

The Burning Stars:

Handouts

A Call of Cthulhu Scenario
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Investigator 1: Dirk Kessler

Born in Sydney, Australia, you joined the Merchant Navy at a very young age, partly to see the world but mostly to escape an angry drunken father who used to beat you. You've never spoken to your old man since, never came to terms with his behavior, and inherited many of his despicable traits. You created your own problems, befriending too many loose women, drinking too much liquor, and picking fights with too many fellow seamen. It was only many years later when you broke a woman's jaw that you realized you had become just like the man you despised.

In response you quit the Merchant Navy, emigrated to New York, smartened yourself up and joined Shaw's Investigations and Security Services as a private investigator. Somehow that did the trick. In the new job you found compassion and responsibility, particularly when it came to missing children. You found a constructive outlet to heal the pain of your own troubled upbringing.

Being a private eye suits you. You've always had a knack for problem solving, talking the tough talk, and uncovering the dirt that wants to stay hidden. You even have a good partner, a young fellow by the name of Guy Randall who is keen to learn the ropes from you, so to speak. But you knew such skills wouldn't be enough to keep you on the straight and narrow forever, you had to give up the drink as well. For ten years now you've been a successful private investigator, but that's only because you've stayed off the booze. You know that if you are tempted again, the violent ways you inherited might raise their ugly heads once more.

CURRENT MENTAL STATE: Something really terrifies you. Something you saw, only you can't – or don't want to – remember it. What you do know is that it's real, and if you start looking into what happened to you, whatever it was that you saw might come back. If it does, it's going to tear you limb from limb, and nothing you can do will stop it. Keep your friends around you always, as they are the only salvation between you and certain painful death.

Dirk Kessler, Age 31, Private Investigator

STR 14	CON 16	SIZ 13	INT 13	POW 15
DEX 14	APP 13	EDU 12	SAN 54	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+1D4
Grapple 50%, damage special
Switchblade 45%, damage 1D4+1D3
.38 Automatic 60%, damage 1D10
.45 Revolver 60%, damage 1D10+2
Shotgun 12-gauge 45%, damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Skills: Accounting 25%, Bargain 40%, Cantonese 10%, Climb 55%, Conceal 25%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 50%, Drive Auto 55%, Fast Talk 60%, First Aid 40%, Hide 50%, Jump 40%, Law 40%, Library Use 65%, Listen 65%, Locksmith 50%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Occult 35%, Operate Heavy Machinery 40%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 50%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 70%

Languages: English 70%, French 10%, Spanish 15%

Investigator 2: James Stirling

You are the head of a wealthy New York family, hailing from six generations of old Rhode Island money. Your father before you built up the fortune with strong stocks in shipping, manufacturing, rubber and petroleum, but it was you who really created the overflowing riches when you added munitions to the Sterling Industries investments. You made a huge windfall during the Great War and in the last decade you've sold weapons all over the world, particularly in Europe and Central America. You understand money and what it can buy, and that's why you're rich.

In life you are a leader, managing and controlling all men who are lesser mortals than yourself. Of your most loyal underlings you trust your bodyguard Sean O'Neil above all others, confiding in him secrets that you would share with no one else.

Since your father's death many years ago, you only return to the family mansion on those occasions when work does not call you away from your wife Janet and your two lovely children, Jack and Donna. Jack has completed his college degree at Columbia University and is ready to join you in running the business, while Donna is busy completing her degree in anthropology at a lesser-known university. If anything happened to either your wife or children, you don't know what you'd do, but it wouldn't be pleasant for those responsible. You'll do anything to keep them safe, and extract any level of revenge if they're brought to harm. No one buys you, you buy *<them>*. If they can't be bought, you'll get your way by whatever means necessary.

CURRENT MENTAL STATE: Something really worries you. You're not sure what's giving you headaches, but you believe your concerns are connected to your son. If only you could remember what those concerns are! You'll move heaven and earth to find out what happened to Jack and then bring him back home, because you're worried he might be in mortal danger. He needs to be rescued and if he can't be rescued, someone needs to pay.

James Sterling, Age 48, Wealthy Industrialist

STR 13	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 14	POW 16
DEX 15	APP 15	EDU 18	SAN 51	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 60%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 45%, damage special

.38 Automatic 55%, damage 1D10

Skills: Accounting 35%, Bargain 50%, Business 70%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 12%, Dodge 45%, Drive Auto 60%, Fast Talk 65%, First Aid 45%, Hide 55%, Jump 40%, Law 50%, Library Use 70%, Listen 60%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 60%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 60%

Languages: English 90%, French 25%

Investigator 3: Sean O'Neil

You're a man who makes his own luck, although looking back on your life an outsider would say luck was never your companion. When you were six your family emigrated from Dublin to New York where you knew no one. Two years later your parents were run down and killed by a drunken motorist who was never caught. Moving from one orphanage to the next, you were quickly separated from your sister and never saw her again. When you were sixteen you signed up to fight in the Great War, witnessing the slaughter of dozens of your comrades in the trenches of France. It was only towards the end of the War that your luck turned, when you met James Sterling. You'd just discharged from the army and he was looking for someone with good military contacts to conduct a little business for him.

Mr Sterling was in the market to sell munitions and you were just the man to introduce him to the right people, who were willing to put their money where their mouth was. Eventually he signed you on as a full time employee, and from there your work took you to the world's conflict zones including Mexico, Italy, Ireland, and Nicaragua. All that time you maintained your combat skills. In recognition of these skills, Mr Sterling eventually made you his personal assistant and unofficial bodyguard. Now you travel the world at his side, protecting and aiding the man you respect most in this world.

CURRENT MENTAL STATE: Something really angers you. Something dark and festering, hidden in the depths of a dark murky pit. It wants to kill you. The only thing is, you can't remember what that thing is, so you're going to be prepared; you're going to make sure you're armed with every weapon you can find, and then you're going to go back this thing's lair, and destroy it. You know that if you fail, many more people are going to die.

Sean O'Neil, Age 32, Bodyguard

STR 16	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 12	POW 14
DEX 13	APP 10	EDU 08	SAN 58	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 70%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 60%, damage special

Switchblade 55%, damage 1D4+1D3

.45 Revolver 70%, damage 1D10+2

Shotgun 12-gauge 50%, damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Skills: Accounting 15%, Bargain 50%, Climb 60%, Conceal 45%, Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 12%, Dodge 60%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 50%, Hide 60%, Jump 50%, Law 20%, Listen 55%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Operate Heavy Machine 60%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 45%, Spot Hidden 60%

Languages: English 60%, French 15%, Spanish 20%.

Investigator 4: Donna Sterling

Your whole life you have been raised to believe that you have a most enviable position in society. You are the daughter of a rich New York family, rich enough to rival the Rothschilds and the Carlyles, with a stately manor home on Rhode Island with vast grounds and dozens of servants. These trappings once made you believe that your life was enviable, but not now. You love your mother and brother Jack dearly, but your father spends so much time traveling and working that you feel he is a stranger to you now. You feel that creating wealth and dining with world leaders and industrialists is far more important to him than spending time with his only daughter. And to make matters worse, now that Jack has finished his studies and is working for your father, he too has suddenly found business distractions which keep him away. It seems the only people who are there for you now are your mother and your best friend, Amy Lachlan, a socialite reporter with the *NY Pillar/Riposte*.

As you grew older, your contempt for the family business inspired you to study in a totally unrelated field. You are now completing a degree in Anthropology at Miskatonic University. Your father and brother both believe you're wasting your life, but to get back at them is partly why you persist. You also know they want to marry you off like some medieval bride, to strengthen one of their business relationships with another wealthy Rhode Island family. You want nothing to do with this; when you're of age and you've completed your studies, you're going to move far away from home and find yourself a job in your chosen field; maybe even find someone who wants to marry you because he loves you.

CURRENT MENTAL STATE> Something really upsets you. Something close to your heart has been forever taken away from you. You feel at a loss, as though it doesn't matter what you do – your closeness to the lost thing can never be restored. But you don't know any of this for certain, you still want to be loved and so you will move heaven and earth to ensure that love is returned to you. Finding that lost love might be more painful than you can imagine, however, yet you must persist.

Donna Sterling, Age 20, Anthropology Student

STR 12	CON 15	SIZ 11	INT 15	POW 16
DEX 11	APP 16	EDU 14	SAN 57	HP 13

Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3
Grapple 40%, damage special
.38 Automatic 50%, damage 1D10

Skills: Accounting 35%, Anthropology 40%, Archaeology 25%, Bargain 30%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Dodge 40%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 70%, First Aid 50%, Hide 45%, Jump 45%, Law 30%, Library Use 65%, Listen 55%, Occult 40%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 60%

Languages: English 70%, French 20%

Investigator 5: Guy Randall

Formerly a New York beat cop, you left the force at an early age for a more lucrative position with Shaw's Investigations and Security Services. Although the work – and the pay – was better, you quickly realized that you were young and inexperienced compared to most of the private eyes with the firm. No one wanted to work with you, believing that your hiring was a boss's mistake. The word went around that you were good for nothing but filing and writing client reports for senior investigators.

Disillusioned, you almost quit until for some reason that is still a mystery to you, you opened up to one of your colleagues. You told him that when you were really young, you witnessed your mother's mugging, and saw how that forever changed her driving her into depression. You didn't want that to happen to anyone else, and that's why you chose to be a cop and then a private investigator.

The private investigator who listened to you was an Australian immigrant, Dirk Kessler, and since then he's let you partner up with him on every case your boss will allow. From Kessler you've learned much, and you feel you owe him a lot. Without him you'd still be back in the New York office, scribbling and filing papers.

CURRENT MENTAL STATE: Something really troubles you. Something you saw, something terrible, made you realize that the only person holding you back is yourself. Recently you learned that the world is a horrible, uncaring, pointless place to live, and that no one cares about you except yourself. Whatever terrible thing you saw, it's still out there, and it needs to be destroyed. If there's a chance you can re-discover what you once valued and respected in yourself, you need to destroy this thing to find that self-respect once again.

Guy Randall, Age 25, Young Private Investigator

STR 15	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 11	POW 14
DEX 13	APP 15	EDU 13	SAN 61	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 70%, damage 1D3+1D4

Grapple 40%, damage special

Switchblade 35%, damage 1D4+1D3

.45 Revolver 70%, damage 1D10+2

Skills: Accounting 45%, Bargain 20%, Climb 35%, Conceal 35%, Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Dodge 40%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 50%, Hide 60%, Jump 50%, Law 20%, Library Use 45%, Listen 45%, Locksmith 40%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 40%

Languages: English 65%.

Investigator 6: Amy Lachlan

Your family was never rich, but your father was butler to the wealthy Sterling family of Rhode Island and your mother was a housemaid to that family. You saw firsthand what money could do. Growing up with at the Sterling manor, you became friends with the Sterlings' daughter Donna.

Now both in your twenties, you are unable to spend much time together. Donna is studying anthropology at Miskatonic University, and you landed a position as a reporter with the NY *Pillar/Riposte*, keeping the populace up to date with the latest announcements and scandals in the world of Manhattan's rich and famous. It's a role you enjoy and cherish. Now all you need is for one of those rich and famous people to notice you, and propose!

CURRENT MENTAL STATE: Something really concerns you, something that happened to you – only you can't remember what it was. Something horrible attacked you and now you're concerned that whatever it was, it has made you feel physically unwell and prone to headaches and nausea. You need to remember what happened to you and learn the truth so you can put it behind you. You need to face your fear, and learn the truth of the sickness that you carry.

Amy Lachlan, Age 21, Pillar/Riposte Reporter

STR 13	CON 15	SIZ 12	INT 14	POW 17
DEX 13	APP 15	EDU 11	SAN 57	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 55%, damage 1D3+1D4
.38 Automatic 50%, damage 1D10

Skills: Art (Write Columns 65%), Bargain 50%, Climb 35%, Credit Rating 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 17%, Dodge 30%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 70%, First Aid 35%, Hide 40%, Jump 50%, Library Use 55%, Listen 55%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 40%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 60%

Languages: English 65%, French 25%.

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Shaw's Investigations and Security Services

Sammons Building, 212 E 38th Street, New York City

Wednesday, 15 October 1930

Mr James Sterling
Sterling Industries
Sunseri Towers
81 William Street
New York City

Dear Mr Sterling,

Thank you for engaging Shaw Investigations. The two detectives I would like to assign to your case are Dirk Kessler who, from his time in the Merchant Navy, has experience in Caribbean nations. Assisting him will be Guy Randall, a former police officer with the New York City Police. Both have considerable success in finding missing persons, and we are confident that they will assist you in finding your son, Jack Sterling, in Haiti.

Our fees are \$80 per day for both detectives, plus expenses. They are both booked on the Cunard liner *Goodfellow* matching your travel itinerary, departing New York Saturday 18th and arriving in Port-au-Prince on the 23rd.

Yours respectfully,

Roger Shaw



Shaw's Investigations and Security Services

Sammons Building, 212 E 38th Street, New York City

REPORT ON STERLING INDUSTRIES

Client Undisclosed

Compiled by Harrison Zamsky, P.I.

Friday July 5, 1929

Sterling Industries is a New York firm controlled by the Sterling family. The Chairman and owner is James Sterling, a wealth industrialist hailing from six generations of old Rhode Island money. His business is diverse investment in shipping, manufacturing, and rubber and petroleum. During the Great War Sterling Industries purchased a munitions factory in Mott Haven in West Bronx and made a fortune selling arms to Allied forces in Europe. After the war, munitions became their biggest business. They have since sold weapons across the globe, mostly into Europe and Central America, particularly Mexico, Italy, Ireland and Nicaragua.

James' son Jack, upon recently completing a college degree at Columbia University, then joined the firm. Other than his son, James Sterling's bodyguard Sean O'Neil is his only other truly trusted employee, who never leaves his boss's side as he travels the world doing business. Several high ranking staff members have expressed dissatisfaction with Sterling and one even questioned the legality of his methods.

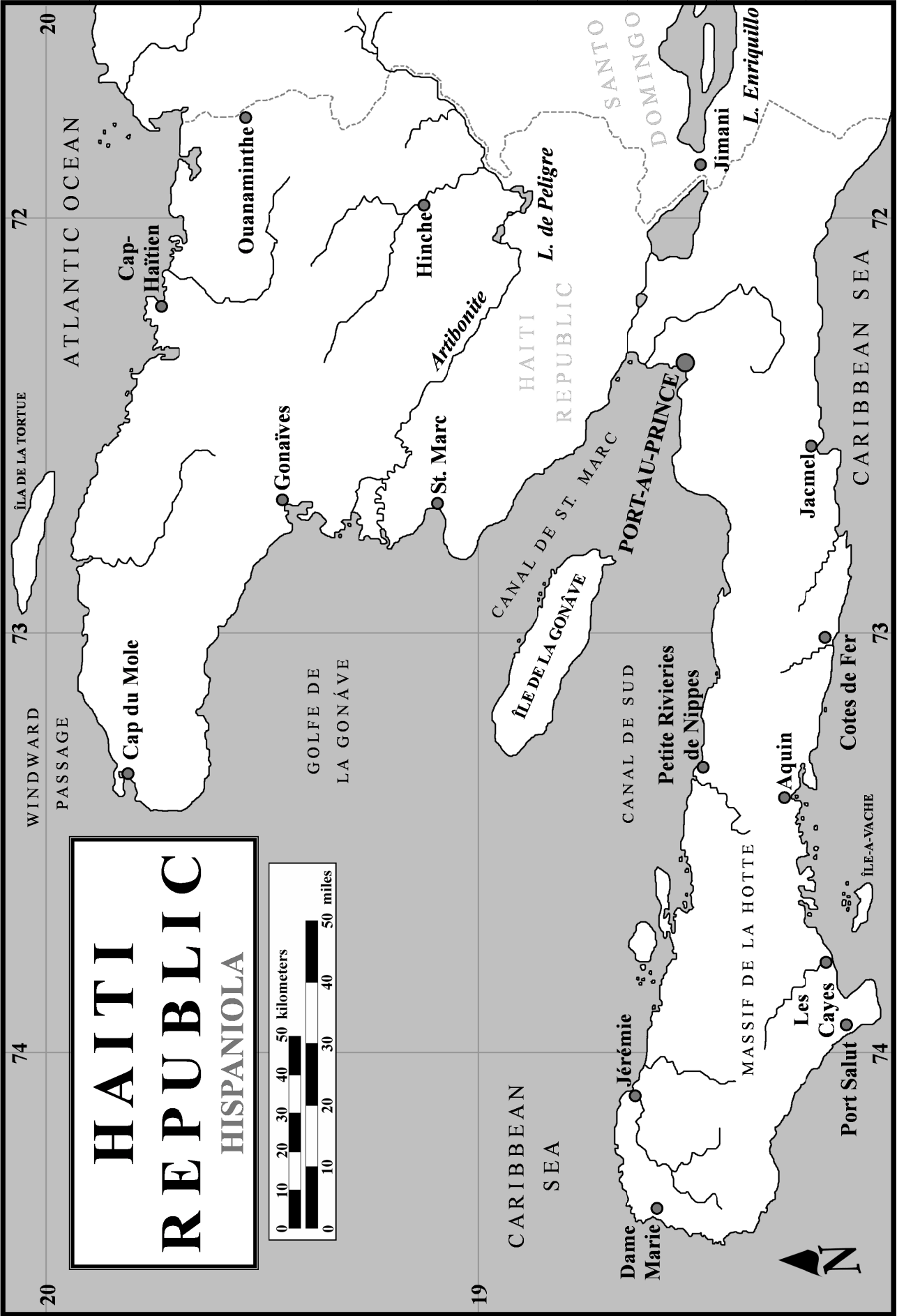
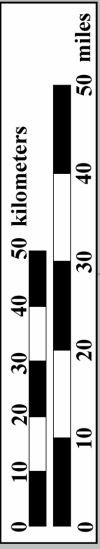
What is not publicly known is that Sterling Industries has been investigated more than once by the Office of Naval Intelligence for suspected collaboration with armed forces opposed to the interests of the government of the United States. No actions were taken and no prosecutions were brought forth against Sterling, most likely because of lack of evidence.

It was also reported that New World Incorporated, the Chicago based corporation, was close to buying out Sterling Industries in early 1928, to effectively eliminate competition in the market of global arms sales.

Lastly, Sterling Industries has been supplying the US government with arms for their soldiers in Haiti, but there are rumors that Sterling is also negotiating secret deals to sell weapons to Haitian rebels. Haitian gun-runner Sebastian Senegal is believed to be a known associate. This act would be seen as treasonous if true and convictions were brought to bear by the United States government.

HAITI REPUBLIC

HISPANIOLA



TEN OF SWORDS



TEN OF WANDS



XV. THE DEVIL



XII. THE HANGED MAN



Tuesday, October 28, 1930

American Foreigners Feared Dead

(PORT-AU-PRINCE) Residents in the foothills on the eastern outskirts of Port-au-Prince reported witnessing a group of American foreigners marching into the hills late last night, shortly before screams were heard.

Later the bloody murdered bodies of the Americans were reported to have been found by the locals. So far police investigations have found no signs of the foreigners or their deceased remains, although blood-stained grass and bushes at the supposed murder sites were identified and later confirmed to be that of human blood.

Although the bodies are still missing, locals insist that the foreigners were assaulted and killed, but by whom, they would not say.

The US Embassy has had no reports regarding any missing citizens in or around Port-au-Prince, but they did say they were investigating the matter.

— *Haiti Progrés* news clipping



Major Lloyd Medwin
Office of Naval Intelligence

United States Embassy
Bicentenaire, Blvd Harry Truman
Port-au-Prince, Telephone P-0220

Tarot Major Arcana

- I. The Magician
- II. The High Priestess
- III. The Empress
- IV. The Emperor
- V. The Hierophant
- VI. The Lovers
- VII. The Chariot
- VIII. Strength
- IX. The Hermit
- X. Wheel of Fortune
- XI. Justice
- XII. The Hanged Man
- XIII. Death
- XIV. Temperance
- XV. The Devil
- XVI. The Tower
- XVII. The Star
- XVIII. The Moon
- XIX. The Sun
- XX. Judgment
- XXI. The World
- XXII. The Fool

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

1201-B

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable sign above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

(21)

SIGNS

- DL = Day Letter
- NM = Night Message
- NL = Night Letter
- LC = Deferred Cable
- NLT = Cable Night Letter
- Ship Radiograms

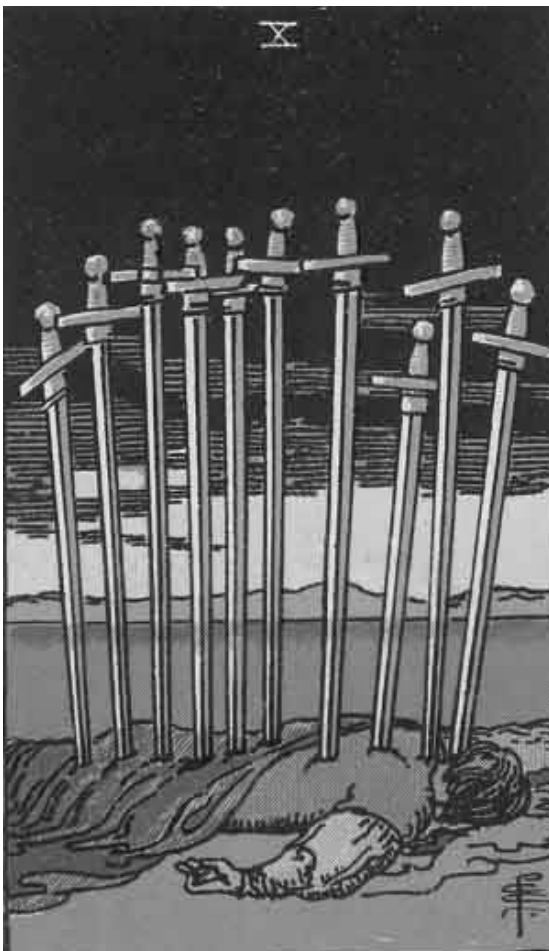
R. B. WHITE
PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

J. G. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

for
**GLAD TO HEAR YOU ARE SAFE AND WELL STOP FEARED
 THE WORST CONSIDERING RECENT EVENTS REPORTED IN
 THE NEWS STOP PRIORITY REMAINS TO FIND JAMES
 STERLING IF STILL MISSING AND THEN FIND HIS SON
 STOP GOVERNMENT AGENTS ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU
 QUERY STOP DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS ABOUT STOP
 ROGER SHAW END**

PATRONS ARE REQUESTED TO FAVOR THE COMPANY BY CRITICISM AND SUGGESTION CONCERNING ITS SERVICE





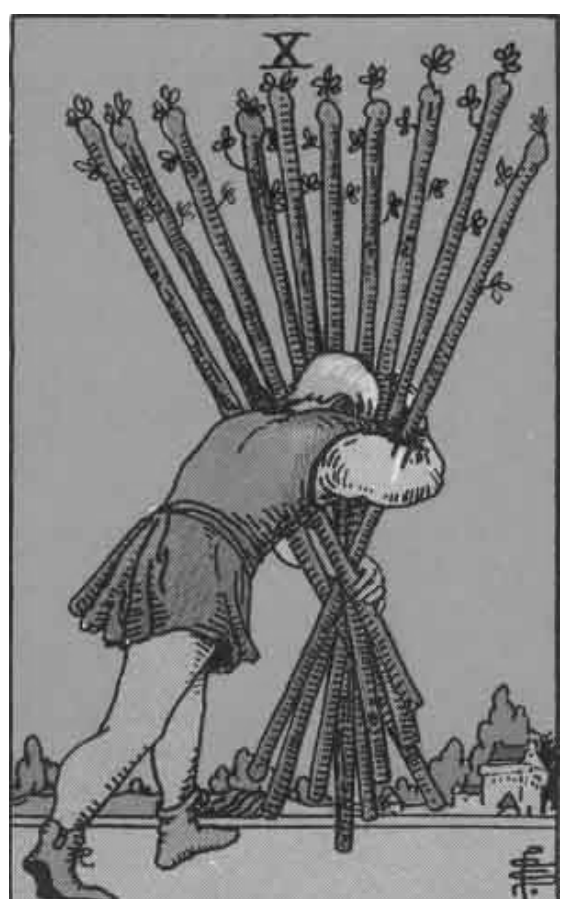
THE HANGED MAN.



DEATH.



THE DEVIL.



Passage from

Africa's Dark Sects



by Nigel Blackwell

. . . . I had been warned earlier that the ceremony I now witnessed, although it had trappings of Voodoo from the Congo, was in fact derived from rituals that were far older and ancient. The witchdoctor, dressed in a grass suit that fully enclosed his body, and his face hidden behind a grotesque mask depicting a face with three eyes, called forth demons from an undersea island. The frenzied dancers around him, his possessed followers, moved with impossible rhythms. The elder amongst them shocked me when they gouged themselves to death with sharp stones.

Into the fray stepped what was once a man, and something else. His skin covered in black scales and his face not unlike that of an iguana, he sent shivers through my skin. It was not the unnatural angles that his body could achieve as he danced, rather his eyes -- still human, still seeing as a human sees. And then an eye opened in his forehead, although it was not an eye, and I could see that the lizard man was Host to something else, something that desired to be free of the vessel that was once a man's forehead. His third eye was the gateway to the unknown realms.

I'm not sure that my mind would have accepted what was to occur next. My guide, Joma, thankfully dragged me from that awful, savage place. And yet in the dark hours, in my hotel or in a bedroll under the stars, I image what I might have seen, if I waited to witness what the Host might have become. . . .

Same ritual as described by BN

Same cult active in P-au-P

Sacred site - the SP?>

S. Senegal knows something about this cult

Monday, October 27

After meeting with James Sterling and his team of investigators, I was surprised at how much of what they told me related to what I had believed, until last night, to be myths. The Star Pools they say is real, and that Mr. Sterling's son has been kidnapped and taken there, to be a victim of a ritual of blood sacrifice. At first I did not believe them, and said as much, but now that I have witnessed the Star Pools for myself, I cannot even begin to imagine what else of the Floating Horror Cult prophecies are true, and what the ultimate fate of this island nation will be if they succeed in their plans.

The Star Pools, located in a hidden valley in the hills east of Port-au-Prince defy rational explanation. I saw Jack Sterling, James Sterling's son. I dare not commit to paper what they had done to him, lest my mind fails me as I remember too clearly in my prose, and I lose my mind altogether. What I will say is that I recognized his undoing, because I can now see they match too closely the descriptions of beings described so clearly in <The Masked Messenger>, especially the tale of the Ashanti Warrior and the Sharp Stone.

They have plans for the younger Sterling, this I know. It is tied to the ceremonies of the Fet Gede, which begin on the first of next month, and conclude in the following day. Will the real followers of the Floating Horror reveal themselves, and lead Jack Sterling into the hills, where he will be sacrificed as his father predicted. Can he still be saved? One can only hope.

Probably not, because I saw what lurked in the green waters of the Star Pools. It was that shape which banished my courage, and sent me fleeing screaming into the night.

Marie Jerome - Tarot Reader
87 Rue Macajoux
Bel Air

Dr. Bruce Northeast - Anthropologist
50 Rue Pacot
Pacot

ADS - National Library
Cult of the Floating Horror? Star Pools?
Voodoo?



Passage from

The Masked Messenger

by Sharinza



The Ashanti Warrior Bargains Poorly with the Keeper of the Sharp Stone

I do not know why I took possession of the sharp stone, found discarded on the shores of the dank river, as I traveled home from a great war from the north. It caught my attention, palm-sized and green with an oily shine. It made me sick in the stomach just to hold it, but its engravings captivated me, sharp cuneiform-like designs similar to those adorning the great statues of Clulu and Tsadogwa that are scattered across this continent. As I felt along its fine cutting edge it drew blood, and the pain shot through me like flame burning the belly. I dropped the stone, cursed it and returned to the path, only to fall into oblivion.

I found myself in a dank, dark labyrinth with the stench of death and cooking fires. The air was filled with the sounds of running water and distant voices, and I knew not where I was. Onwards I marched, lost, confused, until terror finally gripped my soul and my heart bled from a wound that was not made in flesh. In time I forgot who I was, and from where I had come. In time I found my way to freedom, to a great shore of a still sea. Although the sky was as dark as night there were no stars and its brightness burnt my eyes. I looked up, to the black sphere that was the sun, casting its unnatural light.

On the shores I saw three circular mud-brick houses of my people. The black light that shone from within burnt my eyes as well, only the glare was obscured by a man. Tall and thin, he walked toward me, with a grace and poise unknown amongst mortal men. When he reached my side, I saw that his face was a skull, with three human eyes. His unnatural glare spilt from a socket in his forehead, the source of his power.

"Shut your ears, my Ashanti Warrior," his voice echoed inside my head. "I am the Keeper of the Sharp Stone, and you are here now to bargain with me."

My mouth opened, desiring above all other desires to answer this man, this guise of the Masked Messenger, and yet I found no words to speak, and no answer worthy of his reverence.

"Shut your mouth, my Ashanti Warrior." His lipless jaw did not move, and yet his words were as clear as my own hands if they were held up now to my face. "I know what you want. You wish to return to your world. Even if in your world you are still mine."

I nodded, aware that the Keeper of the Sharp Stone knew my thoughts deeper than I knew them myself. My two wives, three sons, five daughters, eighteen cattle, forty-eight goats and three hundred chickens needed the head of their house to return to provide for them, and I owed them as much. So I would make the bargain, knowing that the price would be dreadful, even if only to touch the skin of my beloveds once again.

"Shut your eyes my Ashanti Warrior." And I did what I was commanded. And he touched me upon the forehead and I knew that was where it would begin. Where he would return again, to rule and destroy, and bring chaos to the land and to all people. "We shall meet again, soon enough."

And I woke, upon the shores of the dank river, with the Sharp Stone still clutched greedily in my hand where it had cut. Already black scales were forming around the scab of the wound. It had begun, and I knew I must flee, back to my family until the time of the end comes for me.

I bargained poorly, but the Masked Messenger would have it no other way.