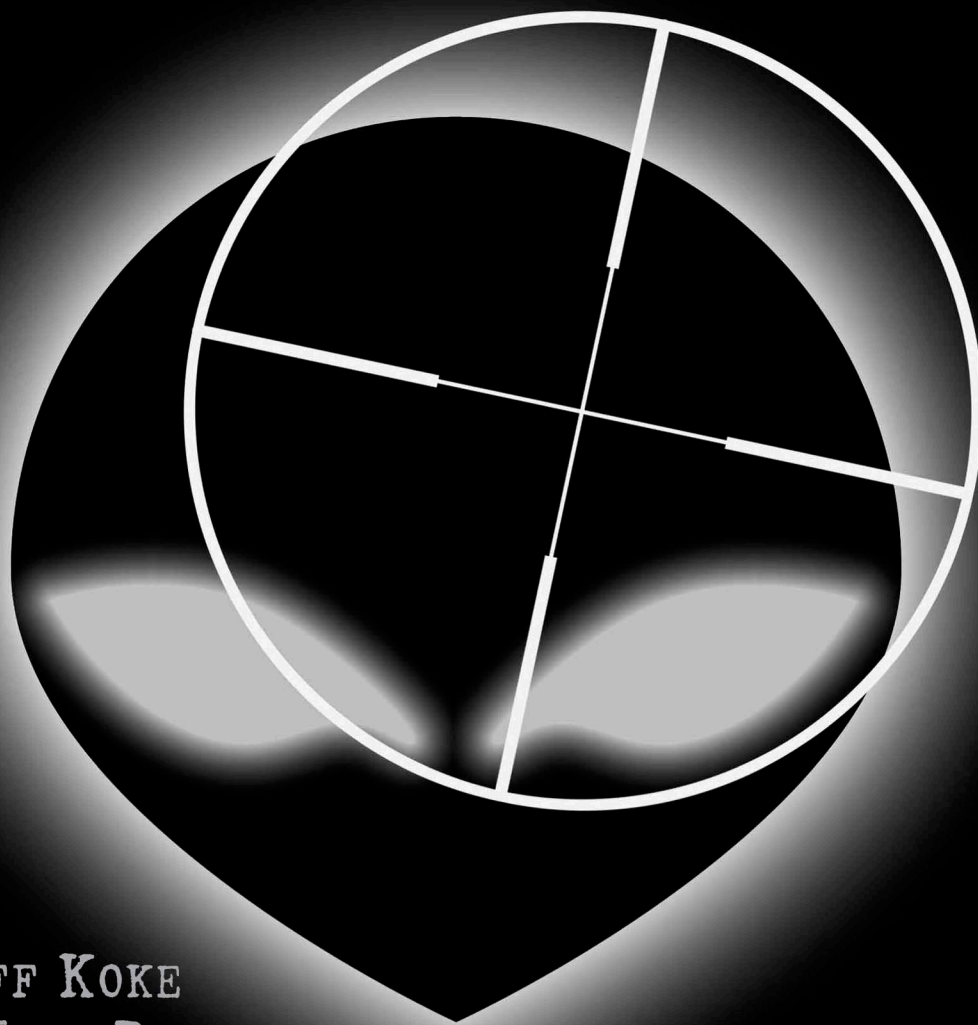


G U R P S[®]

BLACK OPS™

FIND THE TRUTH — AND KILL IT



BY JEFF KOKE
AND S. JOHN ROSS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

THE GREYS. VAMPIRES. EVIL PSIS.



BETTER BRING A SPARE CLIP.

Experience *GURPS* as never before in *Black Ops*, an adventure setting that takes cinematic roleplaying to the edge and over the top!

Wrestle enraged gargoyles on rain-slick ledges high over dark city streets! Endure the raw psychic fury of the dreaded soul dog! Above all, watch out for the insidious Greys, as they kidnap human women and steer the destiny of entire nations!

Our only defense against these terrifying foes is the Company, which takes conspiracy from theory to practice. As one of its recruits, you'll endure five years at the hellish Academy, where only the best of the best graduate and failing grades become tombstone inscriptions. Upon becoming a black op, you'll possess attributes and deadly expertise to make mere normals tremble.

You'll need them – because it's all true. Ancient alien visitors and recent arrivals, things slithering in sewers and alleys by night, dark plots by paranormal cabals to bend humanity to their will – all these dangers and more lurk in society's shadow.

ODDS ARE YOU'LL DIE IN STYLE.
YOUR JOB IS TO TAKE
AS MANY OF THEM WITH
YOU AS YOU CAN.



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
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The *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition* is required to use this supplement in a *GURPS* campaign. The *GURPS Ultra-Tech* books are recommended but not necessary. The setting described here can be adapted for any game system.

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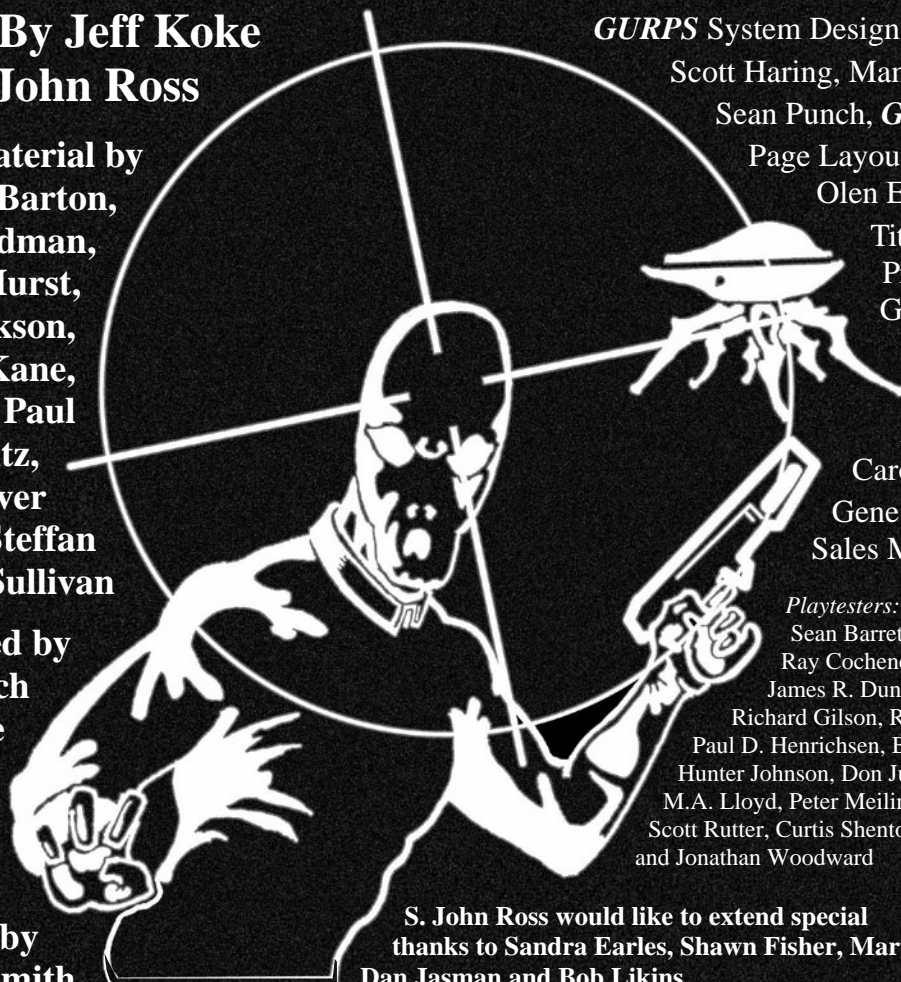
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Jeff Koke dedicates this book to the twin joys of his life – Angela, who loves him more than he could possibly deserve, and Alexandra, who simply loves. S. John Ross would like to dedicate his work on this book to Tim Driscoll and Clint Gaige, both of whom have inspired and fed his interest in the action-movie genres.

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the GURPS system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid. Our bimonthly magazine includes new rules and articles for GURPS, as well as information on *In Nomine*, *Illuminati: New World Order*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures* and more. It also covers top releases from other companies – *Castle Falkenstein*, *Traveller*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun* and many more.

New supplements and adventures. GURPS continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our Web site (below).

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all GURPS releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request. Or download them from the Web – see below.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book in later printings!

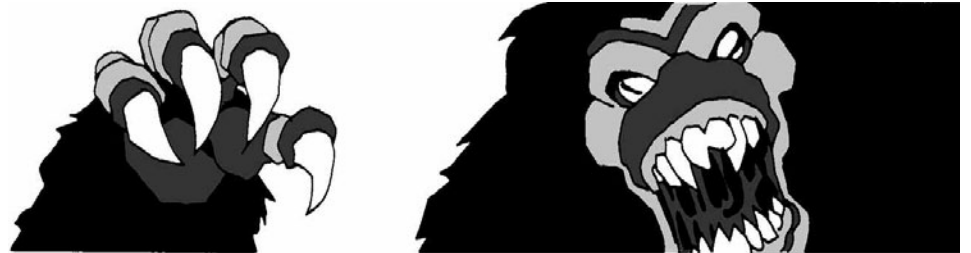
Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for an online catalog, errata and hundreds of pages of information. Illuminati Online supports SJ Games with discussion areas for many games, including GURPS. Here's where we do a lot of our playtesting! Dial 512-485-7440 at up to 33.6K baud – or telnet to io.com. We also have conferences on Compuserve and America Online. GURPS has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. Much of the online discussion of GURPS happens on this e-mail list. To join, send an e-mail to majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to www.io.com/~ftp/GURPSnet/www/.

A Note From the Authors

The first part of this book (up through Chapter 3) and the vignettes beginning the chapters are adapted from a mysterious, partially burned document found in a Dumpster behind a Seattle tractor plant. It was edited for clarity and to remove repetitions; other than that, it's presented in its entirety. The supposed author of this document, one Ivan Decker, could not be located to verify its authenticity.

The remainder of this book provides GURPS rules and campaign suggestions for playing in a world that seems ominously like our own.



Important Players' Note

A conspiracy wouldn't be much of a conspiracy if everyone knew everything that was going on. *Black Ops* contains important yet secret information meant for Game Masters to read and convey as warranted. This material is in sidebars with titles beginning *Argus' Eyes Only* and the entirety of Chapter 6, *Things to Hunt and Kill*. Black ops displaying knowledge of such matters may draw unwanted Security-department attention, at the GM's discretion.

So It Begins . . .

"Oh God oh God oh God oh God oh God . . ."

She just won't shut up. I realize that having the greater part of your arm removed is painful, but she's really starting to give me the willies.

"Oh God oh my God oh Jesus oh God oh God oh merciful Christ . . ."

She's not that light, either. Big girl, thick, like a damn side of beef. A very loud, freaked-out side of beef. I'm dragging her down the sewer tunnel which, by the way, seems to be slowly filling with sewage, flashlight's running low and she's squealing like a stuck pig about her friggin' arm.

So I say, "Shut up, Illy, or I'm putting you in the bag."

"Okay, okay," she says. "Okay." This is only marginally more comforting than "oh God," but at least it sounds somewhat positive and I know she doesn't want to get frozen. The thing that got her arm is somewhere back in the tunnel, probably bleeding to death courtesy of my last shotgun shell. Nastiest wiggler I've ever seen. Big as an alligator and segmented like a centipede, with short stubby legs protruding in all directions and a mouth full of teeth that come out of nowhere.

I push Illiana up onto a ledge and look at the arm. It's bad – huge gashes run vertically from shoulder to elbow, and both bones are snapped and protruding from the skin below the joint. Her hand is a bloody mess, barely there. I pull off my bandanna and tie a tourniquet just below the shoulder. She winces as I knot it and starts mumbling her litany again to herself, "oh God oh God oh God oh Jesus . . ."

“Listen. We’re copacetic here. The squad is just up the way. The doc’s gonna do wonders with your arm. Trust me, you’re fine.” It’s total b.s. and I think she knows it. She’s just staring in a daze, refusing to look in my face.

I snap my fingers a couple of times. “Please, Illiana, stay with me, here. You’ve got to keep it under control or we’re going to bite it for sure.”

“Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!” she starts screaming. She kicks me backward with one foot and with her good hand draws the blood-soaked .45 from her shoulder holster and points it straight at my head. “Jesus, Illy, put that away. I’ll get us out of here, I promise.”

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! She unloads the entire clip. My eyes are closed and burning with red light. But there’s no pain, no blackness – just the sick collapse of the thing behind me and its fetid final groan. Then all I can hear is the soft gurgling of sewage and the faint rumble of the subway.

The sewage reaches my waist now. I stare at Illiana.

“Reload that, and let’s get the hell out of here.”

Listen Close

Welcome to a messed-up world.

Of course, you already know that. You live here, too. But you haven’t seen the half of it. Everything I’m going to tell you is true. If someone tells you different, they’re lying to you. Or, like you, they have no idea what’s really going on.

Right now, you could have an electronic chip implanted behind your ear. Can you feel it? It feels like a little pimple or lump on the bone. If you are one of the ten million already chipped, the Grey aliens who are harvesting us can monitor you and everything you hear. Removal is simple; unfortunately, only about 20 doctors on the planet even know the chip exists. Not all of them work for us.

Right now, your closest friend may have, instead of his brain, a parasitic creature buried in his cerebral cortex and controlling his body. Of course, the body only lasts about a year after infestation, but by then the creature has lured five or six victims to the undercity, new hosts for its children. Is someone you know looking a little ill and acting strange? Maybe he’s been brainsucked.

Or maybe he’s a vampire. No, if he were a vampire, you’d be dead. Vampires don’t have friends. They even hate each other. All they want to do is feed. If you’re normal, the only time you’d see one is right before it killed you, drank your blood and ate your internal organs, leaving you to steam like roadkill in the moonlight until you died . . . or worse, became one of them.

Sounds like a load of crap, doesn’t it? I must be pulling your leg. I wish. See, it’s my job to kill all of these creatures. I’m a black op. I work for an organization so secret that even the U.S. government has no idea that we exist. The Company pays me to keep the world safe from all the bizarre terrors that the powermongers are too afraid to let society know about. Aliens, bigfoot, Walt’s frozen body – it’s all true, and worse. Things they couldn’t possibly print in the tabloids. Things that look like they came from some lunatic’s sketchbook. You pray that you’re hallucinating. You beg for the sweet release of death.

So come on. Join in the fun. There’s only two kinds of people in the world: hunters and prey. If you don’t start hunting then you will be prey. Pick the right side. Don’t worry; it’s not as bad as I make it sound.

You’ll get to kill a lot of things before they finally get you.

— Ivan Decker, August 1997

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*.

Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are BE to *Bestiary, Second Edition*, CII to *Compendium II*, HT to *High-Tech, Second Edition*, P to *Psionics, UT to Ultra-Tech, Second Edition Revised* and VE to *Vehicles, Second Edition*. See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a full list of abbreviations for *GURPS* titles.

About the Authors

Jeff Koke is a graphic designer, writer and musician living in the Austin, Texas, area with his lovely wife, Angela, and their endearing cherub of a daughter, Alexandra (recently certified the smartest baby on Earth). He has two strapping golden retrievers and a harried half-Siamese cat. His previous writing credits include *GURPS Vampire: The Masquerade* and an adventure in each of *GURPS Supers Adventures* and *GURPS Time Travel Adventures*. He plays bass and writes songs for a local rock ‘n’ roll band, called *Love Blender*. He honestly believes everything in this book is true and is finally relieved that someone will read his ravings.

S. John Ross lives in what was once a Colonial-era tobacco town that grew up to serve important roles in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War and now the War For Earth. He’s the author of *GURPS Warehouse 23*, and the co-author (with Daniel Thibault) of *GURPS Grimoire*, but his most obscure achievement is his role as a playtester for *GURPS Terradyne*, for which he received no credit in print. Justice is now served. He has no cats, and his neighbors seem to have fewer each year, as the diabolical experiments continue. He is not sane, and must be stopped.



The Commander

General Davis Francis Steele is approaching his 80th birthday. A big bear of a man, the general is immediately and immensely likable, yet terrifying at the same time. He reminds me of an aging football coach, respected and feared, openly loved and secretly cursed, a legend in his own time.

Born in December of 1917 to a father who was a hero in the first World War, Steele became a hero in the second. Already a captain when the war began, Steele was a bombardier over Germany. His plane was shot down behind enemy lines, and he rescued four of his crewmates, killing an entire troop of Nazis with only a knife and carrying a wounded soldier 12 miles to safety.

He was soon promoted to colonel and given command of an entire air wing in the European theater. It was there that he heard the story of Johnny Franklin (see p. 9) and discovered the first of the many threats to humanity he would soon learn about. He has a passionate love for human society and a hatred of the creatures that threaten it.

Once Argus had designed the Company and started to put it together, Steele asked to be in charge of the agents' training. The other members of Argus couldn't think of anyone more qualified, and he was given *carte blanche* to create the toughest training institution in the world. He designed the Academy to rectify everything that he felt was wrong with the American armed forces. Not bound by laws and regulations, he designed the drills that so casually take the lives of so many cadets. He quickly points out to any complaining recruit that he's personally completed every drill he designed. If they're good enough for him, they're good enough for some whiny grunt.

The commander continued his military career until he became a general at age 53. He then retired to run the Academy full time. He has gradually let the administration slip into his assistants' hands, and is rumored to be grooming a veteran Intelligence op to take over. His main functions lately are ceremonial, giving welcome speeches and pep talks to cadets.



Welcome to Hell

A lot of black ops look back on their years at the Academy as the worst experience of their lives, as though it were five years of the most bizarre, intense fraternity hazing that the Devil himself could have thought up. Armed-forces basic training times a million. And, to be honest, in many ways I'd have to agree. It is truly an excruciating time, both mentally and physically. It sits like a black stain on the wall in the dungeon of my memory. I wish I could block it out, but I never will.

The other side of that same truth is that not a single black op isn't proud of having graduated from it, as proud of it as he is of anything he's ever accomplished. We know that the time in hell is necessary. We'd all be dead meat out there in the field if we hadn't been put through the Academy's brutality. The fact that I can come upon a demon gnawing the limbs off a little girl and not throw up, wet myself or break down crying is testimony to the success of my training. When we see the little glimpses of hell that punctuate our missions, we can always say, "This isn't so bad. I've been through worse."

Only the elite make it into the Academy, and those who make it out . . . we are something else, something beyond that, something almost godlike. Just as importantly, we are literally Company men. Inside and out, we belong to Argus.

The Spire

The first place recruits are assembled is in the Academy's central square, under an imposing monument called the Spire. The Spire is a four-story needle of the flattest black – what it's made of isn't common knowledge. All too often, a special crew has to inscribe a new name on it. They break out state-of-the-art laser cutting tools to do it.

Under a sweltering sun, the new cadets are told that those names – and there are nearly 2,000 of them by now – are the real names of every cadet and black op who's died honorably in training or duty. "The last time you were that person was when you stepped onto this campus," shouts a drill sergeant. "The next time you become that person is when that name is inscribed on the Spire." Then he stares ominously. "Some of you will be up there soon."

Cadets soon find out that the Company takes the Spire very seriously. It's as public as a black op gets – and that's only in death. Pretty soon, many cadets start taking solace in the loss of their friends in training, because at least they've entered the Company's most exclusive circle – the names on the Spire. Pretty soon, the cadets start taking the Spire just as seriously as the old-timers.



Rogues

Note on Rogues: All of the rogues in this section use psionic powers and skills found in *GURPS Basic Set*. For a wider menu of psychic powers, see *GURPS Psionics*.

The Lodge

The Lodge is a conspiracy of “mages.” These highly psychic humans call their powers “magic” and use elaborate rituals to concentrate their powers and warp society. Stock market crashes, earthquakes, riots and full-scale wars have all been perpetrated by Lodge members.

The Lodge is ancient and highly secret. Very little is known about their exact methods, and access to their cabals is very strictly regulated. They rely on layer upon layer of deception to keep the true nature of their organization hidden from all but the highest initiates. Lower-level members are helped to develop their abilities while being slowly and carefully indoctrinated into the Lodge.

A few black ops have managed to infiltrate the Lodge, but none to the highest levels. One of our greatest fears is a renegade joining the Lodge; they could reveal many of our secrets before the Company could react.

The Company’s campaign against the Lodge is designed to hinder them without revealing the conspiracy. Killing Lodge members is therefore discouraged, except in self defense. Squads dealing with Lodge usually need weeks to discover its true motives before *secretly* stopping the plan. This has been a somewhat losing battle so far.

Most Lodge members are perfectly capable of just cutting loose to defend themselves. A single, clever Lodge wizard can keep a party of ops busy. A coordinated *group* of Lodge members can utterly destroy a squad, if the ops aren’t careful. When large concentrations of Lodge activity are suspected, the Company likes to send in groups of high-powered Antipsi “screamers” with plenty of ammunition, but it usually takes several light-stepping reconnaissance missions to ferret out their meeting places.

Sample Lodge Initiate

Ordinary, middle-aged man, 5’8”, 160 lbs. Possibly an antique dealer, doctor or university professor. Dresses in tasteful but bland clothing. Frequently, there is something about his appearance that would tip off another member of the Lodge to his rank within the cabal, but that won’t be apparent to the casual observer.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 17, HT 14.

Basic Speed 6.5, Move 6.

Dodge 6.

Advantages: Certain advantages are more common than others among psychics. Typical initiates (and rogues in general) will have one or more of Alertness, Animal

Empathy, Charisma, Danger Sense, Empathy, Intuition, Luck (any level) or Sanctity (p. CI29). The non-psychic advantage of Longevity is also common.

Disadvantages and Quirks: Most are at least eccentric; some have multiple Delusions and other dangerous mental disadvantages. In particular, those in the Lodge’s “outer circles” often believe that they *are* sorcerers, carrying on ancient traditions.

Psionic Powers: These tend toward variety rather than sheer power. A mid-level initiate might have ESP, Psychokinesis, Telepathy and Teleportation, all at Power 10.

Psionic Skills: A wide range, appropriate to their powers. Again, the focus is on breadth, not depth. The sample power list above complements Autoteleport, Cryokinesis, Emotion Sense, Exoteleport, Levitation, Mental Blow, Mind Shield, Mindwipe, Precognition, Psi Sense, Psychometry, Pyrokinesis, Sleep, Telecontrol, Telekinesis, Telereceive and Telesend, all at levels 15-18 (IQ-2 to IQ+1).

Skills: Mundane skills vary widely, but most Lodge members involve themselves in intellectual pursuits.



Mind

The members of Mind are the strongest psychics in the world. They can simply will psychic energy to do their bidding. Their main goal seems to be to generate wealth and power for their members, little else. They don’t try to overthrow the government, nor do they meddle much with the overall economy. They prefer elaborate, untraceable schemes that funnel funds from all over the world into their shadow corporations and offshore bank accounts.

Some members are more troublesome. Psychic power is a tremendous temptation, and few can resist using it for more than financial gain. Often, Mind members begin to think of themselves as demigods and “normal” humans as their minions. Some set themselves up as cult leaders, garnering large followings of mind-controlled lackeys. When this happens, the Company generally has to step in.

Evidence is just now beginning to surface concerning a new faction of Mind, a group of high-powered corporate CEOs who are using their considerable resources to investigate paranormal activities around the world. If true, these agents could seriously hinder Company efforts, especially if they discover and make contact with the Greys.

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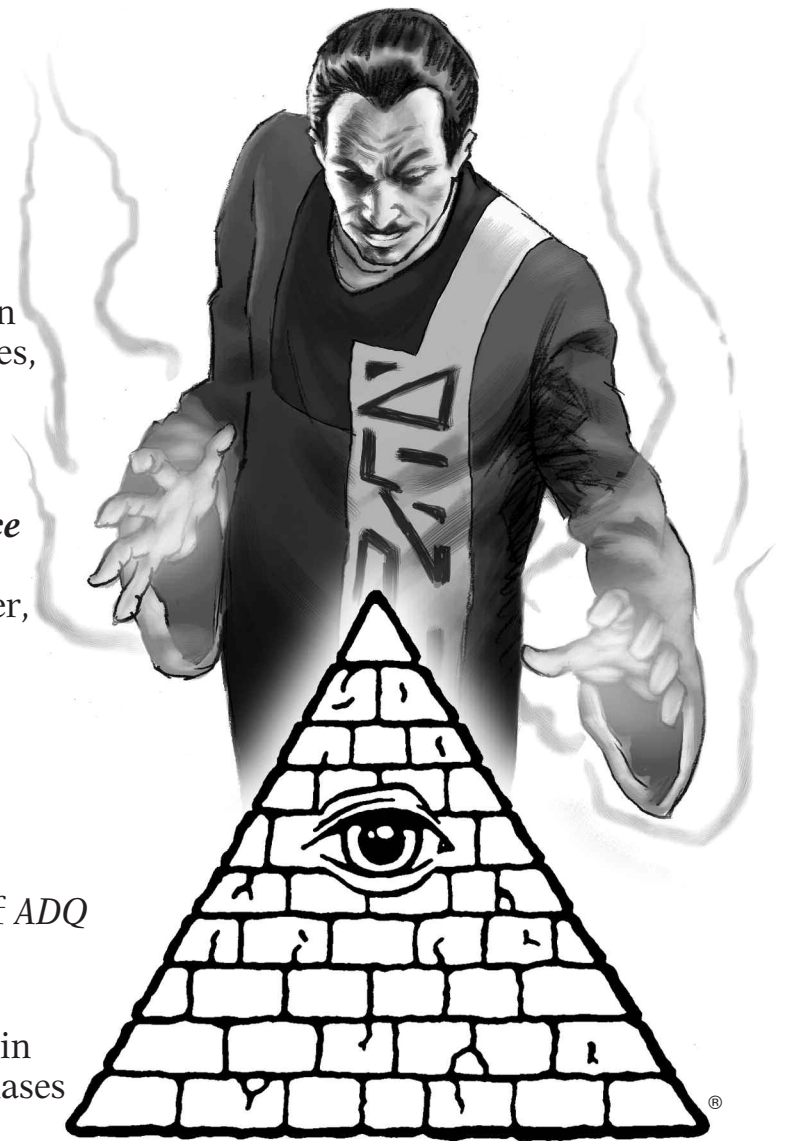
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