

The Satchel of Capitaine Chanfrain

This cracking and stiff leather satchel has not seen the light of day since the CIA team sent to retrieve it pulled it out of a burning Phnom Penh residence in 1954. It is unclear whether or not that team set the fire or was trying to put it out; it is certain that whoever did set the fire did so in order to kill one Capitaine Jacques Adam Chanfrain. Capitaine Chanfrain was ostensibly in Cambodia in his official capacity as an officer in the French air force; it is also unclear whether or not his notorious ties to the occult (Chanfrain often boasted that half of his male ancestors -- and most of his female ones -- had been burned at the stake as witches) was also 'official.' The French are extremely close-mouthed about their esoteric policy practices, and Chanfrain had precisely the kind of horrid private reputation one expects of magical experts that have been over-indulged by their government handlers. Very few people missed the man's passing, although his grave has been dug up three times since 1996.

But back to the matter at hand. The satchel contains three notebooks, all filled with Chanfrain's small but ridiculously neat handwriting, and offers an invaluable primer on the basics of Southeast Asian magical practices. At least, all

of the nasty ones. Chanfrain really was an expert, no question about that; he had the ability to deconstruct a spell or ritual and identify its various elements in ways that even a casual student of the occult could follow. He was also a thoroughly unpleasant man with about as much empathy as a razor blade, which makes his commentary on, say, Vietnamese demonological rituals fairly chilling. Interestingly, for the time period the notebooks are mostly free of racism and even patronization; Chanfrain seemed to be writing as much for his Cambodian peers as he was for his French ones.

That's going to be a problem, if the notebooks ever see the light of day. There is a serious conceptual gulf between Eastern black magic and Western black magic; simply put, it is difficult for acolytes in one evil magical tradition to use the spells and rituals of other evil magical traditions, as the basic assumptions and expectations are simply too different to incorporate easily. Chanfrain's work would be invaluable in bridging this gap, and black magical cults already have too much twisted power at hand as it is. There's no reason to let them have more.

Fortunately, the Satchel is in a crate that got lost in fairly dramatic fashion: it first got sent to one of the CIA's Laotian secret item depositories, and kept there for twenty

years. It's officially destroyed now: the CIA thinks that it was lost in a plane crash in 1975, during the fall of South Vietnam. In reality, it had been misfiled as miscellaneous classified logistical documents and shipped to the USA a year before for evaluation and destruction. As of 1993 (the last year on the paperwork), the crate that it was in was still listed as being present in an obscure American government documents warehouse.

Which means that it should be right over there... huh. Well, *that's* weird.

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