GURPS
Fourth Edition

HORROR
The Madness Dossier™

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

"If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out – bang! – just like a candle!"

*"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if **I'm** only a sort of thing in his dream, what are **you**, I should like to know?"*

"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

He shouted this so loud that Alice couldn't help saying, "Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise."

*"Well, it's no use **your** talking about waking him," said Tweedledum, "when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real."*

*– Lewis Carroll, **Through the Looking-Glass***

For 15 centuries, the Red King has slept, stunned by a cataclysm so massive that it threw all history – past and future – into a new pattern. The Red King's servants, those who survived the reality quake, slowly shook themselves out of the rubble of their superseded history and began trying to wake him up. For over a century, only the Sandmen – the archaeologists, neurolinguists, and commandos of Project SANDMAN – have stopped them. Every day the Red King stays asleep is a day that history remains familiar, that humans remain free, that the madness dossier remains closed. And all it costs is the life, the morals, and the sanity of everyone who works for Project SANDMAN.

The "Red King" (sometimes "Red Kings," given their plural nature) is Sandman slang for the entities that once ruled the world, known to Sumerologists as the Anunnakku (see box). Nobody knows for sure if the Anunnakku were aliens, supermen somehow mutated (or evolved) from *Homo sapiens,* or just the ruling caste of an unguessably ancient civilization that somehow mastered the art of control. Before the reality quake, the Red King was in control. Humanity was linguistically programmed to obey his orders and the orders of his servants. It still is. The Red King's servants use the ancient post-hypnotic blocks and memetic programs in the human subconscious to control us, to hide in plain sight, and to bring about their victory. Project SANDMAN has hacked the human source code, fighting fire with fire . . . using the minds of the innocent as the burning ground.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This book requires the **GURPS Basic Set** to use, and refers to many rules and concepts from **GURPS Horror,** *Fourth Edition.*

Although **GURPS Social Engineering** is not strictly necessary for this supplement rules-wise, it is almost unfathomably useful for any campaign focused on the manipulation and changing of minds, covertly or otherwise. Given the role played by psionics in the setting, **GURPS Psionic Powers, Psis, Psi-Tech,** and **Psionic Campaigns** (in roughly that order) may come in handy. Likewise, **GURPS Martial Arts** provides more options for "total human potential" than this

book includes, and *you* might run a technothriller without **GURPS High-Tech** and **GURPS Action,** but *I* sure wouldn't.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

I wrote "The Madness Dossier" as an included campaign frame in **Horror,** *Third Edition,* from whence David Pulver derived the discussion of reality quakes in the Fourth Edition **Basic Set,** and from whence I did the same in **GURPS Infinite Worlds.** This is the first appearance of the original setting for Fourth Edition; it is considerably expanded.

Previous versions of some of the creepier mind-control rules appear in **GURPS Warehouse 23.** Some weapons and gear (especially the nicer sort of psychotronics) are but slightly altered from **GURPS Ultra-Tech.** The memetics rules are adapted (and simplified) from those in **Transhuman Space: Toxic Memes,** as updated for *Fourth Edition* in **Transhuman Space: Changing Times.** It's a good idea to consult those two works if you plan a more memetics-intensive game. A *good* idea. *Good idea.* Good. *Idea.*

> ## Weird Sumerian Words
>
> The Sumerian word *Anunnakku* probably means "princes," and can be transliterated in a bewildering variety of ways, or even shortened to Anunna. Scholars differ on the word's relationship to the name of An or Anu, the Sumerian sky god. In the earliest texts (c. 2100 B.C.), it seems to be a general term for the great gods, but later works demote the Anunnakku to demigods or even servitor beings. By the eighth century B.C., they are depicted as aligned with the underworld, to be defeated by Marduk. These tablets may be recent retrocreations within History A, of course.
>
> This book uses "Anunnakku" as a noun (both plural and singular) to refer to the entities that programmed humanity, created the irruptors, and ruled History B. It uses the ungrammatical, but more common, "Anunnaki" as an adjectival form.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth Hite did not allow his fundamental allegiance to History A to prevent him from changing it at whim in **GURPS Alternate Earths, Alternate Earths 2, WWII: Weird War II,** and **Infinite Worlds,** or scaring it half to death in two incarnations of **GURPS Horror.** He feels quite smug about stealing "reality quakes" from Mary Gentle and introducing them into the gaming memestream in his "Suppressed Transmission" column, which ran for 10 years in a previous history's version of *Pyramid* magazine. His more recent works in this history include the RPG setting **The Day After Ragnarok,** and the horror RPGs **Trail of Cthulhu** and **Night's Black Agents** for Pelgrane Press.

He lives in Chicago with his wife Sheila and his cat Virgil. Virgil did everything in his power to prevent the truths within this book from coming to light, so don't blame him if the scorpion-men come after you.

CHAPTER ONE
THE SECRET HISTORY OF HISTORY

The applause still thundered out there; it would go on for a few minutes yet, if Harry Houdini were any judge. He was tempted to go back out for one more bow, and turned away with effort. Although Houdini loved performing, he knew he would have to cut this tour short. He had reports to write for Wilkie, and he suspected his own agents in Montreal had reports of their own for him to sift, on cultists and charlatans alike. He owed his friend Howard in Providence a letter or even a visit; Eddy told him Howard's dreams had taken a turn for the bizarre, full of sleeping gods who could remake the world if they awoke. Houdini didn't believe in dreams, but he believed in his instincts about Howard.

Thus distracted, Houdini pushed through the door into his dressing room, flopping onto a couch to think. There were some fans already there; one admirer sketched on a pad. He held the sketch up for the others to judge and they . . . froze? Houdini struggled to sit as another man, tall and thick of neck, strode up.

"You look where you should not. To look is dangerous. It can destroy you."

Houdini could not work his mouth correctly. "De-story?" he heard his throat husk.

"You say you are invulnerable. No sub-creature should say such things. Those words are above your province."

Houdini could barely discern meanings; he was suddenly dizzy and hot, as though he was performing his Great Oven Escape. Breathe, he thought to himself. Breath control. Focus. You can escape –

His thoughts stopped when the hooved fist slammed into his midsection, and his vision literally broke into pieces like a mirror. Bad luck, he thought. Bad luck on Halloween.

As the darkness claimed him forever, Houdini fell back on the couch. His vision guttered out, flaring up at the last like firelight on the horns of a bull.

Once upon a time, the Anunnakku enslaved mankind. They reshaped human consciousness to leave initiative, creativity, and inspiration under their control, in a separate part of the mind. By redesigning our language, and perhaps even the linguistic-perceptual centers of the human brain, they placed everything we could say or see under their control. They reinforced their controls with memes: belief structures (analogous to genes) that spread and reproduce throughout human societies. Their agents, the inhuman (or superhuman) *šedu*, became the overseers of mankind, a mankind programmed by word and faith to believe the šedu, and to believe the Anunnakku codes in our "subconscious."

Somehow, a small group of humans rebelled. Perhaps a šedu went rogue and used "his" humans to rebel against the Red Kings, accidentally aborting their programming. Perhaps one of the šedu took pity on us and freed us. Or perhaps even the Anunnakku weren't perfect, and their control of us broke down as the memes mutated unpredictably and as humanity scattered across the globe and built thousands of different languages and cultures. At any rate, the rebels succeeded, somehow, in triggering a massive reality quake (see p. B534) that overturned history itself, leaving a new past in its wake.

> Plainly, we have to face the possibility now that reality did fracture in or about the beginning of the year 1477. Equally plainly, it is possible that fragments of that prior history have existed in ours, becoming gradually less and less "real" as the universe moves on from the moment of fracture.
>
> – Mary Gentle, **Ash**

THE ONTOCLYSM AND AFTER

In the new history, our history (called "History A" by Project SANDMAN), this Ontoclysm happened in 535 A.D. Everything before that date never really happened; it is a screen memory, a delusion, a scrim created by the global human subconscious. Our history books describe guesswork built from those false memories and from ruins twisted and splintered by the reality quake. The mighty Empire of the Anunnakku vanished into a thousand fragments. Where that Empire rested longest – Mesopotamia, Palestine, possibly Greece or India – its imprint remains visible, if distorted.

The century after 535 was almost a global Dark Age: The Byzantine Empire lost a third of its population in the Plague of Justinian, Rome lay in ruins, China and India descended into chaos and civil war, and even Teotihuacán and the Maya states collapsed. Civilizations vanished entirely: the Tocharians in Asia, the Garamantians in Africa, the Himyarites in Arabia. Barbarian tribes such as the Avars and Uighurs suddenly appeared as if from nowhere. Famines and storms swept over the world. These events were aftershocks from the reality quake, the result of a global population maniacally searching for direction and order after the eclipse of their subconscious "gods," the Anunnakku.

THE DUNCORNE FOUNDATION

In 1888, a small coterie of scholars in the British Museum launched an expedition to the banks of the Tigris River to settle some major discrepancies in the archaeological record. Their shovels unleashed horrible creatures, which only the fortuitous use of the expedition's dynamite supply defeated.

The expedition's sponsor, Alexander Sherbourne, 17th Lord Duncorne, used his fortune and government connections to assemble scholars, soldiers, and Freemasons from all corners of the Empire. His eponymous Foundation (under the cover of an archaeological research society) compared other reports from around the globe with the bizarre evidence brought back from the Tigris. Archaeologists dug at Babylon, and Angkor, and in places never reported to the public. Curators built up quiet armories of inexplicable weapons: the Shield of Achilles, a strange magnetic crossbow found in a Ceylonese tomb, smoothly carved stones that revealed invisible presences, and more. Librarians deciphered codices in unknown languages, and transcribed the rantings of madmen found in certain Arabian ruins. Slowly, after many more encounters with creatures irrupting into our present from a vanished history, the Duncorne Foundation pieced together the truth.

Much as an earthquake leaves fractures in the geological strata along its fault line, the reality quake left many discrepancies in the archaeological record, from the age of the Sphinx (hydrologically dated to 6,000 years before the earliest possible culture could have carved it) to the 250-year gap in the strata above the Mycenaean city of Tiryns. All of these fault lines pointed to the year 535 A.D. as the "ontocenter" of the great cataclysm that thrust our own history (History A) onto the surface of reality, and buried the history of the Anunnakku and šedu (History B) deep below. But just as an earthquake sometimes flings up material from deep in the earth onto the surface, the reality quake cast up anomalous shards of the previous reality into our past.

Reality Quakes

The past, they say, is another country. Picture that country: its rivers, its hills, its mountains, its cities. Now turn around and walk forward. While you stand in the present, a vast earthquake overturns the country behind you. Its rivers change course, its hills rise into crags, its mountains open into crevasses, its cities fall. Turn around and look back. The past is a different country now . . . **and it has always been that way.** *Your memories didn't change, the place you remembered changed and took your memories with it. Perhaps the shock of the earthquake gave you amnesia. Perhaps the earthquake just changed all the maps and geography books while also changing the things they described. The territory is the map.*

But the country of the past didn't vanish, not entirely. Some islands survived, some towns better fortified or just more fortunate. Statues and sagas that didn't burn can be found again, or are remade by artists who don't remember why they remember them. Refugees hide out in the new badlands, in the ruins, remembering what things used to look like and dreaming of a great restoration.

A reality quake, or *ontoclysm,* creates such an upheaval in the path of time that history itself is upthrust and overturned, leaving a new past in its wake. Project physicists hesitate to speculate about what else might change besides history and memory. Perhaps the actual, physical records and history books changed after the great Ontoclysm of 535, or perhaps scribes in psychic shock recopied them to suit their new memories and languages, distorting them into garbled myths and legends, or even fiction. It seems fairly clear (but not *certain*) that the Ontoclysm shifted, erased, and deformed actual physical objects – ruins appeared or vanished, leaving only anomalous traces. Can the laws of nature and physics alter? Can magic bloom or evaporate? Can new stars and planets appear in the heavens?

Much as an earthquake leaves breaks in the strata and fractures in the geology, or flings up material from deep in the earth onto the surface, a reality quake leaves breaks in civilization or fractures in the historical record. It can also uncover and fling up anomalous fragments of other realities – "reality shards" – into the new/old past. After each shift, only the reality shards remain, and the fossilized traces of the previous reality exist in the subconscious mind and myths of surviving cultures, and in the strange artifacts rejected by the inhabitants as oddities or forgeries.

Among those pragmaclasts, or "reality shards" (pp. 37-38), are various odd and inexplicable artifacts that literally exist outside of time and history. The Duncorne Foundation collected such pragmaclasts, and charted the fracture zones of the Ontoclysm, as best it could. These museums and maps, however, revealed a problem of literally global scope. Meanwhile, more and more irruptors scuttled out of the cracks in history.

It was only the fortuitous intervention of a British Army cavalry patrol that stopped a scorpion-man invasion of Rhodesia from out of the King Solomon's Mines fracture in 1899. (The Boers wiped out the few survivors of that action at the Battle of Colenso a month later.) The Foundation realized it simply did not have the resources to guard every possible reality subduction zone. What it *did* have was connections with those who had such resources. James Sherbourne, 18th Lord Duncorne, brought Lord Milner, Governor of the Cape Colony, to see King Solomon's Mines and the three irruptor prisoners from the invasion. The Foundation's files, archives, and personnel became the core of the Office of Archaeological Control (OAC), which Lord Milner established in 1901.

Reality Subduction Zones

In geology, subduction zones occur where one tectonic plate folds another beneath it, often triggering a number of smaller temblors. A reality subduction zone is such a line between histories. Pieces of History B often emerge in such areas, and retrocreated irruptors (popped out of causal limbo by the stress-release of grinding histories) tend to appear there as well. Project reality archaeologists believe that the major reality subduction zones appear where there were large Anunnakku settlements or bases in History B, such as Iraq, Israel, Greece, and the Nile, Indus, and Hwang Ho valleys. Other such zones occur in areas where irruptors have repeatedly attempted to trigger them, such as London, New York, Berlin, Paris, and other major cities. Still others have no clear cause, or may be associated with the cataclysm of 535, such as western Java, the Kenyan uplands, Great Zimbabwe, and Lubaantun in Belize.

PROJECT SANDMAN

The Duncorne Foundation now restricts itself to the study of History B, and to recruiting other scholars for such study. The British government, later in partnership with the Americans, took over the rest of the Foundation's remit: researching the Red Kings themselves, the methods of Anunnaki control, weapons with which to fight them, and strategies to defeat them. All while concealing the horrific truth from a mass population that would react in panic at best, or worshipful surrender at worst. Project SANDMAN takes its name from its mission: to keep the Anunnakku – and the rest of the world – asleep.

HISTORY

Lord Milner's Office of Archaeological Control shuttled and spread around the imperial bureaucracy, constantly changing names and patrons. In Egypt, it was an Army mapping bureau; in India, an Imperial Claims at Law office dealing with antiquities; in Cyprus, a liaison with the London Missionary Society. Milner's private secretary, John Buchan, coordinated its activities and wrote novels alluding to his secret life; Milner's other protégés protected and promoted it where they could. Naval Intelligence officer Everard Feilding, who was coincidentally the secretary for the Society for Psychical Research, tied the group into Britain's burgeoning secret services in 1910 after a disturbing séance in Dorset. Slowly, the shape of the problem emerged: not just artifacts and invaders, but control and reality dictated by the very structures of language.

The War Behind the Wars

Buchan joined the War Propaganda Bureau in 1914; Feilding took an assignment in the Middle East and set about destabilizing the Ottoman Empire under the cover of World War I. They fought a hidden war against the Kaiser's *Propaganda-Kabinett,* which included Yale psychologist Hugo Münsterberg (the greatest living authority on mass psychology and crowd influence) and the archaeologist Max von Oppenheim. By 1918, the British had secured control of Mesopotamia and Feilding's men commanded the key subduction zones in the Middle East. If the Propaganda-Kabinett ever discovered the secrets of History B, the proof vanished in the chaos of Weimar – unless there was some arcane explanation for Hitler's mesmerizing powers of oratory.

Now designated DC-R (a meaningless-looking acronym Buchan thought up during the War), the Milner group centralized its psychological arm in the Tavistock Clinic in London, where data flooded in under the cover of researching "shell shock" and "breaking points." Following Feilding's death in 1936, Tavistock head John Rawlings Rees (who had served as a medical officer in Mesopotamia, where Feilding recruited him) took over DC-R. In 1939, he joined the Army and took over its psychological corps, seeding more assets into Britain's various propaganda arms. The DC-R ran programs out of both the Political Warfare Executive (PWE) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE), especially the latter's "Hackett School" for subversive propaganda, code-named STS 39. The DC-R planted the suggestion in Rudolf Hess' mind to fly to Scotland, where Rees debriefed him on Nazi memetics experiments; he got enough intel from Hess to coordinate the destruction of Max von Oppenheim's private archaeological museum by air raid in November 1943. The "War Magician" Jasper Maskelyne may have had access to Anunnaki glyphs to camouflage the Eighth Army and the Suez Canal during the campaign against Rommel; how else DC-R used its abilities during the wider war is classified.

In 1943, another major irruptor invasion manifested in North Africa and Sicily. This time, DC-R had plenty of military assets in the region, but even so it took American reinforcements to seal and destroy the "City of Brass" in the Tunisian desert.

The DC-R reluctantly brought American OSS operatives into the secret – only to discover that the Americans had had their own memetic warfare program since the turn of the century!

Kilroy Was (Already) Here

As a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune,* amateur magician John Wilkie invented the "Indian Rope Trick" meme. Created as a hoax in an 1890 article, it produced reams of testimony from people who insisted they had seen it as far back as the 1850s. After going into the railway business, Wilkie became head of the U.S. Secret Service in 1898, taking over counterintelligence operations in the Spanish-American War. His failure to save President McKinley from an anarchist's bullet drove him to unorthodox measures: He employed stage magicians and psychics as agents, trusting in their powers of observation and misdirection. Wilkie worked closely with William Randolph Hearst during the War, and with Harry Houdini afterward; his "Special Assignments Office" (SAO) began to examine publicity, spiritualism, and physical conditioning.

In 1911, Wilkie stepped down from the Secret Service to head up "special agents of the Treasury department," taking his Special Assignments Office off the books with him. The new Wilson Administration moved propaganda warfare into the White House: the Committee of Public Information (CPI) used crowd-psychologist Edward Bernays, the "father of public relations" and nephew of Sigmund Freud, to manipulate public opinion about World War I. After the Armistice, the CPI closed down, and Wilkie recruited its top operatives for his team. He had ostensibly returned to the private sector during this period, so it was likely Bernays' high profile that attracted the attention of the Duncorne Foundation. It moved money behind the scenes to bring top linguist Edward Sapir to Yale in 1931 and introduced him to Bernays and Wilkie in a secret meeting in Chicago.

By then, Wilkie had begun turning the now almost entirely private SAO over to a fellow newsman, Frederick Oechsner. In 1929, Oechsner wangled an assignment to Berlin to dig for the old Propaganda-Kabinett files. While there, he managed the 1933 extraction of social psychologist Kurt Lewin, whose work on group dynamics would become the basis of esmology (see p. 20). In the 1930s, he worked with hypnotists Clark Hull and George Estabrooks, recruiting their most promising students as agents, and then as instructors, for the SAO. In 1941, Oechsner found himself interned in Germany for six months as an enemy alien, but arranged his repatriation after closing off ongoing SAO projects there. After Oechsner's return, OSS chief William Donovan appointed him head of the OSS' Morale Operations branch, in charge of propaganda, subversion, and memetic warfare. He folded the SAO into Morale Ops (mostly as the Foreign Division, tasked for "miscellaneous operations abroad") and ran both until 1944, when he joined Eisenhower's psychological warfare staff.

Enter SANDMAN

On May 10, 1943, an army of irruptors attacked British positions in Tunisia near the ruins of Carthage. An OSS Morale Ops team (tracking what turned out to be a šedu memetic signature) on the scene directed U.S. Army Air Force bombers in fire support, turning the tide and closing the fracture zone. Rees, Oechsner, and archaeologist Dorothy Cox (representing the Duncorne Foundation) met at a three-day summit at OSS headquarters in Cairo and set up Project SANDMAN. Initially tasked merely with establishing a joint operating architecture for Morale Ops and DC-R, the Project rapidly expanded in scope as the scale of the latest irruptor invasion became clear. By the time the RAF and USAAF had obliterated the "City of Brass" deep in the Tunisian desert, both sides agreed to continue the Project, coordinating not just operations but also research and development.

After WWII, the Project was officially suspended, although the Duncorne Foundation maintained its role of intermediary between the British and American programs. Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War, the two programs used the ensuing "brainwashing" panic to formalize Project SANDMAN on a permanent, ongoing basis. The Project began officially requisitioning the most promising researchers (or more often, their top assistants and protégés) from the British Tavistock programs, the CIA's Projects ARTICHOKE and MK-ULTRA, and Commonwealth countries like Canada (a major source of MK-ULTRA specialists) and South Africa, where Milner's old OAC group located experimental psychologist Fritz Perls (see p. 42) and sent him to America.

In 1959, the Project moved forward on Wilkie's early notions of physically conditioning agents when it recruited a number of Tibetan martial artists and avadhutas under cover of the CIA's Project ST-CIRCUS. After Nixon canceled the CIA program of aiding Tibetan guerrillas, the Project provided many key ST-CIRCUS assets with new identities in the U.S., U.K., Nepal, and India. The Project infiltrated some of these assets into Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, mostly to study the enigmatic Dong Son and Mimotien ruins in Vietnam, and to monitor irruptor activity around Angkor Wat.

By then, the irruptors had seemingly abandoned direct invasion as a tactic. In 1961, the Project manipulated the French government into testing a nuclear warhead on a reality subduction zone in the Hoggar Mountains of Algeria. The backblast destabilized human culture around the globe for two decades, but Project intel estimated that it decapitated the šedu command structure in our history, collapsed the subduction zone, and may have actually killed one of the Red Kings. It almost certainly convinced the šedu that direct invasion was logistically impossible for the time being.

The Age of Aquarius

After this shock, the šedu turned operations in our history over to their devious aquatic lieutenants, the kululû, for the next four decades. The fish-men built and nurtured compact-but-effective networks and conspiracies hidden amidst the sudden explosion of mysticism, "ancient astronaut" cults, UFO mania, and general weirdness of the era. During this period, kulullû-engineered leaks almost exposed the Project; only the blatantly illegal destruction of the MK-ULTRA files in 1973 by CIA Director Richard Helms (one of Oechsner's star reporters in the old Berlin days) kept the Sandmen undercover. Kulullû cults infiltrated Project nursery gardens like Esalen and other New Age psychological centers; kulullû manipulators slowly drove highly placed Project-controlled assets in Middle Eastern governments into foaming megalomania.

The kulullû targeted the Project itself, luring a number of key British Sandmen into joining the Anunnakku; the war against these *tighearnamach* (see pp. 29-30) traitors nearly tore the whole Project apart in witch-hunts. Between 1973 and 1983, Sandmen had to submit to brainwashing to receive clearances; this policy likewise nearly destroyed the Project's effectiveness.

The kulullû began actively assisting the Soviet psychic weapons and espionage program, centralizing it in the KGB. When the kulullû-maddened Yuri Andropov nearly ordered a nuclear first strike during NATO's ABLE ARCHER exercise in 1983, the Project was forced to respond actively. Sandman "wetware wetworkers" piggybacked onto SDI launches and used orbital psychotronic weapons to kill Andropov and Chernenko (and a number of crucial-but-obscure personnel, including Kim Philby) while the "buzz boys" launched a full memetic barrage against the USSR. Though the Sandmen dramatically lost control of the situation in 1991 during the Kremlin coup, the kulullû had suffered a major setback.

The Project took advantage of this brief breathing space to jettison its South African branch, which had nearly gone rogue in pursuit of its domestic agenda. The OAC infiltrated and took over the South African Department of Information in 1961, using Sandman technology and techniques to tighten white control of the country. The "Muldergate" scandal of the 1970s (probably also leaked by the kulullû) revealed an internal propaganda apparatus on a massive scale unknown in the West since Woodrow Wilson's CPI days, and the *Witsanders* ("White Sandmen") in South Africa doubled down with Project COAST in 1983. They intended to perfect memetic-chemical crowd control and create a brainwashed racial caste society on the Anunnakku model. Having already crossed the Rubicon of direct action against the USSR, the American and British SANDMAN directors agreed to decapitate the South African government as well before things got even worse. Hunting down the remaining *Witsander* bitter-enders took most of the rest of the decade.

> *You think that a wall as solid as the earth separates civilization from barbarism. I tell you the division is a thread, a sheet of glass. A touch here, a push there, and you bring back the reign of Saturn.*
>
> – John Buchan, **The Power-House**

Into the New Aeon

The kulullû tried one more global destabilization campaign, attempting to crash the Internet (by now a vital linchpin of Project operations and control) in a memetic "Y2K" blitz. The global celebration of January 1, 2000 was a complete triumph for Project SANDMAN, marred only by three confirmed sightings of šedu, the first since 1963. The irruptors' campaign stepped up into higher gear as a ripple of reality temblors washed across the Middle East, north and central Africa, and Mexico over the next eighteen months. Al-Qaeda hijacked and flew its planes under cover of this memetic chaff, and suddenly blood flowed once more across the ancient subduction zones.

Sandmen spread themselves thin running missions during the Iraq War, beginning with the seizure and assessment of the site of the Sumerian "holy city" Nippur in 2003. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 had cut off Project access to this critical subduction zone, so recovering the site was an urgent priority. The changes to Nippur in the interim seem to indicate a major šedu reality-engineering operation is underway, but what form it will take remains unknown. Project reality archaeologists are resurveying every site in Iraq and Libya, and surveying new ones in Afghanistan, in between dodging suicide cults and snake-guardian bašmu attacks.

The kulullû still plot in the waters off Hong Kong and Karachi; scorpion soldiers protect Mexican cartels moving specialty narcotics into the U.S.; lion-headed torturers tear information from Iranian scholars and Tibetan lamas in secret prisons. The World Wide Web drowns the Sandmen in leads and information. Crises multiply as reality creaks on its hinges. The Red King stirs in his slumber in this, the end of history.

MISSION AND JURISDICTION

The fundamental mission of Project SANDMAN is to contain and defeat the Anunnakku. This mission depends on humanity at large never realizing the nature of the threat: either global panic or global worship would provide the Anunnakku with the psychic energy to awaken and return the world to their ordered, tyrannical history. Thus, Sandman missions must always be covert and clandestine; even friendlies with top-secret clearances and vital knowledge must be approached under cover or false flag if at all possible. Witnesses to unambiguous irruptor activity must be killed, blanked, discredited, or recruited.

Sandmen have carte blanche to carry out this mission. If they fail, there won't be a review board.

Secondary Taskings

In support of their primary mission, Project SANDMAN undertakes a number of secondary missions:

Human Control and Potential: Decipher the Anunnaki control system, and develop countermeasures (both short- and long-term) to that control system. This mission also includes developing methods to improve human resistance and performance independent of Anunnaki-derived systems. This can encompass not just linguistic and psychological research at Granite Peak or Cambridge, but also stealing psychic warfare secrets from Moscow or Changsha, locating esoteric texts or practitioners of Tantra or Voudun, infiltrating (and destroying) cults with improved social-control methodologies, and recruiting martial-arts masters (or their star pupils) into the Project.

Reality Protection: Map the fracture zones in reality and improve predictive ontoseismology. Develop defenses for reality and history, and discover methods of stabilizing reality in a specific location. High-end theoretical physicists (often working on black grants allegedly from DARPA or NASA) and on-the-ground surveyors and archaeologists (not all of whom know where their funding comes from either) combine their efforts here. Reality protection missions often wind up becoming irruptor suppression missions.

History B: Identify all species of irruptors and their specific techniques and tactics, and develop countermeasures for these. More generally, discover the history, ecology, and political structure of History B. Much more has been accomplished on the first than the second; not even the full geography of History B has been mapped, much less its geopolitics, internal history, or other social concerns. Until the Project knows enough to determine the weak points of the Anunnakku, it can never end the war.

Maintain Project Stability and Security: Keep Project SANDMAN funded, functional, and secure. This mission includes insider trading, applying the insights of esmology to Project internal organization and direction, and counterintelligence work against irruptor cults and rival human organizations (including the CIA and MI6) alike.

Legal Standing

In October 1951, an amendment to the U.S. National Security Act (passed by voice vote without a reading, just before Congress adjourned) and an Order in Council approved under royal prerogative by a dying King George VI established Project SANDMAN as an ongoing research and defense initiative of the two governments. Project personnel were granted "mutual access" to all existing national security organizations and information, with oversight resting solely "at the discretion of the supreme executive authority." The mere existence of these statutes is classified – and, thanks to Sandman manipulation, completely forgotten by both national bureaucracies. No American President since Kennedy has been fully briefed on the Project; Winston Churchill told Queen Elizabeth II of its existence in 1953, and apparently left it up to her to inform his successors or not.

In practice, Sandmen exercise their legal powers through their cover identities as agents of the CIA, FBI, MI6, MI5, etc. and derive tactical jurisdiction likewise. Given the resources of the Project, Sandmen can usually present credentials and clearances for anything they might want to use the American or British governments to accomplish. If not, they can almost always convince anyone with such authority that they should be accommodated "off the books."

STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

As befits a binational organization that is half theoretical research program and half secret warfighting executive, Project SANDMAN organizes and utilizes its vast resources in a seemingly chaotic and contradictory fashion. In a war against the beings that created humanity's organizing behaviors, however, it pays to keep things mixed up.

The Org Chart Is Not the Territory

What organization there is comes from three Directors and a small central staff generally called SANDMAN Control. By custom, there is one British civilian Director, one American civilian Director, and one military Director (usually American, but occasionally, and currently, Canadian). Their identities are closely guarded secrets; the previous Directors select each new Director personally and unanimously, and vet them in every way the Project security teams can devise. They stay in deeply encrypted contact electronically, seldom meeting in person. The staff operates on a similarly distributed basis, although there is a small permanent Control presence at each major Project facility. Bureaucracy and regulations are kept minimal by keeping Control staff small, moving them around frequently, and encouraging self-organization and initiative; Sandman psychological screening recruits personnel who respond best to such laissez-faire management. Although the era of mandatory brainwashing is thankfully behind the Project, open memetic loyalty reinforcement is not unknown, even (or especially) at the Control staff level.

Below the Control staff are two loose, diverging branches: Research and Ops. A Sandman's current task determines which branch he reports to. A Sandman commando might be developing a new method of body control with a Research team, then go into the field as part of an Ops team to test it out while smashing up a slavery cult in Mauritania. Rank is task-driven: A 13-year-old linguistics genius might be in charge of a psycho-cybernetic build but only have a consulting role in a ground survey of Burmese dialects.

Control staff and personnel computers constantly mix and match personnel with missions, often assigning cross-training or advisory roles for little or no justification. Even the missions themselves sometimes seem random, for good reason. That reason, Control explains, is to prevent the Project from becoming predictable – their enemies know human psychology better than the Sandmen ever can. Bonded pairs and reliable teams, based as they are on presentient (and thus pre-Anunnakku design) primate troop instincts, often get assigned to the same mission even when one or more members of the team seem unqualified on paper.

Granite Peak and Elsewhere

In 1943, under the cover of biological warfare research, the U.S. Army built an enormous (250 square miles) installation at Granite Peak, 30 miles west of the main Dugway Proving Ground active areas in Utah. With its own airstrip, power plant, medical wing, living quarters, sewer system, and water supply, it was completely self-sufficient. Some bioweapons testing there during WWII covered the excavation of even more underground lab and living spaces. In 1945, the Army officially abandoned the Granite Peak Installation, allowing the surface structures to fall apart.

In reality, Granite Peak has been the headquarters of Project SANDMAN since the Cairo summit; the surface facilities are considerably better maintained than their ruined appearance would indicate, the airstrip is fully capable of launching anything from Predator drones to supersonic troop-carrying aircraft, and the underground facilities are beyond state of the art. The 22 miles of tunnels and vaults under Granite Peak contain everything from dormitories to supermax prison cells to 3D fabricators to holographic training chambers to sensory deprivation tanks. A nuclear plant repurposed from the USS *Thresher* (a submarine badly damaged during an anti-kulullû mission in the Sargasso Sea, and reported lost as a cover-up) powers the facility.

Elsewhere in the U.S., the Project maintains a physical training facility on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, established in 1965 by separate agreement with the Eastern Shoshone nation after the CIA closed its Camp Hale training ground in Colorado. There are also dedicated Project offices in the Smithsonian Institution and at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory near San Francisco.

Britain Incognito

The British Sandmen take a different approach. All of the British Project staff have cover assignments and work from those facilities: memeticists work out of GCHQ in Cheltenham; commandos train and base with the SAS at Hereford; scholars and researchers use labs and studies in Cambridge and Oxford; psychologists practice at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust in north London; and more specialized personnel work from anonymous, rented offices in London's Docklands.

British Sandmen operate safe houses on MI5's books, task programs on the Met Office supercomputers, and interrogate irruptors in Home Office black prison cells in the Orkney Islands. The closest thing to a permanent Project physical plant in the U.K. is the Duncorne Foundation building in Cambridge.

Scattered Like Grains of Sand

Outside Britain and the U.S., the Project mostly uses CIA infrastructure ramped up during the War on Terror. There aren't enough Sandmen to monitor every known reality subduction zone, much less post permanent garrisons; where practical, the Project recruits local assets under a false flag (claiming to work for oil companies, other intelligence organizations, or the local secret police) and gives them a satellite phone with a preprogrammed number to call if things start getting weird.

The Project's facilities in South Africa are burned; its skeleton staff in Pretoria exists to keep an eye out for *Witsander* leave-behinds and distract any local investigations. There is a permanent Sandman station (with a complement of two or three dozen at any time) at the "King Solomon's Mines" subduction zone in Zimbabwe; the mines, the archaeological site, and the airfield all lurk behind multiple layers of memetic camouflage, bribed officials, and powerful glyphic wards.

From 1948 to 1990 and again since 2003, the Project has kept a full-time staff of reality archaeologists working at the Nippur site in southern Iraq, along with commandos and security personnel ready to deploy anywhere in Iraq or the Gulf.

Fabulous Toys

The Project, generally speaking, has access to all technology and equipment available at any level of clearance in the U.S. and Britain. Its brain hacking and psychotronic gear is the best in the world (see pp. 45-50). A fleet of "black" aircraft ferry prisoners and personnel to and from Granite Peak when local facilities aren't up to the task at hand and time is of the essence. The Project computer system, thanks to computer languages and firmware based on superior understanding of linguistics and human neurobiology, is a generation ahead of the best machines in the private sector (functionally TL9). Funding is not a problem: Between esmological predictions of global financial trends, memetic market manipulation, and the occasional billions stolen from the Russian *Mafiya* thanks to *obshchaki* who don't remember giving up their account numbers, the Project doesn't really need to skim from the black budget any more. When even laundering funds through a half-dozen CIA black accounts isn't enough, gold ingots from King Solomon's Mines provide true financial anonymity.

Other Actors, Other Agendas

No Sandman allows himself to believe that the Project has a monopoly on the irruptors' secrets. (Not least because such a belief would be a transparent kulullû false-security meme.) In addition to irruptor cults stooled to the rogue, other human actors may have glimpsed the hidden shape of human history.

GZ: The current name for the Russian psychic warfare program code-named "Blue Star" in the West. Russian psychic research predates 1940, but when the DC-R tasked Kim Philby with setting up the SOE's "Hackett School" for "black propaganda," it unwittingly gave the Soviet NKVD a huge stockpile of memetic best practices and hints. Fortunately, Stalin detected the attempt to build a mind-control unit outside his control and purged everyone connected with the program. Revived by the KGB with kulullû aid in the 1960s, the program flourished under Andropov's protection. After Andropov's death in 1984, the bureaucratic knives came out for the psy-war *apparat;* the fall of the USSR left it hollow and crippled. The SVR salvaged a hard core of scientists and operatives in their GZ program, but must constantly fend off attacks from the Russian *Mafiya* (backed by the FSB), who have their own uses for psychic soldiers. History B lore, as best the Project can tell, is just another wild theory to the Russians.

NDL 507: The Chinese psychic warfare unit, based at the National Defense Laboratory in Changsha, has access to the Hwang Ho subduction zone and an unknown number of reality shards. The Chinese government also captured Project commandos during the Tibetan operation ST-CIRCUS; under interrogation, they may have revealed the core truths of History B. So far, History A is as stable in China as it is anywhere, despite real limits on Project activity (whether direct or indirect) there. Whether this is because the šedu are primarily targeting the Middle East or because NDL 507 is fighting its own war for reality in the Middle Kingdom remains an open question.

Sebastião Chopra: This Indo-Brazilian telecommunications billionaire (offices in Rio, Goa, and London) owns the world's largest private collection of cuneiform tablets. An avid amateur archaeologist, he has funded numerous books, digs, and documentaries supporting the theory that Sumerian civilization originated in a lost South Indian civilization he calls "Meluhha." Memetic analysis of his companies' broadcasts and activities indicates a strong possibility of deliberate manipulation on a level conversant with History B knowledge.

Haït Yatahadath: The name of this graffiti collective based in Tangier and Casablanca means "The Wall Speaks" in Moroccan Arabic. Art and gnawa music created by or associated with the Haïtun contain contradictory Anunnakku glyphic elements along with symbols of unknown meaning. Weirdly, irruptors have attacked Haït Yatahadath events and openings all over North Africa and Europe. Optimistic Project memeticists believe this may represent a new evolutionary emergence of semiotic "antibodies" to the Anunnakku control system; others believe it's another weird mindfake by the kulullû. For now, SANDMAN policy is to study, monitor, and protect.

CHAPTER TWO
THE SANDMEN

Inside the cave, the African sun could finally be ignored. Lauren ducked through the tarpaulin, and then walked through the charged, hanging sheet that blocked cell phones. Only when she got to the keypad door (sealed and pressurized, some part of her old training noted, against a Level Three threat) did she have to stop. The quiet, tan man at her side barely slowed, swiping a featureless metal card against a featureless part of the door.

It opened onto the interior of the cavern – pillars, altars, basins all carved out of granite. Lauren recognized the architecture: Solomon's Temple, straight out of the Book of Chronicles. The carvings on the walls looked strange, but she couldn't see them as clearly. In front of each inscription, each bas-relief, each carved lotus or acanthus, stood a transparent Lexan screen. Data scrolled across the screens, instant translation, comparison, image matching, thermoluminescence; Lauren had heard about these things, they were in prototype in Germany or somewhere, but her program could barely afford five-year-old Macs.

Men and women in uniforms with no insignia barely looked up from their screens or their books as she entered. Half of them were visibly armed; Lauren had no illusions about the other half. The whole complex hummed with power, air-conditioned and humidity controlled. Just the gear, specialists, and power must have cost more than her university's whole endowment.

"I knew it!" she said, keeping her tone conversational with difficulty. "I knew this dig was secretly funded by the CIA."

The tan man looked at her, keeping his face blank. "Close. It's closer to the truth to say that this dig secretly funds the CIA." He pointed to a pile of bricks she had ignored. She looked again, and then closer. Each brick was stamped with a Hebrew letter, glinting where the die pressed.

"Gold. And that's just what they found in 1899. There are caves we haven't even mapped yet. You'll probably find more, once you get things up and running to your satisfaction. After all, Professor Lee, you're now in charge of King Solomon's Mines."

"In charge?" For some reason, that was the part of his response that seemed odd to her. "I haven't even heard your offer, much less agreed –"

He cut her off, a man done with one tiresome job and eager to get to the next one. "You've already agreed. Having this interview while you're fully conscious is just a formality."

TRAITS

The following traits have a powerful memetic influence on a **Madness Dossier** campaign, often cropping up in either the Sandmen or their foes.

> *English is not structurally suited to thinking. Shut up and listen.*
> *– Robert A. Heinlein, "Gulf"*

ADVANTAGES

As with most horror or horror-themed campaigns, players should make sure the GM is on board with these advantages, even if they appear in a Sandman template. See the likely advantages provided by reality shards (pp. 37-38) for more potentially campaign-appropriate powers.

Alternate Identity

Most Sandmen in the U.S., and almost all British Sandmen, maintain a legal Alternate Identity as their cover in some government initial factory or covert military unit. Indeed, working for those groups may involve *multiple* such covers, but these all can be abstracted into one Alternate Identity for game purposes, since they come from the same government source.

Detect

Detect (History B) is worth 20 points. This ability detects irruptors, reality shards, subduction zones, and other phenomena associated with History B. Although these phenomena are not, strictly speaking, "Common," they are central to the campaign and will likely show up in the majority of scenarios.

Variations (p. 54) gives the option to play up the modern conspiracy memeplex about "monoatomic gold" and "gold of the gods." If the GM does so, Detect (Gold) – possibly granted by exposure to irruptor energies – will be particularly useful. However, its cost stays at 5 points.

Eidetic Memory

Sandman Regimen (p. 16), which is designed to activate and enhance mental capacity, can justify either Eidetic or Photographic Memory.

Illuminated

In a **Madness Dossier** campaign, this advantage could come from exposure to reality shards or from being some sort of weird "linchpin of reality"; in the latter case, it likely appears with Weirdness Magnet and either version of Destiny. You may be a *taisher* (pp. 26-27), have had some sort of "awakening" experience at the hands of a rogue (or warped) irruptor cult, be a former apprentice *chödpa* (pp. 30-31) or *tighearnamach* (pp. 29-30), or have some other weird personal connection to the shadow war for history. The *GM* will determine the nature of your connection, and does not have to share that detail with you; the right to decide for yourself requires an additional 20-point Unusual Background.

The +3 reaction from cult leaders is likely to represent a mistaken belief in your irruptor-given sanctity; a similar reaction from irruptors may translate in practice to "capture for further study" rather than "treat as an equal." In other words, "Don't kill it with the rest of the impudent human scum . . . yet."

> *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*
> *– Isaiah 65:17*

Indomitable

In a **Madness Dossier** campaign, this makes you impossible to influence *without* relying on Anunnaki source code. Those with Hidden Lore (History B) can use Enthrallment skills, Hypnotism, and memetic campaigns to influence you, although you resist at +3. You have a similar bonus to resist psychotechnologically enhanced efforts at Brain Hacking, Brainwashing, and so forth.

Anyone utterly incapable of being influenced by even Anunnaki source code must take the Cosmic (+100%) enhancement on Indomitable. This represents a truly alternate, one-in-a-billion freak of neurology – a brain that simply can't run the Anunnaki program and shuts down or reroutes itself under chemical or psychotechnological interrogation. Such characters can still learn Anunnaki glyphs; they must concentrate just as hard (and spend just as many FP) as normal folks to figure out and inscribe the geometries. As this is functionally equivalent to Immunity to Anunnaki Programming, it should require a similar Unusual Background, if allowed at all; see *Resistant* (pp. 13-14).

Languages

Some languages show up more often, or have special benefits, in the course of a **Madness Dossier** campaign.

Akkadian: The earliest known Semitic language, Akkadian cuneiform was used to write Sumerian beginning in 2900 B.C.; Sumerian and Akkadian strongly influenced each other over the succeeding millennium. Akkadian became the primary language of trade and scholarship across the Near East until the 8th century B.C. and died out even academically around 100 A.D. As the first major language to react to Anunnakku programming, it shows their methods more clearly than others. Many of the glyph names in this book are Akkadian, in the Old Babylonian dialect.

American Sign Language (ASL): The brain processes sign languages in different areas than spoken languages, and Sandmen use ASL to exercise those regions, as well as for silent communication. British Sandmen resent having to learn ASL instead of British Sign Language (knowing one at Native allows use of the other at Broken). Knowledge of any sign language(s) at Native gives +1 to resist any Anunnaki commands or influence.

Aulang: This is the artificial, computer-designed language taught to Golden Children. It is deliberately opaque to normal human linguistic pattern-matching, and its script uses randomly assigned characters from the undeciphered Rongorongo tablets found on Easter Island. If Aulang is the first language you learn (as your free Native language), you may buy Resistant to Anunnaki Programming at +8 without an Unusual Background. Note that this level of Resistant does *not* stack with the bonuses from ASL and Danbe; see *Resistant* (pp. 13-14) for more.

Danbe: Danbe is an isolate language spoken by a hill tribe in western New Guinea; Project neurolinguists believe that of all human languages, it contains the least Anunnakku programming code. Knowledge of Danbe at Native gives +1 to resist any Anunnaki commands or influence.

Sumerian: The oldest known language, it has no clear relationship to any other language on Earth. It may have been the native language of the Anunnakku themselves, or a pidgin developed to communicate with the local human tribe. The Sumerians spoke and wrote it from the fourth millennium B.C. to some time in the early second millennium B.C.; its close association with Akkadian led to its near-complete replacement by the latter tongue. Intriguingly, Sumerian came in two varieties: *eme.ngir* (the common speech) and *eme.sal* (the "fine speech") used in rituals and associated with females. Project linguists believe that eme.sal was the code-speech designed to control humanity, but have been unable to connect it to any other body of Anunnakku or human lore. They have begun to sneakingly re-examine the 1874 theory of the French "orientalist" Joseph Hálevy, who believed that Sumerian was a constructed code language used entirely for ritual purposes.

Volapük: The Bavarian priest Johann Martin Schleyer was told by God in a dream to create an international language. In 1879, he produced Volapük, using an amalgam of French, German, and English. In 10 years, it gained a million speakers, but died out in schism (and from competition from Esperanto) rapidly thereafter. During that period, Duncorne Foundation scholars learned it in an attempt to evade Anunnakku code influences, but Volapük is too much like other Indo-European languages to provide any real benefit. Tøren Rigstad, the inventor of Kleil (p. 45), was a devotee of the language, which is why it remains in use by some Sandmen.

Mind Control

The GM should not allow this advantage by itself, except possibly as a way to simplify the bookkeeping of an effect provided by a reality shard. Much of the flavor of the campaign is the technothriller workarounds and grisly specifics involved in perfecting mind control, for both the Project and its alien foes.

Mind Shield

As for Mind Control (p. 12), this advantage should not be allowed casually. It needs some in-universe explanation such as study of some arcane language or survival of Soviet brain hacking (and hence an Unusual Background) if it isn't to be a boring short-circuit of the game's themes and fun. Mental Strength (p. 19) is a more appropriate way to model most well-defended minds.

Modular Abilities

The Project uses a technological training method to instill this advantage in its agents:

Renshaw Method: Super-Memorization 1 (4) (Preparation Required, 1 hour, -50%; Skills Only, -10%) [7]. *Notes:* Named for the American psychologist Samuel Renshaw, who was quietly recruited by SANDMAN in the 1950s, it used subliminal text flashed at high speed by a special projector called a tachistoscope. Fortunately, modern Project computer screens can "tach" any text. "Renshing" (or, more casually, "wrenching") essentially provides Super-Memorization by rapid reading, allowing a Sandman to temporarily learn a skill up to the 4-point level. This takes one hour per character point. Wrenching a new skill causes the old one to be forgotten, but Renshaw Method may be taken multiple times to allow multiple skills to be retained. This advantage does not *require* Sandman Regimen (p. 16), but having that trait allows you to add and improve Renshaw Method freely. *7 points per skill slot.*

Oracle

When you screen out the constant static of Anunnaki semiotic transmission and programming (or when you can tune into its precise wavelength), some of the true nature of reality becomes apparent to you. So far, the Project has no reliable means of "looking behind the curtain" on a consistent basis, but the Golden Children are better at it than most Sandmen.

Rank

This campaign setting highlights two major types of Rank: Military Rank and Security Rank.

Military Rank: This applies as usual to the military forces of the Project's sponsors, with one or two caveats. Because SANDMAN Control has almost always inserted orders and relevant paperwork higher up the chain of command, Sandmen with Military Rank can usually apply it to non-Project military personnel from allied countries for the purposes of a specific operation. It may take a quick radio call to headquarters to establish this authority, of course. *Within* the ranks of the Project, naturally, a British colonel can give orders to an American captain and vice-versa. It is up to the GM and player to decide if a given Sandman operates openly under his "correct" rank in civilian society; in such cases, his Rank gives him Status as per p. B29. Military Rank costs the usual 5 points per level.

Security Rank: This is rank in a (usually) shadowy government agency with a propensity for horning in on other government operations, or one given explicit cross-agency authority in a crisis: the FBI in its Hoover heyday, the CIA in bad spy novels, or FEMA during a disaster. In this setting, it is rank within Project SANDMAN bundled with the equivalent rank in a Sandman's cover organization. Treat it as Administrative Rank within the main organization, and as Status when dealing with other government, military, or police agencies. If someone from another agency really wants to buck you, they can . . . until your bosses put pressure on *their* bosses. In extremely cinematic games, this advantage might even apply to agencies in another country. Even in the real world, it might apply to foreign nationals of a satellite or dependent state: Croatian cops will likely defer to a Gestapo officer, and South Vietnamese military men tend to heed the CIA station chief. In this heavily bureaucratized setting, Security Rank costs 10 points per level.

> *Cut word lines – Cut music lines – Smash the control images – Smash the control machine.*
>
> *– William S. Burroughs,*
> ***The Soft Machine***

Rapier Wit

Rather than swashbuckling wordplay, Sandmen use carefully tailored memetic payloads (usually jumbles of Sumerian and English words) to mentally stun foes. Control provides these *ariktu* (from the Sumerian word for "spear") for specific mission targets, changing the linguistic mix to suit the likely audience. (This is part of what all those Patron points buy you!) To create an ariktu on the fly requires a roll against any skill covered by Memetics (*Talents*, p. 15).

The operative skill is still Public Speaking, as getting the phrase out clearly is very important – and often difficult in the middle of a fight! The speaker doesn't need to know the language; only the crafter of the ariktu needs Sumerian (at Accented or better) and the target language (at Native).

Clueless and No Sense of Humor do not provide benefits against this version of Rapier Wit, but hearers' Resistant to Anunnaki Programming affects these attacks. Unfazeable trumps this version of Rapier Wit as usual.

Resistant

In a **Madness Dossier** campaign, Resistant to Anunnaki Programming is an important trait. This provides a bonus to all Will rolls to resist Anunnaki programming, manipulation, or influence. Anunnaki manipulation and influence is "Very Common," being present in virtually all human languages, and in most human religions, art, and other cultural products.

*As you know most existing organizations stress such primitive reactions as unquestioning obedience. Their agents become addicted to orders. You will receive orders of course and in some cases you will be well-advised not to carry out the orders you receive. On the other hand your failure to obey certain orders could expose you to dangers of which you can have at this point in your training no conception . . . And the members of all existing organizations are at some point your enemy. You will learn to know where this point is if you survive . . . There is no certainty. Those who need certainty are of no interest to this organization. This is in point of fact a **non-organization** the aim of which is to immunize our agents against fear despair and death.*

– William S. Burroughs, **The Ticket That Exploded**

Project trainers and indoctrinators build up resistance to Anunnaki programming by rewiring the language centers of the mind and via intense aversion therapy. Regular Sandman training provides Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]. Intense training in ASL and Danbe (*Languages,* p. 12) can provide further bonuses.

Golden Children are literally created to be Resistant; they are completely isolated from external human culture and language, speaking only Aulang, until their language centers finish forming in adolescence. Most loa have too little "spare capacity" in their programming to respond to Anunnaki direction. Someone in either circumstance can have Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+8) [15]. As this level represents the pinnacle of human resistance, it does *not* stack with lesser bonuses from learning specific languages.

Buying a degree of Resistant to Anunnaki Programming without the specialized training or background listed requires at least a 20-point Unusual Background. Immunity to Anunnaki Programming [30] is rare, even with Sandman training; if the GM allows it, it requires at *least* a 30-point Unusual Background!

Security Clearance

Sandmen closer to the meat of the Project and its planning process (such as the applied anthropologists) have 10-point "need to know" access to a broad range of secrets about the Project's assets in other agencies, irruptor sightings, and so forth.

Sandmen "wired into" specific divisions (e.g., PSAMETIC, the brain-hacking program) have 5-point "need to know" access to research and information in their own bailiwick.

Sandmen briefed for specific missions (such as commandos), or those operating extensively on the "outside" (like commandos and reality archaeologists), or those who might develop (or already have) instabilities (e.g., chevals or taishers) usually don't have any special Security Clearance over and above their Rank.

Serendipity

Sandman ontologists believe this advantage works by "reading" History A and tweaking it, possibly by tapping energies from History B to produce minor reality shard-type effects. This may be a subconscious psionic power or a simple effect of over-exposure to shifting reality physics.

Shapeshifting

In the mirror-world of the **Madness Dossier,** who you perceive yourself to be often overrides who you actually are. For characters who mentally shapeshift, taking on an entire new persona, here's a new version of Shapeshifting.

Loa

Variable

The most powerful spirits of Haitian Voudun are called *loa* (both singular and plural). Somewhere between demigods and saints, the loa possess their worshipers, granting them ecstatic communion with the divine along with powers, knowledge, personalities, and appetites matching those of the loa themselves. This version of Shapeshifting can model anything from a shaman or bokor summoning actual possessing spirits, to a robot or chipped human downloading an AI ghost persona, to an alien being (or cinematic madman like comics' Badger) with multiple personalities. In this campaign, it models chevals (from the Haitian Creole for "horse," meaning one possessed by the loa), Sandmen who have had complex personality and skill subroutines programmed into their subconscious . . . usually voluntarily.

When you invoke a loa, your normal personality disappears. An invoked loa will still likely go along with your agenda, but will almost certainly do so in its own fashion: as archetypal beings, loa definitely believe that one approach fits all! As with Alternate Form, you keep your skills, and most advantages and disadvantages, although some traits overwrite the host's normal state.

The GM should decide when a trait from the loa's template would clash or be redundant with one of yours. If so, see which of the following applies:

● *You already have the trait, and it has a variable or leveled cost.* Sum the points from your trait and the loa's trait, then use that point value to determine the final result. For example, if you and the loa both have Broadsword (A) DX-1 [1] and Bad Temper (12) [-10], then together you have Broadsword (A) DX [2] and Bad Temper (6) [-20]. If there are points left over after this combination, remove them from the loa's template, reducing its value (or increasing it, for removed disadvantage points).

● *You already have the trait, and it has a fixed cost.* Remove it from the loa's template.

● *The loa's mental trait is incompatible with one of yours.* The loa overwrites you, making you temporarily lose that trait. If your trait was a disadvantage, then the loa's template gains a custom advantage to buy it off; for example, if you have Combat Paralysis [-15] and the loa has Combat Reflexes [15], the loa *also* gains Removes Combat Paralysis [15]. If your trait had a positive cost, the loa gains a disadvantage to remove it.

● *The loa's physical trait is incompatible with one of yours.* Remove it from the loa's template. For example, if you have No Sense of Smell/Taste [-5] and the loa has Acute Taste and Smell 4 [8], the loa loses the Acute Sense and its point value drops by 8.

Invoking a loa requires a skill roll, at +1 for your knowledge of and connection to it. In this setting, chevals use Autohypnosis (p. B179); in a supernatural campaign, houngans would use Religious Ritual (Voudun) to summon *actual* loa. The time to invoke a loa *stacks* – you must take both the time for the skill roll (20-skill seconds for Autohypnosis, or 1 second if you have the Autotrance perk) and for Shapeshifting (10 seconds). Unlike standard Alternate Form, you do not need to concentrate during the final 10 seconds of the shapeshifting process; after you've succeeded at your roll, you can move and even fight. (This makes the Active Change enhancement from **GURPS Powers** redundant.) Invocation of a loa costs 1 FP, and the effect lasts 3 minutes; after that period, extended possession costs 1 FP every 6 minutes. Your loa departs if you're rendered unconscious.

Though you can only be ridden by one loa at a time, you can have multiple loa available for invocation. As for standard Alternate Form, a single loa costs 15 points, plus 90% of the total point value of the advantages, disadvantages, and skills granted by the loa. If you have multiple loa, calculate the highest-priced loa and pay for that package; further loa cost 15 points each.

Special Modifiers

Unless stated otherwise, modifiers only affect the 15-point base cost of Alternate Form (Loa), not the extra cost (the 90% of the loa's value).

Easy Rider: Possession by your loa does not tire you, and costs no FP to invoke or maintain. This enhancement on Loa is likely a better fit for downloaded AI subroutines or multiple-personality implants. +20%.

Vever Required: You must hold or behold a specific physical representation or symbol of your loa to invoke it. This limitation applies to loa invoked by Sandman chevals, and likely to Voudun bokors as well. A drawn Voudun vever is just a trigger (p. B115) if you only have to see the design; although not omnipresent, you can easily sketch it (Common, -20%). A cheval's personalized anchor can't easily be replicated, and is bought as a gadget limitation (p. B116). It's a credit card-sized piece of incised metal (Breakable, DR 4, SM -8, -20%; Can Be Stolen by Stealth or Trickery, -20%); the limitation is applied as "Vever Required, -40%."
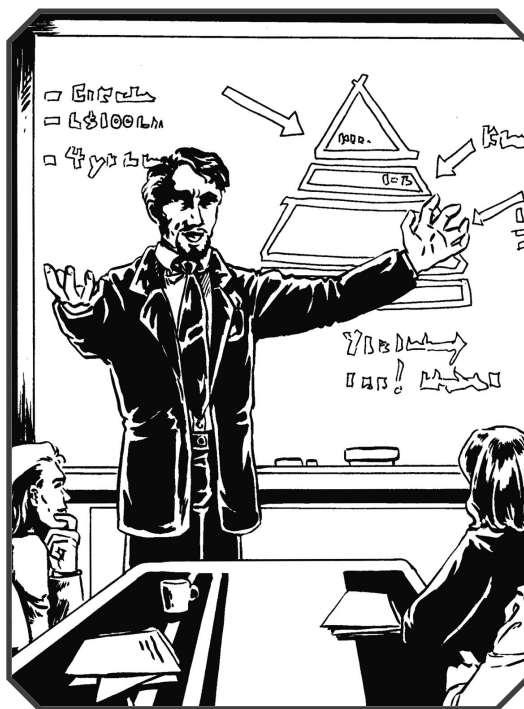
Talents

In any game that wants a technothriller feel, the following two Talents are nigh indispensable:

Born to Be Wired: Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Electronics Repair (Computers), and Expert Skill (Computer Security). *Reaction bonus:* hackers; people buying stock in your dotcom. *5 points/level.*

Circuit Sense: Electrician, Electronics Operation, Electronics Repair, and Engineer (Electrical, Electronics, and Psychotronics). *Reaction bonus:* anyone you use your skills for. *5 points/level.*

In this setting, Project SANDMAN has access to hidden science (the Anunnaki programming language) that instills seemingly innate or even supernatural talents in their operatives. For example, Smooth Operator (p. B91) is more often the result of explicit training in human coding than of native charisma – although the Project makes excellent use of native charisma, too! Thus, Project neurolinguists can teach and train Smooth Operator (and Business Acumen), as well as the Talents listed below. Project investigations into Anunnaki programming have developed recruitment, enhancement, and training programs for other talents, such as:

Esmologist: Administration, Anthropology, Current Affairs, Diplomacy, Economics, Esmology, Finance, History, Intelligence Analysis, Market Analysis, Politics, Propaganda, Psychology, Sociology, Strategy, and Tactics. *Reaction bonus:* social groups. *15 points/level.*

Innate NLP: Body Language, Brainwashing, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Enthrallment skills, Fast-Talk, Hypnotism, Interrogation, Intimidation, Merchant, Panhandling, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal. *Reaction bonus:* trained neurolinguistic programming (NLP) practitioners, members of the helping professions (doctor, nurse, psychologist, counselor, bartender, etc.) who *don't* know what you're doing! *15 points/level.*

Memetics: Brainwashing, Diplomacy, Expert Skill (Memetics), Fast-Talk, Interrogation, Leadership, Merchant, Politics, Propaganda, Psychology, Sociology, and Teaching. *Reaction bonus:* anyone else trained in memetics who can observe you using it – but note that some uses of these skills will be too subtle to observe! *10 points/level.*

Temporal Inertia

see p. B93

You exist in History B and have freedom of action there: You have a responsible position, or you are well hidden – perhaps by a cult of madmen intent on destroying *their* history! In short, should history fall again, you are a human irruptor waiting to happen.

Trained by a Master

see p. B93

Although anyone trained by a Tibetan avadhuta or a rogue chödpa can take the full version of this advantage, being trained by the Project provides a specific, narrower variant:

Sandman Regimen: This represents being trained in techniques developed over decades by Sandman symbolic kinesthesiologists. Sandman Regimen halves the penalty for Rapid Strike, but does not lower penalties for multiple parries. It also allows a character to learn Body Control, Drunken Fighting (**GURPS Martial Arts,** p. 50), Eidetic or Photographic Memory, Esmology (p. 20), Invisibility Art, Kiai, Mental Strength (p. 19), Rapier Wit (p. 13), and the Renshaw Method (p. 13), along with the Hypnotic Freeze (p. 20) and Kapadol (p. 20) techniques; these traits may all be added and improved freely. For students of Kleil (p. 45), this gives access to all of that style's cinematic skills and techniques. *10 points.*

Unusual Background

see p. B96

The campaign assumes that the heroes are agents of Project SANDMAN. Anyone who possesses any of the special skills or knowledge in this setting *without* Project clearance must take a 30-point Unusual Background.

Psis, inside or outside the Project, must take a 20-point Unusual Background. Reduce this to 10 points if limited to ESP only – *if* the GM intends to involve psionics enough to make the difference worthwhile.

Visualization

see pp. B96-97

Like Serendipity (p. 14), Project psychologists believe this advantage works by "reading the story" of History A and peeking ahead. It is likely a subconscious use of a trait similar to Esmology (p. 20).

Zeroed

see p. B100

Sandmen without a legal Alternate Identity are legally dead, at least according to their records. Their fake identities are one-mission "burn" legends, not usable for any kind of long-term civilian existence. For those who have it, this trait represents Project resources devoted to *keeping* the Sandmen off the radar. For example, a Zeroed Sandman can be arrested, but once free, his biometrics quickly become disassociated from the arrest record – his slate is wiped clean.

NEW PERKS

Both "Perfect" perks are very common in infants, perhaps even innate in human development, but we lose them after the age of two. Many people retain Perfect Pitch throughout their lives; Sandman memory training often recreates Perfect Facial Recognition. Golden Children retain both.

Cutting-Edge Training

You've received instruction in one specific technological skill above your personal TL. In this setting, this usually represents training in TL9 computers or TL9^ psychotronics. You must specialize by skill (*and* specialty, when applicable). This perk is cheaper than High TL (p. B23) for those with fewer than five specialties; if someone manages to get Cutting-Edge Training in five areas, the GM may allow him to replace these perks with High TL 1 for the same points.

Perfect Facial Recognition

You can immediately identify faces, and can recognize anyone you've ever seen, in person or in a photograph. You have +2 to penetrate any use of the Disguise skill on someone whose face you've already seen.

Perfect Pitch

You can identify or recreate a given musical note or tone without a reference tone. You have +2 to all rolls to tune musical instruments or to confirm that they're in tune (or out of tune) and to Hobby Skill (Whistling) (**GURPS Low-Tech Companion 1**, p. 17).

With the destruction of history, contemporary events themselves retreat into a remote and fabulous realm of unverifiable stories, uncheckable statistics, unlikely explanations, and untenable reasoning.

– Guy Debord, **Comments on the Society of the Spectacle**

DISADVANTAGES

Some wounds and scars are natural among the veterans of a thousand psychic wars.

Addiction

see p. B122

This campaign frame includes some specialized forms of addiction; whether your specific campaign features weirdly addicted heroes likely depends on how much William S. Burroughs the GM has read. For Sandmen, "against regulations" is the equivalent of "illegal."

"Brocaine": Sandman slang for direct stimulation of the brain using psychotronic equipment. (Despite the name, it doesn't involve the Broca's area.) It's cheap, totally addictive, and very much against regulations. *-15 points.*

Combat Amphetamines: Addiction to combat amphetamines (pp. 46-47) is physiological, in addition to being expensive, highly addictive, and against regulations. *-15 points.*

HUL: Psychological addiction to exposure to the Anunnaki HUL glyph (p. 40) is totally addictive. For Sandmen, it is easy (if not exactly *trivial*) to get hold of a HUL glyph (cheap) but against regulations, making it a -15-point Addiction. For outsiders, it is very difficult or dangerous to find a HUL glyph (expensive), but legal: -20 points. If a cult leader charges huge fees to view the glyph, that worsens the cost to -25 points; if you find your own copy and hide it away in your garret, it becomes cheap, and thus -15 points. *Variable.*

Mopers: Psychological addiction to modified personality drugs (p. 46) is very expensive and highly against regulations for Sandmen. Outsiders find them even harder to score, and seldom have the chance to be addicted to something not available outside Granite Peak and Tavistock pharmacies. *-20 points.*

Cannot Speak

Aphasia is the inability to form coherent sentences; speech comes out in a random jumble of "word salad." A mental illness or Anunnakku attack resulting in aphasia equates to the -15-point version of this disadvantage.

Deafness

This is one of the few major physical disadvantages that doesn't disqualify you from active military service with the Project. Deaf warriors can't *hear* the Anunnaki linguistic command codes, after all!

Characters with cochlear implants that can be switched on or off as the tactical situation demands don't have Deafness at all, but a neat Accessory (p. B100). Some Sandmen go into the field wearing the equivalent (white-noise generating earbuds) when NCEs (see p. 50) would be too conspicuous.

Disciplines of Faith

When you're fighting gods, it can be hard to stay atheist. Many Sandmen have Disciplines of Faith for Islam, Bahá'í, Sikhism, or Mormonism, since all four religions were founded after 535 A.D., and are therefore not as suspect as pre-Ontoclysm beliefs. Devout members of all four faiths must abstain from alcohol and drugs, including amphetamines or other combat drugs; all four faiths also prescribe regular ritual prayer. Both Sikhs and Mormons wear ritual undergarments; Sikhs also wear a comb, bracelet, and dagger at all times. Mormons must abstain from all caffeine and tobacco; devout Bahá'í and Sikhs do not smoke. Sikhs may not cut their hair or beards, or eat halal (or kosher) meat. *-5 points.*

Duty

If there is a campaign disadvantage limit, the Duty to Project SANDMAN does not count against it.

Prohibited Disadvantages

In general, a **Madness Dossier** campaign privileges thriller action and intellectual horror. Heroes who cannot truly partake in either activity should not be PCs. Crippling disadvantages like Hemophilia, Quadriplegic, or Slave Mentality have no place in the elite shadow world of Project SANDMAN; nor do inhuman disadvantages like Bestial, Cannot Learn, Electrical, or No Fine Manipulators. Other fun-killers include Bad Back, Dyslexia, Hidebound, Kleptomania, One Arm, and truly Odious Personal Habits. Terminally Ill is a point crock in this high-lethality game, and Gullibility is downright dangerous!

Some disadvantages, while unrealistic for a covert program, either fit the theme or work cinematically: Amnesia (likely with a Secret, or as a "war wound"), Killjoy, Numb ("his sensory cortex just *shut off*"), One Eye, and Secret.

Flashbacks

This disadvantage can model more than just flashbacks. Use it for any recurring hallucinations or sensory dislocation: model synaesthesia with Mild flashbacks, for example, or the recurring effects of cinematic nerve gas exposure (as in the movie *Jacob's Ladder*) or divine contact with Severe flashbacks.

You can also adjust the hallucinations' activation roll from the canonical 6 or less, and hence the disadvantage's cost:

9 or less: ×2.
12 or less: ×3.
15 or less: ×4.

Low Empathy

Golden Children or other characters raised with little or no human interaction, or those whose minds are completely consumed by memetic infection, might have this disadvantage. In both cases, it indicates an inability to parse normal human society, not any emotional disability. When operating entirely among each other, for example, Golden Children do not suffer from this disadvantage.

Phobia

The cosmic terrors of this campaign may well trigger any number of phobias, especially the fear of crowds or loud noises (see p. B150), or of the apocalypse (see **GURPS Horror,** p. 25). Three other specific phobias naturally apply to the dangers of the war against the Red King:

Earthquakes (Seismophobia): You fear the solid world might liquefy, or crack open to swallow you utterly. You try not to get too far from a door frame, and wouldn't willingly go into a basement in California. *-5 points.**

Pulhata: You're terrified of the irruptors, the Anunnakku, and their kindred creatures. The word is Akkadian, appearing in the *Enuma Elish* as the aura of fear and dread with which Tiamat surrounded her monstrous allies. Sandmen suffering from pulhata often wrestle with it in silence rather than risk psychological discharge. *-10 points.**

Words (Logophobia): Words are the tools of the Enemy! Speech, writing, printing . . . all are the carriers of lies and the spinners of traps. You avoid talking, you think it best to burn the books, and you may have to cut out tongues. *-15 points.**

Secret

In a campaign that makes Sandmen's civilian life (or deep cover assignments) a focus, or one featuring challenges and conspiracies within the British national security bureaucracy, Secret (Sandman) [-30] might make sense as a campaign disadvantage.

In some campaigns, a character might have a nested Secret. Consider, for example, an Oxford linguist and Project asset operating under cover as an MI5 consultant. If his fellow dons discover his ostensible MI5 work, his cover is still blown and his life likely ruined (a -10-point Secret); if his MI5 cover ID has taken a high profile interest in al-Qaeda cells (as a cover for investigating radical irruptor cults), then he may even need a new identity and relocation as protection from terrorists (a -20-point Secret). But the core Secret of the Project remains intact, so the irruptors don't target him for destruction.

Weirdness Magnet

This disadvantage is a common side effect of handling (or worse yet, holding onto) a reality shard (pp. 37-38). It also tends to cling like static to people who spend a lot of time in reality subduction zones.

SKILLS

A few skills can use additional elaboration or options in a **Madness Dossier** game.

Area Knowledge

Many modern technothrillers set investigations, or even confrontations, online in chat rooms, virtual worlds, or other conjectural spaces. While a Contact is often enough for a one-off adventure, really knowing the mean streets and top dogs of the Internet takes specialized knowledge. Area Knowledge specialties for parts of the Internet default not to Geography but to Computer Operation or a relevant Current Affairs specialty, at -3.

Deep Web: The portion of the Web not accessible by search engines requires such a specialty. With an estimated 91,000 terabytes of information to sift, this is comparable in scope to Area Knowledge (Interplanetary State); it covers major data nodes, standard navigation protocols, knowledge of the highest-profile users and key players, and a guess about where data might be stored.

Dark Web: Part of the Deep Web is used by government black projects, terror and cybercrime networks, and the hacker communities surrounding them. In the **Madness Dossier** universe, the Dark Web includes covert psionic research databases, curiously sorted museum archives, and records suppressed by Project SANDMAN and its ilk. The scope is similar to Area Knowledge (Small Nation): knowledge that key archives, nodes, and data holds exist, as well as familiarity with basic search and covert-posting protocols, political and other dangers, and names and legends of hackers and enforcers with Reputation +3 or better (or -3 or worse). If digital demons exist, emergent monsters factored up by second- or third-order Anunnaki programming deposited in code by unwitting agents, then this specialty covers them, too.

Brain Hacking

See p. 50 for the grisly details of Brain Hacking in this setting. It requires Computer Hacking as a prerequisite, and at bare minimum a field wetware kit (see p. 47) as equipment.

Brainwashing

In this setting, Brainwashing defaults to Psychology-6, or to Interrogation-6 if the interrogator has Hidden Lore (History B).

If the brainwasher has both Psychology at 12+ and a detailed psychological workup of the subject, he makes all Brainwashing attempts against that subject at +1. If he performed the psychological examination in question, raise this to +2. Empathy and Sensitive provide their normal +3 and +1.

Enthrallment

In this campaign frame, Enthrallment skills represent, not bardic magic, but use of the Anunnaki memetic source code implanted in the human brain for neurolinguistic programming (NLP). They are all Will/Very Hard (not Hard), but do not cost FP to use and do not require (nor are they limited by) Charisma; instead, they are at -1 for every *full* five targets. Users can affect their chances by varying the time spent, per p. B346.

Depending on the persuader's training and background, Enthrallment skills may use a different prerequisite for the initial skill roll. Project SANDMAN's applied anthropologists use the standard Public Speaking in the field, since they usually deal with groups of people. The Project's neurolinguistic programmers, however, use Psychology for close-up NLP-based (see p. 42) Enthrallment; this requires an additional prerequisite of Body Language at 12+. A politician or cult leader might have stumbled onto the Anunnaki source code and use Propaganda, Religious Ritual, or Performance to activate it. Whatever the supporting skill, users of Enthrallment must possess it at 12+. Only users with Hidden Lore (History B) can raise Enthrallment skills above the prerequisite skill; this represents active knowledge and incorporation of Anunnaki programming.

Humans resist Enthrallment that incorporates Anunnaki programming at -3. This includes Enthrallment carried out by trained Sandmen, inspired irruptor cultists, or the irruptors themselves. At a minimum, Hidden Lore (History B) is required to inflict this penalty, but the GM may require further specific lore or training.

He said that was so, and proceeded to point out that the possibility of vivisection does not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis . . . The mental structure is even less determinate than the bodily. In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of superseding old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas.

*– H.G. Wells, **The Island of Dr. Moreau***

With *no* knowledge of Anunnaki programming, NLP is chancy and unreliable. Enthrallment skills for anyone without Hidden Lore (History B) are used at -5 *and* take double the time. (This may not apply to bardic magic or similar out-of-left-field methods; GMs who want to pit secret conclaves of Druids against the Anunnakku are on their own.)

Irruptors can use Enthrallment against humans via anything from Fast-Talk to Dancing. They need only one-quarter the listed time for all Enthrallment skills except Persuade *and* are immune to Enthrallment skills themselves.

Expert Skill

The following Expert Skill may play a major role for some Sandmen:

Memetics: Can stand in for Brainwashing, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Interrogation, Leadership, Merchant, Politics, Propaganda, Psychology, Sociology, and Teaching to answer questions about the use of memetic techniques or identify memes being spread in a given population.

Gesture

The gestural syntax used by Sandmen in field conditions is based on primate observations in order to minimize the chances of accidentally incorporating Anunnaki mudras. Non-Sandmen are at -3 to understand these gestures, though Sandmen can intentionally communicate using "standard" gestures (for their cultural background) at -2 to skill.

Hidden Lore

This setting introduces two new Hidden Lore specialties:

History B: You know the truth about human history, the role of the Anunnakku, and the nature of irruptors, reality quakes, and similar phenomena. This skill is the prerequisite for any Project SANDMAN esoteric powers and abilities.

Psis: You know all sorts of psionic secrets. This includes details about underground institutes, foreign research programs, who the factions are (and their agendas), and which historical events show psychic fingerprints.

History

Characters with Hidden Lore (History B) can use History to spot inconsistencies, break points, and fault lines in the historical record. These might be indicative of irruptor action or stigmata from the Ontoclysm; a Hidden Lore (History B) roll is needed to specifically diagnose such traces.

Hypnotism

One of the most common post-hypnotic suggestions in clinical hypnosis is the implanting of a trance trigger, such as snapped fingers or the sound of a command word. A previously hypnotized subject given such a trigger resists this new Hypnotism at -3, or at -5 if the trigger is given by his original hypnotist.

Using the symbolic vocabulary of the Anunnaki control program (and Enthrallment skills, pp. 18-19), Sandman hypnotists can give very detailed post-hypnotic suggestions, involving complex actions triggered by very specific stimuli. These suggestions are not affected by the subject's beliefs or even the degree of physical danger involved. The hypnotist makes a Hypnotism roll to entrance the subject, and then a Captivate roll to implant the suggestion and stimulus trigger.

The subject resists when he encounters the stimulus trigger, using Will (at the usual -3 if the Captivate skill incorporated Anunnaki programming, +1 per week since he was last hypnotized, and -1 per hour spent under hypnotic conditioning). The hypnotist can spread the conditioning out over several sessions, disguising them as psychiatric appointments or dental visits, or simply break in and hypnotize the subject while he sleeps each night!

If the hypnotist has both Psychology at 12+ and a detailed psychological workup of the subject, he makes all Hypnotism attempts against that subject at +1. If he performed the psychological examination in question, raise this to +2.

Mental Strength

Using this skill to resist Anunnaki programming or glyphs requires a Concentrate maneuver. In combat, this means the Sandman's resistance roll should be deferred until his turn.

Physiology

Based on a century of combat field reports, Sandmen have developed the specialty Physiology (Irruptor) to locate irruptors' vital spots for targeted attacks and called shots. It defaults to Physiology (Human) at -5.

Propaganda

This is the core skill for designing a memetic (or counter-memetic) payload. See pp. 43-45 for details.

Psychology

Unless otherwise indicated, all uses of Psychology in this book refer to Psychology (Applied).

Although the default Project doesn't know nearly enough to use it, the GM might introduce the specialty Psychology (Irruptor), especially for a campaign intended to depict the final struggle between mankind and the Anunnakku. Such a specialty has no default to or from any Psychology specialty dealing with humans.

Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)

The skill to inscribe an Anunnaki glyph is Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki). Specific glyphs are Hard techniques of Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki). For more details and specific glyphs, see pp. 38-42.

NEW SKILL

The Project's applied anthropologists use a new skill to analyze and predict the behavior of human groups.

Esmology

IQ/Very Hard

Default: None.
Prerequisites: Hidden Lore (History B) and *either* Esmologist 1 or Sandman Regimen.

The Anunnakku programmed human beings to behave in certain specific ways, especially in groups and societies. Sandman anthropologists can read these programming routines, and thus predict mass action (e.g., which way the mob will run or the stock market will go), reflexive action derived from group doctrine or training (e.g., how the squad will respond, how the hospital will evacuate), and group-directed or -reinforced action (e.g., what the police will do next, how Congress will vote). They call this discipline esmology, from the Greek *esmos,* meaning "swarm of bees." It provides perfect predictive analysis of any group or mass of people, especially socially organized groups such as bureaucracies, gangs, or corporations.

With a successful Esmology skill roll, the user can also add +3 to any Influence roll or other skill roll to influence a social group, *including* Propaganda rolls to create a meme or countermeme. This overlaps *Manipulation* (**GURPS Social Engineering,** p. 37); the two bonuses do not stack.

NEW TECHNIQUES

In addition to the glyphic Techniques of Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki) (see pp. 38-42), Sandmen have a few other strings for their operational bows.

Cinematic techniques are marked with an asterisk (*).

Head Butt

Hard

Defaults: Brawling-1 or Karate-1.†
Prerequisite: Brawling or Karate; cannot exceed prerequisite skill.

This is a close-combat strike using the forehead. Natural targets are the face (-5) and the skull (-7) of a standing adversary, but you can attack anything!

Roll against Head Butt to hit. Damage is thrust-1 crushing. Your victim may defend normally; if he parries, any damage this causes affects your *face.* Self-inflicted injury for a target with DR 3+ applies to the skull; however, your skull's DR 2 protects normally.

† Head Butt requires practice to be effective; fighters without Brawling or Karate strike at DX-2 and do only thrust-2 damage. It doesn't benefit from Boxing, Judo, Sumo Wrestling, or Wrestling.

A far-reaching biologic weapon can be forged from a new language. In fact such a language already exists.

– William S. Burroughs, "Electronic Revolution"

Hypnotic Freeze*

Hard

Default: Hypnotism-8.
Prerequisites: Hypnotism and *either* Sandman Regimen *or* Trained by a Master; cannot exceed prerequisite skill.

This is a quick, compelling move designed to focus a target's attention into a pre-hypnotic state. It requires a hypnotic focus; e.g., a gold watch, a hand mirror, or a blinking red light. The item must have been readied in a previous turn, or be worn on or near the face.

Spend a single turn of concentration to attempt to "freeze" a target to attention. Treat this as a Quick Contest of Hypnotic Freeze versus the target's Will+5. If the target wins or ties, there is no effect. If you win, the target is dazed (p. B428). This isn't a true hypnotic trance, but assuming you don't attack or jostle him, you have five seconds to perform a true hypnotic induction with a Hypnotism roll.

You can use Hypnotic Freeze as an active defense against a melee attack once per turn. Roll a Quick Contest: (Hypnotic Freeze/2)+3, rounded down, at +1 for Combat Reflexes, against the attacker's Will+5. Victory counts as a dodge

Kapadol*

Hard

Default: Head Butt.
Prerequisite: Sandman Regimen; cannot exceed Head Butt.

From the Volapük word for "headache," Kapadol acts exactly like Head Butt in combat.

However, it also anchors a powerful NLP subroutine that "reboots" the brain during mental contests. Smashing your skull into a hard surface (a brick wall, an enemy's face, etc.) immediately ends any influence contest against an Anunnakku or their tools. If you fail a resistance roll against such influence, and can succeed at Kapadol *as your immediate next action,* you can reroll the resistance roll at an extra -1.

TEMPLATES

Each of these templates builds a 350-point Sandman. However, required campaign advantages (the languages and Patron) eat 99 of those points at the outset, so Sandmen will "play" more like 250-point heroes. That said, having Project SANDMAN for a Patron provides lots of wonderful techniques and gear. All technological skills are TL8 unless indicated otherwise.

APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGIST

350 points

A Sandman "applied anthropologist" predicts, controls, and redirects groups: enemies, victims, or inconvenient witnesses. (Beam Weapons covers his handy ikoter, p. 47.) His Leadership and Intuition serve him well as the team "mastermind." The applied anthropologist's skill set also makes him a likely backup "face man" if needed, and the team can tap him as a field memeticist.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 11 [10].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 5 [0].
Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Cultural Adaptability [10]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Esmologist 1 [15]; Intuition [15]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Renshaw Method 1 [7]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Security Clearance [10]; and Security Rank 0 [0]. ● A further 40 points chosen from among Charisma [5/level], Eidetic Memory [5] or Photographic Memory [10], Esmologist 2-3 [15/level], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Honest Face [1], Languages (any) [2-6/language], Memetics [10/level], Rapier Wit [5], Renshaw Method 2+ [7/slot], Sandman Regimen [10], Security Rank 1-4 [10/level], Sensitive [5] or Empathy [15], or Smooth Operator [15/level].
Disadvantages: Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]. ● Another -20 points chosen from among Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Mitigator, Glasses, -60%) [-10], Callous [-5], Combat Paralysis [-15], Curious [-5*], Disciplines of Faith (p. 17) [-5], Guilt Complex [-5], Insomniac [-10 or -15], Intolerance (Intellectual inferiors) [-5], Odious Personal Habit (Condescending or Lecturing) [-5], Overconfidence [-5*], Paranoia [-10], or Post-Combat Shakes [-5*].
Primary Skills: Administration (A) IQ+1 [2]-15†; Anthropology (H) IQ+1 [4]-15†; Diplomacy (H) IQ+2 [8]-16†; Esmology (VH) IQ+1 [8]-15†; Propaganda (A) IQ+1 [2]-15†; and Psychology (H) IQ+1 [4]-15†.

Secondary Skills: Beam Weapons (Projector) (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Expert Skill (Memetics) (H) IQ [4]-14; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Hypnotism (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Intelligence Analysis (H) IQ [2]-14†; Leadership (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; and Sociology (H) IQ [2]-14†. ● 10 points in Archaeology, Area Knowledge (any), Criminology, Enthrallment skills, Public Speaking, Savoir-Faire (any), or skills covered by Esmologist (p. 15).
Background Skills: Research (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; Teaching (A) IQ-1 [1]-13; and Writing (A) IQ-1 [1]-13.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.
† Includes +1 for Esmologist.

CHEVAL

350 points

The word *cheval* means "horse" in French and in Haitian Creole. In the latter language, it also refers to a Voudun worshiper who allows himself to be possessed, or "ridden," by a powerful archetypal spirit called a *loa*. The Project took both terms from Voudun, to refer to a brain-hacked multiple-personality asset and the shell persona he carries. The kind of Sandman who volunteers for brain hacking usually has something wrong with him, something that drives him to seek shelter in an artificial personality. Creative disadvantage selection, deployment, and roleplaying can reveal this drive to the other players without the cheval ever overtly addressing it.

In the earliest days of the Project, Sandman psychologists believed hypnotized subjects could be separated from their Anunnaki programming. Building a robust, field-efficient, post-hypnotic subroutine took longer than they thought at first. The first chevals, usually badly traumatized Sandmen with combat skills too useful to lose, were programmed to run very simple subroutines ("run then kill then run then hide") using techniques spun off from MK-ULTRA research.

When MRI and computer technology improved to the point of first-order neural mapping and simulation, the Project began programming more complex shell personae with better success. These shell personae, or loa, are designed to run almost on "autopilot," making decisions based not on conscious or even subconscious thought (both potentially distorted by Anunnaki programming) but on behavior algorithms preset by Project brain hackers. Voudun loa and pop-culture figures provide behavior patterns complex enough to react to changing situations, but straightforward enough to run without contamination by the cheval's in-built Anunnaki source code.

Get a perfect semantic formula and you can't forget it. And the perfect formula would have everything. It'd have rhythm, and just enough sense to start you wondering what it meant. It wouldn't necessarily mean anything, but . . . Combine language with mathematics and psychology, and something could be worked out.

– Henry Kuttner, "Nothing But Gingerbread Left"

The cheval uses a talisman (keyed to him and to his loa by NLP anchoring techniques) to induce autohypnosis (the Autotrance advantage) and "loa possession." In addition to resistance to Anunnaki influence, loa often bring about changes to the cheval's physical ability by biofeedback, or activate skill programs mimicking "forgotten" muscle-memory training; for example, a nebbishy analyst who activates Oggun suddenly becomes a combat monster. Any cheval is thus a landmine or an IED waiting to go off. Chevals train as infiltrators, building on this potential for tactical surprise; if that aspect of playing a cheval particularly intrigues, buy up Hypnotism and Stealth to 14+ to become eligible for Invisibility Art.

This template includes 100 points for the Loa advantage, representing the cheval's highest-point loa. Additional loa cost 9 points each (see below). Adjust any additional advantage points up or down by the amount the cheval's highest-point loa undershoots or exceeds 100.

Example: Of Lt. Carson's loa, The Bat is worth the most points, at 95. Added to the 9-point cost of the Loa (Vever Required, -40%) advantage, that equals 104 points. Because this exceeds the 100 points allocated in his template, Lt. Carson takes 4 fewer points of advantages from the "further 20 points" list in the template. If Lt. Carson had bought Damballah as his highest-point loa instead, for 87 points (78 points for Damballah, plus the 9 points for Loa), he would add 13 points of advantages to the "further 20 points" listed in the template. If Lt. Carson bought Oggun for 132 points total, he would take *none* of the "further 20 points" of advantages, and would have to take an additional -12 points of disadvantages from the list in the template! The way of Oggun is not for the faint of heart.

Remember to adjust loa package costs once you've finished picking advantages and disadvantages! See *Shapeshifting* (pp. 14-15) for detailed rules.

Loa Talents

Nearly all loa come with a complex of skills programmed into them, skills they were literally created to use. Most loa buy these skills for 1 point each and then amplify them with four levels of a custom "loa Talent" that gives +4 to all of the loa's inherent skills. The GM decides who reacts at +4 when witnessing the Talent in action. (Technically, it also reduces training times, but most loa possessions don't last long enough for this to be relevant.) Loa Talents *cannot* be bought separately, only as part of a loa template.

This approach is not ubiquitous to loa templates; some (e.g., Oggun) take a different tack.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 12 [40]; HT 11 [10].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 12 [0]; Per 12 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0].
Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Autotrance [1]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Loa (Vever Required -40%) [100]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Sandman Regimen [10]; *and* Security Rank 0 [0]. ● A further 20 points chosen from among Basic Speed +1.00 [20], Absolute Timing [2],

Danger Sense [15], Eidetic Memory [5] *or* Photographic Memory [10], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Honest Face [1], Pitiable [5], Renshaw Method [7/slot], Security Rank [10/level], Serendipity 1 [15], Wild Talent 1 [20], or additional Loa (Vever Required -40%) [9/loa].
Disadvantages: Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]. ● Another -20 points chosen from among Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10*], Deafness [-20], Disciplines of Faith (Voudun) [-5], Insomniac [-10 or -15], Low Self-Image [-10], Manic-Depressive [-20], Nightmares [-5*], Phantom Voices (Annoying) [-5], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Secret (whatever in your past impelled you to sign up for brain hacking) [-5 to -20], or Shyness (Mild or Severe) [-5 or -10].
Primary Skills: Autohypnosis (H) Will+1 [8]-13 *and* Holdout (A) IQ [2]-12. ● *Either* Shadowing or Streetwise, both (A) IQ [2]-12. ● Select *one* 13-point infiltration-method package:

1. *Physical:* Jumping (E) DX [1]-12; Climbing and Stealth, both (A) DX+1 [4]-13; *and* Electronics Operation (Security) and Lockpicking, both (A) IQ [2]-12.
2. *Social:* Savoir-Faire (any) (E) IQ [1]-12 *and* Acting, Disguise, Fast-Talk, all (A) IQ+1 [4]-13.

Secondary Skills: Archaeology (H) IQ-2 [1]-10; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ-1 [1]-11; Hypnotism (H) IQ-1 [2]-11; *and* Psychology (H) IQ-1 [2]-11. ● *Either* Observation or Urban Survival, both (A) Per-1 [1]-11.
Background Skills: Current Affairs (Popular Culture) (E) IQ [1]-12; Gesture (E) IQ [1]-12; *and* Judo (H) DX-2 [1]-10.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

Loa

Here are a few sample loa to start out with. The point total listed after each is for the loa template (broken down to show the 10% discount), but *not* the 9-point cost of the Loa advantage itself. This is to make it easier to tweak the template as necessary as per p. 15. In particular, if a cheval has Low Self-Image, a loa will typically overwrite that disadvantage even without adding Overconfidence; this increases the loa's template cost by 9 points (90% of 10 points).

The listed Delusions are not technically Delusions per se (a possessed cheval might well *be* Oggun to a devout Voudunist) but represent the social aspects of weird loa behavior, speech, and affect. Plus that whole "I am Oggun, Lord of Fire and Iron" thing.

Project wetware hackers *love* building loa for would-be chevals, and are always happy to try out an experimental build. Players looking for a point break on a loa can opt for a "beta loa" with just a *few* bugs to work out. For such loa, the GM should add secret disadvantages (Epilepsy and Neurological Disorder, for example), underpower the listed stats ("Whoops, looks like that biofeedback didn't give you any DR after all!"), or otherwise introduce flies in the ointment.

Some loa (e.g., The Bat and Wabbit) add the following cinematic ability from *GURPS Horror* (p. 20):

Ghostly Movement: You can move anywhere within (your Move) yards in a single Move maneuver, as long as nobody is looking right at you *and* you could have gotten there "the hard way" eventually given sufficient time. For example, you could slip through a heating grate and escape an office, assuming you were briefly unobserved, and you could have opened and fit through the grate normally. *30 points.*

> *You will understand soon. Terrible times are coming but everything will become clear. Now, you recall a catastrophic event – the "Crisis" – that recently took place on this stratum? This crisis, we discovered, has resulted in the current threat to your reality. The continuum was radically altered at that time, but some holes remained, unseen, pockets of contradiction.*
>
> *– Yellow alien,*
> *in* **Animal Man** *#12,*
> *by Grant Morrison*

Sample Loa

The Bat: ST+2 [20]; DX+2 [40]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Daredevil [15]; Ghostly Movement [30]; Night Vision 5 [5]; Perfect Balance [15]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; The Bat 4 [20]; Code of Honor (Crimefighter) [-15]; Delusion ("I am a grim avenger of the night.") [-15]; Disturbing Voice [-10]; Overconfidence (6) [-10]; Pacifism (Cannot Kill) [-15]; Acrobatics (H) DX+3 [1]*; Boxing (A) DX+3 [1]; Climbing (A) DX+4 [1]*; Intimidation (A) Will+3 [1]; Thrown Weapon (Shuriken) (E) DX+4 [1]. *95 points (90% of 105 points).*

Damballah: ST+1 [10]; DX+3 [60]; Acute Taste and Smell 4 [8]; Damballah 4 [20]; Double-Jointed [15]; DR 2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [6]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Cannot Speak (Hissing only) [-15]; Delusion ("I am Lord of Serpents.") [-15]; Disturbing Voice [-10]; Serpentine Movement [-1]; Supernatural Feature (No Body Heat) [-5]; Climbing (A) DX+8 [1]†; Escape (H) DX+7 [1]†; Swimming (E) HT+4 [1]; Wrestling (A) DX+3 [1]; Choke Hold (H) Wrestling [4]. *78 points (90% of 86 points).*

Elvis: Charisma 4 [20]; Elvis 4 [20]; Handsome [12]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Voice [10]; Delusion ("I'm a millionaire!") [-10]; Gluttony (6) [-10]; Carousing (E) HT+4 [1]; Musical Instrument (Guitar) (H) IQ+2 [1]; Performance (A) IQ+3 [1]; Sex Appeal (A) HT+9 [1]‡§; Singing (E) HT+6 [1]§. *47 points (90% of 52 points).*

Legba: ST+3 [30]; Absolute Direction [5]; Immunity to Stun and Shock [30]; Legba 4 [20]; Oracle (Reduced Time 5, Two minutes, +100%) [30]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Basic Move-3 [-15]; Delusion ("I am the Opener of the Way.") [-15]; Lame (Crippled Leg) [-10]; Stooped Posture [-1]; Electronics Operation (Security) (A) IQ+3 [1]; Escape (H) DX+2 [1]; Forced Entry (E) DX+4 [1]; Immovable Stance (H) DX+2 [1]; Lockpicking (A) IQ+3 [1]. *76 points (90% of 84 points).*

Loup-Garou: ST+2 [20]; DX+2 [40]; HT+2 [20]; Basic Move+3 [15]; Per+4 [20]; Discriminatory Smell [15]; DR 2 (Tough Skin, -40%) [6]; Enhanced Dodge 1 [15]; Loup-Garou 4 [20]; Night Vision 2 [2]; Penetrating Voice [1]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Bestial [-10]; Cannot Speak (Growls and howls only) [-15]; Delusion ("I am a wolf.") [-15]; Dread (Silver) [-5]; Ham-Fisted 2 [-10]; Brawling (E) DX+4 [1]; Jumping (E) DX+4 [1]; Running (A) HT+3 [1]. *115 points (90% of 127 points).*

Oggun: ST+5 [50]; DX+2 [40]; HT+2 [20]; Combat Reflexes [15]; DR 4 (Limited, Heat/Fire, -40%) [12]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Weapon Master (All) [45]; Bloodlust (6) [-20]; Delusion ("I am the Lord of Fire and Iron!") [-15]; Odious Personal Habit (Constant swearing and profanity) [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (Smokes constantly) [-5]; Overconfidence (6) [-10]; Pyromania (6) [-10]; Supernatural Feature (High Body Heat) [-5]; Guns (Pistol) (E) DX+3 [8] ● 16 points of skill in the first melee weapon the loa sees. *123 points (90% of 136 points).*

Sherlock: ST+2 [20]; IQ+2 [40]; Per+2 [10]; Intuition [15]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Sherlock 4 [20]; Callous [-5]; Delusion ("I am Sherlock Holmes.") [-15]; Odious Personal Habit (Chain smoker) [-5]; Criminology (A) IQ+3 [1]; Forensics (H) IQ+2 [1]; Judo (H) DX+2 [1]; Observation (A) Per+3 [1]. *81 points (90% of 89 points).*

Wabbit: DX+2 [40]; Daredevil [15]; Enhanced Dodge 1 [15]; Extraordinary Luck (Defensive, -20%) [24]; Ghostly Movement [30]; Immunity to Stun and Shock [30]; Rapier Wit [5]; upgrade Resistant to Anunnaki Programming from (+3) to (+8) [5]; Wabbit 4 [20]; Craves Carrots [-1]; Curious (6) [-10]; Delusion ("I am a wambunctious wabbit.") [-15]; Trickster (6) [-30]; Jumping (E) DX+4 [1]; Public Speaking (Taunts) (E) IQ+4 [1]; Traps (A) IQ+3 [1]. *118 points (90% of 131 points).*

* Includes +1 for Perfect Balance.
† Includes +5 for Double-Jointed.
‡ Includes +4 for Appearance.
§ Includes +2 for Voice.

COMMANDO

350 points

Most of the Project's special military operators come from the ranks of the British SAS, the U.S. DEVGRU, South African Recce units, or Canadian JTF-2. A non-trivial number are Tibetan commandos descended from ST-CIRCUS teams. However, every so often a special-forces commando from another country (especially one working in the Middle East) discovers irruptors, survives the encounter, and responds positively to Project recruiters.

Attributes: ST 12 [20]; DX 15 [100]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 12 [5]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 7.00 [5]; Basic Move 7 [0].

Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Fit [5]; Military Rank 1 [5]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Sandman Regimen [10]; *and* Security Rank 0 [0]. ● A further 20 points chosen from among ST +1 to +2 [10/level], DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], HT +1 to +2 [10/level], Per +1 to +4 [5/level], Basic Speed +1.00 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Acute Vision [2/level], Ambidexterity [5], Combat Reflexes [15], Eidetic Memory [5] *or* Photographic Memory [10], Enhanced Dodge 1 [15], Fearlessness [2/level], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Languages (Arabic, Pashtun, Farsi, Hebrew, Tibetan, isiZulu, etc.) [2-6/language], Legal Enforcement Powers [15], Luck [15], Military Rank 2-5 [5/level], Peripheral Vision [15], Rapid Healing [5], Rapier Wit [5], Renshaw Method [7/slot], Security Rank [10/level], or upgrade Fit [5] to Very Fit [15] for 10 points.
Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Soldier's) [-10]; Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]. ● Another -20 points chosen from among Addiction (Combat Amphetamines) [-15], Callous [-5], Fanaticism (Patriotic *or* Human race) [-15], Flashbacks (Mild or Severe) [-5 or -10], Hard of Hearing [-10] *or* Deafness [-20], Impulsiveness [-10*], On the Edge [-15*], Overconfidence [-5*], Sense of Duty (Team) [-5] *or* (Nation) [-10], Stubbornness [-5], or Workaholic [-5].
Primary Skills: Fast-Draw (Ammo), Forced Entry, and Jumping, all (E) DX [1]-15; Guns (Pistol) (E) DX+2 [4]-17; Stealth (A) DX+1 [4]-16; *and* Acrobatics (H) DX-1 [2]-14. ● *Five* of Guns (Light Machine Gun, Rifle, Shotgun, *or* SMG) (E) DX+1 [1]-16, bought from default to Guns (Pistol) specialty; Beam Weapons (Projector), Crossbow, Fast-Draw (Long Arm *or* Pistol), Gunner (Cannon *or* Machine Gun), or Guns (Grenade Launcher *or* LAW), all (E) DX [1]-15; or Throwing (A) DX-1 [1]-14.
Secondary Skills: Knife (E) DX [1]-15; Judo and Karate, both (H) DX [4]-15; Gesture (E) IQ+1 [2]-12; Armoury (Small Arms) and Soldier, both (A) IQ+1 [4]-12; Holdout (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Physiology (Irruptor) and Tactics, both (H) IQ [4]-11; Survival (any) (A) Per+1 [4]-13; *and* Breath Control (H) HT [4]-12. ● *Eight* of Parachuting (E) DX [1]-15; Driving (Automobile, Halftrack, Heavy Wheeled, *or* Tracked) or Spear, both (A) DX-1 [1]-14; Escape (H) DX-2 [1]-13; Camouflage, First Aid, Seamanship, or Submariner, all (E) IQ [1]-11; Explosives (Demolition), Forward Observer, Leadership, or Scuba, all (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Swimming (E) HT [1]-12; or Hiking or Running, both (A) HT-1 [1]-11. ● Another 9 points to improve any primary or secondary skill. Alternatively, if you are using **Martial Arts,** spend these on Kleil (p. 45) and its traits, including Style Familiarity.

Background Skills: Archaeology (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Psychology (H) IQ-1 [2]-10; *and* Savoir-Faire (Military) (E) IQ [1]-11.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

GOLDEN CHILD

350 points

Just before the turn of the century, the Project began an experiment called PSAMETIC, named after the Egyptian pharaoh Psametik I who, according to Herodotus, isolated a group of children from infancy to see which language they would learn. (The official backronym stood for Psychophysiologically Adaptive Memetically Isolated Crèche.) Whether or not Herodotus had preserved legends of an early attempt to rebel against Anunnaki linguistic programming, with computer systems now capable of teaching and interacting with people, it seemed possible to raise children completely quarantined from Anunnaki influence.

The PSAMETIC subjects (rapidly nicknamed "Golden Children") were all orphaned infants taken from adoption agencies and refugee camps around the world after rigorous genetic screening. Taught by computerized avatars, they learned Aulang (see p. 12) as their first language. Their human nannies, cooks, doctors, and physical trainers were Sandmen speaking only Aulang, the latter using a variety of techniques from martial arts, sports medicine, and psychophysiology to train adaptable, multi-capable agents. Since the oldest Golden Children are still young teenagers, it's too soon to tell how close to perfection PSAMETIC has gotten, but its initial results were so encouraging and instructive that two other cohorts (currently ages 10 and 5) of Golden Children are being raised in Granite Peak, with selection for the fourth cohort already underway. The Project uses older Golden Children to train these younger cohorts; understandably, Golden Children show a fierce in-group loyalty to their own. The Dependents disadvantage represents this; per p. B131, its value is doubled for a large group.

If Golden Children gain Security Rank (p. 13), it does not provide Status with other national-security bureaucracies, for obvious reasons. Its cost is reduced to 5 points per level to indicate it is restricted to rank within the Project.

The TL9 computer skills (and Cutting-Edge Training) derive from the Golden Children's lifelong interaction with next-generation programming languages and neural nets. Their Renshaw Method advantage has three slots by default, indicating the breadth of their training and their lifelong use of the Method.

Attributes: ST 9 [-10]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 12 [20].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d-1; BL 16 lbs.; HP 12 [6]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 13 [3]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; *either* SM 0 or SM -1.

It is hardly surprising that children should enthusiastically start their education at an early age with the Absolute Knowledge of computer science; while they are unable to read, for reading demands making judgments at every line . . . Conversation is almost dead, and soon so too will be those who knew how to speak.

– Guy Debord, **Comments on the Society of the Spectacle**

Advantages: Absolute Direction [5]; Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Aulang (Native) [0]; Cultural Familiarity (PSAMETIC) [0]; Cutting-Edge Training (Computer Operation and Computer Programming) [2]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Eidetic Memory [5]; Fit [5]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Perfect Facial Recognition [1]; Perfect Pitch [1]; Renshaw Method 3 [21]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+8) [15]; Sandman Regimen [10]; Security Clearance [5]; *and* Security Rank 0 [0]. ● A further 30 points chosen from among DX +1 [20], IQ +1 [20], Per +1 to +6 [5/level], Basic Speed +1.00 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Ambidexterity [5], Appearance (Attractive to Very Handsome/Beautiful) [4 to 16], Autotrance [1], Charisma [5/level], Cultural Familiarity (Western) [1], Enhanced Dodge 1-2 [15/level], Fearlessness [2/level] *or* Unfazeable [15], Flexibility [5] *or* Double-Jointed [15], Gunslinger [25], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Less Sleep 1-4 [2/level], Lightning Calculator [2], Luck [15] *or* Extraordinary Luck [30], Oracle [15], Peripheral Vision [15], Renshaw Method 4+ [7/slot], Security Rank 1-4 [5/level], Special Rapport [5], Voice [10], Weapon Master (Axe/Mace, Shortsword, or Staff) [20], Wild Talent 1 [20], upgrade Eidetic Memory [5] to Photographic Memory [10] for 5 points, upgrade Fit [5] to Very Fit [15] for 10 points, or upgrade Security Clearance [5] to [10] for 5 points.

Disadvantages: Dependents (Next cohort of Golden Children; Built on 50%; Friends; 12 or less) [-20]; Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]; Low Empathy [-20]; Sense of Duty (Fellow Golden Children) [-5]; *and* Social Stigma (Minor) [-5]. ● Another -15 points chosen from among Bully [-10*], Clueless [-10], Curious [-5*], Fanaticism (Human race) [-15], Gullibility [-10*], Impulsiveness [-10*], Odious Personal Habit (Arrogance) [-5], Shyness [-5 or -10], Skinny [-5], Truthfulness [-5*], or Vow (Vegan) [-5].

Primary Skills: Invisibility Art (VH) IQ [8]-14; Meditation (H) Will [4]-14; *and* Mental Strength (E) Will+2 [4]-16. ● Another 12 points in any one skill as a personal excellence program.

Secondary Skills: Archaeology (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Autohypnosis (H) Will-2 [1]-12; Beam Weapons (Projector) (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Body Control (VH) HT-1 [4]-11; Breath Control (H) HT [4]-12; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ [2]-14; Hypnotism (H) IQ [4]-14; Kiai (H) HT+1 [8]-13; Psychology (H) IQ-3 [4]-11†; *and* Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-14. ● One of Axe/Mace, Shortsword, or Staff, all (A) DX+1 [4]-13. ● A further 18 points in combat skills of your choice. Alternatively, if you are using **Martial Arts,** spend some or all of these on Kleil (p. 45) and its traits, including Style Familiarity.

Background Skills: Computer Operation/TL9 (E) IQ [1]-14; Computer Programming/TL9 (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; *and* Singing (E) HT+1 [2]-13.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.
† Includes -3 from Low Empathy.

NEUROLINGUIST

350 points

The neurolinguist is the "face man" of a Sandman team, using NLP for quick persuasion, on-the-fly memory alteration, and other social combat skills. If you foresee getting into a lot of

scraps despite your winning ways, pick up Rapier Wit, a hypnagogic flash (p. 47), and the Hypnotic Freeze technique (p. 20). Or take the more obvious route of Guns (Pistol) and Holdout.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 15 [100]; HT 11 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 17 [10]; Per 15 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 5.50 [0]; Basic Move 6 [5].

Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Honest Face [1]; Innate NLP 2 [30]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Renshaw Method 1 [7]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Security Rank 0 [0]; *and* Sumerian (Native) [6]. ● A further 25 points chosen from among Charisma [5/level], Cultural Familiarity [1/CF] *or* Cultural Adaptability [10], Eidetic Memory [5] *or* Photographic Memory [10], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Innate NLP 3 [15], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], Memetics [10/level], Rapier Wit [5], Renshaw Method 2+ [7/slot], Sandman Regimen [10], Security Clearance [5 or 10], Security Rank [10/level], Sensitive [5] *or* Empathy [15], Smooth Operator [15/level], Social Chameleon [5], or Voice [10].

Disadvantages: Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]. ● Another -20 points chosen from among Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Mitigator, Glasses, -60%) [-10], Callous [-5], Chummy [-5] *or* Gregarious [-10], Combat Paralysis [-15], Curious [-5*], Intolerance (Intellectual inferiors) [-5], Odious Personal Habit (Condescension or Lecturing) [-5], Overconfidence [-5*], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], or Stubbornness [-5].

Primary Skills: Fast-Talk (A) IQ+1-[1]-16†; Public Speaking (A) IQ [2]-15; Hypnotism (H) IQ+1 [2]-16†; Psychology (H) IQ [4]-15; Captivate, Persuade, Suggest, and Sway Emotions, all (VH) Will [2]-17†; Body Language (A) Per+2 [2]-17†; and Detect Lies (H) Per+1 [2]-16†.

Secondary Skills: Beam Weapons (Projector) (E) DX+1 [2]-12; Acting (A) IQ [2]-15; Archaeology (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; *and* Linguistics (H) IQ [4]-15. ● Another 10 points in skills or techniques covered by Innate NLP or Smooth Operator. ● *Either* Judo or Karate, both (H) DX [4]-11.

Background Skills: Research *and* Teaching, both (A) IQ-1 [1]-14.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.
† Includes +2 for Innate NLP.

REALITY ARCHAEOLOGIST

350 points

The reality archaeologist surveys the boundaries of History B, attempting to uncover the hidden history of humanity's foes. In practice, this means a rough-and-tumble familiarity with the outdoors, an archaeological background, and training in Anunnaki glyphs. This constant contact with the edges of reality results in any number of weird effects, usually showing up as Weirdness Magnet and a smattering of strange advantages.

For a price break, buy a package of powers – any of Danger Sense, Extraordinary Luck, Illuminated, Intuition, Serendipity, or Visualization fit – as a *reality shard* (pp. 37-38). This is a piece of History B carried by the archaeologist (against regulations!), warping his personal history and potential future. Apply Can Be Stolen (usually -20% or -30%) and Unique (-25%) to each trait granted by the shard.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 14 [80]; HT 11 [10].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 14 [0]; Per 14 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0].
Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; Akkadian (Native) [6]; Arabic (Native) [6]; ASL (Native) [3]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Luck [15]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Renshaw Method 1 [7]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Security Rank 0 [0]; *and* Sumerian (Native) [6]. ● A further 20 points chosen from among ST +1 to +2 [10/level], HT +1 to +2 [10/level], Basic Speed +1.00 [20], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Absolute Direction [5], Cultural Familiarity (Islamic, etc.) [1/CF] *or* Cultural Adaptability [10], Danger Sense [15], Eidetic Memory [5] *or* Photographic Memory [10], Enhanced Dodge [15], Esmologist 1 [15], Fit [5], Gizmos 1-3 [5/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Illuminated [15], Intuition [15], Language Talent [10], Languages (any) [2-6/language], Racial Memory (Passive) [15], Rapid Healing [5], Renshaw Method 2+ [7/slot], Sandman Regimen [10], Security Rank [10/level], Serendipity 1 [15], Temporal Inertia [15], Unfazeable [15], Visualization [10], or upgrade Luck [15] to Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points.
Disadvantages: Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]. ● -20 points chosen from among Bad Temper [-10*], Bully [-10*], Curious [-5*], Deafness [-20], Disciplines of Faith (p. 17) [-5], Overconfidence [-5*], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Selfish [-5*], or Weirdness Magnet [-15].
Primary Skills: Archaeology (H) IQ [4]-14; Connoisseur (Visual Arts) (A) IQ [2]-14; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ [2]-14; *and* Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki) (H) IQ+1 [8]-15. ● 12 points in individual Anunnaki glyph techniques (pp. 38-42).

Secondary Skills: Guns (Pistol) and Brawling, both (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Area Knowledge (Middle East) (E) IQ [1]-14; Geography (Regional; Middle East) and History (Middle Eastern), both (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; *and* Survival (Desert) (A) Per-1 [1]-13. ● *Seven* of Beam Weapons (Projector), Guns (Rifle), Knife, or Jumping, all (E) DX+1 [2]-13; Climbing, Driving (any), Lasso, Piloting (any), or Whip, all (A) DX [2]-12; Sleight of Hand or Escape, both (H) DX-1 [2]-11; First Aid (E) IQ+1 [2]-15; Acting, Cartography, Electronics Operation (Communications, Scientific, Sensors, *or* Sonar), Gambling, Holdout, Navigation (any), Occultism, Photography, or Smuggling, all (A) IQ [2]-14; Anthropology, Artist (Calligraphy), or Diplomacy, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-13; Scrounging (E) Per+1 [2]-15; or Observation or Tracking, both (A) Per [2]-14.

Background Skills: Hypnotism (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; Psychology (H) IQ-2 [1]-12; *and* Research (A) IQ [2]-14.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

TAISHER

350 points

"Taisher" is British Sandman slang derived from the Scots Gaelic *taibhsear,* meaning "seer" or "one with the Sight." Some humans have the ability to see irruptors, track reality fractures, and otherwise sense the approach or manifestation of History B phenomena. This often results from a traumatic exposure to a History B intrusion, leaving the taisher emotionally broken or otherwise psychically damaged. Other taishers are psis activated by a national psychic warfare program; while the Russians and Chinese reportedly use brutal methods to awaken a potential psi, the old CIA programs weren't much better. (A defector from such a program can take his former handlers as an Enemy.)

Given their abilities, Sandman taishers are most often deployed as scouts or infiltrators, with as many appropriate skills as they can learn.

The psionic abilities with Accessibility limitations are not intended to serve as inexpensive stand-ins for "Detect Irruptor" or "Detect Reality Shard"! Any such ability that is under the taisher's *active* control only works on *known* irruptors, shards, etc. Passive abilities are less of an issue, as the GM controls what information they provide.

Many taishers have powers that only work subconsciously; the limitations Uncontrollable (-10%) and Unconscious Only (-20%) may be added to any normally active ability – saving a few points in the process! Other common side effects of psi in this setting include nausea or migraines (Nuisance Effect), exhaustion (Costs Fatigue), and looking like a babbling idiot (Unreliable).

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 13 [60]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 13 [0]; Per 15 [10]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [15]; Basic Move 6 [0].
Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Detect (History B; ESP, -10%; Precise, +100%) [38]; ESP Talent 4 [20], Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Security Rank 0 [0]; *and* Unusual Background (Psi) [20]. ● Another 40 points of ESP abilities chosen from among Autotrance [1], Clairsentience (Accessibility, Only into reality subduction zones, -30%; Clairvoyance, -10%; ESP, -10%) [25]†, Danger Sense (Accessibility, Irruptors only, -40%; ESP, -10%) [8], Illuminated (ESP, -10%) [14], Oracle (ESP, -10%) [14], Precognition (Accessibility, Anunnaki phenomena only, -40%; ESP, -10%) [13], Psychometry (Accessibility, Reality shards only, -40%; ESP, -10%) [10], See Invisible (Irruptors; ESP, -10%) [14], or Telescopic Vision (Accessibility, Only into reality subduction zones, -30%; ESP, -10%) [3/level]. ● A further 20 points chosen from the previous list or from Per +1 to +4 [5/level], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Illuminated [15], Legal Enforcement Powers [15], Less Sleep 1-4 [2/level], Military Rank 1-4 [5/level], Renshaw Method [7/slot], Russian (Native) [6], Sandman Regimen [10], Security Rank [10/level], or Sensitive [5] *or* Empathy [15].
Disadvantages: Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20] *and* Weirdness Magnet [-15]. ● Another -20 points chosen from among HT -1 to -2 [-10/level], Addiction [Varies], Alcoholism [-15], Bad Temper [-10*], Chronic Depression [-15*], Chronic Pain (Migraines; Severe; 4 hours; 6 or less) [-7], Deafness [-20], Disciplines of Faith (p. 17) [-5], Enemy (SVR or Russian Mafiya; Hunter; 6 or less) [-10], Epilepsy [-30], Flashbacks [Varies], Guilt Complex [-5], Impulsiveness [-10*], Indecisive [-10*], Insomniac [-10 or -15], Killjoy [-15], Light Sleeper [-5], Low Self-Image [-10], Manic-Depressive [-20], Neurological Disorder [Varies], Nightmares [-5*], Odious Personal Habits (Odd behavior) [-5 to -10], On the Edge [-15*], Panic Attacks (**Horror,** p. 26) [Varies], Phantom Voices [-5 to -15], Phobia (Pulhata) [-10*], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Reputation (Creepy weirdo) [Varies], Short Attention Span [-10*], Shyness [Varies], Sleepwalker [-5*], Unfit [-5], or *one* of Overweight [-1], Fat [-3], or Skinny [-5].
Primary Skills: Archaeology (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Camouflage (E) IQ+1 [2]-14; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ+1 [4]-14;

Observation (A) Per [2]-15; Shadowing (A) IQ+1 [4]-14; Stealth (A) DX+2 [8]-13; *and* Tracking (A) Per-1 [1]-14. ● *Either* Forced Entry (E) DX+1 [2]-12 or Lockpicking (A) IQ [2]-13.
Secondary Skills: Beam Weapons (Projector) (E) DX+1 [2]-12. ● *Either* Judo or Karate, both (H) DX+1 [8]-12. ● *Six* of Acting, Disguise, Electronics Operation (Surveillance), Fortune-Telling (any), Hidden Lore (Psis), Occultism, or Photography, all (A) IQ [2]-13; Hypnotism, Mimicry (Speech), or Psychology, all (H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Meditation (H) Will-1 [2]-12; Body Language (A) Per [2]-15; or Detect Lies (H) Per-1 [2]-14.
Background Skills: Current Affairs (any) (E) IQ [1]-13.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.
† Increased Range (p. B106) may be added for a net +5 points/level.

WETWARE HACKER

350 points

The wetware hacker specializes in psychotronics, the interface between mind and computer. Ideally, wetware hackers need skill in both software and human manipulation: the wetware hacker becomes the team's keyboard jockey, wire rat, and (along with the applied anthropologist) a backup "face man." Since a modicum of surgical skill is necessary for brain hacking, he more often than not also becomes the team medic . . . which is less comforting than it might be, admittedly.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [20]; IQ 15 [100]; HT 10 [0].
Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 15 [0]; Per 13 [-10]; FP 10 [0]; Basic Speed 5.25 [0]; Basic Move 6 [5].
Advantages: Alternate Identity (Legal) [5]; ASL (Native) [3]; Born to Be Wired 2 [10]; Circuit Sense 2 [10]; Cutting-Edge Training (Electronics Operation (Psychotronics) and Electronics Repair (Psychotronics)) [2]; Danbe (Native) [6]; Legal Enforcement Powers [15]; Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Special Abilities +100%) [90]; Renshaw Method 1 [7]; Resistant to Anunnaki Programming (+3) [10]; Security Clearance [5]; *and* Security Rank 0 [0]. ● A further 30 points chosen from among IQ +1 [20], Per +1 to +3 [5/level], Acute Hearing [2/level], Artificer 1-2 [10/level], Born to Be Wired 3-4 [5/level], Circuit Sense 3-4 [5/level], Contact Group (Online associates; Skill-12, 15, *or* 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, *or* 15], Cutting-Edge Training (Engineer (Psychotronics)) [1], Eidetic Memory [5] *or* Photographic Memory [10], Gadgeteer [25]†, Gizmos 1-3 [5/gizmo]†, High Manual Dexterity 1-4 [5/level], Higher Purpose (Defeat Irruptors) [5], Innate NLP 1 [15], Mathematical Ability 1-2 [10/level], Renshaw Method 2+ [7/slot], Sandman Regimen [10], Security Rank [10/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Smooth Operator 1 [15], or upgrade Security Clearance [5] to [10] for 5 points.
Disadvantages: Duty (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Extremely Hazardous) [-20]. ● -20 points chosen from among Addiction (Caffeine) [-5] *or* (Brocaine) [-15], Bad Sight (Nearsighted; Mitigator, Glasses, -60%) [-10], Callous [-5], Curious [-5*], Clueless [-10], Cowardice [-10*], Guilt Complex [-5], Loner [-5*], Nightmares [-5*], Paranoia [-10], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Sense of Duty [Varies], Unfit [-5], or *one* of Overweight [-1], Fat [-3], or Skinny [-5].

Primary Skills: Brain Hacking (H) IQ+1 [8]-16; Brainwashing (H) IQ+1 [8]-16; Computer Hacking (VH) IQ+1 [4]-16‡; Computer Operation (E) IQ+3 [2]-18‡; Computer Programming (H) IQ+1 [2]-16‡; Electronics Operation/TL9^ (Psychotronics) (A) IQ+2 [2]-17§; Electronics Repair/TL9^ (Psychotronics) (A) IQ+1 [1]-16§; Interrogation (A) IQ+1 [4]-16; *and* Surgery (Neurosurgery) (H) IQ [4]-15.

Secondary Skills: Beam Weapons (Pistol) (E) DX+2 [4]-13; Body Language (A) Per [2]-13; Cryptography (H) IQ [1]-15‡; Detect Lies (H) Per [4]-13; Electronics Repair (Computers) (A) IQ+3 [1]-18‡§; Expert Skill (Computer Security) (H) IQ+1 [2]-16‡; Expert Skill (Psionics) (H) IQ [4]-15; First Aid (E) IQ [1]-15; Hypnotism (H) IQ [4]-15; Knife (E) DX+2 [4]-13; *and* Psychology (H) IQ-1 [2]-14. ● *Either* Judo or Karate, both (H) DX+1 [8]-12. ● *Two* of Electrician (A) IQ+2 [2]-17§; Engineer/TL9^ (Psychotronics) (H) IQ+1 [2]-16§¶; or Physician (H) IQ-1 [2]-14.

Background Skills: Archaeology (H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Area Knowledge (Dark Web) (E) IQ [1]-15; Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; *and* Research (A) IQ [2]-15. ● *One* of Current Affairs (Science & Technology) (E) IQ [1]-15; Hidden Lore (Psis) (A) IQ-1 [1]-14; or Mathematics (Applied) (H) IQ-2 [1]-13.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† When combined with Gadgeteer, Gizmos is not limited to three levels.

‡ Includes +2 for Born to Be Wired.

§ Includes +2 for Circuit Sense.

¶ Requires both Cutting-Edge Training perk and Mathematics (Applied) skill.

BUDGET CUTS AND ROOKIE SANDMEN

Project SANDMAN has significant worldly power, which it uses to ensure its agents are well-trained and equipped – as reflected by the 350-point templates in this chapter. This degree of training and support is necessary, as Sandmen face powerful, unpredictable, and *dangerous* foes.

It's possible to use this setting at lower power levels, however, by taking one or both of the following approaches. For example, you can run a 245-point game by choosing the second *Project SANDMAN* bullet *and* adding rookie lenses. The GM who does so will need to tone down the challenges he throws at the PCs, of course!

Project SANDMAN

A Project SANDMAN that lacks funding or social pull can still be a valuable asset – just a less reliable one. Replace the existing Patron with any of these options; the final point cost shown is the *net* change, to the cost of both Patron and the template as a whole.

● Patron (Project SANDMAN; 15 or less; Minimal Intervention, -50%; Special Abilities, +100%) [68]. The Project has to take politics, resources, etc., into account for each request; some may be denied even if the Project wishes it could help. *-22 points.*

● Patron (Project SANDMAN; 12 or less; Special Abilities, +100%) [60]. The Project is stretched thin, and is sometimes simply not *available* to help an agent in any way. When it can, however, it helps in full. *-30 points.*

● Patron (Project SANDMAN; 12 or less; Minimal Intervention, -50%; Special Abilities, +100%) [45]. As for *both* options above – the Project has to vet each request *and* is stretched thin. *-45 points.*

The Heroes

Each of these -75-point "rookie" lenses reduces the cost of its associated template from 350 points to 275 points.

Applied Anthropologist: Reduce IQ (along with Will and Per) to 13. Move Cultural Adaptability and Intuition to optional advantages; allow Cultural Familiarity [1/CF] as a cheaper alternative to Cultural Adaptability. Choose 30 points in optional advantages instead of 40. Choose another -20 points in disadvantages.

Cheval: Reduce DX to 11, but keep Basic Speed at 6.00. Reduce Loa (Vever Required) to [85]; the GM should be generous in allowing you to tweak a loa's traits to fit your point budget. Delete Sandman Regimen; make it an optional advantage. Add Split Personality (12) [-15], which gives your loa a chance to "come out and play" on its own. Choose another -20 points in disadvantages.

Commando: Reduce ST (along with HP) to 11 and DX to 14. Reduce Basic Speed (along with Basic Move) to 6.00. Delete Sandman Regimen; make it an optional advantage. Choose another -20 points in disadvantages.

Golden Child: Reduce DX to 11. Reduce HT to 11. Reduce Basic Speed (along with Basic Move) to 5.00. Delete Absolute Direction; make it an optional advantage. Reduce Renshaw Method to 1. In primary skills, reduce Invisibility Art to IQ-1 [4]-13 and put just 8 points (instead of 12) into the personal excellence program. In secondary skills, put just 10 points (instead of 18) into combat traits or Kleil.

Neurolinguist: Reduce DX to 10. Reduce Basic Speed to 5.00. Reduce Innate NLP to 1. Delete Sumerian and make it an optional advantage. Choose 20 points in optional advantages (instead of 25). Choose another -20 points of disadvantages. In secondary skills, choose just 6 points (instead of 10) in further Innate NLP or Smooth Operator skills.

Reality Archaeologist: Reduce ST (along with HP) to 10. Reduce DX to 11, but keep Basic Speed at 6.00. Reduce IQ (along with Will and Per) to 13. Reduce Akkadian, Arabic, and Sumerian to Accented. Choose another -20 points of disadvantages. In the last list of secondary skills, choose five (instead of seven).

Taisher: Reduce Per to 13. Reduce Basic Speed (along with Basic Move) to 5.00. Change Detect to Detect (History B; ESP, -10%) [18]; you can spend 20 points of those earmarked for psionic powers to upgrade to the Precise version. In the last list of advantages, choose just 15 points worth (instead of 20). Choose another -10 points of disadvantages. In primary skills, change Stealth to DX+1 [4]-12. In the last list of secondary skills, spend 1 point on each skill (instead of 2), taking each at one level lower than listed.

Wetware Hacker: Reduce DX to 10; Basic Speed becomes 5.00. Reduce IQ to 14. Reduce Will and Per to 12. Choose 25 points in optional advantages (instead of 30). Choose another -20 points of disadvantages.

ENEMIES OF HISTORY

The stairwell echoed and rattled with automatic weapons fire as Sgt. Sanchez stood tucked into the landing. They had elevation, they were finding the angle, and they had the armor-core door. Sanchez had an airburst grenade in his XM40 launcher, currently being field-tested in Afghanistan . . . and Detroit, although those tests wouldn't go into the Army files, Sanchez thought. He looked through his eyepieces at the vernier display, toggling the launcher: 18 meters straight up, 25 degrees over at 11-o'clock, drop 0.8 meters, FFE.

Sanchez waited a bit for their fire to slacken, but they must have been carrying a lot of ammo, because it didn't. Oh well, nothing ventured . . . Sanchez held the launcher out at arm's length into the hail of lead and pulled the trigger. The grenade flew up four flights, arced behind the door, and exploded. Their fire slackened after that.

Sanchez charged up the stairs, but was too late. Yes, two of them were down, chitin splintered, tails waving feebly, bleeding sticky blackness, wings and guns shredded. Glyphs gone; even without the Broakleys, Sanchez could see them as alien blends of human and scorpion, not as stocky men of indeterminate ethnicity. But a sticky black trail led back into the apartment.

Sanchez spun amidst the dying scorpion-men, boots crunching exoskeleton. He loaded starshell into the XM40, and fired it from the hip with the default three-meter burst. Almost blinded himself (the Broakleys were good, but nothing blocks starshell

from 10 feet), he rushed through the door and fired his Glock six times, on the 30-degree marks. The girtablullû sought refuge in programming when traumatized, and the last two had better be frakking well traumatized by now.

When Sanchez' vision cleared, he saw black tar smoldering in a cratered couch: the starshell must have hit the thing straight on. The other one lay on the balcony, twitching, a hole just above its burned carapace. Sanchez walked out onto the balcony and put two more holes in it. It stopped twitching.

"Excellent. You hunted them perfectly. And they ran, also perfectly." The voice above and behind him was a carillon, a symphony, a lover's endearment. "And now it ends. Perfectly."

Sanchez turned, too late, at the sound of wings.

Sandmen fight the war for reality on many fronts, against many foes. The default thriller tone of this campaign implies lots of bad guys, to be potentially deployed by the GM in squads of scorpion-men and crowds of cultists. To that end, these enemies appear in bestiary format instead of getting full templates, although the GM may want to provide full character sheets or at least design specific psychological traits for villainous "big bads" like šedu or kulullû. On that note, see *Irruptors as Characters,* p. 36.

Many enemies here list their most commonly deployed glyphs, but the GM should vary these at whim.

AUTOCHRONES

Not all of humanity's enemies come from outside History A. Plenty of people native to our history nonetheless seek alien rule, out of short-sightedness, bitterness, or desperation.

TRAITORS

Traitors know the full scope of the war against History B, and have knowingly chosen the other side. These specific foes come from the Project's ranks, or are blowback from its own meddling with human programming.

Tighearnamach

The term means "Lord of the Bees" in Scots Gaelic, a title self-granted by a circle of mostly British traitors from within the Project. Seduced away from their duty to humanity by

their own arrogance and by kulullû manipulation, the tighearnamach went over to the Red King's faction. Some were promised that they would become emperor-satraps upon the return of History B; others just wanted to use their power over the sleeping human herd to make themselves obscenely wealthy or influential. Sandman death squads killed most of the first rank of would-be overlords between 1982 and 1990, usually disguising the deaths as suicides, accidents, or the like. But there's always *someone* who thinks great power should come not with great responsibility but with a retinue of programmed slaves.

The first ring of tighearnamacha led troops of cultists, but that left too many trails for Sandman hit teams to track. The survivors are more likely to have girtablullû guardsmen for security, even if their desire to be worshiped still gets the better of them at times.

ST: 10	**HP:** 10	**Speed:** 5.00
DX: 10	**Will:** 16	**Move:** 5
IQ: 16	**Per:** 16	**Weight:** 130-230 lbs.
HT: 10	**FP:** 12	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 8	**Parry:** 8	**DR:** 0

Fast Captivate (11 vs. Will-3): Requires three minutes of conversation and a successful Psychology roll. +1 to Captivate for each additional three minutes (up to +9 at 30 minutes).

Holdout Ikoter (see p. 47) (12): Save vs. Will-2 or be dazed for a number of minutes equal to margin of failure. Acc 3, Range 10/30, RoF 1, Shots 5(3), Bulk -1, Rcl 1.

KI.AG (see pp. 40-41) (16 vs. Will): Resist or fall in love (+10 on Reaction roll to any request); 5 FP.

Taser (11): 1d-3 small piercing + follow-up paralyzing (HT-5 to resist) while trigger held, then (20-HT) seconds afterward, after which victim rolls HT-5 each second to recover. Acc 0, Range 7, RoF 1, Shots 2(3i), Bulk -2, Rcl 2.

Traits: Callous; Empathy; Esmologist 4; Innate NLP 4; Intolerance (Intellectual inferiors); Language Talent; Languages (ASL, Danbe, Sumerian, French, Russian); Photographic Memory; Renshaw Method 2; Sandman Regimen; Secrets (Former Sandman, Traitor to Humanity); Smooth Operator 2; Visualization.

Skills: Archaeology-14; Beam Weapons (Projector)-12; Body Language-20; Captivate-20; Detect Lies-23; Diplomacy-24; Esmology-18; Fast-Talk-21; Guns (Pistol)-11; Hidden Lore (History B)-17; Hypnotism-19; Intelligence Analysis-19; Persuade-20; Politics-21; Psychology-21; Research-16; Sex Appeal-16; Suggest-20; Sway Emotions-20; Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-16.

Glyphs: KI.AG-15; NING.LUL-14; SHEG-18.

Chödpa

Frustrated with the slow progress of the early cheval experiments, and fascinated with the "total human potential" movement developed largely out of leaked or farmed Project research, in 1975 a Sandman and CIA officer named Anthony Barnes Reinhardt proposed a daring "Clear Warrior" program. (One version of Reinhardt's proposal somehow found its way to Lt. Col. Jim Channon and became his hapless "First Earth Battalion" plan, which eventually led to the Army's remote viewing project.) Rather than implanting Anunnakku-proof subroutines in a human consciousness "like cloves in a ham," Reinhardt wanted to simply break down the human personality completely and rebuild it from scratch. A veteran of the CIA's Tibetan ST-CIRCUS outfit, Reinhardt believed that the traditional Tibetan discipline of *chöd*, or total ego destruction, held the key.

Volunteers would suffer complete ego-death as a "hard reboot" of the Anunnaki program, and awaken as fully actualized warriors for humanity. The trouble with Reinhardt's theory was that what awakens after total ego-death (especially if the subject is a 20-year-old Green Beret rather than a 60-year-old Tibetan Buddhist monk) may be a fully actualized warrior, but it is not meaningfully human. In short, the Reinhardt chöd program erased not only the Anunnaki programming from its subject but *all* human cultural and social conditioning. The project was a complete failure; before it could be shut down, Reinhardt escaped along with six of his surviving test subjects.

Officially, none of these chödpa remain at large, but some of them may have taught disciples. Project analysts believe the chödpa wished to reproduce themselves: Two of those killed in the 1980s had set up cults to recruit suitable candidates for ego-rebirth. At least one report from 1993 mentions a chödpa attack on an irruptor cult – rival predators fighting over the human herd? Sandmen don't hesitate to eliminate them by *any* means necessary; a chödpa has no more human allegiance than a Bengal tiger.

ST: 20	**HP:** 20	**Speed:** 10.00
DX: 20	**Will:** 20	**Move:** 10
IQ: 13	**Per:** 20	**Weight:** 160-200 lbs.
HT: 20	**FP:** 20	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 16	**Parry:** 16	**DR:** 0

9mm Glock (20): 2d+2 piercing. Acc 2, Range 160/1,800, RoF 3, Shots 17+1(3), Bulk -2, Rcl 2.

Expandable Baton (22): 5d+1 crushing; Reach 1.

Fighting Knife (22): 5d cutting (Reach C, 1) or 3d impaling (Reach C).

Fist (22): 2d+2 crushing; Reach C.

Kick (22): 3d-1 crushing; Reach C, 1.

They banded together, and went forth to battle to help Tiâmat.
They were furious, they plotted day and night without ceasing . . .
She bedecked them with brightness, she fashioned them in exalted forms,
So that fright and horror might overcome him that looked upon them,
So that their bodies might rear up, and no man resist their attack . . .
They carried the Weapon which spared not, nor flinched from the battle.
Most mighty were Tiâmat's decrees, none could resist them,
Thus she caused eleven [monsters] of this kind to come into being.

*– **Enuma Elish** (Tablet 1, lines 109-126)*

Traits: Absolute Direction; Absolute Timing; Ambidexterity; Autotrance; Bloodlust (9); Callous; Catfall; Danger Sense; Enhanced Dodge 2; Enhanced Parry 1 (All); Enhanced Time Sense; Extra Attack 1; Fearlessness 3; Gunslinger; Hard to Kill 3; Hard to Subdue 3; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Anunnaki Programming; Indomitable; Innate NLP 4; Intuition; Less Sleep 4; Light Sleeper; Loner (6); Luck; Night Vision 6; No Sense of Humor; Overconfidence (12); Penetrating Voice; Perfect Balance; Peripheral Vision; Photographic Memory; Recovery; Renshaw Method 4; Secret (Chödpa); Selfish (6); Stubbornness; Temperature Tolerance 6 (-45° to 130°); Trained by a Master; Very Fit; Very Rapid Healing; Weapon Master (All); Wild Talent 1.

Skills: Acrobatics-19; Armoury (Small Arms)-12; Blind Fighting-18; Body Control-18; Body Language-23; Breath Control-20; Climbing-24; Detect Lies-22; Driving-19; Escape-20; Esoteric Medicine-18; Fast-Draw (Knife)-24; Fast-Talk-16; Flying Leap-18; Forced Entry-24; Guns (Pistol)-20; Hidden Lore (History B)-12; Hypnotism-16; Immovable Stance-22; Interrogation-20; Intimidation-24; Invisibility Art-18; Judo-22; Jumping-24; Karate-22; Kiai-20; Knife-22; Lifting-24; Meditation-18; Observation-22; Power Blow-20; Pressure Points-16; Running-24; Sex Appeal-24; Shadowing-16; Shortsword-22; Stealth-22; Swimming-20; Throwing-20; Throwing Art-18; Traps-18; Urban Survival-19.

Techniques: Dual-Weapon Attack (Pistol)-20; Dual-Weapon Attack (Shortsword)-22; Elbow Strike (Karate)-22; Head Butt-22; Jump Kick-22; Kicking (Karate)-22; Knee Strike (Karate)-22; Neck Snap-23; any other martial arts techniques desired.

JACKALS

Jackals are simply opportunistic scavengers, ignorantly swallowing whatever falls on the field after the great battle.

Sneaker

This thief is one example of someone who knows nothing about the larger war, but knows that the "magic symbol" he found gives him a much-needed edge in his own career. Some sneakers have stumbled across reality shards (pp. 37-38) instead, which give them strange mystical abilities.

Build a sneaker who *understands* what he has as a rookie (p. 28) reality archaeologist (p. 26), though with no Project-specific traits.

|		
ST: 10	**HP:** 10	**Speed:** 5.75
DX: 13	**Will:** 11	**Move:** 5
IQ: 11	**Per:** 11	**Weight:** 130 lbs.
HT: 10	**FP:** 10	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 8	**Parry:** 10	**DR:** 0

Bite or Punch (14): 1d-3 crushing; Reach C.
UKU (see p. 42) (12 vs. Will): Resist or fall asleep.

Traits: Contacts (Fence and Fixer; Skill-15; 15 or less; Usually Reliable); Curious (12); Flexibility; Gizmos 2; High Manual Dexterity 2; Kleptomania (12); Loner (12); Night Vision 2; Overconfidence (12); Secret (Thief); Serendipity 1; Social Stigma (Criminal Record); Trademark (Simple).

Skills: Acting-11; Brawling-14; Climbing-15; Driving-13; Electronics Operation (Security)-10; Filch-13; Forced Entry-14; Gambling-11; Lockpicking-11; Savoir-Faire (Russian Mafiya)-12; Stealth-13; Streetwise-13; Urban Survival-11.

Glyphs: One preprinted glyph, found. This example uses UKU, but any might be appropriate.
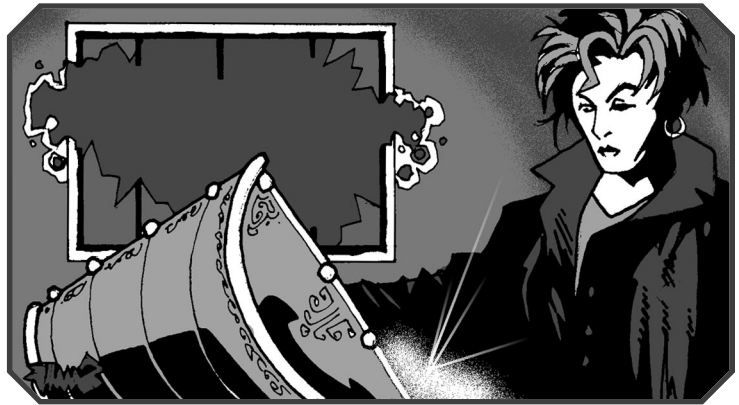
Araddin Zombie

Not all the glyphs and memes left behind after the fight can be picked up safely. There is always collateral damage in any war, and the araddin zombies are typical casualties of this one. Also called "Aladdins" by Sandmen in the field, the name is a hasty conjunction of the Sumerian words meaning "slave corpses." They're not literally corpses, just humans blanked or hollowed out by exposure to a powerful meme, which gradually takes over their entire mind (lowering Will as it does so), and which they then spread by repeating it. This can begin by the araddin winning any Quick Contest with an Influence skill, or by getting a Good or better reaction. As the araddin's Will continues to disintegrate, he becomes more likely to spread the meme merely by chanting it, spray-painting it as graffiti, etc. By the time his Will reaches 0, the araddin is incapable of any conversation or interaction not centered on the meme. Curing an araddin (or a Sandman infected by an araddin) usually requires erasure of the meme from memory (see *Memetic Treatment,* p. 45).

ST: 10	**HP:** 10	**Speed:** 5.00
DX: 10	**Will:** 0-10	**Move:** 5
IQ: 10	**Per:** 10	**Weight:** 90-250 lbs.
HT: 10	**FP:** 10	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 8	**Parry:** 8	**DR:** 0

Fist (10): 1d-3 crushing; Reach C.
Grapple (10): Does no damage, but the araddin then whispers the meme directly into the victim's ear.
Spread Meme (Meme Power+7 vs. Will)*: Each day after hearing the meme is a new test, at a further -1 to listener's Will.

Traits: Compulsive Meme-Spreading (n/a).
Skills: Fast-Talk-13, but only while the araddin's Will remains at 8+ (used to get others to listen).

* For an araddin zombified by a glyph fragment instead of a meme, replace "Meme Power+7" with the Symbol Drawing skill of whoever drew the original glyph.

CULTISTS

Cults may be created by traitors (pp. 29-31) or jackals (p. 31), or emerge spontaneously in a reality subduction zone or after exposure to a reality shard. Some cult leaders mistakenly believe it's all a scam; others discover some aspect of History B and worship it; still others become obsessed with broken or unexploded meme fragments, or stumble into long-dormant esmological dragnets left adrift by the kulullû.

For a major threat, use a tighearnamach (pp. 29-30) or a kulullû (pp. 34-35) to build a cult leader; for a twist, consider an êkimmu host (p. 34) as "high priest." Any cult may actually be led by an irruptor, of course, regardless of where or how it originally congealed.

Cult Leader

This represents a mid-level human monster, possibly out solely for his own ego or seeking a harem of underage girls. A cult leader with Enthrallment skills is more dangerous than one who is merely charismatic and debauched; any of them may have stumbled on the connection between their "powers" and the Assyro-Babylonian myth complex.

ST: 11	**HP:** 11	**Speed:** 5.00
DX: 10	**Will:** 14	**Move:** 5
IQ: 12	**Per:** 12	**Weight:** 100-200 lbs.
HT: 10	**FP:** 10	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 8	**Parry:** 8	**DR:** 0

Bite or Punch (10): 1d-2 crushing; Reach C.
SHEG (see p. 41) (13 vs. Will): Resist or obey commands; 4 FP.

Traits: Bully (12); Charisma 1; Fanaticism; Odious Personal Habits (Various). ● May also possess *one of* Innate NLP 2, Mesmerist 2 (**GURPS Horror**, p. 19), *or* Smooth Operator 2.
Skills: Hidden Lore (History B)-11; Leadership-13; Occultism-11; Public Speaking *or* Religious Ritual (Cult)-13; Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-13; Theology (Cult *or* Assyro-Babylonian)-12. ● May also possess Enthrallment skills at Will.
Glyphs: KI.AG-12 *or* SHEG-12.

Cultist Thug

These guys are the muscle in the robes, kidnapping "brides of Nergal" or brandishing flame-bladed daggers. These statistics also work for tribal bandits or terrorists serving some hill cult in the wilds of Kurdistan or Yemen, or for a wave of meat-shields protecting an irruptor.

ST: 13	**HP:** 15	**Speed:** 6.25
DX: 12	**Will:** 9	**Move:** 6
IQ: 10	**Per:** 12	**Weight:** 100-200 lbs.
HT: 13	**FP:** 14	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 9	**Parry:** 10	**DR:** 2

9mm Glock (10): 2d+2 piercing. Acc 2, Range 160/1,800, RoF 3, Shots 17+1(3), Bulk -2, Rcl 2.
AK-47 (12): 5d+1 piercing. Acc 4, Range 500/3,100, RoF 10, Shots 30(3), Bulk -5, Rcl 2.
Bite or Punch (14): 1d crushing; Reach C.
Kick (12): 1d+1 crushing; Reach C, 1.
Stick (13): 2d crushing; Reach 1.

Traits: Bully (12); Fanaticism; Odious Personal Habits (Various). ● *Either* Combat Reflexes *or* High Pain Threshold. ● *Either* Bad Temper (12) *or* Berserk (12).
Skills: Brawling-14; Broadsword-13; Guns (Rifle)-12; Occultsm-11; Wrestling-13.
Notes: DR represents the average of several pieces of thick or padded clothing such as motorcycle leathers. Dodge and Parry do not include Combat Reflexes bonus, if any.

IRRUPTORS

"Irruptors" is the generic term for entities native to History B who irrupt into our history to attempt to restore their own. All irruptors can sense reality subduction zones, the presence of History B artifacts or entities, etc., as per the Detect advantage (p. B48). Irruptors seem to be genetically modified creations of the Anunnakku, although whether the Anunnakku started with animal, human, or alien DNA may be unknowable. They closely resemble various demons from Sumerian (and later Akkadian and Babylonian) myth, which gives credence to the theory that the Anunnakku first arose, or first enslaved mankind, in the fourth millennium B.C. in Sumer.

The following write-ups give the most common types of irruptors, and their most common tasks in History A.

> *Me say: de Babylon system is*
> *the vampire, falling empire,*
> *Suckin' the blood of the sufferers . . .*
> *Building church and university . . .*
> *Deceiving the people continually . . .*
> *– Bob Marley, "Babylon System"*

Irruptor Meta-Trait

22 points

The irruptors' Immunity only covers the Anunnaki programming designed to control humans; they are completely subservient to the Anunnaki programming designed to control *them!* But while the Anunnakku remain asleep, irruptors' Slave Mentality doesn't show up in the meta-trait. If a šedu activates an irruptor's programming, add Slave Mentality to the specific irruptor. Irruptor psionic resistance applies to chödpa mental attacks and to any independent human psionics, such as those from alternate Earths. The GM should decide whether Immunity or Resistant applies to a given Sandman effort.

If the GM worries that irruptors are still too vulnerable to gunfire, add Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction) (*GURPS Powers*, p. 53) representing the creatures' tenuous existence in History A. In other words, because irruptors flicker between realities at all times, the bullet might not impact the thing while it's actually real! This implies that, following a full reality quake (or even during a serious reality temblor), irruptors lose that advantage, as they fully anchor themselves in the new history.

Irruptor includes Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Callous [-5]; Detect (History B; Precise, +100%; Irruptor Psi, -10%) [38]; Immunity to Anunnaki Programming [30]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Recovery [10]; Resistant to Psionics (+8) (Accessibility, Human psis only, -20%) [12]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Sense of Duty (History B) [-15]; Subsonic Speech [10]; Weirdness Magnet [-15]; *and* Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ [2].

BAŠMU

The bašmu, or snake demon, is the size of a large anaconda, although its coloring and banding match the Asiatic horned viper. It, too, has horns, as well as human arms and hands. The bašmu serves as a protector and guardian of important irruptor sites, especially those in the desert, where it can tunnel under the sand and lie in wait for interlopers. It can spit venom into a foe's face, potentially blinding and choking him.

A squad or more of cultist guardsmen usually accompany the bašmu, deployed on its perimeter. In the Middle East, its guards are often tribal militia, armed with assault rifles. Use *Cultist Thug* (p. 32).

ST: 24	**HP:** 24	**Speed:** 9.00
DX: 13	**Will:** 14	**Move:** 7 (8 through sand)
IQ: 10	**Per:** 20	**Weight:** 250 lbs.
HT: 15	**FP:** 15	**SM:** +3
Dodge: 13	**Parry:** 11	**DR:** 4

Constrict (26 vs. ST or HT): Must follow a grapple; damage equals margin of victory.

Fang Bite (13): 2d impaling + follow-up venom; Reach C. After six-second onset, victim rolls HT-4 or is paralyzed for 3×(margin of failure) hours.

Grapple (15): Reach C (arms) or Reach C-2 (tail).

Horn Butt (13): 2d+2 crushing; Reach C.

Spit Venom (13): Includes penalty to hit the face; Acc 3, Range 5/40. Targets without eye protection roll HT-1 or are blinded for (margin of failure) minutes. Targets without nose *and* mouth protection roll HT-1 or are choking for (margin of failure) minutes.

Traits: Chameleon 3 (Desert only); Cold-Blooded (50°); Combat Reflexes; Constriction Attack; Danger Sense; Doesn't Sleep; Double-Jointed; Extra Attack 1; Hard to Kill 2; Infravision; Irruptor; Nictitating Membrane 2; Night Vision 5; No Legs (Slithers); Peripheral Vision; Terrain Adaptation (Sand); Tunneling (Move 8; Only in Sand); Unfazeable.

Skills and Techniques: Brawling-13; Broadsword-13; Innate Attack (Breath)-15; Intimidation-13; Stealth-13; Survival (Desert)-19; Targeted Attack (Spit/Face)-13; Wrestling-15.
● Some bašmu can fascinate humans using their hiss and gaze (a form of Hypnotism as the prerequisite skill for their Enthrallment); for them, add Captivate-14; Hypnotism-14; Suggest-12; and Hypnotic Freeze-11.

Glyphs: GU.SHUB; KAR; SANGUSH.

Irruptors and Glyphs

The best Project intel says that only the šedu and êkimmu can draw Anunnaki glyphs, but plenty of other irruptors use them. Unlike pre-drawn Sandman glyphs, irruptor-deployed glyphs *can* achieve extra levels of success. All pre-drawn irruptor glyphs have the equivalent of Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-16 for the purpose of the resistance roll, and for the purpose of determining extra levels of success, if any.

ÊKIMMU

This irruptor never takes physical form at all; it is a psychic projection that nests in a human mind. Project analysts believe the êkimmu may be a subroutine dreamed into existence by the sleeping Anunnakku and sent out to somehow influence events in our history.

A human hacked by an êkimmu gains a number of poorly understood psionic powers, always including a sort of "psychic vampirism" that drains the vitality of its targets. The host makes eye contact with the victim and, while matching their breathing patterns, eye movements, and microtremors, exhausts the target. If the êkimmu speaks to the target, this contact imposes a harmful mindset causing carelessness and failure. This technique resembles NLP, and may be running on the same cortical system architecture. Exactly how the êkimmu host benefits from this attack remains unknown; the prevailing theories are some sort of direct psionic energy transfer and positive biofeedback triggered by the attack mode.

The host may also acquire various mental disadvantages, especially Delusion ("I'm a vampire"), Dread (Mirrors) after hallucinating the êkimmu's skeletal reflection looking back at him, and Nightmares or Flashbacks from visions of History B.

The statistics below are not standalone – they are the *modifiers* to apply to the possessed host. In theory, an êkimmu is an Astral Entity with Possession (Spiritual), but they're never encountered outside of a host.

ST: –	**HP:** –	**Speed:** –
DX: –	**Will:** +8	**Move:** –
IQ: +3	**Per:** +3	**Weight:** –
HT: -1	**FP:** See Notes	**SM:** –
Dodge: –	**Parry:** –	**DR:** –

Curse (Will vs. Will-2): Must speak to victim and spend 4 FP. Victim gains Cursed, êkimmu gains Luck, for hours equal to margin of victory.

Steal FP (Will vs. Will-2): Requires eye contact and successful Body Language roll, followed by the listed Will roll at -1 per yard of distance. Steals 3 FP per second, which can also recharge Energy Reserve.

Traits: Dependency (Luck, via Curse; Weekly); Energy Reserve 12 (*Horror,* p. 20) (Only within one yard of reality shard); Irruptor (host's Appearance drops by one level); Night Vision 5. ● Some have one or more *Êkimmu Special Abilities*.

Êkimmu Special Abilities

Though not common, these abilities do show up in the occasional êkimmu. The attacks allow a new resistance roll every cycle, but at a penalty equal to the êkimmu's original margin of success! Successful resistance at any point stops the damage.

Heat Exhaustion (Will vs. Will): Target must resist or lose 1d FP per minute for the next 12 minutes. Restoring FP requires water and a cool environment. Costs 2 FP.

Starvation (Will vs. Will): Target must resist or lose 1 FP per hour for the next 72 hours. Restoring FP requires food and water. Costs 2 FP.

Telekinesis 4: Costs 2 FP.

Skills and Techniques: Body Language-15; Hidden Lore (History B)-16; Hypnotic Freeze-14; Hypnotism-18; Invisibility Art-18; Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-15. ● Some êkimmu may have Enthrallment skills at Will, based off Hypnotism and usable only on hypnotized subjects.

Glyphs: Divide 12 points among GAZ, KU.SHU, and NAM.HILI techniques; others at GM's discretion. Êkimmu pay half the human FP costs for glyphs, rounded down.

Notes: Êkimmu host retains his FP and *also* has access to its Energy Reserve 12 for using Anunnaki abilities. Skills assume a host with original IQ 12; adjust as appropriate.

GIRTABLULLÛ

The girtablullû, or scorpion-men, play a major role in epics – such as that of Gilgamesh – as dangerous fighters and protectors of magical treasure. In practice, the girtablullû seem to be the foot soldiers of the šedu; they likely have their own psychological programming for ruthlessness and efficiency in battle. A girtablullû has a human head and body, vulture wings, raptor legs and talons, and a 5' scorpion tail. Girtablullû use guns efficiently, but prefer wide-bladed swords and knives, such as the kukri. In addition to their native chitinous armor, they wear helmets (DR 12) on patrol or in battle.

Šedu deploy girtablullû in fire-teams and squads, often with orders to kill all resisting humans. A pair or triplet of scorpion-men are most often encountered on a raid or smash-and-grab mission of some kind.

ST: 17	**HP:** 17	**Speed:** 6.25
DX: 13	**Will:** 10	**Move:** 8 (12 flying)
IQ: 10	**Per:** 11	**Weight:** 150 lbs.
HT: 12	**FP:** 16	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 10	**Parry:** 15	**DR:** 5 (torso and tail only)

Kukri (18): 4d+1 cutting (Reach C, 1) or 2d impaling (Reach C).

Scorpion Tail (15): 1d+3 impaling + follow-up 3d toxic (HT-3 to resist); Reach C, 1.

Skorpion 61 Machine Pistol (13): 2d-1 small piercing. Acc 2, Range 90/1,000, RoF 14, Shots 20(3), Bulk -3, Rcl 2.

Taloned Kick (13): 1d+3 cutting *or* impaling; Reach C, 1.

Traits: Ambidexterity; Berserk (15 or as activated by šedu); Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Enhanced Parry 2 (All); Fearlessness 5; Filter Lungs; Flight (Winged); Hard to Kill 3; High Pain Threshold; Irruptor; Radiation Tolerance (PF 10); Single-Minded; Weapon Master (All).

Skills: Brawling-15; Guns (Rifle and SMG)-13; Knife-18; Shortsword-18; Stealth-15; Tactics-10.

Glyphs: KAR; KU.SHU

KULULLÛ

The kulullû, or fish-men, resemble the mythical mermaid, although more reminiscent of squat wrestlers than lissome seducers. In Babylonian myth and art, they were connected to the "fish-garbed figure," a demigod or sage depicted wearing a fish body as cape and cowl. This artistic convention may be due to the kulullû's habit of riding on a muscular, human servitor's back while on land; only when such an expedient is unavailable does the fish-man pull itself along by its arms.

Gagkula Table

GUNS (PISTOL) (DX-4 or other Guns at -2)

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Notes
Gagkula	1d+2 pi-	2	70/210	0.3/0.09	3	100(3)	3	-2	1	[1]

Notes

[1] May also deliver a follow-up Affliction.

In the myths, both kulullû and fish-garbed demigods brought esoteric arts and technologies to a shore-bound mankind. As irruptors, they similarly prefer instructing and manipulating human tools to involving themselves directly in an operation or atrocity. Their Enthrallment skills are based on Psychology (Human).

Kulullû seldom engage in combat. If pursued, they have no compunction about fleeing to the nearest body of water; their exit path will be more than amply mapped, and likely booby-trapped. If followed into the water, a favorite fish-man technique is to show their pursuers HUL, then drown them in ecstasy.

In extremis, kulullû use the *gagkula* (from the Sumerian for "fish-hook"), a small glass or crystal device that throws barbed shards of metal. Often, the metal is psychoactive, introducing follow-up effects such as mental disadvantages (e.g., Delusions) or worshipful adoration. Of the three gagkula captured intact by Sandmen over the decades, none of them have had any discernible energy source. They may be foci (or NLP-style anchors) for kulullû telekinesis or ergokinesis, although kulullû have never shown such psionic powers in any other fashion.

ST: 10	**HP:** 10	**Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11	**Will:** 15	**Move:** 10 (1 on land)
IQ: 16	**Per:** 14	**Weight:** 160 lbs.
HT: 11	**FP:** 11	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 8	**Parry:** 8	**DR:** 0

Gagkula (11): See table above.
SHEG (see p. 41) (16 vs. Will): Resist or obey commands.

Traits: Dependency (Water; Daily); Doesn't Breathe (Gills); Esmologist 2; Intuitive Mathematician; Irruptor; Language Talent; Languages (various); Mathematical Ability; Nictitating Membrane 5; No Legs (Aquatic); Photographic Memory; Pressure Support 1; Scanning Sense (Sonar); Slippery 1; Speak Underwater.
Skills: Captivate-16; Esmology-18; Guns (Pistol)-11; Judo-10; Persuade-16; Propaganda-18; Psychology (Human)-18; Strategy-18; Suggest-16; Sway Emotions-16. ● Additional skills covered by Esmologist (p. 15) as needed.
Glyphs: HUL; NING.LUL; SHEG.

KUSARIKKU

Where girtablullû are the infantry, the kusarikku, or bull-men, are the artillery. Immensely strong, capable of battering their way through a steel wall, the kusarikku can also rapidly heat objects or air in up to a two-yard radius by manipulating molecules with subvocalized intonations and focused mental energy. A kusarikku has a human head and a powerfully muscled human torso and arms, with the lower body and hind legs of a bull, and bulls' horns.

Killing the Red Kings

Even the fearsome šedu are only tools of the Anunnakku themselves. If an Anunnakku awakens in the living world of History A, it triggers an immediate reality quake (if one was not already in progress). An individual Red King might manage a sort of half-awake existence deep in a reality subduction zone, only partly visible to History B. (Such a presence adds at least +3 to the *Reality Quake Table* roll; p. 58.) If you need stats for such an entity, use the Ancient One (*Horror,* p. 74) as a guideline, seasoned with suitable irruptor traits and an overwhelming psionic or linguistic blast attack (Toxic Attack 20d with Malediction).

How many Anunnakku are there? The *Enuma Elish* specifies eleven servitors of Tiamat, but the Project considers that more likely a reference to the number of irruptor species. If the Anunnakku are the same as the symbolic "Kings of Edom" excoriated in the Torah ("They shall name it No Kingdom There") and later kabbalistic texts, there are seven, or 11, or perhaps 22. Later Chaldean references to the "Annedoti" or "Repulsive Ones" imply there are 50 Red Kings in all.

However many Anunnakku there were before the Ontoclysm, the Project thinks it possible that the April 1961 *Gerboise Verte* atomic "test" in Algeria killed one of them. Although that device had only a one-kiloton yield, the Project still considers this a worst-case tactical solution.

ST: 40	**HP:** 40	**Speed:** 6.50
DX: 9	**Will:** 11	**Move:** 6
IQ: 10	**Per:** 10	**Weight:** 350+ lbs.
HT: 17	**FP:** 27	**SM:** +1
Dodge: 9	**Parry:** 9	**DR:** 2 (see Notes)

Gore (13): 6d+2 impaling, also does knockback; Reach C, 1.
Heat the Air: Increase the ambient temperature in an eight-yard area by 24° per second, up to a maximum of +240°. This will not cause *direct* damage, but see *Heat* (p. B434). Range 100 yards.
Heat a Target (14 vs. Will): Heatstroke (1d fatigue) or spontaneous combustion (2d+1 burning); DR does not protect. Inanimate objects resist with HT; treat flammability class (p. B433) as one level higher than normal. Uses Long-Distance Modifiers (p. B241).
Trample (13): 6d+2 crushing, only on prone targets; Reach C.

Traits: Bad Temper (12); Hard to Kill 5; Hard to Subdue 5; Hooves; Increased Consumption 1; Irruptor; Psychokinesis Talent 4**.**
Skills: Brawling-13; Throwing-11.
Glyphs: GU.SHUB; KU.SHU; SANGUSH.
Notes: DR 3 on feet, DR 12 on skull.

Irruptors as Characters

For a twist, the players could play irruptors (see *Monsters as Characters,* **Horror,** p. 11) who see their cause as good and righteous, with Project SANDMAN the devious, dark enemy supporting the corrupt, linear history of human misery. (In such a game, remove Sadism from the irruptor meta-trait.) Under the Anunnakku, there was no war or poverty or suffering (or so the irruptors devoutly believe), and society was ordered and had a place for everyone. It was the human rebels who triggered the first reality quake – in one sense, at least, a genocide of hundreds of millions of people over millennia of history. The šedu enjoy pointing out that the Project SANDMAN myth sounds like the Fall from the Garden of Eden, and that the timing of the reality quake quite closely matches the death of King Arthur and the fall of Camelot. Humanity's own myths condemn its so-called liberators as traitors and devils – perhaps what it really needs is for its gods to reawaken.

ŠEDU

The šedu were the overseer caste of the Anunnakku, whose job it was to supervise humanity and rule over it. Humans have been programmed to obey the šedu, and to react to their terrible beauty with almost primal fear and worship. On top of that, the šedu are expert memeticists, and can draw the compelling glyphs of the Anunnakku alphabet. A single šedu would be a tough target indeed for a Sandman team, and šedu almost always have guardians and servitors (both irruptor and brainwashed human) in their vicinity. The šedu seem very similar to djinn, angels, sidhe, and other beings from human mythology; they have four wings but otherwise appear fully (even perfectly) human. Some šedu can fold their wings behind them, concealed in a trenchcoat or draped robe; perhaps all of them can, but the others are too arrogant to bother.

ST: 20	**HP:** 24	**Speed:** 5.75
DX: 10	**Will:** 18	**Move:** 5 (10 flying)
IQ: 13	**Per:** 16	**Weight:** 180 lbs.
HT: 13	**FP:** 23	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 11	**Parry:** 9	**DR:** 0

Awe (Resisted by Will-6): Anyone who can see the šedu must roll Will-6 or delight in (25-Will) seconds of ecstasy (p. B428), after which he may roll against unmodified Will each second to recover. On a *critical* failure, he obeys the šedu's every command as though he had Slave Mentality for 3d minutes, then may roll each *minute* to recover. His initial resistance (not recovery) roll takes all Fright Check modifiers and is at +1 for each time he has been "awed" in the past 24 hours. Successful resistance makes him immune for one hour. For more detail, use the *Awe and Confusion Check Table* (**Powers,** p. 85) instead.
Nunchaku (12): 3d+3 crushing; Reach 1.

Traits: 3D Spatial Sense; Altered Time Rate 2; Appearance (Very Beautiful); Charisma 6; Enhanced Dodge 2; Enhanced Time Sense; Fearlessness 5; Flight (Winged); Hard to Kill 3; Higher Purpose (Restore Anunnakku); Honest Face; Irruptor; Language Talent; Languages (various); Overconfidence (12); Perfect Balance; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+8); Sanitized Metabolism; Temporal Inertia; Unaging; Very Rapid Healing; Voice.
Skills: Acting-13; Aerobatics-14; Archaeology-13; Captivate-18; Detect Lies-16; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-15; Flail-12; Persuade-18; Public Speaking-21; Suggest-18; Sway Emotions-18; Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-18.
Glyphs: *All* at maximum level.

UGALLU

Possibly intended as a variant kusarikku, the ugallu is built on a leonine model. It sports a lion's head on a human body, with raptor feet and a lion's tail. It has an even stronger degree of control over molecular motion than the kusarikku, but can use it only on the atmosphere – usually to alter the weather in a half-mile radius. This takes an hour of effort, although it can speed up the process as in *Time Spent* (p. B346). In addition to its normal effects, altered weather can provide between +5 and -5 to rolls that would be modified by weather (Vision, driving, etc.).

An ugallu also generates a strong bioelectric field, capable of shooting a powerful electrical spark at its foes, once a storm has sufficiently ionized the air. Even in the absence of a storm, the ugallu can shock cars or hearts into (or out of) starting by touch. Anyone grappling the ugallu takes 2d+2 burning surge damage.

ST: 27	**HP:** 27	**Speed:** 6.25
DX: 13	**Will:** 12	**Move:** 6
IQ: 10	**Per:** 15	**Weight:** 250 lbs.
HT: 12	**FP:** 22	**SM:** 0
Dodge: 10	**Parry:** 11	**DR:** 1

Bite (15)*: 3d+1 cutting; Reach C.
Combat Knife (15)*: 5d cutting (Reach C, 1) or 3d impaling (Reach C).
Electrical Strike (13): 5d burning surge. Acc 5, Range 100/200. If any damage penetrates DR, target is stunned unless he makes a HT roll at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage. Requires an active storm.
Heart Stop (15 vs. HT)*: Heart Attack (p. B429); Reach C.
Roar (14 vs. Will): Mental stun; -1 to roar attack for every 2 yards of distance.
Taloned Kick (13)*: 4d+1 cutting *or* impaling; Reach C, 1.

Traits: Catfall; Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Hard to Kill 2; Irruptor; Night Vision 5; Psychokinesis Talent 4; Silence 2; Temperature Tolerance 1; Vibration Sense (Air); Weather Control 5 (**GURPS Psionic Powers,** p. 45).
Skills: Brawling-15; Climbing-14; Intimidation-14; Jumping-14; Kiai-14; Knife-15; Running-14; Stealth-13; Weather Control-16; Weather Sense-15.
Glyphs: SANGUSH; UR.IDIM.

* This attack *also* inflicts a linked 2d+2 burning surge damage from the ugallu's electrified skin.

POWERS AND GEAR

Our team crouched in the emptied restaurant, briefly ignoring the babbling man huddled in his own vomit.

"Look, all I'm saying is you can't ask for a lot from brain surgery in a Burger King." I'm good, but I'm not that good, and this place was far from sterile.

"I'm not asking for a lot. I'm asking for one answer: What did he see?" The LT is great in a firefight, don't get me wrong, but he drank a lot of sweet meme tea during indoctrination.

"If he describes it, we'll see it. Do we really want to see it? To know it ourselves?" That uncharacteristic sentiment courtesy of Rhian, whose curiosity about the "weird line outside" got us into this. "Reality archaeologist" is just another word for "stupid idea junkie."

"Can't you suppress that? Shut off his whatever-it-is . . ." Like I said, great in a firefight, but not much on neuroanatomy. Fair enough; that's my hajj.

*"His Broca's area? Shut off pattern recognition, and language? You realize you're asking him to describe a pattern, right? Using language? That's asinine, even for you, LT. Maybe **your** Broca's area isn't working too well . . . oh, waa faqri."*

"Don't blaspheme. You've thought of something." He was right. I had.

"I don't like it. You're not going to like it." Rhian's eyes widened. She got it, too.

"We don't have to like it. We have to do it. It's mission-critical. No choice." The LT sounded personally offended at my scruples.

If I were a better person, I wouldn't have enjoyed this next part quite as much.

Rhian hit the LT hard, perfect ket, bang on the nerve point behind the shoulder, and I just sort of threw myself onto the LT's chest, knocking the air out of his lungs. That gave me the time to get the syringe out: a jab in the neck, and the LT just stared and shook.

I had more time now. I cleared the floor as much as I could, and popped the plastic lid on the field wetware kit. "This is going to hurt like hell. But with your Broca's area switched off, you won't be able to tell me about it, so there's that." While the computer booted up, I got out the alcohol wipes and carefully rubbed down the electrodes and all the little needles. Like I said, the LT is good to have around in a firefight, and no need to give him an infection. I mean, except for the one I'm going to have to download into his brain's visual cortex, straight from Vomit Eyewitness Guy.

That infection, I'm reliably informed, is mission-critical.

Most of the uncanny powers in this campaign come from lost pieces of History B, the techniques of the Anunnakku, or the black technology that Project SANDMAN has developed to combat them.

REALITY SHARDS

A reality shard can be anything you'd like it to be in your game. A forgotten penknife that has been stuck in a clay wall in Syria for 40 years can "become" Excalibur; a jade lamp from a Nepalese lamasery might allow its wielder to create dangerous emerald illusions to smash enemies; or you may simply want to make up a spear or magic helmet that fits the story you want to tell. You can introduce "name" artifacts like the Urim and Thummim from the Bible, or present complete enigmas such as a levitating ovoid made of solid aluminum.

Reality shards may resemble obvious forgeries like the "Round Table" of Winchester Castle, or enigmas without scientific explanation, such as the optically ground lenses found in the ruins of Nineveh. Religious artifacts such as the Ark of the Deluge, which sheltered humanity from a previous apocalypse, or the Holy Grail, which various medieval authors claimed was lost after the "Dolorous Blow," likewise combine the mysterious and the numinous.

Reality shards tend to give anomalous readings under scientific testing, especially carbon-14 or thermoluminescence dating. Many seem to be palpable forgeries, "given away" by their anachronistic composition, construction, or artistic technique. Of the reality shards known to the Project, a notable percentage are made of crystal, or have some sort of glaze on them. Whether this is a function of crystal's general ruggedness or of the meta-geometry of reality tectonics remains unknown.

REALITY SHARD ABILITIES

Reality shards are a great way to introduce supernatural powers and abilities into the "hard technothriller" feel of the *Madness Dossier*. Even if you don't want your heroes to sling reality shards around, plenty of cultists, jackals, and villains can have them on tap to even the odds or add mystery and wonder to the proceedings. Don't worry about taking them away from your heroes. Project policy is quite clear: Reality shards are to be isolated in the Duncorne Foundation or Granite Peak, not used in field conditions.

But if the PCs do keep them around, hidden off the books and used only in emergencies, well, who can blame them?

Reality Shard Advantages

A reality shard might allow the casting of Afflictions on one's enemies; IQ or Will penalties, Incapacitation (especially Daze, Hallucinating, Ecstasy, Seizure, or Sleep), and Irritant (especially Euphoria) seem most appropriate. Other advantages provided by a reality shard could include Blessed (especially for NPC agents of the Anunnakku), Compartmentalized Mind, Danger Sense, Daredevil, Destiny, Doesn't Eat or Drink, Doesn't Sleep, Eidetic Memory, Enhanced Time Sense, Higher Purpose, Illuminated, Intuition, Luck or even Extraordinary Luck, Oracle, Racial Memory, Rapier Wit, Serendipity, Shapeshifting (Loa), Single-Minded, Super Luck, Super-Memorization, Temporal Inertia, Unaging, Visualization, or Wild Talent.

Possessing or even encountering a reality shard could awaken Talents like Business Acumen, Esmologist, Innate NLP, Mesmerist, or Smooth Operator. A reality shard might provide the equivalent of Trained by a Master for such skills as Invisibility Art and Kiai.

In the realm of psi, a reality shard is likely to add Detect (History B). Other possible pside effects include Precognition, the various ESP powers from the taisher template (pp. 26-27), the assorted psi powers used by the êkimmu (p. 34), kusarikku (pp. 35-36), or ugallu (p. 36), plus any of Mind Control, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, or Neutralize, but *not* Mind Shield. It also could awaken diverse psionic Talents, especially ESP, Probability Alteration, Psychokinesis, and Telepathy.

Given the linguistic and perceptual themes of the setting, reality shards can offer communication-related advantages: Charisma, Cultural Adaptability, Empathy, Indomitable, Language Talent, Penetrating Voice, Social Chameleon, Speak Underwater, Speak With Animals, Subsonic Speech, or Voice.

Also symbolically appropriate are advantages dealing with perception, such as 360° Vision, Acute Senses, Elastic Skin, Hyperspectral Vision, Infravision, Invisibility, Microscopic Vision, Mimicry, Night Vision, Obscure, Parabolic Hearing, Penetrating Vision, Peripheral Vision, Scanning Sense, Telescopic Vision, Terror, or Ultravision. Many of these advantages may be psionic as well; psionic Morph with Cosmic (+50%) can model a person who always looks like someone the viewer is expecting to see.

A shard could grant anything, though: justify Climbing as an amulet of the Sumerian spider goddess Uttu, or Allies as a squad of animated ushabtis or game pieces from a tomb, or Permeation as being briefly rotated out of History A and into History B where the specific structure doesn't exist. (Buy that last with the "Very Common" frequency: Solid objects created since 535 A.D.)

Limitations and Disadvantages

Almost all shard-given advantages can be bought with the package of limitations Can Be Stolen (usually -20% or -30%) and Unique (-25%). Clay or crystal shards may also be Breakable. Shards can also Cost Fatigue, be Unreliable or Uncontrollable, require a Trigger (such as fresh human brain matter or pulverized cuneiform tablets), or have a Nuisance Effect such as only working for those who loudly intone the right phrases in (Native) Sumerian. (That last example can justify taking the "does not work for thief" version of Can Be Stolen.)

And of course, shards can trigger or otherwise provide disadvantages: Amnesia, Cursed, Delusions ("I am rightwise King of England!" or "This urn will resurrect me!"), Flashbacks, Obsession ("Protect the shard. It is . . . *precious* to me."), Phantom Voices, and Unluckiness only skim the surface of possibilities. It might impose a Split Personality the carrier doesn't know about! Any reality shard is practically guaranteed to be a Weirdness Magnet. These should be taken as Temporary Disadvantage limitations, not as gadget-limited disadvantages, assuming you can just put the shard down and walk away. If it will *let you* walk away. If it will *let you* put it down.

HUMAN INFLUENCE

Much of the Anunnaki suite of powers requires nothing more than a focused will and a disciplined body, or perhaps a marker pen and a piece of paper, to activate. Project SANDMAN reality archaeologists believe the Anunnakku have a different relationship with technology than humans – either because they evolved their memetic and biological sculpting methods first and focused on those paths, or because they have surpassed mere instrumentality.
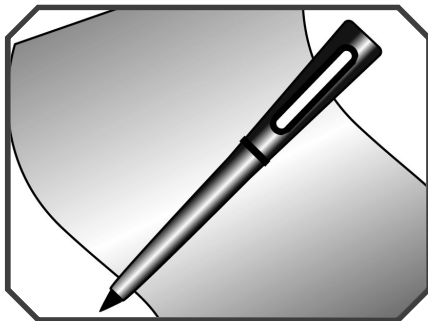
ALPHABET OF THE ANUNNAKKU

The Anunnakku programmed the human perceptual cortex to respond instinctively to certain images. For example, the SANGUSH glyph causes the beholder to perceive the user as a "normal person" in the mind's eye; irruptors need only wear a headband, tunic, or large placard bearing this symbol to appear human when among humans. Other glyphs cause the beholder to run in fear, slip into a hypnotic trance, obey without question, and so forth.

The skill to inscribe a glyph is Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki). Specific glyphs are Hard techniques of Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki). Humans cannot design new glyphs, but they can learn some by rote. Human inscribers of the glyph must concentrate intensely to avoid contaminating their own minds with its message; this is what the FP cost of casting a glyph represents. It takes 12 seconds (Concentrate maneuvers) to inscribe a glyph. For humans, a critical failure while doing so completes it only in the inscriber's mind: It affects him with no resistance roll possible!

Trustworthy Sandmen have access to pre-engraved or pre-printed glyphs produced by carefully isolated CAD programs with the equivalent of Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-12 and 12 in the various glyphic techniques. (Although some glyphs benefit from a higher margin of success on the technique roll, these preprinted ones do not.) SANDMAN Control tracks these engravings obsessively; they must be checked in and out for each mission. Woe betide the agent who loses one in the field, or who is discovered to have created an unauthorized engraving for his own use. "One-off" creations under field conditions must be destroyed as soon as practical; Sandmen carry water-soluble markers and flash paper for such purposes.

The roll to get a target to look at a glyph depends on the circumstances: flashing a glyph while pretending to flash a badge might be Acting; drawing a passerby's attention to a glyph might be Public Speaking; forcing an unwilling person to look at a piece of paper could be Wrestling! If the agent just pastes the glyph on the wall of a terrorist compound, the roll may be Artist (Calligraphy or Scene Design); the better the roll, the more terrorists see the glyph. The player should suggest the method his character uses; the GM decides whether a skill roll is needed, and if so, against what.

Most human witnesses of a glyph submit without resisting, accepting the programming as "natural"; for duration purposes, assume the margin of loss is 20. Those who are wary (or, in the GM's mind, important) may resist; the inscriber must *win* a Quick Contest of Symbol Drawing (*not* the glyphic technique!) vs. the victim's Will. If the inscriber rolls a critical success here, the glyph "burns out" the witness's relevant mental circuitry, sometimes with lasting effects. After this happens, the victim must make a second Will roll; if it fails, apply the margin of failure as negative character points toward a disadvantage that replicates the effects or circumstances of seeing the glyph! (A witness who already has such a disadvantage should make the worse of a Will roll or self-control roll for it.) If by some stroke of luck, the victim managed to resist despite the critical success, these negative character points should go toward a disadvantage that *opposes* the glyph.

Example 1: A leonine ugallu with effective Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-12 hits Gregor (Will 13) with the KAR glyph. The GM rolls a 4 for it, success by 8 – and a critical success! Gregor rolls a 10, success by only 3, and succumbs to the urge to flee in terror. He now makes a second roll, against unmodified Will. He rolls a 15, missing by 2. The GM gives him Phobia (Cats) with a self-control roll of 15 or less, worth -2 character points.

Example 2: As above, but Gregor's roll to resist KAR is a 5, success by 8. Because they tied, Gregor successfully resists the glyph! However, he must *still* make a second roll against Will, due to that critical success. If he again rolled a 15, the GM might give him Overconfidence (15) [-2], as it opposes the concept of running in fear.

An Anunnaki glyph may instead be used in concert with various brainwashing, hypnotic, or other persuasive techniques. This requires a successful Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki) roll in addition to any other rolls (Brainwashing, Hypnotism, Enthrallment, etc.) involved. Each point by which the Symbol Drawing roll succeeds lowers the victim's resistance to the other roll involved by -1. (Preprinted glyphs lower the victim's resistance by a flat -3.) The player may suggest a specific glyph, or the GM may require one for a given purpose. In such a context, the glyph does not have its usual effect; the inscriber usually reveals the symbol in glimpses or fragments.

The GM should add plenty of other glyphs to the irruptors' arsenals. Glyphs replicating Mind Control spells are obvious, and Communication and Empathy effects take only a little more thought. Other glyphs might trigger biofeedback or autonomic nerve responses, allowing effects similar to Body Control or Healing spells. At the GM's discretion, a separate symbol might exist to induce any mental advantage or disadvantage temporarily . . . or *permanently!* Even more complex effects are possible: Irruptor agents use a linguistic virus called NAMZAKU.MULAN that causes its subjects to implicitly believe written text (e.g., a ribbon labeled "prison" can hold them, and reading the word "bullets" can kill)! Adding a new glyph to those mastered by the Sandmen makes a superb mission bonus, but it can take weeks or even months to get one approved for field use.

BU.LU.UH (Vomit)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

This glyph triggers debilitating retching (p. B429) for 5×(margin of loss) seconds. Once victimized, the beholder suffers a Dread (pp. B132-133) of the glyph for (margin of loss) hours.

It costs a human 5 FP to inscribe BU.LU.UH.

GAZ (Kill)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-10.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-2.

Beholding this glyph triggers a wave of homicidal hatred as if the viewer were Berserk (p. B124) and suffering from Bloodlust (p. B125). The viewer will normally attack the first person he sees. If the glyph is wielded, the holder must provide a target (by name, description, or image, or by pointing) as his next action, or the viewer will attack *him!* A successful Hypnotism roll can implant a name, location, or image of a target post-hypnotically, to be triggered by the sight of the GAZ rune. Or a target can be specified via text written alongside the glyph. Once given a target, the viewer attacks immediately in the deadliest fashion available to him.

The effect lasts five minutes or until the target is dead, whichever comes first. For every two full points by which the inscriber succeeds at his GAZ roll, the effect lasts for five more minutes (this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs).

It costs a human 6 FP to inscribe GAZ.

The ELI-3 rhythms, controlled this time, had caught sankt-Efer's attention – better than Obeck had hoped; he saw the dilation of sankt-Efer's pupils . . . It's not hypnosis, Obeck had been taught, not nearly so. It's only a persuasion technique. Still he had hated it, as counterfeit coin of communication.

– John M. Ford, **Princes of the Air**

GESHTUG.ULU (Forget this)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+4.

This glyph causes the victim to forget one fact, skill, or spell (if they exist), or can erase up to five minutes of short-term memory entirely. For every two full points by which the inscriber succeeds at his GESHTUG.ULU roll, the wielder may remove one more memory, or increase the time lost by the subject by five more minutes (this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs). Skills, etc. return after one hour; lost memories return only with treatment or after strong reminders (or other shocks).

The wielder must communicate exactly what is to be forgotten. This is typically done through simple statements, but written instructions, sketches, photographs, gesture, and so on are all allowable – deafness is no defense!

More powerful versions known only to irruptors can wipe hours, days, or even years of memories, or erase skills down to muscle memory.

It costs a human 3 FP to inscribe GESHTUG.ULU.

GU.SHUB (Neglect)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-6.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+4.

This glyph causes the beholder to avoid looking at, thinking about, or moving toward its wielder. The inscriber can also paste it to a door, stick it in a car window, etc. to get the same effect on a roughly 8'×8' space. Viewers will not even notice the glyph they are avoiding; the holder or location is effectively "invisible" to them. If the wielder attacks the beholder, the beholder must make an unmodified Will roll or respond with All-Out Defense – it's like a man-sized moth in your face!

It costs a human 6 FP to inscribe GU.SHUB.

HUL (Delight)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2.

Beholding this glyph triggers a wave of serotonin, causing euphoria (see p. B428) in the beholder. On a critical success, the glyph triggers full-on ecstasy (see p. B428); this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs.

The effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes. Repeated exposure to HUL can cause Addiction (see pp. 16-17), if a viewer fails a Will+2 roll after the third (and each subsequent) viewing. The danger of addiction fades after a week without exposure to the glyph.

It costs a human 3 FP to inscribe HUL.

IGI.NU.GAL (Blind)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-10.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-4.

For (margin of loss) minutes, the viewer of this glyph can no longer process visual data of any kind, as the symbol floods his visual cortex. He sees waves of colors and symbols while his brain reboots the connection to the optic nerve. Treat the effect as hallucinating (p. B429); the viewer is at -5 to all success rolls if he can act at all. If the victim's Will roll critically fails, he is essentially blinded; -10 to combat rolls and other visually dependent skill tests.

It costs a human 5 FP to inscribe IGI.NU.GAL.

KAR (Flee)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-6.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2.

The beholder flees in mindless fear, away from the glyph. If flight is physically impossible, the viewer can turn and take an All-Out Defense maneuver, if attacked. The effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes.

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe KAR.

KI.AG (Love me)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

The viewer falls madly, subserviently, self-sacrificingly in love with the wielder of the glyph. If the wielder makes a request of the besotted viewer, roll a reaction at +10!

The full effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes, but even though it may have worn off by the time the request is fulfilled, the viewer continues to rationalize his cooperation.

Further requests without active KI.AG reinforcement begin at +5, unless the viewer's experience was actually physically dangerous.

It costs a human 5 FP to inscribe KI.AG.

KU.SHU (Exhausted)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2.

The viewer of this glyph feels extremely tired, losing concentration and energy rapidly. For every point by which the inscriber succeeds at his KU.SHU roll (minimum 1), the viewer suffers -1 to Sense rolls and loses 2 FP. (A preprinted Project glyph inflicts a flat -2 and 4 FP.) The viewer is woozy and cannot take a Concentrate maneuver or use any Hard or Very Hard skill.

The effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes, after which the psychosomatically lost FP are recovered at double the normal rate. Any HP lost from *this glyph* pushing FP below 0 recover instantly once the effects end.

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe KU.SHU.

LIL (Fool)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2.

The beholder of this glyph suffers -1 to IQ for (margin of loss) minutes. This affects Will and Per, all skills based on those traits, IQ rolls to remember things, and so on. This IQ penalty worsens by another -1 for every two full points by which the inscriber succeeded at his LIL roll (this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs).

It costs a human 3 FP to inscribe LIL.

NAM.HILI (Fascinate)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-6
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2

This glyph fascinates and intrigues the beholder. Left to his own devices, he will move toward it and stare directly at it. He pays no attention to things that aren't the glyph, unless they directly attack him or endanger the glyph. The effect lasts until something (e.g., passing out from fatigue) completely breaks his line of sight to the glyph; he must roll to resist again if it comes back into view.

It costs a human 6 FP to inscribe NAM.HILI.

NI.NGI.NA (Truth)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

The beholder of this glyph cannot knowingly lie, though he may attempt a Will roll to tell a partial truth. The glyph does not force the witness to volunteer information; the wielder may still need to ask a question or use Interrogation (at +10) to elicit important facts. This lasts for 5×(margin of loss) minutes.

It costs a human 5 FP to inscribe NI.NGI.NA.

NING.LUL (Falsehood)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-10.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-2.

The wielder can implant a trivial false memory (**GURPS Horror,** p. 24) in the beholder's mind: "You didn't see me; you saw a rat." If the inscriber makes his NING.LUL roll by 5+, the wielder can implant a meaningful false memory: "You fell asleep on guard duty." On a critical success, he can implant a significant false memory: "You killed that woman." (The Project's preprinted glyphs can only implant trivial memories.) If the implanted memory conflicts with a real memory, the beholder's brain usually fits the new one in anyway, leaving him confused but still convinced.

Implanting a trivial false memory takes 10 seconds; a meaningful false memory takes 2 minutes; a significant false memory takes 15 minutes. The wielder must be able to speak normally to the beholder throughout, or provide a written (or video) version of the false memory. He does not necessarily need to display the glyph throughout the process.

The effect lasts for 5×(margin of loss) hours, after which the beholder must make a second Will roll, at -2 for every full day it lasted. If he fails, the false memory lasts indefinitely unless definitively challenged.

It costs a human 6 FP to inscribe NING.LUL.

SANGUSH (I belong here)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

This glyph causes the beholder to picture the wielder as someone who should be here: a passerby, a fellow security guard, a roommate, etc. The wielder can also paste it to a door, stick it in a car window, etc. to get the same effect on a roughly 8'×8' space: "That's a Starbucks" or "That car has a parking permit." This effect ends if the wielder attacks the beholder, unless such an attack would make sense to the beholder.

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe SANGUSH.

SHEG (Obey and agree)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+6.

This glyph lets the wielder give the beholder one immediate command – a word and a gesture, or at most two words – which the beholder must obey. For every two full points by which the inscriber succeeds at his SHEG roll, the wielder may add one more command, or add two more words clarifying or reinforcing his initial command (this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs).

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe SHEG.

SUH.DUG *(Confusion of speech)*

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-6.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

This glyph garbles the language centers of the viewer's brain for 5×(margin of loss) minutes. The viewer cannot read or write, and cannot speak coherently. Treat as Illiteracy (p. B24) and Cannot Speak (p. B125). Viewers who know a sign language may attempt to communicate at Broken level with an IQ-3 roll; Gesture may be attempted at -1.

It costs a human 3 FP to inscribe SUH.DUG.

UKU *(Sleep)*

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-10.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

This glyph puts the viewer to sleep. If standing, he falls – but this does *not* awaken him. He can be awakened by a blow, a loud noise, etc., but will be mentally stunned (p. B420). If not awakened, he will sleep for around eight hours and wake up normally.

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe UKU.

UR.IDIM *(Mad dog)*

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

This glyph drives the beholder temporarily insane. Roll on the *Short-Term Conditions* table (p. 51) for the specific effect. On a critical failure of the resistance roll, the viewer also develops a -5-point Phobia associated with the circumstances in which he beheld the UR.IDIM glyph. This *stacks* with the effect of the inscriber's critical success, if any!

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe UR.IDIM.

HIDDEN PERSUADERS

The Anunnakku also planted memes in human languages and cultures to serve as the human "source code." With sufficient knowledge of these memes, the user can convince almost any human, or mass of humans, to believe almost anything . . . including "There's no such thing as reliable memetic techniques."

Project SANDMAN utilizes the Anunnaki source code in three different ways, depending on the primary audience. For one-on-one or close-up interactions with a small group, Sandmen use neurolinguistic programming, mainly modeled here with Enthrallment skills (pp. 18-19). When dealing with large groups face-to-face or in the field, applied anthropology becomes the go-to technique, using Esmology (p. 20). To influence a social group (or a whole society) at a remove, Project memeticists rely on subliminal messaging to carry memetic payloads (see pp. 43-44 for rules). It is not a coincidence that conventional wisdom and mainstream academia consider all three techniques disproven crackpottery.

Neurolinguistic Programming

In the 1950s, psychiatrist Fritz Perls used his wartime training experiences in the South African Army as the basis of his "Gestalt Therapy" method, taking into account not just the patient's experiences, but also the surroundings, sensations, and emotional content of the immediate therapeutic experience. In the 1970s, graduate student Richard Bandler and linguist John Grinder applied linguistics to Perls' methods, creating a model of human interaction relying on language (including body language) to lead a patient into a desired end state. Specific NLP techniques include matching breathing patterns, constant checking and matching of subjects' eye movements and other microexpressions, and subtly encoded linguistic frames (including the sounds of certain words, or their associations with emotional states) to facilitate specific outcomes. The NLP technique of "anchoring" uses a sort of mental jujitsu to associate unfavorable sense responses (to a phobia or trauma) with favorable mental results (such as calm or acceptance). Although the orthodox psychiatric community considers NLP empirically unverified at best and dangerous crankery at worst, it has achieved a certain vogue in the self-help, athletic coaching, sales, and "pick-up artist" communities.

Project SANDMAN recognized the potential of Perls' work after he published his first book – *Ego, Hunger, and Aggression* – in 1942, and supported his development of Gestalt Therapy (and certain never-published methodologies) with covert funding throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Project linguists (already years ahead of the outside world) rapidly adapted Perls' methods to their own ends, creating a working neurolinguistic programming language by 1966. By the 1970s, the Project's "anchoring" method made the first Sandman "chevals" possible.

Bandler and Grinder replicated SANDMAN research a decade later, probably picking up tidbits leaked out through the Esalen Institute, where Perls lectured and which the Project used as an occasional recruiting ground and test bed until an irruptor attack in 1998. Without the Project's knowledge of Anunnaki programming, their methods remain flawed and chancy. Enthrallment attempts using neurolinguistic programming are at -5 without knowledge of Hidden Lore (History B), and double the time needed for all skills.

Applied Anthropology

Also called "cliodynamics," "mathematical sociology," or "psychohistory," applied anthropology attempts to model mass human behavior much as Newtonian physics models mass particle behavior. Indeed, the pioneering sociologist Adolphe Quetelet called his discipline "social physics" in 1835, applying statistical models to human action. The early death of social physics' greatest historical proponent, Henry Buckle, and the rise of the superficially similar doctrine of Marxism diverted the mainstream of historical scholarship into other channels.

Recently, scholars such as Serge Galam and Katarzyna Sznajd-Weron have applied insights from complexity theory to history, politics, and sociology in a new and controversial "sociophysics," but without understanding its fundamental nature, the outside world can still barely map the observed phenomenon.

Project SANDMAN exists to make sure they never understand, because the fundamental nature of human mass behavior is written into the Anunnaki source code. Although Sandmen knew the code existed, breaking it was seemingly impossible until advances in cybernetics and game theory during the 1950s gave them a potential framework for understanding it. Persistent Sandman rumor whispers that deciphering the Anunnaki source code is what drove John Nash into paranoid schizophrenia in 1957; be that as it may, the Project derived the fundamentals of what they named esmology (see p. 20) by 1959. Esmological insights provide the core of what Sandmen call "applied anthropology" in the field, the influencing of groups of people. Project SANDMAN's ongoing memetic defenses, reconnaissance, and skirmishes likewise depend on esmology, although Sandman jargon generally reserves "applied anthropology" for field work. Rear-area esmologists are known as "meme moles" or (before Richard Dawkins coined the word "meme" in 1976) "buzz boys."

Subliminal Messaging

The content and strategy of a SANDMAN memetic program derive from esmology. But subliminal messaging is how the Sandmen spread it. Like NLP, subliminals are a technology rather than a theoretical discipline like esmology or memetics. "Subliminal" means simply "below the limit," referring to sensations below the limit of conscious perception.

Experiments in subliminal perception of electrical fields and shadows began in the late 19th century. In his 1898 book *The New Psychology,* Yale psychologist E.W. Scripture formulated the basic theory of subliminal persuasion: Subliminal stimuli pass directly to the subconscious "and can positively or negatively influence subsequent later thoughts." In 1913, H.L. Hollingworth recommended subliminal techniques to advertisers, while Aleister Crowley recommended playing reversed recordings as a magical training tool. The psychologist Samuel Renshaw used a tachistoscope, which flashes images on a screen more rapidly than the eye can resolve them, to train Allied airmen in airplane recognition during WWII. In 1957, adman James Vicary claimed that subliminal imagery increased sales of Coke and popcorn in movie theaters; the next year, journalist Vance Packard rode the storm of indignation to best-sellerdom with *The Hidden Persuaders.* When Vicary was exposed as a fraud in 1962, subliminal advertising became a jokey urban legend, despite renewed outbursts of interest during the backmasking flaps around the Beatles and Judas Priest.

Renshaw's tachistoscope also sped up reading comprehension, allowing instant memorization of hundred-digit numbers. Recruited by Project SANDMAN in 1952, he developed the Project's accelerated instruction methodologies alongside improved subliminal techniques. "Buzz boys" planted Project subliminals in BBC and Voice of America broadcasts beginning in the mid-1950s; by the 1960s, Project subliminals appeared in most network television seen in America and Britain. Satellites, cable, and the Web drove further innovation: SANDMAN digital subliminals play on YouTube and flicker on mobile phones behind the Great Firewall of China.

Most of the Project's subliminal efforts go into countering irruptor and Anunnaki memetic programming, playing defense by attempting to vaccinate the population against outbreaks. However, for some missions, the meme moles go on the offense: Using sophisticated public opinion research and data mining to provide micro-targeting data, Sandman memeticists can aim a subliminal cocktail of memes and triggers almost anywhere on Earth. After a week of such memetic bombardment, subliminal SANDMAN intervention gives -6 to the resistance or opposing roll of the memetically softened mass target against any rolls Sandmen make for *Indirect Influence* or *Power Struggles* (**GURPS Social Engineering,** pp. 61-67). The GM may apply a similar modifier to such targets' rolls to resist or oppose a Sandman using Diplomacy, Intimidation, Leadership, Merchant, Politics, or Propaganda. (The GM may restrict such penalties to rolls dealing with the specific goal of the memetic campaign.) However, since these subliminals use the Anunnaki source code as a basis, the target population also lowers its resistance to irruptors or other Anunnaki tools by -4! If the GM prefers to use *Political Change* and *Cultural Change* (**GURPS Infinite Worlds,** pp. 105-106), SANDMAN subliminals add +6 to Concept and Proposal rolls, but Anunnakku operations get +4. Because of this, almost all SANDMAN subliminal memetic attacks are designed as fads, to decompose in self-contradiction and dissonance within a few weeks.

Subliminal messaging without knowledge of the Anunnaki source code is only marginally effective. Even on governmental scales, such a subliminal campaign can only influence a given contest or die roll by +1 or -1 either direction, and can never influence a hostile audience.

Memetic Barrage Rules

Most **Madness Dossier** campaigns feature the team at the sharp end, tussling with irruptors and quashing cults. The meme moles are rear-echelon NPC office or lab types, sitting in government-issue chairs deep under Granite Peak. Thus, abstracting the results of their memetic "artillery support" as penalties to targets' rolls makes perfect sense in game terms. However, in the spirit of shows like *Bones* or *CSI,* in which techs inexplicably involve themselves in field operations and vice-versa, here are some extremely abstract and cinematic rules for Project SANDMAN memetic assaults. (More detailed memetics rules appear in Chapter 7 of **Transhuman Space: Toxic Memes,** updated for Fourth Edition in **Transhuman Space: Changing Times,** p. 47.) Each stage of a memetic assault takes 1d days; varying this time can change the chance of success (see p. B346).

Designing a Meme: Building a memetic payload is a two-step process: evaluating the target audience and then crafting a specific campaign to influence that audience. Two skill rolls are needed. To evaluate a target audience, roll against Anthropology, Area Knowledge, Current Affairs, Psychology, Research, or Sociology, at the GM's option. Crafting the campaign is a Propaganda roll. Average the margin of success on these rolls; that becomes the meme's *Power.* Subtract that Power from rolls of the targeted social group to resist or oppose the campaign on the ground. (As above, those rolls might cover *Indirect Influence* or *Power Struggles* rolls from **Social Engineering,** or mass social rolls against Diplomacy, etc. made by Sandmen in pursuit of the memetic campaign's goals.) A meme with negative Power *increases* resistance by that amount, but a successful Expert Skill (Memetics) roll can identify such a broken meme before deployment.

Deploying a Meme: Getting a meme into the eyes and ears of its intended audience is usually simplicity itself for the Sandmen: Their assets in the NSA and GCHQ drop it into a selected pool of Web users, almost always as a subliminal under-message in some other innocuous media flotsam. If that isn't an option, either because your meme doesn't possess Project sanction or because your meme is aimed at a non-wired target population, roll against the skill governing your chosen deployment method: Computer Programming, Electronics Operation (Media), Merchant (to buy advertising), Streetwise or Politics (to spread a rumor), and so forth. If need be, apply bonuses to this roll based on the Reputation or Social Regard of your spokesmen, the Appearance of your spokesmodels, etc. A successful roll gives +1 to the meme's Power, or +2 on a critical success; a failed roll gives -1, or -2 on a critical failure. A normal, Web-mounted, sanctioned SANDMAN memetic barrage always adds the maximum +2 to the meme's Power; global societies' pressure points are well mapped by now.

Psionics

Some irruptors possess psionic talents; taisher ESP is awakened by contact with History B. Psi research from the CIA and U.S. Army used leaked, stolen, or deliberately crippled SANDMAN data. The Soviet and Chinese psychic warfare programs, the Project believes, began with reality shards or possibly a glyph designed to awaken human psi. If the GM allows other human powers besides ESP, the Unusual Background should include some contact with History B, even if its true nature begins unknown to the character. If the GM makes psionics a major part of the campaign, rather than one flavor, using psionics may expose agents to subversion, mind-altering, Delusions, Will losses, or worse! See *Strains of Reality* (pp. 50-52) for ideas.

In any case, **GURPS Psionic Powers** comes in very handy.

Discovering a Meme: Almost all human cultural constructs possess some degree of latent Anunnakku coding. Identifying an "active" memetic payload involves a roll against the appropriate specialty of Current Affairs or Connoisseur to pick the memetic leads out of the normal cultural background. On a critical success, the subsequent roll is at +2; on a failure, it is at -2; on a critical failure, no useful information can be extracted from the culture-fragment (though the investigator might *think* it can, at the GM's option). Then roll against Expert Skill (Memetics) to discern its specific memetic architecture: its Power, its purpose, its etiology, and its designer's characteristic techniques. The same two rolls (with the same modifiers and results) apply to detecting ongoing memetic programming within a target population: first against Area Knowledge, Current Affairs, Psychology, Research, or Sociology, at the GM's option; second against Expert Skill (Memetics) to analyze the identified active memetic operations.

Defusing a Meme: In an individual, this is a test of Brainwashing against the subject's Will plus the opposing meme's Power. In a population, begin by discovering the meme as above, then create the countermeme. Use your Expert Skill (Memetics) roll from that process as the "evaluation" roll for memetic design, and make a Propaganda roll to construct the payload. Average the margin of success on these rolls to get

your countermeme's Power (plus any bonus for deployment) and compare it to the Power of the enemy meme. The GM can simply narrate the victory of the higher-Powered meme, or play out a Regular Contest of Propaganda skills, both modified by their meme's Power, between the Sandman and the enemy memeticist. In the latter case, each roll represents a day. During that time, other characters can attempt other Influence rolls against the contested population; a successful roll gives +1 to their meme's Power, or +2 on a critical success; a failed roll gives -1, or -2 on a critical failure. These effects last one day before being damped out by enemy action.

Anunnakku and Memetic Campaigns: Regardless of the meme's Power, a memetic attack (*not* a countermemetic defense, though) *always* creates a -4 penalty to resist the Anunnakku or their tools in the target population. Irruptors use the same rules for memetic barrages, but their memetic assaults *do not* weaken human resistance to Sandmen!

Independent Memetics: Using memetics without a working knowledge of Anunnaki programming is clumsier and less effective. Would-be memeticists without Hidden Lore (History B) are at -5 to all skill rolls involved *except* the deployment roll.

Memetic Contagion Rules

Exposure to powerful memes can be dangerous. The GM may choose to apply the *Illness* and *Contagion* rules from pp. B442-444 to specific memes or meme-fragments, especially if they carry bizarre or terrifying payloads. These rules mostly apply to outside memes infecting PCs or sympathetic NPCs; infecting specific opponents with memes is best handled by Enthrallment or other Influence rolls, and infecting general NPC populations is what the *Memetic Barrage Rules* (pp. 43-44) model.

A meme's *vector* is almost always hearing or reading it. The *resistance* roll is based on Will, variously modified for resistance to Anunnaki programming, drugs, etc., and contagious exposure as below:

- Avoided all contact with media, Internet, or exposed population: +4.
- Viewed not immediately infected media: +2.
- Viewed infected media but not directly exposed to meme: +1.
- Spoke with exposed population: +0.
- Viewed meme directly; spoke with meme carrier: -1.
- Prolonged reading or viewing of meme; conversation with meme carrier: -2.
- Creative involvement (fanfic, message-board argument) with meme; intimate conversations with meme carrier: -3.

The hearer's personal traits may also modify his resistance roll:

- No Cultural Familiarity with target audience of meme: +3.
- Disadvantage with self-control roll directly opposes this meme's agenda: +3 for (6) or (9), +2 for (12), +1 for (15).
- Other trait directly opposes this meme's agenda: +1 per 5 points or -5 points.
- Trait generally complements this meme's agenda: As for above two options, but read bonuses as penalties.
- Meme directly targeted at hearer's demographic or subculture: -2.

A meme's *delay* is up to the GM, but 1d days for a "generic" meme is a good rule of thumb unless its designer intends a quicker or delayed response. A meme's *damage* is its Power, turned from a flat "add" into dice (as per p. B269), and taken from the subject's Will instead of HP; usually this loss applies only to efforts to resist or oppose the specific meme, but the GM can always justify weird knock-on effects. A meme urging "surrender to the Americans" might also lower Cowardice self-control rolls even for locals aiding the Americans!

Memes either burn out rapidly or become endemic. If a meme has *cycles,* roll once per day or week for a number of days or weeks equal to its Power. Endemic memes do not cycle; after doing their initial damage, they turn quiescent, becoming quirks or other seemingly irrelevant features of a character. (Unless the GM decides they contain post-hypnotic triggers or similar mental landmines, of course.)

Other memes have more aggressive, noticeable *symptoms*. As with diseases, they may not fully manifest until the victim loses some fraction (1/3, 1/2, or 2/3) of Will. The araddin zombies on p. 31 are only one possibility: the GM could insert goals or beliefs, amplify existing disadvantages, or add a new Delusion, Obsession, Intolerance, Sense of Duty, or Fanaticism (among other possibilities) until the meme decays, if it ever does!

Memetic Treatment

Memetic damage "heals" at the rate of one level of Will per month after direct exposure or campaigning ends. More rapid treatment requires Expert Skill (Memetics) and Psychology to diagnose the meme and then Brainwashing, Captivate, or other persuasive skills to counter it. It may be as simple as witnessing

Exposure to memes can be dangerous.

an overt undeniable act that contradicts the meme's message; it may involve countermemes and days of Teaching to undo the damage. It may require Brain Hacking (if so, at a penalty of half the meme's Power). Whichever skill the GM decides applies, a success restores 1d-2 levels of Will immediately and speeds up the remaining recovery to one level of Will per week; a critical success restores 1d+1 levels of Will immediately and speeds up the remaining recovery to one level of Will per day.

Removing memetically instilled disadvantages may come with this process, or may require separate psychiatric treatment (*Horror,* pp. 144-145). Which rule applies likely depends on the GM's preferred campaign flavor: rapid healing promotes fast action at the risk of seeming ridiculous; slow mental recovery adds gritty realism but risks player alienation.

KLEIL

6 points

The word *kleil* means "clarity" in the artificial language Volapük. The martial art of Project SANDMAN, Kleil emphasizes instinctive situational awareness and rote use of muscle-memorized kata combinations to avoid contamination of the *kleilan* (practitioner of Kleil) by Anunnaki malware in the active mind. The goal is clear, fast action, untroubled by thought or intellectual second-guessing. Secondarily, Kleil is designed to be used against monstrous irruptors, so it incorporates few holds and lots of damage-dealing (absolutely including gunplay) and evasion.

All serious students of Kleil have Sandman Regimen (p. 16), giving them access to its cinematic skills and abilities.

A kleilan often attacks using a rote kata called a *ket* (from the Volapük for "chain"). This is a Telegraphic Attack (+4 to hit, which does not increase the chance of a critical success, but +2 to the foe's defense), so it cannot benefit from a Feint, Evaluate, or Deceptive Attack. During any turn in which the kleilan is delivering a ket, he is at +2 to resist outside mental influence.

Combinations (*GURPS Martial Arts,* p. 80) are *very* appropriate for Kleil, if the GM allows them. A combination is *often* thrown as a ket.

Skills: Breath Control; Fast-Draw (Pistol); Guns (Pistol); Judo; Karate.

Techniques: Back Kick; Elbow Strike; Evade (Judo) (*Martial Arts,* p. 71); Feint (Karate); Head Butt (see p. 20); Judo Throw (*Martial Arts,* p. 75); Jump Kick; Targeted Attack (Pistol/Face) (*Martial Arts,* p. 68).

Cinematic Skills: Kiai; Mental Strength.

Cinematic Techniques: Flying Jump Kick (*Martial Arts,* p. 83); Kapadol (see p. 20); Lethal Kick (*Martial Arts,* p. 85); Lethal Strike (*Martial Arts,* p. 85); Roll With Blow (*Martial Arts,* p. 87); Timed Defense (*Martial Arts,* p. 89).

Perks: Rapid Retraction (Kicks) (*Martial Arts,* p. 51); Rapid Retraction (Punches) (*Martial Arts,* p. 51).

Optional Traits

Advantages: Combat Reflexes; Language (Volapük); Peripheral Vision; Rapier Wit.

Skills: Autohypnosis; Body Control; Escape; Fast-Draw (Knife); Knife; Meditation.

Techniques: Axe Kick (*Martial Arts,* p. 67); Hammer Fist (*Martial Arts,* p. 73).

Perks: Drunken Fighting (*Martial Arts,* p. 50); Improvised Weapons (Karate) (*Martial Arts,* p. 50).

TECHNOLOGICAL CRUTCHES

Within the Project, not everyone agrees that following the Anunnaki blueprints for human influence is wise. It's best, some Sandmen argue, if the Project develops some proprietary methods, evading Red King programming on a biochemical or physiological level.

In this section, LC0^ marks devices or formulas that are not just banned, but their very existence is codeword secret, known

only to Sandmen; LC1 devices are still codeword secret, but are used by elite military and security forces.

DRUGS

Project SANDMAN neurochemists have developed numerous specialty drug cocktails for use on friend and foe alike.

Mopers

"Mopers" is a Sandman slang shortening of Modified Personality Drugs, or MPDs. Developed after the Project took over the CIA's mind-control experiments in 1973, MPDs can induce any of the following disadvantages: Absent-Mindedness, Alcohol Intolerance, Alcoholism, Amnesia (Total only), Bad Temper, Berserk, Bestial, Blindness, Bloodlust, Cannot Learn, Cannot Speak, Chronic Depression, Chronic Pain, Clueless, Colorblindness, Combat Paralysis, Confused, Cowardice, Curious, Deafness, Dyslexia, Easy to Read, Epilepsy, Fearfulness (up to 5), Flashbacks, Gluttony, Gregarious, Gullibility, Ham-Fisted, Hard of Hearing, Hidebound, Impulsiveness, Incurious, Killjoy, Laziness, Lecherousness, Light Sleeper, Low Empathy, Low Pain Threshold, Manic-Depressive, Megalomania, Motion Sickness, Nightmares, No Depth Perception, No Sense of Smell/Taste, Nocturnal, Oblivious, On the Edge, Overconfidence, Paranoia, Post-Combat Shakes, Short Attention Span, Shyness, or Squeamish.

Unless the Sandman adjusts the dosage with Physician, the subject has a self-control roll of 9 or less on any disadvantage with a self-control roll, and leveled traits (e.g., Flashbacks) give the subject the median level; if the median falls between two levels, use the stronger one.

Administering different mopers simultaneously creates complex drug interactions with completely unpredictable effects. Multiple doses in the same 24-hour period cause erratic behavior or even trigger neuropathies, again unpredictably. SANDMAN policy is "one target, one drug, once."

These drugs are follow-up poisons, usually injected using a hypospray subdermal injector (p. 49) or a syringe dart. (Sandmen don't like to use gas delivery systems because of the danger of blowback and the difficulty of dosage control, and because it's nearly impossible to use NLP while wearing a gas mask.) In some cases, covert assets (or hypnotically triggered assistants) drop the drug into a beverage, although that risks altering timing and dosage.

The drugs have a delay of one second if injected, one minute if swallowed; they are usually resisted at HT-2, but if the Sandman can control any major stimuli (colors, sounds, smells) perceived by the victim during the drug's onset, the victim's resistance is at -1 for each sense, to a minimum of HT-5. If the moper contradicts an existing trait (Bloodlust vs. Code of Honor, for example), the victim resists at +2. A vial of "adjustment" lasts (25-HT)/4 hours. A successful Physician roll when measuring the dosage lets the Sandman adjust the duration, up to the Sandman's Physician score in hours. On a critical failure of the resistance roll (or Physician dosage roll!) the disadvantage becomes permanent!

A dose of an MPD costs $20 times the absolute point value of the induced disadvantage. LC0^.

Combat Amphetamines

Sandmen sometimes pop these "billies" or inject these "juiceboxes" before high-value combat operations. Although British forces have used amphetamines since WWI, these formulations take advantage of cutting-edge Project research into neurochemistry. Multiple doses can be taken together, although this violates Project regulations.

The user makes a HT roll, at -1 for every dose taken. If successful, the affected attributes are raised by the number of doses taken for (25-HT)/4 hours. If the roll fails, the billie only gives a *flat* +1 to the attribute, regardless of the dosage; as well, there may be other side effects related to that specific drug. After a juicebox wears off, the user suffers a penalty equal to the original bonus, lasting twice as long.

Mixing different types of billies *triples* the HT roll penalty (-3 per dose). On a failed roll, the GM may also add sudden additional mental disadvantages at whim during the fight, such as Combat Paralysis, a hallucinatory attack of Flashbacks, or Unluckiness.

If the user takes another dose of the same drug within 24 hours, he must make a new HT roll at a penalty based on the total of *all* doses taken in that period. The bonus is only that of the new dose, but the letdown period is that of all the doses combined.

Blues: Each dose gives +1 Per. If the HT roll fails, the user also gains Curious (9) – or Curious (6) if he already has any degree of Curious – until the drug wears off. On a critical failure, IQ and Per are at -1 per dose *and* he gains Curious as above. $50/dose. LC1.

Greens: Each dose gives +1 DX and +1 Basic Move. If the HT rolls fails, the user also gains Overconfidence (9) – or Overconfidence (6) if he already has any degree of Overconfidence – until the drug wears off. On a critical failure, IQ and Per are at -1 per dose *and* he gains Overconfidence as above. $50/dose. LC1.

Reds: One dose grants Combat Reflexes to the user; if he already has it, this drug gives another +1 to the active defense, surprise recovery, and Fast-Draw bonuses granted by that advantage. (Multiple doses similarly grant +1 to the same rolls.) Its effects last only half as long as the other billies: (25-HT)/8 hours on a successful HT roll, and half an hour on a failed roll. A failed roll also grants the user Berserk (9) – or Berserk (6) if he already has any degree of Berserk – until the drug wears off. On a critical failure, the user has an immediate seizure (p. B429), which may recur; while the juicebox lasts, whenever he successfully resists Berserk, he must roll HT *minus* his degree of success on the self-control roll or seize! $200/dose. LC0.

Yellows: This juicebox takes effect differently from the others. Each dose instantly restores 1d+2 FP. Roll vs. HT at -1 for every dose taken; the fatigue is banished for a number of hours equal to the margin of success (at least 1 hour, even for a failure). When that time is up, the user loses all of the restored FP, plus 3 more. $40/dose. LC1.

In addition to the top-secret billies above, the Project has invented pharmaceuticals that are known to the outside world. All are legally controlled. The following is common to most Sandmen loadouts:

Modafinil: After 1d×30 minutes, the user gains Doesn't Sleep for the next 24 hours. Up to three doses can be taken in succession before it ceases to provide benefits. Upon taking the second or third doses, roll HT; on a critical failure, the user is nauseated (p. B428) until he gets at least eight hours sleep. $2/dose. LC3.

PSYCHOTECHNOLOGY

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Project went on a buying spree, picking up Soviet psionic research (and researchers) for hard currency wherever they could. Using this windfall, and the complementary data from the CIA's MK-ULTRA and ARTICHOKE mind-control projects, Project techs have developed a number of devices and techniques designed to short-circuit, amplify, or even rewire human wetware.

All Project electronics with a given duration or Shots use custom rechargeable batteries; the weapon batteries are removable to allow for multiple "clips" in the field. Assume that a Sandman with access to standard electrical outlets can "top off" his psychotronics in about 30 minutes.

Agent 17

A SANDMAN-upgraded version of an Iraqi variant of the U.S. Army incapacitant gas BZ, Agent 17 is a respiratory agent (HT-2 to resist; no delay) that causes stupor and confusion. Victims who fail to resist have -4 to DX, IQ (including Will and Per), and *all* skill rolls (even HT-based ones); this lasts until (margin of failure) minutes *after* their exposure to the gas ends. On a critical failure, they are also dazed for the duration.

Once the initial effects wear off, the target must roll HT-2 to avoid succumbing to the *secondary* stage of Agent 17 for (margin of failure)×10 hours! This stage inflicts Ham-Fisted 1, Delusion ("Nothing is wrong with me!"), and short-term amnesia covering the period of initial exposure to Agent 17. As well, any exertion, from combat to intense mental activity, triggers the equivalent of Severe Flashbacks (p. B136) on a 12 or less. The victim also becomes extremely susceptible to *narrative,* resisting Brainwashing, Propaganda, Enthrallment skills, and similar deep, subconscious influences at -4. (Interrogation becomes much harder, however: Victims confabulate, giving -4 to rolls to extract useful intel as well.) He resists even normal movies, comic books, stories, Fast-Talk, Performance, etc. at -1, incorporating them into his worldview on a failure!

If multiple sufferers are in close physical proximity, they become even more susceptible, as shown below. They also share the same hallucinations; one triggering will set off the whole crowd (PCs or other specific sufferers roll their weakened Will to resist).

Two or Three Subjects: Resist deep narrative at -5, casual at -2.

Four to 15 Subjects: Resist deep narrative at -6, casual at -3.
16 to 255 Subjects: Resist deep narrative at -7, casual at -4.
256+ Subjects: Resist deep narrative at -8, casual at -5. (This is the practical maximum: a small theater full of targets.)

Project wetware hackers use Agent 17 to help install loa in chevals; Sandman commandos use it on field missions when large populations are at risk for irruptor contamination. $100/dose. LC0^.

EMF Detector

Detects electric and magnetic fields, and radio emissions, all within a 25-foot range. Project EMF detectors have preset telltales for frequencies associated with and disrupted by irruptor psionic activity. $500, 1 lb., 10 hrs. LC4.

Field Wetware Kit

This unpleasant assortment of clamps, wires, needles, probes, and sensors can be used only on a cooperative or helpless subject – and even a cooperative subject may need to be restrained, because the procedures are extremely uncomfortable. The kit also includes a dedicated microcomputer running encephalogenic software (Complexity 3, considered basic gear for Brain Hacking), a subdermal injector (p. 49), a microwave beamer, and 10 reprogrammable implant chips (p. 48). With a successful Brain Hacking or Electronics Operation (Psychotronics) roll, using this kit on a subject gives him -5 to resist Brainwashing, Interrogation, Anunnaki glyphs, or (if it exists in the campaign) telepathic probing. $20,000, 20 lbs., 1 week. LC0^; LC1 in Russia.

Hypnagogic Flash

This simple device fits in the palm of the hand and emits bursts of light, strobing at specific frequencies for one second. Anyone looking directly at the device counts as a willing subject for Hypnotism, and resists at Will rather than Will+5 (see p. B201). An already willing subject resists hypnotic suggestions at Will-5! The effect lasts five seconds. $1,600, 0.2 lb., 20 charges. LC0^.

Ikoter

The Samoyed of Siberia occasionally enter a mental state called *ikota,* a sudden trance followed by suggestibility, from whence Sandman techs took the name of this device. (Field agents also call it the "I.K." or the "daser.") It fires linguistic white noise at an ultrasonic frequency. If the target fails to resist (Will-2 for the holdout model; Will-3 for the "pistol" model), he is dazed (p. B428) for minutes equal to his margin of failure. Failure by 5+ means unconsciousness for the same period, followed by being dazed for an equal length of time upon awakening. A dazed victim is at -2 to resist Hypnotism during this trance. This weapon also disrupts short-term memory: The subject loses all recollection of the two seconds immediately prior to being shot. Experimental ikoters (+50% cost) can also emit noise packets designed to trigger panic fear (target runs at top speed in a random direction, screaming) or senseless aggression (as Berserk) instead of dazing, for the same duration.

Sandmen in the field carry holdout ikoters built into cell phone bodies, or occasionally "pistol" ikoters built into camcorders. The effect is much stronger (a further -4 to Will) if the target is suffering an electrical shock from a Taser, open wire, stun gun, etc. See table. LC0^ in the West; LC1 in Russia.

Psychotechnological Weapon Table

Terms and notation are as defined on pp. B268-271.

BEAM WEAPONS (PISTOL) (DX-4 or other Beam Weapons at -2)

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost
MAEser (Pulsed Microwave Beamer)	–	3	160/480	1.8/0.5	1	33(3)	3	-1	1	$4,000/$40

BEAM WEAPONS (PROJECTOR) (DX-4 or other Beam Weapons at -2)

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost
Holdout Ikoter	Will-2 aff	3	10/30	0.3/0.1	1	5(3)	3	-1	1	$2,400/$24
"Pistol" Ikoter	Will-3 aff	6	23/70	1.8/0.5	1	16(3)	4	-2	1	$13,000/$40

Implant Chip

These tiny microchips run off the neural electricity present in all mammalian brains, and allow the implantation of a disadvantage. Use the list under *Mopers* (p. 46), plus Bully, Callous, Compulsive Behavior, Decreased Time Rate, Fanaticism, Guilt Complex, Indecisive, Innumerate, Intolerance, Jealousy, Kleptomania, Loner, Low Self-Image, Lunacy, Miserliness, No Sense of Humor, Non-Iconographic, Obsession, Odious Personal Habit, Pacifism, Phantom Voices, Phobia, Pyromania, Sadism, Selfish, Slave Mentality, Sleepwalker, Stubbornness, and Workaholic. One can also implant a specific hallucination (treat as Severe Flashbacks) or period of amnesia. They cannot (as yet) implant *false* memories – use full brain hacking (p. 50) for that – but other Delusions are possible at the GM's discretion.

Prepping an implant chip requires a diagnostic scan of the subject's wetware and a roll against Electronics Operation (Psychotronics) at -2, or Brain Hacking, to program the implant chip. This takes 15 minutes with a field wetware kit (p. 47) or just five minutes in a full Project lab.

Modifiers: -4 per additional disadvantage past the first, or to add a period of amnesia on top of a disadvantage; +2 for a self-control roll of 15 or less, +1 for 12 or less, no modifier for 9 or less, -1 for 6 or less, or -2 for an automatic failure; -2 if the disadvantage contradicts a preexisting disadvantage (e.g., implanted Berserk vs. innate Pacifism).

Failure means the time, effort, and chip were wasted; critical failure should instead produce "interesting" results at the GM's whim. Success means the chip will impose its disadvantage(s) for two hours, plus one hour for every point by which the hacker succeeded. He may set a time delay for disadvantages like Berserk, which might be inconvenient if triggered immediately! Unlike disadvantages, amnesia has a lasting effect, but the period forgotten spans the same 2+(margin of success) hours; the programmer decides how much of that extends before implantation, how much after, and how to adjust for shortened durations if the subject partially resists (see below).

Physically inserting the chip into the back of the subject's neck requires a subdermal injector (p. 49), but no skill roll – it's simple. Once the chip is in, the subject may attempt a Will-6 roll to resist the effects. If he fails, the chip takes effect for the duration. If he succeeds, he holds out for one hour, after which the chip continues to worm its way in as a Regular Contest of the programmer's skill (Electronics Operation (Psychotronics) at -2, or Brain Hacking) against the subject's Will-6. If at *any* point the chip wins, it takes effect for the remainder of its duration (or wipes out the remainder of its time span, for amnesia).

When the chip's clock turns off, it slags itself and becomes inert and unreadable. The subject can recover memories masked by implanted amnesia with a successful Will-6 roll at the end of the period; if he fails this roll, those hours remain blank unless restored by hypnotic regression (Quick Contest of the therapist's Hypnotism vs. the hacker's initial roll), sudden shock, or other GM fiat.

Chips programmed with Complexity 7 software (fine-quality programs: +2 to Brain Hacking skill) can run self-diagnostic and heuristic maintenance subroutines: Their activation period is measured in *weeks* instead of hours. Only the TL9 mainframes in Granite Peak can run this software, though such chips can be *reprogrammed* with field equipment.

While a chip is implanted and active, a wetware hacker can reprogram it. This requires a Brain Hacking roll at -4 and either cranial contact with a specialized interface electrode (found in the field wetware kit) for five seconds or a pulsed microwave connection to the target's skull for 20 seconds (using 20 "shots"). The target should be stationary during this period, as moving the head defocuses the signal. The small microwave beamer in the field wetware kit appears in the table above; its beam is completely invisible and inaudible, although a target with Danger Sense can roll Per-2 (modified by Acute Touch) to detect the warm spot on his head.

Implant chips can also serve as passive bugs, recording everything the subject says or hears, and uploading it in a single microburst at the end of the chip's clock. Programming the chip *only* as a bug, without psychogenic effects, is a simple Electronics Operation (Surveillance or Psychotronics) roll. This does not require the wetware scan.

Of course, psychotechnology is not yet an exact science. The GM is free to add weird side effects, strange cravings, or flashes of nightmare to the mind of anyone with an implant chip, bug or not, active or slagged. $30,000, neg., 2+(margin of success) hours or weeks. LC0^.

Irruptor Disruptor

Some reality shards, especially crystals and gems associated with longstanding subduction zones, accumulate an EM field similar to piezoelectricity. This experimental system generates a powerful standing wave on a frequency resonant with that field. This invisible wave can pass through solid objects; with a successful Electronics Operation (Psychotronics) roll, the operator can project the field's center point anywhere within 400 yards of the generator, and adjust its radius from one to 20 yards.

It amplifies and disrupts irruptor energies, especially psionic energies. Any irruptor psi abilities in the area of effect temporarily gain Uncontrollable (p. B116), triggering spontaneously in stressful situations. Any ability that's *already* Uncontrollable goes out of control immediately and stays that way while the psi remains in the field. The field also tends to cause specific effects in certain irruptors:

Bašmu or Girtablullû: Must roll Will-2 or lash out as if Berserk.
Kusarikku: Small fires break out around it.
Šedu: Must roll Will-2 or give in to supreme Overconfidence.
Ugallu: Static fries the air around it.

In *addition* to any Will roll above, all irruptors must succeed at a Will roll or hallucinate flashes of History B: -3 to DX, IQ (including Will and Per), and all skill rolls. All these effects end immediately upon leaving the field.

Unfortunately, the only working models fit in a truck bed and drain their batteries within 1d×10 minutes. $500,000, 20-yard radius, 450 lbs. LC0^.

Telephone call? Telephone call? That's communication with the outside world . . . Look, hey, all of these nuts could just make phone calls, they could spread insanity, oozing through telephone cables, oozing into the ears of all these poor sane people, infecting them. Wackos everywhere, plague of madness.

– Jeffrey Goines, in **Twelve Monkeys**

MAEser

In 1961, neuroscientist Allan Frey described the "microwave auditory effect" (MAE) by which pulsed microwaves could transmit sound to the inside of the cochlea: noises nobody outside the beam's focus could hear. By the 1980s, Sandmen had cumbersome devices capable of "beaming" words into another person's head. Modern operatives have it easier; they simply attach a MAEser system the size of a SIM card to the microwave beamer found in the field wetware kit (p. 47). (See the *Psychotechnological Weapon Table,* p. 48, for full beamer statistics.) This combination can induce a simple message directly into the skull of a listener. The wielder is limited to words equal to one-third of his Beam Weapons (Pistol) skill, rounded normally, at a rate of one word per second. He can speak the words into a mike keyed to the MAEser's input frequency, or text them to its chip; he then rolls against Beam Weapons (Pistol) with normal speed/range penalties to keep the beam aligned on the listener's ear for the duration of the message, using one "shot" per second.

If a subject unfamiliar with this technology is targeted, he must roll IQ. On a failure, he believes the words to be inner dialogue, and is at -2 to resist any reasonable, normal suggestion so delivered. On a success, he knows they aren't his, but may still be at -2 to rolls requiring concentration, sensible interactions

with others (as with Phantom Voices, p. B148), or skill rolls requiring intense mental effort. A Sandman can use Suggest via MAEser; this makes Beam Weapons (Pistol) the prerequisite roll, takes only six seconds, and is resisted at -3 (in addition to any other modifiers, such as for using Anunnaki source code). $10,000, neg., uses beamer's power. LC0.

Mental Carrier Tone Generator

Built into a combination of Bluetooth headset, filtered earbuds, and a concealed throat mike, this device emits a subsonic carrier tone designed to retune the hearer's brain waves to a calm, responsive state. It adds +2 to rolls for Enthrallment skills and Hypnotism against subjects within 3 yards. $10,000, neg., 8 hrs. LC0^.

Subdermal Injector

This penlight-sized hypo injects drugs or implant chips with a charge of compressed air (100 per $10 cartridge). It must be touching the patient to inject its drug. If used as a weapon, it can penetrate up to DR 1, has Reach C, cannot parry, and uses either Knife skill, DX-based Physician, or a DX-4 default. It takes three seconds to swap out an empty ampoule or air cartridge for a new one. $20, 0.1 lb. LC4.

Tachist 3.0

This app allows the user to read any electronic text (including print books photographed with a digital camera) at high speed using the Renshaw Method (p. 13), assuming he has already been trained in "renshing." $60, neg. LC4.

Defenses

The Project's field defenses still need work, being impractical for standard issue. Senior commanders issue them only when they suspect an area is drenched with Anunnaki imagery or that a šedu has taken a direct hand. Of these systems, only *one* may be worn at a time.

Anti-Anunnakku Shield: This device fits over the skull and inside the ears. Its neuro-diagnostic circuitry monitors the wearer's brainwaves; an attached computer-synthesizer creates sonic patterns designed to interfere with Anunnaki signals. It gives the wearer +4 to IQ, Will, and Mental Strength rolls to resist all Anunnaki *or Anunnaki-derived* programming, including glyphs, Sandman NLP, and subliminally reinforced social manipulation. It also gives the wearer -6 to his Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki) skill – his mind resists forming the symbols and guiding his hand! Its ongoing susurrus of noise and chirrups give -2 to the wearer's Sense rolls and any roll requiring concentration. Finally, after an hour of wearing it, the wearer has the equivalent of Bad Temper (p. B124) and Light Sleeper (p. B142), since the noises actively disrupt normal human rest patterns. Its wiring can be concealed inside a cap or helmet; the computer and earbuds resemble an MP3 player. $5,000, 1 lb., 1 week. LC0^.

Broakleys: Sandman slang (from "Broca's Oakleys") referring to a computerized sunglasses-earpiece combo that disrupts incoming language (visual or spoken) and translates it into either Danbe or Aulang. This provides +2 to IQ, Will, and Mental Strength rolls to resist language-delivered Anunnaki *or Anunnaki-derived* programming, as above, but +6 to resist Anunnaki glyphs, which the glasses auto-replace (along with an annoyingly random variety of other logos, type fonts, and symbols).

An auto-tune feature blocks out only human and irruptor speech frequencies, but the wearer is still at -1 to Sense rolls, -3 to Research or any other skill involving reading comprehension, and -4 to NLP or other verbal interaction attempts. The wearer is at -6 to use Artist (Calligraphy) or Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); he cannot see his work! The computer and earbuds resemble an MP3 player. $20,000, 0.3 lb., 1 week. LC0.

Noise-Canceling Earpieces: Similar to standard tactical headsets, NCEs sit flush against the skull and cancel loud or dangerous noises (as Protected Hearing, p. B78). They incorporate an encrypted tactical radio (four-mile range) with GPS and voice-activated throat microphone, and can be toggled to cut out all outside sound (as Deafness, p. B129; -4 to NLP or other verbal interaction attempts) in case of linguistic or other sound-carried attack. Can be combined with the mental carrier tone generator (p. 49). $1,000, 0.3 lb., 10 hrs. LC4.

Brain Hacking

From its beginnings, the Project embraced computer technologies. Norbert Wiener's 1940s cybernetics conferences in New York included discussions of mind-machine interface and mental programming; Sandmen attended and made a few quiet recruiting pitches to engineers and neurochemists. Computers promised data correlation, analysis, and operational planning untainted by Anunnakku linguistic control; computer science revealed the theory and practice behind that control. The Project did everything it could to drive global acceptance of the Internet and then the Web, seeing an ideal platform for memetic assaults. Over the years, interface technology, cybernetic theory, and memetics have combined into one discipline: in a phrase, brain hacking.

Project SANDMAN brain hacking so far extends to rewriting victims' personalities – usually by implanting or removing memories, advantages, and disadvantages. The GM should use his discretion, but Project laboratory brain hacking can implant all the disadvantages under *Mopers* (p. 46) and *Implant Chip* (p. 48), as well as programming and adding a multiple personality or a Loa (pp. 14-15). It takes 1d weeks to program a single persona, or 1d days to permanently add, transfer, or remove a single memory, advantage, or disadvantage.

Temporarily adding, transferring, or removing memories, premade loa shells, quirks and tics, or other less robust personality elements takes 1d hours, although the process can be sped up (see p. B346). Temporary memories cannot be entirely false; they must come from somewhere, usually another brain. Many wetware hackers keep a case full of terabyte drives preloaded with suitable "screen memories" of drug trips, alien abductions, or hours spent watching owls. If the GM wants a wilder, woolier game, he can allow brain hackers to code temporary disadvantages (again, those listed under *Mopers* and *Implant Chip*) in 1d hours with a Brain Hacking roll at -5, but using an implant chip is usually faster, more convenient, and closer to a sure thing.

A field wetware kit (p. 47) is sufficient for such temporary expedients, but permanent programming requires dedicated mainframe computers and a specially equipped surgical bay. (In such an environment, drugs and other techniques are used to lower the subject's effective Will to 0, making the roll effectively uncontested.) A temporary or field hack requires winning a Quick Contest of Brain Hacking against the subject's Will-6.

On each failure of Brain Hacking, the victim gains -5 points of mental disadvantages per point by which the roll failed. On a critical failure of Brain Hacking, the victim is functionally lobotomized, gaining Slave Mentality along with whatever other effects the GM deems appropriate.

The Project can also "upload" data into a human mind for covert storage (Brain Hacking roll at +2), to be recovered later using a verbal or computer-triggered key. However, Sandmen generally find it much simpler to hide data on a teeny, tiny millipede chip and surgically implant that somewhere in the subject instead.

For field brain hacks, the subject's normal personality or memory returns in (24-Will) hours. The effects of brain hacks performed under laboratory conditions last until reversed by irruptors, psychotechnology, or the GM's decision.

A field wetware kit counts as basic equipment (no bonus) for Brain Hacking; an old Soviet or CIA psychic warfare institute has good equipment (+1); a modern Russian SVR Blue Star base or Defense Laboratory 507 in Changsha has the equivalent of fine equipment (+2); Project laboratories have the best possible human tech, giving +4 to Brain Hacking attempts carried out there.

Irruptor brain-hacking techniques are non-technological (although some intel indicates crystals, wire frames, and lenses are used during the process), and reputedly much faster. Irruptor brain hackers can read memories, as well as replace and rewrite them.

STRAINS OF REALITY

The **Madness Dossier,** perhaps unsurprisingly, involves many opportunities for characters to lose their connection to reality. Or, what's worse, to become increasingly connected to a hostile reality. This section provides mechanical support for these themes of insanity and corruption.

OH, WE'RE ALL MAD HERE

Even in a "normal" **Madness Dossier** campaign, the ostensible heroes will find themselves doing extremely horrible things. At best, Sandmen rape the minds of innocent people to remove memories; at worst, they murder too-convincing witnesses, torture cultists, and turn the weapons of inhuman alien slavemasters against their fellow men. And perhaps the worst part of it is that it's all justified in advance by their unaccountable senior officers. The GM may wish to call for Will rolls when a Sandman does something horrifying yet necessary; on a failure, the agent can still perform the action but suffers -1 Stress, or -3 Stress on a critical failure. (See **GURPS Horror,** pp. 141-142, for more details about Stress.) The more revolting the action, the bigger the penalty to the Will roll: from -1 for endangering civilians, to -3 for erasing a man's memory of his wife, to -5 for murdering civilians, for example.

In this campaign frame, Stress is shed at the rate of -1 per *hour* spent in relaxation or "downtime." Put negative points gained from excessive Derangement (**Horror,** p. 142) into relevant mental disadvantages like Addiction, Chronic Depression, Flashbacks, Guilt Complex, Nightmares, or On the Edge – or go the other way and take Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, Callous, etc.

Some irruptor memes may be designed solely to cause Stress in a target population. Use the rules for memetic contagion on pp. 44-45, and if a character is infected, inflict Stress equal to the meme's Power. Other memes, of course, may simply cause Stress (as above) as a side effect of a failed Will roll to resist a horrific meme.

This can be taken a step further, toward cosmic horror. Add Terror (Visual) [30] to the Irruptor meta-trait – but seeing an irruptor, or learning the truth about our universe for the first time, causes a *Sanity-Blasting* Fright Check (worsening Derangement instead of Stress). In such games, some memes may also cause Derangement *directly:* the classic "truth too horrible to learn." See *Variations* (p. 54) for more on this mode.

Madness Tables

As recommended in **Horror,** this campaign frame features Madness Tables customized for its themes and level of realism. See p. 143 of that book for details on how to implement them in your game.

Madness Dossier Madness Table

Roll (1d)	Condition

Short-Term Conditions

1	Synaesthesia (below) for 3d seconds
2	Aphasia* for 2d seconds
3	Homicidal Mania* for 3d seconds
4	Suicidal Mania* for 2d seconds
5	Mild Catatonia, equivalent to Slave Mentality (p. B154), for 2d seconds
6	Seizure (p. B429) for 2d seconds

Medium-Term Conditions

1	Psychogenic Amnesia* *or* Pulhata (p. 18) for 1d-2 days (minimum 1 day)
2	Aphasia* *or* Logorrhea (below) for 2d hours
3	Dyslexia (p. B134) *or* Non-Iconographic (p. B146) for 1d days
4	Capgras' Syndrome (below) for 1d days
5	Echolalia* for 2d hours
6	Todd's Syndrome (below) for 2d hours

Long-Term Conditions

1	Fregoli Delusion (below)
2	Religious Mania*
3	Stendhal Syndrome (below)
4	Night Terrors* *or* Pulhata (p. 18)
5	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*
6	Hypergraphia (below)

* For notes on modeling these conditions, see **Horror,** p. 144. For others, see *Madness Table Results,* below.

Madness Table Results

This list models disorders with one or more possible disadvantages, with the more characteristic ones listed first. However, mental illnesses are usually syndromes comprising many possible symptoms and behaviors. Feel free to mix and match symptoms and disadvantages to achieve needed point totals for Long-Term Madness; for shorter periods, impose them on a sheerly dramatic basis.

One great effect to try as GM: If more than one person loses it during an adventure, give them both the same condition. This *folie à deux* hits the setting's themes of contagion; done well the first time, you may never have to pull that trick again to keep the players constantly talking and worrying about it. Or you can make it a standard "symptom" of whichever glyph, irruptor, or plot the Sandmen were investigating, and give it ever more specifics. Psychological evaluation of the sufferers might even produce clues for countermemes or indications of the larger kulullû agenda behind the mind-virus.

Capgras' Syndrome: The belief that someone close to you has been replaced by a duplicate or imposter. Delusion; Uncongenial.

Fregoli Delusion: The belief that one person continuously disguises himself as many different people to persecute you, often tied to failing memories for faces and places. Delusion; False Memories (**Horror,** p. 24); Paranoia.

Hypergraphia: An overwhelming, manic urge to write. Compulsive Behavior (Writing); Distractible; Delusion ("If I didn't write it down, it didn't happen"); Short Attention Span; Manic-Depressive; Epilepsy.

Logorrhea: Constant, incoherent talking or mumbling. Compulsive Behavior (Talking Constantly); Noisy.

Stendhal Syndrome: Psychosomatic illness triggered by exposure to beautiful art or scenery, especially in great abundance. Panic Attacks (**Horror,** p. 26; freeze instead of flee); Flashbacks (with rolls triggered by art or beauty).

Synaesthesia: Perception of sensory inputs with other senses; e.g., "tasting" sounds, or "hearing" colors. Treat as Hallucinating (p. B429) for short-term effects; as a longer-term condition, use Flashbacks (Mild).

Todd's Syndrome: Also called "Alice in Wonderland Syndrome." You see things out of their true scale (seeming gigantic or tiny) and often have no sense of time; it is sometimes accompanied by migraines. No Depth Perception; Flashbacks; Absent-Mindedness; Chronic Pain.

INTO THE ABYSS

When a Sandman uses the tools of alien slavery, he pays a price: becoming the thing he hunts. In the default setting, such things as the South African Project COAST (p. 8) and the deranged chödpas (pp. 30-31) reflect this tendency; the GM may also want to point it up narratively with the sort of "house of mirrors" feel familiar to espionage aficionados. The GM can further foreground the inhuman nature of the Anunnakku mechanically by using Corruption (**Horror,** pp. 146-148).

Gaining Corruption

The most common way to gain Corruption is through the Anunnaki source code, especially by utilizing it against humans. Below, for rolls such as 1d-2, the minimum is 0.

Seeing an Anunnaki glyph: Adds 1d-2 points of Corruption if you resist, 1d points if not.

Using an Anunnaki glyph: "Casting" a glyph adds 1d points of Corruption. Using a glyph but not "casting" it (for example, as an aid to Brainwashing or Hypnotism) adds 1 point of Corruption per use.

Using Abilities: Using an Enthrallment skill, Rapier Wit, Esmology, or any other ability made possible or more effective by knowledge of Anunnaki programming adds 1d-2 points of Corruption per use.

Using a Reality Shard: Adds 1d points of Corruption per use; for "always on" effects, add 1 point of Corruption per week of game time and 1d-1 points for every major "on screen" use.

Actively planning a memetic campaign using the Anunnaki source code: Adds Corruption equal to the meme's Power. For countermemetic campaigns, halve this, rounding down.

Memetic Poisoning: Some memes are *designed* to Corrupt. Use the rules for memetic contagion on pp. 44-45; if a character is infected, add Corruption equal to the meme's Power. Other memes may cause Corruption (usually half the meme's Power) incidentally, as a side effect of a failed Will roll to resist the meme.

Using an Anunnaki-Tainted Language: Speaking or reading Sumerian, Akkadian, or any other language the GM decides is especially rife with Anunnaki control rotes adds 1 point of Corruption per week. Exceedingly cruel GMs may decide that speaking English (or any language except Danbe, Aulang, and other minor isolates) counts!

You can also purposely add Corruption in other ways:

FP Bonus: Instead of paying the FP cost for any of the above activities, add 1 point of Corruption for every "free" 1 FP.

Reality Shard or Psi Use: Take +1 to effective skill or attribute for each 1 point of Corruption you add per attempt. If psi ability (or other shard-given gift) comes in levels, one-time access to higher levels is available at a Corruption cost equal to 1/5 of the character-point cost that the user would have to pay for the additional levels, rounded up.

Skill Bonus: For any skill covered by Business Acumen, Esmologist, Innate NLP, or Memetics, take +1 to effective skill for each 1 point of Corruption you add per attempt.

Purchase Corruption During Character Creation: Every 10 points of Corruption is a disadvantage worth -1 character point.

Brain hacking and similar psychotronic violations may be cruel and hateful, but they are fundamentally human in a way that the Anunnaki source code is not. They do not increase Corruption.

And for once you must try not to shrink from facts
Mankind is kept alive by bestial acts.
– Bertolt Brecht,
"What Keeps Mankind Alive"

Effects of Corruption

Every week, anyone with even a single point of Corruption must roll against Will at -1 per full 10 points of Corruption. Failure converts Corruption to negative character points, at -1 point per full 25 points of Corruption. Once someone has 125+ points of Corruption, the GM may convert it into negative character points *regardless* of the Will roll. Converting Corruption points to disadvantage points *does* reduce the subject's running Corruption total.

The more Corrupt you get, the more you become as the Anunnakku. The GM should apply those negative character points to the irruptor meta-trait disadvantages: Callous, No Sense of Humor, Sense of Duty (History B), and Sadism (or Slave Mentality, for Sandmen corrupted more by exposure than by their own actions). Those points can also chip away at advantages like Higher Purpose, Resistant to Anunnaki Programming, etc., lower skills in combat against irruptors (half the cost of lowering the skill), impose penalties on Will rolls to resist glyphs or other Anunnaki influence (in this campaign, half the cost of lowering Will), or even add the quirk "Curses in Sumerian."

Cleansing Corruption

In the stark horror of this campaign, the only way to cleanse Corruption is by brain hacking. Have the Project rebuild your mind into one less amenable to the Anunnakku by changing disadvantages from the Anunnakku-specific ones above into more "human" disadvantages, such as Honesty, Compulsive Generosity, Charitable, or amnesiac Delusions ("I don't remember the Panama City operation"). Of course, the Project may insert other post-hypnotic commands, memories, etc. as long as it's in there . . .

It might be possible to simply take a cocktail of mopers (p. 46) that switches the disadvantages as above without surgery, but they may have their own side effects, from the occasional daze to weird Obsessions.

OPENING THE MADNESS DOSSIER

The call awakened Jeanne just before the cat did. "Sherbourne," she said into the phone.

"Lady Duncorne," said a voice she didn't immediately recognize, "we've found it."

"Found it?" Jeanne picked up the cat with her free hand and nuzzled his neck, inhaling his cat-smell, like pepper and bread, then padded across the flat with him in search of coffee.

"The, ah, evidence. That you asked us to look for. But how did you . . ." She turned on the coffee maker, which immediately muttered and hissed.

"Family secret." She recognized the voice, now, as her subconscious breathing routine cleared her senses and awakened her eidetic memory. The smell of coffee helped, too. "Make a note, Rajiv. Look again at olfactory coding. Lots of characters, huge bandwidth on the CN1. Perfumes, pheromones. **Quatermass IV**."

"What?"

"Never mind, Rajiv. I'll play it back myself from this recording. But you were saying . . ." With her coffee poured, she could open a can of prawns for Cheshire. He purred like a motor launch and got in her way in his eagerness, jumping on the counter, rubbing his head on her coffee cup and hands and face.

"I'm saying we've found it. The Aurora data came back Tuesday, we ran those regressions, and it's conclusive. There is a stable subduction zone in Xinjiang. And it's only two meters across. And it's right in the middle of where the social-media logobars show that spike in the word **sarïg** – that's 'yellow' in Uighur."

She resisted reminding him that she spoke Uighur better than he did. Breath control. Deep inhalation. Ruffle cat's neck. Coffee. "So who do we have on site in Xinjiang?"

"Well, ah, nobody, your Ladyship. We didn't think . . ."

Breathe. Coffee. She let her silence respond. Cheshire gulped his prawns, oblivious.

"Well, you'd better open a new dossier then, Rajiv. Call in some favors. Write some grants. See if the Project can spare a gun or two. I'll be taking the Gulfstream to New Delhi first thing. That gives you, what, 10 hours to have a team ready to meet me on the ground at Indira Gandhi."

Jeanne thumbed the phone off. Cheshire looked at her, his yellow eyes steady. She nuzzled his fur again. She was going to miss his smell in India. For whatever reason, he helped her think.

THE PROJECT SANDMAN CAMPAIGN

Genre: Modern-day espionage and micro-conspiracy. Project SANDMAN operates super-covertly, through a special-ops strike force and a deeply theoretical analysis section. The irruptors don't control world governments, but they do move through the population unseen, thanks to their powers over human perception.

Style: Psychological horror, as the agents must continually use horrific methods (mind control, along with the other less-savory aspects of espionage work) to defeat horrors that use the same methods. If the GM wishes to emphasize this style, the agents' *own* actions might spark Will checks (see pp. 50-52).

Mode: A quintessential wainscot game (**GURPS Horror,** p. 110), making the question of boundaries between universes (as well as between defenders and irruptors) its major concern. Much of the horror of the irruptors comes from their ability to "hide in plain sight." With only moderate tweaks, this can also be an action techno-thriller – in which case the GM may wish to add more, tougher, and more horrific irruptors.

Theme: Betrayal and corruption meet in this game; the heroes must betray their own morality and become corrupt (possibly literally, p. 52) to defeat amoral slavers from another reality. Worse, that reality *was* the real one; History A is artificial, and it is breaking down under the irruptor onslaught. Insanity, mirrors, social disintegration, and "the curious madness of crowds" can all highlight these themes, along with the inevitable question: If you know memories and perceptions can't be trusted, how can you trust yours?

DESIGN PARAMETERS

See **Horror,** pp. 105-109, for general discussion of campaign design parameters.

Scale: Epic, from day one. In theory, if the Sandmen fail at any mission, it could flick out our existence like a light bulb. In practice, some mission failures "merely" cause a reality temblor that retrocreates another batch of irruptors (see *Reality Quake Table,* p. 58).

Scope: In theory, Sandmen are restricted by orders from their superiors, and by their own personal morality. Much of the psychological horror in this campaign comes from the actions they must take to widen their scope.

Visible Scope: The same as the scope; Sandmen are fully aware of the potential consequences of their actions. For an investigative game with unaware protagonists, the visible scope will expand with a jolt once the investigators learn the truth about the irruptors.

Austerity: This campaign is lenient to moderate in the field; Sandmen have broad discretion, little oversight, and access to a wide range of mind-control techniques. However, for taut psychological horror, it should be very austere in moral and psychological consequences – agents who habitually slaughter witnesses should be given the Bloodlust disadvantage, for example. See *Strains of Reality,* pp. 50-52.

Boundaries: Project SANDMAN has a global mission, and most campaigns will be globetrotting ones, with special emphasis on the Middle East. However, a suitably large and historically unstable city (Baghdad, Istanbul, Cairo, Rome, Paris, etc.) can be the setting for a localized campaign.

Variations

This campaign is not cosmic horror per se, but it can take on much of cosmic horror's mood and style if the GM emphasizes the irruptors as aliens and if he establishes that History A is truly doomed regardless of Project SANDMAN's sacrifices. A cosmic horror variation would also support a more investigative mode, including a campaign in which the heroes were outsiders (other government investigators, independent archaeologists, or tenacious reporters) chasing down the mysterious Project SANDMAN and stumbling into the nature of reality. Outside the cosmic horror style, the open-ended nature of reality quakes can justify any amount of the Fortean mode for a GM interested in questioning reality and perception by presenting streams of ever-more-bizarre events.

The GM can also insert any particularly intriguing modern conspiracy or fringe-science theory as a main element, adding to the conspiracy and Fortean tones of the setting. The "mono-atomic gold" popular with both Sumerian ancient astronaut theorists and Reptoid paranoiacs is one excellent example, support for which has already been lightly dusted into this supplement.

Red mercury, UFOs, Alien Big Cats (ugallu? Reality C irruptors?), alternative Nazi science, HAARP – a few minutes with Google can produce hours of game-worthy madness.

A truly paranoid-style campaign might begin with deep-cover Sandmen who slowly come to doubt their own secret: Have they ever actually seen this mysterious base in Utah? Have they ever *felt* a "reality temblor"? Or are they just self-activated conspiracies with amateur brain-surgery equipment in the garage, fighting a war invented during fugue states and mutual hysteria? But if they're delusional, why are scorpion-men still attacking them?

FIND THE LIVE ONES AND EXTERMINATE

There is no such thing as a "standard" Sandman mission, although there are some missions that happen more often than others. These examples are the sort of "day-to-day" missions that the GM can throw in between major parts of the story arc, or even tie together and build an ongoing narrative from. The GM can also take mission ideas from *Secondary Taskings* (pp. 8-9).

Irruptor Hunt

The simplest of all missions: Follow up on murder reports or other spoor of an irruptor, assess its activity and plans, and kill it. If the thing has been using a glyph the Project hasn't encountered, secure a copy in the process. An irruptor hunt scenario can follow the pattern laid out on pp. 45-46 of **Horror,** or reveal a larger conspiracy, or otherwise go sideways. Many of the other scenario types in this section will involve, or end up as, an irruptor hunt.

The GM should decide on the target and its agenda, and figure out at least one horrifying countermove it will make when the Sandmen start sniffing around. Determine some clues that can point up that agenda, as well as the intel that put the Sandmen on the trail in the first place. For subtle irruptors like êkimmu or kulullû, throwing in a red herring every couple of adventures makes sense – the irruptor might even have laid the false trail itself! If so, the trail likely leads through a girtablullû ambush, as do so many things.

Almost immediately, reality caved in on more than one account. The truth is that it longed to cave in.
– Jorge Luis Borges, "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"

Mission Seed: Drone footage from Yemen shows a lion-headed silhouette above a ridge in a desolate, al-Qaeda friendly region. Before the inevitable Predator strike obliterates the evidence, Sandmen need to find the ugallu, determine what it's doing on the site of the legendary palace of Sheba, and kill it and any allies it has suborned.

Secure a Reality Shard

Someone has dug up a reality shard, or a pattern of weird happenings points to something similarly anomalous on the loose. Find the shard, grab it, eliminate any threat or potential security breach caused by its use, and get the artifact back to a secure location before anybody (or anything) else shows up. This same mission structure works for reports of a glyph.

The GM must figure out what the shard is, and ideally come up with something on its provenance. Was it just excavated, or has it cursed a family in Malaysia for generations? Provide some weird happenings or strange lore associated with the shard, and maybe a rival hunting party: Chinese MSS black-baggers, murderous agents of cult-leader billionaires, or FBI agents who believe they're stopping antiquities smuggling. Figure out where it is, who or what protects it, and what they'll do when Sandmen grab it.

Mission Seed: Tadeusz Wielowicz, former head of the Polish State Museum, has died and his collection of antiquities goes under the hammer in a week. Among the treasures: the Mirror of Nitocris, which reputedly revealed the future to the sorcerous (and possibly fictional) Egyptian pharaoh-queen. Sandmen need to infiltrate the auction, prevent the Polish or Egyptian governments from deciding that the possible shard belongs in a museum, and acquire the Mirror without breaking it or their cover.

Disrupt a Cult

The kulullû, at least, don't usually build their cults on an explicitly Mesopotamian theme, but plenty of would-be Antichrists, sorcerers, and ego tyrants do so. These neo-Babylonian cults provide cover and assets in place for local irruptor operations, and often unknowingly spread Anunnaki memes on their websites or in their YouTube channels. Other cults seem innocuous enough on the surface but turn out to be a node for kusarikku logistics or to use glyphs in their Holy of Holies. Once SANDMAN pays attention to a cult, it's time to figure out just how deep their connection goes, where their funding comes from, and whether they've got a reality shard socked away in their compound. For many reasons, not least of which is simple humanity, massacring the entire cult is a last resort. Often, Sandmen have to expose the cult leader as a fraud (which can be hard if he actually has psionic or shard-given abilities) as part of a larger memetic containment operation. And of course, some cults really *are* nothing but tools and shielding for an irruptor.

The GM should come up with evocative details and weird theologies for the cult, and figure out any human weaknesses of the leadership, from bitter internecine rivalry through drug addiction to eagerness to do "real magic" for once. Map their compound, and figure out their social connections: local biker allies, rivals for the underage girl trade, excommunicated members with a grudge, and so on.

Mission Seed: Melchizedek Baloko, a charismatic revival preacher in Nigeria, does a lot of valuable charity work among refugees and the poor. He's also a well-protected asset of the CIA, with thousands of congregants feeding him plenty of intel about both radical Muslim activists and anti-oil company environmentalists. His preaching seems to reference Nineveh, Babylon, and Ur more than normal – is he being suborned by an irruptor, or has his Church Of Divine Redemption always been a full-fledged Anunnaki front?

Counter a Meme

This mission can take place in pieces around and between other missions. First, identify the dangerous meme and analyze its effect on victims. The next step is often doing recon on the social scene – maybe a smash-and-grab or black-bag job on a contagious blogger, storefront cult, or metal band to sift their media intake. After that, prepare a countermemetic campaign, find the source of the toxic meme, and take it out.

The GM should come up with a weird and horrible side effect of exposure to the unfiltered meme, as well as deciding on its Power and other game statistics. It's also important to lay at least one media vector out for the Sandmen to trace, and of course to deduce the identity and resources of the memeticist. Perhaps the meme traces back to a failed or misbegotten Project operation, or it calved unintentionally off of another irruptor gambit.

Mission Seed: A number of prominent architects in Europe, Japan, and Canada have been using neo-Babylonian features in high-profile buildings recently. All of them attended an architectural conference in Dubai last year, but so did virtually everyone who's anyone in postmodern urbanism. Is there a pattern to the buildings, or some other connection being made? And what is this meme designed to accomplish?

Campaign Crossovers

The original version of this campaign frame, in **Horror Third Edition,** presented a number of crossovers with other **GURPS** Third Edition supplements in the grand tradition of such sidebars. Here they are again!

GURPS Black Ops

The Company could easily discover the truth about History B, and the GM can use Project SANDMAN as a task force inside either the Company or Argus. The Prima are almost certainly the Anunnakku by another name; the Greys may be a new slave race bred by the šedu, or another alien race drawn to Earth by the reality quake's shockwaves. The Tunguska blast might have been the Greys' failed attempt to trigger *another* reality quake. In a grim world, it might not have been a *failed* attempt . . .

GURPS Cabal

Project SANDMAN becomes the Wheel of Ptah lodge, the irruptors are the wedge of a qlippoth invasion, and the Anunnakku are the First Creation's archangels, trapped outside the Four Realms by the reality-quaking Deluge that created the Pearl-Bright Ocean. Irruptors should have innate spells (especially in the Mind Control college) at high levels and Dependency on mana, and perhaps be Outsiders or (more dangerously) Threshold Entities (**Horror,** p. 27). The Lemurians, and possibly the Reptoids, might be irruptors under this scenario – or have histories of their own to restore.

GURPS Psionics

In the world of the Phoenix Project, Project SANDMAN is a crucial venture of the Psiberocracy, with significant staff representation from the Psibercorps. The Phoenix Project may be running its own investigation of the irruptors. Whether Project SANDMAN is a sinister government program spun out of control, or whether the Phoenix Project is a gang of addlepated do-gooders who risk demolishing all of history with their amateur interference, is up to the GM.

GURPS Warehouse 23

This setting would put a high Fortean-Mundane lens (**Warehouse 23,** pp. 25-27) on the Warehouse and its contents. In this game world, the Warehouse is "the Sandbox," an ontologically secure facility where Project SANDMAN stores and studies every known artifact from History B. The heroes can be agents assigned to the Sandbox, or the Sandbox can be a recurring setting and plot device. Many of the objects in Warehouse 23 make excellent History B artifacts, especially the Oracle Gem (**Warehouse 23,** pp. 48-49) – which might even be what the rebels used to trigger the 535 A.D. Ontoclysm!

Derail an Investigation

Plenty of inquisitive strangers come sniffing around Project operations, or worse yet, around irruptor operations. (It's worse because inquisitive strangers are almost never prepared for irruptors, and almost always make things far more dangerous for the Sandmen who have to clean up the scene.) It's much easier to derail an investigation before it gets too close, but that's not always a luxury the Sandmen have. On the other hand, once the Sandmen *are* on the scene, using French intelligence agents or a Chinese oil company as tools for your investigation can provide useful diversions and misdirection. Who knows? They might even uncover something useful before you blank them.

The GM needs to detail the target investigators, of course, and figure out what it is they think they're investigating and how they stumbled onto the trail. This is a great place to let sloppy PC tradecraft bite them in the roundabout, or to lay a trail to an ongoing irruptor op. (Or to a Project operation the heroes aren't cleared for!) Finally, this can be a great scenario for introducing replacement or other new characters: the one investigator who survived gets recruited into the Project.

Mission Seed: At Cambridge and at the Nippur dig site, Professor Martin Wyndham-Phipps is quite insistent on being granted access to certain records under Duncorne seal. He has spent a decade working on a revised chronology of the Sumerian and Assyrian civilizations, and has substantial government and corporate grants for his work, which has already been presold to a cable channel as a documentary series. A sudden "change of mind" will raise more questions than it closes off. He knows the archaeology far too well for any simple forgery, and can't just vanish given his many friends in the British Cabinet.

Recon a Subduction Zone

This mission ideally determines which specific other missions might be necessary later. Of course, sometimes the conditions are so changeable, or so dire, that the mission suddenly becomes one of those other missions. But in outline, the mission is: Go in, don't attract attention, look for irruptor spoor or glyphic graffiti, map the memes and check the local rumors, debrief any witnesses before blanking them, and get out with your information. Many reality subduction zones are relatively stable, such as the ruins of Tiryns (in Greece) or Jerusalem. Others are dangerous but relatively well known: the zones in Paris are well mapped, SANDMAN assets within Mossad constantly monitor the zone in Gaza, and there's a Project base inside the zone in Nippur. However, the zones in Baghdad and along the Pakistani stretches of the Indus, and the newly formed subduction zones in Mexico, for example, are both dangerous and mysterious.

If there's anywhere a random encounter table is justified, it's on a mission like this. The GM can go wild. Put anything weird in a reality subduction zone; you can make it fit. You don't even need to come up with a long-term scheme; the zone conditions might be so recent or so changeable that even the šedu don't know their own plans yet.

Mission Seed: Between the sightings of a "phantom Roman ship" off the coast and the sudden upsurge in Roman gold and silver coins being passed in the underground economy, it's clear something big and weird has happened in Maracaibo, Venezuela. Unfortunately, relations between the Venezuelan regime and the U.S. are at an all-time low, with denunciations of spies and saboteurs flooding the local memespace.

Contain a Temblor

The first priority is to figure out the edges of the affected zone, and keep movement of people and ideas across them to a minimum. This often involves suborning local emergency teams, or creating a local emergency to cover the temblor. The next priority is to kill any irruptor outside the zone and maintain a cordon until the temblor ends. Then, go in and take out any newly retrocreated irruptors, map the local effects on history and memory, and generally recon the location as above. Except faster, and probably under fire by scorpion-men.

This should be a run-and-gun type adventure, with far too much happening far too fast. Is that refugee caravan smuggling out an irruptor? A reality shard? Is that little girl really a girtablullû with a glyph up? Are all those messages over the military band from the military, or are they memetic carpet bombs? The Sandmen's logistics and intel will almost always be stretched to the limit – when they've hit their breaking point, send them into the zone to kill stuff.

Mission Seed: A kulullû has planted a cult of Ishtar in a World Health Organization medical relief team (that includes trauma psychologists and therapists) from Spain. They lift for the stricken area (earthquake? terrorist attack? encephalitis outbreak?) immediately, because the kulullû knew the reality temblor was coming. If the temblor didn't require a WHO team, the irruptors cause some horror there that does. The Ishtarites will do good, heal many, and spread a powerful posthypnotic memeplex of dependence on the Anunnakku in the process. (Consider using this seed if you roll a 14+ on the *Reality Quake Table,* p. 58.)

Stabilize a Subduction Zone

This is typically a long-term project involving a number of Sandman teams, and often memetic support from the moles in Granite Peak. It might include any of the missions above; success on those missions can remove modifiers from the roll on the *Reality Quake Table* (p. 58). Even if a particular mission doesn't seem directly relevant to a modifier, the GM may still rule that a success modifies the next roll on the table for that area by -1.

More generally, hunting down any stray scorpion-men, policing up any lost or graffitied glyphs, seeding counter-memes through gossip and propaganda, and erasing the memories of any wandering witnesses is unglamorous grunt work, but it has to be done. Some larger complication often interrupts this sort of "background mission." That complication can be interpersonal or political drama, a nosy Russian SVR team following a psychic sniff, or if need be, a full-fledged šedu counterattack.

Mission Seed: Check the news for an atrocity, riot, disaster, terrorist attack, or coup d'etat somewhere in the last two or three weeks. That was the cover story or the backblast – the irruptors were up to something much, much worse! They're mostly stopped. We think. Your Sandman team gets sent in to stabilize things with inadequate intel; riff on their flailing responses to the horror around them.

MERE CHAOS

Much of the flavor of this game can come from a sufficiently jaundiced viewing of the international news. (Or some days, the national news.) Certainly the sense of law, order, and history tearing and tattering, revealing itself as an artificial scrim stretched over naked force and virulent hatred, is one this campaign aims to reflect. Like any horror game set in the modern world, the GM should endeavor to convey a barely subliminal sense of despair without turning the adventure into a political screed.

To that end, emphasizing other sorts of conditions on the ground in addition to riots, murder-cults, and indecipherable graffiti can assist with that atmosphere. Every GM will have their own vocabulary of surrealism, nightmare, and danger taken from video games, movies, and other sources besides cable news; here are some possibilities to start with.

What Subduction Zones Look Like

Inside a reality subduction zone, human experience is just a little closer to History B than it is elsewhere. One useful shorthand method for the GM is using descriptors reminiscent of Bronze Age Mesopotamia, such as *crude, glazed, towering, bitumen, cylindrical, cracked, baking,* or *coppery.* Perhaps the temperature is always a little hotter, and the air a little stiller, more like Iraq in the summer everywhere. Winds, when they appear, are howling gusts, bringing dust instead of coolness. The sky seems a little flatter, the light slightly more diffuse. Night falls fast and hard; the electric lighting seems wildly discolored or strangely sepia.

Technology might be a little more prone to go on the fritz (a roll of 18 *or* 17 is always a critical failure when using TL7+ equipment). Strenuous exercise or combat might cost 1 FP extra thanks to the heat and thickness of the air.

A Sandman with Hidden Lore (History B) can determine if a location lies within a reality subduction zone with 10 minutes' observation and a skill roll at -4. A character with Area Knowledge for the area might notice the subtle changes (minimum of -3 to the roll) if it recently became a subduction zone. Over a period of a week, an observer making a successful Esmology roll will notice a more atomized or differently charged social atmosphere than normal, as the human hive buzzes madly before settling down into its designed order.

What Reality Temblors Look Like

Reality temblors look like reality subduction zones, only turned up to 11. They almost always involve some local disaster, battle, or other catastrophe. A reality quake, by definition, overturns all of human history – that leaves a lot of damage possible for a "mere" temblor. Temblors have created and uncreated whole fortifications and cities. The medieval castle of Samiran in Iran vanished from the archaeological record for 130 years despite British surveys of the site, reappeared on the wrong side of the river in 1961, and still appears nowhere in the historical record before 1838. The Duncorne Foundation has the original survey records of Kôr in the Kenyan uplands, a city which now survives only in H. Rider Haggard's novels.

In short, the GM should feel free to really cut loose here; eyewitness testimony by traumatized survivors is easily discounted.

One sign of a reality temblor in progress is an anomalous eclipse, unpredicted comet, or other strange astronomical (or astrological) portent. Another effect of imminent reality temblors is to "blank out" local precognitive or psychometric abilities, since history literally *doesn't exist* on the far side of the slip. Volcanism and conventional earthquakes also seem to follow or precede reality temblors . . . as do irruptors, of course.

What Irruptor Incursions Look Like

Irruptors do not appear out of thin air. A šedu might step off of an altar or a frieze, a bašmu tunnel up through the sand, but never in front of witnesses. Often, the irruptors have a human cult waiting for them, to provide protection and tools. The cult might be subverted by a reality shard, or built by a kulullû, or called into existence by the shock of the reality temblor. (The latter sort of cult often responds with bloodthirsty violence and incoherent rage, as its members' minds shift into the new history.) The cult's actions often trigger a memetic pulse among the region's collective subconscious, even if the cultists can be prevented from actively proselytizing on behalf of the Awakened Angel or True Djinn.

A reality temblor shifts things retroactively: that old museum always had a nest of scorpion-men in the basement, or that floating bed of seaweed always held a torpid kulullû. Research rolls (at -3) can turn up traces of the irruptors in the new past: a mysterious death by poison in the museum a century ago, or a ship that wrecked itself in a calm sea near the seaweed bank. A successful Hidden Lore (History B) roll detects the symptoms of retrocreation in such stories: contradictory names, literary parallels, memetic signatures, weird lack of interest by major newspapers or police forces at the time.

HOW SOON IS NEVER?

Like many conspiratorial or cosmic horror games, much of the tension in this setting arises from uncertainty: how soon will the world end? In general, if a full-fledged reality quake comes up on the *Reality Quake Table* (below), that's very likely the end (but see *After the End,* p. 59). How soon that happens depends on how well the heroes do at shutting down the irruptors, and even more so on how often the GM rolls on the table. If the GM feels like adding mechanically to this countdown tension, he can use either of two methods: the oil-spot method, or the percentage method.

Oil-Spot Method

Begin with a map of the Middle East. This map depicts the crucial theater of the reality war; subduction zones elsewhere are diversions or attempts at second fronts. Mark 3d locations (minimum of six) with a dot: these are ongoing reality subduction zones. Use the ones mentioned in this sourcebook (Baghdad, Nippur, Gaza, etc.), make up your own, or add a combination of both. Now roll 1d; this is the number of line segments you have to connect the dots on your map. (Line segments should not be more than an inch or two long, on a normal letter-sized map.)

Reality Quake Table

If an event occurs, or an irruptor plan comes to fruition, that the GM feels might trigger a slippage in the fault lines of history, roll 3d. Such events, and their effects on the roll, might include:

Cults: A large cult worships the Anunnakku, trying to "believe" or "wish" them back into power. Roll at +0 for 10 cultists, +1 for 100 cultists, +2 for 1,000 cultists, and so on.

Mass Death: A large number of humans (100+) die in a day in a reality subduction zone (see p. 6). Roll at +0 for 100 deaths, +1 for 1,000 deaths, +2 for 10,000, and so on.

Memetic Contamination: Irruptors successfully insert memes, Anunnaki glyphs, etc. into the local media stream. Roll at +0 for 10,000 humans influenced, +1 for 100,000, +2 for 1,000,000, and so on.

Overt Revelation: An irruptor is unequivocally revealed to a large, media-connected population. This can go either way; the massive shock and revulsion might reinforce humanity's "amnesia" about the Anunnakku, or the sight of an irruptor might trigger their fear and belief. Roll 1d or 2d, depending on the number of surviving witnesses and the scale of the event; *add* an odd total to the roll but *subtract* an even one.

Reality Shard: Irruptors discover and use an artifact from History B on a human population. Roll at +0 for 100 humans influenced, +1 for 1,000, +2 for 10,000, and so on.

If the event (other than a mass death) occurred in a reality subduction zone, add 1 to the result. If a šedu survives to coordinate the quake, add 3 to the result. If all surviving witnesses believe a Project SANDMAN cover story and no irruptors survive in the area, subtract 3 from the result.

6 or less – No result.

7-9 – No result, but add 1 to any further roll made within a week if stimulus continues.

10-11 – No result, but add 2 to any further roll made within a week if stimulus continues.

12-13 – No *immediate* result, but if stimulus continues, roll again in 1d×10 hours, at +2. This modifier is cumulative if rolled more than once.

14-15 – Reality temblor in 2d hours. Local area becomes a reality subduction zone: 1d-2 reality shards appear and 1d irruptors are retrocreated nearby. After the temblor, if stimulus continues, roll again in 1d days, at +2. This modifier is cumulative if rolled more than once.

16-17 – Reality quake will occur in 2d days. Reality temblor as above, except 2d irruptors retrocreated (instead of 1d).

18 or more – Reality quake will occur in 2d hours. Reality temblor (as above) occurs immediately, *plus* 1d-3 (minimum 1) šedu are retrocreated nearby. See *After the End,* p. 59.

Roll 2d after each PC mission; on a 4 or lower, remove either a dot or a line segment. Removing a dot represents a stabilized reality subduction zone. On a 10+, add a new dot or line segment. A successful mission subtracts -2 from this roll; a failed or ambiguous mission adds +2.

However, there are constraints. A dot cannot be removed if it still has a line segment leading out of it. Further, no dot completely surrounded by line segments can be removed. Also, the GM can add further dots to the same location (in which case *Reality Quake Table* rolls in that subduction zone are at another +1 for each additional dot).

For every full 10 dots on the map, add +1 to *all* rolls on the *Reality Quake Table*. If the number of dots on the map ever drops below six, all rolls on the *Reality Quake Table* are at -2.

The oil-spot method is more fun still if the players can look at the map (call it an "ontotectonics chart" in game) and pick which dots or line segments to erase on a success. If you like, they can mutually take the role of a Control staffer who gives their Sandmen assignments based on the map. The mission target might be that pesky dot, or it might be unrelated; perhaps the characters' kusarikku hunt in Detroit allowed a different NPC Sandman team to stabilize a subduction zone in Isfahan and remove a dot from the map.

Percentage Method

This is much simpler, if less "hands-on" than messing around with maps. At the beginning, the GM decides the likelihood of an Anunnakku victory; somewhere between 40% and 70% sounds like reasonable odds for History B. The "field strength" of History A equals the remainder of the percentage, less a 2% "wild card" factor representing a nascent History C, or utter chaos.

Example: At the beginning of the campaign, the GM decides that History A is fragile: there is a 66% chance of Anunnaki (History B) victory. History A has a 32% (100% - 66% - 2%) chance of survival.

A successful Sandman mission by the PCs (or one they materially assist) adds (1d)% to the field strength of History A, and subtracts (1d)% from the likelihood of History B. A mission the heroes fail deducts (1d)% from History A, and adds (1d)% to History B. (Roll the die twice, for two different results.) The GM may modify rolls by 1 or 2 either way if a given mission was particularly problematic or decisive. On any *successful* mission in which the Sandmen employed Anunnaki methods (glyphs, memetics, NLP, reality shards, etc.), reroll any sixes.

Modify all rolls on the *Reality Quake Table* by +1 for every 10 percentiles that History B climbs above 60%, or by -1 for every 10 percentiles that History B drops below 40%. If History B's probability ever exceeds 96% *or* if History A's strength ever drops below 8% twice in a row, a full-fledged reality quake occurs regardless of the table results. If both History A and History B drop below 50%, start adding irruptors from History C: characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, or agents of Uqbar, or the Greys, or Cthulhu mythos creatures. You're on your own on that one.

If using the percentage method, the GM should not reveal what the initial values of History A and History B are, and probably shouldn't reveal the running total either, except to note when the modifier changes on the *Reality Quake Table*.

After the End

So the dice came up 18 on the *Reality Quake Table,* the PCs blew their shot at the šedu behind it, and the Big One let loose, overturning all human history and returning mankind to the slave farms of the Anunnakku. The Red Kings awaken after 1,500 years. The world is in Babylonian chaos and captivity simultaneously. Now what?

The answer depends on what the GM wants to do with the campaign, but here are two possibilities:

Trigger an Aftershock: While reality is still plastic, maybe a memetic bombardment, or a colossal trauma to the awakening Anunnakku, could re-retrocreate History A. Can the last human heroes find and commandeer a nuclear missile sub that slipped into History B? Locate the Holy Grail? Awaken Tiamat, who even the gods fear? Break the nam-shub tablets contained within the E-temen-anki, the Great Tower of Babylon, and confuse all human speech? It's worth a shot, right? This is the desperate, everything-on-the-table, one-last-mission mission. If the Sandmen win, they restore their history – for a little while, at least.

Lead Humanity in a Revolt: The PCs have a few years – maybe even a century – before the Anunnakku restore full control. They have knowledge of Danbe, and skills to infiltrate the new societies. They can carve out places to hide, subduction zones of History A in this new world. This becomes a longer-term campaign, and requires the GM to come up with more details about how History B works, once the Red Kings get it working again.

CAMPAIGN SEEDS

Each of these story arcs illustrates one of the narrative structures from **Horror** (pp. 100-101) as it might play out in this campaign world.

Breakdown or Breakout (Escape)

Having seen and done enough, the agents try to "come in from the cold" and defect from Project SANDMAN to some other cause. Neither side believes their intentions genuine. To add that special John le Carré feel, maybe not all the PCs *are* genuine defectors; some might be double agents, or tighearna-macha in the making. This can be a subtle game of interpersonal intrigue or an action thriller pitting our heroes against an uncontrollable global conspiracy that can't be exposed without destroying the world.

Earthquake Whether (Gauntlet)

While on a mission in Jakarta, the Sandmen encounter a new Anunnakku glyph that rotates their perceptual cortices into History B during the 535 A.D. cataclysm. They must fight off the attacks of the irruptors, decipher the strange surreal imagery of History B, and avoid destroying too much of downtown Jakarta before their willpower completely erodes and they become loyal warriors in the šedu army – or die of psychosomatic injuries received as the reality quake swallows them up.

Other Nows

What good would a campaign frame about overthrowing history be if you couldn't overthrow its history? Here are a few other "present days" if you would rather subvert the past than defend the present.

In **May of 1942,** the mathematician Norbert Wiener convened a conference in New York City on "cybernetics," a newly coined science of control. Kurt Lewin, Margaret Mead, John von Neumann, and other pioneers of psychology, physics, anthropology, neurophysiology, and electrical engineering attended. Few records were kept, but topics included mind-machine interfaces, human control systems, hypnotism, and conditioned reflex. In short, everything needed for dieselpunk brain hacking. Players might take the roles of these top minds, or of the agents of DC-R, the Duncorne Foundation, and the SAO tracking the spoor of the irruptors who want those top minds for their own upcoming invasion of History A.

In **May of 1968,** the tiny Situationist International (SI) stepped into a leadership role directing student uprisings and general strikes in Paris and all across France. President DeGaulle fled the country, and for a brief moment France was almost remade in the image of an artistic movement that believed the world was spectacle created by consensus ideology. In short, two dozen memeticists nearly took over a major nation. Players might be Situationists tearing down the walls of Anunnaki control, or Sandmen trying desperately to keep the whole of France from erasing itself from history. Whether the SI are bold pioneers of true human freedom or tools of the kulullû is up to the GM.

In **May of 1988,** the Soviet Union began its withdrawal from Afghanistan. In the Kremlin, the writing was on the wall; smart KGB men began planning their post-Communist careers. They knew where the subduction zones ("psychically active loci") were in Afghanistan, and they had no shortage of soldiers willing to make one last looting run through Herat or Kandahar. This is a covert shooting war between Sandmen and Pspetsnaz, racing to seize reality shards or caches of monoatomic gold and red mercury. Irruptors, mujahideen, and hardline Communists complicate everything on the ground and in the memetic battlespace, which roils from Berlin to Beijing. Themes of a dread empire's fall echo from the Kremlin walls and the ziggurats of Saddam Hussein's rebuilt Babylon; a creative GM can riff on *The Man Who Would Be King, Apocalypse Now,* or any other tale of freelance history-making.

When they get out of that, Control decides the agents should keep the glyph and use it for ongoing reconnaissance of History B. After all, intelligence about the world the enemy came from will be vital to defeating them . . . surely, it's worth the insane risk to one team of Sandmen.

> *Stop applauding. The spectacle is everywhere.*
>
> *– Situationist slogan of 1968*

Chevalier Sans Peur et Sans Merci (Nemesis)

A šedu who identifies himself as Lancelot begins operations in England and France, recreating the Arthurian legend with ever-more grandiose results: He becomes commander of the EUFOR, undermines a shaky royal marriage, and defeats terrible threats to Britain. Does he intend to goad the agents into striking a second Dolorous Blow, and use himself as the fulcrum to restore History B? This can add a different flavor from the standard Sumerian-Babylonian-Assyrian complex, as Lancelot drops hints that the real myths are stranger yet.

The Shulgi Prophecy (Picaresque)

The relevant records are broken or contradictory, but around 2000 B.C., Shulgi of Ur attempted to rewrite the myths of Sumer to make himself the center of the gods' story; later texts condemn him for "untruthful inscriptions" and "insolent writings." He looted Babylon and impiously defied the gods while building his own ziggurat at Ur. Shulgi, in other words, may have been an early anti-Anunnakku rebel. The Duncorne Foundation has assembled a possible translation of his rituals, and developed a possible application of his method: invoking each of the seven planets (Mercury, Venus, Sun, Moon, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) in seven subduction zones. Our heroes are the team tasked to turn that into an actual plan, and to then undertake the seven missions; they may even get access to Duncorne reality shards if they can justify it. Are the PCs mankind's best hope? Or is the Shulgi Prophecy disinformation and flypaper, a feint intended to draw out irruptor cults from all over the region into the open? Either way, they're the guys left holding the monoatomic gold box in the bad part of Cairo.

Red King Black Box Hunt (Quest)

The directors are convinced that if the Anunnakku are aliens, the ship that brought them to Earth must be somewhere. Perhaps its navigation systems could help pinpoint the Anunnaki home world; certainly, its advanced technology could even the odds. Its "reality stabilizers" might even be what keeps the Anunnakku asleep, rather than vanished with the rest of their history. Now, all the agents have to do is track down every single myth of a fallen stone, grail, chariot, or flying saucer – but if they find the Anunnaki ship, they could end the fight right there.

OTHER CAMPAIGNS

The default campaign given so far is hardly the only possible reading of the *Madness Dossier.* The world might not be our world, and the Sandmen might not be the heroes. But you knew that already.

THROUGH A LOOKING-GLASS DARKLY

The Duncorne Foundation failed in 1888. The Tigris irruption triggered a major reality temblor, and the world shifted, tilted on its pragmaxis. Scorpion-men poured into Baghdad and Bechuanaland. Lion-headed lords rose in India; bull-men awoke in Greece. For 20 years, the Red King rose toward the surface of existence as the skies turned the color of heated brass. And then free humanity's antibodies appeared. The meme pool of mankind, built up from the lays of Arthur to the *voyages extraordinaires* of Verne, brought forth its own champions, retrocreating them in the newly plastic reality. Sherlock Holmes stopped the šedu in Whitechapel; Tarzan rescued Opar and Nairobi from the ugallu; Abraham Van Helsing broke the spell of the Balkan êkimmu voivodes; Wolf Larsen harried kulullû across the seas. Human armies deployed aéronefs and nautiluses, driving the scorpion-men back across the Euphrates and down the Nile.

But now the memesphere closes over the invasion, healing the scars too well. Mankind once more sinks into amnesia, as the Great Powers prepare for cataclysmic war with their mighty new-old weapons. Only the League of Sandmen stands ready to fight for a humanity that would dream them back into fiction against a foe that would destroy even their legends.

LAWYERS, GUNS, AND MEMORY

The heroes are elite agents of the DEA looking into rumors that rogue elements of the CIA and MI6 are smuggling drugs. (In a dark game, these agencies are doing just that to fund Project SANDMAN; in a lighter one, it's irruptor disinformation.) At least one PC (and perhaps all) should have the Illuminated advantage, if only to explain why they don't just wind up dead in the desert somewhere. One lead after another takes the investigators from battle to battle against both Project SANDMAN and the irruptors; with tolerant or eager roleplayers, the PCs will likely wind up switching sides with total abandon as one or the other faction brain-hacks them. Bring the gonzo: Add in Russian GZ teams trying to restore a Communist utopia that never was, a rogue chödpa who wants to build an army to conquer Persia or unify the world by memetic squid-bombardment, weird heroin-centipede aliens straight out of William S. Burroughs, an agent of Uqbar from History C, or the Men in Mauve.

Reality Abzu, 2013

Fitting this world into the Infinite Worlds is not for the faint of heart. Do the Anunnakku threaten all the earths or just one? Just the earths that diverged between 2900 B.C. and 535 A.D.? Are the worlds with local presents before the Ontoclysm still secret plantations of the gods, or did the Dolorous Blow free mankind simultaneously on all alternates? Can subduction zones open onto parallel worlds? Onto further, inhuman quanta? Is Homeline's Duncorne Foundation (*Infinite Worlds,* p. 40) running the hidden war on Homeline, or is it just a close (Oxford instead of Cambridge) parallel? Do the languages of the parallel earths all hold the secret keys to Anunnaki control? If Patrolmen encounter irruptors, do they bring their deadly memes back across the worldlines in sense memory or post-hypnotic compulsion?

Fortunately for their peace of mind, the Patrol knows nothing of all this. Reality Abzu gets its name from its wealth of ancient cuneiform inscriptions, far more of which have been preserved and translated than on any other known modern-day parallel. A lot of pop songs and advertising campaigns from Abzu also go over incredibly well on Homeline and other close parallels; royalties to Infinity pour in. With no mana, the Sheldrake Section has a considerable leg up on the Cabal hunting for the plentiful reality shards in this parallel. Though ISWAT has its suspicions, it needs proof to get a Z-rating stamped on this world, so rich in weird micro-fads, enigmatic artifacts, and archaeological data.

Current Affairs

The United States struggles with the ongoing global recession and the problems of hyperpower in a splintering geopolitical environment.

Divergence Point

One of the many close parallels that diverges in the 1990s when a non-existent Paul Van Zandt does not discover parachronics. In Abzu, as in a slight majority of similar close parallels, George W. Bush became President of the U.S. in 2001.

Major Civilizations

Western (empire with rivals), Chinese (empire), Orthodox (empire), Indic (empire).

Great Powers

United States of America (representative democracy, CR3), People's Republic of China (dictatorship, CR5), Russian Federation (dictatorship, CR4), India (representative democracy, CR3), European Union (feudal league of democracies, CR3).

Worldline Data

TL: 8 (SANDMAN psychotronic tech is TL9^) **Mana Level:** none
Quantum: 5   **Infinity Class:** P4 **Centrum Zone:** Inaccessible

INSPIRATIONAL SOURCES

Once you start looking, there is no bottom to the wells of linguistic speculation, mind control, psychic warfare, and Mesopotamian myth. These sources should help you decide where to drown first.

Nonfiction . . . Or Is It?

Aunger, Robert. *The Electric Meme: A New Theory of How We Think* (Free Press, 2002). Informed attempt to combine neuroscience and cultural evolution into a theory of memetics.

Begich, Nick. *Controlling the Human Mind: The Technologies of Political Control or Tools for Peak Performance* (Earthpulse, 2006). Conspiracy theory meets neuroscience!

Black, Jeremy and Green, Anthony. *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia* (British Museum Press, 1992). A truly excellent overview and resource.

Jaynes, Julian. *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Houghton Mifflin, 1976). Intriguing and inspirational, if wrongheaded, theory.

Keith, Jim. *Mass Control: Engineering Human Consciousness* (Adventures Unlimited Press, 2003). Longtime conspiracist Keith presents a wide-scale paranoid view of the topic with tons of hooks worth lifting.

Keys, David. *Catastrophe* (Random House, 1999). The real-history cataclysm of 535 A.D. and the world it made. Keys says it was a volcano in Java.

Kramer, Samuel Noah. *The Sumerians* (University of Chicago Press, 1971). Readable general study of the first servants of the Anunnakku.

Ronson, Jon. *The Men Who Stare At Goats* (Simon & Schuster, 2005). Deadpan mockery of U.S. military "Jedi" training and remote-viewing programs, and their postulated spinoffs in the War on Terror.

Velikovsky, Immanuel. *Mankind in Amnesia* (Doubleday, 1982). Hypothesizes that historical confusion results from immense racial post-traumatic stress after two cosmic disasters in the Bronze Age.

Fiction . . . Or So They Would Have You Think

Barnes, Steven. *The Kundalini Equation* (Tor, 1986). Total human potential as pre-technological nuclear fear; a brilliantly original martial-arts horror novel.

Borges, Jorge Luis. "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius" (1941). Classic short story of an imperialist history replacing our own, in this case through an encyclopedia. Grant Morrison ("Orqwith," in *Doom Patrol* #20-24) and Neil Gaiman

("Dream of a Thousand Cats," in *Sandman* #18) have both riffed off this masterpiece.

Burroughs, William S. *The Ticket that Exploded* (Grove Press, 1967). Perhaps not "recommended," exactly, but this avant-garde serial killing of a pulp SF spy novel is certainly "inspirational."

Dick, Philip K. *Time Out of Joint* (Lippincott, 1959). Classic paranoia and linguistically constructed reality in pulp SF dress. Anything by Philip K. Dick is grist for a ***Madness Dossier*** game.

Ellis, Warren. *Planetary* (DC/WildStorm, 1999-2009). Gripping comic about "reality archaeologist" superheroes uncovering the hidden history of their comic-book universe.

Flynn, Michael. *In the Country of the Blind* (Tor, 2001). Reprint of Flynn's 1990 novel of memetic-esmological conspiracy; includes an essay on cliology.

Ford, John M. *Princes of the Air* (Simon & Schuster, 1982). Deft space-opera confidence-man novel includes a language designed for persuasion.

Gentle, Mary. *Ash* (Gollancz, 2000). Astonishing, magnificent historical weird-science fantasy of a 15th-century reality quake in action and aftermath.

Gibson, William. *Pattern Recognition* (Putnam, 2003). A memetic spy novel disguised as hipster quest narrative.

Heinlein, Robert A. "Gulf" (1949). The Renshaw method and improved linguistics become keys to a secret superman society in this too-short spy novella.

Kuttner, Henry. "Nothing But Gingerbread Left" (1943). Memetic earworm warfare against Hitler.

Langford, David. "BLIT" (1988). Features "basilisk" glyphs that crash human software; Langford expands the idea in many later stories.

Leiber, Fritz. "Rump-Titty-Titty-Tum-TAH-Tee" (1959). Nigh-apocalyptic earworm channeled by beatniks in classic Leiber dark-humorous fashion.

Mamatas, Nick. *Sensation* (PM Press, 2011). Secret war between a spider hive-mind and mutant wasps uses humanity as pawns. Arch, political, and unsettling.

Morrison, Grant. *The Invisibles* (DC/Vertigo, 1994-2000). Conspiracy comic replete with weird irruptors, a Universe B, the invisible alphabet, and plenty of amazing psychotronic and mind-altering weirdness.

Stephenson, Neal. *Snow Crash* (Bantam, 1992). The seminal cyberpunk linguistic apocalypse novel introduced Sumerian as the human firmware programming language.

Watson, Ian. *The Embedding* (Gollancz, 1973). Classic SF novel about alien linguistic design, the interplay of language and perception, and memetics before it was called that.

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Paradise
Is exactly like
Where you are right now
Only much much
Better.

– Laurie Anderson, "Language is a Virus"