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ABOUT SJ GAMES

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 (www.sjgames.com/pyramid). Our online magazine covers the hobby's top games – *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Sbadowrun*, and many more – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

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

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PAGE REFERENCES

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition* Revised; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of the *Basic Set*. AE refers to *Alternate Earths*, AH refers to *Atomic Horror*, AN refers to *Arabian Nights*, BE refers to *Bestiary*, BO refers to *Black Ops*, CL refers to *Cliffhangers*, CM refers to *Celtic Myth*, CT refers to *CthulhuPunk*, D refers to *Dinosaurs*, EG refers to *Egypt*, FF refers to *Fantasy Folk*, I refers to *Illuminati*, IOU refers to *Illuminati University*, PM refers to *Places of Mystery*, RS refers to *Reign of Steel*, RU refers to *Russia*, S refers to *Space, Third Edition*, T refers to *Technomancer*, TI refers to *Timeline*, WI to *Wizards*, WT refers to *Warehouse 23*, WWi refers to *Who's Who 1*, WWii refers to *Who's Who 2*, Y to *Y2K*.

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Foreword

by John Tynes

Ken Hite handed me an ice cream cone. “Ripple,” he said.

“A ripple!” I cried in alarm. “A ripple in space? In time?”

“No, you lumbering cretin. Butterscotch ripple.”

“Oh,” I said, taking the ice cream, abashed.

We sat in silence for a little while. Ken regarded passers-by from the limpid pool that was his brain.

“This town’s really going to the dogs,” he said.

“The werewolves of London?” I blurted, horrified, tossing the ice cream cone over my shoulder in a fevered panic, not observing its graceful trajectory through the four dimensions of space-time, oblivious to its sugary collapse on the sidewalk near the puddle of a urinating poodle. “The canine aliens from Sirius? The Dog Police?”

“No, you ice cream-squandering reprobate. This city is filling up with people who wouldn’t know a brutalist skyscraper from a postmodernist park bench. Idiots, the lot of them.”

“Oh,” I said, wondering where my ice cream had gone, and what was that smell?

Ken fished in his pocket and pulled out two dollars. “Here, go buy another cone.”

“Iä ! Cthulhu fhtagn!” I wailed, glimpsing the eye in the pyramid on the back of one bill and the portrait of Adam Weishaupt on the front of the other. I ate the bills and then sat there with my eyes tightly shut, muttering “Transubstantiate . . . go on . . . you can do it . . . transubstantiate . . .”

“You enormous sack of cholera!” Ken angrily barked – perhaps channeling the dog-men of Pluto. “Buy your own darn ice cream!”

“Darn ice cream?” I asked, nervous. “I’ll need an adamantine needle with molywire to darn ice cream. It’s slippery stuff.”

Ken put his face in his hands and sighed.

“Hey,” I piped up, freakishly cheerful all of a sudden. “Did I mention that I read your book?”

As Dan Quayle told us from first-hand experience, it is a terrible thing to lose one’s mind. For this reason, I suggest that you close this book right now and never open it again. Actually, you can read the rest of this foreword. It’s safe. You see, I wrote this foreword. But I’m not Ken Hite. It’s the rest of the book, the stuff written by Ken Hite, that you gotta watch out for.

The man is a freaking lunatic.

I know – I know. He wrote this book. Everyone knows that writers are normal, well-adjusted people. He’s even married! Freaking lunatics never get married, right? Unless it’s to each other, and I’ve met his wife and she’s not a freaking lunatic.

But Ken Hite. He is a freaking lunatic.

I wonder when it happened. Perhaps he has a secret origin, like a super-hero: “Browsing one afternoon in a conspiracy bookshop, young Kenneth Hite found himself at the epicenter of a mammoth earthquake and was buried by books. When rescuers dug him out of the rubble a week later, he emerged as – The Freaking Lunatic!” Cue tights.

The man makes more connections than United Airlines. Hollow-earth Nazis and mystic architecture? Check. JFK and the man who walked around the carriage? Check. Tarot and television? Check. There are no topics so diverse that Ken Hite can’t bring them into brilliant, screaming collision.

And in the process, he makes men mad. You can’t read this stuff for very long without that sensation of terrible coherency stealing over you like a vodka buzz, that sensation that tells you the whole world makes sense in such an awful way that there is no response save madness.

The end is coming – I mean the end of this foreword. You can put the book down or you can turn the page. You can live to reason another day or you can leave your island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity and voyage far, ultimately foundering on the shoals of chaos.

The choice is yours. May Ken Hite have mercy on your soul.

John Tynes is a horror writer, game designer, and locus of a knot of bellisbly intertwined corporate shells somehow tied to Hastur the Unspeakable, including Armitage House and Pagan Publishing. He lives in Seattle.

Introduction

by Kenneth Hite

“There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion.”

– Sir Francis Bacon, *On Beauty*

So what’s a nice guy like me doing with a column like this, anyway? Anything he wants to, that’s what, and it’s all Scott Haring’s fault. That’s what I tell the men in the black Lincoln Continental who ask me that question in their grating, almost mechanical-sounding, voices. Of course, the way they stare at me, the three of them with their flat black sunglasses mounted on the oddly pitted, almost artificial skin of their faces – it makes it hard to remember exactly what I say. But I do know I always try to mention Scott Haring. Many, many times, if need be. Because, you see, it really is his fault.

“Woe to you, ye perverted in heart, who are watchful to obtain an accurate knowledge of evil, and to discover terrors. No one shall assist you.”

– *Book of Enoch, Chapter XCIX: 6*

Scott was starting a new thing, or rather transforming an old thing into a new thing; Steve Jackson Games’ magazine, *Pyramid*, was metamorphosing from a glossy print magazine that lost rather a lot of money into a virtual electronic Web-based magazine that, hopefully, wouldn’t. All this under Scott’s direction as editor. Scott offered me a spot as a columnist, based on the fact that I already had a weekly game review and industry news column somewhere else.

As a freelance writer, you soon learn that the answer to all such requests is “Sure.” And so it was agreed, and it was all Scott’s fault. The official mission statement of my column, as hammered out by the two of us, is as follows: “Ken will rattle on about whatever he feels like, so long as it isn’t game reviews or gaming industry news.”

Now, I just had to decide what it *would* be about. First off, it had to relate to gaming somehow, *Pyramid* is a gaming magazine, after all. That doesn’t narrow it down much; everything can be about gaming. With deadline rapidly approaching, I went with what I knew and wrote the essay on pp. 6-8; those four genres (alternate history, secret history, conspiracy, and horror) have pretty much defined the column ever since. This book, then, is a collection of most of the first year of “Suppressed Transmission,” from April 1998 to March 1999, slightly modified from its *Pyramid* appearance, and annotated, cross-referenced, and indexed for extra utility.

“It is better, of course, to know useless things than to know nothing.”

– Seneca, *Epistles*, 88, 45

So what does that mean to you, the reader? If you're a gamer, you'll find plenty of stuff you can use right away, especially if your game involves any of those four themes I mentioned earlier. If you're not a gamer, don't worry; there's plenty of normal weirdness here, too. Just substitute "writing" (or "daydreaming") for "gaming," and "story" for "campaign" while you read. Who knows? You might even want to pick up another game book. I mostly cite *GURPS* books in these essays, for a number of reasons. I like *GURPS*, first of all. Also, *GURPS* players are *Pyramid's* core audience, *GURPS* has a number of game settings and sourcebooks that naturally match the topic matter, and finally, it's easier to say, for instance, "a *GURPS Black Ops* game" than "a conspiratorial game of elite UFO-hunters in an action-movie idiom." Even if you don't play *GURPS*, there's no shortage of stuff to steal from *GURPS* books; that's the way they're written.

And the way this book is written, too. Hopefully, there will be specific topic essays here that you can work into your game (or your reading) right away, but there are campaign frames, scenario ideas, GMing tips, and things I think are cool scattered throughout. You may have to wrench them a bit, or knock some things around, but one good thing about High Weirdness is that it's used to that kind of treatment. Look up stuff in the index, follow the cross-references, or just read bits at bibliomantic random. Toward the end of this book, there's some general notes on putting this sort of high-strangeness Illuminated universe together, but I think that even reading the essays should give you some idea of what we're all about here, and how to do it.

"Research, mostly. Very obscure, totally useless research . . . Sacrificial rituals of the ancient Scythians. The secret meaning of the Book of Genesis. Trying to find a pattern in NYSE figures between April and June of 1957."

*— Angelica di Rienzi, in **Waking the Moon** by Elizabeth Hand*

Speaking of how to do it, people always assume that I'm channeling some kind of secret Lemurian mind-ray with the aid of blasphemous tomes in Aklo and puissant herbs scraped from the walls of Inca tombs. Whether that would work or not, I also get good results by reading a wide variety of nonsense and books about nonsense. For every essay, I've given some indications of specific works to consult; in the body, in the annotations, and in the quotes. (I've also wrapped a Bibliophany around my essay on the subject, starting on p. 123.) The rest is just my trick memory (one of those that does well on standardized tests), and a 20-year head start on most of my readers.

*"If you do not expect it,
you will not find the unexpected,
for it is hard to find, and difficult."*

— Heraclitus

But truly, everything is Illuminated, everything is weird, if you look at it long enough. Mankind is a pattern-finding animal, whether there exists one to find or not. The real trick comes, as Heraclitus knew, in expecting it, in listening for it. So, tune your mental dial, warm up those crystals, and get set to receive some Suppressed Transmissions.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth Hite is an editor and writer living in Chicago. Since the last paragraph on p. 8 was written, he has become Line Developer for the original-series *Star Trek Roleplaying Game* from Last Unicorn Games. Additional, possibly relevant, writing credits include portions of *Mage: the Sorcerer's Crusade*, the *Cainite Heresy* sourcebook for *Vampire: The Dark Ages*, part of *Back East: The South* for *Deadlands*, and a chapter in *GURPS Y2K*. His wife Sheila perseveres.

Kenneth Hite is an NPC on p. 116 of Atlas Games' *Unknown Armies*. He knows quite a bit about certain historical elements behind the secret masters of the occult underground, who manifest in ripples of coincidence and symbolism.

Kenneth Hite is an alias of convenience used by an extrusion of empyrean pneuma into the material plane. Under this alias, he is known at many of the more poorly-organized bookshops ornamenting the North American Tectonic Plate during this Aeon.