

Catalog (Quantum 5)

The year is 1975. Elvis Presley is in the middle of a European tour, and he sounds *fantastic*. So do the Doors, although Jim Morrison's marriage is reportedly on the rocks again; his off-again, on-again affair with Janis Joplin is a favorite subject for the tabloids. Jimi Hendrix isn't touring this year, but his latest album is poised to go platinum. Rumors abound that Cass Elliot is seriously talking about doing a reunion album with her old band, but that rumor's been perennial since 1970.

But the news isn't all great: J.P. Richardson's just been diagnosed with the cancer, poor fellow. It's sparked plans for a huge charity concert for cancer awareness, though, and all the big names will be there: Ed Cochrane, Patsy Cline, Otis Redding, and of course Rich Valens and Buddy Holley. They're calling it 'Life-Aid,' and construction of a special stadium and facility -- oddly, at the otherwise unremarkable town of Woodstock, NY -- has already begun.

Homeline agents would have already started looking for the interloper behind all of this about halfway through the first sentence. And they would have found him, easily

enough: he's Jack Wylde. "The Man Jack." The single most successful record promoter, agent, and manager that the world has ever seen. Richer than God, a walking encyclopedia of the music industry, and a ferocious defender of 'his' artists; Jack is not the most powerful person on Catalog, but there are few if any people who are more satisfied with how their lives have turned out.

Jack's also a cold-blooded megalomaniac who has personally murdered about sixty or so people at this point, but everybody's got a character flaw or two.

Catalog, 1975 AD

Current Affairs

The world continues on its way, with a lot more in the way of rock music and just a little bit more in the way of murder.

Divergence Point

1953: Jack Wylde world-jumps to Catalog, and murders his way to power, wealth, and fame.

Major Civilizations

Equivalent to Homeline's, circa 1975.

Great Powers

Equivalent to Homeline's, circa 1975.

Worldline Data

TL: 7

Quantum: 5

Mana Level: None

Centrum Zone: Unknown

Infinity Level: P5

On Homeline, Jack Wylde is a reclusive figure who enjoys sufficient wealth to own (very modest) properties in England, America, and Japan. Born in 1970, he had an unremarkable life as a music reviewer and writing until 2001; after that point, he gradually retreated from public view (not that he was ever really in public view). Wylde has not written an article or review since 2017; he has no friends, no loved ones, and his parents died in 2011. His existence today barely registers, even in the information saturated environment of Homeline's digital society.

That's on Homeline. On Catalog -- a shifted, stable echo of Homeline's -- Jack Wylde has been building a media empire since 1953. Wylde is a natural world-jumper with a

genuine love of music, a remarkable amount of specialized ambition and a high level of equally-specialized competence, which allowed him to swiftly become rich in that timeline (using the usual techniques and tricks for manipulating historical echoes, of course). From there it was simply a matter of keeping track of when and where musical stars were on track to self-destruct and/or die senselessly, and keeping that from happening.

Most of the time, it was merely a matter of paying off existing promoters, and paying attention to his clients. But certain people could never quite get into the program -- and that's when Jack Wylde discovered that he could kill a man without guilt or hesitation. It was actually very useful information, given that it meant that he could more or less murder with impunity any number of individuals, years before they could become threats to his clients. The need for really good research was honestly the only reason that Jack Wylde ever went back to Homeline, after his parents died; well, that and the medical technology. Particularly the portable kinds.

It's important to understand that to be a client of The Man Jack is to have a virtually charmed life. The contracts are fair, potentially self-destructive companions are ruthlessly

weeded out, your own self-destructive behaviors are likewise minimized into nonexistence, and the medical benefits are weird, but absolutely effective. This very much includes addiction problems; on Homeline, TL9 drugs that effectively treat substance abuse can be bought in drugstores. Jack Wylde regularly replenished his supply via world-jumping, but he probably has enough in storage right now to last him the rest of his career.

Jack Wylde currently lives in palatial estates in, yes, the United States, England, and Japan. He has never married, but has never been romantically linked to any of the artists that he represents, and his personal reputation is remarkably virtuous for someone in his position. Jack has one known child (a daughter named Miranda, currently aged 8); the mother was a former girlfriend who was given a generous stipend when the relationship ended. Jack hopes that Miranda will inherit his world-jumping abilities, but if she doesn't he's still going to leave everything to her when he dies.

And it's been a year since Jack's murdered anybody, too. He actually debated putting a bullet in the head of Nancy Spungen -- punk was never his favorite musical genre -- but Wylde assumed that he'd be more likely to **not** shoot

her, and regret it later. He's certainly lost no sleep about killing her since.

Outworld Involvement

Hoo, boy.

This is one of Infinity's Nightmare Scenarios: you have a world-jumper, you have a megalomaniac, you have blatant interference in an alternate world -- and you have a result that's not going to make people feel outraged on the alternate world's behalf. It's easy to get Homeline's populace upset over a neo-Stalinist dictatorship piling up the bodies to the sky; but a world where various people got murdered to ensure that Sam Cooke's still alive? It's a slightly harder sell, particularly in a world where Walker's Syndrome (a mental condition where it's difficult to see people from other worlds as entirely *real*) is a real, but deliberately understated, problem. On the other hand: Jack Wylde's murdering people, and he's going to keep murdering people until he dies. This is not acceptable.

And on the gripping hand? He's a world-jumper. That's, well, that's a very rare and valuable ability. Many groups and nations might be persuaded to overlook Mr. Wylde's

peculiar *hobby* in exchange for access to his services, or even just his genetic material. Infinity is *not* so persuaded, officially, but it's feeling a certain amount of pressure to not be hasty about things. After all, again, it's been a year since Jack's murdered anybody; surely they have time to determine the best way forward?

At least Centrum doesn't know about this world. Hopefully. Not that they could get to Catalog anyway. Probably. Nor would they care about the music -- no, wait, Centrum imports most of its music, so they probably would. In fact, it's a good thing that Centrum can't get to Catalog; they'd probably offer Jack Wylde a job on the spot, with no more than a mild suggestion that he clear all future murders with his superiors first.

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