

Illuminati

The Conspiracy

Revised for Call of Cthulhu By Brian-Joseph Baker (cthulhu.international@gmail.com)
Original Version Created for World of Darkness By Stephen Esdale
With a plethora of information and assistance and information provided by Anders Sandberg



Chapter 1: Introduction

We are prisoners in our own World.

Since the dawn of time we sleepers...mortals...humans have been the pawns of greater powers. To them we were nothing; used as tools and exploited for their enjoyment.

In the time before recorded history, at least recorded human history, the Earth was dominated by creatures that our sanity in this day and age would say could never have existed. Powerful Entities that ruled over humanity for millenia. Entities whose servants humanity well aware of where it stood in the universal play that is life. The first of the great non-human civilizations was that of the first and second Serpent Empires. The first serpent man culture came to flower during the Permian period, prior to the rise of the dinosaurs. They enjoyed a flourishing civilization, building great cities of stone, practicing the arts and sciences, studying the use of poisons and drugs, and sicovering the secrets of hypnotism. All of this occuring before the coming of man.

The First Empire waxed for several million years but time and decadence finally took it toll. As the dinosaurs rose to prominence, the civilization decayed and slowly collapsed. Old tales tell of serpent men pursued by monstrous reptiles, particularly the pterodactyls who numbered serpent men among their favorite foods. By the time Nemesis swept the skies, bringing with it the "long winter" and the extinction of the dinosaurs, the First Empire had long since fallen into ruin.

The Second Empire of the serpent men arose during the Pleistocene times, the age of mammals, but from the coming of man. Led by the Priests of Yig, who had preserved what they could of their fallen civilization, the serpent people rebuilt their cities in the old land. Before long, serpent man culture rose to great heights it had previously enjoyed.

But even then, humanity was struggling to find it place in a world that it greatly feared. In a world in which inhuman abominations dominated our race. The tyranny of the Serpent Empire last for generations until the Ice Ages came and ended their empires.

No one remembers those dark days...no one but us.

The forces of darkness sought to continue the cycle of dominance. These creatures are fantastic and terrifying. They have great mystic power and have the will to use it. Many of our most talented, famous, and infamous people have been taken over to their side. Our greatest resources have been stolen from us, the collected treasures of humanity have been raped by abominations! They walk among us, unseen by most. They control the mortal world from the darkness, unknown by most. They are a danger to all of us, incomprehensible by most.

We are not like most people. We see, know, and comprehend.

Magic exists all around us. Those of us have mastered magic in some form are called Sorcerers. This moniker was bestowed by those of our own kind.; our magic cannot compare to that of the mind shattering powers of the things that exist on the fringe of human consciousness.

The Conspiracy. That is the name for the plans we have created to finally free Humanity from the yoke of supernatural influence. Yet its more than that, for we want humanity under our guidance. For too long have they wandered like sheep, allowing the powers of darkness control over them. They need a Shepherd; a leader to show them the way to world dominance. We, the Illuminati, are that force.

The Secret Societies that we call the Illuminati are a diverse lot. Some of us have existed since before the Egyptians, some only very recently. Some, like my Society, want political power; others wish to control the flow of information or money. Others just want power of a different kind, like magic or knowledge! Our secrecy has been guaranteed by our unorthodox methods. A web of intrigue, control and influence make it nearly impossible for those seeking the truth to find it. And if they do get close? We drop the name Illuminati in the laps.

No. We should have never given our name to the Sheep, nor to the forces of darkness that control them. Because of it, our

secrecy could be threatened.

The Courts will send their Cadres, independent troubleshooters charged with protecting the phantom veneer we hide behind. There are many powers in the world which are beyond even our ability to fathom. We must be diligent, or they will crush us like the ants we truly are.

Now that you heard this, you have no other option but to become a member of our side. You will now swear your loyalty to the Society of the Global Elite. If the lie detector detects deception, you will be filled with enough volts light up a small town. Now repeat after me...

Introduction

Welcome to Illuminati: The Conspiracy. Some years ago while I was still running my tabletop World of Darkness campaign I ran across the original version of this document. It had alot of great ideas, but myself holding Call of Cthulhu closer to my heart than Vampire or any other game system for that matter, choose to start converting all of the hard work that the original writers put into this for a version for Call of Cthulhu.

This is a supplement of mundane secret societies, run by extraordinary but still mundane humans. For those who want nifty new supernatural creatures with wondrous powers and vicious natural weapons, you will be sadly disappointed. Its strictly a roleplaying tool. Though the Societies have nifty gadgets at their disposal, the forces of darkness and the Cthulhu Mythos would eat a conventional Knight (an Illuminati Agent) for breakfast. Only by careful planning and scheming can these forces remain undetected in this dark and strange land.

In Illuminati: The Conspiracy it is very ironic that this influential and powerful organization isn't controlled by supernatural monstrosities or some powerful evil wizard'. It is mundane humans, though some blessed with extraordinary Psychic abilities, that are the self-appointed puppet-masters of Humanity. It is also very Paradoxical that though the Secret Societies are against supernatural influence in the world, their great power comes from the magical artifacts and ancient tomes that they have access to. Though they want a world free from arcane authority, they need them to maintain their grip on humanity.

Another element that is very important is paranoia. Plots behind plots, ulterior motives, and secret agendas are everywhere. Working for an mysterious organization, often facing an enemy that a total unknown. Your never sure whether your teammates are trusted friends, or spies. You could be the spy! The only person you cannot distrust is your boss and he's brainwashed you.

As you are reading this, you will immediately draw comparisons between this and Steve Jackson's Illuminati (both the GURPS supplement and the card game). I must admit that the game was the catalyst for writing this supplement, as well as inspiration for the major societies in the game (Gnomes of Zurich = Shadow Bank, Bavarian Illuminati = Global Elite). Yet the bulk of the work remains generally my own (along with more than generous help from Anders Sandberg and a non-listmember, Carl Gutbrod).

I have undoubtedly used a lot of copyrights and trademarks here, and did so without permission. I am getting no revenue from this and have very little money myself. Don't sue me; you can't squeeze blood from a turnip.

Chapter Two : Settings

In the World of H.P. Lovecraft, humanity is the weakest of all the creatures in all of Creation. In the world that H.P. Lovecraft wrote about, the forces of darkness and the unknown has plagued humanity since the very beginning and has been here long before man even stepped onto the stage of this small mud ball of a planet. Now add to this world a force that has existed for centuries, though none of its members are immortal. They rarely confront their enemies directly, they never allow themselves to be discovered. They are the Secret Societies of Humanity, collectively known as the Illuminati.

Collective History of the Illuminati

Though it has faded into the racial memory of Humanity, the real beginning of the Illuminati can be traced to the time before there was a written record of human history. In the early days of the human race, man had much to fear from the forces of darkness and the unknown.

It was the village elders that started groups to maintain a history of their people and also to chronicle the terrible things that existed out in the darkness so that later generations would not so easily fall prey to those hidden evils.

This was, of course, an oral history and was passed down from generation to generation. These small groups would later fade in the background of society as humanity became more and more enlightened to the world around them.

The oral history would continue to be spread until the rise of the Egyptians. Up to (and including) this time, these people had been long considered Sages and men of wisdom. Their knowledge was desperately sought, and was a valuable commodity. A small group of these oral historians, to preserve their legacy for future generations, wrote down their millennia-long legacy on papyrus sheets. They then took the many books and hid them away in a false tomb for safe keeping, to prevent the unworthy from gleaning its secrets. This tomb was the first Basilica, the storehouse of the first Secret Society which would be later called the Blood Covenant.

The secret societies sprung up over the millennia, growing from areas seeded from the Blood Covenant. These Secret Societies saw the atrocities committed by the supernatural world, terrible things that brought back memories of the darkness and the unknown. The rise and fall of the Black Pharaoh, Nephren-ka and the Demon Pharaoh; Menkuhor the "Nightbringer" horribly scarred humanity. Truth be know, these were the only period in history that the Blood Covenant has ever assisted humanity in the destruction of knowledge. After it was over, only the Blood Covenant knew what really happened, and humanity was much better for it. No race should know the horrors that came about during that dark period in history.

The societies had once thought only about advancing mankind, the power gained being fringe benefits. Now they realized that humanity was not capable of handling its own affairs unguided. Now they would control mankind for its betterment, subverting the supernatural influence and eventually utterly destroying those abominations.

Thus The Conspiracy was formed, the plan for the saving of mankind. They would control society from the shadows, never taking a direct hand in anything. Instead they would let the humans serve as pawns, with them not even knowing that they were being controlled. From their secret positions they would lead humanity against the horrors of the supernatural, erasing their power and privilege from the mundane world. The abominations would not be able to strike back effectively, for they would be unable to find the true source of the enemy.

Around the 15th century, when the great age of expansion was taking place, the Secret Societies (now calling themselves the Illuminati) were beginning to clash on a regular basis. When countries and people had little contact with each other, the Illuminati could easily work in their respected circles without difficulty. Each society had its own goals, which rarely involved another society's "holdings". Now the world was getting smaller, travel between locations would soon be much easier and less risky. Already some Illuminati were threatening their cover by hiring thugs to attack another's holdings. It seemed as if the Illuminati would go to war if something wasn't done. Thousands of years of work could be undone in but a few short years.

And that almost occurred, with each Society working towards their own goals and willingly attempting to subvert each others influence within the mundane world, something had to be done.

In the year 1492, just as Columbus was reaching the shores of the New World, the Four Major Secret Societies of the Illuminati (Global Elite, Blood Covenant, The Pantheon, and The Keepers of Secrets) met to avert major disaster. A treaty of peace, called the Pax Concordat was drawn up between the powers. This document laid out a framework in which the Secret Societies could function without risking the Conspiracy. A non-violent means of acquisition and take-over of another Society's holdings was implemented, as well a strict code of conduct for those engaged in those activities. Basilica were updated to guarantee that all Societies knew the reason for their actions and what their goals were . Finally, the Pax Concordat set up a united front against the supernatural. No Illuminati would be alone against the Abominations.

The greatest of the changes that occurred was the appointment of an Emperor that would lead the Illuminati as a whole. The Emperor's word would be law within the Illuminati.

The Illuminati have expanded steadily over the last half millennia. Two new Societies have been introduced into the Pax Concordat, the Shadow Bank and the Enigmatic Stratagem (though it's in doubt whether the latter actually follows its precepts). Since ancient times, they have remained largely unnoticed by the general populace. No one has even suspected they may exist...until recently.

It is fashionable in these days to believe in conspiracies (more so in the World of H.P. Lovecraft). Since Kennedy's assassination, there have been those who theorized there is a phantom government in the United States (and elsewhere). This paranoia has only intensified with the apparent cover-up of UFO abductions and sightings. However, the views of these people are not seriously shared by the general populace and are not considered a threat by the Illuminati. The real threat is the forces of darkness and the unknown.

Illuminati have always been in a delicate position. The Societies must remain active to prevent the further domination of mankind by the supernatural (as well as cement their own brand of control on the populace) but must be very careful to maintain the veil of secrecy which ensures their existence. Unless the Cadres of the Court maintains its level of vigilance, the Societies existence could eventually be threatened.

Lexicon

Common parlance

Acquisition: The taking over of an Supernatural or Mundane-Influenced holding by one of the Secret Societies.

Basilica: The Headquarters and storehouse of knowledge of a Particular Illuminati Society. It is also the teaching ground for new Agents (Knights) and helps enforce the single-minded purpose of the Conspiracy.

Bishop: The Teacher of New Recruits and Keeper of the knowledge contained within the Basilica.

Cadres: Groups of Knights and Pawns, under control of the Court, who seek out potential breeches of the Pax Concordat and "fix" them.

Challenge of Dominion: The formal name for the process of taking over another Society's Holding through non-violent means.

Cliques: Similar to a Cadre, but composed of Knights and Pawns loyal to only one Society.

Conclave: A lesser council made up of Bishops and Rooks which reports to the Court. They handle matters to menial or unimportant to call a full meeting of the Court.

Conspiracy, The: Plan of action in which the Societies of the Pax Concordat subvert Supernatural influence on Humanity while increasing their grip on mortal society.

Court: The council which is made up of the Queens of all the major Illuminati of the Pax Concordat (except the Enigmatic Stratagem). They judge infractions of the Concordat and interpret its laws.

Creed: Inter-Society groups who share common view on the Conspiracy and the goals of the Illuminati in general. They are often at cross purposes with the Court and the Societies.

Holding: The Name for any organization or business under the control of a Secret Society.

Hostile Takeover: An illegal practice in which a Society wrests control from a rival Illuminati (or seize control of a Supernatural or Mundane Holding) by violent means.

Illuminati: The Collective name of all Secret Societies.

Imperator: The Supreme Leader of the Illuminati.

Initiation: The creation of a new member of the Societies by brainwashing or other coercion.

Junctions: Small Societies which serve as intermediaries and buffers between two different Holdings.

King: The head of a particular Society.

Knight: Semi-visible Agents of the Societies. Made up by men and women that are gifted with special abilities (Psychic Abilities, but not always).

Mundane: The greater portion of humanity that has no idea or want to know of the dangers of the forces of darkness and the unknown.

Pawn: Lowest rank of the Illuminati. The only rank in which Supernatural are allowed. Considered nothing but tools.

Pax Concordat: The Concord of Peace. A peace treaty signed by the major societies of the Illuminati. Contains the rules by which the Societies operate.

Phantom Veneer: The veil of secrecy that the Secret Societies and the Illuminati as a whole has pulled over the eyes of humanity to conceal their existence.

Prime Holding: The most important Holding in a Society with direct links to the Basilica. All other Holdings stem from this one source.

Queen: Members of the Illuminati that have separated themselves from the affairs of the Societies to become representatives to the Court.

Righteous Fury: The equivalent of Society Genocide. The destruction of an entire Society or Throng by the whole of the Pax Concordat. Called many times on Throngs but never on Societies, its the only time Hostile Takeovers are sanctioned.

Rook: Controllers of Holdings, they enforce the Illuminati's will on a dominated business. Rarely seen except when dealing with its Holding.

Shepherd: Codeword used to denote an Illuminati agent, typically a Knight.

Societies: The term for each of the major Illuminati groups involved in the Pax Concordat.

Throng: Small Societies, not part of the Pax Concordat but forced to follow its precepts. They hold no influence in Court (but are influenced by that body).

Old Form

Fabula: The bishop's art of interpreting the texts of Basilica.

Latebra: All supernatural creatures that hide from public view.

Lingua: The Knights language of verbal communication.

Regina: Term once used for a Society's Queen.

Regis: Term once used for a Society's King

Vulgar Argot

Abominations: Any human that has been tainted by the powers of darkness or the unknown.

Carnac: A traitor, scum, worthless

Sheep: Mundane humans

Organization in the Illuminati

While there are still many differences between Illuminati, the signing of the Pax Concordat created many standard institutions common to all the Societies. The following is an overview of these common organizations in general.

The Pax Concordat

To understand the Illuminati Society, you must first understand the Pax Concordat. It is Illuminati Society. It is the guide to which all agents follow, the cornerstone on which the Conspiracy is now resting. Everyone in the Society believes that the Pax Concordat is the only reason why the Illuminati have kept their secrecy for all these years. The Pax Concordat is contained in a large leather-bound tome in each of the Society's Basilica. It is a work that is encoded and filled with misleading passages that only a trained Bishop can understand. Though the work has long and specific rules, the Illuminati hasn't the time needed to contact the Bishop every time they wish to initiate an acquisition. So the Societies have condensed the Pax Concordat into several common sense rules that listed below.

I) Secretum: No Illuminati agent, no matter what his station, can reveal the existence of the Secret Societies to an outside member.

This rule is the most steadfast law. The Illuminati are very strict in upholding this edict, for a breach in Secretum could be the end of the Illuminati's existence. The penalty for breaching this law is a lengthy, painful death (which could be dragged out for months). Many of the Societies have invented terrible fates for traitors, generally ensuring that secrecy will be ensured.

II) Principalis: The first priority is the Conspiracy. All other duties, whether personal or the work of the Societies is secondary.

This rule basically states that if there is a choice between furthering the Conspiracy and other possible goals, that the Conspiracy comes first. In practise, the Societies rarely let anything get away from their own plans and ambitions, even the Conspiracy.

III) Dominus: If an Illuminati has influence over the decisions of a Holding, it is theirs. No other Illuminati can exert influence over it unless it is a Challenge of Dominion.

If a Society controls enough of a Holding (say by controlling the President/Chairman or a majority of stockholders) to make decisions unimpeded, then the whole Holding is theirs. No sabotage can be made by rival Societies, unless they formally declare a Challenge of Dominion. Again, in practice the Illuminati rarely let another's conquest run smoothly, though they make sure the problems cannot be directly traced back to them.

IV) Gravitus: When undergoing an Acquisition or a Challenge of Dominion, violence is expressly forbidden. Influence and all other non-violent means are the tools you must use.

Violence garners too much attention, opening the Illuminati to possible scrutiny by the outside world. Therefore influence through bribes, brainwashing, blackmail, etc. are the only means to get Holdings. Of course, violence is used in illegal "Hostile Takeovers". Societies are not quick to accuse another of such tactics, however, due to the fact that some past sin (such as a previous Hostile Takeover) might be dredged up by those blamed.

V) Solus: Against the Supernatural hordes, the Illuminati will be as one force. No Society may deal with the Latebra, to attack a rival Society or to further their own goals.

Another steadfast rule of the Illuminati. Breaking this rule has similar consequences as rule I. Against their mortal enemies, the Societies must work together as a team, using their special talents to their best advantage. Not to do so could be catastrophic.

VI) Prudentia: The Court has supreme authority in all matters brought before it. To ignore or defy its rulings bring misfortune on the guilty.

If a breach of the Pax Concordat, or at the very least a matter of interpreting its rules, is brought before the Court, then its ruling is made law. If it is openly defied or questioned, the perpetrator will be punished. This includes censure and lost of rank, to torture and possible death. The Court will not be questioned, though many Illuminati only give lip-service to this law. In recent history, the Court has lost much of its power to control its members. However, the recent problems with Beltane and his followers have given the Court new resolve and power. This power has been transferred onto their Cadres.

The Conspiracy

The Conspiracy, as stated numerous times before, is a scheme that involves all the Societies. Though the current method of influence and control of society from the shadows is thought to stem from the Conspiracy, it really has more to do with the Pax Concordat than anything else. Remember, the Conspiracy outdates the Pax Concordat by centuries.

This Conspiracy is not as much a plan as it is a list of goals. The Court believes these goals are to be met at any cost, the Illuminati are merely at tool to that end. The Societies, on the other hand use the Conspiracy as a tool for their own plans. This often creates a rift in the Society hierarchy as the Queens of the Court and the Kings of the Illuminati clash over courses of action.

In short, the Conspiracy has three broadly-worded precepts, each interpreted by the Societies to fit their own goals:

- 1) End the reign supernatural dominance over humankind.
- 2) Completely influence the course of the mundane world
- 3) Raise humanity to an intellectual and enlightened state

These lofty goals sound very noble, but it must be stressed that while the Court wishes to see all three precepts followed, many of the Illuminati only care about number two: Dominance of the humankind. The Creeds (see Chapter 4) within a Society often debate what Conspiracy precepts are important or redundant, often leading to heated arguments and even outbreaks of violence.

The Court

The Court is the supreme tribunal of the Illuminati. It is composed up of five Queens, one from each of the Societies of the Pax Concordat except the Enigmatic Stratagem. Its not even known wether the Stratagem even has a Queen, or follows any of the trapping of Illuminati Society.

Every year is a meeting in some neutral place, chosen randomly from a list of hundreds of locations. These locations are owned by the Court and are sometimes used as safe-houses for agents in danger. Meetings are also held every time a breech of the Pax Concordat is brought forth, or when a rule must be interpreted. At attendance in the Court are all the Queens of the Societies, the Archbishops of each Basilica, and possibly some high-ranking Rooks (acting as personal representatives of the King).

To best describe the court is to think of it has a debating club. When a matter is brought forth, the evidence is presented, people give testimony (if you are subpoenaed, you had better show up!), and then the topic is thoroughly debated. Finally, a vote is taken an the result is recorded by the resident Bishops for their respective Basilica. The matter is then closed. Their rule is final and there is no recourse for appeal. To defy them is a dangerous game, though it is one that all the Illuminati have learned to play very well.

While the Court handles all important matters in the Illuminati, it takes too much organization to organize a meeting for every seemingly important occurrence. Therefore, the Court has smaller "Conclaves", made up of Bishops and Rooks, which handle lesser matters. Conclaves are made up of ten members, one Bishop and Rook from all recognized Illuminati (except, of course, the Enigmatic Stratagem). The Conclave makes a detailed report to the Court every year and has a right to convene a Court session if the need arises (though they better have a good reason!). They also have lesser Court powers and any decisions rendered are only cancelled a Queen. There is at least one Conclave for each of the five Societies which sit on the Court, plus at least a dozen Conclaves which handle threats to the Illuminati has a whole (a quarter of which are devoted to keeping tabs on the Enigmatic Stratagem).

Basilica

Originally a small underground tomb or hidden structure, the modern day Basilica are huge complexes underneath the ground. They are multi-story structures, crammed with natural and man-made obstacles to intrusion. Mundane forces will meet (if they ever found the Basilica, unlikely as it may be) a horde of fanatical, heavily-armed Knights, remote machine guns and flamethrowers, and tripwire grenades and claymores. While successfully invading a Basilica is possible, its almost always a suicide mission.

Most of the Basilica is dedicated to the vast library, composed of stone tablets, papyrus, leather-bound tomes, and even computer programs. Connected to the Library is an extensive complex of sleeping quarters, recreation and entertainment complexes for the Bishops. There are also dark areas for Initiation and torture, as well as extravagant floors dedicated solely for King and Queen use.

Note that player characters, unless working for the Illuminati (and brainwashed into loyalty), will likely never find a Basilica, let alone successfully penetrate it.

Society Hierarchy

At one time each society had its own ranking system, each corresponding to their unique world view. The Pax Concordat set up a standard system of Society status to be followed by all Illuminati in emergency situations. During those important occasions, when they were fighting against supernatural forces, it's important to know everyone's place in their own Society. There is enough rivalry between the Illuminati already without adding the arguments over leadership. Over the years this ranking system has been integrated into the Society's power structure. Though they may be referred to by different names and have slightly different arrangements, most societies now follow the standard Concordat ranks.

The current hierarchy was based on the game of chess. This was how most of the Society leaders thought of the Conspiracy at that time. The King was the leader of the Society, given authority questionable only by the Court. The Queen was given a seat on the Court and no longer concerns themselves with Society affairs. Rooks control the holdings of the Society, while Knights act as its enforcers. Bishops are the true "sages" of the Illuminati and are the keepers of the Society's Basilica. Finally the term Pawn was given to all those who are under the control of the Society, whether directly or indirectly. More on the hierarchy in Chapter Three.

Cadres

The Cadre are the elite troubleshooters of the Court, created to help solve the growing problems facing the Societies. Each Society represented in the Court must donate a number of promising Knights and Pawns to form Cadres. This multi-society band of agents, numbering anywhere from four to more than a dozen, must swear their allegiance to the Court and them alone. Failing to do so results in the Court's own brand of Initiation (involving very unpleasant Brainwashing techniques).

The Cadre's responsibility is to fix any problem the Court thinks is a possible threat to Illuminati security. This includes potential rogue agents (rare as they may be), lost texts from a Basilica, and possible uncovering of Society activities by supernatural or mundane sources. The Cadres are spies, assassins, interrogators, commandos, and terrorists all at the same time. Though their importance is great, Cadres know almost nothing about the Societies they work for. They are gathered together secretly and told their mission via tape recorder or video tape (watch Mission: Impossible for ideas). They may know their objectives, but will never know the reasons behind them.

With the success of the Cadres, it wasn't long until the individual Societies began fielding similar groups as the Cadres filled with only their own faithful agents. Called Cliques, these groups fill similar roles as the Cadres, though may also be called on in Acquisitions, Challenges of Dominion, and Hostile Takeovers.

Chapter Three: Character

While Illuminati was originally conceived as an omnipresent enemy for Investigators to face, it is conceivable that people would actually like to play characters involved in the great Conspiracy. Though compared to the supernatural menaces of the World of H.P. Lovecraft, agents of the Societies are often pretty weak in comparison. However, they do have a very powerful organization, rich in resources and talent, actively backing them up on missions. Against the Abominations, a character Knight cannot hold his own in a direct fight. Yet the Illuminati have more tools at their disposal than mere guns or explosives. There are more subtle ways to harm your enemies.

Creating a Character

I. CONCEPT & OCCUPATION

Any concept is possible with Illuminati characters, the more unorthodox the better. Anything from Archbishops to Zookeepers are acceptable and encouraged. Stereotypical agents are not a good idea!

II. RANK

As far as characters are concerned there are only two ranks which will suit adventuring characters, that of Knight and Pawn. Rooks may be allowed as player characters, depending upon the particular campaign and Keeper. Each Rank's duties will list special Character Generation rules and required skills. See part b) for more information on the ranking system of the Societies.

III. SOCIETY

This author recommends that your Keeper choose which Society you belong to, this especially if you a Pawn or Brainwashed Knight. Its almost never a matter of individual choice.

Societies will also recommend Skills that would be of use to them (and why, perhaps, you were chosen by them).

IV. STATS AND SKILLS

When handling this part of character creation, go by the standard rules that are published in the Call of Cthulhu RPG.

Skill Points: Variable (Dependant on Rank)

VI. MONEY AND EQUIPMENT

Besides personal goods, most equipment and weapons needed for your missions will be provided to you by the Societies themselves. While individualism is tolerated (and sometimes encouraged), the Illuminati frown on equipment and clothing which draw attention to the agent (or his employers; ie. no heavy weaponry, explosives, tactical nuclear weapons, etc.)

Some unique gear is listed below.

Society Ranks

Pawns

At the lowest end of the hierarchy is the Pawn. Pawns are the workhorse of any Illuminati Society, a network of contacts and slaves that are given the most unimportant tasks. They are recruited from ordinary citizens, chosen specifically for their ability to integrate into society and their usefulness to the Illuminati. There are many types of pawns: Unwitting helpers, dupes, hired experts and consultants, members of front organizations.

The methods of Initiation vary among this rank, but Brainwashing is rarely done. Its not necessary for them, for they hold no information, nor are they a serious threat to security. Societies tend to follow the acronym M.I.C.E: Money, Ideology, Coercion, Ego. Blackmail, Bribes, and Persuasion using both beliefs and narcissism are (and have always been) quick and easy ways to ensure loyalty and obedience. Pawns are often controlled through a Society's holding (often a Holding they employed with). They are often totally unaware they are working for a secret society, let alone one as powerful as an Illuminati.

At best, a Pawn can be considered a "Sleeper" agent. Continuing their lives unimpeded, they are only used when circumstances warrant it. Rarely are they used in sensitive operations (unless they have been Brainwashed) and are never combat trained. Typical missions for a Pawn are information gathering, shadowing/tailing suspects, research, and petty crimes.

Skill Points: 20

Knights

Knights are the elite shocktroops of the Societies, expendable agents with specialties in espionage and covert operations. Just above Pawns in the hierarchy of the Illuminati, these fanatical warriors are recruited from ex-service personnel, former agents and police officers, and anyone who shows who shows paranormal abilities.

Brainwashing is the normal procedure for Knights. Only rarely does someone show the devotion and self-sacrifice needed to be a Knight. Absolute loyalty is engrained in them throughout their year-long training in secluded camps throughout the world. The Knight is best suited for the tactical elimination of enemies. This elimination is ideally (according to the Pax Concordat) non-violent, but deadly force is also used.

Knights are experts in surveillance and entrapment, getting evidence which can be used to persuade or ruin an individual. They also have knowledge in commando and other special forces operations. Standard operating procedure is to make all covert operations look like routine terrorist actions. Sabotage is made to look like corporate espionage or "Eco-Terrorism"; Assassinations and Bombings are carefully staged to appear the work of extreme factions of such groups as the IRA.

The amount of information a knight knows is totally dependant on the skills and natural abilities he or she possesses. Those that have extensive Psychic abilities are often allowed more knowledge about the Illuminati than the mundane agents with no psychic abilities. Normal agents may know they are working for the a secret society (and may even given a pseudonym to identify it), but has no knowledge of its personnel or practices. Knights endowed with the necessary special gifts may know a bit more, such as their immediate superiors and the influence the Society has over the local area he is assigned to.

Character Generation: Knights have primaries in Physical Stats and Skills. They generally should have a good selection of espionage and military skills. They also must take the Lingua skill, the spoken version of the Rook's Fabula. The Skill of Hide is definitely a must (you ever notice on the X-Files that the enemy agents always disappear after rounding a corner and never seem to appear on cameras?) Psychic abilities are also very common with Knights but preferred psychic abilities vary with Society.

Skill Points: 40

Rooks

Rooks are the cornerstone of any Society; these "enforce" the Illuminati's will in their respective holdings. After a successful Acquisition or Challenge of Dominion, the Rook enters the scene and maintains order. Rooks are generally trusted Illuminati individuals (often born into the Society through hereditary lines) who were employed by the future Holding months or years before the Illuminati arrived.

The masters of subterfuge, manipulation and brainwashing, a Rook ensures that the Holding is completely "loyal" to the powers that be. Rooks are often given a Clique (Society version of a Cadre) of Knights to help in the pacification of the Holding. Often the Rook has an entourage of Brainwashing experts (themselves being brainwashed pawns) or Knights that have likewise have the required Intelligence background.

Using their special abilities, key personnel are Initiated as Pawns into the Illuminati. Rooks then stay in the Holding in small, unimportant positions, watching for insurrection or outside influence.

Of all agents in exposed or semi-exposed positions, the Rooks possess the most knowledge of their Society. They know they work for the Illuminati, its name, and their immediate superior (usually another Knight, but rarely a Bishop). They generally have no idea about the scope of the Illuminati but are still well protected (just in case...)

Character Generation: Social Stats are an imperative, but may choose whether Skills are must suited for there area of expertise. All Rooks must take the Skill of Brainwashing, and most have a high Credit Rating.

Skill Points: 45

Bishops

Keepers of Society dogma, masters of information, historians without equal. Bishops are generally not available to Player Characters because of their isolated existence. Bishops are the masters of the Basilica and has such have historical records dating back for into what the mundane world calls prehistory. Some of the older records include the written versions of the original human oral-histories, many of which date back to the latter end of the Impergium. Each individual Basilica has different records, depending on its age and original geographic location. Besides history, the Basilica holds the records of all Illuminati members, past and present, and details Society business and progress form the earliest times.

There are about a dozen Bishops in each Basilica, lead by one of their number (called an Archbishop). Bishops are chosen from the brightest of the mundanes in the general area of the Basilica. They are snatched from elite schools and from families who have shown a history of high intelligence. Many of the unsolved child abductions are not the work of child molesters or serial killers, but are in fact the latest inductees into the Illuminati. The children are taught from their earliest moments in the Society that they are the most important force in their organization and without it, humanity is lost. Loyalty and Sacrifice are engrained in their minds, and they are given the greatest secrets that the Societies have to offer.

For they learn Fabula, the ancient art of translating Basilica text. It is in a long-forgotten dialect, written in an ancient alphabet, and intricately encoded. Filled with false passages, and special paragraphs to mislead the uninitiated, it takes very intelligent and dedicated individuals to interpret and copy the text. In fact, Bishops are the only ones allowed to take the Fabula skill; it is taught to no other, under penalty of death. This system is so complex, that it took Corvus Beltane (see "Shamans of Beltane" in Chapter 5) over 350 years to decipher the code and translate the language and dialect. Even then, he did not manage to separate the true passages from the false. It's only by these special measures taken to protect the Society's knowledge that the Illuminati have survived for these millennia.

Bishops, due to their wide-spread knowledge of the Illuminati, are sequestered in their hidden Basilica, protected by some of the best Knights available. Magical deterrents are often used to prevent supernaturals from finding the Basilica and penetrating it via mystical or spiritual means. So important are the Bishops to the Illuminati, they often never see the light of day.

Character Generation: Mental Stats and Skills are imperative. Other than taking the Fabula skill, there are no prerequisites to being a Bishop.

Skill Points: 60

Queens

Queens are the judges of the Illuminati. Sitting on the great and powerful Court, the Queen makes sure the rules of the Pax Concordat are followed to the letter and interpret the rules as they apply to new situations. [Author note: The "rules interpretations" are important generally if player characters pursue or inquire about an unorthodox method which may or may not break the Pax Concordat at (such as, say framing the target with murder, which might be considered a Hostile Takeover since violence has been used to gain a Holding). Remember, the Court's rule is law! No appeals. Players who ignore Court rulings better pray they don't get caught...]

Chosen from the ranks of the Illuminati (normally, an experienced Archbishop or trusted Rook), the Queen is inaugurated into the Court in a secret ceremony in one of the Courts meeting places. The Queen (or Quaesitor, using the archaic term) then loses any influence upon the Society they represent. Though they become the greatest power in the Illuminati, they only have nominal power in their old power structure. This discrepancy means that though the Court, as a whole, can reprimand Societies, individual Queens have no power to enforce the Concordat on their own (and often do not report observed internal breaches of the Concordat, due to loyalty to that Society).

Queens, though they must move to many secret locations, are almost never caught in the open. All Queens have personal assistants to transport them from place to place. They are also accompanied by at least one Court-appointed Cadre for personal protection. If they must move in the open, they are given protection unequalled by even heads of state. Only Kings warrant greater protection, though they rarely leave their fortified offices.

Character Generation: They are picked from the ranks of Bishops, Rooks, or very rarely Knights. Create a character from those ranks, then give them an extra 60 Skill Points.

Skill Points: See Above

Kings

Legendary controllers of the Societies, they are the most mysterious of any of the ranks. They are the supreme rulers of their own Illuminati, with personal goals that can only be guessed at. Because of the secrecy and isolation involved with the King, the identity (or even gender) of the Society monarch has become a lasting secret. A strict hereditary system, Kings choose their favourite (and/or most gifted) children for their replacement. The succession is never announced to the crew and only the Queen and a special Rook (his "mouthpiece") know when the change occurs (and the Kings real identity, for that matter).

Cloistered in a special floor, exclusively tailored for the expensive tastes of the King, the Society's leader is never seen outside his domain. The floor is impregnable with massive technological, mystical, and spiritual barriers. In the history of the Illuminati, no King has been assassinated, attacked, or even approached without prior authorization. Then again, if a King had been killed, its doubtful they Society would advertize the fact...

Character Generation: They need no special skills besides being born into the "Royal" family. Anyway, player characters are not going to meet a King in their life time, are they?

Skill Points: As much as they want...

Imperator

The Imperator is the Ultimate power within the Pax Concordat. With but a way is his or her hand, the Imperator can set the entire forces of the Illuminati against a foe or in motion toward some end that only the Imperator and the Grand Court knows where it will end.

Cloistered any in some hidden stronghold in the world, the Imperator guides the Illuminati. To date, no single Imperator has died of unnatural causes, assassination of an Imperator has never occurred.

Character Generation: They need no special skills besides being born into the "Royal" family. Anyway, player characters are not going to meet the Imperator in their life time, are they?

Skill Points: As much as they want...

Society Rank Variations

As stated before, the Pax Concordat set a standard ranking system in times of emergency. Over time it has been integrated into the societies. However, the Societies are loathe to give up their traditions and even those Creeds who are supported by the Court are often resentful of the compromises placed upon them by the Pax Concordat. [Author note: Remember, though the Societies and Creeds believe the Court is a necessary evil, very few are staunch supporters.]

Therefore, the Societies tend to have varied hierarchies which though superficially different, generally follow standard Concordat hierarchy. They are listed below:

The Blood Covenant has seven grades, linked to the planets and their symbols. Initiation into each grade is surrounded by complex mystical rituals and binding oaths (often variations of the Blood Covenant; the ancient ritual which gives the Society its name).

There are three grades of Pawns used by the Blood Covenant. Mundane people and those mundanes who are actively being manipulated by the Society are sometimes viewed as belonging to the grade of Earth.

Two grades control the Pawns and are under the control of the Rook (Jupiter grade) they themselves are brainwashed pawns:

Moon: The Huntress, Queen of spirits, madness and nature. Mind control, hedge magic and occult matters.

Venus: The Seductress, manipulation and espionage.

Bishops are part of the grade of Mercury: Great Hermes, the God of magic and communication.

Knights are of Mars: The God of War, military power. Knights of the Blood Covenant are known as the "Order of the Silver Chalice".

Rooks belong to grade Jupiter: The Lord of the world (Rex Mundi), worldly power (due to their direct influence of the mundane world).

Queens, because of their visible ruler-ship as a member of the Court holds the rank of the Sun: The Glorious ruler.

Finally the King is called Saturn: The Hidden One, the dark unknown ruler.

Within the Society, characters are address using last name and their rank. Nicholas Caliburn, a Knight, would be addressed as Caliburn of Mars. If he was a Queen, he would be called Caliburn of the Sun.

Enigmatic Stratagem. As will be said later in this supplement, not very much is known about the "official" hierarchy of the Stratagem. Pawns, in general, are identical to standard Concordat precepts (or so it seems). Knights, however seem to be divided into two distinct groups. The Knights of the Enigmatic Stratagen are known as the Legion Ex Naegrus (Legion of Black).

Though no one knows about the higher ranks of the Stratagem, there is no reason to believe that they are any different than the Society norm.

The Global Elite only gives higher ranks titles, fitting with their aristocratic attitudes. Pawns are not worth of any moniker (and as such are often considered very expendable; Global Elite pawns are the worst treated of any of the Societies). Each of the higher ranks are considered separate institutions and as such are somewhat autonomous from each other (this is in contrast to the familiar "ladder" organization which is consistent with the other Illuminati). Knights are part of the Order of the Black Storm aka the "Black Storm Brigades", the paramilitary assassins so feared by the Societies.

Rooks are divided up by the organizations they represent. Those part of the Political arena are part of the "Imperialists", while those involved in Corporate or Lobbyist activity are known as the Capitalists and the Arbitrators respectively. Each Rook division has its own areas of influence and a multitude of pawns.

Bishops, known as Coordinators, not only are information gatherers but act as intermediaries between the Black Storm Brigades and the various Rook institutions. They are very influential in the Global Elite's affairs.

Queens are not well liked by this Illuminati. They are often quarrelsome members of the Society which have been granted this position to get them out of their hair. When referring to a Queen, they Global Elite simply refer to them as their "Representative".

The King (or "President") is no different from that of any other Society, though the Global Elite propaganda may say differently.

Keepers of Secrets. Rooks and Bishops are the most prominent in the Keepers of Secrets. Like the Global Elite, the Rooks ("Compilers") are separated in several divisions. However, they are not autonomous by any means; merely sub-divisions of the Rook/Compiler organization. Each Compiler division concentrates on a certain area: Some scan the printed media, broadcasts, and the more interesting areas of the Internet, while still others listen to phone lines and street "gossip". The Bishops (or Archivists) store the information gained for future "reference". Knights of this Society are known as the "Order of the Hidden Truth".

Pawns are unchanged from Concordat norm and are known in KoS circles as Allies and Contacts.

The Representative to the Court (the Queen) is known only as the Oracle. There is no known King, which leads to much speculation on who exactly rules the Keepers of Secrets. Some have even gone so far as to allude that the King is the Oracle. If so, this would make this Society the only one which had an visible leader. Then again, why would a King leave himself open to attack? As with most of the Illuminati, the Lurkers have no plans to reveal any their mysterious.

Pantheon, not surprisingly generally uses religious monikers for their ranks. Most pawns are referred to as "The Faithful", denoting their loyalty to the Society. Knights are of the Order of St. Dumas, often called the "Knights Templar" or just Templars to confuse them with the Throng of the same name (such as is listed in Nephilim: Occult RPG) and with the those of the Sabbat. Rooks are referred to as Archbishops and Bishops as Cardinals (again to confuse matters). Queens are referred to as a Hierophant, and the King is referred to as the Vicar.

The Vicar has often been linked to the true Pope of the Catholic church, but its unlikely they are one and the same. In fact, though the Pantheon has great influence in Catholic (and Protestant, Jewish, Islam etc), they keep themselves somewhat separate from religious hierarchies and positions.

Shadow Bank Hierarchy is very Corporate in nature. Pawns are the Employees, dutifully "working" this Illuminati. Knights belong to the "Order of the Golden Path" aka Society "Security", while Rooks are part of "Public Relations". Bishops are called Executives and the Queen is given the title of Press Secretary. There is no single Shadow Bank King. It is in fact made up of a council known as the Board. The CEO, the head member of the Board fulfils any duties of the King, while another member of that same Board represents the King at Court meetings (Note: This representation is separate from the Queen and other Societies send trusted Bishops and Rooks to act as the King's "observers" during Court proceedings). Societies of the Pax Concordat

Blood Covenant

Nickname: Cultists

The oldest Society, the Blood Covenant used to be the greatest Illuminati on the planet. However, time has not been kind to the Blood Covenant and much of its former glory and power has been diminished. The first sign of decline came when long before the Pax Concordat, when many of its "colonial" Societies, seeded to provide new areas for Covenant control, became independent and formed their own Societies. As time went on, these new Societies would steal valuable holdings from their former masters.

The most debilitating force came from Christianity, nominally controlled by the Celestial Chorus and secretly influenced by the Pantheon. Placing all faith in priests and popes, not mystics and shamans, the growing power of Christians ravaged Covenant control while boosting the Pantheon's influence.

Over the years, the Blood Covenant has tried to regain some of its former distinction, supporting the Barbarians against Rome, sponsoring the Viking Wars. Yet the Vikings were eventually lost in a Challenge of Dominion to the Pantheon.

When the Court voted to ignore the sciences new definition of the universe, the Covenant was furious. It had totally been against the idea, the only dissenter in the Pax Concordat. They were sure it was some plot by the other Societies to steal their holdings and power. They even wondered if these supposed scientists hadn't subverted the Court and its members. The relationship between the Blood Covenant and the other societies is strained even to this day. They also share an arch-rivalry with the Pantheon, whom they blame for the Christian destruction of Paganism.

With the age of reason, it seemed that the Blood Covenant would be swallowed by the other Societies, but that was not the case. Instead of destroying mysticism, it just forced it underground. Blood Covenant gained control by bringing powerful individuals into secret Occult circles, both hidden and overt. This ensured that even though Mysticism was not widely accepted, the Covenant still had influence over the mundane world. Every once and a while these groups would attempt to gain acceptance in the open, sparking organisations as the Rosicrucians, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and individuals such as Aleister Crowley. The success of such incursions varied widely, though they are gaining more recognition as the hold that the Church has had on society has weakened. The Blood Covenant is not only involved in "curses" and spells. Since they control Psychics from around the world, they can convince a superstitious populace of anything (through tarot readings, etc).

The emergence of older religions, particularly those called "Neo-Pagan", have given the Covenant reason to believe a new age of power and control might be at hand. The most prominent of these new (or perhaps really old) religions, that of Wicca, has become a prime target for the Blood Covenant...and a great source of consternation. Without any rigid hierarchy, such as is found with the Catholic Church, the Covenant finds it very difficult to gain widespread control. Many other Societies have remarked that the Society is desperate enough to risk anything for power, even break

Stereotypes

Enigmatic Stratagem: Mysterious and arcane, they could be our brothers, if we could ever contact them.

Global Elite: Politics and diplomacy is not the answer. Their bureaucracy slows the pace of the Conspiracy, while the actions of the Black Storm threaten to breach our veil of secrecy.

Keepers of Secrets: Though they conspired against us with the other Societies, we have no quarrel with them. They seek knowledge, like us, but not in the right places.

Pantheon: Foul butchers, these Illuminati have purposely sought to destroy our power. Their religion has done much harm to us, but its time is now past. We will see how they like being persecuted.

Shadow Bank: Money, stocks and bonds will not answer the questions needed to overpower the Abominations. You are wasted assets, ones that are best liquidated.

the unbreakable rules of the Pax Corcordat. Already some have accused this Society of consorting with Infernal powers, some going so far as to say have totally fallen under demonic influence. Whatever the case, they are being watched closely.

The term Blood Covenant refers not to their mystical rituals, but the blood oath that each new member swears to the Society. This rite is practiced in every Society in one form or another, but none has the history and meaning as that of the Blood Covenant.

Goal: Mystical forces have created the Supernatural that threatens us now. Therefore it will only be by unearthing the greatest Arcane secrets, that will give us the key to our salvation. The control and influence of all Occult, Psychic, Pagan, and Neo-Pagan organizations and societies are important to reaching our goals, though we must make them more acceptable if we are to use them to influence the mundane world.

Basilica: A tomb located near the Giza Pyramids, Egypt.

Suspected Holdings: Warlock Covens, Order of the Golden Dawn, the Rosicrucians , Psychic hot-lines, various Paranormal research institutions, Masons and the Royal Family of England, possible involvement with Infernal groups.

Preferred Skills: Occult is the only skill that is required of Blood Covenant members, though Investigation is also highly prized. Covenant Knights, if they have Psychic abilities, many generally choose spellcraft.

Enigmatic Stratagem

Nickname: Aliens

Of this Illuminati, there is almost nothing known. It doesn't even have an official name. The current moniker used to identify this reclusive group was first coined by the Global Elite's Queen, saying "Of them we no nothing; neither their name or anything about their enigmatic stratagem". The name somehow stuck. Though officially part of the Pax Concordat, it does not sit on the Court. It has only met with the Court once, when its Queen (?) arrived unannounced and told the council "[They] would abide by [the Illuminati's] laws". The Court voted the Stratagem into the Concord of Peace only because its power now rivalled theirs. There still are many who are sure that one day the Court will have to call Righteous Fury upon the Stratagem, once their real aims are revealed.

The group now called the Enigmatic Stratagem first appeared around the mid to late 1800's. It came without warning, from no apparent source. The other Illuminati suddenly began to lose holdings in rapid succession. Not a general takeover, but singular specific organizations. Zoological societies and other groups involved in biological research were targeted first. The Stratagem's other targets, reclusive scientists and theorists, seemed to defy explanation. It would be until the two world wars that the its goals were beginning to come to light. From its early, unimportant acquisitions, the Enigmatic Stratagem had a firm foothold in the advanced technology and biological research market. It had predicted the great rise of technical achievement of the world wars almost a century previous. It would also be evident later on that the Stratagem had already prophesied the biological and genetic revolutions of recent years. Some have wondered if this may be due to ES involvement with a governmental group known as Majectic-12....

What bothers the Court is that Stratagem has taken upon itself to further its biological knowledge through very strange and dangerous means. The rash of "Alien Abductions" over the years is not wholly the paranoid imaginings of the mundane. Some are the experiments of the Enigmatic Stratagem, accomplished through the mysterious creatures some mundanes call the "Greys". These drab, frail-bodied creatures have extended craniums and large eyes. They have been present in a number of abduction cases in North America in the last few decades. Though they are not a proven reality, the Societies are certain they are the first fruits of the Stratagem's decade long technological and biological research scheme. These "Greys" seem to be endowed with great psychic ability and heightened intelligence. Are these things real?

In addition, the Enigmatic Stratagem has some very advanced aircraft, possibly incorporating Alien technology, or technology melded with the mind powers of the Greys. Despite what the tabloids print, there is evidence that only a dozen "saucers" that are operated the Stratagem. Other craft stem from other sources from creatures not of this earth. Many other sightings are complete hoaxes. The hoaxes keep the mundanes from acknowledging the presence of aliens on the planet, though the number of believers are growing. This increasing belief in alien abduction and the presence of the supernatural has only been stemmed by the Stratagem's influence in strategic government agencies. Yet the other Societies are watching them closely just in case government leverage is not enough.

There are at least half a dozen Cadres permanently assigned to protect the Stratagem (whether the like it or not) from the peering eyes of the mundane and supernatural world. If there is going to be a serious breach of the Concordat, the odds are good that the Stratagem will cause it.

This Society also has a unique and baffling hierarchy, nothing like the others in the Pax Concordat. It is clear that the Stratagem has leader(s), so they will have some sort of King. They also seem to have a Queen, though its uncertain whether it is a full time position or one of convenience. Rooks are definitely in use by the Society, filling duties that emulate their society brethren. If anything, the Rooks are the only thing common the Stratagem has in common with the Illuminati, besides the Pawns. What position the Greys fit in the Society is anyone's guess, though it is possible they are Bishops or Knights.

Stereotypes

All Societies: We acknowledge you. Do not get in our way.

Goal: Unknown. Generally seems to involve radical biological research, genetic engineering, and advanced technological testing. The reason for this, their plans, or even the accordance to the Pax Corcordat is a complete mystery.

Basilica: Believed to be somewhere under Area 51, also known as Dreamland, an semi-secret air base located on Groom Lake, Nevada.

Suspected Holdings: Bio-technical and Technological firms around the world, US Air Force.

Preferred Skills: Again, unknown. Is not even understood if they have requirements or preferences. human Knights (?) which have been encountered have extensive psychic powers.

Stereotypes:

Global Elite

Nickname: Plutocrats

The Global Elite came from the same Seeded Society as the Pantheon. From influential members within Roman society, the group split up at the height of the Roman Empire. The factions disagreed on which organizations in Rome were the best platforms for world dominance. The faction which would later become the Global Elite thought that one should control the Senate and the powerful Families which influenced Imperial politics. The group which would form the Pantheon wanted command of the powerful priesthood of the Roman gods. They parted on good terms and retain amicable relations (along with a friendly rivalry). The Global Elite have remained dynamic throughout the past 2000 years, and now are the most powerful Illuminati in the World. The Elite is the most direct of all Societies when it comes to the Conspiracy. "If you must control something", these Illuminati say, "go straight to the top". They control the most powerful people in society: Politicians, Heads of State, and the those with the most political influence. From Capitol hill to the heads of government lobby groups, if supernaturals involve themselves in the affairs of government, they inevitably lock horns with agents of the Global Elite.

When trouble brews, the Global Elite deals with the threat in a forward manner. Of any in the Pax Concordat, the Elite is the most guilty of Hostile Takeovers and blatant assassinations. Their hit squad cliques from the Order of the Black Storm (the infamous "Black Storm" brigades; so-called because of their Nazi-style black uniforms, complete with jackboots) and widely known and feared in the Pax Concordat. They are the first troops to be sent in when a Righteous Fury is called down upon a Throng.

Though they are guilty of breeches of the Concordat due to their violent methods, no Society would dare accuse them of such wrongdoing. Being the most powerful Society in the world, the Elite could cripple any Throng and give any Society much grief. Accusers often meet terrible ends (often involving very regrettable "accidents"). Strength has its privileges...

Goal: To sweep away those of paranormal existence requires firm leadership. We must first control the decision makers, the respected and admired people of this world. Once we have controlled the planet through them, we can then unshackle the world from the supernatural powers.

Basilica: Somewhere near the United Nations Building, New York State

Suspected Holdings: Government offices in many countries, the political lobby, defense contractors.

Preferred Skills: To succeed in the Global Elite, most characters should have some skills in Bureaucracy and Politics. Knights of the Global Elite are the only enforcers of the Societies in which Psychic abilities are not encouraged. Instead, Knights are trained in mind and body strengthening techniques.

Stereotypes

Blood Covenant: Occult rituals and mystical incantations may give you solutions to our current problems, yet you will never be able to implement those solutions without our help.

Enigmatic Stratagem: They meddle in our affairs at every turn! If we could find out the sources of control, we would deal out personal Righteous Fury on them!

Keepers of Secrets: Information is the future. If we do not stem the control of these Illuminati, our rightful place in the Pax Concordat could be usurped.

Pantheon: We are from a common past, though not common ideals. Religion is not a reliable means of control. Though they alone rival our power, we hold no grudges against them.

Shadow Bank: They are the cornerstone of all our power, even if they do not act upon it. Be warned bankers, if you attempt to use your sphere of influence for leverage, you will soon enter personal bankruptcy.

Keepers of Secrets

Nickname: Lurkers

The Keepers are perhaps the only Society actively helping enlighten mankind. Once lowly throngs, the Keepers of Secrets were a confederation of small societies from around the globe. They were keepers of libraries and caretakers of the centres of world knowledge. From the ancient library of Alexandria to the lands of the far east, the Keepers sought out the mundane secrets of the ages.

In the 15th century, as the Pax Concordat was being negotiated, the Throngs gathered together and formed the Keepers of Secrets. It was a defense measure against the encroaching Illuminati as well as move to enter the arena of the greater societies. Both moves were successful and the Keepers of Secrets became the second-last Society to sit on the Court.

Besides controlling libraries, universities, and other organizations devoted to knowledge; they also invested time and effort to influence communication technology. Over time, the Keepers gained considerable power in mundane society as contact over long distances became easier and less costly. The Keeper of Secrets encouraged all forms of telecommunication and free transmission of thought, from the pony express, telegraph and telephone, to the modem, Internet and the ever-expanding information super-highway. Currently, the Keepers are a rising power in the Illuminati. The Global Elite is trying desperately to stem the Keeper's power, trying to discourage free speech across the Internet and police the telecommunication networks. However, such policies are not as successful as the Elite would like, causing many to see a shift of power from the Global Elite to Keepers in the next few years.

The Keepers never use Hostile Takeovers and shy away from any direct approaches to problems. By utilizing their libraries, databases, and telecommunication taps, they have collected much damaging material on both the supernatural and mundane world. They use these "skeletons in the closet" to blackmail potential holdings or discourage any adversaries. They could easily destroy a person, business, or multinational if they so planned.

Goal: Every question has an answer, every person a hidden secret. The supernaturals are not an exception. All that is necessary is to find those secrets and use them to their best advantage.

Basilica: Somewhere near the ruins of the Library of Alexandria, Egypt.

Suspected Holdings: Information Gathering sources (TV/radio stations, newspapers, Internet sites, post offices, phone companies, government think-tanks, etc)

Preferred Skills: Credit Rating and Library Use is prized by the Lurkers, for a personal information network can augment the Keepers gathering sources. Additionally, Languages of all types are helpful.

Stereotypes

Blood Covenant: No mystical secret will cure our ills. The mundane information of this world will be the tool that controls the uncontrollable.

Enigmatic Stratagem: This Illuminati seem to have information beyond even our great scope. They deserve more investigation. We will learn what they know.

Global Elite: Brutal Pencil-pushers! The world under their control has done little to throw off yoke of supernatural oppression. Their reign is at an end.

Pantheon: They have long suppressed information, for they know its power. Ignorance and superstition are their tools, but only we know the light of truth. They never got out of the Dark Ages.

Shadow Bank: Money and Stocks? If only the others knew the truth. We know much more about you than you suspect. Watch your step, bankers, or your little secret might slip out.

The Pantheon

Nickname: Preachers

Splitting from the Global Elite during their schism, the Pantheon concentrated its control of the huge Imperial Priesthood of the Roman Pantheon. They infiltrated every temple with their influence, matching their sister Society, the Global Elite, holding for holding. As provinces were being added into the Empire, the Pantheon would attempt to convert them to the Roman gods or infiltrate their religious ranks.

When Emperor Constantine made Rome a Christian nation, the Pantheon quickly shifted its attention from propagating the Roman gods to the God of the Judeo-Christians. They were responsible for the transformation from the Christian church from the non-aggressive collection of believers to the expansionist, intolerant, megalithic Catholic Church that exists even to this day. The original goal of the Pantheon was to unite the world under one religion, that of Christianity. Though the Society soon became the most influential force in Europe, they had very limited success in other parts of the world.

The Crusades to take the Holy Land was the most ambitious of Pantheon plots. Its purpose, to begin to convert the world to Christianity and uniting it under the Pantheon-controlled Papacy. It had early success but in the end failed badly. They couldn't convert the Islamic nations to Christ, nor did they have any success with the invading Mongol hordes. They did, however, destroy the Celtic civilization and eventually convert the Vikings; harming the Blood Covenant greatly by doing so. The separation of the Eastern Orthodox church, the Protestant movement of Martin Luther, and the Age of Reason all harmed the Catholic Church greatly and devastated the Pantheon.

Currently, the Pantheon still seeks a one world church, but it's not an immediate goal. Instead, it's infiltrated each of the Western and Near Eastern religions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and some Televangelists. The Pantheon now seeks to unify each nation under a particular religion. When this is done, they will then attempt create political religious blocks (such as the an Islamic Federation in the Middle-East). From there, its believed the pantheon will attempt to create an World Ecumenical Council from which will spring forth a single World Religion.

However, Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Shintoism have given the Pantheon great agitation. Perhaps it's from the non-confrontation attitudes expressed by the Buddhist Priest. Now, for the time being, the Pantheon has focused west, perhaps building up for an eventual religious Jihad.

Goal: A Supreme Being. Whether we believe in it is not important, for it's his power over the minds and hearts of the populace is all that's matter. Whether following God, Jehovah, Allah, or Buddha; they will all flock under our Earthly banner. Then, perhaps, we can wage Holy War on the Abominations that walk the Earth.

Basilica: Jerusalem. The Centre of three of the world's great faiths: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

Suspected Holdings: Religious men in most Western (and Near Eastern) religions.

Preferred Skills: Besides Theology , investigators should appear to be upstanding and pious men in their respective communities. For the Pantheon, appearances are everything.

Stereotypes

Blood Covenant: Magic is a tool for imbeciles. The masses need firm leadership, not obscure guidance. You are an aging dinosaur, soon to fall into extinction. Even the Neo-Pagans can't help you now.

Enigmatic Stratagem: Aliens have no place in our world. They undermine our great plan. Cease now or suffer our wrath.

Global Elite: Though they are more powerful than us, a time will come when we will outshine even them. They will then be our enforcers, loyal Crusaders in the impending holy war.

Keepers of Secrets: They know much, but are unwilling to share that knowledge. Nevertheless, they are a rapidly rising star. Care must be taken, lest they overpower us.

Shadow Bank: Money breeds greed. Greed diminishes faith. Faith is the root of our control. Yet, we have no quarrel with them. We will not harm them, unless the get in our way.

Shadow Bank

Nickname: Gnomes

Though the Global Elite, Keepers of Secrets, and the Pantheon dominate the world of the Illuminati, the Shadow Bank would appear to hold the strings. The masters of money, they have the power to cripple the other Illuminati's holdings with ease. However, they seemingly have no interest in attacking their fellow Society members. If anything, they are the most stalwart supporters of the Court. This in itself has eased the fears of the other Illuminati, but has made them wonder...

Though the Shadow Bank only began to rise to Society status during the Industrial Revolution, it existed as a Throng since the early middle ages. The first holding of the Bank was the Knights Templar, stealing them from under the nose of the Pantheon. Under their influence, the Knights became very rich and powerful. Its even rumored that the Knights found the Ark of the Covenant in Ethiopia, an artifact which the Shadow Bank is believed still to hold. Eventually, the Knights were destroyed, lost in a Hostile Takeover by the Pantheon. The fragments of the Templars not reeducated or killed by the Pantheon were saved by the Shadow Bank. They would later set the foundation for the sprawling Monetary Empire of modern day. Currently, they hold banks, stock markets, and fiscal agencies such as the IRS and Merrill Lynch.

Goal: The Golden Rule: He who has the gold, makes the rules. Money does make the world go round, and its influence extends even into the supernatural world. Once we master currency, the world will soon bow before our might.

Basilica: Geneva, Switzerland

Suspected Holdings: Various banks, stock brokers, stock exchanges, and commodity exchanges.

Preferred Skills: Credit Rating is very important to both the Society and its followers. It's become a necessity (or at a very least a rite of passage) to get at least a 40% in it.. Knights who are part of the Shadow Bank have a mix of all Psychic abilities, but rely on their Financial Skills (all Shadow Bank Knights must have at least 40 to 50% in Accounting) to fulfil their objectives.

Stereotypes

Blood Covenant: They spent too much time using the tools of our enemies. Like the psychic hot-line idea, though...

Enigmatic Stratagem: Hmmm, they always seem to have enough money their ventures, yet we have no records of transactions. I wonder if they've filed a tax return...

Global Elite: The rich and powerful they may be, but we hold the purse strings.

Keepers of Secrets: Information is nothing. Records are only important in transactions and contracts. Their methods are useless.

Pantheon: Their idea of religion involves only two things: Control and money. They are very much like us, whether they believe it or not.

The Throngs

The Throngs are small up-and-coming Societies which have not gained enough power to seek acceptance in the Court. However, the Court and members of the Illuminati force these smaller groups to abide by the Pax Concordat. Penalty for these Throngs ignoring the Concord of Peace is hostile dissolution of their assets.

Some Throngs ally with those Societies which closest match their ideologies, while others remain totally neutral. There are still others rumored to fight against the unknown power of the Illuminati and risk total destruction at the Society's hands. In any case, there is much resentment in the ranks of the Throngs. Many believe that the Illuminati fear their power and use the Pax Concordat to prevent them from reaching full Society status. This is not entirely true, for the Societies fear that the ambition of the Throngs might cause them to breach the long-standing veil of secrecy. Still, when Society and Throng elements meet, there is plenty of tension but rarely any violence.

This is the opportunity for the Keeper to customize his particular campaign by adding his own secret organizations into the World of H.P. Lovecraft. These Throngs can be existing organizations or you may make up your own devilish creations. There is no limit to the number of organizations available to you, only your imagination.

[Author's Note: There are plenty of Secret Societies in many RPG's that you could adapt/borrow/steal to use as Throngs. I especially suggest Nephilim for their secret societies and the Illuminati (GURPS, game, card game) from Steve Jackson Games] Here are a few societies (one of many ideas and information donated by Anders Sandberg) to give you ideas:

The Synarcy: Originally called the Bavarian Illuminati. They seek to destroy the current political structures and unite the world into a meritocratic one-world government. They supported socialism and fascism, but has lost a lot of power since its golden days. Right now they are close to the Global Elite and enemies of the Pantheon (who claims they are secretly working for or with the New World Order).

Special Equipment

Note: All equipment is not available to anyone but authorized Society personnel. Other characters will never get to buy these gadgets (and couldn't afford them if they could). The only exception is the Executioner, which could be custom made. However, the cost for the weapon, factoring in the costs of some of the more expensive and illegal components could be well over \$20,000 (a conservative estimate).

CORPSE CHOKER (BLOOD COVENANT)

A magic item used heavily by the Blood Covenant for special Pawns, the Corpse Choker appears like a regular gold chain wrapped tightly around the neck. This choker is sensitive to magics which directly affect the body or the necklace. If such is used, the incantation on the necklace activates. It turns white hot and contracts to a tenth of its circumference. This instantly decapitates the user. Unfortunately it's a one-shot device, rendered totally useless after "activation"

COLLAR BOMB

A non-magical version of the Corpse Choker for use on Mundanes. Inside is a small amount of plastique, just enough to blow someone's head off (no Damage roll necessary). It goes off...you die. It combines an extremely difficult locking mechanism (Mechanical Repair of 15% or below roll to open, detonates on a botch), with a radio-controlled detonator. A common Illuminati tool on temporary Pawns.

EXECUTIONER ASSAULT CARBINE (GLOBAL ELITE)

Standard Issue Black Storm weapon, the Executioner is based off of a standard M16A2 Assault Rifle. It has integral Sound Suppressor and "brass catcher" (to collect spent shells). Also standard issue is an integral thermal imaging and laser scope, along with a 40mm grenade launcher under-barrel. A wide variety of 5.56mm ammo is available, including Incendiary and silver bullets. (See Delta Green or Call of Cthulhu Core Books for possible weapon stats)

LOW-FREQUENCY FIELD GENERATORS (ENIGMATIC STRATAGEM AND GLOBAL ELITE)

This type of devices sends out low-frequency electromagnetic waves, which interfere with the nervous systems of humans. The result can range from headaches and irritability to epileptic seizures and hallucinations, depending on signal strength and frequency. This makes the generators an excellent interrogation or brainwashing tool, or a discreet method of sabotaging enemy assets. By constantly making people nervous and somewhat ill at ease, they become more malleable for Illuminati influence. The units range from portable units disguised as cellular phones to huge underground installations. Some variants use directed antennas (the "Mind Control Lasers"), while other bathe whole areas in discomfort (often hidden as normal radio-antennas or linked to the wiring of a building).

"LOYALTY REMINDER" PAIN IMPLANT

A small electric generator is implanted in the skull, powered by a high density "watch battery". This is wired to the area of the brain which registers pain. Designed for long term control of mundanes by the Societies, activating this device sends shots of terrible pain throughout the body. The damage is one Hit Point per round, healing at a rate equivalent to a Taser. Often combined with the subdermal microphone to determine when "loyal reminding" is necessary.

Another more insidious variant is one which is attached to the pleasure centre of the brain. Always on, the character gets used to the pleasure he feels. If he disobeys, the implant is turned off. Often, the character will not even consciously know why he now feels so rotten (except that he wants to get it back and will do anything to achieve that end). With a little "training" a person can be coaxed into preset responses (just like a lab rat, guinea pig, or hamster...

DALM NEEDLER

A small single-shot weapon which can be hidden in a person's sleeve or hand. Powered by compressed CO2, it can fire a short range dart filled with drugs or poison. (See Delta Green or Call of Cthulhu Core Books for possible weapon stats)

SPY SPIDER

A small metal spider (around 5 cm across), which is equipped with a radio link to a control unit. The user can steer the spider around, pick up small things with it or use its cameras to photograph objects. Some versions are used for assassinations, and have a poison injector.

SUBDERMAL

A small listening device is implanted into the ear and throat of the victim, allowing the Society to hear everything that person says and listens to. A receiver then beams the information to a nearby recording device. The transmission range of the receiver is less than 1000m requiring a surveillance team to keep relatively close.

TAROT MASTER (BLOOD COVENANT)

Using sympathetic magic, the Blood Covenant can control the results of a tarot spread. The user spreads the master deck in a desired way, and then meditates on it, directing it towards another tarot deck. If somebody consults it while it is influenced, the result will be a similar tarot spread. Extremely useful to manipulate superstitious people.

TELEPHONE PREFIX CODE (KEEPER OF SECRETS)

An ultra-secure system for Keepers to call home base (the Basilica) or others without fear of discovery or interception. For some reason, after the prefix-code is entered, the phone call is diverted and encrypted several times. It cannot be listened into (except possibly near its source) or traced. Phone companies will have no record of the call, no matter how long the Keeper has on line. Of course, most people who use the call, make sure they are not been eavesdropped upon just to be sure...

TRUTH DRUGS

Normal "truth drugs" are really not very effective, since the victim will usually be in a rather incoherent state. However, the Illuminati has access to the real, suppressed drugs. These drugs make the victim drowsy; filling the victim with feelings of friendship to everyone, while numbing his sense for consequences and long-range-thinking abilities. While he still can try to hold back secrets, he is quite easy to trick.

VAULT@ILLUMINATI.COM INTERNET ADDRESS (KEEPERS OF SECRETS)

(This is for those who want to know the REAL reason that the old Steve Jackson internet site closed down.)

This site is normally a disused site, generally overlooked by most Internet users. When a Keeper agent uses a special USER code (and the 6 other auxiliary codes after the first successful password), he is open to the main database of the Keeper of Secrets. Here, you can find out information on anyone important in the world. From their public records to their most private secrets, the Vault is a very powerful tool in the Keeper of Secrets arsenal. In game terms, this database gives the user remote access to everything in their Basilica. However, it's encoded in standard Knight lingua, requiring that skill to decipher.

WORLD EXPRESS BANK CARD (SHADOW BANK)

For the Shadow Bank operative in the need of some ready cash, the W.E.B. card gives the user the unlimited resources; at the Keepers discretion. Just insert it into a instant-teller machine and punch in the code (normally, the code changes every six hours in case of theft). There is no limit on daily or weekly withdrawals. Or, more importantly, any incriminating records. The money taken will have shown to have been removed in small amounts from a dozen banks and credit unions, all under different names and PIN numbers.

Mundane Equipment

This Equipment is available in the open market, though getting such equipment may require large sums of money, good contacts, and a very generous Keeper... The costs listed are its whole sale price to authorized buyers.

CELLULAR INTERCEPTOR

An interesting gadget, it locks onto a cellular phone call and allows the user to listen in on it. Additionally, it can read the phones "Cellular authorization codes" that it sends before a phone call to the phone company to permit the call to take place. This allows the person to "program" a cell phone with that code and gain free phone calls (or perhaps make phony calls in the victim's name!).

Cost: \$600+

BROAD-BAND FREQUENCY SCANNER

A hand held device designed to detect transmission sources, like signals used by bugs. When brought near a transmission source, there is a audible howl caused by feedback. While this device is rather crude compared to other bug locators, it is small, portable, and cheap.

Cost: \$425

FIBER-OPTIC CAMERA

A small camera with C-cell battery-sized recorder connected to a fiber-optic lens array. With a camera head small enough to hide in a button, this is a perfect device to "procure information" about a potential ally, Pawn, or victim. A small internal video-tape records only for ten minutes, but for its size its unbeatable. Optionally, it can be set to broadcast to a remote station, but that is more likely to be picked up.

Cost: \$3200

LASER MICROPHONE

Pistol-sized, the laser microphone sends a fine beam of light unto a window pane. Sound caused by talking, echoes throughout the room, causing minute vibrations in all surfaces they touch. A laser mike measures such "trembling" on the window and converts it into speech. An easy alternative to other listening devices which place agents in danger.

Cost: \$2500+

LISTENING DEVICE ("THE BUG")

Conventional listening device. The size varies with technology and cost, but all do generally the same thing. They transmit whatever sound they pick up to a nearby transmitter or other recording device. Common espionage tool for over forty years.

Cost: \$565 (police quality with receiver)

TRACKER

Similar in design to a listening device, the tracker is designed to send out a signal rather than pick one up. Along with a receiver, this allows the user to track a victim for up to 2 miles away. Again, technology, signal encryption, and range will vary with design, manufacturer, and price of unit.

Cost: \$70 (with receiver)

WINDOW TREMBLER

The only way to stop a laser microphone from picking up conversations. A thumb-sized vibration device is placed on the window, effectively masking all sound waves coming from inside the room. Each pane of glass will require a trembler to be 100% effective.

Cost: \$35

Special Skills

BRAINWASHING (SKILL)

The skill of mental manipulation and control, it is the Societies most valuable skill. By using brainwashing techniques, the user can mould his victim to a particular ideology.

Skill use: User rolls Brainwashing against the POW of their victim off of the Percentile Table.. Brainwashing difficulty can be reduced by one for each different technique used by the brainwasher. These include sleep deprivation, malnutrition, repetition of phrases, drugs, psychology, mechanical tools (low frequency generator), and physical abuse (the latter is not that effective against subjects).

The roll is made every day. If the Brainwasher's success exceed the victim's POW, the victim loses 1 point of POW(2 if the user of the skill exceeds the victim double the percentile). If the user Fails the victim actually gains back a point of POW (can't exceed his original maximum). If the victim Fails, he gains a derangement and loses double the number of POW (up to 4 POW !).

When the victim reaches 0 POW, the Brainwasher can then "mold" him/her at his whim. Their beliefs, religion, name, and background can all be altered. This is generally permanent, though intensive deprogramming (actually another minor type of Brainwashing) can bring them back. After brainwashing POW is regained at a rate one a week (up to his pre-brainwash maximum).

FABULA (SKILL)

Restricted to Bishops, this skill is important for writing and reading Illuminati texts. The written word of the Societies, Fabula is an intricately designed language that has its origins millennia ago. It's base tongue is ancient Sanskrit, encrypted with a system that would make the CIA proud. The language, in itself, is difficult to decipher, but the Societies have also had the foresight of adding other features in their texts. Each paragraph has hidden code words in the initial sentence or two. This tells the rightful reader of the text, whether it's true, false, or texts that involve the "Great Secrets of the Illuminati". The false paragraphs are the most common and give misleading information about the Illuminati. The true paragraphs are wedged in between the pages of disinformation, often specifically written to appear false.

Finally, the "Great Secrets of the Illuminati" is an alarm system built into all the Societies texts. It reveals great sources of treasure and terrible magic and weapons of destruction. They're all to be found in certain "highly secret locations" which the Text just happen to reveal. Exploiting the greed and lust for power that most people have, they lead enemy interlopers into dangerous traps ambushes. These serve to not only identify those who have stolen Society text, but to retrieve that text and eliminate the perpetrator.

Each Society has their own Fabula "dialect", though all stem from a common source (that of the original Fabula used by the ancient Blood Covenant society)

LINGUA (SKILL)

Like the skill Fabula, Lingua is the Knights' way of encrypting their conversations. Simpler than Fabula, this spoken tongue is also based on ancient Sanskrit. The language tends to be encrypted as well, but most often simple codeword and innuendos conceal important information. This is a tongue of communication and orders, not generally used to give away dangerous secrets (though, in the past, it has been done so.). As with Fabula, each Society has their own dialect of Lingua.

SOCIETY LORE (SKILL)

The knowledge of a particular society, this skill should be restricted to the those of Knight or higher status. You know the origins, history, and goals of this Society, as well as some of its hierarchy.

10% You know for sure that they exist (Knights)

25% You have an idea about the Societies sphere of influence (Rooks only)

50% You know the Society Hierarchy (Bishops only)

80% Know the exact location of the Society's Basilica (Queen only)

95% & higher Their very secrets are yours (Kings only)

ILLUMINATI LORE (SKILL)

Generally reserved for the most trusted of the Illuminati, this is the knowledge that a person has of the Illuminati as a whole. This includes their number, influence, and their objectives. Generally, unless the Phantom Veneer has been broken, no one outside the higher echelons of the Illuminati should get this skill.

10% There are more than one Illuminati [Knights Only]

25% You have learned several of the Societies Names

50% The Societies and their general goals are known [Bishops Only]

80% You have a good grasp on the makeup of the entire Pax Concordat, including the Conspiracy.

95% & higher You Know as much as the Court [Queens/Kings only]

Chapter Four: Rules of the Trade

A GUIDE TO THE SOCIETY WEB

The Societies must be very careful when dealing with the World of H.P. Lovecraft. There are many forces which, due to their fantastic powers, are more likely than mundanes to find out about the Illuminati. Therefore, the Societies have developed several techniques to safeguard their secrecy.

Note: Take these suggestions as a general guideposts. Use, modify, or ignore them at your leisure.

THE WEB

To first understand the Society influence structure, you must understand the Web. The Society is like a spider, its trail of money and influence like its web. The Societies go from organization to organization, using influence and other means to convert them into their holdings. Each holding is a spring-board to acquire several other organizations. Those organizations would each take control of a couple of holdings, and so on. Covert and visible influence, compounded with false trails, shell corporations and legitimate revenue make tracing an Illuminati to its source a long, arduous process. That is, if they even have the contacts and resources to undertake such large-scale investigation.

At the centre of the web is the prime holding of the Society, probably some multinational or other powerful organization. This organization has a few, easily-broken links connecting itself to the Basilica. If, by some means, the Society is tracked to that organization, the Basilica breaks the links and that organization takes the blame. Like the spider, the Illuminati control the web, but are not part of it. Keepers should pick a Prime Holding that has some prior history of criminal or espionage activity. It should be easier for players (and their characters) to blame the organization than a hidden conspiracy.

For example: Say your studious players track the Keepers of Secrets to its Prime Holding. Have that holding be something like the CIA or NSA. Who wouldn't suspect the CIA of being behind the infiltration? Who would suspect a human conspiracy behind it? If anything, the players will blame the Vampires or the Technocracy (excellent scapegoats). Of course, the Keepers are more than happy to leave evidence to prove the character's hypothesis...

SHUFFLING

To operate effectively, the Societies need to support their troops with money. Orders can be given easily, but cash often presents a problem. The major weakness of the Web is that it has the potential of leaving a paper trail right to the Society's Prime Holding. To fight this, the Conspiracies practise "shuffling". That is, the use of small diverse holdings called Junctions to transfer the money between holdings. Junctions may cross the spheres of control that each other has set up. A Keeper of Secrets might use an insignificant Televangelist, something that you would think only the Pantheon would bother with, as a Junction. Since Junctions generally have no major influence in the world, they are not considered valuable property and are basically fair game. There may be as many as a half-dozen Junctions, or more between Holdings. As the money flows through the Junction it is lost in a maze of transactions which make a paper trail literally a nightmare to follow. Though wasteful money-wise (each Junction takes a small cut to keep going), it further prevents the likelihood of curious individuals for following the trail of money right to its source.

How to Betray Friends and Influence People (The Keeper's Guide to Acquisitions)

ACQUISITION

Though this has come to mean any takeover of an organization, its original meaning was the appropriation of an unheld organization or one held by those not of the Illuminati. Because the risks or discovery are greater than normal, all Acquisitions must be handled as a Challenge of Dominion (see below). Though Hostile Acquisitions (Takeovers) have been done, the Court rarely lets the perpetrators go unpunished.

THE CHALLENGE OF DOMINION

The Challenge is the official name for the taking over of another's Society's Holding. Unlike what it may infer, there is no official declaration of the Society's intent. What it does mean is that the Challenge is a test of the cunning and power between the two Illuminati. However, there are some strict rules of conduct in a standard Challenge. These are outlined in the Pax Concordat section of Chapter Two: No Violence is allowed and when one Society conclusively controls the decision making of the Holding (say by controlling the majority of stocks or brainwashing the President), then the Society takes control of that property.

Non-Violent means that only persuasive methods may be used. The most common avenues is Brainwashing, Blackmail (a good short term measure), or subversion (say by taking over the Vice-President and then orchestrating his rise to the Presidency). After the Challenge has been one, the Rook assigned to that Holding then goes to work. He then brainwashes key personnel to make sure most of the leadership's support is also loyal to the society. These support people are often the first "casualties" of any takeover attempt (often literally if a Hostile Takeover is initiated).

Challenges of Dominions can be a great source of roleplaying potential for Illuminati Players. Knights and Pawns would have to actually think and role-play instead of shoot, maim and kill. A well-thought out plan of action, along with some quick-thinking (and blind luck) will be required to outsmart the enemy Clique.

HOSTILE TAKEOVERS

When a Challenge of Dominion gets violent, then it's called a Hostile Takeover. Gangland-style executions and daring raids that would make Sly Stallone proud are common elements in these takeover attempts. While this sort of acquisition may satisfy the "shoot first-style" players in your group, it is very unwise to allow this sort of action continue without consequences. Though one such action by a Clique/Cadre doesn't concern the Court, multiple instances will only tempt their wrath. Warnings are rare with the Court, and giving one to the players should be conveyed with as much venom and anger as possible. The next violation will surely get one of the players killed...as an example. Don't be afraid to terminate a Knight or Pawn because of his actions. Your player's should actually fear the Court. The Court is the Society's law. Not only will he enforce the boundaries of your campaign but when they have to go against the Court, it will make the adventure all the more terrifying, exciting and satisfying ("We cheated the almighty Court! Yes!!!!!!").

PHANTOM VENEER

(And How To Repair The Damage When They Break It) As I have stressed throughout this supplement, secrecy is the only advantage the Illuminati have. No one knows about the Societies, at least nothing that counts has hard fact. Anxious Illuminati Players, with their zealous dreams of world domination are sometime prone to do open and spectacular things. Open warfare, assassinations, and heavy-handed tactics might well suit a standard campaign, but are extremely dangerous in Illuminati: The Conspiracy. Yes, some groups do use Hostile Takeovers more than not (the Global Elite is notorious for this), even they pick and choose targets are pre-disposed to violence. For example: The city's largest illicit drug manufacture centre was wiped out by a Black Storm brigade. The police believe it was the work of a rival drug manufacturer, due to evidence "found" on the scene. Every Keeper who runs an Illuminati campaign will one day have to repair the damage from the players. Here are a few suggestions:

THE SCAPEGOAT

Blame someone else; someone believable. In the mundane world, it's best to blame those who are already suspected of meddling in society. The CIA, FBI, and NSA are perfect American examples of potential scapegoats (In Canada, CSIS has bungled so many covert operations, they'd be perfect targets). Among the Supernaturals, place the onus on natural enemies or those under suspicion.

DISINFORMATION

So they're sure its some sort of secret society. Fine. Give them a secret society, but make sure it has nothing to do with the real Illuminati. The Enigmatic Stratagem have this down to a science. Everyone is convinced that the American government is in league with Aliens and that they are using alien technology. With the Stratagem's strange equipment and the presence of the "Greys" have done much to perpetuate this falsehood. While everyone is concerned with the "Alien Conspiracy" no one suspects mundane humans plotting the overthrow of mankind. It's also noteworthy that there so many sceptics about Alien involvement, that most people are convinced there is no Conspiracy at all.

The main purpose of Disinformation is to mix as much falsehood in with the facts to lead any researchers on a wild goose chase. The more convinced they are in the fabrication, the more embarrassed they will be when they are proven wrong. This tends to lower the credibility of the researchers (very important if they eventually find out something about the True Illuminati). Think about it. Just look at how Steve Jackson games are selling lots of things named Illuminati, and how the concept of Illuminati have spread far and wide thanks to R.A.Wilson... the real Illuminati are hard to find among the wannabees and enthusiasts.

DISCOURAGEMENT

A favourite of the all the Illuminati, the main goal of Discouragement is to make the investigation more trouble than it's worth. Corporations who involve themselves in Illuminati affairs see their stocks fluctuate wildly or become the objects of government investigations. At first the "problems" are just bad enough to serve as warnings. If things persists, however, they can become crippling. While this method has the potential of encouraging investigation, often the individual organization's instinct for self-preservation will convince them otherwise. Discouragement tactics range depending on the Society. Global Elite rely on "physical" means (beatings, bombings, and assassinations; often disguised as terrorist acts) or political pressure, Shadow Bank using monetary means, the Pantheon resorting to slander campaigns from the pulpit (Interesting Plot Hook: Exactly why is the Pantheon so anti-RPG? Maybe the Blood Covenant is behind TSR?), and the Blood Covenant involved in curses and other mystical incantations.

COUNTERCONSPIRACIES

"The best way to avoid a conspiracy is to start it yourself". So the Illuminati creates groups apparently opposing them, to lure in anybody trying to find them or their holdings. The Enigmatic Stratagem probably manipulates the UFOlogists trying to make the government release secret documents, and the Blood Covenant runs debunkers and sceptic organizations which are used to strike at their competitors in the occult world. Additionally, the Global Elite probably controls anarchists. For every attack on a holding owned by their Society, there are a half dozen levied on Enemies.

Societies within Societies (The Creeds)

So, you thought the Societies were a homogenous mix of infiltrators, blackmailers, and spies? Wrong. The Conspiracy and its three main tenants (Control the World, Fight the Supernatural, Enlighten Humanity) have sparked much debate among the higher echelons of the Illuminati. What's the most important tenant? What should the Societies' main purpose be? There are many who choose one of the three tenants as their life's goal (their "Creed") while still others have developed their own ideas about the Conspiracy and the direction the Illuminati must follow.

Creeds go beyond Society limitations. In many ways, it's the only thing the Illuminati have in common. Though Societies may fight their own petty battles, many times their Creeds still have relations (though strained they may be).

The Collusionists

"Conspiracy for Conspiracy's sake".

These people have told so many lies, weaved so many intricate plots, that they have become mentally and emotionally dependant on the Conspiracy. They are deathly afraid that if the machinations ever ended, that their life would be shallow and worthless. The Collusionists have no other goals but to keep the lie alive; to do nothing but forge endless (and often meaningless) plots and schemes. Followers of the status-quo, they actively fight any attempt by a Society or Creed to hinder or abet the Conspiracy (because it could eventually cause its end). They are a small faction, but present in all Societies, most notably the Global Elite (and some say the Enigmatic Stratagem).

The Enlightened

"The Conspiracy is not to enslave, but inform".

This Creed seeks a return to the origins of the Illuminati, when the role of the Societies was to educate and assist humans throughout the world. Though they have no love for the supernatural, they see no reason to wipe them out. Likewise, world domination is a trivial and useless endeavour. Only by enlightening mankind to the possibilities the world has to offer, can freedom from all forms of oppression be guaranteed. Many of the Enlightened have adopted ascension-like beliefs, making many wonder if those of this creed are not being influenced by Harmonist elements. They are very common in the Blood Covenant and are the most common Creed-members in the Keepers of Secrets. Also suspected of having members in the Enigmatic Stratagem, though they may have been distorted by the Aliens' twisted philosophies (whatever they may be).

The Harmonists

"The Conspiracy is for everyone, both mundane and supernatural".

A throw-back to the Architects of Reason, the Harmonists believe that the Supernaturals should not be enslaved, imprisoned, or destroyed. Instead, they should be part of the Illuminati; using their powers to the benefit of humanity rather than its exploitation. A very small and silent Creed, the Illuminati regard Harmonists with fear and loathing. Harmonists must remain secretive, lest they be hunted down and eradicated. Nonetheless, there is believed to be quite a few Harmonists in the Enigmatic Stratagem and the Shadow Bank.

The Ideologists

"Only our Conspiracy is the true Conspiracy"

Loyalty to one's Society is the most important to members of this Creed. Only the Society has the correct path to victory of the supernatural. Only they are worthy of becoming Illuminati. The other Societies are only pretenders to their throne, anti-popes to their divine right of leadership. In short, all other Illuminati are inferior and should bow their will. These groups clash on a regular basis with the Court, and despise their rule. They appear in sizable numbers in most of the Conspiracies.

The Nihilists

"The Battle is lost. Humanity is doomed"

Gloomy, depressed, and perhaps unbalanced, these society members are convinced that the war with the supernatural has been lost before it started. The only recourse is to go out with a bang, taking as many as the abominations with them as they can. There are stories of Nihilists going into the havens of vampire cults with a backpack full of thermite or napalm, destroying as many vampires as they can in the process. Most of these have been dismissed by vampires as suicidal vampire hunters, but the Illuminati is deathly afraid of the publicity these actions cause. Because of this, this society has been officially banned by the Court. However, these believers still exist in small numbers; more rise up everyday, despite the many who die.

The Overseers

"There is only one path for Humanity. The path that we, the Illuminati, forge."

This is, by far the largest Creed, not only in power but in influence. The Kings have actively supported the Overseers in their Societies, for it has given them an excuse to grab power wherever they find it. The main goal of the creed is simply the complete domination of mankind. Once they have the mundanes in check, they can use its great resources to curb the Supernaturals. Many within the Creed believe that what they are doing is for the benefit of mankind, but there are just as many greedy cutthroats who do it for the personal influence it gives. The Court has long tried to inhibit the Overseers, but it hasn't the will (or the power) to ban such a large group of individuals (especially since some Queens have fallen under their control). As stated above, the Creed exists in all Societies; the Global Elite is securely under their control.

The Paranoids

"There is only one way... inwards"

This creed (which is related to the Collusionists) is unofficial but quite prevalent in many societies. The paranoids have seen too many friends turn out to be traitors, heard too many awful secrets and know far too much. They cannot leave, they cannot relax and the only way to survive is to fit in while trying to understand what is really going on. They hide their fears under a veneer of loyalty, and often do their outmost to serve the Conspiracy while constantly watching for trouble. Most of them simply try to avoid it, always keeping to the safe side or hiding behind the party-line.

The Purifiers

"What you call genocide, I call a day's work."

While other Creeds only condone the hinderance of the supernatural, the Purifiers believe in their total destruction. The exact reasons for their hatred is varied; xenophobia, a religious hatred of "evil," human supremacy and purity of the race (of any race or gender). The supernatural is seen as unnatural and polluted strains of humanity; many feel they its their duty of eliminate aberrations for the good of Homo Sapiens everywhere. The Purifiers dream is to set up Auschwitz-style extermination camps where the supernatural beings would be exterminated. While no one will admit to being a Purifier (most masquerade as other Creeds), their presence is felt throughout the Illuminati.

The Scholars

"Knowledge is Power."

This creed is common among some Bishops, who have spent all their time studying in the libraries of their Basilicas. They no longer care for the eventual defeat of the supernatural or the eventual fate of humanity. Instead they have become obsessed with the vast amounts of knowledge their society has gathered, and want to get more, to use the Conspiracy to learn all secrets (this creed is quite common among the Keepers of Secrets). They do their best to gather as much information as possible about the supernatural, their enemies or the world in general. They are not very powerful, but very tenacious when they want to learn something.

The Supplanters

"To control the beast, you must remove its claws, pull its teeth, pluck out its eyes, and cut out its ears. After that it's rather harmless".

The Supplanters are the second-largest Creed, just behind the Overseers in overall support. They have the direct backing of the Court (who seek to control the Overseers and Purifiers advocacy and growth). The Supplanters see only the curbing of influence of the supernatural as a worthwhile goal. Those such as vampires require pawns to safeguard their existence and control mankind. By removing those pawns, ideally without them knowing, the Illuminati take control of what the supernatural sees and hears. As the supernatural have become dependant on their holdings and mortal pawns, so they have given the Illuminati a potent tool in which to misdirect or even destroy them. Ironically, if knowledge of the Illuminati were to become widespread, their dependence on holdings would be their demise. Though they haven't dominance in any society, their presence has at least restrained the influence of the Overseers in most of the societies (excluding the Global Elite, which is firmly under Overseer control).

The Unionists

"There are no Societies. There is only the Conspiracy."

Seeing themselves as visionaries, the Unionists yearn for a day when the Societies can put aside their differences and join as a single unit. Only then, they reason, can the Conspiracy be brought to fruition. They have sought to build relations between friendly Illuminati (such as the Global Elite and the Pantheon), as well as bring peace to feuding Societies (Pantheon and the Blood Covenant). Receiving nominal support from the Court, the Unionists have managed to be a thorn in the side of the other Creeds. They are powerful enough to resist absorption from the other creeds, not threatening enough to risk a ban, and have enough support to cause many to wonder whether separate societies are a good idea. They exist in all Societies (save, perhaps, the Enigmatic Stratagem; they seem to want to keep as far away from the other Societies as possible).

Epilogue: A Parting Word

"This game is not real...you are" -introduction from Nephilim: RPG

Since you are reading this (and assuming you're not one of those people who reads the last page of Mystery novels) I guess you've at least skimmed through my work. For this I'm very grateful. It's been a few months since I started this supplement and I'm more than happy with the result. It's not the typical Secret Society dissertation I had originally had planned, but I feel that it has blossomed into something more original. I hope you like what you've read, or at least have something that you can use.

Again, I'd like to thank Stephen Esdale and Anders Sandberg for all their ideas and information, Carl Gutbrod for his support, and all the members of wod-1 for their suggestions and ideas that have floated about since its inception.

Revisers Note: I would like to thank all of the above writers for all the work they put into the original Illuminati: The Conspiracy supplement. Within all of their work, I dare say the creation of this supplement for Call of Cthulhu would have taken quite a while.

Suggested Material

The following are excellent sources of Illuminati and Secret Society information in general.
X-Files (Fox TV-Show) Excellent example of the Enigmatic Stratagem at work

Mission: Impossible (Both Syndicated TV-Shows) Excellent guide to Cadre/Clique operations
Nephilim: Occult Roleplaying (Chaosium) Has great secret societies (perfect for Throngs)

Call of Cthulhu (Chaosium) Great source of secret cults and things "man was never meant to know".

Illuminati Card Game/GURPS Supplement (S. Jackson Games) Original motivation for this supplement, this was my first foray into the world of the secret societies.

GURPS Voodoo: The Shadow War (Steve Jackson Games) More nifty secret societies (on the supernatural side) as well as a fascinating GothPunk-style setting.

GURPS Cthulhupunk (Steve Jackson Games) -Cyberpunk meets Cthulhu. 'Nuff said.

In the Country of the Blind (Michael Flynn). Very relevant to this game! It is about conspiracies using mathematical models to predict the probable future; the conspiracies wage a shadow war against each other, both trying to hide and trying to wipe each other out. Has several neat descriptions of a Basilica, Pawns, Rooks, Knights, Bishops and a Queen.

Focault's Pendulum (Umberto Eco). Lots of material about conspiracies, especially the Templars.
Society Net.post (Mark Carlson, found in ftp.iquest.com in /pub/RPG/Misc) Though low on facts, this gives you great ideas on the structures of fictional secret societies and the sub-societies below them. Scary thing is, his ranking system for agents is very close to mine (and I down-loaded it two months after deciding on the Ranks in this supplement...). Based on Call of Cthulhu and Comic sources, as well as real conspiracies.

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