

# Rule Book

ATLAS  
GAMES

## Cults Across



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*The Board Game of Cthulhoid Domination*

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If you like *Cults Across America*, you should try the **Call of Cthulhu**® roleplaying game produced by Chaosium Inc. It features similar subject matter, but takes everything much more seriously. Contact Chaosium at 950-A 56th Street, Oakland, CA, 94608-3129.

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# Rules of Play

In *Cults Across America*, you control a bunch of religious fanatics who aim to dominate the entire United States of America. Your faction consists of cultists, priests, creatures, and others, and their plans for domination include such goals as the creation of a continuous chain of lunatics that stretches from coast to coast.

*Cults Across America* is not a serious simulation. Rather, it allows players of all stripes to have a good time for a few hours, whether they aim to crush their competitors using deep-thinking strategy, enact improbable religious campaigns, or simply froth, foam, yell, and destroy.

## Three Games in One

There are three different ways to play *Cults Across America*. The following sections provide an overview of each, and will help you decide which one you'd like to try first. The nuts-and-bolts differences between the games are presented in "Scenarios" on page 11.

### The Standard Game

This is the "normal" game. It is intended for players who don't mind taking a few hours to play a game but who like a strong dose of the "beer and pretzels" factor, even if it means their painstakingly enacted strategic schemes are occasionally foiled by a player who manages to win the Mythos 500.

### The Strategic Game

This is similar to the Standard Game, but removes some of

really weird stuff. It allows more conventional board gamers to concentrate on sane strategies and not get too disturbed by wandering madness.

### The Bloodbath Scenario

This is *Cults Across America* on steroids, and can be played in as little as an hour. The rule set is reduced somewhat so players don't have to get all concerned about resource management and other fiddly details. The victory conditions are simple too: you win by stomping the hell out of anything that's not on your side. Last man (or whatever) standing takes the day.

## Set Up

Set up the map so all players can reach it easily. Each player should select a faction and take all the counters of that color. The deck of cards should be shuffled and placed to one side.

Next, the Personality counters should be placed in their starting locations.

#### *Personality Starting Locations*

Miskatonic U Marching Band . . . . . Arkham  
Pope. . . . . Denver  
President of the United States . . Washington  
Director of the CDC . . . . . Atlanta  
Ambassador from Uruguay. . . . . Houston

Each player determines how many counters he or she will begin the game with, according to the following table.

Players	Starting Counters		
	Cells	Priests	Relics
2	16	2	2
3	14	2	1
4	12	1	1
5-6	10	1	1

Next, players take turns placing their starting counters on the board. The player who will place the first counter should be determined by a roll of the dice, though any other method that all players agree on may be used instead. Starting with this

### List of Components

- 1 Game Board
- 1 Rule Book (what you're reading now)
- 112 Cards (57 Effect cards, 17 Equipment cards, 22 Summon cards, and 16 Victory cards)
- 384 Counters (74 Equipment counters, 48 Money counters, 35 colored counters per faction, 27 Creatures, 12 Plague counters, 6 Initiative counters, 5 Personalities, 1 Plague Bomb, and 1 Necronomicon)
- 2 Dice

player, all players take turns placing Cultist Cells on the map two at a time, proceeding clockwise around the table.

Cells placed at the same time do not have to be placed in the same city. Cells may be placed in any city regardless of whether another player has already placed Cells there, save that no starting counters may be placed in R'lyeh or any Dreamlands city. After all players have placed their Cultist Cells, High Priests and Sacred Relics should be placed in cities one at a time in the same order as before.

Initial control of the Personalities is determined after all counters have been placed, as described in the "Minders" section on page 10.

Finally, each player is dealt five cards and given \$10K from the counter stockpile. If any player is dealt any Victory cards in this initial hand, they are shuffled back into the deck and replaced with new cards until each player has five initial cards which do not include Victory cards. Play then begins with the first Game Turn.

## A Few Definitions

The following terms are used in the game rules. Learn 'em and love 'em.

*Active Counter:* A counter that can take actions. Non-active counters include Personalities without minders, Creatures without minders, and equipment.

*Combat:* Each engagement between two factions in a given city.

*Dice:* Unless a given rules specifies otherwise, a die roll is the sum of the numbers rolled on two six-sided dice.

*Equipment:* Any weapon, vehicle, or special item.

*Faction:* The collection of every active counter controlled by a specific player.

*Fight:* Each selection of an attacking counter, defending counter, and the results of that match-up. More precisely, each iteration of combat steps 3, 4, 5, and 6.

*Game Turn:* Each iteration of the Initiative phase, Action phase, Proliferation phase, and Bookkeeping phase.

*Minder:* A Cultist Cell or High Priest that allows a faction to retain control of a Personality or Creature.

*Phasing Player:* During the Action phase, the phasing player is the one who is currently carrying out his or her movement and combat actions.

## The Game Turn

A Game Turn consists of four phases performed in order: Initiative, Action, Proliferation, and Bookkeeping. After the Bookkeeping phase, a new Game Turn begins. Note that a player with no active counters is eliminated from play and is out of the game immediately upon losing his or her last counter. He or she does not complete any of the following activities. Life is hard.

## The Initiative Phase

The Initiative phase determines the order in which players will act in the Action and Proliferation phases. The first player is determined during each Initiative phase by a roll of the dice. Before rolling, however, each player may secretly hold an amount of money in his or her hand. The amount held is added to the player's die roll. For example, if Howard held \$3K in his hand during the Initiative phase and rolled a 6, his actual total would be 9.

Players will take their turns in the order of their Initiative totals. (In case of a tie, the tied players should flip a coin to determine which of them will be first.) The player with the highest total takes the "Player #1" counter, the player with the next highest total takes the "Player #2," and so on, so all players know when their turns are.

## Action Phase

Each Action phase consists of two steps, the movement segment and combat segment, which must be performed in that order. Each player carries out his or her movement and combat segments (starting with the player who won "Player #1" in the Initiative phase) before play passes to the next player. The Action phase ends when each player has performed his or her movement and combat segments once.

### Movement

During his or her movement segment, the phasing player may elect to move each of his or her active counters to an adjacent city. For example, an active counter in Chicago could legally move to Milwaukee.

An active counter which possesses a vehicle (that is, a Satanic Pushcart, Big Honkin' Truck, or Tank—see "Vehicles" on page 9) may move two cities. For example, an active counter in Chicago with a Satanic Pushcart could legally move to Buffalo.

Instead of moving normally, any active counter that the phasing player controls may try to enter the Dreamlands. In order to successfully enter the Dreamlands, the phasing player indicates a counter and rolls the dice. If the roll equals or beats the dreaming target number shown on the chart below, the indicated counter must be placed on one of the Dreamlands Gate spaces: Ulthar, the Vale of Pnath, or the Plateau of Leng. Dreaming uses a counter's entire movement segment. The selected counter may not move prior to a dreaming attempt, nor may it move after a dreaming attempt whether it was successful or not.

Dreaming counters retain their equipment.

#### Dreaming Target Numbers

Type of Counter	Target Number
Cultist Cell	9
High Priest	7
Creatures	8

Personalities . . . . . 9  
 Any counter in R'lyeh. . . . . 5

## Combat

After he or she is finished with the movement segment, the phasing player may initiate combat in any city that contains at least one of his or her active counters.

Combat takes place in one city at a time. All fighting in one city must be resolved before fighting begins in another city. The decision to undertake combat in another city may be reserved until the end of the current combat.

Combat must be declared on one enemy faction at a time—the player controlling that enemy faction becomes the defending player. In the event that the phasing player wishes to fight more than one opponent in the same city, all fighting against one player must be finished before another player can be engaged.

In a combat, the following steps are observed:

1. All players (even those who are not engaged) have a last chance to play cards that do not specifically state they can be played during combat. If multiple players wish to play cards, Player #1 plays a card first, followed by Player #2, and so on. After each player has played a card, Player #1 may play a second card, followed by Player #2, and so on. This continues until all players consecutively decline to play cards.
2. The attacker and defender both have a last chance to swap equipment amongst their own counters in the city in question. This can be done secretly if either the attacker or defender wishes.
3. The attacker chooses one of his or her active counters to be the attacker.
4. The defender chooses one of his or her active counters to defend against that attack.
5. The attacker and defender each roll dice and add any bonuses they are entitled to. Note that bonuses from vehicles and weapons are not cumulative. See "Equipment" on page 9 for more details.
6. The counter with the lower total is removed from play along with any equipment it possessed. If the result is a tie, both counters and all their equipment are destroyed.

Repeat steps 3, 4, 5, and 6 until all of the attacker's counters have attacked once or the attacker calls off the attack. The attacker may only decide to call off his attack after each iteration of step 6.

The defender may have to use his or her counters more than once in a single Combat. This is legal, but he or she may only use a counter a second time after all defending counters have been used once, may only use a counter a third time after all defending counters been used twice, and so on. Counters being used for the second time subtract one from their roll,

counters used for the third time subtract two, and so on.

Third party factions with counters in a city where a combat is going on have the option to join in on one side or the other.

During step 3 of the Combat sequence, the attacker may ask any third party player for the use of a specific third party active counter. If the third party player agrees, that counter serves as the attacker's counter in that contest.

During step 4 of the Combat sequence, the defender may ask any third party player for the use of a specific third party active counter. If the third party player agrees, that counter serves as the defender's counter in that contest.

The contest is resolved as normal with the owner of the counter in question rolling the dice for it. Casualties are removed as normal.

## Combat Example

Howard and August just can't seem to get along in Little Rock. Howard has two Cultist Cells (who have Sticks and Stones and Whips and Chains) and a Mi-Go there. August controls two Cultist Cells and one High Priest, who have one Knives and Guns counter to share. On August's turn, he declares Combat.

First, they have a last chance to play cards. August is Player #1 this Game Turn, so he goes first. He plays Whips and Chains, and places the appropriate counter in his stack. Howard, Player #2, plays a Summon Cthonian card, and places a Cthonian in Little Rock, under his control. August passes on his second chance to play a card, as does Howard, so the combat sequence continues.

Second, equipment is distributed by each player in secret. August assigns his Knives and Guns to one of his Cultist Cells and his Whips and Chains to his High Priest. Howard assigns Sticks and Stones to one Cultist Cell and Whips and Chains to the other.

Now the violence begins. August chooses his first attacker, naming his unarmed Cultist Cell. Howard elects to defend with his Mi-Go. August rolls a five and adds +1 because he has a friendly High Priest in the city, for a total of six. Howard rolls a five, but he adds his Mi-Go's combat bonus of +2 for a total of seven. It looks bad for August's Cell, but he plays a Use the Force card (which specifically states that it may be played during combat, otherwise it could not be played at this time) and adds a further +2 to his own roll, bringing his total to eight. The totals now stand at eight to seven, and the Mi-Go is eliminated.

August names his Knives and Guns-bearing cell as his next attacker, and Howard defends with his Cthonian. August rolls three and adds +3 for his equipment for a total of six. Howard rolls a seven and adds +4 for the Cthonian's combat bonus for a total of eleven. August's Cell is scraped up with a putty knife and sent off the board.

At this point, August elects to call off the attack, so this Combat ends.

It is possible for a third party to help both the attacker and defender (and possibly even fight against his or her own faction), but regardless of which side the counters participate on, each third party counter may only be used once per Combat.

Note that the use of third party attackers allows the attacking player to fight more times than he or she personally has attacking counters. However, a Combat is always over when all the attacker's units have attacked once.

## Proliferation Phase

There are five segments to the Proliferation phase: money, cards, upgrades, cultists, and purchases. They are handled differently than the segments in the Action phase, because each player completes each segment before the next segment begins. For example, in a game between Howard, August, and Brian, Howard would get his money, then August would get his money, then Brian would get his money; next, Howard would

get his cards, August would get his cards and Brian would get his cards; and so on.

Alternatively, all players can proliferate simultaneously. When this is done, each player completes the Proliferation phase segments on his own without waiting for other players. This saves game time, and generally has little or no effect on the outcome of the game. Simultaneous proliferation can only take place with the unanimous approval of all players.

## Proliferation Segments

*Money:* Each player receives \$10K.

*Cards:* Each player receives one card. Additional cards may be purchased for \$5K each. Players may buy cards one at a time and look at each one before deciding whether to purchase more.

*Upgrades:* Each player may upgrade up to three of his own Cultist Cells to High Priests for \$20K each, though no player may have more than three High Priests in play at any given time. See "Counter Limits" on page 10.

*Cultists:* Each player receives the following:

- 1 Cultist Cell in every city that is currently home to one or more High Priests.

## Speedy Combat Rules

The following alternate rules for combat speed the process up. They can be used with any of the three scenarios to save time, but limit tactical combat options, so players of the Standard of Strategic Games will probably want to use the normal rules for combat.

Under these rules, assistance from third party counters is not permitted. Before combat begins, each player plays any last minute cards and assigns equipment as normal.

Then, instead of assigning individual attackers and defenders, each player rolls two dice for each active counter in the combat on his or her side and adds each applicable combat bonus his or her side is entitled to. Each player divides his or her total by nine (rounding down), and the opponent must remove that many of his or her own counters from play (of the owner's choice). Once this is done, the combat is over.

For example, Howard has three Cultist Cells armed with a Big Honkin' Truck and two Sticks and Stones in Waco. He attacks August, who controls three Cultist Cells and a High Priest who have four Sticks and Stones among them. Howard rolls 24 on six dice (two for each of his active counters) and adds five (his truck and two Sticks and Stones). His total is 29. August will lose three counters ( $29 \div 3$ , dropping fractions). August, on the other hand, rolls 32 on eight dice and adds seven (the High Priest provides a +1 bonus to three different cells, and four of his counters can use Sticks and Stones) for a total of 39. Howard will lose four counters. August elects to lose his three Cultist Cells (also losing the Sticks and Stones they were carrying). Howard must remove his entire force from play, along with their equipment, since he only has three active counters and has taken four casualties.

All of the Bait and Switch cards should be removed from the deck if this optional rule is used.

## Combat Example 2

Howard has been holed up in Waco for quite some time; he has two Cultist Cells there (A and B). Brian has just moved six Cultist Cells into the city (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). During Brian's combat segment, he declares his attack.

Both decline to play any cards, and there is no equipment to assign.

Brian attacks with Cell 1; Howard defends with Cell A. Brian rolls three and Howard rolls six. Cell 1 is removed from play.

Brian attacks with Cell 2; Howard must defend with Cell B (since his only other Cell in the city has already been involved once). Brian rolls five and Howard rolls twelve. Cell 2 is removed from play.

Getting frustrated, Brian attacks with Cell 3. Howard may choose either of his cells to defend (since both have fought exactly once), and chooses Cell A. Brian rolls a five. Howard rolls a six but must subtract one since Cell A has fought already in this Combat, so his total is five. Since it is a tie, both Cells are eliminated.

Brian presses the attack with Cell 4. Howard defends with Cell B. Brian rolls seven. Howard rolls a nine and subtracts one (because Cell B has already fought once in this combat) for a total of eight. Cell 4 is eliminated.

Brian sighs and attacks with Cell 5. Howard defends with Cell B (his only remaining Cell). Brian rolls a seven. Howard rolls an eight, but must subtract two (because Cell B has previously fought twice in this combat). The totals being Brian 7 and Howard 6, Cell B is eliminated and the combat is over.

- 1 Cultist Cell per four cities the player's faction controls. These Cells may be placed anywhere the player already controls an active counter, but not in the Dreamlands.
- Up to 3 Cultist Cells at a rate of \$10K each. These Cells may be placed anywhere the player already controls an active counter, but not in the Dreamlands.
- 1 Cultist Cell for every set of cards redeemed. A set of cards is a group of three cards with either the same cultist silhouette on each (for example, three pistol-wielding cultists) or one of each silhouette (one pistol, one club, and one SMG-bearing cultist) on them. Cards redeemed as a set do not generate their normal effects, they are simply discarded. The new Cultist Cell may be placed in any city on the board, including the Dreamlands. (This is one of the only ways new Cultist Cells may be placed in cities where the player does not already have active counters.)

*Purchases:* The following items of equipment can be purchased at the following rates.

#### *Equipment Purchase Table*

Sticks and Stones . . . . .	\$3K
Whips and Chains . . . . .	\$6K
Knives and Guns . . . . .	\$9K
Satanic Pushcart . . . . .	\$4K
Big Honkin' Truck . . . . .	\$12K
Tank . . . . .	\$20K
Cosmic Ray Gun . . . . .	\$30K
Nuclear Reactor. . . . .	\$30K

The Proliferation phase is the only time Cultist Cells, cards, and equipment may be purchased, except by the effects of cards or other special rules. Likewise, the Proliferation phase is the only time that Cultist Cells can be upgraded to High Priests save by using a card.

Note that cards which bestow equipment are not (necessarily) part of this turn segment. They bestow the equipment listed on them at any time, at no cost to the player.

## Bookkeeping Phase

The following actions take place in order in the Bookkeeping phase, after all Proliferation actions have been completed.

### *"At the Beginning of Bookkeeping" Actions*

Some effects state that they should be resolved at the beginning of the Bookkeeping phase. These are resolved at this time. If two or more actions are to take place at this time and it makes a difference which happens first, a random method should be used to determine their order.

### *The Plague*

The procedure for the plague is as follows:

1. Check for spread: Any city adjacent to a city that is already infected will itself be infected itself on a roll of 1 or 2 on a single die. Place a plague counter in any newly-infected city immediately.
2. Check for casualties: The plague attacks each Cultist Cell, High Priest, or Personality in a plague-infested city, killing it on a roll of 1 or 2 on a single die. Roll separately for each.
3. Plague fizzles: The plague automatically fizzles (the plague counter is removed from that city) in any city that contains no Cultist Cells, High Priests, or Personalities. In addition, the plague fizzles in any city that does contain a Cultist Cell, High Priest, or Personality on a roll of 1 or 2 on a single die.

### *Cult Infestation*

If any one faction has more than six High Priests and Cultist Cells in any combination in a single city during the Cult Infestation segment of the Bookkeeping phase, the local authorities notice and begin to clean up the area.

Any player may point out a violation of this rule—the player who owns the counters is not responsible to announce it. If the number of counters is found to be in excess, the player to the offending player's left must remove any one offending counter from the over-infested city. The removing player chooses any counter he or she wishes, as long as it is a High Priest or Cultist Cell. Items of equipment disappear with eliminated counters, so the player being penalized must make sure the equipment in that city is clearly assigned so the removing player can make an intelligent choice.

### *Reactor Dividends*

Each player who can operate a Nuclear Reactor this turn receives \$10K per Reactor. Each player who operates a Nuclear Reactor must check to see if resident counters become casualties. See "Nuclear Reactors" on page 10 for more information.

### *"At the End of Bookkeeping" Actions*

Some effects state that they should be resolved at the end of the Bookkeeping phase. These are resolved at this time. If two or more actions are to take place in this phase and order matters, a random method should be used to determine which goes first.

## The Map

The map represents the United States of America and the Dreamlands. Movement is possible between the two by dreaming (see "Movement" on page 4) or through teleportation from Celephais (see "The Dreamlands" on page 8).

The map consists of a collection of cities connected by

lines which represent the only possible routes of travel between them (except by dreaming). When a “one space” move is referred to, that means that the counter in question may follow any line out of a city to the next city on that line. A “two space” move consists of two one space movements.

Cities are the only places on the map where counters may be legally located.

## The Dreamlands

Movement between cities in the Dreamlands works just like normal movement, with one exception. An active counter that begins its movement segment in Celephaïs may teleport to any city on the map in place of a normal move. The counter is not required to do so, however. It may remain in Celephaïs with the option to teleport in some later turn, or may move normally to some other Dreamlands city.

Dreamlands cities count as normal cities for all other purposes unless a rule specifically states otherwise.

## Control

A faction is said to have control of a city if that faction controls all active counters found there. Active counters from different factions may certainly co-exist in a city, but neither is considered to have control.

## Cards

Cards represent special effects and occurrences in the game. No player may have more than six cards in his or her hand at any time. If a player gains a card that would bring him or her above six, that card is immediately discarded.

There are four types of cards:

*Summoning Cards:* These cause a Creature counter to be placed on the map.

*Equipment Cards:* These cause an Equipment counter to be placed on the board in the city of the player’s choosing. This item is immediately placed in the possession of any counter in any player’s faction. This piece of equipment is free.

*Victory Cards:* These allow players to accumulate points towards victory by fulfilling certain conditions that are described on the cards. See “Victory Point Victory” on page 11 for more information.

*Effect Cards:* These have various purposes. Directions are printed on the individual cards.

Most cards can be played at any time except during combat. This is the case unless the card states that it may only be played at a certain time. Victory cards are an exception to this rule. They must be played immediately when drawn from the deck.

Unless a card states otherwise, it takes effect immediately when played, during the current phase of play. For example, if a “Promotion” card was played during the “Cultists” segment

of the Proliferation phase, the new High Priest would spawn a new Cultist Cell during that Proliferation phase. As another example, if you summoned a creature during your movement segment, you would be allowed to move it immediately.

The order in which cards are played is often very important. Card effects are resolved in the order they are announced. If two players announce card play simultaneously, they should roll dice to see which takes effect first.

When a card is announced, all play stops until the effect is resolved. If a player is in the middle of completing an action when the card is played, the card takes effect after the action is finished. For example, if a player is in the middle of buying a Tank while another player plays the card Stock Market Crash, the first player may purchase the Tank, and his supply of money is then reduced to \$3K, as per the effect of the card.

## Counters

There are several different classifications of counters. Each is defined and discussed below.

### Cultist Cells

Cultist Cells are always active counters under the control of the player who is controlling that color. Cultist Cells may possess equipment and vehicles, and may act as minders for counters that require them.

### High Priests

High Priests are always active counters under the control of the player who is controlling that color. High Priests give a (cumulative) +1 to the combat rolls of all Cultist Cells of the same faction in the same city. High Priests do not receive their own bonus in combat, nor do they receive the bonuses of other High Priests. High Priests may possess equipment and vehicles, and may act as minders for counters that require them.

### Personalities

These are major figures that do not begin the game allied with any particular faction, but may wind up under the sway of any of them. Personalities need to have minders to be active counters (see “Minders” on page 10). When Personalities die they are not returned to the game, with the exception of the President of the United States (see “President of the United States,” below).

Personalities that are active counters may fight just like other active counters. Personalities that are active counters may also possess equipment. Personalities who become uncontrolled but have equipment retain their equipment.

Each Personality has special rules associated with it, which are discussed below.



## *The Miskatonic University Marching Band*

This counter adds +1 to the combat rolls of all friendly counters (the controlling player decides what counters are friendly) in the city the Band occupies. The Band does not receive its own +1 bonus.

## *The Pope*

The Pope is opposed to weaponry. Because of this, no weaponry of any kind is effective in any city occupied by the Pope (the Cosmic Ray Gun may exist and be operated in a city occupied by the Pope, but may not be fired into a city the Pope occupies). This affects Sticks and Stones, Whips and Chains, and Knives and Guns, but not vehicles or any other types of equipment.

The Pope is also against birth control, and so any player who controls the Pope only pays \$8K for new Cultist Cells during the Proliferation phase (no matter where they are placed).

## *The Ambassador from Uruguay*

The Ambassador is a vicious little bastard, and automatically eliminates any other Personality that finds itself in the same city. No combat is fought—the other Personality is automatically removed from play the instant the two are forced to cohabitate. This sad fate also befalls any Personality moving through a city (on a Satanic Pushcart, for example) that the Ambassador occupies.

## *The Director of the CDC*

The Director has all kinds of nasty germs at his disposal, and as a consequence, has the ability to start the plague. There are two ways to do this. First, the player controlling the Director may spend \$10K during the purchases segment of the Proliferation phase to start the plague in the city the Director occupies. Second, the player controlling the Director may spend \$15K during the Purchases segment to construct a Plague Bomb. This Plague Bomb is represented by an equipment counter which is given to any active counter in the city the Director occupies. The counter with the Plague Bomb may activate it at any time. When activated, the active counter carrying the Bomb is removed from play and a plague counter is placed in the city the bomb occupied.

## *The President of the United States*

The President can call out the National Guard. Any time the President becomes involved in a Combat, (that is, he is in a city and his faction declares combat there, has combat declared against it there, or becomes involved in combat as a third party there), his controlling player may pay \$3K for each counter of the National Guard that will fight. Guardsmen are purchased between steps one and two of the combat sequence. National Guardsmen fight just like other active counters. National Guardsmen may not be assigned equipment

or vehicles, and are removed from the game when the Combat is over.

Unlike other Personalities, the President returns to the game when he is killed. At the beginning of any Bookkeeping phase when the President is not in play, one player should roll the dice. On an 8 or higher, the President appears in one of the following cities (roll a single die):

- 1 Washington
- 2 Des Moines
- 3 R'lyeh
- 4 Minneapolis/St. Paul
- 5 New Orleans
- 6 Seattle

## **Creatures**

These counters represent various Mythos beasts, gods, and critters. Each creature has an inherent combat bonus listed on its counter, which is added to the creature's roll in Combat. Creatures may not possess equipment of any kind, and must have minders (See "Minders" on page 10) to be active counters.

## **Equipment**

Equipment comes in three varieties. Each is described below.

### *Weaponry*

Weaponry includes Sticks and Stones, Whips and Chains, and Knives and Guns. All items of weaponry provide a bonus in combat. Sticks and Stones give +1, Whips and Chains give +2, and Knives and Guns give +3. No counter may possess more than one weapon at a time.

### *Vehicles*

Vehicles allow the counter that possesses them to move at a rate of two cities per turn. Vehicles include Satanic Pushcarts, Big Honkin' Trucks, and Tanks. Some vehicles also provide a combat bonus. Having a Big Honkin' Truck gives +3, and having a Tank gives +4. No counter may use the combat bonus from both a weapon and a vehicle at the same time, and no counter may possess more than one vehicle at a time.

### *Special Items*

Some items of equipment have special rules associated with them. They are described below.

*Sacred Relic:* Any Cultist Cell or High Priest possessing a Sacred Relic of the same color gains +3 to its combat rolls. Sacred Relics may be used along with other equipment when determining a total combat bonus. If a counter carrying a Sacred Relic is destroyed, the Sacred Relic is not destroyed, as other equipment is. Instead, the counter that was victorious

against it gains possession of the Relic. If a Sacred Relic is destroyed outside combat, is part of a combat where there is a tie and both counters are destroyed, or is not destroyed by a specific counter, it is removed from play permanently. Other factions' Sacred Relics are of no practical use to counters that possess them, save for fulfilling some victory conditions and preventing opponents' use of them.

*Nuclear Reactor:* Nuclear Reactors are not portable, may not be built in the Dreamlands, and are not assigned to individual counters like other equipment is. After construction, they remain in the same city until destroyed. A faction that controls a city that is home to a Nuclear Reactor may elect to operate that Reactor each turn, gaining \$10K during the Bookkeeping phase for its troubles. When operating a Reactor, however, the operating player must roll a single die for every active counter he or she controls that is present in the city. On a 1, that counter dies of radioactive waste poisoning and militant environmentalist protests. If all counters in a given city are killed in this way, that Reactor generates no income on that turn.

*Necronomicon:* Though any active counter may possess the Necronomicon, only a High Priest may use it according to the rules below. A High Priest possessing this tome may summon a Dimensional Shambler, Hunting Horror, or Byakhee during its controller's Action phase instead of moving and fighting. A creature summoned in this manner appears immediately, in the same city as the High Priest, initially under the control of the High Priest's faction. The summoned creature may not take any actions (save to fight if attacked) until the next Game Turn.

*Cosmic Ray Gun:* Cosmic Ray Guns are portable like other equipment, but may only be used in cities that have Nuclear Reactors in them (though the firer need not control the Reactor). An active counter with a Cosmic Ray Gun in a city with a Nuclear Reactor may target one active counter anywhere on the board (except in the Dreamlands) and destroy it automatically in the combat segment of the controlling player's Action phase.

## Ownership of Equipment

Two active counters in the same city may exchange equipment instantaneously and at will (except during combat). If requested to do so at any time, a player must specify which counters in a given city possess which items of equipment at any given time.

If ownership of equipment is shifted across factions in mid-turn, the new controlling faction may not utilize that counter until the next game turn.

## Counter Limits

The number of counters in the game is limited intentionally. The following list reflects the maximum number of counters of any given type that can be in play at once. Other counters

not listed here are available in unlimited supply—if you run out, simply use whatever is handy to represent more.

### Faction Counters

30 Cultist Cells of each color  
3 High Priests of each color  
2 Sacred Relics of each color

### Personality Counters

1 Pope  
1 President of the United States  
1 Ambassador from Uruguay  
1 Director of the CDC  
1 Miskatonic University Marching Band

### Creatures

5 Hunting Horrors  
5 Dimensional Shamblers  
4 Byakhee  
4 Mi-Go  
3 Cthonians  
3 Gugs  
1 Cthulhu  
1 Cthugha  
1 Hastur  
1 Ghatanothoa  
1 Nyarlathotep

### Miscellaneous Counters

5 National Guardsmen  
1 Necronomicon

### Equipment Counters

20 Sticks and Stones  
15 Whips and Chains  
10 Knives and Guns  
10 Satanic Pushcarts  
6 Big Honkin' Trucks  
4 Tanks  
2 Nuclear Reactors  
2 Cosmic Ray Guns

## Minders

Personalities and Creatures require minders in order to be active counters. A minder is simply a faction member responsible for making sure normally-neutral entities like Creatures and Personalities remain under control. A Cultist Cell or High Priest may act as a minder for any number of Personalities and/or Creatures, as long as all counters to be minded are in the same city as the minder.

The faction that will control a given Personality or Creature is determined according to the following rule: Personalities and Creatures must be in the constant presence

of a minding counter, or control is lost. The following specific clarifications elaborate on this rule.

First, if a Personality or Creature was already under the control of one faction and that faction continues to have eligible minders in the city the Personality or Creature occupies, control does not change hands. For example, if a Gug in Milwaukee moves to Chicago, it remains under the control of the faction that controlled it in Milwaukee, as long as that faction has at least one High Priest or Cultist Cell in Chicago to act as a minder. This is the case even if the previously-minding counter in Milwaukee doesn't make the trip to Chicago with the Gug.

Second, if a Personality or Creature resides in a city occupied by more than one faction, and the original controlling faction is not one of them, it comes under control of the faction with the largest sum of Cultist Cells and High Priests in that city. If there is a tie, control goes to the player with the most High Priests in that city. If there is still a tie, control goes to the player willing to spend the most money on control. If all else fails, dice are used to break the tie and establish control.

If a Personality or Creatures ends its turn in a city that contains no Cultist Cells or High Priests, it becomes uncontrolled. Uncontrolled Personalities and Creatures are controlled by the first faction to send a Cultist Cell or High Priest to that city. Uncontrolled counters are not active counters.

### Minder Example

It's a bad day in Seattle. Howard's faction there consists of four Cultist Cells and a High Priest, August's faction is comprised of five Cultist Cells, and Brian has a single Cultist Cell and the Pope. Frank controlled a single High Priest and Cthulhu there, but his High Priest has just been slain by a Cosmic Ray Gun. Since Frank no longer has an eligible minder in Seattle, control of Cthulhu shifts. First, the total number of Cultist Cells and High Priests for each faction is summed. Howard has five, August has five, Brian has one, and Frank has none. It's a tie between Howard and August. Since Howard has more High Priests present than August, he gains control of Cthulhu.

Note that since Brian retains an active counter through the entire affair, control of the Pope remains with him indefinitely, until such time as he has no eligible minders.

## Scenarios

### The Standard Game

This is *Cults Across America* as written. No changes are made to the rules to play this version of the game.

A player wins the Standard Game if he or she fulfills either of the following conditions at the beginning of any Initiative phase.

### Hands Across America Victory

A Hands Across America victory occurs when a faction controls an unbroken string of cities from the west coast to the east coast, and controls the President of the United States. All coastal cities are marked with an asterisk on the map.

### Victory Point Victory

A Victory Point win occurs when a faction accumulates ten Victory Points by fulfilling conditions described on Victory cards. A running tally of each faction's Victory Points should be kept on the Victory Point Track on the board. Each player should designate his or her current tally by placing one of his Cultist Cell counters on the track.

## The Strategic Game

All Victory Cards should be removed from the deck for the Strategic Game. Although a Hands Across America victory (see the Standard Game) is allowed, victory will most often be achieved by controlling many and valuable cities at the end of the game.

Each city on the map has a value between one and five associated with it — it's printed right on the map. These numbers are ignored when playing the Standard Game. When playing the Strategic Game, however, control of a city gives its controller a number of City Points equal to the value of the city. So far so good.

The Strategic Game also has a limited length, which depends on the number of players participating. The number of Game Turns that a Strategic Game lasts is spelled out below. The Game Turn track in the upper corner of the board and any convenient marker should be used to keep track of the game's progress. Of course, if one of the players is successful in engineering a Hands Across America victory, the game ends prematurely with victory for that player.

#### Length of Strategic Game

Players	Length of Game (Game Turns)
2	12
3	11
4	10
5	9
6	8

At the end of the last Game Turn, one final combat segment is fought. That is, each player goes through a combat segment (and only a combat segment) of the action phase once. Initiative order is the same as it was for the last Game Turn. This gives each player the chance to eliminate squatters who prevent him from having sole control of his or her strongholds.

After this last combat segment, the player who controls the greatest number of City Points is the winner.

# The Bloodbath Scenario

## Set Up

All Victory Cards are removed from the deck prior to play; they are not used. Also remove the Meltdown, Martyrdom, Unholy Rite, Gaming Convention, Blatant Theft, and Asylum Breakout cards from the deck. Each player selects twenty Cultist Cells. These are placed in groups of two as per the standard set up rules. Two High Priests are then placed as per the Standard Game. Each player is dealt five cards. Sacred Relics and money are not used in the Bloodbath Scenario.

## Play

The Initiative and Action phases are the same as the Standard Game (unless the optional speedy combat rules are used).

Instead of following the normal Proliferation phase sequence, though, each player receives two cards and his choice of one of the following:

- two Cultist Cells, to be placed in any city or cities where the placing player already has active counters, or
- \$20K worth of equipment. No change is given, since money counters are not used in this scenario. Money not spent is wasted. Also note that this money is for equipment only; new High Priests, Cultist Cells, cards, and so forth may not be purchased in lieu of equipment.

Players may redeem cards sets for Cultist Cells as in the Standard Game, but receive no Cultist Cells for High Priests or for controlling cities. Note that in this scenario, players may never purchase new High Priests and can never construct Nuclear Reactors or Cosmic Ray Guns.

Bookkeeping works as the Standard Game.

## Victory

As usual, players are ejected from the game when they are reduced to zero active counters. The only way to win is to be the last player with surviving counters.

# Negotiations

In *Cults Across America*, dealing with other players can be very important. It is often very difficult to win without making alliances. In order to facilitate cooperation, players may trade all sorts of things. Cards, money, equipment, and control of Personalities and Creatures may be traded with the following guidelines.

## Honoring Deals

Simultaneous deals must be honored if both players agree to them. For example, if one player agrees to sell another play-

er a card for \$10K, each must hold up his or her end of the bargain. Deals that require future compliance may be broken. For example, if one player agrees to give another player a certain card in exchange for \$10K next turn, the second player may choose to pay or not on the next turn.

## Location

Equipment, Personalities, and Creatures retain their location when control is exchanged. If equipment, Personalities, or Creatures change factions in mid-turn, the new owner may not use the new counter until the next Game Turn (though the new owner becomes the controller of that counter immediately). This prevents (for example) several factions from using the same Creature to attack a single rival over and over in the same Game Turn.

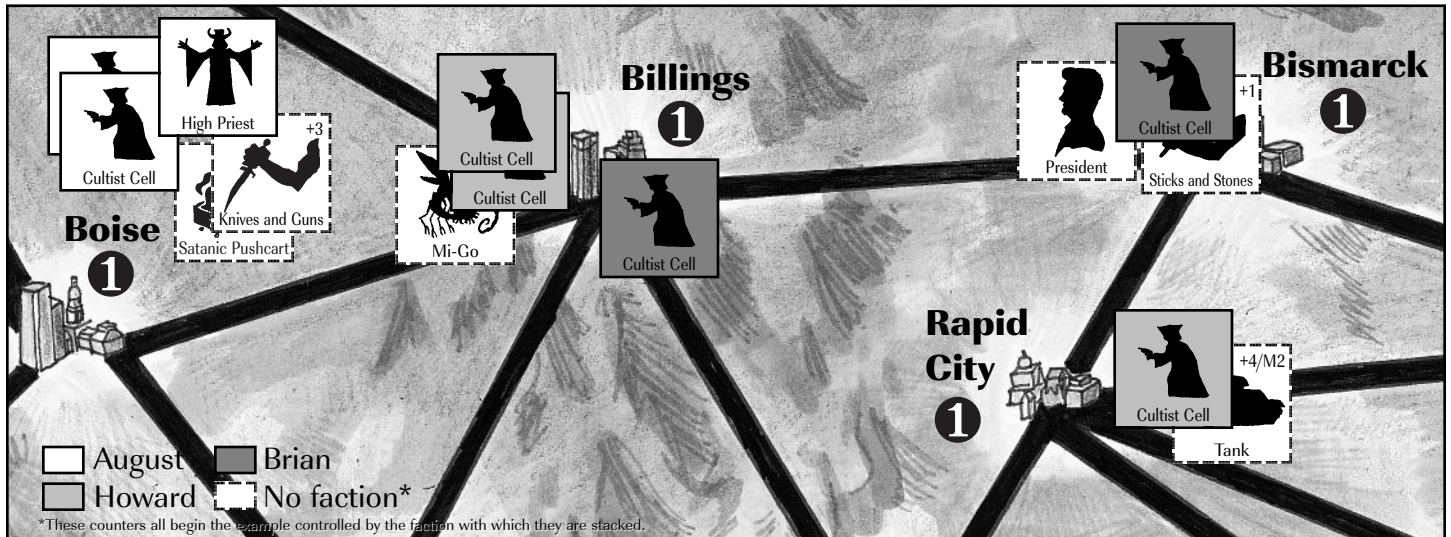
## Minders and Control

When control of Personalities or Creatures is exchanged, the player who begins in control gives control to a specific faction. The player to receive control must have minders in place to take control, or the standard procedure (see "Minders" on page 10) is followed to determine who the new controller will be.

For example, if Howard's faction controls Cthulhu in Seattle and Howard wishes to transfer control to Frank, he may do so as long as Frank has an eligible Minder in Seattle. If Frank does not, and Howard transfers control anyway, the normal procedure for uncontrolled creatures is followed.



# Example of Play



Howard, August, and Brian begin a Game Turn with counters as shown above

The first phase is Initiative, so each secretly designates an amount of money that he will use to influence his roll. When they reveal their amounts, Howard has spent \$4K and August and Brian have spent nothing. They roll two dice. Howard rolls a seven, to which he adds four, for a total of eleven. August rolls twelve and Brian rolls nine. August's total is highest, so he takes the Player #1 counter. Howard takes the Player #2 counter, and Brian takes the Player #3 counter.

The Action Phase begins. August is first, so he begins his movement segment. He sends one of his Cultist Cells and his High Priest from Boise to Billings. His remaining Cultist Cell in Boise takes the Knives and Guns and Satanic Pushcart to Bismarck (this Cell can move two cities because it has a vehicle). His movement finished, he enters his combat segment.

First, he declares combat in Bismarck against Brian. He and Brian each have a chance to play cards before the fighting begins in earnest. August elects to play a Summon Dimensional Shambler card. He places a Dimensional Shambler in Bismarck. Brian has no cards he wishes to play. August doesn't want to play another card, so the combat continues. August assigns his Knives and Guns and Satanic Pushcart to his lone Bismarck Cell; he has no other options, since his only other counter (the Dimensional Shambler) can't have equipment. Brian assigns his Sticks and Stones to his Cultist Cell. That finished, August selects his first attacker, naming his Dimensional Shambler. Brian elects to defend with

the President. August rolls a four. Adding the Shambler's combat bonus of +2 gives him an attacking total of six. Brian rolls a seven, and since the President has no equipment or other bonuses, that's his total. The President is victorious, and the Dimensional Shambler is eliminated. Not to be discouraged, August names his Cultist Cell as his next attacker. Brian has no choice but to defend with his own Cultist Cell (since all of his other potential defenders have already defended.) August rolls a seven and adds +3 because of the Knives and Guns his Cell carries, for a total of ten. Brian is not so lucky; he rolls five and adds +1 for his Sticks and Stones, for a total of six. August's cell wins, and Brian's is eliminated.

At this point, the President no longer has a minder from Brian's faction at his location, so control is determined anew. Since there are no active counters in Bismarck save August's, August takes control of the President. The combat is over since there's no one left for August to fight.

Having done all the fighting he wants to do, August declares his Action phase is over (he could have elected to fight with either Howard or Brian in Billings before ending his Action phase, but instead chose to live peacefully with them for now).

Howard's turn is next. He elects to move his Rapid City Cell to Bismarck, bringing its Tank. That Cell, of course, could have moved on to Billings since it has a vehicle, but Brian has chosen otherwise. He also moves his Mi-Go from Billings to Bismarck. He retains control of it because while no minders travel with the Mi-Go, there are minders at both its beginning

location and ending location. Howard ends his movement segment.

In his combat segment, Howard first declares an attack against August in Bismarck. Neither Howard nor August decides to play any cards. Howard indicates that his Cultist Cell is driving the Tank (he has no other options — remember that creatures can't use equipment) and August names his Cultist Cell as the bearer of his Sticks and Stones and Satanic Pushcart. Howard names his Mi-Go as his first attacker. August defends with the President of the United States. Howard rolls a seven and adds the Mi-Go's +2 bonus for a nine. August rolls a three for the President, who has no equipment or bonuses. The President is eliminated. Howard names his Tank-driving Cultist Cell next; August defends with his remaining Cultist Cell. Howard rolls five, adds +4 for his Tank, and beats August's roll of six with a +1 bonus for Sticks and Stones. August's Cell is eliminated.

Howard thinks about declaring combat on August in Billings, but Brian informs him that he intends to do extreme violence to August in Billings on his own turn, and that Howard should wait until then and help out when the time comes. Convinced, Howard ends his combat segment and thus his Action phase.

Brian's movement segment begins. He only has one active counter left in this part of the board, and he decides to leave it where it is. He ends his movement segment.

In his combat segment, Brian declares combat against August in Billings, and the combat sequence begins. August plays cards first, but declines the first time around. Howard (who may play cards even though he is not a party to the combat) also declines. Brian plays a Big Honkin' Truck card, and gives the equipment to his Cell. August has another chance to play a card, and he plays SWAT Team (which eliminates any Big Honkin' Truck, Tank, or Cosmic Ray Gun), destroying Brian's Big Honkin' Truck. Howard passes again. Looking smug, Brian plays Summon Hastur, and places him in Billings. August passes, Howard still doesn't want to play any cards, and Brian also passes. There is no equipment left in Billings to be assigned, so combat begins. Brian, instead of naming his own Cell as the attacker, requests that Howard send one of his own Cultist Cells to attack. Howard agrees. August elects to defend with his Cultist Cell. Howard rolls a seven; August rolls a six. Since August has a High Priest in Billings and that gives his Cell a +1, the totals are tied. Both Cells are eliminated. For his next attack, Brian asks Howard to send his other Cultist Cell to fight against August. Howard declines, deciding he's already lost enough counters on Brian's behalf, and so Brian sends Hastur out to fight. August has no choice but to defend with his High Priest. Hastur rolls a three and adds his +6 combat bonus for a total of nine. August's High Priest rolls an eight, making a good accounting but being eliminated nonetheless. The combat is over.

Rather than stop a good thing, Brian elects to declare combat on Howard in Billings. Amidst general cries of "Treachery!" final cards are played. August, who is still angry at

## Name Your Cult!

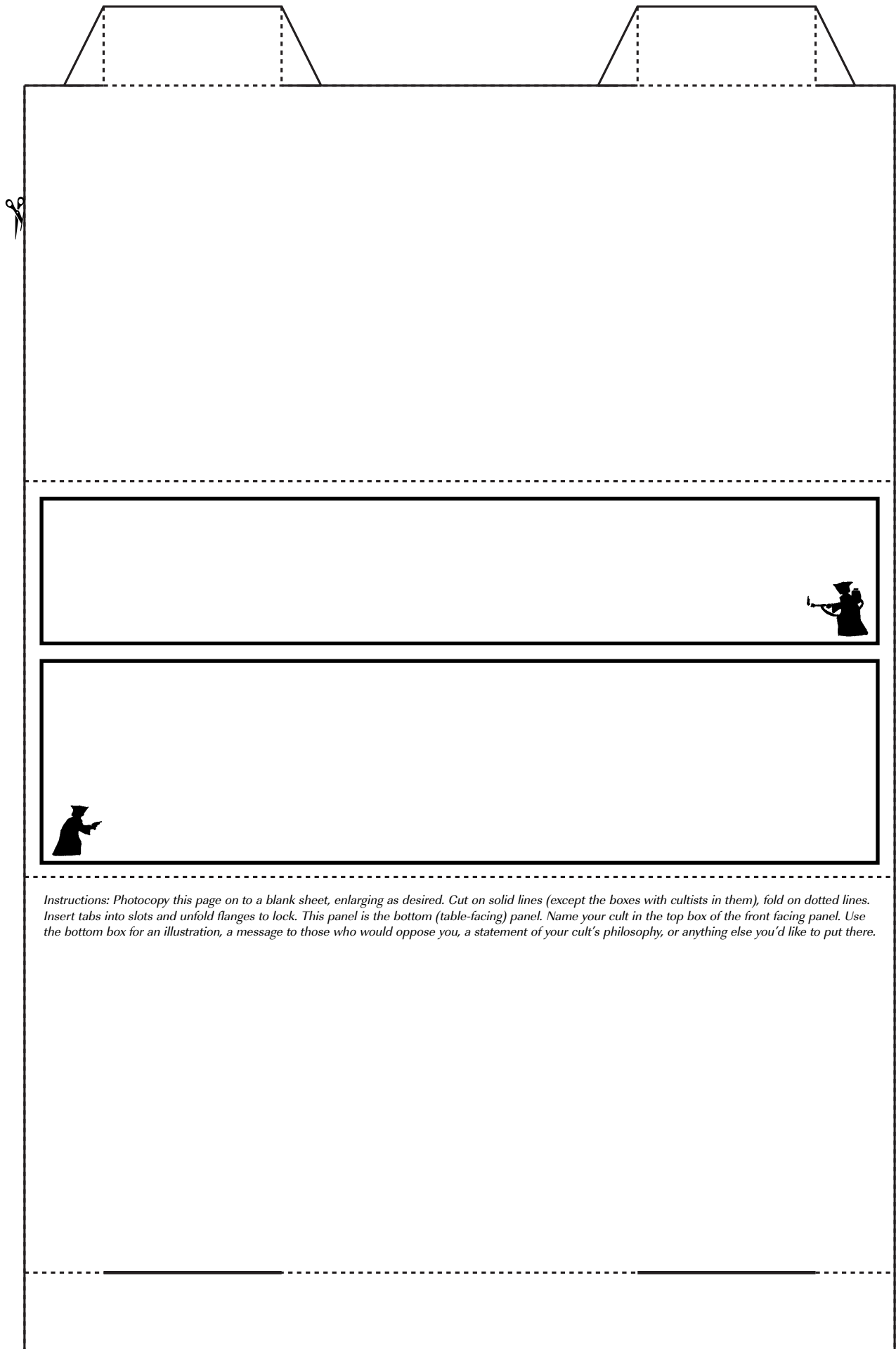
The more creative players of this game will no doubt want to personalize their cults, giving them fearsome names, colorful agendas, demented leaders, and so forth. We're encouraging this behavior with the photocopyable folding table signs on this page. Each sign has a space for a cult name and message, and can be folded so the other players at the table can see exactly who you represent and quake in fear. If you want to play the same cult each time you play, glue your table sign to a cardboard backing so it will resist wear and tear.

Brian for killing his High Priest, elects to play a Sticks and Stones card and give the resulting equipment to Howard's Cell. Howard elects to play Conversion (which transfers an opponent's Cultist Cell permanently to the card-player's faction) on Brian's Cell. Howling in anguish, Brian replaces his Cultist Cell with one of Howard's color. Hastur, no longer having anyone from Brian's faction to control him, moves over to Howard's faction because he has the only eligible minders in the city. Furthermore, the combat is over since Brian has no one left to press it. Brian sullenly declares his combat segment over and play continues.

During the Proliferation phase, each player in turn collects \$10K. Each then draws a free card. August elects to buy two more cards, spending the \$10K he collected at the beginning of the turn. The cards segment being over, Howard decides to upgrade his Billings Cultist Cell to a High Priest (using the \$10K he collected this turn and another \$10K he had before). He replaces his Cultist Cell with a High Priest (transferring his Sticks and Stones and control of Hastur to the newly-promoted Priest) and discards the money. No one else wants to upgrade, so they proceed to the cultist segment. August and Brian don't have any new Cells to place in this part of the board. Howard places a new Cell in Billings because he has a High Priest there. Finally, they all have the opportunity to purchase new equipment, but none decide to do so.

Finally, the Bookkeeping phase blows by. The President is currently dead (having died this turn), and so two dice are rolled in the "beginning of bookkeeping" segment. They come up six, so the President does not reappear at this time. There is no plague, no player has more than six Cultist Cells and High Priests in one city, there are no reactors present, and there are no "end of bookkeeping" actions, so the next four segments fly by with no activity and the Game Turn ends.





*Instructions: Photocopy this page on to a blank sheet, enlarging as desired. Cut on solid lines (except the boxes with cultists in them), fold on dotted lines. Insert tabs into slots and unfold flanges to lock. This panel is the bottom (table-facing) panel. Name your cult in the top box of the front facing panel. Use the bottom box for an illustration, a message to those who would oppose you, a statement of your cult's philosophy, or anything else you'd like to put there.*

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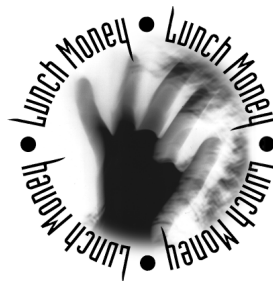
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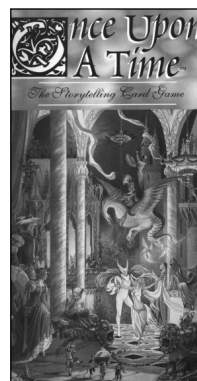
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