

Handouts from the Beast, a Hunter the Reckoning campaign I ran in the spring of 2005.

Ross Payton of Role Playing Public Radio <http://www.slangdesign.com/rppr>

## WELCOME TO VOLUME 1 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

#####NEWS YOU CAN USE#####

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From the Publisher:

Hello,

I am Chronicler13 on Hunter-net. You probably don't know me but I know all of you. I look out into the great metropolis that we all live in and I feel something on the air. Something big. Something bad. Some of you have heard of it. The Beast.

I think we need to cooperate more than ever to deal with this. So, with the help of Witness1, I put together a sub-list of hunter-net of every hunter in the Chicago area. This newsletter will NOT send out any personal info without the consent of the parties involved. I want to help you guys stop this Beast. Feel free to email me at [rpayton@gmail.com](mailto:rpayton@gmail.com) if you have questions or comments.

### 2. NEWS AROUND TOWN: GOINGS-ON AND GENERAL EXCITEMENTS

#### BOMBS AWAY!

By Chronicler13

APRIL 22, witnesses around the new office district near the suburbs heard what sounded like an explosion and gun shots. Police scanner reports confirm someone detonated a grenade!!!! -ed.) in the alley next to the All-a-Tech office building. A car and burned to a crisp corpse (I think the corpse is a blood slave -ed.) were also found. The office itself was broken into, with a smashed door and a broken window (fangs ripped the door open and jumped through the window -ed.) Sources indicate that All-A-Tech's office has been designated with warlock and extreme danger glyphs.

#### BATTLE ROYALE @ HOPEWOOD APARTMENTS

By Chronicler13

APRIL 22, A vicious fight erupted outside the upper class apartment building some time after the bombing incident. Over a dozen witnesses called in reports of gunfire. Police found two corpses burned and shot up (good job whoever ended those fangs -ed.) and three people were treated for gunshot wounds (boo! Ends don't justify the means! -ed.). The apartment is home to a lead US attorney, Daniel Nabakov, a confirmed blood slave.

#### RUNAWAY JANE COME HOME!

By Chronicler13

APRIL 21, Eight area teenagers have been reported missing. This is not unusual in of itself, but sources indicate that the hapless teens have been seduced into a cult that means them harm. The cult is a national phenomenon, calling itself simply the "Gathering in the Desert" or the Gathering. However, the local cult chapter is controlled by a confirmed monster, although its type has not been established. It is NOT a rot, fang, blood slave, or skin-shifter. The leader appears as a middle aged Asian woman in good shape and typically wearing a black robed outfit. She is always seen with several armed bodyguards who appear normal to our sight. (Still packing heat and loyal to IT though -ed.) Area imbued want to find and stop the cult, but the location of the chapter's safe house is unknown.

### 3. PUBLIC SAFETY AWARENESS TIPS

#### DON'T BE STUPID WHEN IT COMES TO FELLOW HUNTERS!!!

Several reports have circulated of an extremist imbued operating in Chicago. The man appears to be 30-35 years old, wearing Salvation Army type clothing and has threatened other imbued for information, weapons, and for not demonstrating the 'proper' level of hatred towards, well, everything. One report says he car-bombed a van full of innocents just to kill one blood slave traveling inside.

#### STAY TOGETHER AT NIGHT

It may seem like an obvious thing, but some imbued still don't realize the importance of sticking together at night. Isolated hunters are easy prey for the monsters that roam the night, especially in the last two weeks. The damned are becoming more active than ever.

### 4. WANTED: PUBLIC ENEMIES OF HUMANITY

#### 1. "BUM" WEREWOLF

For the last two months, a murderous shape changer has stalked the streets of Chicago. It normally appears as a Caucasian male dressed as a bum with a unique ritualistic scar along its right forearm. However, at night, this 'bum' changes into a beast and slaughters innocents. It has killed at least eight, so far, including an official at Grimbaldi Security Inc. What sinister plan does the beast have in mind?

#### 2. GHOST AT KELLY SKYSCRAPER CONSTRUCTION SITE

Construction has been halted by some kind of ghost at the construction

site. It has caused several accidents, including one fatal fall and three foremen have quit from nightmares and mental problems. No one knows why it is doing it or how to best stop it.

### 3. THE ROBED MAN

Some kind of warlock walks the streets day and night for some unknown reason, but he/she/it is violent and unstable. It appears as a person dressed in a plain brown hooded robe, except no matter where the viewer looks, it is impossible to catch sight of the person's face or hands. The hood leaves a pure black area that light can not penetrate. The person engages solely in hand to hand combat and bullets do not seem to affect it. Second sight shows warlock traits.

## 5. ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS

### 1. ST. THADDEUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL CLOSING

The St. Thaddeus Catholic School has been suddenly closed for unknown reasons. We're looking into it but so far all we can tell is that there is a real biohazard threat inside. It's been sealed up tight for a reason. Imbued wanting to enter should take gas masks and bio hazard suits.

### 2. "THE DEALER"

Some kind of entity has offered several imbued information on monsters, access to weapons, and even more in exchange for some kind of favor or information. We're not even sure if it is the same entity or several fangs trying to compromise us. Who is it/they? What does it want?

## WELCOME TO VOLUME 2 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

#####NEWS YOU CAN USE#####

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1. THE SITUATION UP TO NOW
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#### **1. THE SITUATION UP TO NOW**

By Chronicler13

I've talked to a few of the imbued since the first issue and have learned quite a bit about the entity known as "The Beast". From their testimony, I've compiled a rough history of the events so far. This is to remind current imbued of what has happened, help brief anyone brought into the investigation and to ensure that some record will remain if all the current imbued fall in the line of action. This history is not entirely in order, but as accurate as I could figure out.

#### THE WEDDING

The Beast first manifested itself on June 9, 2005 at the wedding reception of Jessica Karabin and Paul Benney. As Jessica gave a toast to the guests, (names changed to preserve their anonymity) Aaron, Matt, Tom, and David became aware that the entire groom section was dead, but still moving. This included the groom himself. Rots, as they would later learn.

Jessica then ordered the guests out to the ballroom who complied with strange obedience. She was somehow hypnotizing everyone except the recently imbued. She then ordered her father to place his throat above the punch bowl and tried to slit his throat. The imbued got together and figured out that the dead blamed the father for their deaths and were justified in thinking so. Tom shot the father, causing the dead to turn to dust. The groom then tried to flee with the bride, but the imbued worked together and stopped him. Finally, they turned to the bride who killed herself with a knife. Her blood formed a perfect circle around her corpse. The pool of blood depicted an image of a diseased man who spoke to the imbued, saying he would enter the real world soon. He also somehow pushed several dozen copies of a photo out of the blood. The photos showed a group of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, 42 in all. The imbued recognized themselves and realized they couldn't remember that year of their life. On the back was a list of names, 13 named and the rest of the 42 spaces blank. Jessica and Paul were among the named.

#### ENCOUNTER WITH THE BEAST

The imbued quickly got together and decided to put their personal differences aside, to fight The Beast. Tom found a vampire and killed it along with a blood slave. Matt found his boss was a blood slave and David received a call from a spiritual medium who wished to visit him. They also began patrolling the streets to gain experience as a team.

As they patrolled, they came across a wrecked van in a ghetto inside Chicago. They found two new imbued John and Nathan. They had been kidnapped by a man named Grimbaldi. Grimbaldi then showed up, apparently possessed by the Beast. His body was broken and mangled but still remained standing through the Beast's power. The Beast mentioned getting closer to the real world and then ordered a rot to attack.

The rot, an old woman named Elaine Smith, was calmed by the imbued after it released a banshee like wail. Grimbaldi's body finally collapsed, leaving another perfect circle of blood and a message from the Beast. The list of names had a new name, another victim.

The imbued discovered hunter.net and researched the names listed. Most were dead or missing. One woman, Angel Harris, was listed as insane. They also found out that Jessica, the bride, had spent time in the archival rooms of her old Catholic school.

David found a pattern inside the many photos and had an expert decipher it. It revealed a message from Jessica, explaining that the Beast's right hand cut her connections from the physical world, her fiscal and academic records.

The imbued also encountered a shapeshifter that appeared as a homeless man. It soon threatened Tom with blackmail, as Tom was wanted by the police. Tom gave him the money but couldn't chase after the monster, when it literally disappeared from view.

John found Elaine Smith and talked to her. He found her to be of two minds, one hopelessly confused and lost, looking for her son. The other was cold and calculated, and asked John to help her find the son. She offered information about the supernatural citizens of Chicago. John began helping her.

Elaine described several factions in the city. The fangs had a few dozen members in the city but were indifferent to the Beast, not helping or hurting its cause. The shapeshifters had a small pack of three members, actively hunting the Beast. The spirits of the dead were numerous but were afraid of the Beast mostly. The Grimbaldis were blood slaves and servants to Ian Blackwelder. Finally, a single warlock, The Robed Man, stalked the city trying to control the Beast.

Aaron found a note in his stronghold, offering help in exchange for information.

David let the medium come to Chicago. She wanted to conduct a séance, as Chicago was host to a great spiritual unrest.

## FIGHT THE FANGS

As the imbued researched into the Beast's activities, they realized that the Beast was tied to two entities, the right and left hand. The right hand was revealed to be a fang, Ian Blackwelder, an engineer behind a black CIA operation, TARTARUS. This information is discovered when Matt looks into Jessica's financial records. Somehow, parts of TARTARUS's documents have written over the existing files.

The hunters continued patrolling the streets. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Matt, David and John found a building with an open door, blood spatters, and hunter sigils that warned of evil. They investigated and found a horrid abattoir that a member of the Grimbaldi family used to commit ritualistic human sacrifices. They imbued watch with horror as they find the man being attacked by a vengeful spirit. Unable to stop the wraith, the man dies. They turn the matter over to the police, which quickly gets covered up.

Tom found out the local top gangster in his area is a blood slave. He did not act on the information. Hunter sigils have also shown up as graffiti around Chicago.

Aaron met a bystander who wants to help and mentions a weird fetish like item found in a forest outside of the city. Aaron investigated the forest and found another fetish like token. He scans and posts the image on hunter.net but no one has any information about it.

Matt showed had the blood slave's blood analyzed by a crime lab technician who could not understand it. The tech sent the blood to a chemistry professor. Later, Matt found that something had erased the technician's and professor's memory of the blood. The professor also repeated a hypnotically planted message warning Matt to stop looking into the matter when Matt asked about the blood.

Matt's blood slave boss asked him to investigate a company, All-a-Tech. This company was laundering money and the boss, Daniel Nabakov, wanted to find out its source. Nabakov soon asked Matt to accompany some 'special agents' and break into the company's office. The agents turn out to be two fangs and a blood slave driver. Matt contacts the other imbued, who follow after the agents' car. The agents easily broke into the office, smashing a door down with superhuman strength. Matt looked over the paperwork and discovers that All-a-Tech simply takes money from unclaimed bank accounts. How they know which account numbers to access is another question.

Outside the office, the other hunter found warlock and danger hunter sigils on the office. Inside, the fangs found a hiding office worker and began torturing him for information. Matt stared down the monsters to keep them from killing the worker, while the other hunters charged in. A

few explosions and a hail of bullets later, the blood slave was dead and the fangs and worker were gone. The imbued decided the fangs would try to report to Nabakov personally and proceeded there for an ambush.

A few hours later, the fangs showed up in front of Nabakov's apartment. A brutal fight broke out, killing both fangs and wounding several, including a stray bullet that nearly killed David. Nabakov appeared shortly afterwards and questioned Matt about the nature of the battle. Matt tried to bluff his way out, saying some thugs attacked and killed the fangs and nearly killed him. Aaron acted as a pedestrian, offering to help. The rest fled. Nabakov tried to shoot Aaron, but missed and Aaron fled. Nabakov told Matt that they would discuss the matter the next day at work.

#### A NIGHT AT THE GRIMBALDI MANSION

Tom received another blackmail demand from the homeless man. However, this time Tom refused to pay up. Later, two FBI agents from the SAD division visited him. Apparently the homeless man had acted as informant for the agents before. The agents gave Tom an ultimatum: either act as an informant or go to prison. Tom started feeding information to them, but left some details out.

Nabakov ordered Matt to explain himself to his superiors at the Grimbaldi mansion. The other hunters followed Matt to the mansion, Aaron inside the trunk of the Grimbaldi limo, using his reach ability to spy on the mansion.

An elderly woman, the matron of the Grimbaldi family asked Matt to kill Nabakov. She explained that Blackwelder controlled the family but he was only really interested in the Grimbaldi's hold over Nabakov. Killing him would make Blackwelder lose interest in the family. She wanted the fang to leave the family, as Blackwelder drained their resources and had members of the family killed indiscriminately fulfilling his secret agenda.

Matt was then taken to a servant of Blackwelder, a bloodsucker who called himself the attendant. The attendant ordered Matt to drink a vial of blood. Outside the mansion, the other imbued noticed The Robed Man approaching the mansion. It easily destroyed the guards and entered the building.

All hell broke loose.

Aaron found a library in the mansion and Blackwelder examining a TARTARUS document. Matt froze the attendant and set him on fire with hair spray and a lighter but the vampire called in a blood slave to kill Matt. The Robed Man killed guard after guard. Aaron and the others ran to help Matt, Matt killed the blood slave with a concealed blade (but only after nearly being disemboweled) and the monsters converged on each other. Blackwelder briefly encountered John and Aaron but did not kill them, only gave them a page from his TARTARUS files with the address of TARTARUS's testing grounds, saying that they should first comprehend TARTARUS before they judge him. Blackwelder then engaged The Robed Man. The hunters fled the chaos, but not

before Tom rigged the gas line of the mansion to blow.

The next day, Matt was suspended without pay as Nabakov was missing and being blamed for a wide range of criminal acts. John visited Elaine again for more information and was given the task of encouraging a certain criminal, Elijah Manchester, to leave the city. The imbued drove him out themselves, but as soon as they passed the city limits,

That's what happened up to now.

## **2. THE MONSTERS THAT ROAM THE NIGHT**

The following information comes from a variety of sources, mostly the rot Elaine Smith. She describes the city's supernatural residents as a balkanized lot, divided into many different factions.

### THE VAMPIRES

Several dozen bloodsuckers supposedly exist in the city. The majority of them have nothing to do with the Grimbaldi family or the Beast. They seem to be mostly selfish and callous, but also pragmatic and ruthless. They seem to have powerful interests in the criminal underworld and the corporations and possibly the city government as well.

### THE WEREWOLVES

Elaine mentioned a pack of three werewolves hunting the Beast. Only one has been confirmed, a homeless man that has ties to a pair of FBI agents.

### THE RESTLESS DEAD

Rots walk the streets day and night. Perhaps hundreds or thousands exist in Chicago. They are mostly independent and alone, acting on some unknowable agenda. A few seem to be in thrall to the Beast while some spirits of the dead want to stop it, as David's spiritual medium friend has said.

### THE VOICE IN THE SEWERS

Something has made contact with Aaron, offering help in exchange for information. In particular, it wants Aaron to research a high school student at a private academy. It can control rats (and probably other small animals), and has some kind of invisibility. It gave Aaron a tape showing the creature watching a man in his house without the man noticing, even though the lights were on.

### THE GATHERING IN THE DESERT CULT

A cult apparently led by Angel Harris. They want to converge on a site in the Arizona desert for some unknown reason. They have safe houses across

the country, including Chicago. Each safe house recruits and sends cultists to the gathering. The Chicago safe house is heavily guarded and has some kind of supernatural guardian or leader.

#### THE ROBED MAN

A shadow in the shape of a man, concealed in a simple brown robe. It commands a swarm of cloth locust that devour the living. It also has uncanny luck and incredible strength. Elaine claimed it wants to bind the Beast. It has not acted against the imbued. When it saw a hunter in the mansion, it stopped and looked at the hunter for a while, studying him.

#### THE GRIMBALDI FAMILY

A large, incredibly rich family of blood slaves. They seem to owe Blackwelder some kind of servitude. Several of them have some kind of interest in the occult and possibly the ability to summon or control spirits.

#### THE RIGHT HAND - IAN BLACKWELDER

Presumably he is a powerful vampire, although no one knows what he can do or if he even is a vampire. He serves the Beast, severing the victim's ties to the world; primarily the financial, academic, employment, and government records of the victim. Study of the victim's files reveals that Ian would write over the records with TARTARUS documents, then after the victim disappears, partially writes the records back in so a precursory investigation reveals nothing.

#### THE LEFT HAND - ???

Unknown. Jessica wrote that the Left Hand 'stole the love of the victim's family'.

#### THE BEAST

Extremely powerful entity, somehow trapped outside of the earth (hell? Some alternate dimension? The future or past?) that has a connection to a group of 42 people, including the current hunters. This group all attended a school in Eden (unknown location) in the sixth grade. None of them have any memory of the sixth grade. It typically appears as a horribly diseased man in reflections, usually the blood of its victims. It has briefly possessed a blood slave, although that destroyed the host body quickly. Unknown motive and powers.

### **3. THE CHICAGO IMBUED**

Aside from the main Beast crusaders, other imbued in Chicago work to fight the monsters. However, each hunter has their own motivations. Any who want help from these hunters should act in accordance with their beliefs. Your

actions will make it harder or easier to deal with certain hunters. This is only a simple overview of the Chicago scene. More detailed descriptions will follow.

#### THE HARDCORE

The world has shades of grey, but when it comes to monsters, only black and white exist. Hardcore hunters seek to kill monsters and save humans, period. Compromise or negotiation will only lead to tragedy. Many monsters have mind control powers so none of them can be trusted. Studying them is a fool's game and will lead to corruption. Also, human life must be preserved at all cost. Reckless endangerment will not be tolerated.

#### THE FANATIC

Monsters must die. If humans have to die to kill a monster, so be it. Only one hunter, a white male in his thirties, name and hunter.net nick unknown (if he even is on hunter.net), seems to believe in this philosophy, but he has tried to convert others imbued and may succeed in the future.

#### THE GOOD SAMARITANS

Monsters were once human. Some are mad and need to put down, but not all. Indiscriminate death and destruction only leads to further evil and violence. Try to help the damned.

#### THE PRAGMATIC

The Beast hunters tend to fall under this category. No one is automatically innocent, even normal humans. Try to achieve the greatest at the least cost. Punish the wicked, even if they're human. Don't let evil get away, even if the good could get in the way.

WELCOME TO VOLUME 3 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

June 20, 2005

#####IN MEMORIAM#####

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1. BRREAKING NEWS

**1. BREAKING NEWS**

By Chronicler13

As I write this, Matt is facing off a dangerous monster in the basement of the cult safe house. Several cultists gunned Tom down.

But let me recap first.

Earlier tonight, the gathered hunters decided to try Madame Anna's séance. Aaron and Matt broke into the wedding hall and disabled the alarms. They rest snuck in. They found that the blood stain was embedded in the tiled floor of the reception room. The janitors were replacing it with new tiles.

Madame Anna began the séance with Matt, David, and Aaron joining the circle with the medium. John watched them while Tom kept an eye out for intruders. The séance proceeded well at first, as a spirit named Cicero appeared and answered a few questions. The imbued learned the following from it:

\*The Robed Man is named Octavius.

\*Cicero was a friend of Octavius when he was alive.

\*The key to turning Blackwelder from the Beast lies in finding his secret desire and reminding him of what he has lost.

\*The hunters already have the information necessary to find the left hand of the Beast. They just have to use it.

However, something went wrong. Anna became erratic and physical manifestations of the supernatural became readily apparent. The temperature dropped, the world seemed to decay and turn black and unholy energy crackled in the air.

The Beast had arrived.

John and Tom turned on the second sight. It revealed dozens of spirits in the room, mostly the dead workers that had sought revenge against the bride's father. It also revealed Cicero in the center of the circle and a

massive black monstrous spirit, ten times the size of any other spirit. The Beast.

John panicked initially and fled the room, screaming. Tom opened fire on the spirits as a reflex action, emptying a magazine into the ceiling. The hunters in the circled tried to free Anna. David and Aaron turned on the second sight, which damaged the circle, but caused a backlash of mystic energy, releasing a wave of pain on the three. John recovered when he ran into the security guard, which knocked both of them down. The scared hunter ran back to the reception room with the guard chasing after him.

Aaron left his body to combat the Beast. Matt tried to freeze it with his sheer determination and conviction. David analyzed the situation and found out that the circle could be disrupted by placing a holy item in an urn used in the ceremony. Tom pummeled the possessed woman and eventually damaged the circle by doing so. David managed to place a rosary in the urn, breaking the circle entirely. Aaron and Matt's efforts seemed to chip away at the Beast's power which began to wane as the circle broke.

The woman that was the Beast chanted in ancient Greek. It spoke of the dead, war, and commanding.

Cicero spoke to Aaron, telling him to not die foolishly and that some battles have a cost too high to pay. Aaron ignored the advice and tried to fight off the Beast. The other others made several attempts to stop the Beast from completing its chant. They noticed that the ghosts became fewer and fewer, somehow fusing together in horrific amalgamations. Eventually, they managed to stop the chant and the entities disappeared. Madame Anna crippled herself, her jaw unhinged and her teeth smashed, as though some great force slammed her upper and lower jaw together.

The team broke up after the séance. David and John took Anna to the hospital, John managing to convince the doctors to NOT call the police while Aaron went home and Matt and Tom decided to raid the cultist safe house. John went with them to heal any injuries and deal with hostages.

Tom began by shooting a sentry outside the house with a silenced pistol. He broke the door down to the house and the gunfight began. Two armed cultists opened fire as soon as the door came down. Tom ended them with a spray from his M-60. Matt entered the building, taking fire from another cultist in a side room to the left. Tom charged in, finding another cultist barricaded down the hall. Both hunters killed the cultists, although they were bleeding by this point.

Tom found an entrance to the basement and charged in. Three cultists waited for him, and brought him down in a hail of gunfire. Matt threw a flashbang down and barely managed to kill the three. John ran into the building to help. They have found the cultist leader but I can't see what they're doing.

In case you're wondering how I can see what's going on, I am able to

transcend my physical ability and observe my fellow hunters from a great distance. Similar to Aaron's ability, but more advanced. It's not perfect, so I still need information from you, but it allows me some extra time. I wasn't there for very long at the séance. I fled as soon as I saw the first ghost. It followed me and it took me a few hours to get rid of it before I could return to my body. Sorry.

## WELCOME TO VOLUME 4 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

July 13, 2005

#####KEEP ON TRUCKING#####

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#### **1. ST. THADDEUS**

By Chronicler13

It appears that we have a new member, who I will give the moniker of Tom although he's not imbued. I won't say what he is because some won't understand but it is not my job to judge. Tom is a hell of a fighter though.

Anyway, most of you have spent some time regrouping and figuring things out. The major action lately has been the successful raid on St. Thaddeus Catholic School. A major entity was infesting the school, but now it is gone.

Matt, Aaron, and Tom snuck in, Matt through the school's doors while Aaron and Tom investigated the graveyard across the street. They found out that something had dug the coffins and dragged them to the school from the underground. They crawled through the tunnel to follow the trail.

As Matt looked through the school for evidence, a weird voice came on the PA and asked him to go to the office. He went, wanting to confront the monsters and found a horrible abomination. Some kind of entity hid under the tanned hide of a human. Matt drove it off, forcing the creature to flee through the floor. The skin attacked Matt but was far too weak to be a threat.

Aaron and Tom discovered the end of the tunnel led to the basement archival room of the school. Dozens of tanned human skins hung on the walls and

floors in grotesque poses, mimicking medieval catholic art. The creature manifested and Tom quickly destroyed its physical form but found it drew strength from the earth and pollution. Matt arrived and the skins began to rise to destroy the group. Aaron and Matt searched the room for a yearbook left by Jessica, the bride while Tom fought off the skins. Eventually the book was found and Tom realized that an earth based creature would be destroyed if it was exposed to the pure night air. He brought the roof down and the creature was banished.

## **CHICAGO'S IMBUED**

I've compiled a brief list of every imbued I could find in Chicago.

1. Tagger: a street kid that tags buildings with hunter sigils. Only Nighingale has met him and she's the only reason I know about him. She's worried about him. He's homeless and 14 or so.
2. Ignition770: a firebug and hardcore.
3. Vault921: Knows a lot about finance and white collar crime. A hometown hero.
4. Nightingale78: A merciful lady who's a capable healer.
5. DDay1096: A hardcore sniper with a disabled leg.
6. Life983: Offers lessons in martial arts and B&E. A real hardcore, willing to take big risks.
7. Ahab33: A planner type, very cautious. Looking into some weird stuff going on in the Great lakes.
8. Icarus555: A risky hardcore with a lot of money willing to spend on hunting.
9. Caliber80: A philosopher type with business and government connections.
10. Bow618: Makes custom weapons for the cause, but only ancient style weapons. A semi hardcore type.
11. Tristan989: Tries to help those who need it, man or monster. Has a few safehouses available.

### **3. A NOTE ON NOT BECOMING WHAT YOU HUNT**

I found this post from John and I thought it's worth repeating. DO NOT BECOME WHAT YOU HUNT.

To: vitalis@hunter-net.org  
CC: Chicago-list@hunter-net.org  
From: element\_27@hunter.net  
Subject: The Events of June XX, 2005

Note: names have been changed to protect the individuals' privacy.

I imagine word has gotten out by now about what happened at the Gathering In the Desert HQ. I've been holed up in my room for a while, and haven't seen anybody since the incident, except for the meeting at [Tom's]. Though I don't feel an obligation to explain my actions to anyone, I thought it best that I do so in order to foster trust and unity among the imbued, especially those here in Chicago.

I want to start by saying that I am not a killer. Quite the opposite- my father was an Army doctor, and I've always been taught that it's my job to help people, not hurt them. With me, Death is the enemy, whether it is the death of a person, an animal, or even one of the hidden.

The crew I run with, especially the two that I was with that day, don't share quite the same view. Some of the people on the vitalis list have (at times mockingly) called people like them soldiers. To be honest, I can't disagree. They are soldiers, but they are not murderers. I've met soldiers, grown up around them, had uncles and friends of the family who were all soldiers, and I am firmly convinced that killing does not make them slaughterers. So I went that day knowing there would be violence. My hope was that afterwards I would be there for people to fall back on- that I could heal where hurt had been done.

I remember waiting in the car for the shooting to stop. When it did I went inside, and I saw the remains of several people that had died in the shootout. It made me sick. It made me doubt my friends and whether I had made the right decision in coming there. Then I heard more shots. I ran to a stairwell, and I saw [Tom] lying on the ground, bleeding. My first thought was to get to him and try to help him, to stop Death- but the people that had shot him were still standing, and [Matt] stood alone, reloading his guns. At that moment it didn't matter that I had come to heal, or that I had doubts about my friends. Right then all that mattered was that [Tom] was dying, and the people that had shot him were going to shoot [Matt]. Death had already won, now it was just a question of us or them, and how many of each. In short, it was war.

My next memory is pulling the sword out of the midsection of one of the shooters. I'm glad, because I don't remember running it through him, as I must have done.

[Tom] died. That's one thing I can't get past- I try to rationalize it in my head: I was trading one life for another- not the best thing, but at least it was the practical thing. But it DIDN'T work. I'm having to question a lot of what I once believed. So those of you who want to debate about the morality of what happened that day, go right ahead. To me, the question isn't purely intellectual.

It's some encouragement to me that we saved the hostages, and those that we had fought were actually under the Thing's control. A lot of people died that day, but there's a part of me- that hopeful part that I trust- that wonders how many would have died, or spent the rest of their existence in slavery had we acted any differently.

In short, I want to say that I am still hopeful, still willing to have an open heart when it comes to the darker side of humans and the other side, but I am not stupid. Sometimes you lose the fight against Death, and then you have to fight for whatever you have left.

#### 4. THE YEARBOOK

The yearbook recovered from St. Thaddeus is a powerful artifact in its own. It causes weird visions and can trigger painful repressed memories to appear, even someone else's memories in your head, although those haven't yielded any useful info. No one's been able to decipher it though. The words are all gibberish and I can't remember what the picture looks like, except the cover photo of the students smiling for a group photo. I do know this from the Heralds though: This is a powerful weapon against the Beast and but only when we get to Eden. I think it will remain inscrutable until it is brought there.

WELCOME TO VOLUME 5 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

August 26, 2005

#####KEEP ON TRUCKING#####

#### Table of Contents

1. TARTARUS
2. THE GATHERING

#### **1. TARTARUS**

By Chronicler13

After a brief rest, the team decided to continue helping Elaine. They found the gun Elaine wanted in junkyard, seemingly laid out for them. It was a large revolver, very heavy and dark. John took it.

Everyone went to Elaine's house, John carrying the gun inside. The rot was not there, only a TV and VCR remained. The VCR started playing Elaine's taped will and the hunters saw Elaine as she was alive for the first time. She looked like a kind and pleasant old woman. She spoke at first of her love for her son and her fond memories of him.

Then it switched to the dead Elaine. This Elaine spoke of the pain her son's death caused and how much she hated the killer. The tape alternated between the living Elaine and the dead Elaine for a few minutes. Then, the dead Elaine commanded the hunters to shoot the killer with the gun. The rot had somehow found the killer. The imbued saw a man standing in the hallway across from them, his features concealed in shadow. Elaine was apparently holding him with some supernatural power. The killer looked dead, perhaps a ghost.

The living Elaine asked for mercy, saying she did not want to see anymore pain caused on her behalf or for her son. The dead Elaine promised vital information in exchange for killing the man. John held the gun and counted the bullets, seven writhing maggots that seemed to slide in perfectly as bullets. John pointed the gun at the man, but could not bring himself to shoot. The ghost appeared more clearly and the imbued saw it was Elaine's son. He had committed suicide with the gun. The imbued kept the pistol, which the son's spirit seemed to inhabit. It held incredible destructive powers. Elaine appeared one last time on the TV, dead and hateful. She was being manipulated by the Beast and promised revenge for their inaction.

The imbued then prepared to leave for the Stanley Proving Grounds, the location of TARTARUS. At a truck stop, Tom saw an entity he called a 'hollow man', some kind of weird monster trafficking in 'souls' according to Aaron's message from the Heralds. They decided not to act, as they had to focus on the Beast.

Most everyone spent the night at a campsite, except for David who remained at a hotel an hour away. Tom found signs of dead dogs walking in packs around the territory but nothing else. Aaron had received an EPA report from a hunter contact that described the area around Stanley as a toxic cesspool of heavy metals and chemicals.

Pleasant Glade, the town near Stanley was deserted. Everyone was gone, apparently abducted by...something. The group disembarked and walked to Stanley, 3 miles away. The fencing around Stanley was intact, but barely. A single gate led in. A rot stood at the guard post, with a rifle and army uniform. It challenged them but Matt managed to convince it that they were its relief for guard duty. It crumbled to dust.

Aboveground, Stanley was nothing more than a collection of rusted and

neglected hangers and buildings. The group found an elevator that led down to the real complex. They took it, all wearing their combat biohazard suits. The first room in TARTARUS proper was an orientation room, with a film projector and chairs. It was ready to show them a movie. The group sat down and watched.

The first film revealed some light on their past and link to the Beast. Apparently, some group called the Obertus Research Institute gave a group of children, (including the imbued) special powers to break them free of conventional morality. At first, the kids used their abilities to help and heal, but at the end of the film strip, it showed a child committing some act of horrible violence with his abilities.

The second film was an orientation film for TARTARUS, going over procedure and so forth. At the end of the film, the narrator told the hunters that they could see TARTARUS as it was if they removed their gas masks. The hunters could see copper particles in the air, so they knew if they did remove them, they would be vulnerable to TARTARUS's effects. Tom and John removed them while the others didn't.

After this, the two groups saw that they could see vague outlines of the other group but could not really interact with them. It was as though they were on two different planes of existence that somehow ran parallel to each other. John and Tom were now working for TARTARUS while the others saw the half flooded ruins of the base. John and Tom were ordered to remove a body from the test chambers, while the others followed after them.

In reality, the body was a rot that attacked the other hunters while Tom and John calmly carried it to the crematorium. Both groups broke off with each other during the confusion and investigated the base on their own terms. They found that Blackwelder was blackmailed into working on TARTARUS because of past LSD use. He was a true believer in science and progress and subconsciously hated himself for his part in TARTARUS. Not only that, but TARTARUS was a doomed project. It would not alter the course of history. It was futile work. Aaron found the equipment that his contact requested and had to take his mask off to get it.

Eventually, the group found Blackwelder and talked to him. They reminded him of his humanity and how he can redeem himself. He wept tears of blood and stepped into the furnace of the crematorium. All of the hunters pulled the switch as the illusion disappeared.

As they were leaving, they found Blackwelder's personal monster, a fleshcrafted abomination. It appeared like an angler fish made of human skin, with hands as teeth and three great eyes composed of dozens of smaller human eyes. Its tongue was split three ways and was composed of quilted human intestines. It was roughly the size of a large truck.

At the surface of the base, the hunters found the citizens of the town and the monster. They fought it and killed it, using one of the maggot bullets

from the revolver. Matt was nearly killed by the monster. As the monster melted away, they saw it had an iron lattice work to support itself.

## **2. MORE INFO ON THE GATHERING**

By Chronicler13

I've found more info on the cult. Apparently, it's getting pretty big but something's covering for it. A few scattered news reports of a big 'festival' in the Arizona desert seem to indicate that they have approximately 3,000 or more people involved from all across the country. The news and law enforcement agencies tend to think it is just some kind of music festival, nothing to worry about. However, a single report from a UFO newsletter states this:

\*The Gathering waits for a 'galactic intelligence' to contact the faithful.

\*They do not believe in primitive earthly technology. Only basic tools and equipment are allowed in the Gathering's headquarters. Everything is accomplished with 'crystal matrix induction techniques'.

\*The flesh is imperfect. Only the galactic intelligence can improve their earthly vessels.

\*Once 3,333 members join hands in a massive ritual, they can be united with the galactic intelligence. This will happen sometime on September 1, 2005.

\*New members can join by coming to the gathering recruitment center in Deadhorse, AZ, a small town of 54 people that the cult has taken over. They must wear ceremonial blue robes. These robes are easily made and I have instructions if someone wants to make them.

Also, one last note. The cult members that the group rescued from the safe house are dead, except for the child, who is missing. Someone shot them all. I don't know who.

It's about 1804 miles from Chicago to Deadhorse, AZ. 28 hours of driving, minimum. Good luck. I've left a few Johnny Cash CDs in Aaron's mailbox.

# WELCOME TO VOLUME 6 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

September 13, 2005

#####THINGS FALL APART, THE CENTER CAN NOT HOLD#####

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- 1. CHAOS
- 2. BLOOD IN THE STREETS
- 3. ORIGIN OF SPECIES

### **1. CHAOS**

By Chronicler13

Aaron had a meeting with Octavius. The mage described the Beast's history and tested Aaron's mettle. However, I could not see much of the meeting as the warlock somehow blocked me out.

The imbued drove from Chicago to Deadhorse Arizona to stop the Gathering. Along the way, they encountered several supernatural entities, including a group of rots holding children hostage at an abandoned diner. These rots were led by an enormous butcher king rot that planned to dispatch the kids. After a brief fight, the rot was slain and the kids were free. However, they disappeared into some kind of hidden realm, ruled by a 'Mr. Green'.

A roadside memorial in Arizona led to an encounter with a ghost that pleaded with the hunters to help her son. They found him working as a manager of a local hotel. The group discovered he had been imbued and did not know how to handle it. Eventually, they gave him an introductory lecture on the hunt and the new hunter dispatched a blood slave that had resided in the hotel.

Finally, the group arrived at Deadhorse. The small town had been completely taken over by the cult. Only a general store seemed open. The imbued entered the store and interacted with the cult members. David figured out that 'tithing' or sacrificing something was the cult's primary method of determining social rank. He cut himself to secure the group some food. Aaron saw that many packages of food in the store were contaminated with something...moving. He also saw the store clerk had some kind of taint. The clerk also had some kind of ability to detect supernatural abilities as he questioned the imbued suspiciously. Matt saw that another hunter had infiltrated the cult but did not have time to question him thoroughly.

Eventually, a 7 foot grey skinned man called 'The Protector of The Ways' talked to the group and said he would ask the Angel for instructions. The group waited. Tom left and scouted the area and found metal canisters under

each building.

The Protector returned and told the group to come with him to see the Angel. When they approached the Sanctuary, they were told to give up all earthly weapons and tools. David refused and walked away. The Protector hesitated, but it seemed that a fight would break out.

The town blew up at that moment.

The group reacted instantly, taking out the guards while the Protector ran into the flames. The hunters rescued the R.V. and drove into the Sanctuary. After an hour of driving, they found a ring of wooden poles with large crystals on the top. After some experimentation, they discovered it emitted an EMP type effect upon crossing it. They dismounted and approached the inner Sanctuary on foot.

Angel was finishing the ritual just as they arrived. The Inner Sanctuary had another ring of wooden poles with crystals and thousands of people crowded around a central altar/ziggurat. A battle ensued, as the hunters poured their conviction into stopping Angel. The Beast manifested and took the majority of cultists away, but Angel was slain. The hunters also discovered the location of Noland, the town where it all began.

## **2. BLOOD IN THE STREETS**

By Chronicler13

They're everywhere now. News reports are pouring in of supernatural crimes and savage acts. Some third world countries seem to be disappearing off the grid entirely. No one's heard from places like Easter Island, Mongolia, or Iceland.

Apparently, every cultist was tainted by the ritual and turned into some kind of monster. They appear to have radically different powers and weaknesses. Then the Beast moved them to different places across the globe where they spread the evil. However, it seems they're like a disease now, turning others into tainted monsters from simple contamination.

The only good news seems to be a huge influx of wake up calls. Hunter net has surged with new members and I'm beginning to see sigils much more commonly. Of course, this can't be entirely good news though.

An extremist group calling itself 'The War-band' has appeared from Chicago. They claim to be crusading against the source of the evil. Somehow, one of them knows about the Beast and the entire group is hunting...for you guys. I'll try to transcribe a radio transmission they sent out over Chicago, but it mentioned several of your actions in Chicago. They called you all 'traitors' and 'tools of the enemy'. I think they want to kill you and take your place. It seems to be led by the guy who threatened the other hunters

in Chicago.

### 3. ORIGIN OF SPECIES

I'm putting this in because Fyodor emailed me a response to it.

To: vitalis.list@hunternet.org  
CC: hunter.list@hunternet.org  
Subject: Whence are we, and of what scene?

A lot of people have written on this subject, and though I don't claim any special insight of my own, I thought I'd add my two cents to the mix.

The question could be posed a lot of ways, "What is the purpose for the imbued?" or "How did the imbuing happen?" but most simply the nagging question we all have is "Why are we here?"

I'm not really sure how long people like us have been on earth, but it's fairly common knowledge that the other side (to lump them all together) has been around for ages, at least as long as- if not longer than- humanity itself. Though a lot of them do not seem to do harm to the earth (or at least, no more, and sometimes less, than your average, everyday human), others do. Could the imbuing be sort of immune reaction? The more I look at it, the more plausible it seems. It would even explain the variance in callings from the heralds and behavior among hunters. Consider:

The body's first reaction to an infection is preemptive- i.e. prevention. Our skin, the phagocytes in our mouths, even our eyelashes are all intended to keep the harmful out while letting the good in. Don't each of us, in some way, serve this function? I've seen abilities manifest in myself and others that scream "STAY AWAY!" whenever the other side poses danger.

The body's second move is to go on the offensive. Please everyone, hear me out before you decide that I'm saying something I'm not. The body can, in various ways, isolate and destroy infectious bodies. One problem with this is that it is often very slow and/or inefficient. Certain immune cells destroy infected cells, along with those around them, in order to stamp out the infection. Others specifically isolate and attack harmful organisms, and it is more often these that help cure an infection, but they take considerable time for our body to manufacture.

That's practical immunology in a nutshell- defend and destroy. Yet there's one last thought I have, and I find it the most intriguing. Suppose that warding and demolition aren't the ultimate form of curing? To extend the metaphor, what if our bodies could take "infections" and turn them to the mutual benefit of both organisms? We know this happens, though we tend to forget it when talking about disease. When the first microscopic organism crawled inside another, it was probably not seeking to destroy it, but simply to benefit itself. The host might have destroyed it- God only knows.

But we know that at some point a host didn't destroy it, and that host became the first creature to have a mitochondria. Then a photosynthetic bacterium successfully took up residence in another host, and the first chloroplast came to be. Billions of years later, here we are, compilations of individual cells, most of which aren't even our own. Yet the microorganisms in our stomachs and the cavities of our bodies don't hurt us, indeed, they typically do us good. Granted, there are the occasional bad eggs, such as hurtful strains of the otherwise benign E-coli bacteria, and some of our guests are toxic when removed from their particular roost in our body, but for the most part, these things are our friends! Without them we couldn't even digest food. Sure, sometimes we get a cold or zits, and very rarely a really bad virus comes along and kills a lot of people-but that is no reason to assume the worst of them. Heck, oftentimes the solution to one virus is found in another virus, such as cowpox helping to inoculate against smallpox.

If any of this is muddy because of jargon, feel free to say so. Likewise, those more knowledgeable may have to supplement my lacking knowledge of evolutionary history (I had that class at 8:00 every morning, and fell asleep a lot).

Fyodor's response:

A unique theory John, but where does that leave you? How does redemption and understanding fall into a Darwinian struggle for survival? I think the difference between man and monster can be found in such an answer and that answer can help you find a solution to this Beast. Please email me if you need any material needs to be met. I believe you need all the help you can get.

[oblonsky@lament.ru](mailto:oblonsky@lament.ru).

WELCOME TO VOLUME 7 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

September 26, 2005

#####THE WORST ARE FULL OF PASSIONATE INTENSITY#####

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- 1. HUNTER DIPLOMACY
- 2. THE RED STAR

**1. HUNTER DIPLOMACY**

By Chronicler13

After the group returned to Chicago, they began to prepare for the trip to Noland. Aaron asked Samantha, Blackwilder's vampire child to use the Tartarus device to retrieve his memories. He got a glimpse of the child who now controls the Beast. The child was sick and hated everyone else for their health.

Tom mastered the art of kalindo, at a great personal cost.

The group researched the town of Noland and found it seemed not to exist in the records, except for a minute reference to some records in Montana State University's archives. A satellite map of the area revealed some unique marks but the group could not learn what it signified.

The Warband, the hardcore militant hunter group kept tabs on the group. Matt and John found they were being tailed. Both of them approached their tails and managed to talk the members into rethinking the Warband's philosophy.

David found a bug in his apartment and taunted the Warband when he found it. They charged in, trying to kill him, but fled after a brief firefight.

John talked to the fang he had met in the café earlier. It tried to use its mental powers on him but failed. Samantha appeared and scared the creature off, explaining to John that it worked for a vicious faction that would have killed him.

Matt arranged a meeting between the 'normal' hunters and the Warband. Tom attended. The meeting took place at a large park in the city, at night. The group gathered about 20 normal hunters while the Warband showed up with over 50 hunters on their side.

At first, the groups merely talked. The Warband leaders were the real fanatics of the group, inciting otherwise reasonable hunters into raging

killers. Matt argued for a reasonable solution, to unite against the real darkness.

Then the mob of vampires attacked.

Approximately 80 or more vampires attacked in three mobs, mindless frenzying beasts. The rank and file of both groups attacked the monsters. Tom changed into his war form, terrifying a few hunters and charged into the mob. The Warband leaders attacked Matt, John, and Aaron while they defended themselves. David sniped from a nearby concealed tree.

The battle only last a few minutes at most. However at the end, all of the vampires had been slain. Furthermore, 28 hunters died, 8 from the normal group, and 20 of the Warband's. The leaders managed to get away and the group survived with some injuries. 11 Warband hunters defected that night, swearing off the leaders' sociopathic ways.

Now, all roads lead to Noland.

## **2. THE RED STAR**

By Chronicler13

People across the world are beginning to see a red star in the sky. A star that some claim is getting bigger every night. I suppose that it's a sign of the end of the world. Anyway, some news highlights since you guys are getting a little too busy to watch CNN

\*The Government has NOT declared martial law and has stated that it will not, because every incident represents an 'isolated' phenomenon. It's basically refusing to recognize the supernatural.

\*Every national government does seem to be stockpiling supplies and preparing for some kind of calamity. However, they're more or less trying to keep the people from mobilizing in anyway, so the masses are left being left alone for the most part.

\*The Chicago Battle, as that night in the park is being called now, has become the biggest event in the hunter community so far. Most hunters agree that the Warband is wrong, since they fired on fellow hunters when a clear threat was present but the majority of hunters aren't comfortable with Tom. It has led to further mobilization and action though.

\*Some crazy bastard in South America claims that he is the son of an Incan god and has claimed large parts of the Amazon as his personal domain. A few imbued down there said his servants are all tainted. Brazil hasn't done anything about him though.

\*Some super corporation, Pentex, has been dissolved by the US government. The EU is dismantling their holdings over there as well. This wouldn't

be news except that their employees are being put into camps and/or being shot. One hunter who works for the Fed said Pentex is tainted. Another said the fed are dismantling it because they don't want competition for 'Gehenna', whatever that is.

## WELCOME TO VOLUME 8 OF THE WINDY CITY NEWS

December 13, 2005

I SAW THE BEAST...AND WITH HIM THE FALSE PROPHET THAT WROUGHT MIRACLES

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- 1. NOLAND
- 2. TWILIGHT'S END

#### **1. NOLAND**

By Chronicler13

The group left for Noland. Along the way, they searched a small town, seemingly abandoned. They learned it was owned by Pentex, a corporation Tom claimed was evil. At the town's center, they found a large escalator leading underground. After some initial exploring, Tom thought the underground was too dangerous, so they left.

Missoula had to little to offer except some additional information. Some research led to the discovery that Noland rested on an ancient city over a thousand years old and that a group of decadent European aristocrats had settled there 150 years ago.

Noland appeared normal from a distance, a small bustling town. However, the hunters met the Left Hand of the Beast at the courthouse. He appeared as the deranged mayor of the town, capable of killing his citizens without reason. The group talked to him, until the monster enraged Matt who shot the abomination. The Left Hand informed them that it was connected to every resident of the city and any harm that befell him would be visited upon the innocents.

During the night, the group visited a dancing competition at the church. To their horror, they learned each couple was poisoned and only the last dancers would receive the antidote. Outside the church, Tom found innocent humans made up as zombies wandering around in a daze. Obviously, the Left Hand had a twisted sense of civic engagement. The group acted to help the innocents.

The next morning, John and the others talked to the Left Hand again and managed to convince him that he would only find true happiness by opposing the Beast. The Left Hand severed his ties to the town, causing it to

collapse in the Earth. The group frantically raced out of town, getting as many innocents out as possible. Within a few minutes, the town was replaced by a deep lake...with a perfect circular circumference.

## **2. TWILIGHT'S END**

By Chronicler13

I've seen riots across the globe now. More natural disasters, from earthquakes to hurricanes. People in the mainstream media are even beginning to openly discuss the end of days. Strangely, it's lacking the fervor most people imagined. Despite the bloodshed and violence, many are simply shutting themselves in, waiting for the inevitable. Others have given into the darkness. Fortunately, there hasn't been a decisive major cataclysm so the masses still go to work. I think a lot of people are trying to stock as much as possible before the end, so a few more paychecks to buy bottled water or whatever can't hurt.

Some news items:

\*A group called the Technocratic Union has openly emerged, promising sci-fi gadgets like personal cold fusion reactors in exchange for swearing to disbelieve in the 'mass hysteria' sweeping the world as of late. I've heard from other hunters they're desperately trying to stop something.

\*The swamps of the South are pissed. Thousands of acres of urban sprawl has been swallowed up by an incredibly powerful fast growing swampland. Some claim 'dinosaur men' are causing this to happen.

\*Ten thousand women in Russia simultaneously clawed their eyes screaming about Baba Yaga. Shortly afterwards, a volcano erupted outside of Moscow. What the Fuck.

\*Famous ships like the Bismarck and the Yamato have been spotted by various ships. One yacht reported the Titanic, then the crew started screaming. The yacht was later found empty.

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all convictions, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?