GURPS Fourth Edition

HORROR

The Madness Dossier™

By Kenneth Hite

Can You Handle The Truth?

History is a lie. The truth is that the godlike Anunnakku enslaved mankind, co-opted language to program us, and established the superhuman šedu as our overseers. And that would have been The End if reality-warping disaster hadn't overturned everything in 535 A.D., leaving the true past forgotten but not gone, shoved from human memory by a collective delusion. Now the irruptors — servants of the Anunnakku, dimly remembered as monsters of myth — gnaw at the edges of our world, seeking to return their masters to power and history to the way it was.

Most humans are clueless about all this. Worse, those who discover snippets of the truth tend to worship the Anunnakku or irruptors as gods, or turn the power of language and symbols to misguided ends, making the situation worse. Fortunately, a stalwart few are moved to defend our reality from forces that would rewrite it. Welcome to Project SANDMAN!

GURPS Horror: The Madness Dossier requires the GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.

By **Kenneth Hite**   Cover Art by **Tithi Luadthong** and **Warm Tail**

Illustrated by **Heather Bruton**, **Steve Bryant**, **Zach Howard**, **Dan Smith**, **Ray Snyder**, and **Nikola Vrtis**

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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About *GURPS*

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Store Finder (**storefinder.sjgames.com**): Discover nearby places to buy *GURPS* items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We've added them to many *GURPS* book web pages, with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

"If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out – bang! – just like a candle!"

*"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if **I'm** only a sort of thing in his dream, what are **you,** I should like to know?"*

"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

He shouted this so loud that Alice couldn't help saying, "Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise."

*"Well, it's no use **your** talking about waking him," said Tweedledum, "when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real."*

*– Lewis Carroll, **Through the Looking-Glass***

For 15 centuries, the Red King has slept, stunned by a cataclysm so massive that it threw all history – past and future – into a new pattern. The Red King's servants, those who survived the reality quake, slowly shook themselves out of the rubble of their superseded history and began trying to wake him up. For over a century, only the Sandmen – the archaeologists, neurolinguists, and commandos of Project SANDMAN – have stopped them. Every day the Red King stays asleep is a day that history remains familiar, that humans remain free, that the madness dossier remains closed. And all it costs is the life, the morals, and the sanity of everyone who works for Project SANDMAN.

The "Red King" (sometimes "Red Kings," given their plural nature) is Sandman slang for the entities that once ruled the world, known to Sumerologists as the Anunnakku (see box). Nobody knows for sure if the Anunnakku were aliens, supermen somehow mutated (or evolved) from *Homo sapiens,* or just the ruling caste of an unguessably ancient civilization that somehow mastered the art of control. Before the reality quake, the Red King was in control. Humanity was linguistically programmed to obey his orders and the orders of his servants. It still is. The Red King's servants use the ancient post-hypnotic blocks and memetic programs in the human subconscious to control us, to hide in plain sight, and to bring about their victory. Project SANDMAN has hacked the human source code, fighting fire with fire . . . using the minds of the innocent as the burning ground.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This book requires the **GURPS Basic Set** to use, and refers to many rules and concepts from **GURPS Horror,** *Fourth Edition.*

Although **GURPS Social Engineering** is not strictly necessary for this supplement rules-wise, it is almost unfathomably useful for any campaign focused on the manipulation and changing of minds, covertly or otherwise. Given the role played by psionics in the setting, **GURPS Psionic Powers, Psis, Psi-Tech,** and **Psionic Campaigns** (in roughly that order) may come in handy. Likewise, **GURPS Martial Arts** provides more options for "total human potential" than this

book includes, and *you* might run a technothriller without **GURPS High-Tech** and **GURPS Action,** but *I* sure wouldn't.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

I wrote "The Madness Dossier" as an included campaign frame in **Horror,** *Third Edition,* from whence David Pulver derived the discussion of reality quakes in the Fourth Edition **Basic Set,** and from whence I did the same in **GURPS Infinite Worlds.** This is the first appearance of the original setting for Fourth Edition; it is considerably expanded.

Previous versions of some of the creepier mind-control rules appear in **GURPS Warehouse 23.** Some weapons and gear (especially the nicer sort of psychotronics) are but slightly altered from **GURPS Ultra-Tech.** The memetics rules are adapted (and simplified) from those in **Transhuman Space: Toxic Memes,** as updated for *Fourth Edition* in **Transhuman Space: Changing Times.** It's a good idea to consult those two works if you plan a more memetics-intensive game. A *good* idea. *Good idea.* Good. *Idea.*

Weird Sumerian Words

The Sumerian word *Anunnakku* probably means "princes," and can be transliterated in a bewildering variety of ways, or even shortened to Anunna. Scholars differ on the word's relationship to the name of An or Anu, the Sumerian sky god. In the earliest texts (c. 2100 B.C.), it seems to be a general term for the great gods, but later works demote the Anunnakku to demigods or even servitor beings. By the eighth century B.C., they are depicted as aligned with the underworld, to be defeated by Marduk. These tablets may be recent retrocreations within History A, of course.

This book uses "Anunnakku" as a noun (both plural and singular) to refer to the entities that programmed humanity, created the irruptors, and ruled History B. It uses the ungrammatical, but more common, "Anunnaki" as an adjectival form.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenneth Hite did not allow his fundamental allegiance to History A to prevent him from changing it at whim in **GURPS Alternate Earths, Alternate Earths 2, WWII: Weird War II,** and **Infinite Worlds,** or scaring it half to death in two incarnations of **GURPS Horror.** He feels quite smug about stealing "reality quakes" from Mary Gentle and introducing them into the gaming memestream in his "Suppressed Transmission" column, which ran for 10 years in a previous history's version of *Pyramid* magazine. His more recent works in this history include the RPG setting **The Day After Ragnarok,** and the horror RPGs **Trail of Cthulhu** and **Night's Black Agents** for Pelgrane Press.

He lives in Chicago with his wife Sheila and his cat Virgil. Virgil did everything in his power to prevent the truths within this book from coming to light, so don't blame him if the scorpion-men come after you.

British Sandmen operate safe houses on MI5's books, task programs on the Met Office supercomputers, and interrogate irruptors in Home Office black prison cells in the Orkney Islands. The closest thing to a permanent Project physical plant in the U.K. is the Duncorne Foundation building in Cambridge.

Scattered Like Grains of Sand

Outside Britain and the U.S., the Project mostly uses CIA infrastructure ramped up during the War on Terror. There aren't enough Sandmen to monitor every known reality subduction zone, much less post permanent garrisons; where practical, the Project recruits local assets under a false flag (claiming to work for oil companies, other intelligence organizations, or the local secret police) and gives them a satellite phone with a preprogrammed number to call if things start getting weird.

The Project's facilities in South Africa are burned; its skeleton staff in Pretoria exists to keep an eye out for *Witsander* leave-behinds and distract any local investigations. There is a permanent Sandman station (with a complement of two or three dozen at any time) at the "King Solomon's Mines" subduction zone in Zimbabwe; the mines, the archaeological site, and the airfield all lurk behind multiple layers of memetic camouflage, bribed officials, and powerful glyphic wards.

From 1948 to 1990 and again since 2003, the Project has kept a full-time staff of reality archaeologists working at the Nippur site in southern Iraq, along with commandos and security personnel ready to deploy anywhere in Iraq or the Gulf.

Fabulous Toys

The Project, generally speaking, has access to all technology and equipment available at any level of clearance in the U.S. and Britain. Its brain hacking and psychotronic gear is the best in the world (see pp. 45-50). A fleet of "black" aircraft ferry prisoners and personnel to and from Granite Peak when local facilities aren't up to the task at hand and time is of the essence. The Project computer system, thanks to computer languages and firmware based on superior understanding of linguistics and human neurobiology, is a generation ahead of the best machines in the private sector (functionally TL9). Funding is not a problem: Between esmological predictions of global financial trends, memetic market manipulation, and the occasional billions stolen from the Russian *Mafiya* thanks to *obshchaki* who don't remember giving up their account numbers, the Project doesn't really need to skim from the black budget any more. When even laundering funds through a half-dozen CIA black accounts isn't enough, gold ingots from King Solomon's Mines provide true financial anonymity.

Other Actors, Other Agendas

No Sandman allows himself to believe that the Project has a monopoly on the irruptors' secrets. (Not least because such a belief would be a transparent kulullû false-security meme.) In addition to irruptor cults stooled to the rogue, other human actors may have glimpsed the hidden shape of human history.

GZ: The current name for the Russian psychic warfare program code-named "Blue Star" in the West. Russian psychic research predates 1940, but when the DC-R tasked Kim Philby with setting up the SOE's "Hackett School" for "black propaganda," it unwittingly gave the Soviet NKVD a huge stockpile of memetic best practices and hints. Fortunately, Stalin detected the attempt to build a mind-control unit outside his control and purged everyone connected with the program. Revived by the KGB with kulullû aid in the 1960s, the program flourished under Andropov's protection. After Andropov's death in 1984, the bureaucratic knives came out for the psy-war *apparat;* the fall of the USSR left it hollow and crippled. The SVR salvaged a hard core of scientists and operatives in their GZ program, but must constantly fend off attacks from the Russian *Mafiya* (backed by the FSB), who have their own uses for psychic soldiers. History B lore, as best the Project can tell, is just another wild theory to the Russians.

NDL 507: The Chinese psychic warfare unit, based at the National Defense Laboratory in Changsha, has access to the Hwang Ho subduction zone and an unknown number of reality shards. The Chinese government also captured Project commandos during the Tibetan operation ST-CIRCUS; under interrogation, they may have revealed the core truths of History B. So far, History A is as stable in China as it is anywhere, despite real limits on Project activity (whether direct or indirect) there. Whether this is because the šedu are primarily targeting the Middle East or because NDL 507 is fighting its own war for reality in the Middle Kingdom remains an open question.

Sebastião Chopra: This Indo-Brazilian telecommunications billionaire (offices in Rio, Goa, and London) owns the world's largest private collection of cuneiform tablets. An avid amateur archaeologist, he has funded numerous books, digs, and documentaries supporting the theory that Sumerian civilization originated in a lost South Indian civilization he calls "Meluhha." Memetic analysis of his companies' broadcasts and activities indicates a strong possibility of deliberate manipulation on a level conversant with History B knowledge.

Haït Yatahadath: The name of this graffiti collective based in Tangier and Casablanca means "The Wall Speaks" in Moroccan Arabic. Art and gnawa music created by or associated with the Haïtun contain contradictory Anunnakku glyphic elements along with symbols of unknown meaning. Weirdly, irruptors have attacked Haït Yatahadath events and openings all over North Africa and Europe. Optimistic Project memeticists believe this may represent a new evolutionary emergence of semiotic "antibodies" to the Anunnakku control system; others believe it's another weird mindfake by the kulullû. For now, SANDMAN policy is to study, monitor, and protect.

Pulhata: You're terrified of the irruptors, the Anunnakku, and their kindred creatures. The word is Akkadian, appearing in the *Enuma Elish* as the aura of fear and dread with which Tiamat surrounded her monstrous allies. Sandmen suffering from pulhata often wrestle with it in silence rather than risk psychological discharge. *-10 points.**

Words (Logophobia): Words are the tools of the Enemy! Speech, writing, printing . . . all are the carriers of lies and the spinners of traps. You avoid talking, you think it best to burn the books, and you may have to cut out tongues. *-15 points.**

Secret

see p. B152

In a campaign that makes Sandmen's civilian life (or deep cover assignments) a focus, or one featuring challenges and conspiracies within the British national security bureaucracy, Secret (Sandman) [-30] might make sense as a campaign disadvantage.

In some campaigns, a character might have a nested Secret. Consider, for example, an Oxford linguist and Project asset operating under cover as an MI5 consultant. If his fellow dons discover his ostensible MI5 work, his cover is still blown and his life likely ruined (a -10-point Secret); if his MI5 cover ID has taken a high profile interest in al-Qaeda cells (as a cover for investigating radical irruptor cults), then he may even need a new identity and relocation as protection from terrorists (a -20-point Secret). But the core Secret of the Project remains intact, so the irruptors don't target him for destruction.

Weirdness Magnet

see p. B161

This disadvantage is a common side effect of handling (or worse yet, holding onto) a reality shard (pp. 37-38). It also tends to cling like static to people who spend a lot of time in reality subduction zones.

SKILLS

A few skills can use additional elaboration or options in a **Madness Dossier** game.

Area Knowledge

see p. B176

Many modern technothrillers set investigations, or even confrontations, online in chat rooms, virtual worlds, or other conjectural spaces. While a Contact is often enough for a one-off adventure, really knowing the mean streets and top dogs of the Internet takes specialized knowledge. Area Knowledge specialties for parts of the Internet default not to Geography but to Computer Operation or a relevant Current Affairs specialty, at -3.

Deep Web: The portion of the Web not accessible by search engines requires such a specialty. With an estimated 91,000 terabytes of information to sift, this is comparable in scope to Area Knowledge (Interplanetary State); it covers major data nodes, standard navigation protocols, knowledge of the highest-profile users and key players, and a guess about where data might be stored.

Dark Web: Part of the Deep Web is used by government black projects, terror and cybercrime networks, and the hacker communities surrounding them. In the **Madness Dossier** universe, the Dark Web includes covert psionic research databases, curiously sorted museum archives, and records suppressed by Project SANDMAN and its ilk. The scope is similar to Area Knowledge (Small Nation): knowledge that key archives, nodes, and data holds exist, as well as familiarity with basic search and covert-posting protocols, political and other dangers, and names and legends of hackers and enforcers with Reputation +3 or better (or -3 or worse). If digital demons exist, emergent monsters factored up by second- or third-order Anunnaki programming deposited in code by unwitting agents, then this specialty covers them, too.

Brain Hacking

see p. B182

See p. 50 for the grisly details of Brain Hacking in this setting. It requires Computer Hacking as a prerequisite, and at bare minimum a field wetware kit (see p. 47) as equipment.

Brainwashing

see p. B182

In this setting, Brainwashing defaults to Psychology-6, or to Interrogation-6 if the interrogator has Hidden Lore (History B).

If the brainwasher has both Psychology at 12+ and a detailed psychological workup of the subject, he makes all Brainwashing attempts against that subject at +1. If he performed the psychological examination in question, raise this to +2. Empathy and Sensitive provide their normal +3 and +1 to Psychology.

Enthrallment

see pp. B191-192

In this campaign frame, Enthrallment skills represent, not bardic magic, but use of the Anunnaki memetic source code implanted in the human brain for neurolinguistic programming (NLP). They are all Will/Very Hard (not Hard), but do not cost FP to use and do not require (nor are they limited by) Charisma; instead, they are at -1 for every *full* five targets. Users can affect their chances by varying the time spent, per p. B346.

Depending on the persuader's training and background, Enthrallment skills may use a different prerequisite for the initial skill roll. Project SANDMAN's applied anthropologists use the standard Public Speaking in the field, since they usually deal with groups of people. The Project's neurolinguistic programmers, however, use Psychology for close-up NLP-based (see p. 42) Enthrallment; this requires an additional prerequisite of Body Language at 12+. A politician or cult leader might have stumbled onto the Anunnaki source code and use Propaganda, Religious Ritual, or Performance to activate it. Whatever the supporting skill, users of Enthrallment must possess it at 12+. Only users with Hidden Lore (History B) can raise Enthrallment skills above the prerequisite skill; this represents active knowledge and incorporation of Anunnaki programming.

Humans resist Enthrallment that incorporates Anunnaki programming at -3. This includes Enthrallment carried out by trained Sandmen, inspired irruptor cultists, or the irruptors themselves. At a minimum, Hidden Lore (History B) is required to inflict this penalty, but the GM may require further specific lore or training.

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IRRUPTORS

"Irruptors" is the generic term for entities native to History B who irrupt into our history to attempt to restore their own. All irruptors can sense reality subduction zones, the presence of History B artifacts or entities, etc., as per the Detect advantage (p. B48). Irruptors seem to be genetically modified creations of the Anunnakku, although whether the Anunnakku started with animal, human, or alien DNA may be unknowable. They closely resemble various demons from Sumerian (and later Akkadian and Babylonian) myth, which gives credence to the theory that the Anunnakku first arose, or first enslaved mankind, in the fourth millennium B.C. in Sumer.

The following write-ups give the most common types of irruptors, and their most common tasks in History A.

Me say: de Babylon system is
the vampire, falling empire,
    Suckin' the blood of the sufferers . . .
    Building church and university . . .
    Deceiving the people continually . . .
    – Bob Marley, "Babylon System"

Irruptor Meta-Trait

22 points

The irruptors' Immunity only covers the Anunnaki programming designed to control humans; they are completely subservient to the Anunnaki programming designed to control *them!* But while the Anunnakku remain asleep, irruptors' Slave Mentality doesn't show up in the meta-trait. If a šedu activates an irruptor's programming, add Slave Mentality to the specific irruptor. Irruptor psionic resistance applies to chödpa mental attacks and to any independent human psionics, such as those from alternate Earths. The GM should decide whether Immunity or Resistant applies to a given Sandman effort.

If the GM worries that irruptors are still too vulnerable to gunfire, add Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction) (**GURPS Powers**, p. 53) representing the creatures' tenuous existence in History A. In other words, because irruptors flicker between realities at all times, the bullet might not impact the thing while it's actually real! This implies that, following a full reality quake (or even during a serious reality temblor), irruptors lose that advantage, as they fully anchor themselves in the new history.

Irruptor includes Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Callous [-5]; Detect (History B; Precise, +100%; Irruptor Psi, -10%) [38]; Immunity to Anunnaki Programming [30]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Recovery [10]; Resistant to Psionics (+8) (Accessibility, Human psis only, -20%) [12]; Sadism (12) [-15]; Sense of Duty (History B) [-15]; Subsonic Speech [10]; Weirdness Magnet [-15]; *and* Hidden Lore (History B) (A) IQ [2].

BAŠMU

The bašmu, or snake demon, is the size of a large anaconda, although its coloring and banding match the Asiatic horned viper. It, too, has horns, as well as human arms and hands. The bašmu serves as a protector and guardian of important irruptor sites, especially those in the desert, where it can tunnel under the sand and lie in wait for interlopers. It can spit venom into a foe's face, potentially blinding and choking him.

A squad or more of cultist guardsmen usually accompany the bašmu, deployed on its perimeter. In the Middle East, its guards are often tribal militia, armed with assault rifles. Use *Cultist Thug* (p. 32).

ST: 24	**HP:** 24	**Speed:** 9.00
DX: 13	**Will:** 14	**Move:** 7 (8 through sand)
IQ: 10	**Per:** 20	**Weight:** 250 lbs.
HT: 15	**FP:** 15	**SM:** +3
Dodge: 13	**Parry:** 11	**DR:** 4

Constrict (26 vs. ST or HT): Must follow a grapple; damage equals margin of victory.

Fang Bite (13): 2d impaling + follow-up venom; Reach C. After six-second onset, victim rolls HT-4 or is paralyzed for 3×(margin of failure) hours.

Grapple (15): Reach C (arms) or Reach C-2 (tail).

Horn Butt (13): 2d+2 crushing; Reach C.

Spit Venom (13): Includes penalty to hit the face; Acc 3, Range 5/40. Targets without eye protection roll HT-1 or are blinded for (margin of failure) minutes. Targets without nose *and* mouth protection roll HT-1 or are choking for (margin of failure) minutes.

Traits: Chameleon 3 (Desert only); Cold-Blooded (50°); Combat Reflexes; Constriction Attack; Danger Sense; Doesn't Sleep; Double-Jointed; Extra Attack 1; Hard to Kill 2; Infravision; Irruptor; Nictitating Membrane 2; Night Vision 5; No Legs (Slithers); Peripheral Vision; Terrain Adaptation (Sand); Tunneling (Move 8; Only in Sand); Unfazeable.

Skills and Techniques: Brawling-13; Broadsword-13; Innate Attack (Breath)-15; Intimidation-13; Stealth-13; Survival (Desert)-19; Targeted Attack (Spit/Face)-13; Wrestling-15.
    ● Some bašmu can fascinate humans using their hiss and gaze (a form of Hypnotism as the prerequisite skill for their Enthrallment); for them, add Captivate-14; Hypnotism-14; Suggest-12; and Hypnotic Freeze-11.

Glyphs: GU.SHUB; KAR; SANGUSH.

Irruptors and Glyphs

The best Project intel says that only the šedu and êkimmu can draw Anunnaki glyphs, but plenty of other irruptors use them. Unlike pre-drawn Sandman glyphs, irruptor-deployed glyphs *can* achieve extra levels of success. All pre-drawn irruptor glyphs have the equivalent of Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-16 for the purpose of the resistance roll, and for the purpose of determining extra levels of success, if any.

The ELI-3 rhythms, controlled this time, had caught sankt-Efer's attention –
better than Obeck had hoped; he saw the dilation of sankt-Efer's pupils . . .
It's not hypnosis, Obeck had been taught, not nearly so. It's only a persuasion
technique. Still he had hated it, as counterfeit coin of communication.

– John M. Ford, **Princes of the Air**

GESHTUG.ULU (Forget this)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+4.

This glyph causes the victim to forget one fact, skill, or spell (if they exist), or can erase up to five minutes of short-term memory entirely. For every two full points by which the inscriber succeeds at his GESHTUG.ULU roll, the wielder may remove one more memory, or increase the time lost by the subject by five more minutes (this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs). Skills, etc. return after one hour; lost memories return only with treatment or after strong reminders (or other shocks).

The wielder must communicate exactly what is to be forgotten. This is typically done through simple statements, but written instructions, sketches, photographs, gesture, and so on are all allowable – deafness is no defense!

More powerful versions known only to irruptors can wipe hours, days, or even years of memories, or erase skills down to muscle memory.

It costs a human 3 FP to inscribe GESHTUG.ULU.

GU.SHUB (Neglect)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-6.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+4.

This glyph causes the beholder to avoid looking at, thinking about, or moving toward its wielder. The inscriber can also paste it to a door, stick it in a car window, etc. to get the same effect on a roughly 8'×8' space. Viewers will not even notice the glyph they are avoiding; the holder or location is effectively "invisible" to them. If the wielder attacks the beholder, the beholder must make an unmodified Will roll or respond with All-Out Defense – it's like a man-sized moth in your face!

It costs a human 6 FP to inscribe GU.SHUB.

HUL (Delight)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2.

Beholding this glyph triggers a wave of serotonin, causing euphoria (see p. B428) in the beholder. On a critical success, the glyph triggers full-on ecstasy (see p. B428); this does not apply to the Project's preprinted glyphs.

The effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes. Repeated exposure to HUL can cause Addiction (see pp. 16-17), if a viewer fails a Will+2 roll after the third (and each subsequent) viewing. The danger of addiction fades after a week without exposure to the glyph.

It costs a human 3 FP to inscribe HUL.

IGI.NU.GAL (Blind)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-10.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-4.

For (margin of loss) minutes, the viewer of this glyph can no longer process visual data of any kind, as the symbol floods his visual cortex. He sees waves of colors and symbols while his brain reboots the connection to the optic nerve. Treat the effect as hallucinating (p. B429); the viewer is at -5 to all success rolls if he can act at all. If the victim's Will roll critically fails, he is essentially blinded; -10 to combat rolls and other visually dependent skill tests.

It costs a human 5 FP to inscribe IGI.NU.GAL.

KAR (Flee)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-6.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)+2.

The beholder flees in mindless fear, away from the glyph. If flight is physically impossible, the viewer can turn and take an All-Out Defense maneuver, if attacked. The effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes.

It costs a human 4 FP to inscribe KAR.

KI.AG (Love me)

Hard

Default: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki)-8.
Prerequisite: Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki); cannot exceed Symbol Drawing (Anunnaki).

The viewer falls madly, subserviently, self-sacrificingly in love with the wielder of the glyph. If the wielder makes a request of the besotted viewer, roll a reaction at +10!

The full effect lasts for (margin of loss) minutes, but even though it may have worn off by the time the request is fulfilled, the viewer continues to rationalize his cooperation.

In short, the GM should feel free to really cut loose here; eyewitness testimony by traumatized survivors is easily discounted.

One sign of a reality temblor in progress is an anomalous eclipse, unpredicted comet, or other strange astronomical (or astrological) portent. Another effect of imminent reality temblors is to "blank out" local precognitive or psychometric abilities, since history literally *doesn't exist* on the far side of the slip. Volcanism and conventional earthquakes also seem to follow or precede reality temblors . . . as do irruptors, of course.

What Irruptor Incursions Look Like

Irruptors do not appear out of thin air. A šedu might step off of an altar or a frieze, a bašmu tunnel up through the sand, but never in front of witnesses. Often, the irruptors have a human cult waiting for them, to provide protection and tools. The cult might be subverted by a reality shard, or built by a kulullû, or called into existence by the shock of the reality temblor. (The latter sort of cult often responds with bloodthirsty violence and incoherent rage, as its members' minds shift into the new history.) The cult's actions often trigger a memetic pulse among the region's collective subconscious, even if the cultists can be prevented from actively proselytizing on behalf of the Awakened Angel or True Djinn.

A reality temblor shifts things retroactively: that old museum always had a nest of scorpion-men in the basement, or that floating bed of seaweed always held a torpid kulullû. Research rolls (at -3) can turn up traces of the irruptors in the new past: a mysterious death by poison in the museum a century ago, or a ship that wrecked itself in a calm sea near the seaweed bank. A successful Hidden Lore (History B) roll detects the symptoms of retrocreation in such stories: contradictory names, literary parallels, memetic signatures, weird lack of interest by major newspapers or police forces at the time.

HOW SOON IS NEVER?

Like many conspiratorial or cosmic horror games, much of the tension in this setting arises from uncertainty: how soon will the world end? In general, if a full-fledged reality quake comes up on the *Reality Quake Table* (below), that's very likely the end (but see *After the End,* p. 59). How soon that happens depends on how well the heroes do at shutting down the irruptors, and even more so on how often the GM rolls on the table. If the GM feels like adding mechanically to this countdown tension, he can use either of two methods: the oil-spot method, or the percentage method.

Oil-Spot Method

Begin with a map of the Middle East. This map depicts the crucial theater of the reality war; subduction zones elsewhere are diversions or attempts at second fronts. Mark 3d locations (minimum of six) with a dot: these are ongoing reality subduction zones. Use the ones mentioned in this sourcebook (Baghdad, Nippur, Gaza, etc.), make up your own, or add a combination of both. Now roll 1d; this is the number of line segments you have to connect the dots on your map. (Line segments should not be more than an inch or two long, on a normal letter-sized map.)

Reality Quake Table

If an event occurs, or an irruptor plan comes to fruition, that the GM feels might trigger a slippage in the fault lines of history, roll 3d. Such events, and their effects on the roll, might include:

Cults: A large cult worships the Anunnakku, trying to "believe" or "wish" them back into power. Roll at +0 for 10 cultists, +1 for 100 cultists, +2 for 1,000 cultists, and so on.

Mass Death: A large number of humans (100+) die in a day in a reality subduction zone (see p. 6). Roll at +0 for 100 deaths, +1 for 1,000 deaths, +2 for 10,000, and so on.

Memetic Contamination: Irruptors successfully insert memes, Anunnaki glyphs, etc. into the local media stream. Roll at +0 for 10,000 humans influenced, +1 for 100,000, +2 for 1,000,000, and so on.

Overt Revelation: An irruptor is unequivocally revealed to a large, media-connected population. This can go either way; the massive shock and revulsion might reinforce humanity's "amnesia" about the Anunnakku, or the sight of an irruptor might trigger their fear and belief. Roll 1d or 2d, depending on the number of surviving witnesses and the scale of the event; *add* an odd total to the roll but *subtract* an even one.

Reality Shard: Irruptors discover and use an artifact from History B on a human population. Roll at +0 for 100 humans influenced, +1 for 1,000, +2 for 10,000, and so on.

If the event (other than a mass death) occurred in a reality subduction zone, add 1 to the result. If a šedu survives to coordinate the quake, add 3 to the result. If all surviving witnesses believe a Project SANDMAN cover story and no irruptors survive in the area, subtract 3 from the result.

6 or less – No result.

7-9 – No result, but add 1 to any further roll made within a week if stimulus continues.

10-11 – No result, but add 2 to any further roll made within a week if stimulus continues.

12-13 – No *immediate* result, but if stimulus continues, roll again in 1d×10 hours, at +2. This modifier is cumulative if rolled more than once.

14-15 – Reality temblor in 2d hours. Local area becomes a reality subduction zone: 1d-2 reality shards appear and 1d irruptors are retrocreated nearby. After the temblor, if stimulus continues, roll again in 1d days, at +2. This modifier is cumulative if rolled more than once.

16-17 – Reality quake will occur in 2d days. Reality temblor as above, except 2d irruptors retrocreated (instead of 1d).

18 or more – Reality quake will occur in 2d hours. Reality temblor (as above) occurs immediately, *plus* 1d-3 (minimum 1) šedu are retrocreated nearby. See *After the End,* p. 59.

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*Paradise
Is exactly like
Where you are right now
Only much much
Better.*

      – Laurie Anderson, "Language is a Virus"