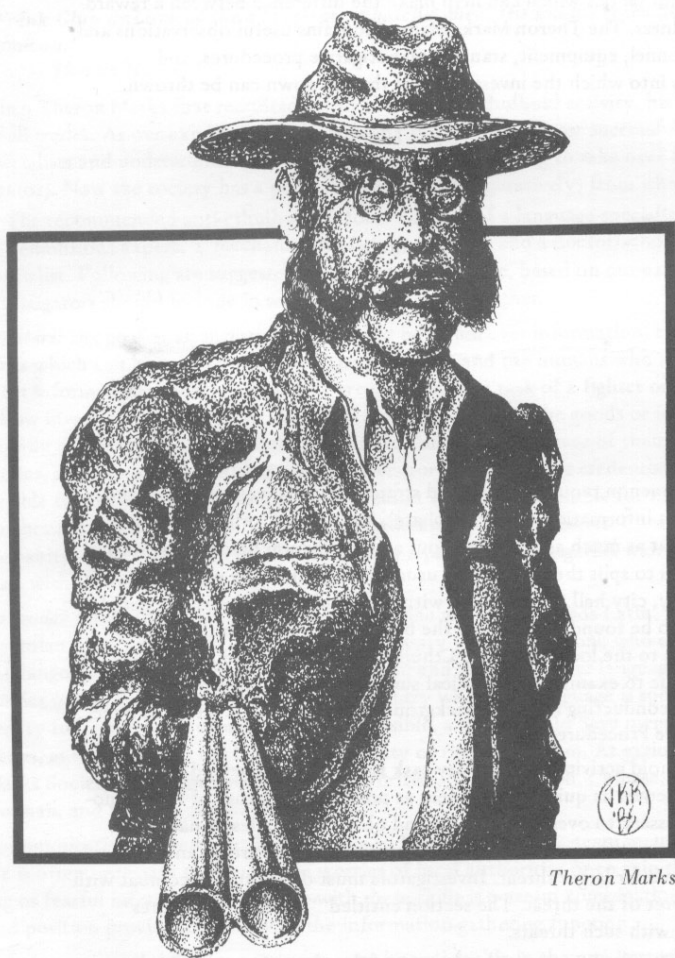


Field Manual of the Theron Marks Society

Compiled by Andre Stalin



Theron Marks

FOREWORD

Not much is known of Theron Marks before his appearance in Arkham, Massachusetts early in 1920. But within a few short years, and with the help of a few trusted companions, Theron Marks built a group of part-time, low-rent occult investigators into an organization which boasted such well-known Cthulhu investigators as Joshua Leng (died 1923), Jonathan Harker Jr. (died 1923), Ambrose Hunt (died 1923), Virgil Hector Hades (died 1924), August Rath (died 1924), Dmitri Katliya (died 1924), and Frank Glup (died 1924).

Throughout the 20s, we fought together under Theron's guidance as the Theron Marks Society, hunting down and exterminating Cthulhoid phenomena wherever we found them. Most of the original members of the Theron Marks Society have either been killed or have retired to the Theron Marks Home for Investigators of Little Sanity. Despite attrition, the society continues to work to this day, for we must be ever-vigilant against those who would destroy us to possess our world.

My purpose in passing on the wisdom of Theron Marks is to give like-minded investigators information, and to provide them with tactics which can help make the difference between a rewarding investigation and death or madness. The Theron Marks Manual contains useful observations and helpful hints about weapons, personnel, equipment, standard investigative procedures, and tactics to fit a variety of situations into which the investigator of the unknown can be thrown.

Happy Hunting,

Andre Stalin
Arkham, 1925

Strategy

"Run, you fools, Run!"

– Theron Marks

Investigation of a Cthulhoid phenomenon requires a two-fold strategy: first, investigation of the background of the phenomenon (an information-gathering phase), and second, primary investigation of the target. One must find out as much as possible about a phenomenon before confronting it. Theron Marks' usual method was to split the team. I was usually assigned, along with Frank Glup or August Rath, to cover the library, city hall, newspapers, witnesses, and other places and people where background information is to be found. Only when the background has been thoroughly researched can a relatively safe visit to the location of the Cthulhoid threat be conducted. Once on site, it remains necessary to continue to examine the physical surroundings for clues. A more detailed treatment of procedures for conducting a proper background investigation is set forth later, in the section entitled "Investigative Procedures."

Upon arrival at the site of Cthulhoid activity, the primary task is to remain alive and sane. Beyond that, investigators must discover as quickly and safely as possible the nature of the phenomenon. In order to do so, it is necessary to overcome threats and obstacles of a lesser nature. In my experience, the creatures known as "Deep Ones" or human cult-worshippers are often the guardians of secret information or of some far larger threat. Investigators must often survive combat with these lesser threats to learn the secret of the threat. The section entitled "Tactical Procedures" treats in detail methods of dealing with such threats.

Once penetration has been made to the heart (or other organ) of the phenomenon and it has been confronted, the investigators must decide whether to attack, or to run away because the horror is

too great to bear and still remain alive and sane. Attack is recommended if it is within the investigators' power to defeat the opposition and accomplish their goal (whether the goal is to vanquish the blasphemy or just to discover information). Either way, experience has shown that it is a fairly foregone conclusion that on any given mission, at least one member of the investigative team will be killed or go mad (or worse). The life of an investigator is often short, but is always exciting.

Know your enemy. Find out as much as possible about Cthulhu and his minions. An excellent source of information is the writings of the contemporary author Howard Phillips Lovecraft. His accounts of Cthulhoid activity, thinly disguised as fiction, contain much valuable perspective about Cthulhu and other horrors.

A well-prepared investigator arms himself with good friends, good equipment, and a good pair of running shoes.

Personnel

"Frank Glup was one of the all-time great hatchet-men. His kill-list reads like an index of the necronomicon."

— Theron Marks

When Theron Marks first recruited me to investigate Cthulhoid activity, his teams comprised jacks-of-all-trades. As our experience increased we found that our most successful teams were those with specialists and understudies (non-active investigators studying to take over the job of an active investigator). Now the society has a pool of investigators (figuratively) from which to select.

The recommended anti-cthulhu task force consists of a language specialist/magician, a gunfighter-demolitions expert, a mechanic/assistant gunfighter, and a doctor/scholar/communications specialist. Following are suggested categories of expertise, based on our experience, which teams of investigators should include in some combination or another.

Fighters: the goal of all investigations should be to uncover information, books, objects, letters, and plots which can be used to stop the Great Old Ones and the humans who aid them. Unfortunately, most information, books, and the like are guarded. The task of a fighter or tactician is to get his fellow investigators through to their goal and out alive with the goods or information. In general, ex-military men are the best potential recruits for this job because of their skills with weapons, tactics, and demolitions. With a proper cover-story and the right credentials, a tactician might even be able to give the authorities a plausible reason why it is acceptable for his party of investigators to go about armed to the teeth with automatic weapons and explosives. Choose fighters with formidable sanity — they will need it. The last person a party of investigators wants to go berserk is the man with all the weapons.

Language Specialists: every team needs someone who understands Latin, Arabic, and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics. It is also usually necessary to have someone who can speak modern European languages such as German, French, Italian, and Spanish. Other languages are used rarely enough so that unless a team intends to visit the country where the language is spoken, consulting at a university for translations should suffice. If possible, a team should have members of different nationalities, as this increases the language capability of the entire team. At various times, the Theron Marks Society had members of American, British, Scottish, Irish, Chinese, Russian, Indian, French, German, and Spanish origin.

Communications Specialists: it is valuable to have a charismatic team member who is a good talker. He is often necessary to assuage the worries of local authorities or to gain the confidence of unwilling or fearful informants. A scholar with these skills is a useful combination, since his social status and position provide legitimacy to the information-gathering function.

Scholars: a successful team needs someone knowledgeable in the non-language areas of learning. He should be a good researcher. In order of preference, seek investigators skilled in archeology, medical

EACH MEMBER SHOULD UNDERSTAND WHAT HE OR SHE IS TO DO IN THIS SITUATION. TALK THINGS OVER

— \$GREEK!

science, the occult, astronomy, geology, and zoology. Scholars need not be so much sane as they need to be intelligent.

Magicians: every investigative team should have a designated magician with an understudy. Since most spells are in foreign languages or ancient tongues, a language specialist or bilingual investigator usually practices any magic the team acquires. Investigative teams should always have magician understudies. Magicians often gain their knowledge at the expense of their sanity, and thus tend to go insane just when needed most. The turnover in this job category is high.

Demolitions Experts: to use dynamite, a team must have a demolitions expert. Gunter Dammerung, one of our late comrades, was quite appropriately blown to smithereens in the hills outside Drovostna, Hungary, because his group failed to store properly the dynamite it was carrying by horse cart to Castle Hauptmann. A certified demolitions expert can also more often obtain the right permits to possess and use dynamite. Seek to recruit former sappers or persons formerly employed in mining and construction. ~~HE OR SHE SHOULD HAVE A GOOD DYNAMITE ARM!~~

Mechanic: never underestimate the value of a handyman. A mechanic can drive vehicles, open doors, pick locks, repair hinges, fix weapons, devise gadgets, care for crumbling books, operate a winch, run heavy or unfamiliar machinery, and otherwise save the day when things go wrong. If a mechanic has a strong back and can lug around all the group's equipment, so much the better.

Benefactors: one factor that has contributed greatly to the success of the Theron Marks Society is its independent wealth. All captured wealth becomes the property of the Society (all carefully accounted for by the society's trained accountants), and Theron Marks Society members frequently will their estates to the Society. This relieves Theron Marks Society investigators of the necessity of working outside jobs, at least while the money holds out. An investigative group that has no wealthy members should watch for rich dilettantes.

Understudies: every team should train understudies. Understudies are new recruits who are not sent on investigations, but stay at the team's base and study books or otherwise hone their skills. An understudy's training period can last months if the attrition rate of the regular investigators is low enough. This pool of fresh blood (so to speak) helps maintain the continuity of an ongoing investigation. A full stable of understudies ensures that despite the high mortality and insanity rate among full-time investigators, a complete team can always be fielded.

Archivist: one team member should be designated the archivist. This fellow keeps a running record of the team's activities, making notes of various clues and keeping track of information gleaned from the team's findings. This job can be passed around on rotation. The archivist also acts as librarian of the team's books, keeping track of which books the investigators possess, who has read them, and who has gone insane reading them.

Benevolent Fraternal Brothers: membership in some sort of fraternal brotherhood (at least one of the benign ones) has saved the day for a Theron Marks Society member more than once. On one investigation, my group happened to find a jar containing the worldly remains of Benjamin Franklin and a reanimation spell. So we reanimated Mr. Franklin, who was quite naturally rather confused, somewhat afraid of us, and not at all inclined to trust us until Theron, who was a sixth degree Mason, slipped Mr. Franklin the Mason's handshake. With that single handshake Theron won Franklin's "undying" confidence.

Photographer: an excellent method of preserving clues for future examination is photography. A team member whose hobby is photography is a valuable asset, especially if this person also knows how to develop his pictures and regularly carries with him the massive stack of supplies required to do so. The team photographer should carry his camera at ready rather than a weapon. There is a certain risk to mind and body involved in photographing Cthulhoid manifestations, since a clear photograph often requires exposure of the photographer as well as of his film. Nonetheless a photographer's presence on a team provides an important opportunity to gather information quickly or surreptitiously for later and more detailed examination.

BUT REMEMBER
MINE AND MASTER EDWIN!

M

ALSO
SOMEONE WITH
GOOD PHYSICAL SKILLS
LIKE A SPECIALTY
LIKE PILOTING OR
HANDLING BOMB OR

WRITE NAME
IN SITE IN
PHASE
INVESTIGATION

ALSO A
PROFESSIONAL
ORGANIZATION
INVESTIGATORS
CAN JOIN WANT
ORG

Equipment

"Sanity is a sawed-off shotgun."

Frank Glup

Without a doubt, a weapon is one of the most important pieces of equipment for a Cthulhu investigator. Without exception, my investigations with Theron Marks eventually led to a confrontation with some sort of outre horror. If an investigator can retain his sanity, a weapon is the best way to ensure that the carnage that often accompanies is inflicted primarily on the monster rather than the investigators. Naturally, not all Cthulhoid beings are susceptible to physical assault, but in our experience, investigators seldom meet those that aren't before defeating a number of those that are.

Shotguns: the shotgun is the best all-around weapon. When sawed-off, it is light and relatively easy to conceal, easy to wield, and quite deadly at close range. A team of investigators all armed with shotguns can defeat most any physical threat.

The greatest practitioner of the double-barreled fast-draw in our group was Frank Glup. Frank carried two sawed-off shotguns in shoulder holsters concealed inside his exceedingly baggy trench-coat, and could empty both weapons quicker than you could say 'Shub-Niggurath.' The double-barreled shotgun has the drawback of carrying only two rounds. On the other hand, it was seldom necessary for Frank Glup to reload after emptying both barrels of both shotguns into something.

The pump shotgun is the weapon of choice around the Theron Marks Society. It holds four rounds, fires relatively frequently, and is excellent in close-quarters tactical situations - except when it jams. Some members carry special shells loaded with silver or with enchanted shot; which is effective against the undead as well as the all-too-alive.

Rifles and Handguns: Theron Marks rarely bothered with rifles or handguns, though he was quite proficient with both. A rifle is more accurate at long range than a shotgun, but may not do enough damage to kill something before it kills you. If a threat is so distant that it cannot be hit accurately with a shotgun blast, investigators should consider waiting for the threat to close, laying an ambush or running away. Handguns are as inaccurate as shotguns and shotguns are four times as deadly at close range. Sawn-off, a shotgun is fairly easy to conceal, too, though not so easy as a handgun.

Dynamite: this is a weapon of last resort. It is dangerous to the investigator, and often counter-productive to the success of the investigation. See the entry about demolitions experts and the entry covering tactics with dynamite.

Flammable Liquids: bring flammable liquids in a variety of breakable and non-breakable containers. White gasoline (benzene) is more flammable than ordinary gasoline. Alcohol is even better, but many varieties are difficult to obtain and illegal to possess because of the prohibition amendment. It is advisable to carry flares, flareguns, or a gun loaded with incendiary ammunition to ignite flammable liquids from a distance.

Although much more readily obtainable than dynamite, flammable liquids carry with them all the disadvantages and contraindications inherent to explosives. However, when the liquids can be used, tactics employing them are quick and deadly against large or slow-moving physical threats, or against packs of animals such as wolves, dogs, or rats. See the entry covering tactics with flammable liquids.

Lanterns and Lighting: to truly overcome Cthulhoid blasphemies, it is necessary to pursue them into the Stygian blacknesses which they favor. But it is foolish to enter such a place without the benefit of a strong and sturdy source of light. A steady source of bright light acts as an invaluable weapon, bringing comfort and courage to the investigators, and fear and dismay to their foes. Be mindful, however, that it is sometimes better not to see the unnatural horror one confronts.

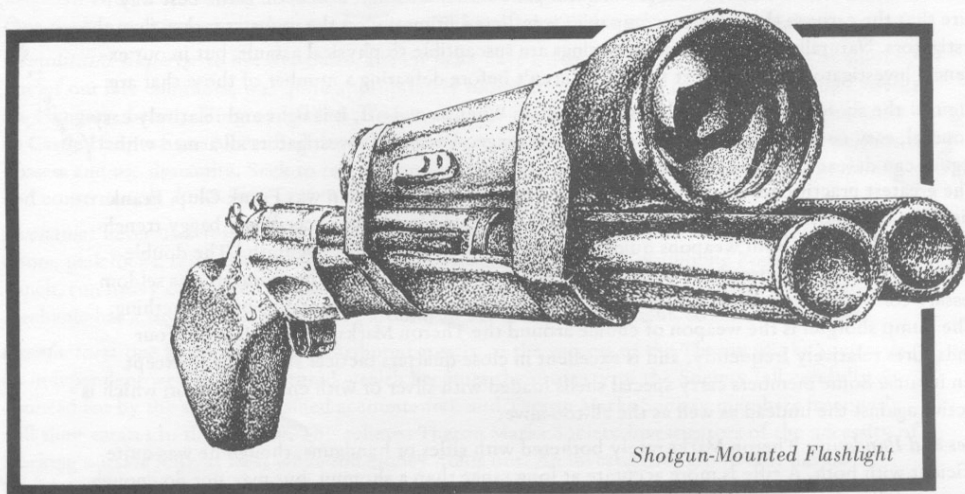
When the Theron Marks society first started undertaking Cthulhu investigations, we always found it difficult to carry a light in a satisfactor manner into a dark place. A light held in one hand left only one other hand free (at least for humans) to hold a gun and fire it. Accuracy suffered, and so did the investigators. Mining hats helped, but did not suffice, because their illumination must be

Tommyguns ARE BEST
TWO-HANDED

NOT ALWAYS!!

SAWED-OFFS
ARE ILLEGAL
EVERYWHERE!

aimed separately from a gun and rate of fire suffers. Then we tried taping flashlights onto shotgun barrels, but each blast would break the light. Usually at least one member of a group would not be firing at a given time so one flashlight would still provide some light. The Society now possesses custom gun mounts for flashlights, which demonstrates the value of a member wealthy enough to afford it. Carry spare flashlights, batteries, and bulbs, and always bring someone skilled at repair.



Shotgun-Mounted Flashlight

Automobiles: every investigatoive team should have an automobile, preferably a light truck. The vehicle should have a large trunk or passenger capacity to carry all the above described equipment. It should be equipped with a winch,, and with such essential equipment as a jack, a spare tire, a complete tool kit, etc.. A winch is an invaluable piece of equipment. If the vehicle mires itself, use the winch to pull it out. If a large object must be moved, use the winch with block-and-tackle as a hoist. Use of the winch is limited only by the investigative team's imagination.

If the team has an automobile, it is necessary to recruit an investigator who is adept at driving it, as it might be needful to chase cultists, race to forestall some terrible doom, or to run from the police or irate citizenry. It is convenient for this investigator to be also the mechanic of the team. For advice on procedures for occasions when a team fails to escape the notice of the law, see the section entitled Communications Specialists.

In some locations it is advisable to have a different type of vehicle, or even to have no vehicle at all. For example, a car, or truck is useless in a swamp or in the amazon rainforest, and in Antarctic snowfields dog sleds provide the optimum transportation.

Clothing: investigators should wear leather gloves; these protect the hands against insects and other bites. Leather boots also provide valuable protection. If a descent into a sewer or even more foul underground location is planned, investigators should consider investing in hip boots or waders. Not only do these offer greater protection but wearing them may prevent an investigator from contracting a horrible disease. Carry spare clothing in the trunk of the team's automobile. After a difficult night spent breaking up Deep One rituals, investigators are tired and covered with Deep One gore and filth and a change of clothes makes everyone more comfortable. Also, some team members might be insane (temporarily or permanently), and the last thing the investigators who have been spared the ravages of madness need is to explain the appearance of the party to nosy policemen.

Other Equipment: in the trunk of the team's car should be carried picks, shovels, axes, jacks, crow-bars, spare clothes, weapons, ammunition, a complete tool kit, spare tires, photographic and dark-

ALWAYS KEEP RAINCOATS.

room equipment and always carry rope (perhaps it is better to keep a truck). Most of this stuff can be left in the vehicle, but each investigator should carry a backpack containing essential supplies, as much rope as he can carry, and a couple of grappling hooks. The team should bring spare canisters or bottles of white gas or of alcohol (but if the alcohol is an illegal variety, watch for treasury agents), flares, and flareguns. Every member of a team should memorize the team's standard cypher (see the section entitled Coded Communications) — it is not advisable for team members to carry written notes to valuable codes as these can easily fall into the hands of the team's enemies.

Headquarters: the Theron Marks Society headquarters used to be in Arkham, Massachusetts in the home of Dr. Jonathan Dare until a certain Edward Chandler destroyed it. The society headquarters offered room and board to our investigators and contained a library. In the basement was a vault, a laboratory, a firing range, and Mr. Franklin's quarters. Every team should have a home base, at least a temporary one. The headquarters serves as a rendezvous in times of emergencies, acts as a central switchboard to relay messages between groups of investigators, provides room and board for guests and for team members, and a place to store books and valuables. It provides the team with esprit-de-corps and a refuge from certain death and madness. Unfortunately, if a team is successful or otherwise attracts attention to itself, it becomes necessary to change locations regularly to avoid attack.

Investigative Procedures

"You check the libraries; I'll check the speakeasies."

— Frank Glup

Before rushing off to destroy unnatural and blasphemous horrors, an investigative team must learn all it can about its enemy, whatever that may be, from available sources of information. Find out the history behind any family, place, or sequence of events related to an investigative target and do not stop the search until reasonably satisfied that all available sources of information are exhausted. Though it is folly to split up a party in a tactical situation, investigative tasks can be split up with relative safety among smaller groups of investigators to economize on time when speed is necessary. Try to include in each group at least one person with better-than-average research skills. Send your scholar to the library or to the newspaper morgue since the information to be found at these sources should not be missed. Remember, a thorough investigation of a Cthulhoid phenomenon is not just a necessary prerequisite for a successful investigation, it is often a necessary prerequisite for staying alive and sane.

Libraries: the public library should be a team's first source of background information on a phenomenon. If a town is too small to have its own library, check the county library or the library in the nearest large town.

Search by subject, name, and title for key persons, places, events, sequence of events, deaths, or disappearances. Search the author index for anything written by key persons. Search for any books about local legends or spooky stories either by the indigenes or the latter-day inhabitants of an area. Libraries contain local newspaper files and possibly also have copies of old newspapers which are no longer in circulation, or even newspapers from other towns, states, or countries. Public libraries often possess rare or old books, personal papers, and letters of long-dead historical figures withdrawn from circulation and kept under lock and key. Inquire at the front desk for any such documents. Your team scholar should be able to obtain these materials with his or her credentials.

If an investigative team finds themselves in someone's home or office, either as part of a background investigation or part of a primary investigation of a target itself, they should take time to search any desks, libraries, or collections of books they come across. Always continue a search after a find, even under the same topics for more information on the same subject, key name, place, event, or sequence of events. There might be more information to discover. Take your time and be thorough — Cthulhu has waited for strange aeons; he can wait a few more hours.

Don't forget
to check the
libraries for
any clues
to the
case

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Newspapers: the second-best source of information is the local newspaper morgue, usually at the local newspaper itself or at the public library. If a town is too small to have a newspaper or if the local paper is now defunct, check in the nearest large town's library and newspaper morgues. Search for key family names, events, sequences of events, dates, places, marriages, deaths, births, injuries, attacks, sightings, words, etc.. Always search through the obituaries. Keep the search category narrow enough to get the required information but broad enough not to miss fringe items. Look for articles covering unusual deaths or disappearances; the manner of death sometimes indicates what kind of monster or phenomenon is involved. Try to determine when a phenomenon began. Chronologies of events, deaths, births, marriages, all sometimes reveal useful information such as whether the phenomenon was brought to the area or originated here.

Civic Records: usually located at city halls or country seats, these contain birth, death, and marriage certificates, property records, and police records. These documents are all public records and should be freely available for inspection. If, for some reason, a custodian of these records refuses access, do not take no for an answer. Get a lawyer, the team's communication specialist, or a mechanic to obtain access.

Cemeteries and Churches: before cities and counties began record keeping, churches kept records of births, deaths, and marriages. If civic records do not stretch back far enough, check local churches. Check local cemeteries for tombstones of key persons or families. Remember though that many wealthy families keep private plots.

Other Sources: historical societies are sometimes a source of information, and their members are notoriously garrulous. Also check local speakeasies for talk around town. The inhabitants of a town might be suspicious of strangers and some of them might even be hostile agents. However, the town drunk is usually a safe, though unpredictable, person to ply for information. If the team includes someone who can climb, move quietly, and pick locks and open safes do not underestimate the value of a little second-story information gathering.

On-Site Investigation: once at the primary site of the Cthulhoid phenomenon, continue to investigate the physical surroundings for clues. If the site is a house, perform a systematic search of each room, looking for letters, diaries, books, journals, newspapers, maps, and other objects which might be hidden in desks, closets, boxes, dressers, under beds, under rugs, in walls, the attic, or in the basement. Check the fireplace, the mantle, and the ashes.

If the site of a Cthulhoid manifestation is an open area, such as a cave, field, cemetery, or archaeological site, quarter the area and spread out to search the ground, but stay within sight of one another. Check for foot-, claw-, or tentacle-prints, broken branches, the absence or presence of plant, animal, and bird life. Search for underground openings.

If the site of a Cthulhoid manifestation is an open area, such as a cave, field, cemetery, archaeological site, quarter the area and spread out to search the ground, but stay within sight of one another waiting.

Consultations: the scholar or communications specialist of a team should be given the task of obtaining university translations, since the scholar's status can provide the necessary credentials to obtain access to the information, and the communication specialist's skills can be used to allay any suspicions about the contents of the translated document.

Miskatonic University: if possible, consult Miskatonic University. Miskatonic can be a valuable source of information if the staff is not all on sabbatical in Antarctica and can be convinced that the team is not completely crazy. It is often possible even to recruit a faculty member or graduate student to help with the investigation. One such student, Quentin Murgatroid, joined one of the Theron Marks Society investigations but, sadly, was slowly dissolved into a puddle after being struck dumb by Nygotha. Another team member, Dr. Robert Parker, received a fellowship at Miskatonic and due to his library privileges became invaluable to many investigations.

Communications: when an investigation requires travel, establish in advance rendezvous places and times. Rendezvous should be made at places like hotels, where telegrams and telephone calls can be reliably made and received. Wire money ahead to the rendezvous if necessary to cover expenses. Keep all the receipts for the income tax.

Witnesses: naturally, witnesses to Cthulhoid activity are reluctant to talk about their experiences. Send a communications specialist to interview witnesses, police officers, records clerks, university or museum employees, and other people with information which they might not want to reveal.

Travel and Borders: when investigations require foreign travel, check ahead with authorities to determine what weapons and equipment are contraband in the new country. When crossing borders, do not carry any contraband items (have them somewhere else where they cannot be found or traced to the group, or get them within the country).

Photography: take photographs to preserve ephemeral phenomena and evidence which cannot be removed from the site. Photographs provide an opportunity for detailed examination of an object or site at a safe location which might reveal formerly hidden details. Photographs also relieve the painstaking task of copying down long inscriptions and reduce the chance for error in transcription. It is recommended that a camera be taken to the library at Celaeno. There is a rather stiff fine for stealing books which the librarians exact with terrifying relish.

Photographs can also be persuasive evidence for the unbelieving and skeptical laity. This is true particularly with persons who are in authority, such as county sheriffs, who might be inclined to make trouble for persons they believe are troublemakers, yet may feel obliged to help if provided with hard evidence to substantiate what is otherwise an improbable story. Remember, however, that many beings, such as Mi-Go, cannot be photographed at all, or only with specially prepared emulsions. So-called proof in the form of a black or blurry photograph confirms nothing more quickly to an official than an investigator's lack of sanity.

Coded Communications

"More bowling balls, man! More bowling balls!"

— Professor Clarence Gambolputty

Occasionally an investigator is forced to use a telephone or carry on a conversation where there is no privacy and discretion must be exercised in what is said. An eavesdropper could raise far more than inconvenient questions should he overhear plans for a break-in, a demolitions blast, or an assassination. The Theron Marks Society standard code is for use whenever privacy cannot be assured, and obviously cannot be reproduced in this manual. It is recommended that investigative teams agree beforehand to the existence and use of a code, and use the code whenever needed.

Tactical Procedures

"Don't ever split the party. Period."

— Theron Marks

Weapons are the last line of defense. Whenever preparing to enter a potential tactical situation, clean, repair, and load weapons. Carry plenty of spare ammunition and flares. After firing a weapon, as soon as it is safe, immediately reload. Carry rope, water, and food in a pack. Never put anything in a pack which cannot be abandoned should the pack be dropped to expedite flight. Keep valuables safe, especially books, which should be wrapped in water-tight material. Always carry flares, fuel canisters, and dynamite far from any source of flame, but ready for use; not buried in a pack. Above all else, never split up a group.

Have weapons ready whenever opening a trap door or any other aperture of dubious safety. When opened, smell first for foul, overwhelming stench. Although sometimes an odor yields informa-

DON'T SHIP TO AN IMPROBABLE AREA, THEN STEAL OF BOOKS FROM THIS AREA

tion, it can also have adverse effects on your health. Send a scout down first, tied to a rope. If the scout is overwhelmed by the smell or attacked while descending a pit or stairs, he can be hauled quickly to relative safety.

Spells: realistically, arcane spells can only be used in a tactical situation when sufficient other tactical procedures are being employed allowing the magician enough time and safety to cast his spell. Spells take time to cast and the user can easily get himself killed in the amount of time it takes to cast a single spell. If it is not possible to anticipate the use of a spell, at least get the magicians to a safe place or otherwise protect them while the spell is being cast. Of course, if a threat is non-physical, such as a dimensional shambler or star vampire, a spell might be the only available weapon. When such a creature is encountered, everyone who knows the appropriate counterspell should begin chanting immediately. Everyone must pray that someone will finish the spell before everyone who knows it is killed, driven insane, or driven away.

All in all, spells are notoriously unreliable; an example follows. Melvin Peele, a former NWI security officer in Peru, joined the Theron Marks Society team, and discovered that he possessed uncanny psychic powers. We were with him in a life-threatening situation and were preparing to flee when Melvin stepped forward and shouted "Let me handle this!" He then clutched his head, screamed, and, apparently having seriously failed to cast whatever spell he had attempted, dropped dead. The monster never raised a tentacle.

The elaborateness of the rituals required to cast certain spells is another limiting factor not only on the combat use of spells, but also on their non-combat use. Few spells can be employed surreptitiously, with minimal unusual behavior on the part of the practitioner. Many more spells require formal rituals, wild gesticulations, loud incantations in unnatural languages, animal sacrifices, and other bizarre and socially abhorrent acts to be successfully cast. In other words, it is impossible to successfully cast spells in Times Square, at least in A.D. 1925. Take care not to be observed or overheard while casting spells. If an investigator is overheard by a layman casting a spell he runs the risk of being mistaken for the very person he might be trying to thwart, or even being considered a lunatic with the doubly unfortunate consequences of being thrown into prison or into an asylum while his quarry escapes to pursue its evil design.

Dynamite: the only real tactical use of dynamite is to destroy things that cannot be destroyed with small arms. The use of dynamite in tactical situations is limited by several factors. It is difficult to use underground, too close to a monster, anywhere populous, or in an expensive or structurally unsound building, or if the investigators need to preserve certain artifacts or information. Although it is always wise to carry some dynamite just in case, its use is strongly discouraged. Dynamite stands as the ultimate confession of investigative failure and many Theron Marks Society members have died using it, including Theron Marks himself.

One thing that everyone remembers about Theron is that he always smoked a cigar. Never a cigarette, always a cigar. "A cigar stays lit longer," he used to say. Whenever Theron needed a light, he always had one. He carried his cigar clenched in his teeth so that he could shoot with one hand and light a stick of dynamite with the other. It is somehow fitting that he went the way he did. Theron died in Castronegro, New Mexico, in an underground blast. We were cornered by a slimy monster, and Theron covered our escape by raining dynamite down on the beast. But he lost his grip on a stick and when it fell, he threw himself on it to save the rest of the party. The creature threw itself on Theron, the rest of the dynamite went off, and the blast caved in the chamber. Needless to say, there was nothing left to reanimate.

Flammable Liquids: tactical use of flammables is limited by the same factors that limit the use of dynamite. See the section on dynamite above.

In many tactical situations involving physical threats, a breakable canister full of a flammable liquid can be thrown at the threat, in the path of the threat, or at a wall to one side or the other in

A.D. 1925 BERLIN, 1924

SPELLS ARE MOSTLY GOOD FOR ATTACKING WITH PREPARATIONS. NOT GOOD FOR FIGHTING IN TIGHT SITUATIONS

such a way as to spread the liquid over as much of the surface of the threatening area as possible. The liquid can be ignited at the best moment with a flare or flaregun. One of Theron's friends, Damon Hunter, devised a tactic whereby a non-breakable container is thrown at or placed near a threat and then ignited with a round of incendiary ammunition. A "breakable" container that fails to break can also be ignited in this way. Another variation of this tactic is to leave a pool in the track of a possible threat to be ignited with a flare, a flaregun, or with a cigar if necessary.

Theron's own variation on the use of incendiary liquids required an "Indian firepump." An Indian firepump is normally a piece of fire-fighting equipment. It consists of a metal canister mounted on a back-pack frame. The canister is supposed to be filled with water. A tube runs from the canister to a hand-pump, much like a high-pressure bicycle pump, which squirts the gasoline from the end when pumped. It has a range of up to 15-25 feet when in good working order. An Indian firepump is quite deadly, and very accurate whether used properly or improperly. Theron would soak down enemies with benzine first, and then set them afire, all from a relatively safe distance. Beware fire vampires, though.

Use of flammable liquid weapons entails the risk to the user of also succumbing to the smoke and flames. Should an investigator find himself in the midst of a general conflagration, he should cover his nose and mouth and stay close to the floor so as to breathe as little smoke as possible. If no water is available to wet the handkerchief, the investigator should urinate on it. I kid you not. It could save his life.

Star Stones: a portable elder sign, such as a star stone, is a useful item. Not only does it provide limited personal safety when brandished at some creatures, it can be used to secure doors and thresholds. I was once trapped in a tomb with several other investigators by two eight-foot Egyptian mummified alligator-men. We took sanctuary inside the tomb itself and held off the guardians by hanging a star stone over the door handles outside. We then poured lamp-oil under the doors. It spread out under the feet of the guardians, and we set them afire. We left when they had finally burnt themselves out.

Standing Watches: always stand watches when spending the night on an investigation. A two-man watch is best, but a luxury. Divide the number of hours in the night by the number of team members and draw straws. Be on guard for piping, overhead shadows, lights, and apparitions. Never investigate alone. If something appears, wake the other investigators immediately. This saves lives.

Monster and the Right Weapon

"Wooden stakes and mallets? No, don't tell me. I don't want to know."

— Montrey Jack, independent investigator extraordinaire

Human Cultists: insane cultists present a particularly insidious threat. Cultists are usually found in packs. The size of the pack varies in proportion to the ability of the cult to function in its environment and yet remain secret. Cultists stop at nothing to avenge the theft of their secrets, so it is unsafe to attempt action against one cultist without proceeding thereafter to wipe out the entire local organization. There may only be one opportunity to attack a cult. Make that opportunity count.

Another problem with human cultists is that the law frowns particularly harshly at open murder of them. Unlike many Cthulhoid monstrosities, deceased humans don't melt away, leaving no tell-tale evidence behind. Circumspect activity, therefore, is usually called for.

Humanoid Monsters: many humanoid monsters have more-than-human strength, so do not let them close with you. Fortunately, most humanoid monsters, such as Deep Ones, can be killed by normal weapons. Firearms are fine, though Frank Glup took a macabre glee in burning Deep Ones to death, often subjecting us to his insane sense of humor with comments about frogs' legs, and so forth. Deep Ones carry spear guns, so beware.

THIS IS
NOT THE BEST
DANGER!
USE ASSASSIN'S
GLOVES AND A
GATSMASH.

NOT ALWAYS

OR RUN THEM DOWN IN YOUR
FLINIER

Mi-Go: what is true for deep ones is doubly true for Mi-Go who can fly and have technically advanced equipment, not to mention huge claw-like pincers. Fortunately, since Mi-Go are low-gravity creatures, they damage easily. A squirt of gasoline set on fire brings down a flying Mi-Go quickly. Use a shotgun to kill them.

Slimy Things: slime creatures like Nyogtha or shoggoths are best repelled using flammable liquids. Explosives are contra-indicated for the obvious reason that it spreads the creature's slime all over the investigators and the surrounding terrain. Shotguns and other projectile weapons do little damage to these monstrosities. A real danger when facing slime creatures is the possibility of going mad.

Byakhee, Hunting Horrors, and the Like: investigators who run across these creatures are in serious trouble, especially if the encounter is outdoors where the monsters can fly freely. Try to get under cover, and blast at them with rifles or shotguns. Pray that the ammunition holds out and that the entire team is not driven insane by the sight of the creatures.

Other-Dimensional and Non-Physical Monsters: physical weapons won't harm non-physical and other-dimensional creatures like fire vampires. What is more, many such creatures cannot even be seen until they are feeding when the blood coursing through their gullets becomes visible. Enchanted weapons harm Servitors of the Outer Gods, and a star stone holds them off. Otherwise, the only hope is that no one has bound the creature to destroy your team of investigators so that its attention can be distracted with a sacrifice of an animal tied firmly between the investigators and the monster.

Chthonians, Dholes, and Worse: don't look, run. The only hope in this situation is to summon another deity or monster with a natural hatred for whatever it is that is attacking. Survival in the vicinity of such a battle is an entirely different matter altogether, but perhaps is less risky than the alternative.

Afterword

When fighting Cthulhoid monsters, keep in mind that each investigator possesses a monster of his own which is also capable of wreaking great havoc. This monster is made of moist gray convoluted flesh, has thousands of tentacles called nerves, and hides within a cavern called a cranium. This monster, called Brain, is marvelously equipped with eyes, ears, a nose, and a lot of common sense. Brains can save an investigator's life when summoned in advance and used wisely. Every investigator should look before he leaps, think before he acts, stay alert, sane, and instead of working hard, work smart.

Andre Stalin
Arkham, 1929

About the Author

Andre Stalin was born in 1900 in St. Petersburg, Russia, the landless son of a minor Russian noble. Mr. Stalin was an officer in the cavalry and fought for the Whites in the civil war. He came to Boston after the revolution and fell in with Theron Marks, traveling extensively throughout Europe, South America, the Middle East, and (if his memoirs are to be believed, to the library on Celaeno and to the City of the Old Ones). This manuscript was found among his effects upon his death in 1929 of unnatural causes.

The Editors