

The Lost Mace of Columbia

Very few people really pay attention to the fact that there is in fact a ceremonial weapon for the United States of America: it's called the Mace of the House of Representatives, and it's (theoretically) wielded by the House Sergeant at Arms. The current incarnation of the Mace is a reasonably hefty silver-and-ebony ceremonial item, so-called because it'd probably fall apart if somebody tried to use it as an actual mace for too long. A magical or esoteric scan of this particular Mace would reveal that it's got a reasonable amount of power; but precisely the power that you'd expect from a normal item used in mundane rituals for a couple of centuries. Nothing really *esoteric*, in other words.

But that's the *current* incarnation of the Lost Mace of Columbia. The **original** has been bathing in a pool of liquefied Freemasonry since it 'burned up' in 1814. In reality, of course, the Mace was taken somewhere safer, and has had generation after generation of esoteric engineers and Grand Mechanics work on strengthening, tweaking, and boosting its power.

And what are the Mace's powers? It's a last-resort item, really. Think of it as the American equivalent of Drake's Drum: the secret civic Order that keeps custody is not even going to *think* about breaking the Mace out of storage unless there's an actual invasion force just across the border. But if they ever do break it out of storage... the Mace supposedly gives its wielder 'perfect command over all true Patriots, in both this world and the next.' There's been some internal discussion in the Order about whether this means that the Mace can raise revenants, ghosts, or both *en masse*; but, of course, there's no way to find out except by having the country be on the brink of catastrophe.

The Lost Mace of Columbia cannot be wielded by the President, incidentally: it's a *Congressional* Mace, which means that its creators were working under the assumption that a President might be the person that the wielder of the Mace would need to oppose. There are only three people -- the Sergeant at Arms for the House, the Sergeant at Arms for the Senate, and the Architect of the Capitol -- who may pick up the Mace, and not immediately drop it. If all three of those people are dead, the Mace will somehow move itself from hand to hand until it finds somebody ready to reestablish the Republic, and go on from there.

Which leads to another internal discussion: is the Mace of Columbia somehow alive and self-aware? Nobody knows. It's certainly never said.

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