

Project Silence: DETACHMENT

*Department of Collation
Office of Corporeal Observation
(Subdivision: North American Continent)
Commerce Park*

*Classification: NTN (Verification: **SERAPH**)*

*The following is a transcript of a meeting dated XX/XX/XX in Washington City, District of Columbia, the United States of America (precise corporeal space-time coordinates have been classified as NTN, Verification: **SERAPH ARCHANGEL**). More complete dossiers on the participants are available upon request. All Servitors of Trade, Revelations, Protection, Destiny, and Judgement cleared for this report are instructed to immediately report any and all encounters of the term "Project Silence: DETACHMENT" to their superiors. Under no circumstances shall any cleared entity attempt to investigate said project further without full support from the appropriate agencies.*

List of entities present at this meeting:

- Major Gladys NMI Chang, MD, USMC (AFMIC) (Fated)
- Bruce Thomas Dreiser, MD, PhD, CDC (Null)
- Brigadier General Thomas Francis McKenzie, USMC (DIA) (Unresolved)
- Colonel Gregory NMI Rodgers, USA (INSCOM) (Unresolved)
- Lt. Colonel Walter Jose Francis Rodriguez, USAF (NRO) (Unresolved)
- Captain Henry NMI Vanderbilt, USN (ONI) (Destined)
- Special Agent Gerald Ivan Wilson, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Behavioral Science) (Unresolved)

Transcript begins.

McKenzie: Is everyone here?

(Several voices in agreement; various sounds of chairs being moved, coffee being poured and other minutiae)

McKenzie: Good. I know this meeting was called on short notice, so I'm glad that your various agencies at least were still able to send representatives. We'll just have to soldier on without the input from Central Intelligence and the NSA boys.

Rodriguez: And this is bad how?

(General laughter)

McKenzie: Walter, if you can still laugh when we're finished the briefing, I'll be a happy man. Yes, Henry?

Vanderbilt: Tom, is this meeting related to the agenda from the last one?

McKenzie: No, Tom. The brass still hasn't decided what our formal policy should be towards the Parasites. Until they do, your team is still cleared to work with them. Just don't trust them.

Vanderbilt: Of course. We haven't forgotten the trouble that 'Apollo' caused.

Rodgers: On that note, Tom: some of my people have found yet another bunch of Parasites.

Vanderbilt: Who are they pretending to be this time?

Rodgers: Some Central European pantheon that nobody's ever heard of: even the bookworms had to look them up. The report should be in your inbox tomorrow.

McKenzie: Let's move along. I've called all of you here tonight because of a very troubling trend in several of our operational theaters. Several operations have been hampered or ended in failure, and we've had a devil of time figuring out why. Eventually, though, we got lucky. Major Chang and Special Agent Wilson are prepared to brief you on how. Gladys, if you would start?

Chang: Of course, Sir. Sirs, several weeks ago a standard recon team working in the Baltimore metropolitan area was essentially wiped out by extra-dimensional entities. This has happened in the past; however, what made this particular atrocity noteworthy was that it soon became clear that our command structure had become somehow

compromised from the very beginning. My combat interrogation team and I were called in to investigate.

We were able to track the instigators of the atrocity through the use of Parasite and Renegade intelligence and a lot of old-fashioned detective work. We were fortunate that their lair was in an area where we could work without too much potential interference; despite that, the raid nearly failed on its own. To use a pun, the opposing commander of the extra-dimensional entities showed a most diabolical intelligence when it came to countering our tactics. We discovered why when we were finally able to forcibly debrief it.

Preliminary investigation clearly indicated that the opposing commander was what AFMIC calls a Destroyer of the Horde faction of aliens; its faction was later deemed to be that of CONSUMER. We didn't take any chances: a combination of certain captured extra-dimensional internal security equipment and enough ketamine to incapacitate an elephant managed to get the Destroyer secured and ready for field interrogation. Colonel Rodriguez, you had a comment?

Rodriguez: Only my usual one: I would like to state for the record, yet again, that both my group and I oppose the use

of such interrogation methods in the strongest possible terms, and will not permit them in our own bailiwick. Just kill them and be done with it: we're soldiers, not the fucking Gestapo.

Chang: And I would remind you, Sir, of Godwin's Law.

McKenzie: Major.

Chang: My apologies, Sir, Colonel. I spoke from heat.

Rodriguez: Very well: it's over and done with. What did you get out of the poor bastard?

Chang: Quite a bit - and may I add that the 'poor bastard', when we interrupted it, was in the process of eating a human being? There is little that we could do to its kind that would not be justified, in my opinion. At any rate, a surface interrogation gleaned the usual fragmentary amounts of useful intelligence from the supernatural claptrap; deeper probing, however, provided information that was much more disturbing. The use of certain stimuli caused a drastic shift: suddenly, we had a completely different personality. Worse, it was someone that was known to us.

Several months ago, my group lost one of our most energetic and zealous members to enemy action. His name was Captain Jason McLeod, and I can personally assure all of you to both his utter loyalty to our cause and his demise. It was a shock to hearing his voice come out of the mouth of that thing, and it was all I could do to not resolve the status of the Destroyer then and there.

After some trial and error, we were able to determine that the entity was not, in point of fact, McLeod: it had access to many of our fallen colleague's memories, and could be fooled into thinking that it was McLeod, but it wasn't any more human than the rest of its kind. However, we were able to determine that a judicious use of biochemical therapy and physical stimuli could keep the McLeod personality dominant long enough for debriefing.

A full report is in your dossiers: to summarize, the McLeod personality reported that it had spent an indeterminate amount of time as a prisoner of the Horde. It did not have an easy time of it: the personality had apparently been continuously tormented and brutalized until it had revealed all knowledge of our group and our mission. After this had been done, the personality had somehow been shifted into the vessel of the entity that we had captured and forced to serve as a living encyclopedia of betrayal. The

extra-dimensional entities were thus able to forecast the recon team's moves and tactics to deadly effect. Yes, Colonel Rodgers?

Rodgers: Major Chang, what was done with the entity after your... debriefing was completed?

Chang: We resolved its status, Colonel.

Rodgers: You mean that you permanently killed it.

Chang: Yes, Colonel.

Rodgers: You did not think the phenomenon worthy of further study?

Chang: Of course, Sir, but other factors outweighed that consideration.

Rodgers: Such as, Major?

Chang: Morale, Sir. This was something like a former member of my team, Sir: it was a unanimous decision to give it surcease.

Rodgers: I see.

Chang: With all due respect, Sir, I do not believe that you do. It was a unanimous decision.

Rodgers: Do you mean to say that you required an interrogation subject to cast a vote about his own execution?

Chang: It was the entity's own suggestion, Sir. It could feel the Destroyer personality beginning to regain consciousness.

(Silence.)

McKenzie: I think that we should move on from here. Gladys, thank you for your report.

Chang: Of course, Sir.

McKenzie: The other case study that I want to bring to your attention comes from the civilian side of our struggle. Special Agent Wilson?

Wilson: Thank you, General. Well, my report isn't nearly so grim, but it's a bit more troubling, we think. My group got called in during a fairly nasty child pornography case in

Omaha, Nebraska: the local SAC there made a Mulder call...

Vanderbilt: "Mulder"? Oh, that old television program. Never mind.

Wilson: I hate the name, myself -- don't ask me what I thought about the show -- but it's not my call to make. Anyway, enough weird things were going on that my team got sent out. Unfortunately, there were already a couple of dead kids, so it didn't look too odd that we stepped in.

It was clear right from the start that Eedees were involved: the gizmos were tracking psychokinetic energy residue so thick that you could almost taste it in the air. We were expecting to encounter members of LECHER faction, of course; we weren't sure about which actual type, but judging from the existing evidence we reasoned that Slavers and Deceivers were the most likely bet, so none of us went anywhere in groups of less than three -- and I do mean anywhere. The next week or so was pretty quiet: the dossiers have the details, but the investigation stayed fairly routine.

After a week or so, though, the gizmos started going even more nuts... and the bodies started showing up all over

town. We were able to investigate and dissect enough corpses to realize that we had stumbled onto a full-fledged fight between the Seelie and the Unseelie factions of the Eedees. That's what we in the Bureau call them, by the way. Neither side was paying too much attention to keeping things quiet, either: our team learned more about how to use our gizmos in two weeks than we had in the past six months.

Now, during all of this my team is still trying to track down and shut down the kiddy porn pushers, and we must have attracted some attention, because on day 15 of the faction war I got an untraceable call on my cell phone informing me of the best time and place to do my job. As per standing orders, I attempted to determine what kind of Seelie I was dealing with: it didn't start spluttering when I suggested that it was lying to me, so it wasn't a Polygraph, and it didn't get panicky when I didn't take the bait of 'immediate danger' towards kids, so I'm guessing that it wasn't a Mama Bear or a Gossip. If I had to guess, I'd say it was probably a Spock, or maybe a Kamikaze. Assuming that it wasn't one of the Unseelie, of course.

Not being fools, my team and I weren't about to charge in blind. We made sure to have plenty of surveillance equipment on and around us as we checked out the

situation. We also showed up very early, which allowed us to get some good footage of the fighting. It would seem that while the Seelie Eedees wanted us to make the bust, they wanted to do the serious ass-kicking first.

All things considered, the fight itself was anticlimactic: once it became clear that there weren't any human hostages in the line of fire, we held back and took lots of pictures as the Unseelie got their heads handed to them. Once the fight was over and the Seelie had left... yes, Major?

Chang: Special Agent Wilson, did you attempt to interdict the 'Seelie' extra-dimensional entities as they made their escape?

Wilson: Let me put it this way, Major Chang: I'll start 'interdicting' alien invaders that are armed to the teeth with automatic weapons that violate known physical law on the day that either the Bureau or the Project deigns to arm me with something more potent than a service pistol. I'm a cop, remember? People in this country tend to react badly to even the idea of G-Men with machine guns. So, we ended up taking pictures and cleaning up after those arrogant bastards. They were thorough about it, I'll grant them that much.

We thought that the story ended there, but we were wrong. Post-mission investigation of the video footage revealed a very interesting participant. Let me put on the slide projector.

(Sounds of surprise and consternation.)

Wilson: I see that some of you recognize Captain George Fraser.

Rodriguez: It can't be. I attended his funeral. I saw the footage of his death, damn it.

Wilson: I'm afraid that it is, Colonel. Once we knew whom -- or what -- we were looking for, we were able to positively identify the putative Captain on three later occasions. On the last of those occasions, we were even able to make brief verbal contact: the contact officer in question was a friend of Fraser's, and is personally certain that it was him. There's no evidence to suggest otherwise. We seem to have at least one dead man walking around.

Rodriguez: What... what happened to him?

Wilson: 'Captain Fraser'? He wouldn't comment on it too

much, and unlike some of our -- colleagues, Behavioral Science doesn't exactly have either the resources or the right mindset for involuntary debriefings. 'Fraser' claimed to have been sent back down from 'Heaven' to help fix some of the problems caused by the Eedees; he also had some pithy comments to make about the Project. Past that, the contact officer couldn't get anything we could use.

Rodriguez: I'm sorry, Special Agent: what I meant was, what happened to Fraser after your fellow agent encountered him?

Wilson: 'Fraser' got up and walked out the door. As I've mentioned before, the Project doesn't exactly provide my group with the gear we'd need for proper interdictions. 'Fraser' hasn't been seen since, by the way.

(Pregnant silence)

McKenzie: Thank you for your report as well, Special Agent Wilson. So, gentlemen -- Major Chang -- you begin to see what we're dealing with, here. These aren't the only reports of individuals apparently returning from the grave; once we knew what we were looking for, not a few other reports started making a whole Hell of a lot more sense.

What we have to do now is figure out what to do about it. Luckily, the CDC has come through for us again: they've sent us a specialist from one of their most interesting projects. Dr. Dreiser?

Dreiser: Thank you, General. Good evening, gentlemen, lady.

Rodriguez: Excuse me. Dr. Thomas Dreiser? The same Dr. Dreiser that was the primary author of the standard field manual on vampire detection?

Dreiser: Yes, Lieutenant Colonel.

Rodriguez: Chapter 6 is a load of crap. Your pardon, Major.

Chang: No need. It is.

(Faint laughter)

Dreiser: The latest version has been revised in response to commentary from the field. I believe that you will find it more satisfactory.

Rodriguez: Good to know.

Dreiser: I suppose. I am here to discuss the current situation that the Project is undergoing, however. If I may continue?

I am mostly here to make certain that the Project as a whole, and yourselves in particular, do not spend time considering possible answers that we at the Center for Disease Control have already considered and discarded. We have been analyzing the problem for quite some time, which has allowed us to eliminate the more egregious fallacies -- and come up with an acceptable solution.

The first fallacy that must be addressed is of course the one that none will admit to publicly considering: that these incidents merely indicate that the story given to us by the extra-dimensional entities is essentially true and accurate.

(Pause at silence)

Come now, gentlemen, lady, this is hardly a taboo subject. Many of you are religious individuals by background and inclination: it would be unnatural for you not to wonder whether these entities are not 'angels' and 'demons' in truth, especially considering that they seem to have

access to those of us who have ceased to live. This is an easy hypothesis to disprove, however: the home conditions of both the 'Host' and the 'Horde', while superficially resembling those of most depictions of the afterlife, break down utterly when examined closely. For example, I personally find it disingenuous that an entity that professes to be a Roman Catholic 'angel' can also profess to not know the actual status of Jesus Christ -- or God, for that matter. Likewise, a demon that has never seen Satan, fearfully swears to the existence of a human 'Princess' taken directly from Talmudic legend, and serves a 'Prince' of television sets? Such obvious lies are an insult to the intelligence.

The second hypothesis -- that these creatures spring from the collective belief of human consciousness, and must intrude upon our world to survive -- is more plausible, but equally flawed. I admit that there are entities that do exist in such a fashion, but they are an entire quantum level lower in power than our main adversaries. Furthermore, we have acquired technological equipment that is clearly superior to our current theoretical and practical capacity, yet perfectly capable of functioning in our reality. Jung's collective unconscious may produce archetypes, but I have yet to hear of it producing a single prototype.

(Laughter from one or two individuals)

Ah. A joke. My apologies.

To continue, it is the collective opinion of the Project's operatives at the Center for Disease Control that the Project's working assumption -- that we are being invaded by entities from another dimension that have taken on the trappings of common cultural beliefs and superstitions -- remains accurate. As the theory is thus deemed still viable, it behooves us to consider how current evidence can be explained in the simplest manner. We at the Center for Disease Control believe that our current theory explains the existing facts, without contradicting the current hypothesis.

It is of course well known that the extra-dimensional entities have a varying amount of personal control over matter and energy: those doubting this would do well to consider the official dossiers and reports that deal with the extra dimensional faction leader codenamed WANDERER. It is equally well known, as just mentioned, that the extra-dimensional entities' command of science and technology is markedly superior to that of our own, if not always fully reliable. Those facts, considered together, suggests that it is well within the capacity of our

adversaries to duplicate exact copies of anything they desire, including human beings.

What makes this of critical importance to the Project is that said duplication can and does act at the molecular level, which would logically include the neural network of a standard human brain. Thus, extra-dimensional entity technology would therefore be able to recreate a given human being, complete with all memories existing at the time of the duplication.

I see that this has gotten your attention. Obviously, this state of affairs puts the entire Project in jeopardy: if any member of it can be duplicated without his or her knowledge, then forcibly debriefed, then we are all potential traitors. It thus behooves us to prepare countermeasures -- and we have done so, using a combination of captured extra-dimensional equipment, and our own research.

Two years ago, operatives from the Project managed to capture both equipment and human traitors working for the extra-dimensional faction leader codenamed MANSON. Interrogation of these captives soon ascertained that they had gone through a process of fairly drastic physical modification; while crude and hardly safe, it showed some

promise in general, and much more when considered for our current difficulties. The modifications seemed to be designed to permit an indefinite expansion of lifespan and an increased ability to use psychokinetic energy; one side effect was that the combination of chemicals and exposure to certain types of radiation used in the conversion process completely altered the method by which memories were stored in the brain. It was swiftly determined that this alteration made it effectively impossible to others to remotely duplicate another's psyche at any time: this caused our team to consider it as a method of keeping the Project's secrets safe.

The procedure itself is straightforward. Using adapted MANSON technology, a volunteer is inserted into the conversion chamber, where his or her blood and neurons are replaced with a pseudo-volatile chemical serum that duplicates the functions of both. The exact nature of this serum is available only for those with Top Secret (DETACHMENT) clearance, but suffice it to say that it is psychokinetically active, cannot be duplicated and acts as a general preservation agent. We have determined that agents so treated no longer require sleep, food or drink, do not age and are immune to all sickness and disease. The procedure also allows them a full range of psychokinetic abilities, although this remains rudimentary

without proper training.

There are, however, side effects. To begin with, the process itself is not foolproof. Only volunteers in the peak of human condition are capable of successfully undergoing the procedure, and in some cases the transformation fails. In most cases, the subject may still be stabilized, at the cost of psychokinetic warping or even severe brain trauma. The aforementioned warping invariably results in a need for constant refreshment of certain key trace elements and compounds: we have developed palliatives to alleviate that difficulty, but the cost remains high.

Also, even when the process is successful the serum notably affects the subject's neural network, to the point where the pleasure centers of the brain effectively shut down. Fortunately, this is not a debilitating drawback...

Wilson: You're kidding me.

Dreiser: No, Special Agent Wilson, I am not. The sensation is less traumatic than one might think; there is still available a certain intellectualized pleasure that can be derived from aesthetics or logic. Much what we call 'pleasure' is simply a learned response to outside stimuli:

those with already developed habits will adapt readily. Furthermore, the pain centers of the brain likewise become inoperable: I am certain that all here can grasp the possible benefits of that condition.

Finally, the process does not take into account human body aesthetics; some of the physical changes can be disconcerting. For example, a small amount of necrosis from decreased blood circulation will eventually manifest; fortunately, a judicious use of both psychokinetic energy and any locally available deodorants has proven to be a satisfactory solution to this particular problem. Regular applications of cosmetics usually solve the others.

Vanderbilt: Still, Doctor, how well can people with this treatment function in normal society?

Dreiser: Judge for yourself, Captain Vanderbilt: I have successfully undergone the procedure.

(Pause)

Chang: So you can personally attest to the efficacy of the procedure then, Doctor?

Dreiser: Yes. I will not deny that there is an unavoidable

period of time where one must adjust to the new condition, but on the whole the process has resulted in a noteworthy increase in my productivity and efficiency. I have also been able to more successfully perceive and utilize both ambient and harnessed psychokinetic energy in all its forms since my conversion, so I am on the whole satisfied with the results, and I recommend that anyone given a similar opportunity take it.

(Pause)

Rodriguez: Immortality, you say?

Dreiser: As near as we can determine: we will of course need further time to prove this, one way or the other. As it stands, I do not see any reason why the condition cannot remain stable indefinitely.

Still, this is not the reason why Project DETACHMENT has been brought to your attention. As mentioned before, we at the Center for Disease Control had serendipitously discovered that the conversion process utterly disrupts the bioelectric energies that our adversaries are apparently using to duplicate our deceased operatives: field use of captured technology from factions OZONE and FRANKENSTEIN confirms that no successful harvesting

of psyches has occurred to Detached individuals killed in the line of duty.

Due to metaphysical engineering limitations, it is only possible to use the procedure on volunteers that are fully aware of the potential risks. Each one of you has been determined to have an above-average chance to successfully undergo Detachment: you will find in your dossiers contact information, should you decide to explore this matter further.

Mackenzie: Excuse me, Doctor.

Dreiser: Of course.

Mackenzie: I would like to make it clear that there is no obligation for any of you to volunteer. There isn't any unspoken obligation, either: refusal will have no effect on either your overt or covert careers. I'd like to say that the Project understands if you don't want your brain fiddled with like this -- but it's really because any hint of hesitation on your parts can and will be disastrous, and our higher-ups don't want to risk all the training that they put into us. I'd be annoyed at that cold-bloodedness myself, if I wasn't busy being so relieved.

(Nervous laughter, followed by pause)

Chang: For myself, I think that I will look forward to seeing more information on this. Will we be able to discuss this with other members of our respective groups?

Dreiser: There is a list of names in each individual dossier: you may provide those individuals with whatever information that you see fit. Otherwise, remember to follow standard security restrictions.

Chang: Of course.

Mackenzie: I would like to thank Dr. Dreiser for his report and time. I think that I may speak for the Project as a whole when I say that the very existence of our cause may well depend on your work, sir.

Dreiser: Not just our cause, General Mackenzie: our very souls themselves.

Transcript Ends.

Mechanical Notes

Yes, we're talking about Undead. Normal rules, except that Mummy candidates have to have 6 Forces to start with and the standard Need for Zombis and Vampires is for a fluid only made by Project Silence: DETACHMENT. Don't ask what's in it: really, don't. A surgically implanted container dispenses the stuff: a standard pack lasts (30 divided by the level of Need) days. Any Undead kept away from it for more than a day will effectively have Murderous/3 until they get replenished, or of course 'die'.

The material presented here is my original creation, intended for use with the In Nomine and GURPS systems from Steve Jackson Games. This material is not official and is not endorsed by Steve Jackson Games.

In Nomine and GURPS are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games, and the art here is copyrighted by Steve Jackson Games. All rights are reserved by SJ Games. This material is used here in accordance with the SJ Games online policy.

- Moe Lane
- <http://www.moelane.com>