

Operation RADIANT MISCHIEF

As most scholars of Redacted Occultism know, the Depression era spawned a large number of what we would now call 'magical terrorist groups,' as well as a few organizations that were not actually terrorists. For example, there is some argument as to whether the underground alchemical movement should have been lumped in, willy-nilly with Crimson Future cults and more conventional diabolists. While the alchemists back then were unpleasant, they weren't exactly nihilist. On the other hand, they were heavily involved with organized crime, with all the violence and criminality that that suggests.

On the *gripping* hand? The Federal Bureau of Investigation had wrested control over anti-alchemical operations from the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. The FBI was engaged in a War of Shadows with occult seditionists generally, and the FBN was not, so the alchemists got to be un-American sixth columnists like the rest of their arcane ilk.

The FBI's counter-occult operations were never formally codified, or even recorded -- one wag called them the 'Unmentionables,' which stuck -- but their powers were vast, and largely unregulated. Essentially, they were immune from prosecution for assault or even homicide, *if*

they could demonstrate that they had attacked a practitioner of Black Magic. If an Unmentionable couldn't, they'd be lucky to be sent to solitary confinement in Leavenworth for their actions. This high-risk, high-reward strategy worked, if in a very rough fashion. It also encouraged a work atmosphere of long, almost endless research into a target -- followed by highly violent, rapid action. This combination alarmed their arcane opponents; they knew that the Unmentionables might attack at any time, and with the entire US government behind them, but they never knew when.

Still, the FBI never had the same success against occult terrorism as it did against the Ku Klux Klan, mostly because Hoover adamantly refused to let anyone with actual magical talent actually work for his organization. There were just enough cautionary stories in the American Shadow Government to justify such a stance -- the infamous if obscured implosion of the OSS being the most influential one -- that the policy survived Hoover's own death by ten years. By then the Unmentionables were actually part of the DEA, having been quietly removed from the FBI's ranks in 1974, and transferred over. There had never been many of them anyway, and in their new position the group had found it hard to recruit new members from the DEA's ranks.

They certainly weren't enjoying the same level of resources and immunity from prosecution, either, which is why the leaders of the Unmentionables came up with Operation RADIANT MISCHIEF. The aforementioned old alchemist criminal organizations were actually still around, and making a lot of money being involved with the drug trade. Why not do something about it? For the good of the country -- and their own jobs, of course.

Alas, Operation RADIANT MISCHIEF (an ambitious plan to identify, isolate, and neutralize the most effective alchemical-drug supplies) ended... disturbingly, and without warning. One Friday the Unmentionables all went home for the weekend, and none of them showed up for work the next Monday. It was like they had been swallowed up; or possibly just killed en masse by vengeful alchemists with more firepower than expected.

Which would have been a reasonable assumption, except that every group associated with the arcane criminal community swore up and down that they had nothing to do with the Unmentionables, and were able to back up their protestations of innocence. Even the alchemists; in fact, *particularly* the alchemists. Like their mundane partners, the alchemical Mob understood extremely well the dangers in offing a bunch of Feds (even *these* Feds). They were able to convince the Shadow Government that no,

really, it wasn't them; and, indeed, nobody's ever been able to find out what, or who, happened to the Unmentionables. It was just one of those alarming watercooler stories.

...Of course somebody found an interesting set of evidence in a commercial storage space. That's what storage spaces are there for, it seems. And yes, of course your team has been tapped to investigate. We don't like it when federal agents get disappeared. It's a bad precedent to set. So go do due diligence on the documents, if you would? See if it means anything.

But *do* keep in touch. Like, every two hours or so.

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