

Psionic Tongue Zombies

[Install a chip](#) in people's tongues to help them with their sleep apnea, they said. Bathe their craniums with regular doses of electromagnetic energy, they said. Make it all accessible via the Internet Of Things, they said. You can probably see where this is going, right?

Well, perhaps you can't. Yes, an unsanctioned group decided to do some impromptu domestic terrorism by hacking the chips to go off at inappropriate and dangerous times. And they indeed figured out a way to use the hacked chips to just shut down somebody's cognitive ability more or less indefinitely (or at least until the chip failed). Which meant that they'd now had a bunch of highly suggestible, obedient zombies to play with -- well, at least until they'd get shut down by a *sanctioned* group, which typically happens pretty quickly in the modern era. Nobody gets to have zombies. It never ends well, particularly if you're the one making the zombies, and then somebody has to clean up **your** mess. Nobody likes being the garbageman.

Unfortunately, before the aforementioned unsanctioned group could be suppressed the unexpected side effects

started cooking off. Turns out that zapping somebody's head from the inside could, under the right set of circumstances, stimulate the parts of the human brain that governs our latent psychic abilities. Who knew?

Psionic Tongue Zombies typically have telepathy, which they can instinctively and reflexively use to 'piggyback' emulations of their original personality into various other tongue zombies' wetware and the aforementioned Internet of Things (yes, Top Men are working to answer the question of about just how they're doing that). There's also electrokinesis, psychokinesis, probably some kind of extra-sensory perception; nobody's seen a teleporter yet, and everybody's really happy about that, too. And once that part of the brain has been switched on, it's kind of hard to switch it off.

This means that, every time a Psionic Tongue Zombie meets anybody with the chip, there's a non trivial chance that it's going to download a copy of itself into the other person's brain. Which might cause the other person to spontaneously have his own psionic abilities stimulated. This isn't really a 'zombie apocalypse' problem as much as it's a 'rogue AI' problem; typically, a copy will eventually move itself to the Cloud via the Internet of Things, where it

will have a miserable existence thanks to the lack of processing power. It's all actually rather horrible, actually.

At the moment, nobody's sure just how many Psionic Tongue Zombies there are: the hacking problem started some time after the original procedure was approved for treatment of sleep apnea, so there's a lot of people out there who could be turned into regular zombies. Right now there's an unfortunately unsettled fight going on between the people who want to shut the program down now and the people who want to shut down the program after it cranks out a few hundred functional telepaths; it's not that the Great Game *wants* to turn people into zombies, but you can reverse the process and still get the psionics. And there are plenty of people out there who would volunteer to get access to telepathy.

But first things first: the unsanctioned group that started all of this needs to be shut down. Everybody's in agreement about that. Well, everybody who isn't in the unsanctioned group. And they've got some zombies with which to appeal the decision.

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