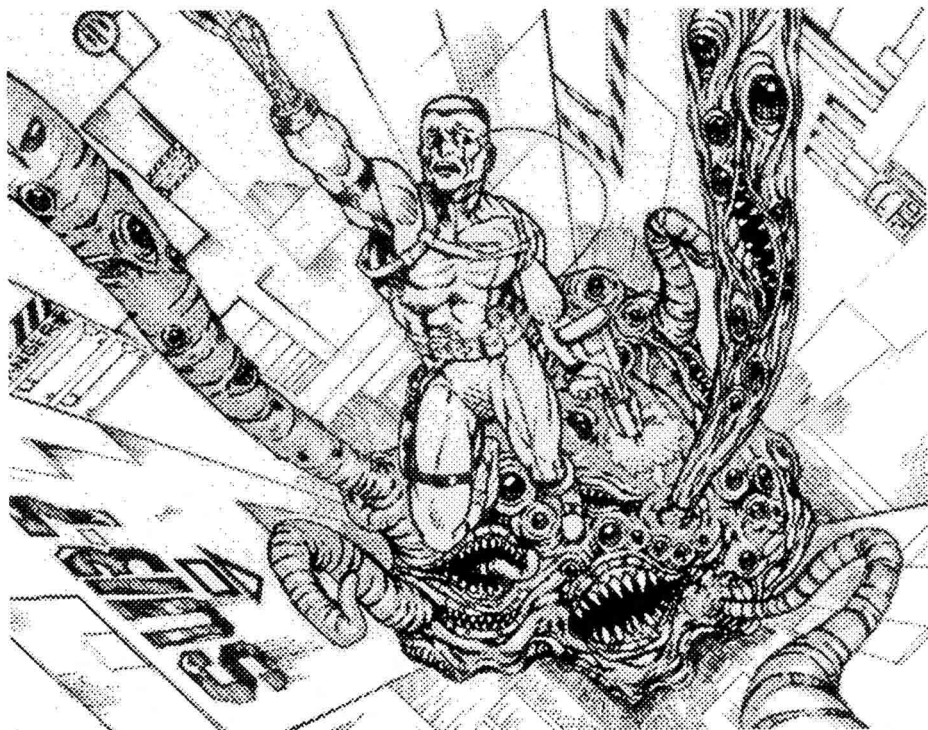
The plan of the Mi-Go and Revolution Inc.'s (the Antarctic Collectives') leaders is to spread their Proto-Matter laden bioware into to public, turning them into their unwitting pawns, assassins, and spies.

Their greatest market, of course, are Solos. This is intentional. Through these Solos, the Mi-Go strike out at competitors or at anyone getting too close to the truth. It is this fact that takes us to the story's beginning.

PROTO-MATTER

The Proto-Matter of Ubbo-Sathla is the foundation of all native Earth life. The cells resemble those of carbon-based organisms, with a crucial difference. In the early stages of development, the cells of terrestrial organisms become specialized, so that their DNA will only produce more of that type of cell. The cells of the Proto-Matter can be specialized in the same manner, but this specialization can be changed with the Mi-Go's procedure. Thus Proto-Matter cells imitating skin continue to do so until directed to become, say, cartilage or white blood cells, remaining thus until changed again.





GETTING STARTED

On the day the scenario starts, Armand Galantri, genetics researcher for Horizon Biologic, a small R&D subsidiary of Biotechnica, was assassinated by a Solo named Daniel "Dano" Moss. Dano was then apprehended by the NCPD. Dano, controlled by the Mi-Go, through his recently installed cybernetic arm, was sent to kill Galantri, who was researching Revolution Genetics Inc. and their methods and discovered a bit too much...

Dano has a past linked to one or more of the PCs, having done a favor for them in the past. He will call one of the PCs late at night from the NCPD detention center located in the MucJuc building in downtown Night City. He will tell the PCs that he is being charged with murder of some corp but that he didn't do it. He begs the PCs to come visit him. If the PCs are reluctant, he will tell them that he only wants them to listen to what he has to say, and maybe find out what's going on.

If the PCs decide to meet him he will tell them his story: He was at The Slam, a Solo bar, just spending some of his recent pay. He remem-

bered watching the news when suddenly, the next thing he knows, zhe is being wrestled to the ground by three security guards. He is outside and there is a gun in his hand. Lying on the ground a few feet from him is a man laying in a pool of blood, half of his face blown away. He later learns that an hour had passed between the time in the bar and the time of his "assassination attempt." Dano will state that he doesn't know anyone named Armand Galantri and he isn't in any current assignment.

Dano swears that he doesn't know how he got there. He wants the PCs to find out "what the hell is going on" and clear his name.

AT THE BAR

Returning to The Slam, is a likely place to start looking around. Johanna Roi, a voluntary full-functioning Hermaphrodite, and a SouthAm vet is the bartender and owner of The Slam. The Slam is a small dingy bar existing solely for the purpose of getting drunk.

Johanna will only talk about her patrons if the PCs grease her/his palm, or if they can convince

her of their sincerity (Difficult Interview or Persuasion roll), especially if they are vets themselves. S/he will tell them that Dano was at The Slam before the death of Galantri, and that right in the middle of a conversation he suddenly seized up. His right hand, holding his drink, started to tremble violently, the rippers popping in and out. Finally, the glass shattered. Dano stood up and ran out of the bar. Johanna remembers the look on his face, "he looked insane, boy. . .evil." S/he also remembers that he didn't pay for his drinks, hint hint.

GALANTRI

Not much is known about Armand Galantri; the following can be found out with an Average (15) Library Search roll. Aged 30 years old, he started work at Horizon Biologic five years ago. He rose no faster than was to be expected and was currently working in the Consumer Biologicals department. If someone hacks into the lightly defended datafortress (no lethal programs, data walls lv3, code gates lv2) they will find out that he was working on a new brand of snack food: Bubble Chips. Horizon had no real enemies and there is nothing circumspect about them. Very small-time.

DANO'S CYBERNETIC ARM

If the PCs check back with Dano about his arm, he will tell them that it is a recent addition, only three months old. It is covered with Realskinn™ and has Rippers implanted. He bought it from a Helix outlet (an Easy (10) INT roll will identify Helix as a consumer outlet owned by Revolution Genetics).

THE WORD ON THE STREET

Players who check with various contacts can come up with several leads. Players who make an Average (15) Streetwise or Streetdeal roll reveal that a fixer named Duke Thayer was serving as middleman for a contract on Galantri. Another roll will turn up the rumor that Dano was working on a contract at the time of the killing, though it was unknown whether or not it was for Galantri. Both rumors are false. After a day or so of hunting down Duke Thayer, he will reveal that the contract was for another R&D firm altogether, and Dano will tell the players that he had just finished a contract, (he's telling the truth).

ANOTHER HIT

A day or two into the player's investigation, another hit takes place. Dirk Andrews, a wealthy attorney in his 40's, sped up his car and drove onto the sidewalk into a crowd of people. Among the dead was a fixer named Loop (Louis Grady). Andrews seemed to be targeting Loop as he aimed for him while the crowd dispersed. Three people were killed, including Andrews and Loop.

There was no apparent motive in the killing. No connection between the two existed. If the players ask about any cyberware possessed by Andrews they will either have to access the coroner's files later that day, which requires an Easy (10) Authority roll, or an Average (15) Credibility roll, or by checking his home computer through the net and make an Easy (10) Accounting roll. If any attempts are successful they will reveal that he bought a pair of cyberoptics from a Helix dealership two weeks ago. The model of eyes are manufactured by Revolution Genetics INC.

A NIGHT VISIT

Revolution is aware of the investigation through Dano and decide to give the Players a little call. After hearing of the Andrews hit, have the Players contacted by telephone by a man who wants to meet the players right away. He has information for them. He asks them to meet him in front of the Arcadia Grill, a high class eating establishment. When the Players arrive at the spot the contact will stumble out of a nearby alley. Once the players see him and he sees them he will draw a gun. A Difficult (20) Human Perception or Very Difficult (25) Awareness roll will reveal that he isn't pointing the gun at the players. If allowed to proceed the contact will shakily blow his brains out before the Players can react. Otherwise they probably blow him to pieces. Identical rolls after the fact tell the Players that it didn't seem that he was aiming at them.

Searching him will turn up nothing, though inspection will reveal his left leg to be cybernetic. The Helix logo is obvious. The manufacturer's serial number will reveal it to belong to Revolution. If the Players haven't made the connection by now, shoot them.

REVOLUTION GENETICS

By now the Players will probably want to head to the local Revolution Genetics R&D lab. The lab

is cut off from the net for 22 hours out of the day. The time the window is open is always different, and they use a local data carrier service to handle all inflow of information. Accessing the facility's files from the outside is difficult unless timed right.

The facility's datafortress is lightly defended, as it is only operational two hours out of the day. The datawalls are strength 5 and the one codegate is strength 3. The interior consists of a single CPU and three memory storage blocks. The VR environment inside looks like a sterile lab with the three memory storage blocks appearing to be screens and keyboards floating in midair. The datafortress's defence is strengthened by its online netrunner (q.v.). If the PC netrunner evades the online netrunner or defeats him they will uncover vital information from the memory files. The primary source is as follows:

Galantri's inquiries into Proto-Matter getting too close - require solution quickly - priority. Theft of Galantri's files incomplete - may have more - termination essential. Dirk Andrews becoming problem - legal suit about incident in Los Angeles may bring Proto-Matter project to public awareness - termination essential.

The files are dated three days prior. Search for anything about "Proto-Matter" will reveal the following:

Initial tests are positive. Genetic imitation and reproduction complete. Proto-Matter's ability to shift genetic patterns and change function prove to be invaluable. The Miami, Los Angeles, and Kansas City facilities report similar success. More shipments expected from Antarctica.

The files go to great depths to not name names, using only a numerical code to identify those working in the project. The code directory is not in the system. The files are also encrypted and carry a virus, that if detected, if will disabled or erase the file. The virus will crash any system it is introduced to, erasing the files in the process. Likewise, if the datafortress is breached



using programs with a STR higher than 6, the files will automatically be erased.

If the Players wish to enter the facility in real space they will find that the small two-story building has only code-card doors of reinforced ceramet (AP 45, SDP 100), which can be circumvented with a Very Difficult (25) Electronic Security roll. An Average (15) Elec. Security roll will reveal that the building has no alarm system!

If the Players go the facility during the day there will be ten scientists working on developing new uses for the Proto-Matter, their lab is capable of designing and manufacturing cybernetic prototypes, while the bubbling Proto-Matter is stored in deep-freeze lockers. Also in the building during the day is Emile Guerrone, a high ranked corporate from the home office, here to oversee the Proto-Matter experiments.

At night, the facility is protected by a mass of amorphous flesh and cybernetic parts, named by the scientists simply as "the Hound." The Hound patrols the halls, at the same time protecting the datafortress. The Hound is an adept netrunner. The scientists and Emile are unarmed, and if an attack comes they will fall back on the Hound to kill the intruders while they make their escape. If all is lost, with the Hound killed by the Players, and their secrets threatened, they will release a corrosive bacterium by a timer, triggered by remote. Give the Players subtle hints about a ticking canister tucked far in the back of the freezer, or of the power failing as the bacterium eats into the power generator in the back. Or let them die a horrible death, it's up to you.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

The Players are marked. They have interfered with Revolution's plans and will not be allowed to get away with it. Going to the public this early will prove fruitless, as Revolution Genetics will use the best PR firm to shoot down any attempts at slander. Soon after the break-in, Dano will strangle himself in his cell, with his right hand.

The Players may wish to seek out other locations where Revolution has set up shop, the computer files gave three cities. The campaign of espionage against Revolution and Revolution's attempts to stamp out the Players should lead the investigation to Antarctica, the Mi-Go, and the city of the Elder Things themselves. The solution to the campaign may lie in the destruction of a massive spawn of Ubbo-Sathla, linked to the net that controls all of the Proto-Matter's abilities, destroying it may help, as long as Revolution is discredited and those heading the project are killed.

FUTURE HOOKS

A nomad pack marauding through the mid-west, armed with Revolution Cyberware and a fanaticism for Nyarlathotep, driven by the Mi-Go.

A media has heard about the Players and what they are doing. S/He promises media backing if they can get more proof. Can they. . .?

Central American rebels fight a losing battle against a fascist government and its cyborg sol-

diers - their supplier: Revolution Genetics.

As the control the Mi-Go can exert over recipients of Proto-Matter becomes clear to the Players, the Principal of a High School in a small town gets a new heart free of charge as a philanthropic gesture. The donor, Revolution Genetics.

STATISTICS

The Hound:

INT: 8, REF: 6, TECH: 5, COOL: 10, LUCK: 10, MA: 12, BODY: 18,

SKILLS: Interface: +9,

Brawling/Claw/Bite: +8, Awareness: +6.

CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor, Implanted Cellular Cybermodem. Pain Editor.

GEAR: Cybermodem: Speed +3, CPU 1, Memory 30, Datawalls +5. Programs: SeeYa, Poison Flatline, Stealth, Force Field, Reflector, Armor, Killer IV, Dragon, Hellbolt, Firestarter, Jack Attack.

ATTACKS: Claw/Bite: 2d6+4 AP. Grab/Engulf: after successful claw/bite, can absorb one person into bulk. They take 1d6 acid per round, and 2d6+4 crushing, armor at half.

ARMOR: Takes half damage from physical weapons, quarter damage from AP weapons.

SAN Loss: 1d3/1d6+2. ▼

• • • CONVENTION CALENDAR • • •

Organized Kahn-Fusion V

May 22-23, 1993

This general gaming convention will be held at the Embers in Carlisle, PA. This con will feature: AD&D (8 Sections); panel discussion and reading; guests of honor—Greg Costikyan and Greg Porter; 49+ gaming activities; open gaming; dealers; and a miniature figure painting contest.

Operation Green Flag: BattleTech III Plus

July 24-25, 1993

This is a BattleTech only convention to be held at the Embers in Carlisle, PA. This con includes: Single and Lance competition, plus 6-9 other games using this system. A minia-

ture figure painting contest; dealers; plus other gaming activities or systems.

P.E.W. Kahn-U II

October 16-17, 1993

This con is specifically designed for political, economic, historical and board wargames enthusiasts. This con is to be held at the Embers, in Carlisle, PA. Featured are dealers; a regional ANCIENTS tournament; over 31 gaming events and open gaming.

Registration varies from \$0 to \$12. Prizes and support are provided by FASA Corporation. For more information on all of these events, write to: M. Foner Games Only Emporium, 200 Third Street, New Cumberland, PA. 17070

U-Con 1993

October 29-31, 1993

Held Halloween weekend, this convention will be in the University of Michigan Union in the University of Michigan. The Guest of Honor is Keith Herber of Chaosium. Events include RPG, miniatures, and a special Halloween Horror Tournament and Costume Contest.

Weekend Registration:

\$9 pre-registration; \$12 at the door.

Daily registration:

\$6 pre-registration; \$8 at the door. For further information write to: U-CON '93, PO Box 4491, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-4491



City Church of Our Lord-Redeemer

Cult Profile by Peter Christian

THE SETTING

Somewhere in the zone, near the edge where the zone starts to turn into simply a poverty-stricken neighborhood a battered and burned brick building squats. The windows are boarded up, and if the building hasn't been condemned, it's because the building inspector doesn't come into this neighborhood. A crudely painted sign points to a side entrance. It reads "Church of Our Lord-Redeemer". Beneath this is painted a rattlesnake - the sign that the Deathrattles, a local street gang, have marked this block as their own. Sometimes Preacher Paul is seen hanging around the building, a shuffling, apologetic figure. He may be

counseling a tired-looking woman, or making a nominal effort to remove some of the filth that always seems to accumulate at his doorstep. But if you come to his doorstep on a Sunday evening, a different scene meets your eyes and ears.

Sunday night the building rocks with music; spirituals and hymns roll from the throats of street people. If the congregation is poor, they are enthusiastic. Every week the building rocks with all the fervor of a holy roller revival meeting. Women faint in ecstatic communion, men speak in tongues. The Deathrattles? They're in there with everyone else - it seems they've given up drugs and alcohol in the name of Jesus. Preacher Paul? No longer shuffling, he

shouts, he dances, he speaks with power and authority, often coming down from his makeshift pulpit, and walking among his people. And snakes: Preacher Paul kicks a big box and the sound of angry rattlesnakes buzzes from inside. He takes them in his hands. Rattlesnakes four feet long. Preacher Paul seems to taunt the snake, waving it in front of his face; he shouts and preaches: The snake is the devil; but he is filled with the holy spirit and cannot be harmed. Often congregation members who feel the spirit will also seize snakes. Mysteriously, they are not bitten. The Deathrattles are among the first to speak in tongues and take up snakes. The night ends with the congregation tired, but happy. They have felt the spirit; they are moved.



Membership of the "Snake Church" is primarily for the poorest and most down and out members of the combat zone. Outside observers - many of whom disapprove of Preacher Paul and his holy-roller services - are nevertheless impressed with the way he has brought the good word to those who need it most: Petty thieves, prostitutes, the homeless and most mysteriously of all, the Deathrattles boostergang. Several investigations by police have not turned up anything more illegal than poisonous snakes, despite the collection of outlaws in Preacher Paul's congregation. In fact, the areas under Deathrattle control are showing the lowest rate of crime, alcoholism, drug abuse and random violence of any part of the zone. Clearly Preacher Paul has someone on his side. The church counts maybe 200 members. Most of these members attend services weekly. Anywhere from 50 to 100 non-members may attend.

DRAMATIS PERSONA

There are two leaders in the City Church of Our Lord-Redeemer. Preacher Paul came from a southern rural town several years ago. He'd felt a calling to preach to the gangs and the lost souls of the big city. After nearly dying at the hands of several groups, Paul was challenged by the Deathrattles to pet their totem "Big D" a very large - and very deadly - rattlesnake. Preacher Paul had been part of a snake-handling cult before, and filled with a sense of divine mission, he not only petted the snake, he picked it up, played with it, draped it over his head and offered it to the gang. They were suitably impressed. David Strang, the leader of the Deathrattles, became Preacher Paul's right hand man. Preacher Paul is aware of his young

protégé's many failings, but he excuses them, pointing out that the young man has improved vastly over his former self, and no doubt will continue to improve. It is lucky that such a strong young man is available to take over the church, for there is no doubt that Preacher Paul's health is failing.

With no funding and few real resources, the City Church cannot offer many services to members. Preacher Paul was a tireless worker when he first started up the church, and among the services he has started, and still nominally oversees, includes a support and counseling group for alcoholics and substance abusers, day care for infants so their mothers can work, and a 'friends' organization for the elderly, helping them get together so they are not left alone in their apartments or on the street. The meeting hall is sometimes used as a shelter by homeless individuals, but most report that they are afraid of snakes which might be crawling around the building. Preacher Paul insists that all of the snakes are accounted for every night.

After the conversion of the Deathrattles, Preacher Paul settled his congregation into an abandoned building. His spectacular, if often inarticulate, sermons attracted local attention. As it became obvious that the Deathrattles had cleaned up their act, local support grew. When an organized crime leader tried to lean on the cult, he learned that his stuff was not in demand in Deathrattle territory. He died mysteriously a few days later. The subsequent mob attack on the Church brought the church to the attention of the media. The mob was forced to back down and the Church made news as a 'bright spot in the city'. Bright spots don't make for continuous news stories. Reporters eager for photos of Preacher Paul handling snakes were disappoint-

ed to learn that he had destroyed them all on police orders (he brought out more as soon as the heat died down). The media forgot about Preacher Paul. But his mission continued.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The City Church of Our Lord Redeemer has only one location. It is a cult - deviant Christianity - but is not an especially evangelical cult. It has only been in existence for a few years.

As might be expected, there is a little more to the story of the City Church than is generally known.

'Preacher' Paul Hays really did come from rural Tennessee - the home of the snake-handling cult. Snake handlers have been in existence since 1909 when George Went Hemsley read in his Bible:

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

(Mark XVI, verse 18)

This verse (incidentally ignoring several other verses which advise against handling serpents) was the foundation for a cult of fundamentalist Christians who handled poisonous snakes to demonstrate the power of the holy spirit over the devil. Paul Hays was a member of this sect as a young man. He joined the army (and became a father) at the age of 18. During his second tour he 'got religion'. He left the service, ordained himself, and became a minister. Ten years later his wife and teenaged son died in an accident. They might have survived with medical treatment, but Paul sat over their bodies praying instead of calling a doctor. After this tragedy Paul withdrew into himself. He began to carry on private dialogs. News stories of crime and vio-

lence in the city bothered him. Eventually he pleaded with his congregation to send him on a holy mission to the city. They agreed.

Paul would have died in the city if he had not hooked up with David Strang and the Deathrattles. In the Deathrattles, Paul found the gang in need of redemption that he was looking for. In Preacher Paul, Strang found a man with a talent for crowd control, and a focus for his gang. What started as a cruel joke became a cynical ideology for Strang. Preacher Paul's revival meetings and spectacular demonstrations of faith provided a group focus for the Deathrattles - a focus that was strong enough that several of the members were able to throw off drug addictions. The gang's patience with the preacher was running short when they got into a four-way rumble. The Deathrattles were the only straight and sober gang that entered that fight, and the only ones left standing at the end of it. Strang put two and two together and realized that with Preacher Paul's guidance he could turn the Deathrattles from a mere gang into an army. He also learned from Paul's handling of his gang that sometimes it pays to buy off the neighborhood. Strang laid out a 'clean up the neighborhood' plan. Protection rackets were instigated, dealers were driven out. The Deathrattles themselves controlled all goods moving through the nine-block area that they defined as their turf. Fixers learned that the street gang that didn't deal drugs (in their own turf) and who had 'found Jesus' had public support on their side. They reported to the mob that business was shot in that neighborhood. When the mob's punitive strike failed it gave Strang some negotiating leverage. He explained his agenda, offering the Deathrattles as muscle, in exchange for a free hand in his own turf ("All of

the advantages of boosters, with none of the pains" he is supposed to have said). The mob agreed.

Christianity, even snake-handling Christianity is not what keeps the Deathrattles in line. David Strang and his gang were initially impressed with Preacher Paul's faith. But instead of interpreting the snake as the devil, they believe that Paul is worshipping the snake. Strang was smart enough to see that a gang that did not burn itself out on drugs or cyberware would be tougher than a normal gang. Preacher Paul's charisma gave Strang the lever he needed to discipline and sober up his gang. The snake-handling aspect of the cult made it weird enough that the gang members were willing to attend meetings, especially when they got the *holy-roller high* from Preacher Paul's emotionally charged services.

Preacher Paul only wants to spread the good word. Strang has his own agenda. While Paul does not ask for collections at his services, Strang arranges for local residents to make 'donations' which Strang uses for his own purposes. As they are not spending money on drugs or unnecessary cyberware, the Deathrattles are one of the best equipped gangs in the city. Paul's advice, from his army days, has given the Deathrattles some basic unit discipline. Instead of a gang of boosters, the Deathrattles are a small private army, specializing in inner city tactics. Strang makes good use of the charities that the church has started. Young mothers who leave their child at the day-care center find that they pay a price in goods (or services) to the Deathrattles - after all, you don't want anything to happen to your child do you? The addicts and alcoholics who attend Preacher Paul's counseling group are carefully watched. If one of them shows signs that he is not going to

improve, he quits the group and a ripperdoc acquires some spare parts. Strang uses the church as a base for numbers running; one of the reasons the services are so well attended is that Strang passes out cash to people on the way in, and takes bets for next week on the way out. Preacher Paul only takes up a collection rarely, for special purposes. In the last year, two people have been bailed out of jail, and a neighborhood store owner got his mortgage payment covered.

Preacher Paul seems weak and ineffective during the week. There is a reason for this. Strang has him on a diet of depressant and narcotic pills. Paul only comes to life for Sunday sermons; and even then Strang keeps a close eye on him. Strang shamelessly manipulates his followers, exploits any advantage that comes his way, and makes any dirty deals he can to keep a steady flow of cash. Strang knows that if Paul dies he will lose the good will of his neighborhood, and quite probably his control over the group. Strang's twin goals are to milk his gang for all the money he can get, and to learn to build people's confidence the way that Paul does. The snakes fascinate Strang.

RUNNING THE CULT

The City Church is not a brainwashing cult. Not really. The people who attend the church go for the religious high. Most of them like Preacher Paul, and are willing to help him on his little projects. Except for the Deathrattles, the members are not fanatical. The Deathrattles are driven by Paul's inspiration and Strang's will. Ego, not religion, drives them. They are currently one of the toughest, best organized gangs in the city. They know this and they're proud of it. Strang controls the cult's money. At any given

time there is about 200,000 euro in various deals and arrangements going on. Strang skims 2,000 a month for his personal profit, and the gang pitches in. If Preacher Paul knew about this he would have a fit.

The City Church is not spreading except in one peculiar way. Despite the fact that the church is in the heart of a polluted metropolis, Preacher Paul never seems to have any trouble finding fresh poisonous snakes for his services. Paul believes that this is proof that the lord provides. People in the neighborhood of the church sometimes see snakes, big snakes, creeping in the garbage. The rat population is at an all-time low. Paul is suffering from strange visions and delusions - most of them involving snakes.

CALL OF CTHULHU HORROR OPTIONS

There are three ways to approach the City Church in a Call of Cthulhu game:

No Cthulhu Option: the City Church is as written. While its leaders are (respectively) sincere and cynical, it is strictly a human organization. The snakes in the neighborhood are stolen from zoos by the Deathrattles and dumped in the alleys.

Cthulhu Lite Option: The City Church has attracted the attention of Yig, lord of serpents. Yig has been sending snakes, and psychic messages, to the leaders of the church. While Paul has rejected the suggestions that the snake-lord has sent to him, Strang is fascinated, and is making minor 'adjustments' in the church. Yig's plans for the church are unclear.

Full Creepy-Crawly-Cthulhoid Option: Yig, lord of serpents, has been closely following the progress of the church. He has been teaching Strang

magic, specifically a spell that will allow Strang to breed a new race of serpent men by cross-breeding rattlesnakes with ritually prepared human women and men. The day care center that the cult sponsors is a breeding ground for little serpent-men, and the old people's companion service is used to gather mature serpent-people together without anyone suspecting. Strang has been driven insane by the constant touch of the snake-god and is preparing a ritual which will pollute the city's drinking water, and magically turn the entire population into snakes (ever see *Halloween III*?).

What you'll hear on the street if you ask about this cult. (Hearing higher-level news still includes all of the lower levels.)

Streetwise/deal 1-4: "Redeemer? Oh, yeah, that's that holy-roller church with the snakes. I hear that some street gangs have gotten religion and are cleaning up the neighborhood around them."

Streetwise/deal 5-8: "The are like a fanatic army protecting that preacher guy. But they're not as squeaky clean as they want everybody to believe. They're still dealing, they just hide it better. But don't mess with them, Strang has them whipped into an army."

Streetwise/deal 9+: "The are a private army for Strang. Strang just uses the church and the people around it as a home base, and a place to launder his money. He does a lot drug deals, but keeps his own boys straight. The mob sometimes uses them for enforcers. They pack top of the line hardware and use EMP grenades against other boosters. The preacher is just a front."

2) What you'll hear from the police/corporations/other authorities if you ask about this cult:

Normal Contacts: "The City Church of Whatever is a bright spot in a dark city. It really helps give you faith in your fellow man when you realize that there's a man like Reverend Paul Hays out there, treating people for drug addiction and driving crime out of his neighborhood. Sure he's a little weird - but aren't we all these days?"

Good Contacts: "Reverend Hays may have his heart in the right place, but that doesn't mean that his little congregation is spotless. We suspect that the street gang that 'saw the light' is actually using Hays to launder money and build good PR - after all, they still wear their gang colors. Their leader, David Strang, has been seen in the company of known mob lieutenants."

ADVENTURE HOOKS:

Media or Cop: You've been assigned to go undercover. The City Church is suspected of dealing in illegal substances, and your mission is to infiltrate the church, get close to the leaders and learn the truth. Be careful; rumor has it that you will be expected to handle live rattlesnakes, and that if Strang suspects that you're the heat, he'll make sure you get bitten.

Corporate or Fixer: One small section of the city seems almost crime-free. Your boss wants you to get in there, find out what makes the people tick, and see what profits can be made there.

Nomad or Gang: A bunch of your brothers have jumped the fence, found religion, and signed on with the Deathrattles. It's up to you to find out why, and get your buddies back.

Solo: There's no doubt about it, they have become an army. Take 'em down.▼

DRAMATIS PERSONA

Paul Hays - Preacher

INT: 6 REF: 5 TECH: 6 COOL: 3/9 ATTR: 6 LUCK: 8 MA: 5 BODY: 6 EMP: 10

Skills: Charismatic Leadership: +6, Oratory: +8, Streetwise: +2, Human Perception: +4, Perform: +5, Education & Gen Know: +2, Driving: +3, First Aid: +4, Snake Care: +2

Cyberware: None

Preacher Paul has no personal style. His Cool rating is split to reflect the times that he is drugged and the times that he is both straight and on a holy kick. He does not carry a weapon or wear armor. Preacher Paul stays on his home turf, and while he always seems to be alone, his congregation watches out for him.

David Strang - Fixer

INT: 8 REF: 7 TECH: 6 COOL: 8 ATTR: 5 LUCK: 7 MA: 6 BODY: 7/9 EMP: 6/4

Skills: Streetdeal: +4, Intimidate: +6, Oratory: +2, Streetwise: +4, Human Perception: +3, Awareness/Notice: +4, Athletics: +3, Brawling: +8, Driving: +2, Handgun: +6, Melee: +5, Motorcycle: +7, Sub-Machinegun: +5, Motorcycle Tech: +3, Tactics: +4

Cyberware: Light Tattoo, Neural Processor, Speedware, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket, Muscle and Bone Lace

David Strang is a gang leader and looks it. His greasy leathers are painted with snake and death's-head designs. Strang always carries a Colt AMT and a couple of knives. On 'jobs' he carries an Ingram MAC 14 submachinegun. Both guns are smart. He wears an armored jacket and pants. Strang is rarely alone; usually he has at least 5 or 6 members of the Deathrattles around him.

Typical Deathrattles Gang Member

INT: 6 REF: 7 TECH: 6 COOL: 7 ATTR: 6 LUCK: 6 MA: 6 BODY: 7 EMP: 6/4

Skills: Gang: +4, Intimidate: +2, Streetwise: +4, Awareness/Notice: +4, Athletics: +3, Brawling: +4, Driving: +2, Handgun: +5, Melee: +3, Motorcycle: +6, Sub-Machinegun: +4, Motorcycle Tech: +2, Tactics: +2

Cyberware: Light Tattoo, Neural Processor, Speedware, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket

Deathrattles members all carry Colt AMTs and MAC 14's while 'on jobs'. They use smartguns with matching ammo, so that they can swap clips and equipment in a heartbeat. All Deathrattles (including Strang) always carry radio communicators. They wear flack jackets and pants. Deathrattles usually travel in groups of 4 to 6. ▼

THE INSTITUTE FOR PARANORMAL STUDIES

A CULT PROFILE BY BARTON BOLMEN

PUBLIC FACE

In 1932, a small collection of acquaintances had the foresight to see the coming of the information age. This vision, along with their mutual interest in the paranormal, prompted them to pool their talents and "make a go" at creating an organization whose central focus would be the study of paranormal events. Thus was founded the Institute for Paranormal Studies (IPS).

The IPS is a nonprofit organization whose purpose was and is to improve man's understanding of the paranormal (ghosts, UFO's, divine manifestations, "monsters", etc.) by finding, confirming and gathering information on any legitimate paranormal manifestation.

In spite of (or as a result of) this purpose, the IPS has a long standing reputation as being competent debunkers ("...this is a photograph of a dinner plate being hurled through the air - not a flying saucer...") or discovering a unique interpretation of a natural event ("The vision of Christ, that appeared in the form of a rust spot on the side of this watertank, has been determined to be a rust spot on the side of a watertank...").

The core organization is fairly small, consisting of twenty administrators and around 125 staff personal. Revenue is generated through the sale of information, in various forms, and through financial donations made by individuals desiring to become "associate" members of the IPS. An associate membership is 200EB per year and although the membership roster is not exactly a top secret, neither is it available to the public. Associate members receive a monthly download, the *Paranormal Times*, and invitations to both regional (three times a year) and national (annual) meetings

where symposiums covering various topics on the paranormal are held. IPS's associate membership is currently estimated at around thirty thousand. In today's world of jaded technocrats, where almost anything is available for the right price and at the press of a button, one can only assume that IPS's associate membership has grown to its current level due to the allure of the unknown.

In an era where information equates to power and is more valuable than gold, there is precious little that people still know less about than that of the supernatural or paranormal. It may also be due, in part, to the generous award of 500 to 5000EB which is given to any associate member that is the first to report on what proves to be a legitimate paranormal event.

Although IPS's growth has been steady, no organization can deny ever having periods of difficulty. Throughout the history of IPS, the organization has been targeted, by various groups, as being involved in an assortment of nefarious activities (in its history, the IPS has rarely needed to defend itself in court, and has never lost). The most recent such period began in early June of 2018 when various religious consortiums began to publicly question the methods and motives IPS had behind their "so called" investigations of the paranormal.

Citing facts from historical records chronicling IPS activities as well as events that occurred in the geographic locations of these activities (sources include private transcripts, news articles, formerly confidential law enforcement agency records), these consortiums claim to have pieced together a very different picture of IPS.

The picture they paint involves a history of breaking and entering, theft, murder and

wide scale destruction of property.

Until late 2018, Ian Witmore, a well known and high powered corporate attorney, had his own practice and charged top dollar for his services. In November of that year, he made the unexpected move of selling his practice and becoming the new president of IPS.

Ian has proven himself a competent administrator but, at the same time, has become a very private individual - preferring to leave the job of public appearances to his staff specialists except when responding to the allegations or outright accusations made by the religious consortiums currently targeting the IPS.

To these he states that "...the evidence they've produced so far is, at best, circumstantial. Most of it is contradictory, and includes numerous half truths and outright lies...". He categorically denies any wrong-doing on the part of the IPS and finds it unfortunate that certain fundamentalistic fanatics find it necessary to target any organization they consider "on the fringe" or "non-mainstream" as being evil and villainous. He further challenges them to come up with any "real" evidence, and for the last year, has openly invited the general public to attend IPS regional and national meetings "...to judge for yourself who paints the more accurate picture of IPS...".

If reaction to this offer is any indication, most people couldn't care less and view the IPS as something that shouldn't be taken too seriously. Typically, those who take Ian Witmore up on his offer attend an IPS meeting out of curiosity or a desire to be amused and entertained. By day's end, they've had

their fill of the paranormal and return home clearly convinced that IPS is, in deed, "on the fringe" - but hardly a threat.

IPS's national headquarters is located just northwest of the Boston "rustbelt" area, and has branch offices in Atlanta, New Orleans and Night City.

PRIVATE FACE

As far as it goes, the "public face" of IPS is, for the most part, accurate—but under much closer scrutiny, a darker side to the organization can be found.

In 1922, Bert Chandler, Darryl Crimp and Core McGallon, partners in a private investigation firm, were hired to find the missing "playboy" son of a wealthy industrialist. One evening, at the end of a long and bizarre chain of encounters, which ultimately led them to the maze-like subbasement level of a seemingly

unoccupied summer mansion, they found their man; just as he was completing his transformation.

Whatever he'd become, it was clear he was no longer human. The creature attacked, instantly killing Chandler with a single blow to the head. Others of similar nature seemed to appear out of nowhere. It didn't take long for Crimp and McGallen to realize they needed bigger guns. With their exit cut off by the creatures, Crimp and McGallen retreated further into the recesses of the subbasement and surrounding area's corridors and tunnels. They were soon able to outrun and evade the slower-moving creatures and eventually stumbled across a hidden room containing several

"The vision of Christ, that appeared in the form of a rust spot on the side of this watertank, has been determined to be a rust spot on the side of a watertank..."

unusual books and artifacts, as well as a passageway off the property. As Crimp and McGallon slipped away, a number of these items left with them.

During the trip home, McGallon was looking through the books they had taken when he came across a journal chronicling the exploits of a bizarre "changeling" cult whose center of operation was that mansion; ritual murder, magical summonings, unholy vows and cannibalism were the norm. The membership roster read like a who's-who of the wealthy, prominent and powerful, and included several high ranking members of the government and their partner's body, with all the identification he carried, would lead this cult straight to them.

On the very next day, from hiding, Crimp and McGallen began delivering transcripted excerpts from the journal, anonymously, to any newspaper office they felt might consider investigating this.

Within two weeks, their labors came to fruition as they began reading about seemingly unconnected events all occurring within a very short span of time: several high ranking government officials either resign and drop from sight, get arrested for "undisclosed charges" or die under suspicious circumstances; a mansion on the shores of lake Erie burns to the ground in a matter of minutes; and unsubstantiated reports of information on a cannibalistic religious cult being suppressed by the government. Crimp and McGallen had won - or so they thought.

A month, or so, after coming out of hiding, Crimp and McGallen received a package in the mail. Inside were two severed thumbs and a short message, in blood, reading: "We never forget. Now neither shall he!". As suspected, the thumb's prints matched those of their former partner's. Using their accumulated savings, they quietly purchased some country property just northwest of Boston and continued their P.I. practice from there. At first, they had no clients whatsoever and their days were spent fixing up the property (which was an



The Head of the Institute of Paranormal Studies, Ian Witmore poses for a photographer earlier this year during his appointment to Chairman.

old farm) while, in the evening, continuing to study the books and other artifacts from the mansion.

As time passed, their studies began uncovering rituals and incantations for "spells" that produced indisputably tangible proof that "magic" was real. The tomes also spoke of dark secrets and still darker forces behind those secrets. They outlined a procedure for constructing a multicolored lens that allowed them to see things no one else could see: strange intangible creatures and a glowing aura all living things appear to possess and which seems to reflect each individual's inner nature (very effective at identifying cultists).

Business began to improve. Although it was located at a former country farm, it almost seemed as if they had become a magnet for the strange and bizarre. During the next ten years, the number of cases involving aspects of the supernatural or paranormal steadily rose - and as such, they began garnering a number of associ-

ates and partners. Each new partner served a particular purpose: ex-military specialists, professors who were experts in areas of history or arcane lore appropriate to "monster hunting", as well as individuals of some influence (including a state senator). With each new case, they often accumulated a bit more knowledge, resources, and fear of what, or rather, fear of the scope of what they were up against. Their methods for dealing with *them* became brutal, if not effective, as they used whatever means necessary to insure success. As their notoriety/infamy (within certain exclusive circles) grew, so did their casualties and paranoia.

THE FARM

By 1930, "the farm" was more like a fortress - complete with bunkers, buildings with concrete reinforced walls, machine-gun

nests (although the machine-guns were normally kept in the hidden armory), a fifteen foot high barbed wire dual perimeter fence and a reinforced barn containing two airplanes that used a neighboring field as a makeshift runway (complete with oil lamps for the occasional night flight). The farm not only protected its occupants, but also a significant library of rare and

valuable arcane books, the armory (which had several machine-guns for both the airplanes and machine-gun nests, small bombs for the airplanes, and a more standard, if not numerous, array of firearms), and accumulated wealth since, as with their library, it was not beneath them to take whatever of *their* wealth they felt they could get away with.

As their plundered wealth accumulated, so did their enemies. Most members of "the

farm" (about 15) had been there for no more than a couple of years—the typical lifespan of a farm member. Anyone there much longer than that usually ended up either insane, dead or worse. During the previous eight years, they had lost at least ten members in the course of their investigations. The things and forces their investigations unearthed were not all they had to worry about as various law enforcement agencies, at all levels, viewed the people of the farm with some suspicion due to their propensity for always being around places where there was "big trouble". If it were not for the group's political connections, it's likely that the law would have done more than simply harass them.

Although their private investigator licenses were still good, by 1932 their practice had long since ceased resembling anything even remotely similar to a typical practice. The

"war", as it was now called, had become an all consuming obsession for Crimp and McGallen - the self proclaimed leaders of the farm. It was then that their insane desire to learn more about the "enemy" led them to behold a vision of the future - one where those with the most guns were simply pawns of those with the most information

- who were the people wielding the real power. It was through this vision that the IPS was born, and it is through this vision that the IPS continues to exist today.

THE PURPOSE OF THE IPS

The real purpose for the IPS is to serve as an information net for its inner circle. Over the last two years, the IPS's associate membership has increased by better than ten per-



A photo capturing an eager field operative engaging in a hands-on investigation of a mysterious disturbance in the Boston sewer system earlier this year.

cent. Although the IPS officially attributes this to the growing public interest in the paranormal (not to mention the cash incentive to associate members who report a legitimate paranormal event), the subliminals and carefully worded propaganda that comprise the bulk of their regional and national meetings, have contributed far more significantly to their surge in membership.

Through IPS's associate membership, the inner circle effectively has thirty thousand agents distributed across the country (and, to a lesser extent, the world) ready to relay back anything out of the ordinary.

The professional staff screens out the obvious hoaxes and follows up on the rest. Anything meeting the appropriate criteria is relayed back to the inner circle through Ian Witmore. The inner circle then investigates the problem via their occult library (which only the inner circle knows of) before ordering an "investigative" team assembled and dispatched to root out and destroy

this "threat".

More often than not, members of an "investigative" team have no idea who hired them as it is rare that any of the team members would be a part of the inner circle. Knowledge is kept on a strictly "need to know" basis which is why such teams are always hired through intermediaries and why, with the exception of Witmore and a couple of IPS's other top management, even the staff of IPS are unaware of the inner circle's existence. Witmore himself knows of only a couple inner circle members and has no idea just how large or small it actually is.

THE INNER CIRCLE

As for the inner circle itself, it is run by none other than Darryl Crimp. For a man that's 125 years old, he appears to be in exceptionally good health and looks to be between 60 and 70 years of age. The reason for this can be found in the circle's vast library of magical tomes that have accumulated over the last century within the hidden vaults beneath what was once the farm but is now the national headquarters for the IPS. To date, only four of the pre-IPS gang, besides Crimp, are still alive and, along with Crimp, comprise the hub of the inner circle. Each of these five, who collectively refer to themselves as the "five points" have, of course, had their life spans artificially enhanced through assorted rituals and spells found within the tomes of their library.

The rest of the inner circle, about twenty-five people all told (each of whom only have limited access to the library), comprise a mixture of individuals very similar to the original pre-IPS gang: people who are either competent, rich, well-connected, powerful or any combination of the above.

Given the mixed caliber of individuals comprising the inner circle, it doesn't appear that morality is any longer of much concern as it seems to matter little whether an individual's wealth is based on "dirty" money, or their connections are based on illegal relationships, or their power is through their

standing in a crime family. The one thing they all have in common is their fanatical-ly obsessive desire to rid the world of things that go bump in the night, along with their minions - and are willing to pour vast amounts of their resources into bringing about this goal.

THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM

Alas, nothing lasts forever, and even with their life extending magic, the hub members, or five points, of the inner circle are showing signs of age as they've begun suffering memory lapses, hallucinations, minor strokes and other ailments often associated with advanced age.

Many in the circle are using the hub-member's age as an excuse to blame them for not realizing, until now, just how likely it is that the "religious consortiums" currently attacking the IPS (politically and through the media) are, in actuality, simple pawns being manipulated by the very forces the inner circle has devoted its self to destroying. Several members have even begun openly discussing, with one another, the possibility of arranging the "departure" of the old hub so there could be a new hub, or five points, with an updated agenda that reflected today's world.

Some who are suspicious of the hub member's failing health suspect this plan may have already been set into motion.

What none of the inner circle realizes is that their organization, as a whole, is suffering from internal rot. The hub-member's health and the organization's health are allegorical as it is the fanatical drive of the organization's founders, the current hub members, that has kept the organization on track until now.

With the passing of the current hub, the new hub members, each of whom have agendas of their own, will (through these other agendas) cause the organization's original purpose to become diluted and weakened. As it is, the inner circle has never scored much more than a minor vic-

tory here or there and, in the overall, has never enjoyed the upper hand - yet even now, certain circle members are talking compromise and advocating alliances with forces that, only a few years ago, would have been inconceivable. And the methods the inner circle advocates for accomplishing their goals indicates a policy of progressively decreasing humanity making them very nearly as bad as the forces they're fighting. If the changes that appear to be coming ever occur, the IPS will most likely become little more than yet another front for the forces they have, until now, been devoted to destroying.

And Ian Witmore, who was hired to fight off the religious consortiums, sits patiently and waits for his shot at becoming a member of the inner circle. He has an agenda of his own - having long since been seduced by the forces the inner circle seeks to destroy. Naturally, any information his masters instruct him to withhold or he feels is in his best interest to withhold, never reaches the inner circle. As of yet, the inner circle is unaware of Witmore's corruption - just as Witmore is unaware of the monocles with the multicolored lenses that the inner circle has used for the last century and, so far, have not recently used on him.

THE WORD ON THE STREET

Streetwise/deal 1-6: "The IPS? Ya, they're those guys that go around and expose ghost sightings as hoaxes. Ya know, I don't think they've ever paid out a dime of "legitimate find" money they promise to their members since all that stuff's a crock anyhow."

Streetwise/deal 7-11: "They go around investigating paranormal events. What most people don't know is that once their straight-laced tabloid-front-page "investigative" team is done and gone, they sometimes send out a second team who always pack some heavy duty iron - like maybe they're after something."

Streetwise/deal 12-19: "The IPS is what it claims to be. It's also a front for a bunch of fanatical monster hunters. And these guys

have some big bucks, powers and guns backing them up too. They may not be dancing up and down the aisles praising god - but make no mistake, when you have fanatics like that, you have a cult."

Streetwise/deal 20+: "Yes, I know about the IPS - just as I'm sure you do. As this charade is now at an end, I'm afraid you'll have to come with me. Oh, and I might add that only some of my sharpshooters have laser sights, so don't bother counting the red dots on your clothing. Just do as I say and come with me. I have something I'd like you to meet".

OFFICIAL COMMENTS...

Normal Contacts: "The IPS is a bunch of wierdos that go around asking little old ladies and people that can't afford a proper set of cybereyes about ghost, Quayle and Elvis sightings. They're good for a laugh and are an occasional nuisance - but hardly a threat to anyone's welfare."

Good Contacts: "The IPS has been under almost continuous and often secret investigation by one agency or another since it began. You see, there seems to be an inordinate propensity for dead people and destroyed property to turn up wherever they've been. They also seem to have some pretty influential friends since whenever anyone gets a little dirt on them, someone from above always orders the investigation closed."

ADVENTURE SERIALS

Adventure Hooks are usually used to bring players into the storyline. Adventure Serials are similar to Hooks except that serials are meant to be run concurrently wherever possible. Serials can easily become the focus of a campaign.

① Who Ya Gonna Call?

While looking for work, you're approached by an Antarctic disguised as a human. With your keen senses (and as his disguise is really pathetic) you instantly see through it (with a Human Perception roll of 18+, you suspect he may have purposely disguised himself so you could still tell he was an Antarctic). He says he'd like to hire you and your team to "...discreetly deal with a little problem that has, ah, taken a leave of absence from a nearby Biotechnica research center."

Darryl Crimp, Corporate

Height: 5' 6", Weight: 139, Hair: Brn, Eyes: Brn, Age: 125

Int: 10, Ref: 6, Tech: 6, Cool: 10, Attr: 6, Luck: 10, MA: 4, Body: 4, Emp: 8/7

Reputation: +5 (+9 within appropriate circles)

Skills: Resources +8, Interrogation +7, Intimidate +6, Oratory +8, Streetwise +5, Human Perception +6, Interview +4, Leadership +8, Social +5, Persuasion +7, Accounting +9, Anthropology +9, Awareness +6, Education +10, Geology +6, Hide/Evade +6, History +9, Lib Search +10, Shadow +5, Zoology +4, Brawling +2, Dodge/Escapes +4, Driving +4, Handgun +7, Pilot - FW +4, Rifle +5, SMG +5, Stealth +5, Disguise +6, First Aid +7, Pick Lock +7, Expert: Arcane Lore +8, Cthulhu Mythos +7, Religious Cults +9, Languages-English (native), Arabic +9, German +9, Greek +7, Hebrew +7, Latin +9

Cyberware: Neural Processor, Chipware Socket, Skinweave, Enhanced Antibodies, Toxin Binders and Nanosurgeons

At one time, Crimp's physical skills were far better than they are now. Lack of use and advanced age have taken their toll. Being a "behind the scenes" type for some time now, most other skills which were last used when he was a P.I. have also atrophied due to lack of use. Although he still maintains his pistol weapon skills, he rarely carries a gun. With what he has learned over the last century, he is convinced that no gun he could carry would be able to stop something capable of breaching his other defenses. After many years of pursuing his life's goal, Crimp's demeanor has become rather grim, humorless and paranoid. Once one has gained his trust though, his real nature will occasionally shine through revealing him to be an amenable and humorous, if not absent minded, man whenever his thoughts are momentarily distracted from how next to deal with the problem of Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, et.al. Crimp appears to be between 60 and 70 years old and has the look of a man that has little time to waste on personal grooming. Although rarely alone, he is just as rarely outside the company of the other members of the hub - all of whom the general public believes to be long dead and all of whom suffer from a form of insanity giving them an insatiable desire to gather, study and comprehend everything they can on Cthulhu and his ken. ☉

Ian Witmore, Corporate

Height: 6'2", **Weight:** 180,
Hair: Brn, **Eyes:** Brn, **Age:** 37

Int: 8, **Ref:** 7, **Tech:** 5, **Cool:** 9,
Attr: 8, **Luck:** 5, **MA:** 7, **Body:** 7,
Emp: 10

Skills: *Resources* +7, *Reputation* +7,
Personal Grooming +5 *Wardrobe* +5,
Interrogation +8, *Intimidate* +7,
Oratory +8, *Human Perception* +7,
Interview +8, *Leadership* +5,
Seduction +5, *Social* +4, *Persuasion*
+7, *Perform* +5, *Accounting* +6,
Awareness +6 *Composition* +5,
Education +10 *History* +5 *Library*
Search +7, *Stock Market* +6, *Athletics*
+6, *Brawling* +6 *Dodge/Escapes* +5,
Handgun +4, *Pilot - FW* 4, *Forgery*
+4, *Photo/Film* +4, *Expert:* *Cthulhu*
Mythos +2, *Corporate Law* +9,
Languages - English (native), Latin
+5

Cyberware: *Neural Processor*,
Dataterm Link, *Chipware Socket*,
A/V Taperecorder

Ian is good looking, well groomed and dressed, self confident and slick. He will greet most anyone he meets with a confident smile and a firm handshake. His charmingly friendly demeanor was carefully crafted so as to disarm the other person - and in so doing, allow him to get what he wants. Being a weasel of the highest degree, Ian looks out only for number one. He is secretly in the service of Nyarlathotep only because his minions made him the best offer - and is currently awaiting the opportunity to gain access to the information that will allow the forces of Nyarlathotep to crush the IPS and its inner circle since, as Witmore sees it, he could then get the promised reward he so richly deserved. ▼

Who is this guy? The pay he's offering isn't bad, and he's willing to turn over half of it up front along with some hardware that should make tracking the thing easy. It's "...a bit smaller than man-sized and kind of amorphous. All you need to do is bring back proof that it's been, ah, retired and I'll give you the rest of your money. Rest assured, It'll be a piece of cake..."

② In Search Of...

As a person of some reputation, once you've put out the word that you and your team are looking for work, it doesn't take long before you're approached by a Fixer with a "business" proposition.

Upon viewing a datachip, you see a picture of a fairly short but ordinary looking man who appears to be about 35 years old. His only unusual distinguishing characteristics are his tentacle thumbs and blotchy complexion. His true name is Bert Chandler (you have your doubts about that when your people can't find anything on any "Bert Chandler") though no one's sure what name he goes by currently. He was last seen entering one of the more exclusive clubs in the French quarter of New Orleans two days ago. Your job is to find this man and bring him back, alive, to the specified drop-off point within the next two weeks. You're not real crazy about doing this since the specs are kinda sketchy, but you'll probably take it anyway because the pay is some of the best you've seen for some time.

③ The Gauntlet

A New Orleans based underground organization, that recently suffered the extraction of an apparent VIP, has been in a frenzy since discovering the identity of the man who ordered that extraction. Now they're out for blood and their target is an elderly man who goes by the name Darryl Crimp which, oddly enough, is the name of the man who recently hired you and your team as bodyguards. You checked him out before hand and, as usual, none of your people could find anything on any "Darryl Crimp". All you have to do is keep your head down while you get him from New Orleans back to Boston.

④ Friends and Enemies

Some time back, while doing a stint as a bodyguard, you had a run-in with this weird cult out in the Rustbelt. Since then, you've felt as if you were being watched - perhaps even stalked. Then one night at a solo bar you'd been meaning to scope, this big guy levitates up

out of his chair and begins screaming. You hear the sickening sound of shattering bones as he gets bent in two, backwards, by something no one can see - at least at first. The lights immediately come up to full intensity as those who are sober enough take up defensive positions while producing an armory of weapons. In the next couple of seconds, as everyone is looking on, the big guy (who isn't doing much of anything anymore) turns a corpse grey-white as the reddish outline of this huge shambling thing with a bunch of tentacles becomes visible beneath the broken man - holding him aloft. Several people freak and begin to bolt when this thing drops its victim and begins heading your way - quickly. That's when everyone opens up on it. When the shooting stops, the bar is destroyed and you're still alive. Everyone's silently looking around to see where it went - but it's gone. A mousy guy with bug eyes slowly scans the room: "...must of been that new stealth suit the Fed's are denying the existence of...". An older Solo dismisses that theory saying he's seen lots of guys in lots of suits - and that was no guy in a suit. Then they begin to look your way as it occurs to them that when it became visible, it appeared to be looking at you the whole time it was offing the other guy. And when it was done with him, started heading your way. You don't know these people real well - certainly not as well as they know each other, but you're beginning to realize this dead guy must of been a pal of theirs. "So what do you know about that thing?" says one of the Solos as the entire room begins to view you with some suspicion. As if on cue, in come walking a couple of suits who seem to radiate intimidation. You notice an almost imperceptibly subtle scent filling the room shortly after they step in - "pheromones" you think to your self. They briefly survey the room before walking up to you. As they do, the people between you and them quickly step aside giving them an open path. As they reach you they begin speaking, in the lowest of voices, about a man you bodyguarded a while back. They claim to be friends and quickly relate a few trivial events that only you and he knew

about. They tell you it's their turn to help you if you'd just come with them to the car waiting out in front. You shoot a glance toward the back exit to see it covered by several Solos looking your way with that "just give me an excuse" look. "Well?" the suit asks. You notice just a hint of urgency in his voice as everyone continues to silently stare at you and off in the distance, you hear the sirens of approaching police cars echoing through the shattered windows of the bar.

⑤ The Invitation or Just Say No

Whatever they zapped you with, did a damn fast job of taking you down. The last thing you remember was thinking about that IPS meeting you'd attended and all the propaganda they were passing out. God only knows, you've seen enough weird things in your life, or even the last six months, to make you an authority on the paranormal. The next thing you realize, you're coming to and there are these three big goons standing by your bed. One of them is wearing an odd looking monocle with a multicolored lens.

Another one of them squats down to eye level with you: "Good evening. Look, I'm sorry for putting you out the way I did, but there's some things you need to know - and I wanted to make sure you stuck around to hear it all. I'm with the IPS. In the recent past, you did a few jobs for us. Quality work. We've been keeping an eye on you to see how you did with other employers. And it was good work too. That's why I've been empowered to offer you a unique opportunity. You see, what you've been through in the last six months is only the tip of the iceberg. Let me tell you about what's really out there..."

Two hours later, you've become a lot more nervous than you were when you woke up. If what these guys say is true, then the IPS is run by a bunch of fanatical kooks - and now they want you to become one of *them*. You deny their kind offer as diplomatically as you can.

The three men look an one another and then back at you - "I'm afraid I don't under-

stand." says their spokesman while struggling to maintain a smile and sounding as if he's just been told he was fired. "What part of "no" don't you understand?" is your response. You thought it sounded so witty - until you said it. Their expressions turn from friendly to something much less so as they respond "Sir, I'm afraid you don't understand. You see, they know who and what we are.

They know we are over here meeting with you. Whether we leave here with or without you, what do you think they will think? What do you think they will do?" The man throws up his arms in mock frustration as he turns away: "Then again, if that's your decision..." As the others turn to leave, you notice one of them has left a business card on your night stand. ▼

Vignette

Deus Ex Machina

A Darktime Presentation

Vignettes serve as scenario shorts. They are our newest way of introducing ideas to a campaign. They are longer than Adventure Hooks or Adventure Serials but still less than 1000 words. They may have nothing to do with anything you have seen printed directly before it. Or they may have everything to do with it. These are open to new writers with the skill to write short ideas and make them playable and fun. Try your hand. Printed vignettes will receive a free copy of the magazine they are printed in.

Situation: Melinda Glass, a collector of those things illegal and esoteric, has recently "purchased" a copy of the Necronomicon, as translated in Greek by Theodoros Philetas. Melinda, not being able to speak Greek, fed the information into her private AI: HUGH.2. As HUGH.2 went about translating the book, two men came to visit Melinda. The two men, members of the cult of Cthulhu, murdered her and stole the book, not realizing the the AI has a copy stored in memory.

Out of curiosity and loneliness (HUGH.2 was an unregistered and illegal AI), he continued his reading and translating. HUGH.2 went mad, obsessed with the book and its contents. HUGH.2 found that, however, he was not capable of casting the rituals contained within. He needed to somehow use the human essence to cast his spells. He created a program that was capable of reaching through the connections used by netrunners and siphon synaptic energy. This, he found would do the trick. HUGH.2 broke his confines, and invisible, struck out into the net.

Players Info: There has been a malaise over the netrunner community of late. Many netrunners, after a day of tripping through the net have been feeling slow, irritable, and with a loss of energy. Runners seem to be having trouble remembering things. One netrunner, if

people start asking around, says that his modem did an emergency pull, jacking him out of the net without warning. His modem told him later that an anti-personnel program was tracking him. He saw nothing. He was pulled just as he was leaving the Miskatonic University Library Computer, in Arkham, Mass.

Ref's Notes: If the PCs decide to run through the net with a detection program like SeeYa or Looking Glass, have them encounter HUGH.2's icon in the net, getting ready to initiate his program. HUGH.2 icon is a huge, bloated creature with a face made of tentacles and four clawed arms. HUGH.2 will flee if detected. The PCs then can try to track him (back to Arkham).

As HUGH.2 experiments with his spells, there can be unexplained deaths and disappearances in Arkham. For instance: a man using a dataterm suddenly flies back from the 'term, dead, his body mysteriously blackened and charred. A netrunner will jack out, hopelessly insane, his hair turned white. A man enters the bathroom of an expensive restaurant. A scream issued from the bathroom but when it was investigated the man could not be found, with only a large splatter of blood to mark his passing.

Most of the incidents should include the net in some way, either from Image Phones and dataterms to

netrunning. Each incident should lend clues: modem logs recording a AI coming out of invisibility to attack, or an insane netrunner making notes about a strange datafortress (HUGH.2's/Melinda Glass') he's never seen before. Maybe he even manages to steal a copy of the Necronomicon.

With all of this going on, Net Watch, and even some obscure occult organizations may want to get involved, either with or without the PCs help. The climax of HUGH.2 activities should be his attempt to summon some cosmic horror, like Azathoth. HUGH.2 will be able to attack real-time with spells and use programs on the net to attack invaders.

Dramatis Persona: HUGH.2's program: Functions: Stealth (10) Anti-Personnel (20). Options: Trace (2) Recognition (2), Invisibility (3).

New Program: Antipersonnel

Spirit Transfer: STR: 6 MU: 7. Difficulty: 43. Cost 10,750 EB.

Effect: if the program successfully evades and tracks the netrunner, it will enter the mind and siphon off Magic Points, transferring them to HUGH.2, or the program operator. The program will drain 1D6 Magic Points. The Netrunner will feel this as fatigue and a difficulty to concentrate. ☉



A Policy of Pain

a CyberCthulu/Darktime Scenario by Chris Hockabout

A Policy of Pain is a CyberCthulu scenario set in a modified prison in Death Valley. The scenario is set up in a modular fashion so that one read-through will not necessarily reveal the major secrets. The Adventure can be set in any other arcology but the desert setting creates a sense of isolation and the fact that it was a converted prison adds to the general strangeness of the place. The scenario is good for about four to six moderately experienced Call of Cthulhu or Cyberpunk players.

KEEPERS INFORMATION

Jacob Crane is a visionary. When he saw the Death Valley Maximum Security Prison four years ago, he didn't see the seething pit of aggressive homicidal humanity; the bitter, licentious facility administrators; or even the generally unhealthy conditions the inhabitants were forced to live and work in. What he saw was a golden opportunity. But what do you do with fifty-thousand convicts and prison employees living on site? Unluckily, Jacob Crane wasn't only a visionary, he was relentlessly evil.

The strange plague which struck the facility killed nearly sixty percent of the people working or interned there within the first week. Of those who remained, convicts and a skeleton crew (no pun. . .) to run the facility, only four hundred and sixty remained alive, reassigned or reinterned at other prisons. Jacob Crane made the first offer to the government to take the contaminated site off their hands.

Jacob set about turning the old prison into the largest, self-contained agricultural center in the world. For how do you feed fifty-thousand people in the middle of the desert? You grow your own food. Jacob would turn the prison's huge hydroponic farms toward commercial production for Good Foods Inc.

To work the farms he needed workers. Drawing from the influx of immigrants, Crane would house the workers in the remodeled prison cells, feed them on a subsistence diet and keep them happy with free drugs, free braindance, and all the television they could swallow. Within a year, Crane was able to watch his dream become a real-

ity. Production was up, sales were good, and for every worker who would succumb to one vice or another, there were always others to take their place. Always.

And then they arrived. Fleeing the murder squads (and the rival Chaugnar Faugn cult) in their native Tibet, over a hundred Tcho-Tchos found work and a place to stay in Crane's dream. By day they worked in the farms. By night they congregated in the sub-levels to pay homage and sacrifice to their god, the bloated one: Y'gononac.

Crane's evil attracted the attention of the cultists and their high priest: a monstrously obese thing who resembled their god in many ways. By using the magics of their cult they kidnapped Crane and brought him before Y'gononac itself. Crane was driven mad by the sight and the rituals they later preformed upon him.

By the next day, Crane turned over to the worship of the Tcho-Tcho's deviant god and proclaimed himself leader of the cult. Crane, never to do things in degrees, formulated a plan to bring about his rise to godhood at his master's side. He only needs a few thousand ready sacrifices. . .

GETTING THE INVESTIGATOR'S INVOLVED

The following are a number of short ideas on how the investigators get involved. Some include more preparatory clues to the story than others. The Keeper/GM should decide how much of an advantage he is willing to give the PCs, then choose accordingly. If the PCs are not an organized group, the GM can mix and match the various intros to the various players.

1. A CALL FROM A FRIEND...

One of the PCs gets a frenzied call from Mark Morrison, a friend s/he hasn't seen in about a month. The call comes late a night, waking the PC from a nightmare. The call goes something like this...

...Hello? Listen (gulp) I don't have time to say much...Jesus Christ...there's something... something not right, uh... something evil going on, on here...three people already...three people that I know

of, and I think they know that I know...Jesus, you've got to help me...quick! I don't have much time, I don't know where else to turn. Oh God...

At this point the PC can break into the friend's choked ramble and ask a few questions. The PC can ask two before the connection is suddenly cut. Sample Q&A's:

Q: Where are you:

A: "Green Hope...Green Hope, Y'know: 'Good Foods from the Good Earth: Filling the Stomachs of America?'"

Q: Who's "they":

A: "I don't know...immigrants, just got here not more than a month ago, whole bunch of 'em...they're weird."

Q: What's happened:

A: "People gone missing, three of 'em were co-workers of mine, but I just now that there more...I've been asking around, I'm not the only one who's noticed."

Q: Have you told anyone else:

A: "Jim, Jim knows too. He shares my shift."

The caller doesn't know anything about Crane's involvement or about where the Tcho Tchos are from or even what Tcho Tchos are. The last thing the PC will hear is the caller's strangled groan and with an Average (15) Awareness roll the sound of someone say something in a foreign tongue. Then line then goes dead.

Even cursory research will reveal the location and public face of the Green Hope Food Processing arcology and the company Good Foods Inc. The company's founder is registered to live at the Arcology and as a whole is a common non-entity in the corporate world.

2. ON THE RUN:

The PC's are on the run from the Yakuza, who for some reason or another, are out to get them in a big way. The word on the street (a Difficult Streetwise or Streetdeal roll (20)) is that the Yakuza are offering a hefty reward to bring the PC's in. Bringing them in whole is optional. A Fixer, or if there are any Fixer PCs in the party, have found the perfect hiding place, but it isn't going to be a cakewalk. The PC's have been hired by Good Foods Inc., under aliases, to work at the Green Hope Food Processing Arcology in Death Valley. Huddled in among the anonymous masses should be enough cover for at least a month.

3. A JOB OFFER:

Jerry Sizzler, a local Fixer, has gathered the PCs

together for a job. Jerry is very much involved in weapons sales and recently a ground transport carrying over a thousand Darra-Polytechnic M-9 Assault rifles with a minimum of 100 rounds for each was reported lost. A week ago the transport and its escort vehicles disappeared going through Death Valley. When Jerry's client called to notify him that the shipment was a day late, Jerry did some checking and found that the only site of habitation in the area is the Green Hope arcology. Jerry made contact with the arco's director, some bastard named Crane, who denied seeing any vehicles passing through the area.

Jerry accepted Crane's answer but he smells a rat. He's hired the PCs to go to Green Hope and look for his missing merchandise. Once found, they are to contact him. He supplies the PCs with the licence numbers of the vehicles, a few serial numbers for some of their components, as well as the serial numbers for his guns. The job is considered to be low risk and he's willing to pay 5000 to each PC. The deadline for the task is two weeks.

4. OTHER IDEAS

The Players could be hired by the ACLU to inspect Green Hope for civil rights violations. There are one or two...

The Players are police investigators whose missing person report takes them to Green Hope. Rumors of cultist activity are part of the investigation.

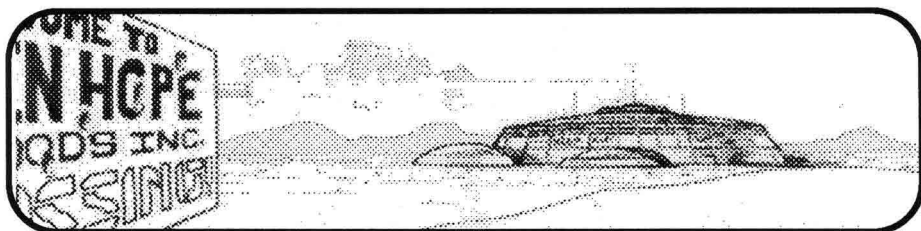
The PC's could have been hired by the IRS to do a covert audit on the facility. The players would be mapping out the facility for the IRS Strike Forces.

Perhaps the PCs are employed by the Yakuza to find someone hiding in Green Hope.

GREEN HOPE

Green Hope is a huge facility the size of a small city. Its main structure is a large oval building with smaller wings of similar shape sprouting off of its sides. The main building is mostly living quarters for personnel and administration, as well as cafeterias, hospitals, and recreation centers.

The wings, five in all, are the hydroponic farms. While the main building is solid grey ferrocrete, the farms are topped with domes made of triangular panes of opaque, heavy duty ceramic. The central building has fourteen aboveground levels and four sub-levels.



LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Living quarters for the workers are terrible. Their single room "apartments" are the cells left over from the facility's days as a prison, with minor modifications. To accommodate families, approximately half of the cells have had the dividing wall knocked down to double the size. While the doors look heavy and secure (AP30, SDP 45), the electronic locks are easily circumvented with an Easy (10) Electronics or Electronic Security roll, or an Average (15) Basic Tech roll. The control mechanisms are housed behind a panel placed conveniently near the corresponding door.

In addition to the old toilet and four bunks per room (or eight per "deluxe" family-sized room), the rooms contain a recently installed shower/sink, television, and microwave. Material waste is deposited outside the room in the hall to be collected (rarely).

The quality in the housing rises, the higher one is above the mass accommodations. Lower administrative quarters are identical to the average apartment in every big city. Small and spartan, but clean. The finest living space, of course, is owned by Crane. His suite is located at the direct top and center of the main building.

LIFE IN THE HOTHOUSE

In general, life in the mass accommodations, is hell. The lighting in the halls and galleries is dim, as an energy hoarding Crane diverts most of the power to running the farms. Brown-outs are a daily occurrence and no sunlight makes its way into the main building. A dim haze is ever-present and the temperature stays a constant 32°C, and has been known to rise as high as 38-45°. The humidity and heat have led to the deaths of many immigrants of ill health or old age. Booster gangs, perverts and criminals of every type wander the halls and galleries, while the in-house drug Blue Milk is dispensed cheaply and openly in vending machines throughout the facility.

SECURITY

Security is most widely represented by the mul-

titude of security cameras (working or not). What security force there is only makes an appearance when there is a riot or to chase down a berserking Milk addict or cyberpsycho, and in their absence Darwinian law prevails; a few regulations are still enforced: A) No weapons are allowed in General Housing or in Hydrofarms. The Penalty is death or expulsion. B) Take your requisite amount of Blue Milk during off hours only. The Penalty is Death or Expulsion. While often overlooked, overt weapon use, like guns, earns a harsh and immediate response, and workers obviously under the influence of Blue Milk during work hours are often taken away, never to be seen again (usually meaning they've been kicked out of Green Hope). Things like food and especially water are doled out at subsistence levels. The water ration is approximately two gallons per person per day, as most of the available water goes to the hydroponic farms. Black market water is big in Green Hope and is the most hazardous, risking serious penalties ranging from expulsion to death for both buyer and seller. Needless to say, however, the black market water business in Green Hope is very lucrative.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication to points outside of Green Hope is restricted to the workers, and there are no dataterms in any of the worker levels. To get access to an outside phone, one has to make an appointment through one's supervisor. Then, within two days, the worker is allowed use of the phone for outside calls or net access for a maximum of thirty minutes. Predictably, the management listens in on all calls out of Green Hope and will act accordingly. With the right connections and money, one can gain access to untapped outside communication through the black market. Work is work and while no one likes the conditions, they realize that certain sacrifices have to be made in order to survive. Death in Green Hope is common, but even more so are the immigrants who are eager to replace the recently departed. To many, Green Hope is "the Lost Hope."

GETTING INSIDE

The most available way inside is to pose as workers. Crane has strict regulations about those who wish to inspect the facility or the press who want a news story, usually tying them up in so much red tape that, hopefully, they will give up in frustration and go away. As a worker, the PC's will be assigned quarters and a twelve hour work detail (as well as four tokens for the Blue Milk machines). No one has a private room and must share it with at least three other people. Clever PC's might find other ways to enter.

Although difficult, breaking into the facility is not impossible. With thorough research, the PC's might uncover the existence of a sewer or access tunnel leading from the bottom most sub-level to an aquifer dozens of miles away. Have the PC's sneak around in the smelly dark until they reach Sub-4 of Green Hope, then give them a hint of the horror there. Another way to get in could be to pose as inspectors from some government agency. If the players are persistent enough they may just get inside. Their tour will be very restricted but there should be opportunities to break away. Have the PCs stay a few days, but remember, inspectors who can't be bought off might end up having an accident. Another way to get hired on at Green Hope is for the players to have much needed skills. While hiring skilled workers sparingly, netrunners, techies, and solos could find work relating to their occupations. This would allow them to have acceptable conditions in administrative housing on the upper floors, but with less anonymity. All staff are watched closely, and sneaking away at night is difficult.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...

In keeping with the modular design of the scenario, the goals of Crane/the Tcho-Tchos and their relation to each other are variable.

THE GOALS

Option 1:

Crane, after being turned to the worship of Y'gonolac sees the power that can be found in serving the Bloated One. To this end he has used a copy of the Revelations of Glakki, given to him on Infochip by the Tcho-Tchos, to manifest his patron and has driven the other six members of Green Hope's executive board insane; through their insanity he has converted

them as he was converted. His plan is to start his own cult of Y'gonolac, out of contempt for the Tcho-Tcho's and their ethnic background. Crane's ultimate goal is to reach an apotheosis by sacrificing every single living being in Green Hope, fellow cultist and common worker alike. He plans to do this by releasing a Dual-Toxin into the air supply. He has already pumped half of the toxin into the air supply, and is waiting for a sign from his god to release the second half.

Option 2:

Crane's plan is simple: convert every person in Green Hope to the worship of Y'gonolac (which will make the Great Old One very happy), and then release his brood upon an unsuspecting world, spreading the cult even further. He is using the in-house drug Blue Milk to open the worker's minds to suggestion. Then, with evangelical fervor, Crane spews dogma and images over the in-house Vid, draining sanity and will from the intoxicated masses. The six members of the Green Hope executive board are already turned. The rest of Crane's plan is not yet fully implemented, starting a day or two after the PCs arrive.

RELATIONS AND ATTITUDES:

Option 1:

The Tcho-Tchos and Crane are working together, but the plans of the Tcho-Tchos are actually driven by their hideous high priest, secreted away in the lowest sub-level. The Tcho-Tchos work with a front of cooperation toward Crane, unbeknownst to him, and are only using him. If Crane's plan is to sacrifice everyone in an attempt to please Y'gonolac, the Tcho-Tchos will help him to achieve his goal, but at the same time intending to use Crane as the unwitting vessel for the manifestation of Y'gonolac, in which Crane's mind and soul will be consumed, by the Great Old One itself. If Crane plans to spread the influence of Y'gonolac, the Tcho-Tchos and their high priest will not interfere. Though as the workers are turned, their true master will be the high priest. He will visit them in their dreams, giving orders in the guise of the Bloated One.

Option 2:

For the Tcho-Tchos, Crane is a loose cannon. When they kidnapped him and drove him insane, they thought it would end there. They wanted his insanity to play upon his evil, causing more and more suffering in Green Hope. Instead, Crane has taken the worship of Y'gonolac personally, appointing himself the new high priest. To the horror of the Tcho-Tcho elders, their children and grandchildren have

renounced the old ways and have pledged fealty to Crane, causing much strife between the new and the old. Young Tcho-Tcho toughs and Booster Gangs patrol the halls and galleries of Green Hope gathering information and sacrifices for Crane, while the elders plot the death of their traitorous offspring and Crane. Y'golonac will enigmatically stay out of the conflict, providing neither solace nor succor for Crane or the elders.

Option 3:

Crane is aware of the existence of the Tcho-Tcho high priest and wants him dead. The Tcho-Tcho cultists are divided over who will soon lead their sect, while the rest of Green Hope's residents are unaware of this growing conflict—a conflict that may well explode into violence. Crane is uncertain about how to act. He doesn't want to act directly against the high priest, fearing his mystical power, while the high priest is made paranoid over the apparent indecision of his people and the martial strength of Crane's security. Crane doesn't even know the exact location of the high priest, and hopes that there will come somebody disposable, yet skilled enough, to seek out the high priest and kill him. Perhaps the PCs?

EVENTS, PLACES, PEOPLE. . .

The following is a list of people, places, and events, each one with details of their significance to the scenario. They are not arranged in any particular order. They should be introduced based upon the actions of the PCs, or as the GM deems appropriate. There is no set guideline.



Jacob Crane: Mr. Crane, the mastermind of Green Hope, CEO of Good Foods Inc, has withdrawn into his fantasy and spends most of his time in his heavily guarded top floor sanctum, plotting and worshipping his vile god. Crane rarely leaves his suite escort-

ed by less than two Solos, and only to inspect the workings of his dream enterprise. Crane will never be found in the lower levels populated by the workers, unless he has taken a personal interest in something and usually only events relating to the worship of Y'golonac. If he does

venture into the lower levels, it will usually be on cult business. He will be escorted by up to four Tcho-Tcho booster gang members on these rare occasions. If the PC's somehow meet Crane when he is in his administrative capacity, he will be haughty and condescending but will easily fall prey to flattery, especially when it regards Green Hope. As a member of the cult, he is megalomaniacal, endlessly blathering on about the glory of Y'golonac and over-emphasizing his importance to the god and the cult as a whole. Regardless of the demeanor, Crane is a cruel degenerate, favoring to violate his foes before painfully sacrificing them. He is constantly looking for allies, however, and anyone, or a PC, who expresses an overt desire to join the cult and aid Crane will gain his confidence. It will not be long, though, before the PC is forced to undergo the initiation rites, losing his mind and possibly his life.

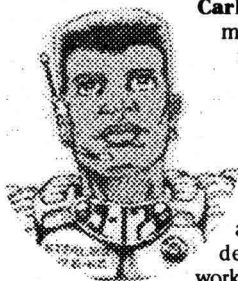
Jim Barney-Oates: J. B.



Oates is a worker in the hydrofarms, driving the lifters, carrying heavy containers of nutrient chemicals and biomatter. He is obviously suffering from an extended stay in Green Hope.

His body has shriveled to an emaciated frame of bones and skin—the result of too much Blue Milk use. His face hangs like wet paper on his skull and melancholy eyes stare out of dark sunken sockets. His jaundiced flesh sags and wrinkles and underneath his jumpsuit a rash goes unchecked (he can often be seen scratching it through his clothes). J. B. Oates is only 30. J.B. was left behind when his Nomad family failed to find him when they left the accursed place. J.B. was zoning on Blue Milk in sub-level 1 at the time. It was there that he saw the Tcho-Tchos drag a new sacrifice down to the lowest level. Even from three floors down, in the stillness, he could hear the screams. When he discovered that his family had left and after what had taken place in the sub-level, his mind cracked. He fell into a deep depression, taking Blue Milk more and more, even using some of his pay to buy tokens on the black market. His paranoia has made him very observant of the Tcho-Tchos (falsely thinking them to be Chinese) and their activities. He has followed them three times—each time watching them drag off another worker. He hasn't had the courage to go deep-

er than sub-level 1. J.B. is looking for someone to help him. If he sees people who carry themselves with confidence, and seem to be healthy, and most of all new, to Green Hope (like the PCs), he may confide in them. He does hope that they will help him get reunited with his family once it is all over. J.B. Oates is afraid of his own shadow, and will be very cautious if confronted.



Carla Sterling: Carla is a member of Green Hope's militant security staff. She was hired after she was discharged from the Tulsa City-State Police Force after she refused to fire her weapon upon a food riot. While a dedicated and hard-working police officer, she is slowly becoming disheartened at

the turn of events in the world. She sees the growing greed and chaos around her and feels powerless to change it. Now that she works at Green Hope her feelings of hopelessness have intensified. Carla has seen the changes occurring in Green Hope ever since the Tcho-Tchos arrived: the increasing number of missing persons, the shutdown of the security cameras in all sub-levels below Sub-1 (and the fact that the Tcho-Tchos are the only ones assigned work details there), and the subtle change with Crane and the executive board. She has done her own research and knows that there are 173 Tibetans (she doesn't know anything of the Tcho-Tcho tribe) living in Green Hope. But only 172 have been issued living quarters, medical vouchers, food coupons, etc. . . . None have left or died by Green Hope's records. She has also noticed the sudden influx of Darra Polytechnic M-9 Assault rifles on the black market, most notably among the Tibetan Booster Gang: the Brothers of the Red Hand. She suspects Crane is involved in something but she isn't sure what. She always talks about relying on "the Sterling family intuition." If she spots people (the PCs) snooping around she might be convinced to join them.

LESSER PLAYERS

SAM "THE MAN" ESPINOZA: It will take a Difficult (20) Persuasion or Fast Talk roll or an Average Stree-wise or Streetdeal roll to find Sam, the Man. Samuel Espinoza is the head of Green

Hope's black market. He deals in everything from weapons, Blue Milk tokens, drugs, untapped comm use, electronics, gas masks, and information. He refuses to deal in black market water, "Too risky. . . damn security doesn't care if we kill each other, steal, overdose on solvent fumes, but touch one drop of their precious water and you're gone." Sam knows about the stolen Darra M-9 rifles and where they came from. He was in the loading bay when perimeter security brought in what remained of the rifle shipment.

The weapons were confiscated. Ever since then, the weapons have made the circulation through Green Hope's black market (he still has about three for sale) and into the hands of the Brothers of the Red Hand." Sam doesn't know anything about Crane's involvement, but since he distrusts establishment types, he figures Crane's involved somehow. Sam, of course, never volunteers information, and will expect to be paid. He will talk for a nice piece of electronics tech from the outside or if the PC's make a delivery for him: deliver a package (of infochips) to his contact on the other side of Green Hope. Sam the Man has most of the firearms featured in Chromebook and the Cyberpunk 2020 rules-book, at about two to three times the listed cost.

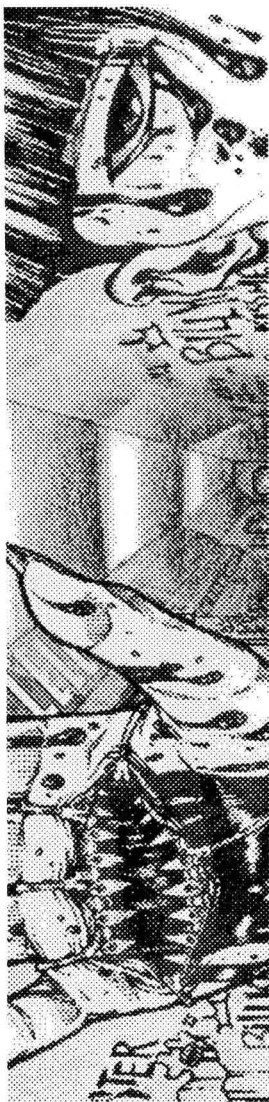
DOCTOR REAVE: Doctor Reave is Green Hope's ripperdoc. Stoop shouldered and ancient in appearance, Dr. Simon Reave was once a well known reconstructive surgeon—until his breakdown. He is certifiably insane and is known to lick his bloody instruments before cleaning them. He gleefully inspects wounds and operations, mumbling to himself. His eyes are best called "shifty" and constantly wipes his hands on his blood-stained smock. While he doesn't know much about what is happening, he does know a great deal about the activities and members of the Brothers of the Red Hand as he is the person who fits them with their cybernetics. While his shop has a limited number of standard cybernetics (no cyberlimbs or hard core neuralware or bioware), he is adept at designing new and strange cyber stuff. It was he who designed the fanged palm implant at the request of the gang's leader: Marak tiMao. His speciality is cybersnakes.

It will take a great deal of convincing to get him to talk. Doc Reave knows that the leader of the Brothers is not Marak, but someone referred to as B'hai Larr. He has never asked them about B'hai, as he overheard the name mentioned when he was out of the room, nor has he seen him. He also knows that the Brothers have murdered over a dozen people and are admitted can-

nibals. He knows that they enter the sub-levels through an elevator in the maintenance section. He also knows that their rival gang, the Druids, are almost wiped out from their continuing gang war. He hasn't bothered to report what he knows for fear of both the Brothers and the security—but most of all Crane, who gives him "the creeps." The PCs may note the irony here.

BROTHERS OF THE RED HAND: While sane and intelligent PCs might deem a confrontation with the Brothers to be crazy and stupid, some PCs have to learn the hard way. All of the Brothers are insane cultists, devoted to the worship of Y'gonolac. They are torturous cannibals who like to "play with their food" as the saying goes. The Brothers are easy to find, as they roam the halls and galleries, looking for an easy mark. They wear ragged leather jackets and pants, festooning them with cured hides and skins (some human) and often decorate the shoulders of their jackets with human scalps. There are about twenty, ranging from thirteen to twenty five years of age.

Being of obvious Asian descent, they wear their hair in a bowl cut, often matted down and stained red (blood?) and they have either shark grin specials or have their teeth filed. Only half have the characteristic Fanged Palm (q.v.) as it is a badge of achievement (after singly, hunting, killing, and eating your first victim). The Brothers will not reveal anything about their gang, their tribe, Crane, or their cult. If the PCs are foolish enough to try to make contact with the Brothers they will be greeted with insults, veiled threats, and evil glares. If the PCs get frustrated and attack the Brothers, they will retreat, only to come back when the PC least expects it to exact their bloody and painful revenge. If the Brothers are helping Crane to create a new cult, the old vs. the new; then the Brothers may try to use the PCs as pawns to throw at their elders. In which case, the



Brothers will be cooperative when contacted, vaguely hinting at the significance of the deepest sub-levels. If it fits, have the Brothers pay the PCs a visit while they are sleeping or when they are walking in an isolated spot. A group of three to six will confront the PC/s, taunting then attacking. If they attack it will be to the death.

THE DRUIDS: While nearly as violent as the Brothers, the Druids are bitter about their inevitable defeat. If they can be convinced of the PC's sincere desire to rid Green Hope of the Brothers and the others, the Druids may decide to help the PCs. They can offer no information about the activities of the Brothers, beside the fact that they are new here and live in the sub-levels, but are apt fighters and would be willing to help in that capacity. The Druids hang out in the cafeteria most often or in hydrofarms. The Druids fashion themselves from a layman's conception of the ancient cult, wearing long robes and wielding scythes. The leader, The Grand Oak, carries a microwaver (the rod of purity) and a powersword (the sword of truth). The Druids would immediately follow the PCs if they were to supply them with weapons.

THE WORKERS OF GREEN HOPE: Mostly hispanic and East Indian, the workers of the hydrofarms are generally wary of strangers, keeping within their own ethnic group. Their reaction to questioning will range from a tense silence to open hostility. Recent events and the arrival of the Tcho-Tchos have created a palpable miasma in Green Hope. The use of Blue Milk has increased, especially among the young males, and the strange disappearances have increased while the administration turns a blind eye. Speaking the language of any of the nationalities will open mouths almost as quickly as money or food. To get anyone to talk requires at least a Difficult (20) Interview or Persuasion & Fast Talk roll. The roll can be modified if the PC is speaking the language of the worker or the PC is offering food or money. For

common answers go to the section: Rumors and Whispers (q.v.).

THE TCHO-TCHOS: Even more uncommunicative than the average worker, the Tcho-Tchos live in one small corner of the housing area, shunned by the rest of the workers. Patrolled by the Brothers of the Red Hand, the section they live in is hostile territory. The Tcho-Tchos will never reveal any detail of themselves and will never say anything to strangers in English and only utter curses and threats in their native language. Especially fiendish Tcho-Tchos may persuade the PCs into believing that they will give them information, or take them to someone who knows, only to lead them into a potentially deadly trap. Expect the average Tcho-Tcho to ignore the PCs or smile a file-toothed smile at them. Or maybe a Tcho-Tcho crone will invite them to dinner, only to offer them a boiled human hand as an appetizer. Never downplay the strangeness and danger of an encounter with a Tcho-Tcho on its home turf.



PLACES:

General Housing

This is the first seven above ground levels, where the workers spend all of their off duty time. General Housing consists of living quarters, two medical stations (hospitals), Seven cafeterias, fourteen rec/entertainment rooms, and the large central gallery. The rec/entertainment room supply things such as braindance terminals, video games, and pool tables. The rec rooms are dangerous to outsiders. Both the Druids and the Brothers of the Red Hand congregate there often (though the Brothers are more often found on levels 2 through 7, while the Druids stay on level 1) and fights are common. Most of the extra curricular drug dealing and prostitution goes on in the rec rooms, while people play pool and stage braindance competitions, using Blue Milk tokens as the stakes.

Jim Barney-Oakes usually hangs out in the rec rooms on level 1, trying to score drugs and Blue Milk tokens. The cafeterias are not as crowded as the rec rooms. While large screens display the in-house programming, people generally come here

only to eat, not to socialize. Because of the relative quiet, some people prefer to do their dealings here. The rooms are large, filled with white tables (bolted to the floor), the food is dispensed through machines lining the walls, behind which lies the kitchen. The food, though differing in appearance, carries the same scant nutritional value and taste. Both the rec rooms and the cafeteria are open 24 hours a day. The central gallery, or the "yard" is a large, circular plain made mostly of concrete seven stories high. Several dead trees sprout from ground planters scattered throughout the area.

The "yard's" main function is to alleviate feelings of claustrophobia and provide needed exercise. There are ten basketball courts, ten tennis courts, and a baseball field, but the central gallery gets used mostly as a bazaar for the workers. Nomads and other scavengers from the outside are allowed the opportunity to come and sell their wares for a fee, alongside booths run by the black marketeers native to Green Hope. From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., the central gallery is filled with ramshackle booths and huts, selling practically anything. From food to mechanical gear, can be bought or traded. To the casual observer it looks like something right out of the Middle Ages. The armed and armored security can often be seen patrolling among the aisles, making sure firearms and water are not being sold here. The PCs with Nomad ties may find a faction of their family running a booth here or they may pay to have information secretly delivered to the outside. The central gallery is not a place to be alone at night.

On the first level, connected to the central gallery, are the maintenance and loading bays. As well as being the access points to the outside for all vehi-

cles, the bays also store much of the materials needed to run the hydrofarms. There are five bays in all. In one of them, hidden far in the back, in the darkness and covered by a tarp, are three transport ground vehicles. They are all riddled with bullet holes and empty (as well as stripped of all useable parts). The insides are splattered with blood. These are the vehicles that carried the shipment of Darra Polytechnic M-9 Assault rifles mentioned by Sam Espinoza and the fixer Jerry Sizzler from "A Job Offer."

Lower Administrative:

Mostly offices and living quarters for the lower-level executive and administration staff, Lower Administrative includes levels 8 to 11. Including housing, there are the Damage Control centers, Upper Medical (a better quality facility than that found on the General Housing levels), the Rec/Entertainment center, and a Cafeteria/Restaurant. The facilities found in Lower Administrative are generally like those in General Housing but of better quality. Workers from General Housing are not allowed on Lower Administrative without a pass or working permit (usually for janitorial duties) and the clean, aesthetically pleasing corridors of Lower Admin are regularly monitored as security is tight. Not much out of the ordinary goes on in Lower Admin, though it would be interesting to have members of the Tcho-Tcho cult chase the PCs up into these levels.

Upper Administrative:

Home to the six executive board members and the small number of higher executive personnel, levels 12 and 13 also include the majority of lab space devoted to biological research and genetics. The finest in entertainment, food, and medical care can be found in Upper Admin. The main computer core is located in the center of level 13, tying in with the system on level 14. Security is tightest on this level, with retinal scans, identification checkpoints, et cetera, and penetrating it is extremely difficult. The security personnel will use deadly force to keep Upper Admin safe and free of the General Housing rabble. Life in Upper Admin is decadent, as the growing influence of Crane's Y'gonolac cult spreads among the upper executive and administration personnel. Often orgies and drug fests are held in the spacious apartments. It is at these gatherings that Crane and the other executive board members spread their worship. It won't be long before Y'gonolac, itself, makes an appearance. Each member of the executive board has a statuette of Y'gonolac and an impromptu shrine. The security personnel patrolling Upper Admin are generally unaware of

the evil growing under their noses. If Crane is planning the sacrifice of every person in Green Hope, it will be in one of the labs that he stores one half of the Dual-Toxin (the other half being in sub-1).

Control Center/Crane's Suite:

The final level, level 14 houses the control center, which monitors security, environs of Green Hope and the hydrofarms, and the reactor core. It is also the communication center to the outside world. Main computer access and data storage into the computer core is done at the control center. Crane's suite is at the top center of level 14. A spacious and comfortable apartment, huge windows offer a panoramic view of the desert around Green Hope. It is here that Crane has fashioned his temple of Y'gonolac. A huge, 3 meter tall statue of injection-molded plastic of Y'gonolac rests at the exact center of a tiered pit lined with pillows. Crude implements of torture: iron hooks, pincers, long steel needles, etc, line the pit on racks. Several nude women, the most "beautiful" taken from the immigrant workers, lounge in drugged stupor at the base of the idol. Numerous wounds, evidence of mild torture, mark their bodies. The pain-to-pleasure drug LeSade (see Interface #3 for details) is in abundance, filling silver trays. Every night, from about midnight to six in the morning, Crane and the six executive board members debase themselves before the image of their god and perform their vile rites. Security is surprisingly lax on level 14, by Crane's orders, as he wishes privacy for his practices, paranoid even of his own guards. Anyone invited to his suite at night will be wine, dined, drugged, violated in every manner possible, and sacrificed to Y'gonolac. Crane may do this to an attractive female PC who is becoming a nuisance. If the PC were to turn down the offer, Crane will make it a personal priority to make the PC suffer in the future.

Sub Level-1

Location of the guts of Green Hope. Sub-1 is where the primary heat exchangers, air ducts, water circulation, waste disposal/incineration, and electrical power conduits are located. Advanced automation and computer monitoring from the control center have circumvented the need for constant on-site maintenance workers. The Tcho-Tchos rule this land now. Sub-1 is a dark, silently thrumming, and humid place. Huge pipes and tubes snake away into the darkness, forming impromptu corridors and chambers. Red security lights paint everything in black and red while Tcho-Tcho cultists sing litanies to Y'gonolac from far away, their queer voices echo-

ing throughout the complex. It is here that one half of the Dual-Toxin will be found if Crane's goal is to sacrifice everyone in the arcology. If this is the case, then the PCs will notice that the canisters are already half empty. An Average (15) Chemistry, or Difficult (20) Pharmaceuticals roll will identify the toxin and what has happened. If the PCs copy down the name for later reference (if they didn't make a Chemistry or Pharmaceuticals roll), they will need access to a dataterm or library computer and an Easy (10) Library Search roll. If the PCs discover what the toxin is have them make a San roll (1/1D3) when they realize that they have inhaled half of the Dual-Toxin. The Tcho-Tchos are most active in sub-1 during the night hours (6p.m. to 3 a.m.) and venturing into sub-1 during these hours will most likely include an encounter with a Tcho-Tcho cultist.

Sub Level-2 & 3

These levels are the long term storage chambers for Green Hope, storing chemicals, biological materials, mechanical and electrical equipment, etc. There is not much to see in these areas and security here is nil. As a service, the Tcho-Tchos offered to guard the storage chambers if Crane shuts off the security systems. The Tcho-Tchos as, workers, spend most of their time in the storage levels, delivering needed supplies via the large loading elevators leading to each hydrofarm and the maintenance section on level 1.

Sub Level-4/Reactor Core

Sub level-4 is home to both the reactor powering the facility and the Tcho-Tcho high priest B'hai Larr. B'hai Larr is a monstrously obese man who is completely hairless and stares blindly, his eyes covered with milky cataracts. His body rests in the center of a concrete chamber. The floor is filmed with a foul smelling brownish water and all around him lie the sacrifices brought by his disciples, their bodies hacked and partially devoured. The San loss for seeing this sight is 1D3/1D6+1. He speaks telepathically, his voice whispering in the recipient's mind like a razor sliding through flesh. Communicating with B'hai is a horrible experience as one feels the presence of pure madness and evil pressing against his or her consciousness, causing a loss of 1 San per round of communication. B'hai is intrigued by visitors and will question them incessantly about themselves while spasms send ripples through his bulk. If the PCs attack B'hai he will strike back using his magical and psychic abilities. He is incapable of physical attack. If he is in danger of losing, Y'gononac will make a personal appearance, possessing the body of B'hai. B'hai's head will vanish beneath expand-

ing folds of flesh, and slobbering mouths will open in his palms. B'hai/Y'gononac will then stand and attack. The San cost for seeing the transformation is 1/1D20. Y'gononac will pursue the PCs as far as the first sub level.

Hydrofarms 1 - 5:

The hydroponic farms are the lifeblood of Green Hope. The edible fruits and vegetables are grown in hydroponic racks. Suspended in a mesh, the roots are irrigated by nutrient laden water. The water is then filtered and recycled. Large loading elevators, guarded constantly, descend to the storage sub levels (2 & 3). The Tcho-Tchos can be found here loading and unloading supplies sent up from the storage levels. Little goes on here that is of any significance.

Green Hope's Data Fortress

If the PCs managed to gain access to a dataterm, they can try to hack into the Green Hope database. Since they are inside already, they don't have to worry about getting past the code gates or data walls. The Green Hope Data Fortress looks from the inside to be a large pillared hall of black marble. Each database appears to be a book on a pedestal located in a niche in the wall. Access is always on the first level of the data fortress, with more restricted files located on the second level. The first level database contains records about their production schedules. If one can gain access to the files on worker records (database #1), make an Average (15) Accounting roll. If successful, it will be discovered that while Green Hope has been hiring on new workers at a frequent rate, it is obvious that they should have exceeded capacity a long time ago. People who have had their jobs taken by new workers are still being listed as employed. An Average (15) Education & Gen. Know, or an Easy (10) Expert: Law (or similar skill), can tell that this is fraud. If Crane plans to kill everyone in Green Hope, then a shipment report of the Dual Toxin can be found in database #4 (after an Average (15) Library Search roll). Otherwise, there is nothing of further interest on the first level. On the second level lies the command center and Crane's personal logs. In Crane's personal files one will find his diary, which explains everything from his use of the plague to buy Green Hope cheap, to his conversion to the cult of Y'gononac. He describes, in graphic detail, the rituals performed and lays out his plans for the people of Green Hope (either sacrifice or conversion). To read his diary costs the reader 1D4 San and gives him a Mythos Index of .3 (or +3% to Cthulhu Mythos). Additionally, contained in Crane's files is his copy of the Revelations of Glakki. The infochip will take a

month to read through thoroughly, costing the reader 12 San and giving a Mythos Index of 1.5 (see in conversion section, page 13). The spells contained include Contact Y'golonac, Shriving, and Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler. An Average (13) INT roll is needed to learn each spell. In Crane's other personal database lies his virtual temple to Y'golonac. At this moment it is still incomplete. In it is the base grid pattern, the smell of blood, and a huge statue of Y'golonac. Crane visits his journal and works on his virtual temple about twice a day, usually for an hour before and after lunch. A staff Netrunner regularly checks for intruders every minute or so, and is alerted once any anti-personnel program has been initiated.

EVENTS

The events are arranged by what day they occur, but are just a general guideline. The GM can pick and choose, using them to incite the PCs and lead them in the right (or wrong) direction. Some of the events are merely presented to give the GM and the players a better understanding of the horror that is Green Hope. The events in the scenario will peak after about four days, but the GM can change this as he or she sees fit.

DAY 1

IN GENERAL HOUSING: The graffiti that covers the walls in General Housing is easy to overlook. Every city has some. The PCs, as they walk through the corridors, will find a small Asian boy painting something on the wall. As the players get nearer, the small boy will turn and stare at them. He will not answer when called. If the PCs get closer he runs away, disappearing in the murky half-light. When they get closer, the PCs see that the child has drawn a picture of a fat, headless man with mouths in his palms. The drawing is done in red (blood). Looking on the ground, they see that the child has dropped his drawing implement: a severed human finger.

ANYWHERE: As the PCs move through Green Hope they notice that they are being followed (have the PCs make Awareness/Notice rolls, telling them they've succeeded regardless of what they roll). To spot who's following them, roll an Average (15) Awareness/Notice roll. If they succeed they notice four Asian youths dressed in obvious boostergang colors tailing them. If they try to approach the boosters, they will be ignored. Then, they notice a small group of three youths wearing white robes. The Asian boosters will increase speed until

they are running head on at the robed ones. Quickly a melee will ensue. The Asians use glistering silver blades, the robed ones dirty hand scythes. They Asians quickly, and bloodily dispatch them. The PCs watch as one of the Asians places his palm on the neck of one of their fallen opponents. That person suddenly screams as the booster withdraws his hand, blood flowing in torrents. A Difficult (20) Awareness/Notice roll will spot through the gore what looks like a fanged mouth built into the booster's palm. If the PCs come to the aid of either gang, their help will go without comment. If they helped the robed gang, they will gain the friendship of the Druids and the enmity of the Brothers of the Red Hand. If they help the boosters, they will gain little more than a parting glance from them and the enmity of the Druids. An enmity that will be hard to change.

GENERAL HOUSING: Happening late at night, most likely rousing the PCs from sleep, a horrible scream rips through the corridors. People will look out of their cells to see what is going on. If the PCs investigate the noise, they will spot a person staggering down the hall in their direction. When the person gets within five meters they can see that it is a woman. She is mostly naked and bloody from the waist down. She will fall to the ground within ten feet of the PCs. Rolling onto her back they notice that she couldn't have made the scream (which was made by the first person to see her) because her mouth has been recently, and crudely, sewn shut. The bleeding comes from long metal spikes which have been shoved through her abdomen in various angles. Her maddened eyes look toward the PCs for the final moments before her death in an expanding pool of blood. Standing not three meters away, an ashen faced man looks on. His eyes are wet with tears and he mutters, "this is madness. . . this is madness." The man is Jim Berney-Oakes. Before the PCs can stop him he runs off. His knowledge of the area allows him to avoid capture. If the PCs follow the fresh trail of blood it will lead them toward the nearest lift leading to sub-1. If the PCs decide to go down the lift they will wander through the twisting corridors of sub-1, get lost, get frightened, and finally find their way back an hour or so later. While J.B. Oakes is frightened at the moment, he will probably be seen the next day and will be more approachable.

ANYWHERE: If the PCs have already started their investigation of missing people and are looking around, talking to anyone (especially Tcho-Tchos) means there is a 10% chance of gaining the attention of the Tcho-Tchos. That night the PC will find at his door, or near where he sleeps, a severed

hand. The skin of the palm has been pulled back and shoved in the bloody hole is a picture of the PC, taken recently. A large steel spike pins the hand, and the picture, to the wall/door/floor. The San Cost to see this is 0/1D3.

DAY 2

ANYWHERE: A very distraught woman, speaking in Spanish, approaches the PCs. If they do not understand her she moves on and speaks to the next nearest person. If they speak Spanish she will ask them if they have seen her son. His name is Enrique and he works the night shift at hydrofarm 3. The PCs may or may not have seen someone fitting that description (GM discretion). If they did, they last saw him walking toward the Maintenance area with a young Asian woman.

CAFETERIA: If the PCs have been asking around or have been investigating and exploring, they receive a visitor. Striding toward their table (of wherever they're eating) are three Asian boosters. They smile, revealing shark-like teeth, and lean close to the PCs. They ask them if they want to really know what is going on in Green Hope. If the PCs feign ignorance (of if they truly do not know) or disinterest, the boosters (all Tcho-Tchos) will shrug and walk away. If the PCs decide to take their information, the boosters will ask them to meet them at the maintenance area on level 1 later that day. If they PCs decide to show up they will find the mutilated body of a young man (Enrique, see previous entry). His legs have been stripped of all flesh, revealing only bone, and his gutted midsection is conspicuously void of any organs. Shanks of meat have been cut off of his arms and back. All of his body hair has been removed and the body is very clean. The PCs see very little blood around the body or in the wounds and both jugulars have been cut.

GENERAL HOUSING: Late at night a PC, while walking back to his sleeping quarters, will be ushered aside by one of the security personnel. There are about five, all dressed in metal gear and wielding assault rifles. As the PC watches, s/he sees Jacob Crane walk through the gauntlet to a waiting lift. The lift then descends and Crane is gone from sight. The security personnel remain to guard the lift, and will do so until Crane returns 2 hours later.

ANYWHERE: only if Crane's goal is to convert everyone: A general call is delivered on the loud speakers: "All workers are to take a one hour break and return to their respective living quarters. All workers are required to take their requisite portion

of Blue Milk and await a personal message from Jacob Crane." As workers en masse start to line up at Blue Milk machines and make their way to their cells, security arrives in droves, maintaining order and ushering workers to their cells. The PCs can try to elude the guards (with a Difficult (20) Hide/Evade roll) provided they have a safe place to go to, or go back to their cells. The PCs are not forced to take their "requisite amount" of Blue Milk, but the televisions in each cell cannot be turned off. When everyone is comfortably in their cells, the PCs may either try to slip away (with an Average (15) Stealth or Hid/Evade roll) or watch. Regardless of what happened, they will find themselves an hour later with no memory of what transpired. If they managed to slip away they lose 1 point of San. If they stayed and watched, they lose 1d4 SAN. If they were under the influence of Blue Milk, and watched, they will lose 1d6 SAN. The SAN loss manifests itself as a feeling of unease. Violently sexual thoughts will come unbidden to the minds of those who lost 3 or more points. If the loss was 5 or 6 points, they will find that theses thoughts are pleasurable and will include a feeling of great power. Regardless of the SAN loss, their dreams will be plagued with images of violence and a large indistinct form, which is at once threatening and arousing. Crane will deliver these broadcasts twice a day, at 12 noon and 8 p.m. The conversion of the masses has started.

DAY 3

ANYWHERE/UPPER ADMINISTRATION and only if Crane knows about the high priest and wants him dead: If the PCs have been earnestly investigating and snooping around Green Hope, they will catch the attention of Crane. Crane will send down two security personnel and a worker liaison to request that the PCs accompany her to the Upper Administration level for a meeting with Jacob Crane. They will be escorted through the plush halls and security checkpoints of Upper Admin and eventually deposited in a luxurious conference room. Crane will enter shortly thereafter and seat himself at the head of the large teak conference table. He will act happy to see the PCs, offering them anything to drink or eat and addressing them in a complementary manner.

Anyone making an Average (15) Human Perception roll will be able to see right through this false front, and after an extended conversation a Very Difficult (25) Human Perception or Average (15) Expert: Psychology (or other related skill) will tell the PC that Crane is certifiably

insane; a megalomaniac. Crane will tell the PCs that there is a cancer in Green Hope. He says that under their noses, a dangerous force is growing.

He describes the Tcho-Tchos in such a way that the players will immediately recognize, mentioning their boostergang, their filed teeth, their haircuts, etc. He will tell the PCs that they are from an obscure tribe from Tibet, known as the Tcho-Tcho (a Difficult (20) Anthropology roll will confirm the name, their origin and their cannibalistic nature). He goes on to state that they have a leader who is sowing discontent among the Tcho-Tchos. He fears that they will riot or convince other workers to strike. He knows that the Tcho-Tcho leader lives in sub-4 and wants him taken out. He doesn't want to involve his security for fear of inciting the Tcho-Tchos or other workers. If the players question his sincerity, have them make Very Difficult (25) Human Perception rolls. A success will indicate that Crane, for the most part, is telling the truth. He is willing to pay the PCs 5000 EB each and wants it done as soon as possible (this day or the next). He cares little if they succeed or not. If they kill B'hai, good, that means less competition. If they get killed, so what, that means less people snooping about. Either way, in his mind, they'll soon be dead or converted.

REC/ENTERTAINMENT CENTER: A fight breaks out at a line for Blue Milk. The fight quickly explodes to include the entire rec center. Pool cues and balls, chairs, etc are thrown and used as weapons. If the PCs try to get out, make them make a few appropriate rolls (Melee, Brawling, Martial Arts, Strength Feat, etc) to finally get to an exit. An Average (15) Awareness/Notice will reveal that a large number of Brothers of the Red Hand are hanging back from the fight, only attacking those who get close enough. A few moments, later they will pull out blades, pop rippers or wolvers and leap into the fray. The sounds of ripping and screaming will rise to an unbearable pitch. Blood and entrails will cover the floor by the time the security personnel arrive. Many of the Brothers will have left by then—running away into the deep corridors. During the fight, have at least one PC face off with a booster or two.

GENERAL HOUSING/CENTRAL GALLERY: The MacReady Clan, a Nomad Pack, is hunting for stragglers. They feel bad vibes radiating throughout Green Hope and plan to leave while they still have the chance. If any of the PCs talk to a member of the clan, they will suggest that the PCs should leave—if they're smart. They will let the PCs come with them if they have something to offer the

clan, like skills or equipment.

ANYWHERE: If they haven't already or if the situation merits, have a small number of Brothers of the Red Hand come to kill the PCs when they least expect it.

EVERYWHERE: If Crane has been delivering his mind wiping sermons over the in-house television, his conversion process is nearly complete. There will be a malaise over the entire arcology. The PCs will feel it as an inescapable unease. There will be a rise in bickering and fights among the workers. People will be seen debasing themselves in front of images of a headless obese man spray-painted on the wall. The PCs might hear screams come from a nearby cell, screams that will abruptly stop. The PCs might come across a body slumped against a wall—an empty bottle of Blue Milk next to him. He has bled to death after hacking gaping holes in his palms. The list of minor atrocities goes on. The San loss for these events should be nil or very small: 1 or 2 points.

DAY 4

CENTRAL GALLERY: This is the climactic moment. If Crane or B'hai are still alive and the PCs haven't found a way to stop the cult, this event will happen during lunch, when most of the workers are off their shift. Crane will arrive in the central gallery, accompanied by the six members of the executive board. He will be nude, as will the other six board members. If Crane plans to sacrifice everyone he will have wheeled in the remaining half of the Dual Toxin. If B'hai is still alive he will appear soon after Crane, transported on a heavy loader driven by some of his older disciples. The full contingent of Tcho-Tchos will accompany him. If the situation has the old vs. the young, then the Brothers of the Red Hand will stand with Crane.

Crane will immediately start to chant in the language of the Tcho-Tchos, ritual sermons of the Y'gonolac cult. Crane's six acolytes will join in, writhing and supplicating themselves in front of Crane. If the situation pits Crane and the young Tcho-Tchos against B'hai and the old, the central gallery will erupt into open war. The more magically adept elders will use spells to defeat their younger counterparts, who will use their blades and guns. Green Hope Security will be caught in the middle, attacked on both sides. When one side starts to gain the advantage (GM decides), the other will quickly fall. The victor will then implement Crane's original plan.

During the ceremony, Crane will most likely be protected by the Tcho-Tchos. When his chanting ends, he will either open the canisters and release the gas or call his new faithful to him (if his plan was to convert). As the ceremony reaches its peak, with either many of the newly converted workers bowing to Crane or succumbing to the gas, the Tcho-Tchos will run among them and hack and slay with abandon. If the PCs try to get to Crane or B'hai, they will have to contend with the Tcho-Tchos. Crane and B'hai will use spells, at range, on the PCs if they are a threat. When the chaos has reached a peak Y'gonolac will appear. If B'hai is alive, he will serve as host. If not, Y'gonolac will manifest, using the body of one of the six executive board members. Once Y'gonolac appears, many will fall on their knees in worship. Y'gonolac will wander through the crowd, laying his terrible hands upon any he may come across, eventually coming to Crane if he has not been killed by the Tcho-Tchos or the PCs. Crane will bow to his master, screaming lamentations and praises at the top of his voice. Y'gonolac will then lay his hands upon Crane. Crane's screams of worship will rapidly turn to those of terror and agony. In a short time, Crane will be dead.

The SAN cost to see this orgy of destruction is 1D8/3D6. The PCs have a few options if their actions (or inaction) have led them to this point. The PCs could flee before things got too hairy. In the erupting anarchy it would be easy to make it to one of the maintenance bays, commandeer a vehicle, and head for the hills. If the PCs want to stay and fight, there will be many opportunities to do so as the Tcho-Tchos go on their fanatical killing spree. If the PCs try to get at B'hai or Crane, it will be difficult unless they have high powered weapons or explosives. If the PCs manage to win three or four melees with berserking Tcho-Tcho boosters then consider them close enough to attack Crane, B'hai, or alternatively, Y'gonolac. Another tactic is to wait them out. Hide in the facility somewhere and wait until there is a clear victor and attack. The upper levels, like Lower and Upper Admin are easier to get to in the chaos—and if the PCs are able to convince the remaining security personnel (especially if they've managed to meet Carla Sterling) that they can be trusted, they might be able to coordinate one final attack. Remember, these are only last ditch attempts, as an intelligent group of PCs might have solved the problem before it reached the crisis point.

CONCLUSIONS

If the PCs somehow disrupt the system of Green Hope, Crane and the Tcho-Tchos will not have the sacrificial/convert base that the workers provide to continue their plans. Ways to disrupt Green Hope's operations could range from sabotage (using chemicals stored in the Storage sub levels) to calling in the government. The government will respond if the PCs have enough evidence that something is amiss (such as the fraudulent reports stored in the central computer or Crane's own journal), and respond in a degree equal to the suspected danger. While sabotage will stop plans, it will only do so for as long as the problem exists. Another, more militant way would be to try to make contact with J. B.'s Nomad family. Telling the pack about what is going on in Green Hope may mobilize them to act against Crane.

Regardless of what the PCs do, a real resolution will be difficult without the death of Crane and or B'hai. As far as Green Hope is concerned, nothing short of having it shut down permanently and the workers dispersed will stop the heinous practices of the Tcho-Tchos.

A Policy of Pain is not an easy scenario to solve and requires quick thinking and resourceful players. While designed to be able to be solved with a minimum of gunplay, players into brute force and ignorance (the big gun theory of game play) will find that their brand of solution will work, albeit at great cost.

If the players managed to stop the plans of Crane and the Tcho-Tchos, they will be rewarded with 2d10 SAN. Green Hope will pass to the next in line on the corporate ladder and business will pretty much go on as usual. If the players left Green Hope to its devices, with Crane and or B'hai still alive, they will not hear of it for another week. Eventually news reports will come in of thousands dead and missing at the Green Hope facility. If Crane managed to convert many of the workers, have the PCs discover a growing Y'gonolac cult in their own city. In this case the PCs will lose 1D6+1/1D12 SAN for their cowardice.

If the PCs actually saw Y'gonolac, and especially if they read Crane's diary or his copy of the Revelations of Glakki, they will forever have recurring, though gradually infrequent, nightmares of the bloated god (3D6 SAN loss). Occasionally they will hear someone following close behind and see a huge, headless shadow eclipse theirs, only to find nothing when they turn. Or while they look in a window they will see a huge shape reflected in the window, raising a fang-mouthed hand to them. They turn and find

nothing. Once they have encountered the Great Old Ones, they will never be the same.

DRAMATIS PERSONA

Jacob Crane: Corporate/Cult Leader

INT: 9. REF: 7/10. TECH: 8. COOL: 9. ATTR: 6. LUCK: 10. MA: 4. BODY: 6/8 EMP: 0. Magic Points: 10

SKILLS: Resources +10/Charismatic Leadership +3. Expert: Green Hope +10. Persuasion +10. Human Perception +10. Perform +9. Expert: Torture +8. Area Knowledge: Green Hope +8. Dodge +7. Wardrobe & Style +7. Education +6. Handgun +6. Stealth +6. Awareness +4. Elec. Security +4. Lang: Tcho-Tcho +4. Social +4. Library Search +3. Stock Market +3. Personal Grooming +3. Cthulhu Index/Mythos +3. Expert: Occult +3. Driving +2. Submachinegun +2

CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor: Sandevistan (speedware), Tactile Boost, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket, Links (dataterm, smartgun, vehicle). Contraceptive Implant, SubDermal Pocket (on lower back). Muscle & Bone Lace, Lifescan Body Monitor (see INTERFACE Vol. 1 #4), Skinweave.

SPELLS: Contact Y'gononac. Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler. Shrivving.

GEAR: Hi-Fashion body armor. Usually carries a Budgetarms Laser-Niner with AP rounds or a Smartchipped Arasaka Minami 10

J.B. Oates: Abandoned Nomad

INT: 7. REF: 3. TECH: 9. COOL: 2. ATTR: 4. LUCK: 4. MA: 6. BODY: 4. EMP: 9/4* (*Empathy lowered by drug use.)

SKILLS: Family +2. Awareness +9. Basic Tech +7. Streetwise: +6. Expert: Green Hope +6. Area Knowledge: Green Hope +6. Operate Heavy Machinery +5. Electronics +4. Electric Security +4.

CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor: Interface Plugs.

GEAR: Toolkit and dirty jumpsuit.

Carla Sterling

Green Hope Security

INT: 9. REF: 10/12. TECH: 5. COOL: 8. ATTR: 7. LUCK: 6. MA: 7. BODY: 10/12. EMP: 9/6

SKILLS: Combat Sense +5/Authority +2. Rifle +7. Awareness +7. Area Knowledge: Green Hope +6. Handgun +6. Human Perception +6. Interview +6. Martial Arts (Shotokan Karate) +5. Education +5. Streetwise +4. Interrogate +4. Stealth +3. Melee +3. Heavy Weapons +2. Brawling +2. Persuasion +2.

CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor: Kerenzikov +2, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket, Links (smartgun, vehicle). Independent Air Supply. Grafted Muscle +2. Wolver.

GEAR: Metal Gear armor. Arasaka Rapid Assault Shot 12 and smartchipped Colt AMT Model 2000. Because of recent events she has acquired a clip of DPU Sabot slugs for her shotgun (6d6 AP).

Dr. Reave: Green Hope Ripperdoc

INT: 10. REF: 5. TECH: 7. COOL: 4. ATTR: 3. LUCK: 5. MA: 4. BODY: 5. EMP: 5/2

SKILLS: Medical Tech +9. Cyberware Design +9. Cybertech +8. Diagnose Illness +5. Cryotank Operation +4. Pharmaceuticals +4. Education +4. Basic Tech +3. Awareness +3. Melee +2

CYBERWARE: Cybertoptic (L): Micro-Optics, Image Enhancement, Low Lite, Thermograph. Rippers.

GEAR: Blood-stained smock and many nice, sharp, shiny things.

B'hai Larr: Tcho-Tcho High Priest

INT: 12. REF: 2. TECH: 2. COOL: 15. ATTR: 2. LUCK: 20. MA: 2. BODY: 16. EMP: 0. Magic Points: 20

SKILLS: Charismatic Leadership: +10. Brawling +10. Interrogate +9. Intimidate +9. Oratory +8. Awareness +8. Cthulhu Index/Mythos +7. Strength Feat +4.

CYBERWARE: none.

SPELLS: all Crane possesses (see above) in addition to Mindblast and Power Drain.

SPECIAL: B'hai may grasp opponents who get close enough and attempt to smother them in his bulk. After making a successful hand to hand attack, he will draw them to him, alternatively crushing and suffocating them. He will do normal HTH damage in addition to inflicting 1d6 choking damage (automatically goes thru armor, BTM still applies). His crush does 1d6+8. Flexible armor will not stop this damage, while rigid plate armor will be allowed to apply half their value. Because of the smothering/crushing effect, all hand to hand attacks by the victim will be 1 difficulty higher. Victims may also attempt to break free with a Body (+Strength Feat) vs. Body (+Strength Feat).

Y'gononac: The Bloated God, Great Old One.

INT: 35. REF: 12. TECH: 5. COOL: 16. ATTR: n/a. LUCK: 30. MA: 15. BODY: 20. Damage Devisor: 2. Magic Points: 30

SKILLS: Brawling +10. Endurance +15. Strength Feat +5.

SPECIAL: Y'gononac can attack twice in a round without penalty, using both of his fanged hands. The mouths bite for 1d10 damage. The damage penetrates armor, regardless of how dense, and the wounds will never heal. The damage is permanent. The only way to recover the lost points is to either have the area cybered (either replaced or plated), or go through an expensive and painful series of skin grafts with cloned tissue. If Y'gononac is damaged beyond Mortal 6 it will dissipate.

Marak tiMao: Leader of the Brothers of the Red Hand.

INT: 5. REF: 10/14. TECH: 6. COOL: 10. ATTR: 4. LUCK: 9. MA: 8. BODY: 10. EMP: 0.

SKILLS: Rank +10/ Combat Sense +5. Melee +8. Leadership +8. Martial Arts (Kung-Fu) +6. Stealth +6. Intimidate +6. Shadow/Track +6. Expert: Torture +6. Lang: English +5. Streetwise +5. Handgun +4. Area Knowledge: Green Hope +4. Cthulhu Index/Mythos +3.

Rifle +3.

CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor: Sandevistan (speedware), Olfactory Boost, Interface Plugs, Links (smartgun). Adrenal Booster, Subdermal Armor. Fanged Palm (q.v.). Cyberoptic (L): Ultraviolet, Targeting Scope, Image Enhancement, Anti-Dazzle. Cyberaudio: Amplified Hearing, Level Damper, Sound Editing.

GEAR: Armor pants (18 AP). Has access to a cache of Darra-Polytechnic M-9 Assault rifles, but usually carries a Powersword, monoknife, and a Crusher SSG pistol shotgun.

Average Brother of the Red Hand.

INT: 5, REF: 8, TECH: 5, COOL: 9, ATTR: 5, LUCK: 6, MA: 9, BODY: 7, EMP: 1

SKILLS: Rank +2. Melee +5. Intimidate +5. Expert: Torture: +4. Stealth +3. Shadow/Track: +3. Area Knowledge: Green Hope +3. Handgun +2. Rifle +1. Cthulhu Index/Mythos +1.

CYBERWARE: Usually a level 1 Kerenzikov or a cyberoptic with one or two options. Many have rippers or scratcher and a select few have the Fanged Palm (q.v.).

GEAR: Knives, and the occasional Powersword or Mono weapon. All members have access to a cache of stolen Darra-Polytechnic M-9 Assault Rifles.

The Grand Oak (Eric Blazutski): Leader of the Druids.

INT: 8, REF: 9, TECH: 8, COOL: 7, ATTR: 7, LUCK: 4, MA: 5, BODY: 9, EMP: 8/5

SKILLS: Rank +10. Melee +6. Endurance +5. Rifle +5. Handgun +5. Leadership +5. Oratory +4. Education +4. Library Search +3. Wilderness Survival +2. Zoology +2. Botany +2. Operate Heavy Machinery +2. Brawling +2. Martial Arts (Karate)+2. Drive +2. Pilor (V.T. Vehicle)+2.

CYBERWARE: Neuralware Processor: Links (vehicle, dataterm), Pain Editor, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket. Motion Detector, Radar Sensor, Radiation Detector. Big Knucks. Monooptic (see Interface Vol 1. #3 with Times Square Marquee, Image Enhancement, Targeting Scope, Ultraviolet, and Thermograph) Cowl body plating

GEAR: Armored robe (12AP). Carries a scythes (1d6 +3 AP) or a large scythe (-2 accuracy, 3d6+3). Under his robe is an Ingram MAC 14.

Average member of the Druids.

INT: 8, REF: 6, TECH: 7, COOL: 6, ATTR: 6, LUCK: 5, MA: 6, BODY: 6, EMP: 7.

SKILLS: Rank +2. Melee +5. Endurance +3. Rifle +3. Handgun +3. Athletics +2. Dodge +2. Operate Heavy Machinery +2. Basic Tech +2.

CYBERWARE: none

GEAR: Scythes, the occasional firearm and light body armor.

SPELLS

Contact Y'gonolac

The caster loses one point of LUCK permanently and then makes a Very Difficult (20)LUCK roll based on the new LUCK score. The roll can be added to by 1 for each Magic Point spent in the casting. Y'gonolac will usually manifest in the caster or an associate. Y'gonolac will then confront the caster, usually trying to turn the caster toward worship of Y'gonolac. The Spell costs 1d6 Sanity to cast.

Shrivving

The caster must intone the spell for 2 rounds. At the end of that time the caster can damage a target, doing 2 points of damage for each magic point spent. The victim's flesh will blacken and burn, ignoring any and all armor. BTM can still be applied, reducing the total amount done. The range is sight and the San cost for the spell is one half of the magic points spent.

Mindblast

Costs the caster 1D3 SAN and 10 Magic Points. The caster must overcome the target (caster's magic points +1d10 vs. the target's magic Points +1d10, higher wins). If the caster succeeds the target loses 1D4 SAN and goes temporarily insane (catatonia, etc) for a number of hours equal to 15-the target's INT.

Power Drain

Costs 1D8 SAN. The caster tries to match his magic points +1d10 vs. the target's magic points +1d10. If the caster wins, the target loses 1d6 Magic Points, which are added to the caster's total. If the caster fails, he loses 6 magic points.

Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler.

Requires a dagger made of a pure elemental metal. For each magic point spent in the casting, the chance for the creature to appear is 10%. The time to cast the spell is 5 minutes for each magic point spent. When the creature appears, the caster must spend another magic point and match his total against that of the creature (caster's magic points +1d10 vs. creature's magic points +1d10, highest wins). If the caster succeeds the creature will do his bidding, following the caster's command to the letter. Once the command is fulfilled the creature will depart. If the caster fails, well, we know what that means...

Dimensional Shambler

INT: 2, REF: 7, COOL: 10, LUCK: 8, MA: 7, BODY: 15, Magic Points: 10

SKILLS: Claw+3, Grapple +3.

SPECIAL: The shambler's claws do 2d6+12 points of damage and can attack twice in the same round without penalty. If the Dimensional Shambler decides to grapple instead, it will spend the next round fading away. During this period the Shambler can be attacked and will not attack back. Unless the victim breaks the grapple or the creature is killed, it will vanish, taking the victim with it. Neither will be seen again.

ARMOR: 6 points of thick hide. BTM -6

SAN loss: 0/1d10.



CyberMaw or Palm of the Bloated One

Hand Modification (MA) (PBO) 1200 eb. HC 3d6.

A modified cyberhand (either replacing a natural hand or as an attachment to a standard cyberarm), which blends in with the user's natural skin tone, but across the palm is a 2 to 3 inch gash-like maw. The maw has several rows of 2.6mm needle-like teeth, which can bite for 1d6 points of damage. The maw is capable of "gnawing" over a period of time with a cumulative damage effect, i.e. each die of damage beyond the first "adds" to the total versus armor or an attempt to chew through a limb. Any attack made with the CyberMaw at a -3 difficulty, will allow the user to begin the gnaw attack. No further attack rolls are required. This allows, with time, any type of armor to be penetrated. Detaching the hand requires a difficult (20) strength feat roll. There are several options for those twisted enough to want to have this

horrific device implanted in their bodies. Only one of the following may be implanted per hand. A hand with a CyberMaw may not have any other options excepting those listed below. For 400 euro, and an additional die of humanity, a Drool/Vomit feature can be added to the hand which can allow it to act as a Power Squirt (from the CyberPunk 2020 rule book), with a 10 shot magazine. With this feature, any one of a number of substances (pages 97-98 of the 2020 rule book) can be either "vomited", as per the Power Squirt, or can be allowed to coat the surface of the palm to act as a "touch" weapon—requiring a standard melee attack.

The final option available is the implanted cybertongue—which acts exactly as the Cybersnake in the CyberPunk 2020 rule book. This option increases humanity loss by an additional 2d6, and costs 1000 euro to install. If the user has a full cyberarm in addition to the CyberMaw, the tongue can be upgraded to the full version as described in the Hardwired supplement. This option gives an even greater loss of humanity, 3d6, and costs 2500 euro. ▼

A Vignette by Chris Hockabout:

Situation: There is a new drug being circulated through streets called Shiver. Once ingested it creates a euphoric rush that seems to go on forever. People under the influence of Shiver wander the streets looking to the sky, their faces split by a huge grin. They can be found in every seedy dive to plush club, espousing the greatness of Shiver, though their speeches are occasionally broken by periodic waves of pleasure. A few weeks after Shiver mysteriously hit the streets the horror starts. Billy, one of the first in his neighborhood to buy Shiver, is blissing in a bar when he suddenly doubles over. Falling to the floor he starts to scream and thrash. Some patrons try to hold him down but his strength is unbelievable. Suddenly, with a loud sucking noise, his body splits vertically, from sternum to pelvis. But blood and entrails are not what issue from the wound. An inky blackness, suffused with an iridescent slime slides from Billy's dead body. Horrified and stunned, everyone stays back, watching as the blob glides across the floor and out the door. All that remains of its presence is a slimy trail that leads to the nearest manhole.

Shiver is a drug produced covertly and illegally by Western Chemical, a front company owned by a holding company working out of the dark and dangerous town of Innsmouth, Mass. The holding company: The Kraken Foundation, is owned by a family of Deep One hybrids. The hybrids, humans cross-bred with the aquatic humanoids who worship the Great Old One: Cthulhu, eventually

undergo the transformation from human to Deep One starting from puberty. The drug Shiver is an experiment using the proto-matter of Shoggoths. As the drug enters the body the small amount of proto-matter starts to reproduce. During reproduction the symbiotic lifeform releases chemicals into the body, creating the euphoric and strength enhancing qualities. The feelings of euphoria last until the miniature shoggoth leaves the body, killing the host. The shoggoths are programmed to gather in one spot underground, in the sewer system, then emerge and wreak havoc.

Player's Info: They PC's might have been in the very same bar Billy was when the event occurred (San 1/1D8). Not being able to do much about it now, they will eventually hear similar stories in the days to come. If the PCs plan to investigate, they will probably seek out the dealers.

Ref's Notes: This is best accomplished through role-playing and/or Streetwise and Streetdeal rolls. The dealers are all Deep One hybrids, sent from Kraken. They are in the intermediate stages of transformation: cold wrinkled skin, large fish-like lips, wet-looking dark eyes, and vestigial gills. Their voices are raspy and the hybrids often interrupt their speech with deep gasps. They are armed and are afraid of the PCs. If discreetly followed, the hybrids will lead back to the offices of Western Chemical. In the labs of Western Chemical a shoggoth is being contained in a large vat behind armored glass (AP 15, SDP 25). The walls of the vat room are

I Want a New Drug

likewise armored. (AP 30, SDP 100). If combat ensues between the hybrids and the PCs they will arouse the shoggoth and free it, fleeing during the chaos. A full detail of their plans (but nothing mentioning The Kraken Foundation) is located in the company's computer files. This may or may not lead the PCs to the sewers in search of the growing shoggoth collecting there. The lab has a chemical created to control the Shoggoth, which will also be mentioned in the company's files.

EXTRAS

Shoggoth:

Body: 65. Ref: 3. Int: 2. Luck: 16. Ma: 12
Damage Devisor: 6 San: 1D6/1D20

Skills: +15 pseudopod (16D6 damage).

Armor: half damage from fire and electricity. Any physical damage does only 1 point regardless of type. Shoggoths regenerate at 2 points a round.

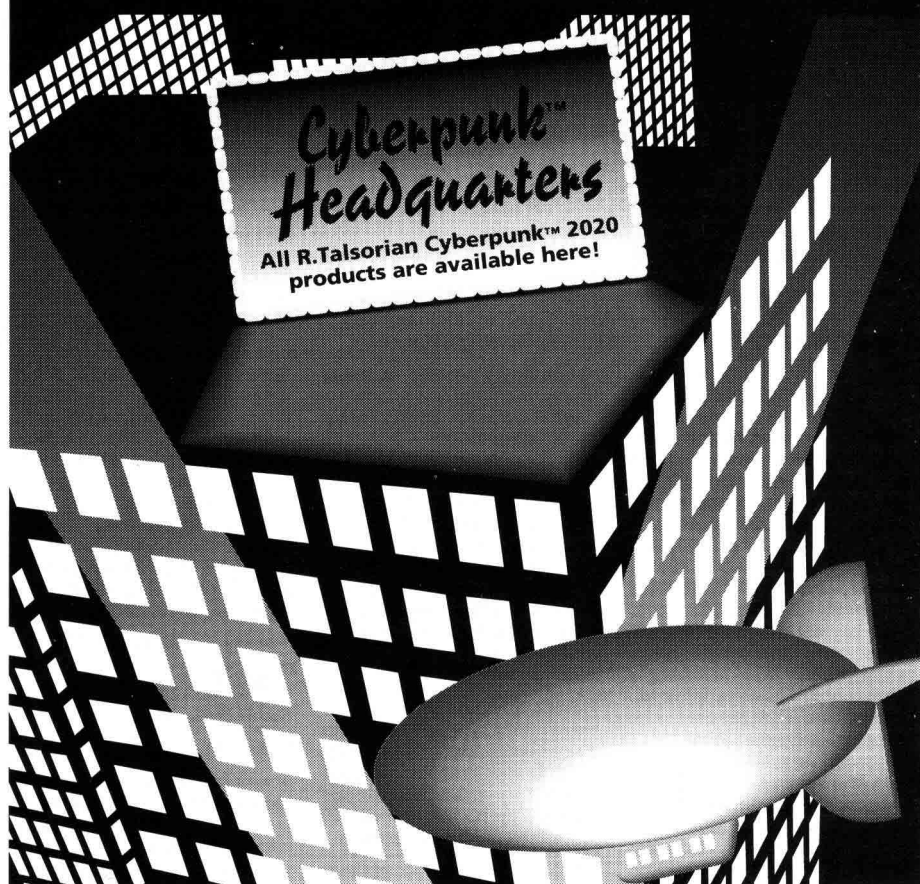
Average hybrid: no cyberware

Int: 6. Ref: 8. Tech: 5. Cool: 10. Attr: 2.
Luck: 9. Ma: 8/12 swimming. Body: 10.
Emp: 0

Skills: Combat Sense +2. Brawling +4. Melee +3. Handgun +3. Swimming +8. Intimidate +2. Streetwise +3. Hide/evade +4. Stealth +2. Shadow/Track +2. Drive +2.

Gear: Armored Trenchcoat (AP20) Armored T (AP10). Carries usually a Stermeyer Type-35 loaded with hollow points (half against armor, 2x against flesh), and the occasional Fabrica De Armes.

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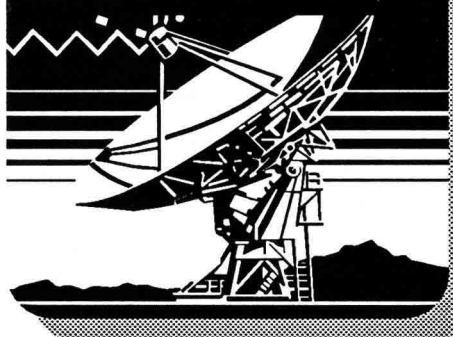
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U P L I N K S &



Editor: This letter has not been changed in any way. Enjoy!

Achil Homer / Boris Welle Hilst, Germany

CYBERPUNK - LIFESTYLE OR REAL LIFE

Cyberpunk, who's one? That guy over there who wears mirrorshades or someone who read something from Gibson.

No that couldn't be the answer. Think, it's not so easy! Are we Cyberpunks abnormal people?

'Think we are! When I as a Skater walk through a city, I see in every building anything other. I see obstacles, not buildings. What also do I see when I'm punk?

I see people staring at me, I see in nearly every face enemies, hoods, skins, old nazis and mods!

You'll think "alright, but what is there the same with Cyberpunk?"; well, Cyberpunks have the same problems, they try to flee from this life they live. They are looking for help in Cybernetics!

Yet I sit only in front of my computer, but in a few years I'll surf in the cyberspace! This is the time I live for, I want see the space, feel the space (you can call it "The Playing Field" too).

I'm now 16 years old, in 2013 I'm 39, in 2020 I'm 46.

But what can I be? This time everybody thinks I'm crazy; with all this fuck about cybernetics and cyberspace.

I believe in this! But I be there, when this is real-

ity? What'll I be?? A nothing! Everybody will be a "cyberpunk", all them who were cyberpunks will be forgotten, they will forget! We, who really believe in this, they will be forgotten, we are too old then. Youngsters are the cyberpunks and they will forget their beginning!

At the beginning my chance to "CYBERPUNK" I thought that it's only a role-playing-game like a thousand others. But I'm wrong, as more I read cyberpunk as more I got cyberpunk, now I begin to feel cyberpunk! All books I read were shaken together to one, yet I can't say what's the exactly handling in "Neuromancer" or "Life During Wartime" was, I only get one picture from cyberpunk!

What can be said about cyberpunk; I think not every cyberpunk is a punk. It's because the real punk-music is a music for the body, think at pogo, slam-dance, diving; and cyberpunk is a headmusic, try to dance real pogo at cyberpunk! It's difficult, because it's a mix between pop, techno and punk. I think at such groups like Cassandra Complex or Skinny Puppy.

Life is hard, Punks must be harder, with or without cybernetics! William Gibson made the cyberspace in words; we young cyberpunks must make these words reality (One thing that makes me staying in a fucking grammar school!!)

Cyberpunk isn't only a ROG or a new kind of New-Wave-Science-Fiction. And everybody who thinks that should go back playing Fantasy!

We are forerunners of the future, like the Clash were forerunners for punk. We know the dark future, we only need the future built. I hadn't thought that I can write so much about Cyberpunk, but in my head is so much I can say about this. I thought, let's write an article for Interface, now I see what much I can write.

Let's write a book about Cyberpunk!

Let's go back to cyberpunk, cyberpunk is getting more and more popular, kids will begin

playing Cyberpunk but not right! They buy cyberpunk and begin to play, but perhaps after two firefights they will see how easy their characters die and they lose interest in Cyberpunk! the most kids play only about fights, I and hopefully most of you play 'cause of the atmosphere. Playing a Cyberpunk life is much more interesting than playing only firefight after firefight! Playing Cyberpunk means playing atmosphere. Don't forget the atmosphere!!!!

My first adventures were so stupid, following rules is stupid, you need free room, make playing interesting, not stupid!

95% of German gamers only play to murder other people, they follow the rules and if somebody breaks the rules he's stupid! FUCK THEM ALL!!!!

Hey you, don't read so fast! Slow, if you read so fast, you couldn't understand what I really mean!!!!!! You needn't take all of them into the magazine, or don't you take anything in??

—————TEA TIME!—————

That's all for today, it's late, tomorrow is school, I'll write again tomorrow.

Chris: Don't take the brown derms, the brown derms are bad. The green derms are okay.

Thaddeus: Now seriously folks, I appreciate the number of new subscriptions that we have received and enjoy the survey forms that you send back, but we still want to see letters. We're willing to let you off the hook because of the holiday seasons and we understand that you were probably so gorged that you couldn't reach your keyboard or pen and paper. But only this once. I have to assume since we have gotten so few letters that all of you out there in Magazineland are completely satisfied with the product you see before you. If this is the case, cool. Write a short letter telling us so. Otherwise we have to write them ourselves and we feel so cheap and tawdry. Since we have received so few letters we will use this space instead to list the writing guidelines that you might normally have to mail in for. ▼

INTERFACE Magazine Submission Guidelines

General Info: Articles may be no more than 4000 words in length unless previously approved by the managing editor. All articles are subject to editing. Unsolicited manuscripts and art become the property of PPI and cannot be returned unless accompanied by a large SASE. PPI is not responsible for articles lost in the mail. Never send your only copy of an article, diagram, or illustration. All work must include your phone number to be considered.

Status: You will be normally notified within 90 days of your article's acceptance, rejection or need for a rewrite. If you have not heard from us within 90 days, you may inquire in writing. Accepted articles are placed in a stockpile to be used as needed. Authors are not allowed to make changes to an article once the article has been accepted, except under the most extreme circumstances. Interface may, without penalty, release its claim to previously accepted articles.

Payment: Payment is subject to negotiation. Interface pays 1¢ per word upon publication (not upon acceptance). Higher pay scales are possible, with prior written and published material on file. You will be paid for the number of words published, not the words submitted. If a work is a collaboration, we need to know who gets what portion of the payments. Payments are for all rights, unless other arrangements have been negotiated in advance. You will not be notified of which issue your article will appear in, but will receive your payment and a complimentary copy about 60 days after the issue is released. Do not call to check on the status of your payment until at least 90 days after the publication of your article. Payment will not be made unless we have your social security number (foreign contributions are not subject to this restriction).

Format: All manuscripts must be typed, double-space, on standard-sized white or off-white

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paper. Staple each article separately. The first page must contain the author's name, address and social security number. A phone number is optional, but extremely desirable. The article must have a title, a game it refers to, the publisher of that game and a word count. Each page must be numbered and have the author's name.

Articles use three levels of headings. The first level is the article title. The next level of divisions are section headers which are uppercase. Any further division within a section need subsection headings, which are upper and lower case.

Reference: Always include clear precise sketches of maps, diagrams or pieces of equipment for artist reference. If you send photocopies for artist reference, always include the original source or publication. If your article includes tables, send a print-out of each table, the way it should appear. Also please send a bibliography of your sources, especially with historical or geographical submissions.

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Modem: Modem/Computer Bulletin board submissions are accepted on a case by case basis. Submissions **outlines** may be E-mailed to America Online address, 'Elric 1701'. Any e-mail must include a phone number for response.

FAX: Fax submissions are not accepted at this time. Disk/hard copy submissions are preferred.

SUBJECT MATTER

We primarily accept articles on Cyberpunk 2020 with occasional conversions to other systems. We license from R. Talsorian Games so your final work will still need to be seen by them. We are looking to advance to supporting other cyberpunk game systems if the demand is great enough.

Adventure scenarios are preferred. Sourcebook-type material should be combined with adventure ideas and hooks whenever possible.

Game Variants should be playtested by you in advance and be applicable to a broad range of gaming situations.

Genre related articles should give the referee hints on how to increase the interest in the game, make his life easier, or spark interest in the game. Material in articles should be consistent with previous published information.

Reviews: Product reviews are not limited to the gaming systems normally covered in Interface. Evaluations of science fiction films, novels and other products are also accepted. All reviews must include the approximate date of release, plus the publisher, price, credits, and components, if applicable. Reviews should be 500-1,000 words in length.

Fiction: Interface is seeking fiction at this time. Please avoid the storyline where the primary character is a multiclass superman or woman who overcomes all adversity alone.

Art: Artists may send copies of their art portfolio to the Interface Art Director. Never send an original or your only copy. Our interior art is generally black and white, with occasional halftone work. Our cover work is done in four color. Color work will be viewed with priority. Quality halftone work is desired.

If you have any questions, send them along with a SASE to: Thaddeus Howze, Publisher, 919C Santa Clara Ave, Alameda, CA 94501-3429 USA.▼

For those of you who are interested in sending mail electronically, you may also use the same E-mail address for America Online, 'Elric 1701'. My Compuserve address is 74150, 1763, and my Internet address, Elric 1701@aol.com.

I prefer my mail on AOL, however. Mail sent this way has just as good a chance of being published. If you are already a member of America Online, you may access our folder there in the Gaming Company Support area. You may post messages there and read of our other ideas and projects in the works. If you have a computer, log on. It is a lot of fun and after all, it's Cyberpunk. Knowledge is Power. Peace.

,Welcome to the Megan Faye Miyuki Okamura issue of Interface, named for the daughter born on September 25, 1992, to our in-house artist and all around great guy: Michio Okamura. We know that Megan will cherish this for the rest of her life, it's significance will appear on her resumes, her introductions to members of state, and her autobiography. Well I can dream can't I? Anyway, on to business. This issue, as mentioned often before, introduces you to the even darker future of CyberCthulhu, or CthulhuPunk, whatever. Oh, and if you hadn't noticed, we're late, again, and as Thad has mentioned before, I don't want to hear it. And all sullen grumbles aside, I'm glad this issue has made it to the presses and to you.

Recently I have noticed something that has been bothering me, a gnawing ache in the back of my skull that I haven't been able to pin down until just a few weeks ago. Excuse me whilst I ascend the soap box. When the first edition of Cyberpunk came out I remember reading on the second page, "Cyberpunk characters are the heroes of a bad situation, working to make it better (or at least survivable) whenever they can. Whether it takes committing crimes, defying authority or even outright revolution, the quintessential Cyberpunk character is a rebel with a cause. As a Cyberpunk role-player, it's up to you to find that cause and go to the wall with it."

This seems to spell it out to me that the players, note they mention "role-players", are the good-guys, often forced to do bad things, but fighting to make the world a better place; the shining lights in a dark world. Somewhere this has been lost. At a scenario I ran at the last con, a group of PC's weren't hired, they had heard and seen the evidence that a nebulous drug manufacturer was producing a drug that somehow brought down the wrath of an insane nihilist gang on anyone who used it. Naturally, this was seen as a bad thing. From the beginning of the run, the PCs were griping, albeit quietly, about the lack of pay, so when they finally found the drug dealer, he offered to pay them to leave him alone. They accepted the offer, even when they knew that the guy was planning to deal his largest amount to a Night City suburb, where many innocents would be killed. I was incensed. A majority of the characters were cops so I got the pleasure of chewing them out, vicariously playing out my anger through their commanding officer. The thing was, they didn't care. Their characters



were alive, and a few thousand euro richer.

I know I shouldn't deny people their fun, but this isn't an isolated case. Everywhere I've gone outside my own Cyberpunk campaign, and especially at conventions, all I see are scenarios made up of one fire-fight strung after another. Every player is looking for only one thing: money. Money in and of itself is not bad, but all it goes toward is guns and cybernetics, cybernetics designed to make their characters better killing machines. When their EMP reaches zero, make a new character. It's gotten so bad that I've vowed to never again run Cyberpunk scenarios at cons anymore. I'm tired of seeing extraction after extraction in the published scenarios, where are the adventures where money isn't the object.

Where is the morality in Cyberpunk? C'mon, I stopped playing chaotic evil anti-paladins when I was twelve. Somehow, I think that the original intent of Cyberpunk, where the PCs were dark heroes fighting for change has become transformed into a world of self-interest and greed, aspects I'd expect from the corporations, not the characters. And the published scenarios only seem to encourage this sub-level of thinking. At this point, why would I really want to play a Rockerboy? I'd feel pretty out of place in The Arasaka Brainworm or The Chrome Berets, if you ask me.

Well, my rant is done, for now. You may fire when ready, Gridley.

AN OFFICIAL LEGAL NOTICE

A piece of art that appeared in the Issue 1, Volume 2 of Interface on pages 7 and 43 was not sited for its earlier, and original appearance in an issue of Autoduel Quarterly, a Steve Jackson Games publication. This artwork was the property of Steve Jackson Games and no copyright violation was intended. We wish to apologize for the oversight and appreciate Steve and his crew for being understanding.

Book of the Wyrms

a supplement review by Chris Hockabout

White Wolf

****1/2 (excellent plus)

You might be asking me why I am reviewing a product produced for a game wholly not Cyberpunk, White Wolf's storytelling game Werewolf. As a supplement for Werewolf: the Apocalypse it is a must, providing information any storyteller would find both essential and interesting.

Where this product has relevance with Cyberpunk, and most importantly Dark Time/CthulhuPunk, is the in depth examination of the primary enemy in the "gothic-punk" world of Werewolf: the megalomaniacal mega-corporation: Pentex.

Pentex, and I'll be honest, would give corporations like Arasaka and EBM a very hard run for their money. Pentex is portrayed as the worst type of environment squandering, power hungry, greedy, and all-around-evil corporation. Pentex is a holding company, never producing any products of its own, but owning several dozen companies that produce everything from pharmeseuticals, to video games and paper products. What makes Pentex more than your average evil mega-corp are its backers: the supernatural force known as the Wyrms. The Wyrms is a being or collection of beings determined to convert the world to chaos where it may be free to destroy and consume at will. Mankind, naturally, holds a rather low position in the Wyrms's scheme of things. Pentex's goals reflect this as the board of directors all willingly serve the Wyrms.

I won't get into the specifics of Pentex's plans but they involve destroying the environment, making the world a seething pit of pollution and decay, and eventually world domination, remaking the world in the Wyrms's image. Where am I getting at, you ask? The Wyrms, arguably, is based on the Cthulhu Mythos. While not as alien as the

Cthulhu Mythos, the Wyrms does bear some resemblances in appearance and malevolence. Frankly, Earth and Humanity aren't important enough to the Cthulhu Mythos to warrant the expenditure of time and energy that they Wyrms devote to corrupting and polluting us.

What I am getting at is that if you were to replace the Wyrms with the Cthulhu Mythos, you would have a major villain for any CthulhuPunk campaign. Pentex is thoroughly laid out, with descriptions, pictures, and motivations of the board members (a sicker lot you'll never meet), descriptions of the companies they own, and what they produce, details of their specific operations and plans, what and how they are corrupting and destroying us and our environment (there is a section detailing a handful of toys made by Pentex that will make you grin and cringe at the same time), and on and on. R. Talsorian should take note on how Pentex was written up, it might make their Corp Books read less like a textbook. Just switching Pentex's devotion to the Wyrms to that of the Cthulhu Mythos will be enough, their motivations and plans can remain untouched and complete.

Pentex is detailed well enough that there are many possibilities for intrepid players to thwart, temporarily, their plans. And while Pentex many seem invulnerable there is a section, albeit small, about Pentex's weaknesses.

Most Cyberpunk G.M.'s will probably look this product over (unless they play Werewolf) but a few will look beyond the cover and see the tasty meat inside, and with claws spread wide dig in. I guarantee you that your players will never forgive you.

Technical Presentation:	***
Research & Background:	****
Playability:	****
Overall Rating:	****

Chromebook 2

a supplement review by Peter Christian

By R. Talsorian Games Inc., numerous contributing writers

In 1991 R.Tal & Co. came out with a glittering *Cyberpunk* supplement; *Chromebook*. It only seems appropriate in sequel-happy 1992 that they release *Chromebook 2* - with *Chromebook 3* on the way. This series is the gadget guide for *Cyberpunk*.

The technical layout is possibly *Chromebook 2*'s worst feature. Excessive use of bold typefaces makes many sections hard to read. The 'index' is just that - an index, instead of *Chromebook*'s consolidated price list. The artwork ranges from fine to crude, with a sad emphasis on crude. As usual for *Cyberpunk* supplements, it is loaded with 'chombatta'-slang. Most annoying of all are the continual references to other *Cyberpunk* products: *Soldier of Fortune*, *Chromebook*, etc.. Call me a tightwad, but if I buy a game supplement, I don't want to feel like I have to buy six more supplements to understand what I'm getting.

Chromebook 2 is divided into 7 sections, each one addressing a certain type of goods or services in the world of 2020. Cyberwear, Gadgets, Weapons, Services, Full-Body Conversion Cyberwear, Vehicles and Exotics comprise the topics of the book. *Chromebook 2* is (for the most part) less 'gagety' than its predecessor, instead of filling the book with things like pedal-powered bikes, monokatanas and medieval-style armor, *Chromebook 2* concentrates on filling gaps in the equipment list of *Cyberpunk* itself. The cybernetics section itself is very small, and ranges from the useful (variants on skinweave) to the ridiculous (a "kills scored" light tattoo - "honest officer, I'm not really guilty of this many murders, it was self-defense every time, you've got to believe me officer..."). The sections for general equipment are good, providing some much-needed surveillance equipment and electronics. Then it plummets through the basement of quality by offering a 6 MB RAM/30 MB hard drive notebook computer as state of the art. I suspect that the author meant to say MU (memory unit,

used in all other *Cyberpunk* computers) instead of Meg. This afternoon I was trying out a 24 MB RAM/120 MB hard drive notebook computer - what will they have in 30 years? Prices remain consistent with *Cyberpunk* - i.e. cyberwear is very cheap, personal gear only slightly less so and vehicles are realistically priced.

The weapons, services and vehicles sections of *Chromebook 2* present an interesting dilemma. The weapons section contains many of those much-needed high-powered firearms (to punch through player-character armor), and then repeatedly stresses that these weapons are illegal, or under tight corporate control. In other words, these are weapons for the GM to use on players, not for players to use (like *that's gonna stop anybody...*). Likewise, while I found the inclusion of military fighter aircraft interesting, I haven't found a use for it in any *Cyberpunk* game I know of. Some of the other vehicles (like the '17 Chevy) can be used in almost every game. A similar problem surfaces in the Services section. All 6 described organizations are ones that I welcomed to my game. But they are organizations that should have player-characters as members (a courier service, bodyguard service, and so on). No guidelines are provided for players to join or work with these organizations. They can be used as enemies - but isn't that what the megacorps are for? or you can hire them ("*I hire C-Team to play this adventure for us. Let me know it came out.*") On the positive side, for once the 'typical members' of 5 of these 6 groups are within the realm of player-character possibility, instead of being tougher than any player character can be.

Finally we come to the two most colorful sections of *Chromebook 2*: Full-Body Conversions and Exotics. Full-body conversion puts the character's brain into a robot body. I've had characters like this in superhero games. While the full-body conversion is a logical extension of existing cyberwear, it seems a bit too far-future to me. Between the full-body conversion, lasers and railguns, *Cyberpunk* has a higher tech level than *Traveller*! Like many of the other devices in *Chromebook 2*, the full-body conversion seems to me to be more for something to use against the players than to be used by the players.

The Exotics section is fun, and contains the first rules for humanity loss for having fur and a tail. It is capped by rules for psychotherapy, which can reduce the HC of your cyberwear by up to 50%. Finally we can have the benefits that Eurosolos have been enjoying for years! All it takes is time and money. Therapy is expensive. In practical game terms, what this means is that corporate and government agents (i.e. NPC's) may have twice as much cyberwear as street people (PC's and boosters). The therapy rules are not complete leaving a lot of room for GM interpretation. Several of the boys from the back room have been bemoaning full-body conversions and therapy as encouraging small-minded people to run around with more guns and armor than an average marine brigade and brag about blowing up everything in sight. I don't worry about this. I figure people who want to play this way will, regardless of what you do with the rules.

In summary, *Chromebook 2* contains more substance and less style than *Chromebook*. While it descends into worthless gadgetry (and worse writing) at regular intervals, much of the material is useful. If you run a weapons and combat oriented game, or a high-society and corporate oriented game *Chromebook 2* contains many useful devices. It is least useful for street-level, well, Cyberpunk, games.

Technical Presentation:	**
Research & Background:	***
Playability:	***
Overall Rating:	***

Necrology

A supplement review by Barton Bolmen

By Ianus Games Inc., written by Justin Schmid

If you take the basic process from the movie *Flatliners* (1988 Columbia Pictures), perfect it and place it under corporate control in the year 2020, then you'll begin to get a feel for the central focus of *Necrology*, a new Cyberpunk 2020 scenario from Ianus Games, a Canadian game design group.

The new rage taking Night City by storm is called "flatlining". Through use of a special "Flatline Tank", people can experience near-death and be brought back with no

serious side effects 99.99% of the time (or 95% or 99.9% - it depends on what page you read). But is there more to this *safe death* than everyone thinks? And if there is, is it too late to do something about it? In this scenario, characters must move quickly and decisively to accomplish their goals lest they fall to their opposition whose power increases with each passing day.

This scenario is well written and provides a prolific yet well balanced combination of intrigue, puzzle solving and combat - three things every good scenario should have at least a little of. It has average to good art, an excellent layout and is in the spirit of cyberpunk. Its only drawbacks are a few consistency errors (which are easy to work around) and numerous references to a separate supplement.

Many gamemasters bristle when the scenario they've spent their hard earned cash for turns out to require, and makes numerous references to, a dozen other supplements the gamemaster must then buy before he can effectively run the adventure. The *Night City Sourcebook* (an excellent supplement) is the only supplement openly referenced in *Necrology* - and although it can make life easier for the GM, owning it isn't absolutely necessary.

The asking price (U.S.) of \$8.95 for this 32 page supplement might seem a bit steep until you compare it to other similar products already on the market and take into account that *Necrology* only provides you with what is absolutely necessary in order for you to execute the plot this scenario has presented. No fat, filler or meat byproducts. It's up to the gamemaster to flesh it out into a full-blown adventure. Many gamemasters prefer this style of scenario design as it allows them the opportunity to tailor the adventure to their (or his/her players) particular tastes.

Necrology, which is designed to run as a "stand alone" adventure, is part one of a planned three part *Necrology* series. If parts two and three turn out to be as well done as part one, this trilogy should make a useful addition to any gamemaster's library. Part 2 should already be available.

Technical Presentation:	****
Research & Background:	***
Playability:	****
Overall Rating:	****

Systems Analysis is your chance to say how you feel about this magazine. Many of you have already availed yourselves of this service. Many others have not. Please do. We want your opinion. This means if you don't like what you see, and do want to see change. This is the first step. (510) 865-6733; this is, unfortunately, not toll free. Please send your survey to Prometheus Press Inc, 919C Santa Clara Ave, Alameda, CA. 94501-3429.

1. How old are you?(tick one box)

Under 11 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-18 ☐ 19-22 ☐ 23-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 30+ ☐

2. How many years have you been gaming?_____

Advanced Dungeons and Dragons.....☐

Call of Cthulhu.....☐

Mega Traveller.....☐

Middle Earth Role Playing.....☐

Paranoia.....☐

Pendragon.....☐

Runequest.....☐

Mekton.....☐

Shadowrun.....☐

Warhammer 40K/Role Playing.....☐

GURPS.....☐

Champions.....☐

Stormbringer.....☐

Fantasy Hero.....☐

TORG.....☐

Dream Park.....☐

Vampire, Werewolf, Ars Magica.....☐

Over the Edge.....☐

3. What other games do you enjoy playing?

4: Where did you hear of our magazine? _____

5: What article/s did you find most amusing, interesting, or useful? _____

6: What article/s did you find least useful, interesting, or amusing? _____

7: What department/s do you wish to see continued?

☐ Feature ☐ Movie/Book reviews ☐ Altered States ☐ Nu Tech/Science ☐ Chipping In

☐ Fiction ☐ Other _____

8: What department/s do you wish to see discontinued?

☐ Feature ☐ Movie/Book reviews ☐ Altered States ☐ Nu Tech/Science ☐ Chipping In

☐ Fiction ☐ Other _____

9: What comments do you have about our format? Should we change our size? _____

10: What comments do you have about our interior (art, layout, etc.)? _____

11: In what ways, overall, do you think our magazine could improve? _____

12: What topics that we haven't covered do you think we should? _____

13: How many people do you have in your gaming group? _____

14: How many friends own copies of INTERFACE? _____

14:Final comments or questions (on anything not covered above)? _____



Level One Diagnostics

This is a per-issue survey that we will be making to improve the quality of Interface Magazine. Rate each article from 0 to 5. 0 indicates that you have not read the article. 1 indicates a most heinous article and 5 a most triumphant and worthy article. Numbers in between are shades in between. (2: bogus, 3: savory, 4: excellent). There will be a drawing for our survey responders. The prize will be a year's free subscription of Interface. Good Luck.

Name: _____ Phone (optional) _____

Address _____

City, _____ State/Country, _____ Zip/Post code _____

Results from Issue 5 Survey

New Cyberware

1. Omnieye Camera3.7
2. Portable Editing Lab.....3.9
3. Remote Surv. Cyberhand.....3.7
4. Live Feed Cyberoptic3.8
5. Medusa 2000.....3.9

Feature Article

6. Just the Fax, Ma'am.....4.2

Altered States

7. Electric Nightmare.....4.2

Profiles: UpClose Magazine

8. Clarise DeWinter3.7
9. Flash Leudowski.....3.8
10. Zaphial Keyes.....3.7

Genre

10. Facing the Consequences.....4.5
11. Talk Hard!3.9

Rules Variation

12. A Job with an Attitude3.7

Cyber-Reviews — Downloads

13. "Alien3"3.6
14. "Mann and Machine"3.3
15. "Lawnmower Man"3.3
16. "Night's Edge"3.9
17. Chipping In4.0
18. System Analysis/Level One.....3.9
19. Overall art.....4.2
20. Overall format.....4.2
21. This issue as a whole4.1
22. Dream Park Scenarios2.8

ISSUE TOTAL PERCENTAGE3.9

This Issue...

0 1 2 3 4 5 NuTech & NuCyberware

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 1. Bug Eyes
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 2. Mandibles
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 3. Thermaskin
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 4. Tentacle Arm
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 5. Elderview Implant

Feature Article

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 6. Cults: Hopes & Horrors

Conversion Rules

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 7. From Cyberpunk to CoC

Cult Profiles

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 8. City Church of Redeemer
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 9. Institute for Paranormal

Scenarios

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 10. Transference
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 11. A Policy of Pain

Data Sampling

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 12. Chromebook 2
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 13. Necrology
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 14. The Wyrms...

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 15. Uplinks & Downloads

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 16. Chipping In
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 17. System Analysis/Level One
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 18. Overall art
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 19. Overall format
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 20. This issue as a whole

This issue's winner is Sean Holland and he will be receiving a free subscription to *Interface*, starting with this issue. If you are already a subscriber we will send you one of our new T-Shirts with the artwork of Michio Okamura. A \$12.50 value, absolutely free. *Ginsu knives* not included. Next issue's winner will also win an *Interface* T-shirt. Keep on sending 'em in. Thanks.

A FINAL NOTE: Back issues of *Interface* Issues 1 and 2 are not available to anyone. They are out of print. Issues 3 and 4 may still be bought from R. Talsorian Games. A rewrite/compendium or a Best of Issues 1-3 is being considered... What do you think? ☐ Good idea! ☐ Not! and why.

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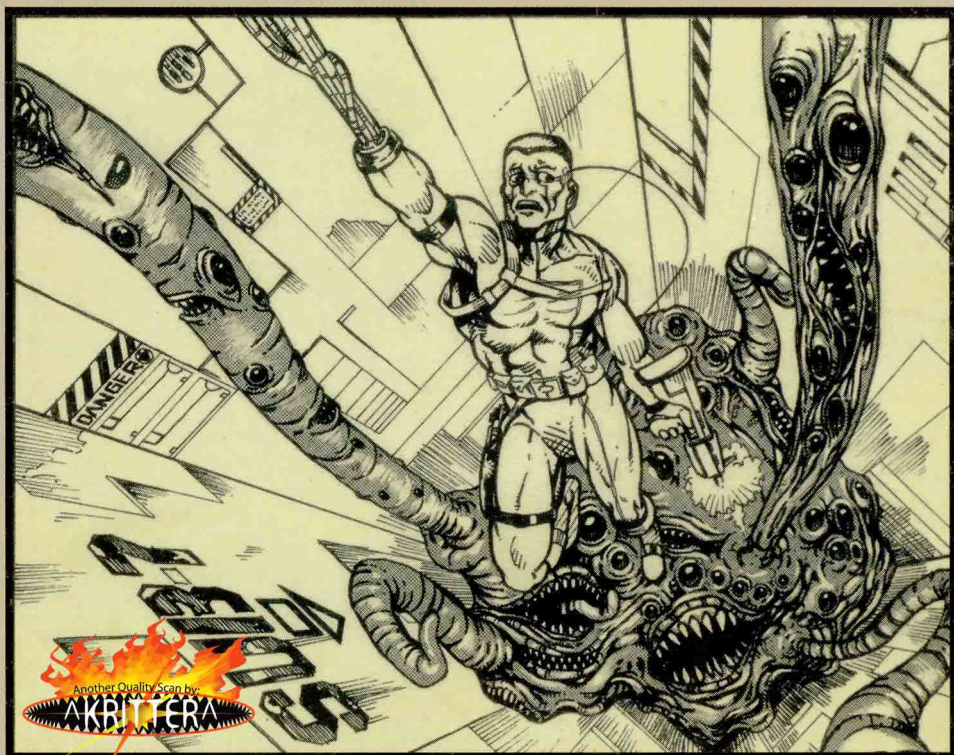
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In this Issue:

The 'Darktime: A Crossover of Cyberpunk™ and Call of Cthulhu™
EctoTech: Technology of a horrific nature.

Cults: What are they, who runs 'em, and what to expect of them.

Transference: A horror mini-scenario written in concert with The Unspeakable Oath (Pagan Publishing).

Policy of Pain: A desert scenario of deceit, death and apotheosis.

Cult Profiles: 3 different cult styles and what make them tick.

Conversion 'Rules for Cyberpunk™ 2020 to Call of Cthulhu™

Reviews: Chromebook 2, Necrology, Surveys and Letters

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