

## Esoteric Controlled Transdimensional Observer Meter

Description: a human skull attached to a human spinal column, with two human humeruses (humeri?) serving as handholds (the ECTO Meter is held like a two-handed metal detector). The skull has two light bulb displays in its eye sockets that can flash red, yellow, blue, and green. There is a socket in the skull that will take a standard headphone plug, but not a USB port. The entire thing smells vaguely of polished bone and ozone.

Get a ghost to catch a ghost, apparently: the Esoteric Controlled Transdimensional Observer Meter comes down to us from the allegedly golden years of 1950s Atomic Horror Esoteric Counter-Espionage, when brute-force methods were linked to a certain ruthless efficiency in the service of national security. And, at that, it was an improvement. The immediate ancestor of the ECTO Meter used to put living creatures in a state of half-death in order to get the right etheric vibrations. And, well, **that** was an improvement on **its** ancestor. The less said about who they used for raw materials back in the bad old days, the better.

The ECTO Meter in contrast is relatively benign: take a ghost, install it in the skull, then have it 'glow' the proper

light bulb when it comes within ten yards of various supernatural elements. The colors are as follows:

- Red: Demon
- Yellow: Ghost
- Blue: non-ghostly spirit
- Green: default state

The headphone jack was added later to let the ghost give more information, mostly because it was found that the ghost performed better when it could talk to living people and get a response. Oddly, most ghosts inserted into an ECTO Meter don't seem to be upset about that; whether this is due to the insertion process or the nature of the confinement is unknown. It's certainly not due to ECTO Meter ghosts being volunteers. The original project had a fairly bad habit of taking condemned esoteric spies and implanting their ghosts after the spies' executions.

In any thematically-consistent universe this would have ended in utter, karmically-appropriate disaster; in this more prosaic one the project was a noted success and the people who ran it all died contentedly in their beds. The project itself likewise more or less died out in the 1970s, mostly from lack of attention. By that time ectoplasmic espionage was out and psionic remote-viewing was in, in,

in: there just wasn't enough call for ECTO Meters, and eventually people forgot that they were available. Some time in the 1980s everything was tossed into long-term occult storage and held for later review for final disposition.

Well, it's later. And the spirits in the ECTO Meters seem interested in getting back on the jobs. And, truth be told: ghost-espionage is back in fashion. So why not activate the ECTO Meter program? I mean, what could go wrong?

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