

Killer 7 Plot Analysis/FAQ

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KILLER7 PLOT ANALYSIS

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I: INTRODUCTION	[#I]

This document is a Plot Analysis of the Capcom release Killer7 (2005). A few points should be clarified up front.

First: since this is a Plot Analysis, it will draw support for its conclusions from all parts of the game. Therefore, I assume that the reader will have played the game at least once--having watched all of the cutscenes and talked to all the NPC's--before reading this guide. This also means that the Plot Analysis is one huge spoiler.

Second: since Killer7 is such an open-ended game, no single understanding of the events of the game can be regarded as "correct" above other understandings. The purpose of the analysis in this guide is not to establish a final authority on the events of Killer7, but to provide one unified grasp of the game that answers the majority of the questions presented within the game.

I would like to address one frequently asked question that is directed at this document, rather than at the game. That question is:

[Q]: Why can't you just give straight-up answers to the questions put forth in your guide?

[A]: This game is not simple.

Appearances in this game are often deceptive. If I give a direct answer to a question, the answer will likely contradict what seems to be true. For example: if I merely wrote that Kun Lan is the Devil-figure, and left it at that, I am guaranteed to receive fifty eMails asking, "But wait! Kun Lan has the Hand-of-God! How can HE be the Devil! Because Harman has the power of the God Killer!!!"

In other words, the answers are written the way they are because they are complicated answers. That's why this is a complicated game. That's why this plot analysis document exists. Writing is written so that it may be read, not skimmed. Likewise, I assume that anyone reading this document will have the intellectual engagement to read its contents, rather than expect it to run like an answer key to a multiple-choice quiz.

I hope you enjoy reading this Plot Analysis.

II: THE LONG VIEW: FOUR NARRATIVE LEVELS [#II]

Interpreting Killer7 is like jumping into a cold swimming pool on a hot summer day. There is no warm place to stand and get used to the water. You just need to jump in--or get pushed.

Either way, you have to start tying things together by their loose ends--and the knots you use aren't going to be everyone's choices. With that in mind, I'll start with some

assertions that have a basis in the game's story, and I will then explain the entire story of the game based on those assertions. From here on out, when I write "such-and-such means" or "such-and-such is this way," I'm reasoning the conclusion either from the clarity that the definitions bring to the story, or from a historical or mythological relationship between a fact in the game and the historical world we live in.

A pre-release article on Killer7 described the game thus: "Killer 7 will contain five storylines that span through four different worlds in two time periods, the present day and the year 2005."

Amendments have been made, of course, to the narrative since the publication of the article. For all of the differences that developed between the earlier concept and the finished product, though--I'm thinking specifically of the five storylines and the two time periods--the "four different worlds" facet stuck with me.

As I have played and studied the game, I have concluded that the plot of Killer7 exists on four different levels of narrative reality. These four levels of narrative reality are: the Cosmic level; the Political level; the Individual level; and the Spiritual level. To simplify the distinction (and to prevent this document from becoming confusing), I will refer to each level of narrative reality by a nickname.

The Cosmic level is Gods.

The Political level is Governments.

The Individual level is Folks.

The Spiritual level is Ghosts.

All of these narrative levels progress at the same time, and they interweave through each other. In the interest of keeping my explanation unconvoluted, I will describe the flow of each of the four narrative levels, insofar as they operate independent of each other.

A: THE COSMIC LEVEL (GODS) [#IIA]

The Cosmic Level of the narrative is the easiest to describe. However, I should clarify up front that there are three different entities known as "Harman" in this game. They look alike and speak alike; they are related to each other; however, they are distinct from each other.

I will describe each of them, as they relate to their respective levels of narrative. The "Harman" on the Cosmic Level of narrative is the character who I refer to as "Hasidic Harman," or H. H. I name him "Hasidic Harman" because his manner of clothing suggests that he belongs to a spiritual tradition related to Western religious heritage, which is dominated by religious traditions that find their roots in Hebraic history.

H. H. is described as "the God Killer." His rival is Kun Lan, who is described as wielding "the Hand of God."

H. H. represents Western culture and civilization: Europe and the Americas. Kun Lan represents Eastern culture and civilization: the Asian continental nations and Japan. At the end of the ANGEL episode, we see that H. H. uses Garcian and the Smiths (in the Killer7 group) as transportation. He and Kun Lan have a long history of friendship, though they seem to regard each other with professional (rather than personal) affection. They reflect upon their competitive relationship as experienced via chess games; most of the time, H. H. wins.

SUDA 51 (the visionary developer of the game) has been quoted as remarking that H. H. and Kun Lan represent "the futility of war." This seems most keenly expressed in the game's final epilogue, which occurs 100 years after the game's events in Shanghai. I do not disagree with SUDA 51's comment; I would add, also, that it seems to represent the inevitability of war and the eternal irresolution of differences between East and West, so long as one attempts to aggress upon the other.

At the end of ANGEL, H. H. fires a tank-piercing bullet at Kun Lan, who catches and drops the shell after having been propelled backward by its impact. This moment signifies the beginning of the "chess game" that occurs in the Union Hotel's top floor suite, through the course of the game's events. The only time H. H. appears is when he is in the company of Kun Lan.

The conflicts between Kun Lan and H. H. involve human political, personal, and spiritual affairs. These three levels of existence are the media through which they war. Everything that occurs on these levels of existence (and narrative) are related to their actions. Importantly, these two figures are not absolute dieties: they can "recruit" individuals, nations, and spirits into their leagues--and the power that the formerly subordinate entities gain from their recruitment places them on a tier higher than most mortals.

B: THE POLITICAL LEVEL (GOVERNMENTS) [#IIB]

In order to understand the political narrative of Killer7, we must first look at the enigmatic "Yakumo." Hints are given on what it is, in the game, but it's never really made clear what its contents are.

GameFAQs message board user Yoshiko Ohier has offered the following information on the Yakumo:

"According to the CAPCOM official web site in Japanese, Yakumo is a text which was created by 7 Japanese founders (politicians) in the past. The Yakumo (text) is said to have a power to change the world. And, Ulmeida (Cloudman) got somehow a part of the text and thanks to that, he could develop his company to one of the biggest corporation in the world. Here, I'll give you translations of two names:

"Yakumo = (Ya)eight (kumo)clouds

"KumoOtoko (title in Japanese) = (Kumo)Cloud (Otoko)man

"Ulmeida has gotten one Kumo (Cloud). Maybe that's why the title was named 'Cloudman'. Well, this is what I think...".

Given the close relationship that the Yakumo, in Killer7, shares with Japanese nationalism, it is pleasant to note that the first recorded piece of Japanese poetry begins with the very words "Ya kumo."

I would like to quote Patrick Smith's book "Japan: a Reinterpretation" regarding this matter:

"The importance not only of belonging but of being hidden within can be judged from the first lines of poetry Japan ever produced:

"Eight clouds arise.
The eightfold fence of Izumo
Makes an eightfold fence
For the spouses to retire within.
Oh! that eightfold fence.

"These lines are about the whole of Japan. There were eight clouds and eight fences because in the old chronicles Japan consisted of eight islands."

During his brief scene, in SUNSET, Toru Fukushima described the Yakumo as a policy that was created by the Union-Seven. However, he expressed his revulsion with Japan as being too weak of a nation to handle the power of the Yakumo. The contents of the Yakumo are implied to be able to propel a nation toward total domination of the world--or, at least, primary control.

When I first played Killer7, my impulse was to regard the phrase "U. N. Party" as indicative of the United Nations' presence in the fictional universe. However, the U. N. Party is not the United Nations. Travis' speech is most useful in determining the role and identity of the U. N. Party.

Travis says: "Japan is controlled by the United Nations Party. If the UN Party goes down, Japan's minority party will take control. In other words, the Liberal Party would take the reigns. There's some nasty shit cooking in this restaurant. And it ain't momma's fried chicken."

During his brief scene at the start of SUNSET PART TWO, Kurahashi says that all of the U. N. Party's efforts will be destroyed, and that they have been in motion for "65 years" since Japan's American occupation at the end of World War II. Most historical resources seem to agree that Japan's struggle after World War II involved two major ideological forces: the liberal, individualistic ideas that wanted to depart from Japan's culturally historical means of thinking and acting-- and the conservative, collectivistic ideas that wanted to return the government to the control of an oligarchic shadow-

government and the pursuit of Shinto and Bushido ideals.

If we judge the political quality of the U. N. Party by their apparent means of self-government (Kurahashi and Akiba reveal that they dealt with succession by killing their elders) and their contrast to the Liberal Party, we may conclude that the Yakumo--as a governmental policy developed by the Union-Seven--is enmeshed in those conservative Japanese ideals.

Another historical departure might be useful, now. Japanese foreign policy was established early in the second millenium of the Christian calendar as "Hakko Ichiu." The ideology holds that the Japanese emperor is not merely the sovereign authority over the Japanese people, but over all people of all races. The self-righteousness of their cultural self-perception was manipulated easily during the Second World War by Japanese Emperor Hirohiko (also a high Shinto priest who very much believed in his own deity) into justification for all types of nationalistic aggression. Translated, the foreign policy aims to bring "all the eight corners of the world under the roof of Japan."

The U. N. Party comes from this cultural tradition. The Yakumo--a policy of "eight clouds," implying the literary association with the first Japanese poetic expression of nationalistic identity--seems to be a renovated form of "Hakko Ichiu."

Further, this policy may have been developed strictly for Japanese execution, but (as Fukushima admits) Japan is too weak to implement it on her own.

Now, let's look a little at the supposed history of the U. N. Party. Fukushima appears to be the party's leader. After all, his political clout is the reason he is the Killer7's target in SUNSET. Fukushima explains that he became frustrated with Japanese politics, because of its inability to become anything more than play-acting upon a stage. Yet, he explains, he got a call one day from someone asking if he would like to be "an architect."

Two questions stem from this root: first, who called Fukushima; second, what sort of architecture?

I'll answer them in reverse order. The architecture is Japanese; it is deliberate, I think, that Fukushima's estate is so Japanese you can taste the Pocky. It is the only location that is idiosyncratically Japanese in the whole game--even moreso than Battleship Island. The cultural history implied by Fukushima's restaurant's architecture, along with his description of his work as that of "an architect," suggests that the more abstract and political "architecture" he designed was an extension of Japanese, Shinto-based imperialism.

As for his caller--I think he was (who else) Kun Lan. Akiba and Kurahashi seem to recognize Kun Lan easily enough, when he appears to them and Matsuoka. Most probably, Kun Lan is the head of the U. N. Party; by extension, it would make sense that Kun Lan would have recruited Fukushima to create a

governmental structure--the U. N. Party--through which the Yakumo could be realized in the field of world politics.

So--what are the eight clouds?

I'm unsure, exactly. It might be good, though, to consider who possessed the Yakumo at what times. Fukushima was supposed to have had the Yakumo, but Julie Kisagi appears not to have found it on him--even going to far as to demand it of H. H.! At the KAKU Building (where the second half of SUNSET occurs), DePaul's ghost says that Matsuoka has the Yakumo.

When we speak to Ulmeyda's ghost in Curtis Blackburn's home, during the second part of ENCOUNTER, he says that he gave Clemence (the boy who was featured at the end of CLOUDMAN) the Yakumo. Clearly, Ulmeyda possessed some measure of the Yakumo's wisdom. The postal clerk describes Ulmeyda as "an asshole" who seemed to have gotten lucky, and who seemed to have risen out of nothing to his current status. Ulmeyda is regarded by the townspeople as a mysterious local who rose to prominence through his corporation "First Life," yet we learn from Ulmeyda that the company doesn't exist: they simply run commercials.

Ulmeyda's success, it seems, is owed to the governing ideals and methods described in the Yakumo.

"But wait!" you may say. "Travis said that the Yakumo had the power to let the United States dominate the world! If Ulmeyda had the Yakumo, why didn't he do just that?!"

I answer: because he was a postal clerk. He's neither the United States nor the U. N. Party. Even Garcian says of Ulmeyda (when Master Harman asks if Ulmeyda is a revolutionary), "No sir, no one of that calibre." Despite the admittedly sadistic whims he displayed--such as destroying an entire stadium during a concert and subjecting his heir to "driving yourself to death"--he clearly possessed some humanitarian impulses. Even though his decision to inject himself with lethal diseases was a self-oriented action, to make himself feel alive by courting death, his decision to make his blood available for others to immunize them against those diseases is humanitarian, surely.

I think that the Ulmeyda episode illustrates the manner in which the Yakumo serves as an extension of the Shinto-based policy of "Hakko Ichiu." In Andrei Ulmeyda, we see the convergence of political leadership (he runs the town that has his name) and religious leadership (he has a cult). However, Ulmeyda's simplicity as a man and a leader only allows him to create a facade of government. (Notice how that giant corporate cathedral fell down, as mere plywood, and revealed a desert in which Ulmeyda tested the limits of both his and his acolytes' bodies.) Understanding this makes the intervention of the U. S. military at the end of the CLOUDMAN chapter more sensible: they seem to have neutralized Ulmeyda to retrieve the Yakumo, which the United States has been trying to get for a year.

I initially thought that "Yakumo" referred to a political party; however, it does not. It refers to the cabinet policy

of the United Nations Party within Japanese government. The irony of the party's name becomes more apparent, when we recognize that the Yakumo is a revised version of "Hakko Ichiu": a surface interpretation of the name "United Nations" would lead a person to think that Japan had renounced its attitude of racial entitlement to global rulership, and wish to become united with other nations; however, since the nature of their cabinet policy is nothing more than a revision of the same ideology that led to the belief of racial entitlement, they are claiming (oppositely) that they want to unite all nations--UNDER JAPANESE RULE.

The curious thing about the Yakumo, to a Western (and specifically American) mind, is its implied blending of spiritual and governmental activity. On the one hand, it is a governmental party's policy, and therefore it is governmental, practical, executable; on the other hand, it seems to be communicated only after harsh spiritual experiences, such as Matsuoka's "enlightenment" by Kun Lan in the introductory sequence of SUNSET PART TWO. In understanding this, it will be important to remember the cultural tradition out of which the "Hakko Ichiu" policy and, in turn, the Yakumo are derived.

Shinto religion held that the Japanese Emperor was supreme over all, as a governmental authority as well as a spiritual authority. Nationalism and government were inextricable from spiritual identity. In his biography "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan," author Herbert P. Bix writes of "Hakko Ichiu" (also called "the Imperial Way"): "The 'imperial way' was a motivating political theology sprung from the idea of the emperor as the literally living embodiment of Japan past and present, a paradigm of moral excellence all should follow. The term denoted a kind of ideological warfare but also, on the other hand, an action plan. It was designed to make Japan free of all externally derived isms, such as Western democracy, liberalism, individualism, and communism. Free to be itself only, the nation would regain self-esteem and be able to wage a 'holy' war of ideas against Western political doctrines." For an incredible span of world history, Japan violently resisted involvement with Western culture. At one point, early after Western culture's introduction to Japan, the Japanese took all Japanese and non-Japanese Christians, physically crucified them, and displayed the crucified practitioners of Western culture on the islands' coasts--so that all Western ships passing by would know what sort of welcome to expect.

Emperor Hirohito is described by Bix as having believed in his own deity: "In a wooden building in the southeast corner of the palace compound, he regularly performed complicated rituals that clearly implied his faith in his mystical descent from the gods, and the sacred nature of the Japanese state and homeland." Hirohito continued to serve Japan, as emperor, after their defeat and occupation during the Second World War. Under his emperorship, then, the United Nations Party developed and grew--the Yakumo was developed for execution by what seemed to be a democratic nation, rather than a theocracy--and Fukushima created the stable political organization for the Yakumo to become active through.

Most American players--and I include myself in the category of "most"--will see the theme of usurpation of American democracy, during their first play-through of Killer7. Understood against the cultural and historical tension of post-World War II Japan, Killer7 is also the story of the usurpation of Japanese democracy.

So, now that the Yakumo is understood, what can be said about the political narrative of Killer7?

On July 3rd, 1998, the world trashed all of its nuclear missiles and set up an island in the South Pacific for the disposal of radioactive waste. Not all missiles were destroyed, though: ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) remained.

I would like to quote the narration during the opening animated film of SUNSET PART ONE: "The international society, under the motto of 'Protecting the world from international terrorism, ideology terrorism, and cyber-terrorism,' stopped all air transportation and closed every network station in the short span of two years, to reduce the likelihood of terrorism. The world had changed.

"In the year 2002, a network of intercontinental expressways, bridging the Atlantic Ocean, opened, connecting the two major sides of the world. In the following year of 2003, the construction of a mass scale distribution system began, and the man-made landmass large as a city was built over an ocean. The use and research of nuclear energy was banned, and all radioactive waste and materials were disposed of at an energy disposal facility in the Gibsoft Islands, a remote set of islands off the coast of the Indian Ocean."

So--all this has happened. Soon afterward, though, a terrorist group called "the Smiles" began attacking government meetings and figures. Their modus operandi seemed to be to suicide-bomb their targets. They were a hard group to catch, and--developed to catch them--an underground society of assassins served to kill targets who threatened the stability of the new-found global peace. Among these, the group known as "the Killer7" were supremely skilled.

Presumably, since the early 1980's, Coburn Elementary had been taken over by the U. N. Party of Japan. There, they raised children in the cultural image of the Yakumo. They taught that the President of the United States was always decided upon by "the Chairman of the Education Ministry." (This may be taken as a misnomer for "the Secretary of Education," since the American form of democratic government does not describe itself in terms of "ministries.") In other words, they taught that democracy did not exist--and they replaced the ideological education of children under democracy with the education of children under the Yakumo.

According to Hulbert's tapes, the children who graduated from Coburn were prepared for post-graduation careers in government service. In exchange for their service, Hulbert explains, they were "promised their life." Those who did not comply with the expectations of the United Nations Party and the Yakumo were

killed, although it is also highly probably that they were deported and sold as orphans on the black market--or, they were killed and their organs were sold on the black market. Other students were recruited to serve as assassins, in the interest of defending and supporting the Yakumo.

In 2010, a terrorist group called "the Heaven Smiles" began attacking the United States. Their organization was unknown, as was their leader. They were most troublesome, as terrorists, because of their relative invisibility. Only one counter-terrorist group (the Killer7) could see and kill Heaven Smiles. In all, there seemed to be three "types" of Heaven Smiles: first, people who looked human and wore strange smiles; second, Heaven Smiles borne from eggs out of egg-machines; third, Heaven Smiles cobbled together out of organs harvested by black market organ sellers, like Pedro and Curtis Blackburn.

Apart from the Heaven Smiles, tension existed between the East and West--specifically, Japan and America--during the 1980's, 1990's, and first decade of the 21st century. Japan had become a husk of a country, politically; it had so little political clout, its most powerful political party (the U. N. Party) cannot even appeal to the United States to save it from imminent destruction. Missiles were fired from an unknown Asian source at Japan, and, after much suspense, the United States launched missiles westward across its Californian border to stop the missiles of unknown origin.

Why did the United States launch its missiles to defend Japan, when it seemed the entire U. N. Party was finished? Because of Coburn graduates, subordinate to Matsuken, who held positions in American government.

Over the course of the next year, the Heaven Smile problem became more unmanageable. Military research on captured Heaven Smiles had enabled the United States military to extract a viral serum that, when injected into a host, would turn the individual into a Heaven Smile. Seeking to test their concoction on a man with high viral resistance, the U. S. military assaulted cult leader Andrei Ulmeyda and infected him with their homebrew strain. The virus overpowered Ulmeyda, and the resulting transformation destroyed all of the military officers present. The Killer7 group killed the Heaven Smile diseased Ulmeyda, who passed his spiritual legacy (and the Yakumo) on to Clemence, his chosen heir.

Later that year, Curtis Blackburn--a former officer of the self-defense department--raided the Immigration Headquarters. His violence prompted the U. S. government to call (again) upon the Killer7 group. The Killer7 group tracked Curtis to ISZK LAND, an amusement park that served as a front for Curtis' black market kidnapping ring. They confronted Curtis' adopted protoge, Ayame Blackburn, and followed the escaping bus (filled with kidnapped young girls) to Blackburn's residence. After raiding Blackburn's home, killing Ayame, and discovering Blackburn in a secret chamber beneath his estate's swimming pool, Dan Smith of the Killer7 group slew Blackburn. During the raid, it was discovered that Blackburn had traded selling orphans on the black market for selling orphans'

organs on the black market. The organs were used for the genetic cobbling of the experimental Heaven Smiles that the Killer7 group had found during their otherworldly passage through the Vinculum Gates.

With Blackburn killed, exportation of girls' organs slowed significantly. Since Blackburn had killed his former cohort-- Pedro--the two oldest and most professional salers of black market organs were dead. The production of experimental Heaven Smiles slowed.

By this point in the story (around mid-2011), the Heaven Smiles had become regarded practically as their own species. They were deemed racially acceptable to exterminate. The United States military--deciding against their former policy of harnessing the Smiles' strength--purportedly developed the group "the Handsome Men" in conjunction with Trevor Pearlharbor (a clairvoyant comic book artist) to combat the Heaven Smiles. However, they abandoned their plan and turned on Pearlharbor when his clairvoyance departed from their interests, resulting in the assassination of a Democratic Party senator by the Handsome Men.

The Handsome Men became regarded as terrorist threats themselves, and the Killer7 group was dispatched to kill Trevor Pearlharbor--who was believed to have been the guiding force of the team of heroes-turned-terrorists. The Killer7 invaded Trevor Pearlharbor's home in the Dominican Lost City. When they discovered Pearlharbor on his veranda, drawing, Dan Smith confronted Handsome Black, who was summoned by Trevor to stop Dan Smith. Handsome Black, however, turned on Trevor who died confused as to why his clairvoyance had failed. Dan Smith killed Handsome Black, and the remainder of the Handsome Men vowed to avenge Handsome Black's death by a formal duel in Times Square, New York.

The Handsome Men and Killer7 group battled one-on-one in Times Square. When the final confrontation came between Handsome Pink and Garcian Smith, Handsome Pink transformed into her alter ego, known only as LOVE. LOVE revealed herself as the force responsible for the Handsome Men, and gave the Handsome Men up to their losses at the hands of the Killer7 group.

The Presidential elections passed (in 2011, for some reason), and the Republican candidate was elected President.

In winter of that year, the Killer7 was sent to contact and capture Kenjiro Matsuoka--the recognized leader of Japan's U. N. Party and the possessor of the Yakumo. Matsuoka received information that he was targeted by the Killer7, and used his informant's advice to locate Hiro Sakai. Having located Sakai, Matsuoka tortured and killed him, making his death seem like a suicide.

After a long, self-revelatory journey between Washington State and Pennsylvania, the Killer7 group became pared down to Emir Parkreiner. Emir overtly joined hands with Kenjiro Matsuken to work together and eradicate the Heaven Smiles. Three years later, on Battleship Island, Matsuken had trapped the final Heaven Smile. Emir arrived to dispose of the curse

for good.

Here, the path splits, and the words of Linda Vermillion (the assassin who killed Mills) come back to mind: "See the system with your own eyes, and then decide." Emir chooses whether he believes in Western democratic ideals (by killing Matsuken and destroying the remains of the Yakumo)--or if he believes in the Japanese "imperial rule" revised in the Yakumo (by letting Matsuken live).

C: THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL (FOLKS)

[#IIC]

On 22 November 1942, Emir Parkreiner is born.

Among other levels of significance, Emir Parkreiner is symbolic of Japan's national well-being. He is born at the time when the Japanese imperialist Empire is at its strongest, historically. In 1946, as alluded to by one of the Japanese diplomats during the introductory sequence to SUNSET, the atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the period during which Japan is an occupied nation begins.

As a reflection of Japan, Emir naturally would be aligned with Kun Lan--in Harman's hemisphere. With the ultimate establishment of Modern Japan--out of the Western remodeling of Occupied Japan--it may be inferred that Kun Lan's powers weakened, correspondingly. This may account for Emir Parkreiner's recorded death in 1952--it corresponds with the "death" of isolationist Japan. However, as Japan was "reborn" into Modern Japan, Emir also was reborn.

Hulbert's tapes indicate that Emir was "living with his parents at the time of his death." Who else would be the father of the Soul of Japan, but Kun Lan himself? This implies, of course, that Emir has a mother. I assume that Emir would have endured his "rebirth," while still in his mother's care.

It may seem improbable that Emir's physical life and death would correspond with the life and death of a political/cultural body, but I think that the symbolism is intended, to evince the game's general statements about the relationship between Japan and America.

Thus, Emir Parkreiner's second cycle of life begins around 1952. He would be ten years old at the outset of the Civil Rights movement; he would be twenty when the Civil Rights movement had reached full swing. The narrative supplied by Kun Lan, during Garcian's first visit to the "Forbidden Room," applies to Emir's second cycle of life. I will provide a transcript of the dialogue, to keep the reference present alongside my argument.

Kun Lan: "There once was a young man who had a promising future. The centerback position was his to keep, and no one could take that away from him. Any play was a fair play; no one blew the whistle on him. Everybody loved him. Not to mention his campus sweetheart. Oh, she was something! They

were the perfect couple. He graduated from Columbia with an MBA. His opportunity was infinite. He could do whatever he wanted with his life . . . but was he satisfied? No! Every night he would cry, begging the Lord; something deep within needed awakening. Then one day it happened....that moment, when the subconscious rises to the surface. Well, the way it triggered was very simple: it happened when his mother came on to him one night. As if the spirit of Jack the Ripper had taken over his body, he stabbed and stabbed until you couldn't tell who she was. You know what I think? An angel whispered into his ear. The angel gave him the extra courage he needed, to give her the divine retribution she deserved."

H. H.: "Sure she wasn't . . . a Hell's angel?"

Kun Lan: "I'm pretty sure she only had good intentions."

H. H.: ". . . you really are a villain."

Kun Lan: "I had nothing to do with it . . . but I must admit, my memory has become a bit misty these days."

During Emir Parkreiner's second cycle of life, he was a star football player, had a great girlfriend in college, and--in general--turned out to be the All-American Ideal. Yet, despite his attainment of the All-American Ideal, "something deep within needed awakening." That "something," I think, was the buried memory of his earlier incarnation--as a child of Kun Lan. Here we have one of the layers of irony: the soul of Japan, reincarnated into the body of the All-American Ideal, wrestling with a painful emergence of identity. Kun Lan's coyness strongly suggests that he is accountable not only for Emir's awakening--but what awakening within him.

Such an awakening could not have occurred, though. Thirty years after Emir's reincarnation--in 1983--a new diplomatic relationship between Japan and America was established, through Ronald Reagan's formal address to the Japanese legislature. This indicated a crucial change for Japanese and American culture. In the same manner that Emir's soul reincarnated when Modern Japan was formed, his Japan-Soul-Inside-The-All-American-Ideal ruptured and caused another reincarnation. The crucible for this rebirth, though, was much darker.

As a young man, during his second cycle of life, he held within himself both the Soul-of-Japan and the All-American-Ideal--both of which resided in his genetic memory. (Remember, Emir has special DNA; I expect that his "immortal" qualities allow him to retain the memory of previous incarnations.) During his second cycle of life, his mother tried to sexually molest him. Something in the act of molestation brought forth the tensions that had been boiling within him, spiritually, since his birth in 1942. Perhaps, it can be chalked up to the fact that the taboo against mother-son incest is one of the few cultural similarities between the East and the West--allowing him to judge him using the full force of both Eastern and Western parts of his soul. When he slew his mother, he reincarnated again--awakened, now, but uncontrollable.

H. H. and Kun Lan, likely, were aware of his trifold existences. By positing Emir Parkreiner's unaccounted history above, we can account for his age at the time of the murders of the Harman Assassins, the time of his recorded birth and death, as well as the events of the narrative supplied by Kun Lan in the forbidden room that--owing to cinematic techniques that deflect the stress of the story onto Garcian--most probably describe Emir's past.

H. H. appears not to have known about Emir's dark awakening, at Kun Lan's behest. (Note that H. H.'s line, "You really are a villain," refers both to the atrocity of awakening Emir's darkness--and prompting the slaying of his ex-wife.) Since Kun Lan awakened Emir--and since the "government" of United Nations Party members within the U. S. government are reflections of Kun Lan's activity--they naturally would have been led to find Emir and place him in Coburn.

At this point, Emir is a loose cannon. He is uncontrollable because he lacks the ability to identify himself as either Japan or America. In the terminology of games, he is the Joker card: neither one thing nor the other, but with the potential to be both at any given moment.

Now--we need to cut away from Emir Parkreiner, and look at Harman Smith.

Harman Smith is the man who was once the Principal of Coburn. At the time of Hulbert's cassette tapes' recording, Hulbert says (of Harman): "He's the key person linked to some underground organization." Note the tense that Hulbert uses: "He is--". This implies that Hulbert has no reason to believe that Harman is dead, at the time of the recording. Let's do a little bit of symbol-digging, to try and figure out when Harman was killed along with the Harman Assassins.

The full moon is a symbol of transformation. It throbs full screen while each mission loads. As well, when Garcian sees Emir standing, dazed, atop the Union Hotel, the full moon is in the background. I take the persistence of the full moon as a symbol that the Harman Assassins--and Harman himself--were killed during a full moon. If, as I think, Emir has killed Harman and crew just before killing Hulbert, then Harman and the Assassins were killed a full three days before the recording of Hulbert's cassette tapes.

If you look at a lunar calendar, for the month of November in the year 1996, you'll see that the date described as the time of Hulbert's first recording falls three days after the full moon. Hulbert says that he begins recording on "the fourth Thursday in November." This also places Emir's assassination of Harman and his Assassins very close to the Presidential election, which Hulbert describes as being a few days from the time of his first recording.

So--why would Emir choose to kill Harman Smith, his mentor, during the full moon--along with the other Harman Assassins?

Simply put, Harman Smith is a type of anti-Christ figure. He looks like H. H. and talks like H. H. Yet, he is in league directly with Kun Lan. I think that, because of his alliance

with Kun Lan, he is given Kun Lan's power of light and resurrection.

Travis describes himself as "the chief's first kill." He also dates his death at "thirty years ago," seemingly parallel to the promise of diplomatic responsibility offered by Reagan in his address to the Japanese Diet. He describes himself as "the killer who got killed on the job."

I think that Travis was the first assassin sent to kill Harman, and that Harman had never actually killed before Travis. If the diplomatic unity between Japan and America are regarded as H. H.'s victory over Kun Lan, then it seems natural that H. H. would want to neutralize the most violent threat to the stability: Harman Smith, then Principal of Coburn.

I think that Travis is the reason why Harman gathered the Harman Assassins together. Not only did Harman Smith perceive that his own life was in danger, but he perceived that the interests of his boss--Kun Lan--were in danger. So, the Harman Assassins were gathered together from a diverse range of killers across the North American continent.

We're at the point in the long-term timeline, now, when Emir kills everyone: 25 November 1996, the full moon of November.

The next question is: how does Emir know where everyone is staying? I suspect that Yoon Hyun tipped off Emir, while Yoon Hyun was still alive.

As we know from the locations of the Soul Shells in the first part of SMILE, and the locations of the Harman Assassins' deaths in the second part of SMILE, the Soul Shells correspond with each of the Assassins' deaths. Yet, a seventh shell is found--outside the same Suite where Garcian finds Harman Smith, with Johnny Gagnon.

I think that this means that Emir killed Harman in the lobby area of the Suite. He took the body back to Coburn--all the way back to Washington State. This would put Emir's return to Coburn at almost the same time that Hulbert infiltrates the building, looking for answers for the investigative committee.

Hulbert describes Emir as "an ace brought out by the Yakumo." That means that, somewhere in all of this, Kun Lan's plans are on track. This, I think, accounts for Kun Lan's presence, denoted by the strange laughter that Hulbert reports having heard. While Hulbert is snooping around for clues to aid his investigation, Emir has taken Harman Smith's body to the Principal's Office--and stuffed it in the safe.

We see a red scar appear across Garcian's forehead, when he opens the safe that Harman's body was stuffed into. SUDA 51 has commented on this moment, in an interview: "His awakening as a bloodthirsty ghoul is represented by having a 3rd eye. In the High School, Garcian's eye bleeding is shown as a way of indicating that he was in conflict with his past memories and that his eye was beginning to open." I take this to imply that Emir's third eye literally began to appear when he stuffed

Harman Smith's body into the safe. (This might also suggest why we never see Harman--in any of his forms--standing up, except for his playble form as Young Harman. Emir must have broken his back at least once stuffing him in there.)

The awakening of Emir's Third Eye, I think, accounts for the "surreal" phenomena that Hulbert experiences in the school. He has inherited Harman Smith's vision ring--as well as the Third Eye. The spirits of the remnant psyches have gathered around Emir, and they are becoming bound to him. "Inside the walls of this school, the voices continue to echo," describe's Hulbert's presence during the formation of Garcian--the Killer7--and Kun Lan's binding into Iwazaru.

So, what is the significance of Emir's name changing to "Garcian?" "Garcian" may have significance as a play off the French word "Garcon," or "servant." The change in his names likewise reflects his change from Kun Lan's home-bred messiah--and into H. H.'s personal task force, unified under the powers previously held by Harman Smith.

Again, the ironies stand out: Harman Smith, a messianic image of H. H., is aligned with Kun Lan--and Emir Parkreiner, a messianic image begotten by Kun Lan, is reigned by H. H.

D: THE SPIRITUAL LEVEL (GHOSTS)

[#IID]

The ghosts are the souls of the dead and the living, as they interact with supersensual beings (such as Emir Parkreiner and Harman Smith).

There are two types of ghosts in Killer7: Personae and Remnant Psyches.

Personae are ghosts who have been killed, and who have been bound in such a way that they are wholly controlled by H. H. and Garcian. Master Harman--who is in the wheelchair in Garcian's trailer--is the "Harman" on the spiritual level. Why, then, does he need a caretaker (Samantha)? Why is he physical and able to interact with living people?

The important thing to note about the Personae is that they are ghosts who can be given PHYSICAL EXPRESSION. The themes of death and rebirth run all through Killer7; when one persona is dispersed, it "dies," and the physical manifestation of another persona forms out of the dispersed physical material that comprised the FIRST persona's body. This is why Trevor Pearlharbor and Curtis Blackburn can see Killer7 as Dan Smith. This is why Jean DePaul can see Killer7 as MASK De Smith.

The Remnant Psyches are the ghosts who have been killed by either Harman Smith or the Killer7, and who have been bound to the psychic matrix formed around the former Emir Parkreiner at Coburn, in 1996. Some of the Remnant Psyches stick around of their own accord; some of them stick around because they are forced into service, such as Iwazaru.

The gameplay sequences all take place on the spiritual level of the narrative. Even the Heaven Smiles exist on the spiritual level, although some of them may bear human appearance on the individual level. When you are playing through the game, with the exception of scripted events, you are Smith--the general combination of the Personae.

While playing through Killer7, I was perplexed at who the Remnant Psyches addressed when I spoke to them. I could deduce a few things: at the end of ANGEL, Travis addresses the player as "Emir," and the player is forced to speak to him as Garcian. Therefore, Travis recognizes Garcian as distinct from the other Personae. Susie addresses whomever approaches her as "Smith," suggesting her awareness of the multiplicity of the player's identity--and, also, her uncertainty as to who is the "true" character. Therefore, she addresses the player by the name common to all the Personae: Smith.

Iwazaru addresses the player as Master, and he seems be uninterested to differentiate between the Personae, when he addresses Master. He speaks to the core energy of the Personae. When he explains his grudge against the current fad of abbreviations (at the beginning of SUNSET PART TWO), he says that he would abbreviate the Master with "M. The Big M." None of the Personae have a name that begins with M--except MASK, who is clearly a secondary figure to Iwazaru since he is referred to with distrust in ANGEL.

Travis seems to have the best grasp on who he's talking to, spiritually. He generally refers to the player as "chief," who is distinct from Garcian as the leader. His former master was Harman Smith, who Travis recognizes as being nullified as an active force--which implies that Travis, at least, regards Master Harman as the real listener.

Master Harman, then, is a Persona, given physical expression, in need of at least superficial care. With the exception of Samantha, no one knows that Master Harman exists in Garcian's trailer. When Garcian explains Master Harman's disappearance to Mills, Mills awkwardly tries to find a way to explain that Harman has been dead (to him) for years.

In discerning Master Harman's nature--as distinct from the mortal nature of Harman Smith and the immortal nature of H. H.--I think the best place to look is the television. In one of his letters, Johnny Gagnon writes: "The members switch using the medium of television. But I have yet to determine what governs the switches." Notice the differences between the television, when accessed from Harman's Room in the field--and Harman's Room in the trailer. When in the trailer, Garcian can only access Master Harman; the other Personae--even his own--are not selectable. When in the field, the other Personae are present and selectable--yet, Master Harman is not in the room.

Master Harman governs the switches. When Garcian is in the field, I think that Master Harman actually manifests himself AS HARMAN'S ROOM. When we are inside Harman's Room, in the field, we are inside Harman himself. From within Master Harman, we can access the other Personae and wake them up; we can give the surgeon (also Master Harman) blood from our kills

and strengthen him; we can save our progress, when Samantha is in a mood to serve. Samantha's felicity in saving the game is a reflection of Master Harman's experience with her, as a caretaker: she only does her job one eighth of the time, and the rest of the time she's slacking off or behaving abusively.

Why is Master Harman catatonic most of the time, then?

Master Harman's catatonia is a safeguard of H. H., to prevent Harman Smith's spirit from becoming uncontrollable. When he was given a physical body and free will, Harman Smith allied himself with Kun Lan. He became a traitor. When H. H. had Emir kill Harman Smith, he incorporated Harman Smith's ghost into the whole psychic matrix--but, he did so in such a way that would leave Harman Smith unable to betray H. H. again.

Master Harman is what happened to Harman Smith, when his ghost was incorporated into the psychic matrix as a Persona. Since most of the vital energy of the whole psychic matrix exists within Garcian, Harman Smith's Persona can only become activated if Garcian chooses to engage him. Here, then, is the safeguard: Master Harman can only become active when Garcian wishes to activate him--and, he can only speak and act according to the ways in which Garcian desires him to speak and act. Garcian desires a Shogun-like master: therefore, Master Harman speaks to Garcian in the tone of a warlord sending a loyal soldier on a mission. Master Harman only carries authority because Garcian wants him to have authority.

Garcian serves as both the lock and the key for Harman Smith's psyche. When Master Harman disappears--as Garcian explains to Mills--something happens that H. H. didn't expect. As the chess game parallels the dramatic events on the spiritual level of the narrative, let's look at what happens in that game, when Master Harman disappears:

Kun Lan: "Check." *moves*

H. H.: "What a coincidence. Check." *moves*

Kun Lan: "This time, the game is mine." *moves*

Kun Lan appears to have made a surprise move that nullified the defense that H. H. established, in the chess game. This "surprise move" is reflected on the spiritual level of narrative, in the awakening of Harman Smith's Persona.

How did Harman Smith's Persona awaken? Johnny Gagnon.

While we don't know how, Gagnon is implied to have clairvoyant powers. He can perceive and communicate how Garcian and the Killer7 use the medium of television to communicate. However, he cannot perceive the Remnant Psyches, which is implied by his observations of KAEDE:

"Kaede Smith spurts blood from her arms. What a sick sight! And then what did she do? She flattened a wall, right before my eyes. She must have taken out some kind of barrier. That's what Kaede's blood can do! Sometimes her arm sucks blood. That's some stuff I didn't need to see, either!"

He attributes KAEDE's barrier-breaking abilities to her blood

alone, and he does not mention Iwazaru's wife. His accounts of the deaths of the Remnant Psyches are historical observations, rather than explanations of the ghosts who he sees around the Killer7. He also believes that the Harman Assassins are a different group from the Smith Syndicate.

In his final letter, he writes: "I asked Master Harman. Asked him to kill you."

Given Johnny Gagnon's extraordinary resourcefulness in digging up information, it is likely that he found Master Harman in Garcian's trailer and "used all of [his] resources" to wake up Harman Smith.

Johnny Gagnon is Kun Lan's secret piece, used at the right time to make a devastating move against H. H. Emir Parkreiner has been asleep for years; H. H. would have no interest in dispersing the veritable powerhouse he has in the Killer7. Only Kun Lan has the motivation or power to have instigated Gagnon's investigation, by prompting Gagnon to gradually awaken Emir from his identity as Garcian. In the process of awakening Emir, Gagnon also awakened Harman Smith.

The experience of rebirth, in most instances, involves a death to past life and a clean slate. When Emir Parkreiner became incorporated in the psychic matrix that deconstructed and reformed his soul, he was "reborn," albeit not as an infant. He was "reborn" as a monster, a shape-shifter. However, in most religious beliefs of reincarnation, a reincarnated person's former identities are accessible still, as memories. Certain chance encounters with objects and experiences, in a current life, that associate with an earlier life may bring about a recognition of memory that was buried at the time of rebirth.

Gagnon's purpose is to give information to Garcian--and to Master Harman, who experiences everything that Garcian does in the field--that other people will not provide. It is implied that the people around Garcian deliberately shield him from his own history, since Mills apparently knew about Garcian's belief in Harman's existence WHILE KNOWING that Harman was dead, physically. Gagnon was used as an informant who did not know the consequences of giving information. As Master Harman gained more information through Gagnon's letters, he began to awaken from his sedation--and more fully became Harman Smith.

When Garcian meets Harman Smith for the first time, in SMILE PART ONE, Harman Smith directs Garcian to Coburn Elementary so that Garcian can retrace, finally, the buried history that led to his present identity. However, Harman Smith is not fully as strong as he might become. He reappears, briefly, in Harman's Room in Garcian's trailer as a subdued Persona, between SMILE PART ONE and SMILE PART TWO. As well, he seems to remain attached to Garcian's physical presence, given his immobility. (Notice that, even after he's awakened to his identity as Harman Smith, he is still never seen standing.)

Only after Garcian finally learns his original name--Emir Parkreiner--can Harman Smith separate himself from Garcian's control. As Garcian moves through the Union Hotel, during

SMILE PART TWO, he revisits each of the Personae's death. Without the Vision Ring, Garcian cannot retain the Personae any longer; when he remembers how he killed each of the Personae, he is forced to confront the fact that he--Emir--is psychologically distinct from the given Persona. In other words, when he revisits his murder of Kevin Smith, in the lobby, he must recognize psychologically: "I am myself, and you are not me. Because we are not the same person, I can kill you." As he realizes that he is NOT the Killer7--but only Emir Parkreiner--each of the Personae enter into the Forbidden Room and excuse themselves from H. H.'s service.

During the second Forbidden Room scene, Kun Lan snidely remarks that "[they've] been interrupted again." H. H. then asks, "Has another come to surface?"

Kun Lan's dialogue implies that they have been visited recently by successive people. H. H.'s dialogue implies that these visitations are the "surfacing" of people. I propose that, here, Kun Lan and H. H. allude to their experience of Garcian's awakening into his identity as Emir. As Garcian revisits each murder, the spirit of the victim "surfaces" like a bubble--that is, he or she rises to the top of the hotel, through the elevator, and enters the Forbidden Room. These events occur parallel to Garcian's loss of each Persona, because he can no longer identify himself AS them.

When Garcian enters into the Forbidden Room, the second time, Harman Smith (having traveled with him) kills the impressions of both Kun Lan and H. H. Afterward, Garcian goes to the roof and frees himself from Harman Smith's power, by killing the Third Eye on his teenage self. He opens the case, sees the Killer7's weapons, and collapses: bewildered and truly alone.

Here, the credits roll: Emir Parkreiner has become whole again. The consequences are two-fold. First, he is aware of himself, completely. Second, he is alone for the first time, spiritually, since his birth in 1942.

Afterward, Emir Parkreiner assumes his identity without the Killer7, as the true son of Kun Lan. While he is alone, spiritually, he is not yet free of the spirits that associated with him. Since H. H.'s psychic matrix has been dissipated, the Remnant Psyche of Kun Lan--Iwazaru--is now free. The sole influence left within Emir is the diminutive Kun Lan. Because of this, he cooperates with Matsuoka. Without Kun Lan around to control the Heaven Smiles, the Heaven Smiles no longer act in the interest of terrorizing America alone.

As the leader of the Japanese people, Matsuoka desires to protect Japan from the Heaven Smiles, who are now without their Shogun, Kun Lan. Three years pass: Emir and Matsuken work together to eradicate the Heaven Smiles. Emir seems to have retained his reputation as a shape-shifter, since Matsuoka says to Emir: "You boys are almost done. You don't need to go around killing everybody anymore." Without the balance of H. H.'s presence within his soul, Emir becomes violent under the impulses of the diminutive Kun Lan.

Yet, Emir also possesses some free will. Because he possesses

free will, he can decide whether or not to kill Matsuoka. If Kun Lan were fully in charge of Emir, he would not have allowed Matsuoka--and the Yakumo--to die.

What happens to Emir, after the credits roll?

There's absolutely nothing in the game that so much as hints at what happens to Emir after the end. However, I will hazard a guess, based on the rules that seem to govern the spiritual universe of Killer7.

When Emir kills Kun Lan's spiritual remainder, he becomes mortal. His immortal qualities have depended upon his identity as his father's son--as the son of an immortal, cosmic being. When he kills the last Heaven Smile, he destroys the last shred of immortality within himself and becomes only human.

This fate, I think, explains why Matsuoka says: "No more terrorism, hail to the free world. But I wonder, what'll become of you guys if terrorism is the law of nature? You know, you should kill me now, because you don't want us hanging around. Know what I mean? If I'm alive, I'll give you a run for your money--even an assassin like yourself. Better be prepared, because blood must atone for blood."

As an "adopted son" of Kun Lan, Matsuoka has insight into Emir's existence that most people do not. If the last Heaven Smile is also the last bit of immortality left in Emir, then Matsuoka knows that Emir will be mortal and MUCH less powerful after killing the remainder of Kun Lan. "If terrorism is the law of nature," then Emir will have a lot of people after him--and he won't have the resources left to defend himself.

Emir will not be reborn. His death is the end of his cycles of life, and the end of the drama until Shanghai, 100 years later.

III: SYMBOLISM [#III]

While the game is rife with symbolism, two issues seem most frequently called to the audience's attention: first, the distinction between forces of good and evil; second, the use of chess as a metaphor for the events of the game. I would like to use this section to address these issues exclusively.

Other symbols are present in the game, even if they are not mentioned in this section. In other sections of this document, I have addressed less significant symbols as they have seemed relevant to the story.

(A) YIN-YANG VS GOD-DEVIL INTERPRETATION OF HARMAN
AND KUN LAN [#IIIA]

I think that the yin/yang VS God/Satan issue can be resolved by looking at the theme of hybridization that permeates the game. The color schemes in the game suggest that a yin/yang

interpretation is valid: H. H. wears all black, and Kun Lan wears all white. Yet, there's even a reversal here, because H. H. controls white chess pieces, while Kun Lan controls black chess pieces. The yin/yang distinction is a decidedly Eastern dichotomy; a more Western dichotomy is the God/Satan distinction, which alludes more to the Western spiritual tradition of Zoroastrianism.

There are ironies laid out all over the place. Harman is the Yin: passive, white-dressed-in-black. Kun Lan is the Yang: active, associated with light. Yet, Harman's "Queen" piece is Garcian: black-dressed-in-white. In the Eastern sense, Harman and Kun Lan are complementary opposites; yet, along the more Western lines of Zoroastrian spirituality, they use the elements of the world to dramatize their struggles with each other.

I don't think that they are impossible to discern, though, simply because they are ironies. Part of the significance of Kun Lan's irony, for example, is that he is the active principle of the East (Yang)--associated with light and heaven--and, yet, in the symbolism of the West, he is associated with Lucifer, the light-bearer who masquerades as an angel.

(B) CHESS

[#IIIB]

Think about Emir's "rebirth," at the time of Reagan's address to the Japanese Diet, in 1983. Now, think about his movement to the age of thirteen, when he kills the Harman Assassins and gains the power that we control, as players, during the game.

This suggests to me the act of promotion, in a game of chess. When a pawn reaches the other end of the chess board--and has completely infiltrated the other player's territory--it becomes promoted to whatever piece the player would like, usually a queen.

Consider, then, that young Emir Parkreiner was Harman's pawn--reborn as a queen, with all of the abilities of movement of the other pieces (except, of course, for the knight).

Consider, also, that in addition to the pawns, there are seven chess pieces besides the Queen in an opening chess set-up.

Harman would be the king: essentially immobile, and, yet, the most precious and valuable.

Con and Coyote would be the knights: able to move in ways that the other pieces cannot.

KAEDE and Kevin would be bishops: able to move in diagonals, as a way of getting around obstacles that would take more effort to confront head-on, such as KAEDE's barrier breaking skills and long shot, and Kevin's invisibility.

MASK and Dan would be rooks: no-bones-about-it, head on power. If the player talks to Iwazaru outside of the Ladies'

Restroom, during SMILE-PART 2, Iwazaru comments on "those two," though the people referred to are not specified: "But, who are those two? Acting like kings" While it is uncertain whether Iwazaru comments upon Harman Smith and Johnny Gagnon, sitting in the 7th floor Suite, or Kun Lan and H. H., sitting in the rooftop Suite, his language suggests a connection between Kun Lan and H. H., if we take the chess metaphor.

As the Kings of the metaphorical chess game, Kun Lan and H. H. are "immune" from the effects of the activity occurring on the playing board. The noteworthy laziness--even malaise--that Kun Lan and H. H. exhibit when Harman Smith enters the room suggests that the game has become unwinnable by either Kun Lan OR H. H. In other words, the game is a stalemate.

Harman Smith decides who "wins" the chess game by totally annihilating both kings. He tries to destroy the whole game. This is contrasted with Emir's decision, near the end of the LION mission, when Emir is forced to choose between the United States or Japan. Cosmically, the stalemate was resolved when Harman Smith annihilated Kun Lan and H. H. Politically, the stalemate was resolved when Emir Parkreiner chose to save the United States or Japan.

IV: HISTORY LESSONS [#IV]

As I stated in the preceding section of this document with respect to symbolism, this section intends to call the reader's attention to specific historical occasions that seem relevant to this document's interpretation of the events of Killer7. However, not all of the relevant historical allusions are covered in this section. Other relevant historical allusions are explained in the sections where they are most relevant.

(A) RONALD REAGAN, THE JAPANESE DIET, AND NEW DIPLOMACY [#IVA]

I'd like to explain what I think was meant by "the promise made 30 years ago." Since Garcian delivers the quoted words in 2010, he indicates that the promise was made in 1980. I have researched lightly Japanese-American diplomatic relationships during 1980, and I discovered nothing significant. However, a significant occasion occurs in 1983, when President Reagan addressed the Japanese legislative assembly (the Diet). The contents of his address seem to relate most closely with the events of Killer7, and I think that it may be the "promise" alluded to in the game.

I will highlight some of Reagan's remarks, and comment on their relevance to the game. You can read the entire text of the speech here:

<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/111183a.htm>

The outward, visible alternative political history of Killer7 starts in 1998, I think. Almost everything before 1998, in real political history, can be considered relevant to the game.

Reagan's address to the legislature--the Diet--was the first formal address given by an American, to a Japanese political group, in a very long time. It marked a new understanding of Japanese-American relationships. The diplomatic interests are clear in Reagan's speech: "The bonds of friendship which unite us are even greater than the ocean which divides us." And, later: "Japan will not have to bear the burden of defending freedom alone. America is your partner. We will bear that burden together."

As well, the speech emphasizes the parallel development of Japan and the United States: "In 6 years you will celebrate your 100th anniversary of representative government in Japan, just as we will celebrate the birth of our own Congress. I bring you the best wishes and heartfelt greetings from your American counterparts, the Congress of the United States." Taken in the context of the fictional history of Killer7, some of Reagan's remarks foreshadow the dissolution of airlines and commerce, in the interest of retarding terrorism: "Our two great nations, working with others, must preserve the values and freedoms our societies have struggled so hard to achieve. Nor should our partnership for peace, prosperity, and freedom be considered a quest for competing goals. We cannot prosper unless we are secure, and we cannot be secure unless we are free." It is worth noting that the seizure of airlines, as a way of retarding terrorism, was given historical precedent well before September 11, 2001; a while before Reagan's speech to the Diet, over the Sea of Japan, 269 people were killed when a Japanese civilian airplane was shot down.

Reagan remarks upon one of the hottest issues of the times, which we see reach a half-conclusion in "the missile shows": "Arms control must mean arms reductions. America is doing its part. As I pledged to the United Nations less than 2 months ago, the United States will accept any equitable, verifiable agreement that stabilizes forces at lower levels than currently exist. We want significant reductions, and we're willing to compromise."

Even the Japanese "occupation" of the American government in Killer7 is foreshadowed. Reagan comments upon the Japanese economy's strengths, over the United States', and says: "Sometimes I wonder if we shouldn't further our friendship by sending our Congress here and you coming over and occupying our Capitol Building for a while."

I believe that the political circumstances in Killer7 are science-fiction extrapolations of Japanese-American diplomatic relations, as they are communicated in Reagan's speech. I wrote that I thought that Hulbert's cassettes were recorded in 2000, but now I change my mind. I think that they are recorded in 1996. I think it more probable that electoral suspicion would arise in a president who was so interested in pursuing the goals of global disarmament, that he would dissolve some of the sovereignty that separates America from Japan.

Emir is noted as having died on 28 April 1952. This date corresponds to the exact day before the end of Japan's post-World War II occupation, and the beginning of modern Japan. The occupation of Japan involved Japanese disarmament, as well as the establishment of a new Japanese political Constitution--drafted and finalized in the image of the American Constitution.

The comic book artist's name is Trevor Pearlharbor. The allusion in his last name is screamingly obvious to anyone raised in the American school system. It is significant that Trevor Pearlharbor is the comic writer who designs and narrates the adventures of the Handsome Men--and that the Handsome Men (according to Mills) are a force designed by the military to combat the Japan-affiliated Heaven Smiles. The role of the Handsome Men, of course, is subverted. They are used to assassinate American political figures--and, ultimately, used to assassinate Trevor Pearlharbor himself. While they appear to originate from the United States, they turn out to be controlled by Kun Lan. Kun Lan's appearance at the very end of the ALTER EGO chapter--as he puts down a video game controller, after the faux-credits of a Capcom fighting game scroll past--suggest that they were his characters to control in his and H. H.'s "game."

Before I get to further discussion of the World War II symbolism, I'd like to note one narrative parallel: as I have stated in an earlier post, Garcian can switch between the six main members of the Killer7, because he stays behind at the television. A subtle layer of irony work, here: Garcian controls the Killer7 from the television screen, just like we (as players) control Garcian and the other six characters from our television screen. When we see Kun Lan on the other side of the monitor, putting down his controller, after watching the faux-credits, we (as players) as being addressed somewhat directly. We have played a scripted game of "Handsome Men Online Battle" against Kun Lan, over a fictional online game. In the opening of Sunset, Part 2, one of the old men says: "For 65 year, we give everything we have to restoring this country. Now, all our efforts will end up in smoke once again, by the hand of the same country that put us here." If 65 is subtracted from the date of this statement (2010), we find that the year referred to is 1945--the year of Germany and Japan's defeat by the Allied Powers. As well, this is the same year that the United Nations charter was signed. It is also (importantly) the year in which the Atomic Bomb was used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Emir Parkreiner was born in 1942--the year that the Japanese Empire was at its height. You may view a map of its land possessions here:

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/pacificwar/pacwar.gif>

The only remarkable information that I've been able to dig up about Japanese war activity during November 1942 is (1) the Battle of Tassafaronga, and (2) the naval battle of Guadalcanal. My natural knowledge of World War II is unimpressive, therefore much of my information is the result of immediate research. In general, 1942 was a very, very good year for Japan. November, specifically, saw Japan endure (and, in one instance, win) a couple of naval battles that--judging from the numbers--they shouldn't have won.

Emir was born when Japan was at its height, as an Empire.

V: QUESTION AND ANSWER [#V]

Here, I will address specific questions that have recurred on message boards and via eMail sent to me, from readers.

A--[Q]: Who are Harman Smith, H. H., and Master Harman? Why are you describing Harman as three people? [#VA]

[A]: "Harman Smith" is the man who used to be principal of the school visited in the "Smile" chapter. He was the man who ran the school that trained Japanese terrorists, and he was also the man who was Emir Parkreiner's mentor. He was an agent of Japan, and in league with Kun Lan; as an agent of Kun Lan, he is granted power from the "Hand of God": he can resurrect whomever he wants.

"Master Harman" is the man who Garcian addresses as "Master Harman." He lives in the room in the trailer-house, and he is taken care of by Samantha. He is the Remnant Psyche of Harman Smith. Due to the circumstances that led Emir (as an agent of God) to kill Harman Smith, he is subdued in a wheelchair. He can only act and speak, when Emir turns to him on the television--and, when he acts and speaks, he acts and speaks as the voice of H. H., who I will now describe.

"H. H." is "Hasidic Harman." He is the man who wears traditional Jewish men's clothing. He is an eternal figure, and his power complements the power of Kun Lan. Kun Lan has the "Hand of God," which enables him to bestow life on whomever he pleases. H. H. (Hasidic Harman) has the power of the "God-killer," meaning he can kill those creations of Kun Lan that normal people are unable to destroy. You see H. H. at the chessboard with Kun Lan, and you also see him at the ends of Angel and Lion. Anytime you see one of the three Harmans interacting with Kun Lan, it's H. H.

B--[Q]: You describe Kun Lan as a Devil-figure, yet he has the "Hand of God;" also, you describe H. H. as a God-figure,

yet he is designated the "God-killer." Aren't these contradictory?

[#VB]

[A]: I think it is significant that Kun Lan has the "Hand of God," whereas H. H. is the "God Killer." Each represents different aspects of existence: life and death. If we assume that President Harman was under the control/mentorship of Kun Lan, then it seems more natural that President Harman would have the power of Kun Lan: the power to give life.

Some see Kun Lan's ability to give life as proof that he is the holy part of the pair; oppositely, I see him as the unholy part. He may create life, but the ends to which he creates life are twisted. H. H. may destroy life, but he destroys the twisted life created by Kun Lan.

Also, I think it's worth noting that many of the people who the Killer7 kill over the course of the game show up as Remnant Psyches-and thank Killer7 for having killed them! A person who kills psychopathically expresses hatred for life; their true desire is to die themselves. As the death-half of the divine presences in the game, H. H. uses the Killer7 to murder those who want death. In a sense, he delivers both mercy and retribution at the same time!

I think it is ironic that the characters who serve Kun Lan-the life-giving divine figure-desire death more than anything.

C--[Q]: What's the deal with the surveillance cameras?

[#VC]

[A]: I think that their locations are due mostly to narrative convenience. For instance, when Travis addresses Garcian as "Emir," the cameras are set up deliberately to ensure that you will play as Garcian during that sequence-and, again, set up deliberately to ensure that you will face Kun Lan as H. H., rather than Garcian.

I believe that the cameras are connected to the "medium of television," as Johnny Gagnon puts it. I also think it's connected to the overlapping layers of the narrative.

Think about it this way: when you watch television, you control what you watch, because you can change the channel. When you operate a cam-corder, however, you experience an added level of control: you control what you watch, and you alter the content insofar as your power as director allows.

The television represents Garcian's free will, with respect to his use of personas. When you play as any of the six main characters of the Killer7, Garcian is not selectable from the Smiths menu. This implies that all of the Smith characters are present, on screen, yet Garcian is not. Likewise, when you select Garcian, none of the other characters are available under the Smith menu. When one of the personas is selected, from within Harman's Room, I believe that Garcian stays in Harman's Room; when you switch characters in the middle of gameplay, Garcian has changed channels, within Harman's room.

This also explains why none of the other characters are selectable, when you play as Garcian: none of them can change the channels, and the channel-changer is out in the field.

The camera, though, represents H. H.'s control of Garcian. Garcian cannot select when to use H. H. in the field; H. H. apparently chooses this of his own accord, and he uses the medium of the cam-corder to do so. Notice that the first time Garcian changes under the view of the cam-corder, he turns into Dan; Dan then looks up at the camera, with both surprise and recognition. The transformation has been enforced upon Garcian, according to H. H.'s will.

D--[Q]: What do the Handsome Men have to do with anything? [#VD]

[A]: The Handsome Men serve a number of purposes, to the plot. One of those purposes, I think, is the continuation of the theme of creations-turning-against-their-creators. Just as Trevor Pearlharbor is killed by the Handsome Men, Kun Lan and H. H. are killed by Young Harman--who is both of their creation. (Similarly, as I believe that Emir is the son of Kun Lan, he turns against his "creators," by killing his mother and eventually killing his father.)

The "video game" layer of the ALTER EGO mission takes the game to a more metaphorical level. We see Kun Lan putting down a controller, after we watch the credits for what looks like an online fighting game made by Capcom. This implies that we, as players, have been playing an online video game against Kun Lan.

In terms of a formal analysis of Killer7--meaning, an analysis of the form used to present the narrative--the "video game" layer of ALTER EGO connects to the means of using a television to switch between personalities. Recall that Garcian can change Smiths, when he is not selectable from the pause menu--which implies that all of the Smiths are in the field, while he has stayed behind in Harman's Room. He is controlling the Smiths from afar, using a television screen--much as we, the players, are controlling the Smiths in their virtual world, using a television screen. One might even posit that Garcian is controlling the Smiths in exactly the same way that we, as players, are controlling the Smiths: in a virtual sense, as though playing a game.

Throughout all of the "game-playing," controlling the Smiths from afar, Garcian has been battling the Heaven Smiles--the cultish army of Kun Lan. As we learn by the end of ALTER EGO, the Handsome Men were controlled by Kun Lan. The image of Kun Lan putting down a game controller puts everything I have just discussed into the context of Kun Lan and H. H.'s "game." This also relates to greater meaning of the game, beyond the specific details of the plot: how Eastern and Western cultures have intermingled and influenced each other. It is important that 1983--the year that Reagan addressed the Diet--was also around the time that Japanese pop culture began to influence Western, American culture more apparently. I think specifically of the greater appearance of anime, as well as

the domination of Japanese-made video games. At least three of the bosses of Killer7 (the Angel in ANGEL; Ayame Blackburn in ENCOUNTER; and the Handsome Men in ALTER EGO) are made in the image of stock types out of Japanese anime and manga: the seraphic figure head; the Sailor Moon-esque schoolgirl who transforms into a fighter for justice; and the team of futuristic, helmet-wearing martial artists.

<1980's-fanboy> I'm sure that some of the younger generation reading this are jumping up and exclaiming, "But those weren't Japanese characters who the Handsome Men were parodies of! They were parodies of the Power Rangers, who were American pop icons!" I'll let you know that the Power Rangers--much to the disgust of many of my generation--were mere copies of VOLTRON, who preceded the Power Rangers by at least ten years and were infinitely better. </1980's-fanboy>

The mere fact that we, as gamers, garner so much of our entertainment and our favorite myths from video games attests to the cultural "invasion" of the East. I think that this is one of the over-arching messages of Killer7.

I should note, here, that VOLTRON was not the first embodiment of normal-people-who-gain-awesome-powers-and-dress-up-to-fight-evil, in Japanese entertainment. The whole motif falls under the general description of Sentai--or, if there are gigantic robots involved, Super Sentai. A number of readers have pointed this out, and the knowledge has led to an extension of my thought regarding the significance of the Handsome Men.

According to my resources, "sentai" loosely means "task force." The term was originally employed by the Japanese Army Air Force, in reference to their fighting squadrons. The Handsome Men kill Trevor Pearlharbor--just like the World War II Sentai bombed Pearl Harbor. There seems to be an implied connection between Japanese pop culture, and Japanese military aggression.

E--[Q]: So, Kun Lan was Iwazaru? Why is he in Garcian's
basement?

[#VE]

[A]: I think that this goes back to my assertion that Kun Lan was originally inside Principal Harmon--and, then, Emir "ate" Principal Harmon's powers, granting him the Third Eye. Since Garcian can resurrect his fallen members--a power inherited from President Harman, who (in turn) had inherited it from Kun Lan--it may be reasonable to assume that a remnant psyche of Kun Lan exists somewhere within Garcian's psyche. Since H. H. overwhelmed Kun Lan when Emir killed President Harman, Kun Lan appears within Garcian's psyche as a defeated character: bound in bondage gear and subservient.

I don't think that Kun Lan has remained active within Garcian's psyche, opposing Harman in the form of Iwazaru; I think that Izawaru is the remnant psyche of Kun Lan's earlier habitation of Principal Harman. In the same way that Principal Harman (as an aspect or avatar of H. H.) contradicted the

spiritual being in whose image he was made, Iwazaru contradicts the fact that he has been made in Kun Lan's image. I don't think that he was in Garcian's basement. First, I've lived in trailers. They don't have basements--especially not as spacious as the area that Garcian chased Iwazaru/Kun Lan through. Second, Garcian's trailer seems connected with Battleship Island, outside of the boundaries of space-time. The Forbidden Room door leads to a suite on the top floor of the Union Hotel, and the Basement door leads to a winding network of passages in Battleship Island. These strange alterations of space-time represent the cosmic nature of Garcian's existence, as well as the psychological qualities of each room's inhabitant.

At the end, we see H. H. asleep on the floor of Harman's Room. While H. H. is asleep, Kun Lan (AKA, Iwazaru) is loose and alive. Emir kills Iwazaru/Kun Lan and effectively frees himself from the influence of his father. Kun Lan's presence in Garcian's basement suggests strongly the subconscious memory of Kun Lan, as a father figure.

F--[Q]: What's the deal with the Vinculum Gate and the Gateman
and the Coliseum? [#VF]

[A]: The Vinculum Gate is a sort of barrier set up by Kun Lan, to prevent H. H.'s Killer7 from getting to their goal. Think of it as a "castle" move, from chess. A Vinculum, literally, is a mathematical mark used to connect two ideas together. Since the Vinculum Gate transcends space-time, it takes the Killer7 through the Coliseum--which, by the end of the game, we know is the base of Japanese military strength, Battleship Island. Also, importantly, Battleship Island is the experimentation headquarters, for the creation of new types of Heaven Smiles.

Markus Pfeffer, a German reader of this document, has eMailed me with the observation that the German version of the game translates "Vinculum Gate" as "knotentor." In German, this means "knot door." This description of the Vinculum Gate is excellent, since it conveys both the nature of the door as a "connector," as the motion of the on-screen character through it. Notice that the character goes straight through the Gateman's Hallway, into the Coliseum, and then takes a curve. Then, from within the area where the Killer7 fights the new Heaven Smile, the character runs straight--only to appear out of the SIDE DOOR of the Gateman's Room! Then, the character enters the left hallway, from the Gateman's Room.

The character's physical movement represents a knot tied in a piece of rope, ending with the parallel placement of two pieces of the rope.

G--[Q]: What's all that terrible screaming in Garcian's
trailer? [#VG]

[A]: I think that it's the remnant psyche of Principal Harman,

AKA Harman Smith. He's bound and immobile--a juxtaposition to Iwazaru, who is also bound and immobile. (Note that Iwazaru can only move via his bungee cord, vertically, whereas Harman can only move via his wheelchair, horizontally.) Since Principal Harman is doped up, owing to his binding, he has all the coherency and grace of an Alzheimer's patient on crystal methamphetamine.

As well, we know from the end of LION that Iwazaru's "home" is in the Basement section of Garcian's Trailerhouse. In the field of action, Kun Lan is bound as Iwazaru; however, at home, as we see in the final segment of LION, Iwazaru has his bond released. His fetishist bulb is removed from his mouth. It is also likely that the screaming is also the noise made by the captive image of Kun Lan, in the Basement of Garcian's Trailerhouse.

H--[Q]: Who gunned down Kun Lan and H. H. during the second
cut-scene of the Forbidden Room? [#VH]

[A]: Good old Harman Smith.

Notice that H. H. looks at the person who enters the Forbidden Room and says, "Well. Look who it is. Haven't seen you in a long time." When I first watched this scene, I thought that H. H. spoke with inappropriate condescension to Garcian. As well, his remark that he hadn't "seen [him] in a long time" didn't make sense, since he was in fairly regular communication with Garcian.

Then, I figured it out: He spoke condescendingly, because he was addressing the Remnant Psyche of Principal Harman. He had obvious disdain for the man who looked like him, but betrayed him.

Further, as we see when we play as Harman Smith in Killer8, Harman is the only character with a Tommy Gun, which is what seems to have been used against Kun Lan and H. H.

It seems that old President Harman knew his number was up, as a Remnant Psyche. The six main killers of the original Killer7 had already been laid to rest: as soon as Garcian destroyed the Third Eye on Emir, President Harman's Remnant Psyche would be released, too. He took the last possible chance he had to get revenge on the two divine beings who had caused so much havoc in his life.

I--[Q]: In the LION mission, how can Garcian/Emir run from the
Coliseum (in the Pacific Ocean) to his trailer (in
northwest America) to the Coliseum again? [#VI]

[A]: I think that Garcian's Trailer-House, the Forbidden Room of the Union Hotel, and the Coliseum are all connected--and I mean physically, though not concretely.

Lemme try to unknot that for you. For reasons that are never explained directly, the Coliseum (in the Pacific Ocean) goes

down to a sublevel-where you can walk into Garcian's living room. This is either a tremendous glitch, or an important detail.

Likewise, the basement of Garcian's Trailer-House goes down into the depths of the Coliseum. Somehow, he is able to run about fifty feet on an island in the Atlantic Ocean and make a detour by his kitchen, in Washington State.

Similarly, Garcian is able to walk through the back door to his Trailer-House, and walk into the top floor suite of a hotel in Pennsylvania. (Note that I think that the room he walks into, after finding Samantha dead, is the top floor of the Union Hotel. Look through the windows during the cutscene: you'll see atmosphere that you shouldn't be able to see from the one floor of a Trailer-House.)

A couple of other things strike me as odd about the set up. The most major one is the fact that it's a Trailer-House. Those things don't even have basements. Likewise, unless it is a double-wide, I can't imagine having enough room for a large room, like the suite. The second fact-more subtly-comes from something Kun Lan says, during gunning scene in the Forbidden Room. He says, "Time here is warped."

J--[Q]: What happened with H. H. and Kun Lan, during the first
scene in the Forbidden Room? [#VJ]

[A]: I believe that the two freak out, because "things are astir." (Not a quote from the game; my own phrase off set by quotations.) Samantha is dead; Harman is gone; and Garcian has just overheard them describe the trauma of his past. Clearly, things are going a little rustier than they expect, in Garcian's mind.

An interesting aspect of the divine/immortal beings in Killer7 is that they depend upon human beings, as hosts or vessels. At the time of the gunning scene in the Forbidden Room, both Kun Lan and H. H. seem fatigued-bored, even. I think that this is because both of their "vessels" have disintegrated: H. H. is losing Garcian/Emir, and Kun Lan has just lost Nightmare. Their chess game has even come to a halt-the game they love more than anything. Without their physical vessels, the chess game (which is a symbol of all of the activities in the human world) cannot resolve because neither divine being has the energy he needs to play.

I don't think that Garcian could have entered the Forbidden Room, from his Trailer-House, unless the remnant psyche of Principal Harman had awoken. The remnant psyche of Harman is the sole layer between Garcian and H. H.--and with that layer absent, Garcian can intrude upon the very working of the spiritual fabric that dictates historical events.

One important difference between the two Forbidden Room scenes is how Garcian and Harman react to the presences of H. H. and Kun Lan. Garcian only gives them a little shock. Harman mows them Al Capone style. Harman's got a lot more rage pent up

than Garcian does, apparently.

K--[Q]: The whole set-up with the gymnasium at Coburn seemed a
little deliberate. Who set it up? [#VK]

[A]: I expect that Kun Lan set it up. If he can dissolve Garcian's spiritual balance (psychotic though it may be), he can unravel H. H.'s vessel--and, therefore, gain the upper hand. To do this, he has to awaken Garcian to his past identity: Emir.

Note how the entire scenario in the gymnasium plays out like a chess game, visually; also note how it plays out like a trap. A number of Heaven Smiles appear, and they are equal to the number of personas within Garcian. They are totally black, like Kun Lan's chess pieces. And they take them out, one-by-one, diagonally, like pawns taking more powerful pieces on the board. (Also note that Garcian's suit is white--the color of H. H.'s pieces.)

I expect that the flaw in Kun Lan's plan came from the Benjamin Keane. Kun Lan likely expected Nightmare to be ready for Garcian, with the Golden Gun and black Heaven Smiles at his command. However, the Ben Keane caught him off guard and hoisted him on the stage rack.

L--[Q]: Why would Benjamin Keane kill Greg Nightmare? [#VL]

[A]: Greg Nightmare who controls Coburn--and, by consequence, controls who will become the next President of the U. S. A. Keane didn't win the "election" like he hoped.

In other words, Ben Keane wanted the elections rigged in his favor--so, when this didn't happen, he rigged Greg Nightmare!

M--[Q]: What's the deal with the Golden Gun? [#VM]

[A]: Think of the Golden Gun as a holy sword. The Golden Gun was Emir's token, I think. The usual signifiers are at work: the gun is made of gold, connoting that it is special; further, it is the weapon of an agent possessed by God (or a God-analog); as well, it is made of the metal that was deemed most holy by alchemists. (Nevermind the fact that an actual golden gun would melt after the first few shots.)

The black Heaven Smiles, I think, are pure Heaven Smiles. I think they are the raw essence of the evil within a Heaven Smile, without a human host. Previously, the Killer7s' guns could kill the Heaven Smiles, because they could kill the physical body of the host. Now, they cannot, since no physical body is present. Nightmare is in possession of the Golden Gun, to keep Garcian away from the one weapon that will work against the black Heaven Smiles. Note, also, that Garcian lacks the Vision Ring. He most probably sees the Heaven

Smiles, now, as those three victims in ANGEL saw them.

The Golden Gun may have been a reference to the popular James Bond movies, which are also referred to in Johnny Gagnon's "Pigeon Letters." (The names of the pigeons are also the names of women characters in the films.)

N--[Q]: The game doesn't give a specific date for the recording of Hulbert's cassette tapes, in the SMILE chapter. How do you come up with the year 1996? [#VN]

[A]: Hulbert opens the first tape, by explaining: "It's been a few days since the Presidential election. Today's the fourth Thursday in November."

So, let's look at election years. The last one we had was in 2004, and they occur every four years. These are the possibilities, then: 2000, 1996, 1992, 1988, 1984, 1980, 1976, 1972, 1968, 1964, 1960, 1956, and 1952. I stop at 1952, because this is the election year closest to Emir's death. Hulbert describes Emir's birthdate as "1942," and then pauses and says, "That's over 50 years ago."

From this, I conclude that the recording of the cassettes comes at least 50 years since 1942. 1942 plus 50 equals 1992.

The first cassette tape explains that the first cassette is recorded during an presidential election year. I assume that the only election years in question are 1996 and 2000, because the election of 2004 would have been at least 60 years since 1942. Given that it seems likely that Hulbert would have expressed the time span in tens, I think that 2004 is too late of a date to place the recording of his cassettes.

Between 1996 and 2000, I choose 1996. The intro movie of SUNSET describes the resolution to ban nuclear weapons in July 3, 1998. It seems more likely that concern would arise (with respect to electoral validity) given the later developments to stop all international commerce.

To quote the narrator, again: "The international society, under the motto of 'Protecting the world from international terrorism, ideology terrorism, and cyber-terrorism,' stopped all air transportation and closed every network station in the short span of two years, to reduce the likelihood of terrorism. The world had changed.

"In the year 2002, a network of intercontinental expressways, bridging the Atlantic Ocean, opened, connecting the two major sides of the world. In the following year of 2003, the construction of a mass scale distribution system began, and the man-made landmass large as a city was built over an ocean. The use and research of nuclear energy was banned, and all radioactive waste and materials were disposed of at an energy disposal facility in the Gibsoft Islands, a remote set of islands off the coast of the Indian Ocean."

In other words, the resolutions of 1998 began a process that

resulted in U. S. cooperation in a global unification of the economy. Note that Hulbert's communication comes a few days after the election--meaning, someone suspected fraudulent practices only a short time after the election had taken place. Since the winner of the 1996 election is held responsible for the U. S. policy changes that resulted in the 1998 resolutions, I expect that that was the year of Hulbert's cassettes' recording.

O--[Q]: Who's the guy sitting next to Harman Smith, in the
Union Hotel? [#VO]

[A]: Quick answer: he's Johnny Gagnon.

Johnny Gagnon's last letter narrates that Harman Smith was laughing with him. Laughter, of course, is Kun Lan's calling card. We also know that Kenjiro has been touched by Kun Lan, from the intro scene to Sunset, Part 2. Since Harman Smith--in the suite of the Union Hotel--is aligned with Kun Lan, and since his identity is the Harman who worked with the Yakumo, I believe that he and Kenjiro would cooperate with each other.

When Harman Smith explains that he already sent Kenjiro away, I believe that he sent Kenjiro away to make a hit on the man who is seen gagged, and who falls off the building.

Harman tells Garcian that he "handed over" Kenjiro, to get Garcian to go to the school. Johnny Gagnon knows what Garcian looks like--but not what Emir looks like. In his mind, Garcian (as part of the Killer7/Harman's Assassins) is distinct from Emir. Therefore, when Harman tells Garcian that "the man you are looking for" is at the school, Johnny thinks that Garcian is going to kill Emir.

Between the time that Garcian goes to the school, and the time that he returns, Harman Smith has killed Johnny Gagnon, and Johnny Gagnon is a remnant psyche of Harman Smith. In other words, the man who we see handing Harman Smith the hat is a subservient ghost of Johnny Gagnon.

P--[Q]: Who's the man who falls from the roof of the building,
in the opening to SMILE? [#VP]

[A]: I think that the man who falls off the building is Hiro Sakai, Garcian's contact at the opening of SUNSET, Part 2. Since Harman Smith would have been "within" Garcian at the time that Garcian met with Hiro Sakai, he would know that Hiro was an agent against the Yakumo's agenda.

Q--[Q]: What is that song that Emir whistles, during the
flashback sequences of SMILE? [#VQ]

[A]: The tune is "Greensleeves," and the music is named so in the credits. However, other players and I think that the music

is intended to reference "What Child Is This?"

The main reason given against interpreting the music as "What Child Is This?" is that the credits do not list the song as "What Child Is This?" Despite this discrepancy, a number of reasons exist that favor the interpretation of the music as "What Child Is This?"

First, there's the literal matter of tune and song. The song "What Child Is This?" puts lyrics to the tune of "Greensleeves." Since no lyrics were sung, it's plausible that the tune may be credited as "Greensleeves," while the song "What Child Is This?" is the intended reference. Second, there's the metaphorical matter of meaning. The themes of divine incarnation and birth present in "What Child Is This?" cohere more meaningfully with the themes of Killer7--as opposed to the theme of "Greensleeves," which more often than not is about romantic love.

R--[Q]: Who's the woman who killed Mills? What's her purpose
in the story? [VR]

[A] Her name is "Linda Vermilion."

I think Linda Vermilion is a functional character, whose purpose is to allude to contextual information that is useful in understanding the plot. I don't think she's connected to anyone, right now.

The reasons that I think she was introduced are mostly technical reasons, relating to the story-telling. First, Garcian needed someone for a contact, with Mills dead. Second, Linda alludes to the dual functions of Mills and Garcian, as assassins: they ostensibly work for the American government, but they are forbidden to do anything "in the interest of the country." Linda is positively spiteful toward Mills, when she says, "Is making a move in the interest of the country an assassin's job, too?"

Mills loved his job, I think, because he loved his country. He was unaware that his country-or, at least, the part of it through which he served-was corrupt.

It's also useful to note that Linda is Japanese-or, if not Japanese, markedly Asian. It suggests that, even though Garcian's orders appeared to be coming from a Western source (a white American man with a New England accent), he was being monitored by and controlled by an Asian source.

Most of this information is made directly available to the player, later in the game; however, I think that it is suggested by Linda's presence (I assumed all these things when I saw her scene in the game, anyhow) as foreshadowing for the revelations to come.

Also, she serves as one of the few definitely-human-characters to interact with Garcian directly, and to react to him. Garcian and Mills appear to have been working together for a

long time-enough to know each other's habits, certainly-and Garcian clearly seemed unprepared for another contact who would become irritated at his lack of punctuality. (At the start of ANGEL, we see that Garcian has been on thirty formal missions. I expect that he and Mills have worked together for most of them-or, if not most of them, enough for them to have developed a personal affection through their professional relationship.)

Her interaction with Garcian also suggests Garcian's own blindness. At least three people seem to know more than Garcian does, about his own past: Mills ("Garcie, thirty years ago-"), Linda ("Must be nice being you, able to come and go as you please-"), and Matsuoka ("There are more important things-like finding out who you are."). I don't think that any of these characters have a whole vision of Garcian's/Emir's history and circumstances, but they certainly know enough to suspect a larger picture-and, until SMILE Part 2, Garcian doesn't seem to know enough to cause him to doubt his assumptions about his existence.

S--[Q]: The instruction booklet says that Dan wouldn't
hesitate to kill Harman. This never gets played out in
the game. What's up with that? [#VS]

[A]: Please read the entry titled "FALLEN ANGEL" in the
section "Things That Don't Belong Anywhere Else."

T--[Q]: What's the purpose of the Ulmeyda episode
in the game? [#VT]

[A]: I think that the Ulmeyda episode is meant to illustrate a
few aspects of the Heaven Smiles, as well as show how
thoroughly the Yakumo had infiltrated the American government.

Ulmeyda's religion seems antithetical to the Heaven Smiles. I
draw this conclusion from a few instances: first, Ulmeyda's
followers do not bear the smiling, near-manic demeanor of the
Smiles; second, when Clarence (the boy who "wins" the car) is
pulled aside, he is ecstatic at having "won," but Ulmeyda
discourages his smiling because he'll "frighten off lady
luck;" and, third, he obviously fears the Heaven Smiles as a
disease, since he asks Garcian to kill him in the instance
that he is "infected" as one of them.

This illustrates a few things about the Heaven Smiles, I
think, on the cosmic level of the narrative. However, it
illustrates those characteristics of the Heaven Smiles, as
they are antithetical to Ulmeyda. Ulmeyda, importantly,
represents most of the characteristics of Western religion. As
we know from Clarence's monologue at the end of CLOUDMAN,
Ulmeyda's followers drank Ulmeyda's blood; this reflects the
ritual of the Last Supper, in Christian tradition. Further,
Ulmeyda deliberately infected himself with various lethal
diseases, and overcame them. His blood is filled with numerous
antibodies to genuinely deadly diseases, giving his blood a

degree of "healing power," much as Christ's body is believed to have held in the Christian tradition.

(It seems suggested, though, that Ulmeyda's blood also contains traces of the original diseases. Notice the different reactions in the military officer and Clarence, when each is showered with Ulmeyda's blood. The military officer screams and falls over, as though the blood were acidic; Clarence simply tastes it and recognizes it as Ulmeyda's. This suggests, to me, that Clarence had developed an immunity to the diseases still in Ulmeyda's blood, owing to his earlier drinking of Ulmeyda's blood.)

In fact, when we see Ulmeyda infected with the Heaven Smile virus, we may be looking at the process of "conversion" to the Heaven Smile cult.

The irony, here, is that the American military has infected Ulmeyda with a disease that is the aggressive force of Kun Lan--the East! I think that this is another instance of the irony of East-in-West--Kun Lan's use of Western power, to achieve mastery for the East.

Clarence, at the end, sells the car to Mills. Presumably, he continues Ulmeyda's cult. In a way, he is the Saint Peter to Ulmeyda's Christ.

Ulmeyda's real motivations seem to be what they appear. He wants to do good things for humanity, yet he is only happy living when he's risking death. (We learn this, when talking to Ulmeyda's remnant psyche, post-CLOUDMAN mission.) In the process of amassing his empire, he has (naturally) garnered a lot of attention, and he fears being exploited by the Heaven Smiles.

U--[Q]: That girl just appeared while I was fighting Handsome
Pink!!! WTF? Is this game SERIOUSLY punching my brain and
NOT apologizing!? [#VU]

A: Yes. It is punching you in the brain and not apologizing.
Viva SUDA 51!

That girl introduces herself as LOVE. The short answer: she's Trevor Pearlharbor's agent, and she is the one who really controls the Handsome Men.

Here's the scene, since it's easy to miss stuff:

Garcian: "The girl's an avid gamer. Her world of games and the real world co-exist as one."

LOVE: "Nice to meet you, Mister Killer Garcian. My name is LOVE."

Garcian: "How do you know my name?"

LOVE: "Because I write the story, mister."

Garcian: "I don't follow."

LOVE: "Here's the thing, I work for Electro-inline Inc. I create propaganda using media--you see?"

Garcian: "You're saying . . . that they're all Electro-inline's advertisements."

LOVE: "That's why I'm gonna bring 'em down. I'll make 'em pay for Trevor's death."

Garcian: "Can you really do it?"

LOVE: "I'll make sure justice is done. But in MY book though. You be sure to check it out in next week's issue. I'm really glad we met, Mister Killer Garcian."

Garcian: "The pleasure's all mine. LOVE, your passion is inspiring to us all."

LOVE: "Thank you. I'll be watching you, mister."

LOVE disappears

First off: I am not sure if the company's name is "Electro-inline." I'm uncertain of the written letters around where the hyphen is.

In order to understand what LOVE is saying, we have to look at what Travis says during the ALTER EGO mission. As he describes Trevor, the comic artist is egoistical, arrogant, and elitist--he secludes himself from his artistic team. Travis explains the rationale for the hit: "We all know the guy owes his success to his representative's finesse. He doesn't have the skill to make it on his own, thank you. Straight up, he puts an angle on a comic, and the same shit goes down in the real, 3-dimensional world. The guy's a seer, man."

When Dan Smith walks into Trevor's veranda, it's clear that he thinks the world of himself. He squeals, "I didn't think I had such power!" He then brags that Dan can't kill him, because he wrote the comic so that Dan will die. Trevor mistakes his ability as a seer for the ability to create the future. He brags about the superior strength of the Handsome Men, because they are his creations.

Yet, he is killed by Handsome Black. Trevor Pearlharbor is a fanboy unrequited.

The entire second half of ALTER EGO is akin to a blend between a video game and reality--or, to speak from our side of the television screen, a video game WITHIN A VIDEO GAME, and the reality within the video game Killer7.

The video game that runs its credits notes that it is an online game. This means, it could be played by LOVE from an undisclosed location. LOVE is not present, physically; Garcian and the Killer7, however, are. Even so, the space created for the fight appears to be unreal, given the absence of ANYONE in Times Square.

Since the space for the HAJIME fights is a synthetic creation of a video game and reality, it follows that part of the space is created by a television--on LOVE's end. This may account for how all of the Killer7 (and Master Harman) can exist in the same physical space, at the same time. All of them can exist on different channels, in the television, and through the combined television-reality of a video game they can all share physical presence.

The purpose of the HAJIME fights is to destroy the Handsome Men. LOVE is Trevor Pearlharbor's representative. She writes the stories--Trevor "predicts" their outcome, and he takes credit for it. In other words, LOVE is the person who manipulates the Handsome Men through the medium of a video game; Trevor is the person who takes credit for the predictions and the actions of the Handsome Men.

Garcian and the Killer7 are sent to kill Trevor Pearlharbor, because Trevor is the person who is responsible, publicly, for a senator's assassination. However, the Handsome Men arrive to assassinate Trevor, too--controlled by LOVE! Likely, she sent the Handsome Men to kill Trevor, so that Trevor would know (at the last moment) that he was powerless.

We can take away some useful observations, from the conversation between Garcian and LOVE. First, they do not regard each other as enemies; this is quite different from all of the preceding interaction. She refers to Garcian as "Killer Garcian," because that is the name that he will have in the comic book. Remember, Mills showed Garcian the next issue in which Harman Smith was portrayed as a monster, and the Killer7 were named as the Handsome Men's next opponent. That means that Garcian and the other members of Killer7 will be in the issue, and they will likely have names patterned similar to the Handsome Men's.

For example: "Handsome" is like a family name, and the specific color designates the individual. So, you'll have "Handsome Red" and "Handsome Blue," and you'll know they're part of the same group because they're both "Handsome." Similarly, you'll have "Killer Garcian" and "Killer Dan," and you'll know they're part of the same group because they're both "Killer." The language pattern reflects the Japanese custom of placing a person's family name before his or her personal name--suggesting that the comic book is an American knock-off of Japanese Sentai motifs.

Therefore, when LOVE says, "That's why I'm gonna make them pay for Trevor's death," she's speaking ironically. Garcian smiles, and says, "Can you really do it?" with the incredulity of a secondary character who hears a comic's lead character vow to do something noble. (E.G.: "I'm off to kill Tetsuo!" "Can you really do that?") LOVE makes a point of highlighting that "justice will be done" in HER book--not Trevor's. She's killed Trevor, in other words, to advance her own career.

Notice the trio of dots, on LOVE's hand. The camera focuses on this little tattoo twice, suggesting that it is important.

The triangle, pointed upward (as LOVE's tattoo points) symbolizes masculine power and fire. It also symbolizes the Third Eye: two dots for the two normal eyes, and one dot for the third.

Therefore, when Kun Lan appears on the other side of the television screen, the trio of dots suggests that either LOVE was being controlled by Kun Lan--or, that LOVE never existed, but, rather, was a *façade* adopted by Kun Lan for the sake of the game. Sure, Kun Lan is male and LOVE is female--but how easy is it to lie about one's gender over the internet? Further, how much less willing to question the lie will a person be, if the name tantalizes him, somehow, like "LOVE"?

V--[Q]: How did Emir know that Harman and his assassins were
staying at the Hotel Union? [#VV]

A: My belief is that Yoon Hyun tipped off Emir. I think so, because of Johnny Gagnon's description of him, in his next-to-last letter:

"The informant's name is Yoon-Hyun. He's the owner of the Union Hotel Group. He met an untimely death at the Union Hotel in Philadelphia. Many celebrities were at the reception, but nevertheless, there were few witnesses to the murder, and many of the facts don't add up. Yet one thing is for sure: he was involved with the Smith syndicate. Rumor has it that an incident that happened at the hotel was swept conveniently under the rug."

Yoon-Hyun is an informant. As a member of the Smith syndicate, he knew the whereabouts of the Harman Assassins--and, as the owner of the Union Hotel (where the seven were murdered), he knew which rooms they were staying in.

Why, then, would he betray the rest of the Smiths? A couple of reasons suggest themselves to me.

The first reason is fairly easy, I think: as a likely Yakumo affiliate, Yoon-Hyun would have been the best person for Emir Parkreiner ("an ace of aces brought out by the Yakumo") to contact for information. Since both Emir and Yoon-Hyun worked for the same organization, Yoon-Hyun would have been loyal to his greater master: the Yakumo.

The second reason is a little more difficult. The Remnant Psyches all are represented metaphorically, I think. Travis was a go-getter, so he's often shown exercising; Susie frequently "lost her head," so she's shown disembodied; Kess was a handbag of insecurities, so he's blind and constantly besieged by dreams of monsters; and Yoon-Hyun (I think) was happily traitorous . . . for the right price.

Notice that, as an informant, Yoon-Hyun is happy to provide general information and banter for free. If you want the real, direct information, though, you have to shoot the mask and pay up. Yoon-Hyun then addresses "the chief" and refers to himself as "the True Mask." I think that this is a symbolic expression

of Yoon-Hyun's inner character, and how easily he was bought.

W--[Q]: What's the deal with the Save Maid? Is she Samantha
Sitbon or Samantha Smith? [#VW]

A: At the end of ANGEL, Samantha is introduced as "Samantha Sitbon." However, I am informed that, in the Japanese release, she is introduced as "Samantha Smith." In both releases, she refers to herself as "Samantha Smith," in Johnny Gagnon's final letter.

I would offer the explanation that Harman has identified with Samantha Sitbon (who I call the Save Maid's real-world self--the abusive caretaker), and has established a spiritual connection with her that allows him to take advantage of her identity as a Remnant Psyche--before she is actually dead. When Harman Smith finally rapes and reaps her soul, she is fully Samantha Smith--one of the Smith syndicate, in death.

X--[Q]: What's Curtis Blackburn's deal? Did he just fly through
those corridors? [#VX]

A: Yes. "How," you ask? Ninja magic.

Simply put, Curtis has Awesomeness, with a capital-A. He can levitate down corridors; he can lie on the surface of water and even use his Awesomeness to levitate upright and stand on the water's skin. The man has 'leet skills.

Y--[Q]: Who is Ayame Blackburn? [#VY]

A: In what may be one of the most memorable moments in my video game career, Ayame Blackburn introduces herself as "the Chairman of the Educational Guidance Council."

Ayame might have explained herself a little better for an American audience unfamiliar with Japanese government and bureaucratic structure. The Japanese government is very similar to the government of the United Kingdom, employing many of the same terms and relationships between structures as does the government in the U.K. Either Ayame Blackburn is confessing that she holds a position in the Japanese educational system--or, she is confessing that she holds a position in the American educational system which (in the political universe of Killer7) is defined in terms of Japanese bureaucratic structure.

The equivalent to American bureaucratic terms would be something like "Chairman of the Board of Education," most likely in the Seattle region, since this is where Curtis is based and where Coburn elementary exists.

I have learned from various sources (which I will specifically describe, when I have those bearings together) that Ayame

Blackburn is Curtis Blackburn's adopted daughter. She is about sixteen years old, and Curtis has trained her personally. This is how she can run invisibly through poorly lit areas, and can run at incredible speeds.

Ayame Blackburn is one half of another light-and-dark juxtaposition. Remember that Curtis Blackburn also taught Dan everything that he knew. Presumably, given Curtis' unique skills, he also taught Dan how to perform the Collateral Shot. Ayame Blackburn's strength is found by entering into darkness; Dan's strength is found by emitting light. I suspect that they are two halves of Curtis Blackburn's total knowledge.

Z--[Q]: Where was Kevin during the flashback sequences? [#VZ]

A: This is the most frequently asked question that I receive via eMail, so I'll include it here: Kevin was the bellhop.

Yes, that's right. The bellhop.

AA--[Q]: I didn't understand what was going on in the KAKU building. Who were those four guys playing Mah-jong? Why were they talking about dogs and monkeys? [#VAA]

A: According to the translation of Capcom-Japan's Killer7 web site provided for me by Yoshiko Ohier, the men in the KAKU building playing Mah-jong were named Dudley, Jeffers, Ohta, and Kuramoto. Dudley and Jeffers were American diplomats, and they were the ones referred to as "Dogs." Ohta and Kuramoto were Japanese diplomats with the Liberal Party, and they were the ones referred to as "Monkeys."

I think that these nicknames correspond with the archetypal dogs and monkeys of the Shinto zodiac. In the Shinto zodiac, monkeys are erratic geniuses, clever and skillful when working on large operations, innovative, and original. These characteristics would seem to describe the Japanese politicians in Killer7: all of them innovatively find ways to undermine their opponents, and they pursue these plans in large-scale ways. Yet, describing the Japanese as "monkeys" is ironic, given the ambiguous success that the Japanese seem to have in these endeavors. Dogs, in the Shinto zodiac, are imbued with strong senses of duty and honor. They are extremely honest, and try to maintain good relationships with others. They inspire confidence and can easily persuade others to keep secrets. This sort of blunt, emotional personality is an appropriate description of the American politicians in Killer7; certainly, the American military officers seen in the opening cutscenes of SUNSET showed sincere concern for the lives of the Japanese, who (to those officers) were known national allies. However, describing the Americans as "dogs" is also ironic, given the fact that the Americans would have betrayed Japan's friendship were it not for Matsuken's intervention on behalf of the U. N. Party.

AB--[Q]: Who was Kenjiro Matsuoka? And why was he called
Matsuken?

[#VAB]

A: Yoshiko Ohier explained to me that "Matsuken" is a nickname for Kenjiro Matsuoka. In Japanese language, family names are written before personal names, opposite how they are written in most Western languages. Matsuoka's name would be written "Matsuoka Kenjiro." The nickname is simply a combination of the two names: "Matsu(oka) Ken(jiro)."

Matsuken was a lower, younger member of the U. N. Party, until he became frustrated with the seeming ineptitude of his party elders. He shot them--Akiba and Kurahashi--and prepared to shoot himself. However, Kun Lan touched him and "adopted" him with the "Hand of God."

Matsuken represents the violent anger in Japanese culture toward America, due in large part to the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the atomic bombs. Yoshiko has explained that the Capcom-Japan Killer⁷ website that Matsuken was born in Hiroshima, and is 30 years old at the time of the story. He was born in Hiroshima. Further discussion of the significance of his age and birthplace can be found in the section of this document titled "MESSIAHS."

After becomig "adopted" by Kun Lan, Matsuken takes the reins of the U. N. Party. He is responsible for the murder of Hiro Kasai, the Japanese man who informed Garcian of the talks being held in the KAKU building at the opening of SUNSET PART TWO. Hiro Kasai was a member of Japan's Liberal Party--the domestic opposition to Matsuken's U. N. Party.

Some players believe that the man who Matsuken kills is Iwazaru. I do not think this is correct. First, we are given no indicators that suggest that the scene on top of the roof in Washington, D.C., is a flashback. It occurs within the narrative linearity of the game's events. At the time of the murder atop the D.C. building, Iwazaru was already a remnant psyche. As well, whether or not a reader accepts my interpretation of Iwazaru as a remnant psyche of Kun Lan (Emir's father), it cannot be argued that Matsuken had a known motive for killing whomever Iwazaru was in life. On the other hand, Matsuken has the knowledge that would lead him to kill Hiro Kasai (since Harman Smith is now alive as a Persona), and he has the motivation to kill Hiro Kasai, since Kasai is a leading figure in the Liberal Party working against the U. N. Party.

At the end of the game, if the player allows Matsuken to live, we see him standing with a stern facial expression as Japanese military technology hurtles toward America. Given his "divine ordination" and the Japanese political party that is most closely aligned with conservative Japanese political ideals, I think that Matsuken represents the reinstatement of Japanese emperorship and the destruction of democratic freedom.

AC--[Q]: Who is the person who leaves messages for Garcian on
the answering machine? What's that message about?[#VAC]

A: The person who leaves messages for Garcian on the answering machine is Christopher Mills, the contact agent between the U. S. Government and the Killer7. The message is a code, so Mills can let Garcian know that there is work to do.

The message is: "Hello, Mr. Smith. The election is drawing near. Have you decided on your vote? If you haven't, please let the Republic party make the most of your precious vote. Thank you, and have a nice day."

The meaning of Mills' contact message is subtle. We should look at his use of the terms "election," "vote," and "Republic party."

"The election is drawing near," Mills says. "Election" carries weight as a political word in both democratic and dictatorial contexts. When we speak of "an election," in American democratic politics, we refer to a specific instance when citizens who are registered to vote cast ballots for candidates; the winner "wins the election." In a dictatorship, "an election" is the assignment (often the self-assignment) of a political figure to a given role. One may be elected to a position of power by popular consent, as in an ideal democracy, or one may be elected to a position by hubris, power, or divinity. Often, the phrase "divine election" is used with respect to a person or group of people who are chosen to carry a significant burden for the sake of others.

Matsuken was "elected" to the position of the U. N. Party's leader by Kun Lan's intervention, much as Emir Parkreiner was "elected" to the role of the killer (and consumer) of the Killer7, including Harman Smith. These elections occurred in the past; they were epiphanies wherein indecision had reached its climax and a single path was chosen.

The irony of Mills' use of the word "election" involves Emir's fate, and the host of the Killer7. When Garcian (as a "game player" controlling the Killer7) chooses between the Personae, he is casting a "vote" for each of those Personae. A person is elected to carry out a designated task; likewise, Garcian elects certain Personae for certain tasks. MASK is chosen for the removal of specific obstacles; Coyote is chosen to move around difficult terrain; and Garcian himself is chosen for the recovery of the dead.

Regardless of the Persona "elected" to a given task, Emir Parkreiner--as the base personality on whom the Personae and Harman Smith are piled--votes for all Personae except his own true identity. One "election" that draws nearer with each mission is the final encounter at the Union Hotel, wherein Emir effectively eliminates all of the possible candidates for his identity, leaving only himself.

Once the internal "election" is resolved, Emir may turn his vote--his power to decide--toward the outside world. At the end of the LION chapter, the player is given the option to either kill Matsuken or let him live. This is a moment of election, wherein Emir is no longer elected by anyone--neither Kun Lan nor H. H.--and takes the power that they once possessed as his own. He "votes" for either Japan or America.

The use of the phrase "Republic Party" struck me as awkward, when I reflected upon it. A casual listening might lead a player to conclude that Mills has disguised himself as a campaigner for the REPUBLICAN Party.

In American political culture, the Republican Party is currently the more ideologically conservative political force; prior to the election of John F. Kennedy, however, the Democratic Party had been the more ideologically conservative party. (The Democrats' election of Kennedy--a Catholic--into public office aroused the prejudice against Catholic Christianity in the politically conservative South, starting a regional migration of political allegiance toward the Republican Party. Prior to this shift, the Democrats had been ideologically conservative.) The history of the Republican Party is important, here, because it reveals that the ideological identity of a given political party is not static. Ideas change, and so do political parties' identities.

So, if Mills had meant "Republican" party, we would be led to believe that he was posing as a conservative ideologue; however, in the projected political future, even this identity would be hard to determine, since "Republican" has meant both ideological liberalism and conservatism. I think that this suggests that we should pay attention to the specific word he chooses: "Republic Party."

Any reference to the American government's structure as "a democracy" equivocates America's real political operation. Certain, America is "democratic"; however, it is not a democracy. A true democracy entails the literal voting participation of every single member of a nation. On a small scale, true democracy is more probable to succeed, since the number of votes are maintained more easily than with a large population. On a large scale--such as the United States' current size--such a method of governmental operation is impossible to execute efficiently. Instead of a true democracy, the United States of America's government is a "democratic republic." Note that "democratic" is the subordinate word, and that "republic" is the dominant word.

When Mills describes himself as "from the Republic party," he confesses that he sides with the United States of America's historical identity. Mills believes that the United States' political structure allows power to politicians because of the population's conscientious approval. In the world of Killer7, he could not be more wrong.

Linda Vermillion calls Mills a slave because "the government's interest was his interest." She asks the rhetorical question, "Is making a move for the interest of the country an assassin's job?" She then introduces herself as "a protector of the country." While her references to "the government" and "the country" seem equivocal, the distinction implied in her speech is important. Mills believed in the government, as he learned of its structure; Christopher Mills was a patriot who served his country through the underground societies within its bounds. Regardless of the culture of deception and intrigue that he surrounded himself with, he never doubted that the authority of the government of the United States of America--a democratic republic--trumped all of the subversive crowds within its borders. When he began acting in the interest of the nation he believed in, the shadow government (whose disguise was a democratic republic) murdered him.

Linda Vermillion contrasts herself with Mills, when she describes herself as "a protector of the country." She protects the shadow government whose activities Mills threatened, by acting on his belief in the power of a democratic republic.

Mills' use of the phrase "Republic party" implies that he and the Killer7 believe that they work for America's historically recognized identity as a democratic republic. At the end of the game, Emir Parkreiner--a mass

murderer who may still be noble, as a political character--must use his power to decide whether he will defend the Republic or not.

AD--[Q]: Why does Garcian find all of the personae's weapons in his attache case? [#VAD]

[A]: My and other's initial reaction to Garcian's discovery of the other personae's weapons in the attache case was to conclude that Garcian, himself, was all of the Killer7. However, I do not think that is the correct conclusion.

The six members of the Killer7 who the player can choose among, while in the field of action, are considered separate from Garcian Smith. However, since Garcian seems to be either a stable physical entity (as Garcian Smith) or a fluctuating physical entity (as the other personae), it makes sense that he would carry all of the other killers' weapons with him. They come in and out of existence, using his body, and he must carry their guns with him.

AE--[Q]: Why doesn't Garcian remember having killed Harman Smith and the other assassins? [#VAE]

[A]: "Garcian Smith" did not exist until Emir Parkreiner had killed Harman Smith and the other assassins, and then had gained the psychical powers of Harman Smith.

Think of "Garcian" as the identity created within Emir, when he became the master of the psychical universe that the Killer7 inhabit. When Emir Parkreiner's memory was recovered, "Garcian" died. Emir remembered killing Harman and the assassins; Garcian could not, because his identity and memory began immediately after Emir took on Harman Smith's powers.

AF--[Q]: Why does Emir still carry the attache case in the LION chapter, if he no longer has the third eye? [#VAF]

[A]: The most immediate answer that I would give to this question is that the developers didn't have the time or interest to create a whole new character model for Garcian, just for the LION chapter.

Even if it is laziness, though, the evidence is in the game that Emir continued to carry the weapons of the Smiths after he became "freed" of their existence as personae. It is possible that the end of SMILE only dramatized the end of H. H.'s existence within Emir Parkreiner. Garcian died, because "Garcian" only existed as a "servant" of H. H., who communicated with Garcian through the form of Master Harman.

The condition of Kun Lan's binding, though, has also been removed. H. H. is no longer within Emir's psyche to keep Kun Lan chained, and the power of resurrection that Emir gained from killing and "consuming" Harman Smith were originally gifts from Kun Lan. So, it seems likely that Emir retained his power to shape-shift and resurrect the dead; he simply lost the guidance and control that

H. H. had had over him, when he was Garcian Smith.

Also, note that when Matsuken addresses Emir, he says: "You boys are almost done. You don't need to go around killing everybody anymore." Matsuken seems to know that Emir represents a group of psyches, since he refers to Emir as "you boys." Surely, Matsuken has spent quite a bit of time around Emir, since his later words imply an extended professional relationship: "I wonder. What'll become of you guys if terrorism is the law of nature? You know, you should kill me now, because you don't want us hanging around." I think that all of this means that Emir retains the power to change forms. Consequently, I think that he carries around the attache case with the others' weapons, so that he can do his work as a professional assassin.

AG--[Q]: What's up with Samantha and the lights? [#VAG]

[A]: I think that this has to do with the white/black, light/dark distinction between H. H. and Kun Lan. Kun Lan is associated with white; H. H. is associated with black. Darkness is H. H.'s true environment. Presumably, since the chain of inheritance of Kun Lan's power (from Harman Smith to Emir Parkreiner) still has the power of Kun Lan--white--at its root, it would make sense that Master Harman would only be able to communicate with Garcian in the light--through the power of Kun Lan that has been manipulated to serve H. H.'s ends.

When Master Harman asks Samantha to turn on the lights, he is returning to darkness--returning to his natural element within Emir's psyche--and giving the "light" of Kun Lan's powers back to Garcian, so that he can use it in the field of action.

AH--[Q]: Why are KAEDE's and MASK's names capitalized? [#VAH]

[A]: This question has a simple answer. They are capitalized because they are the only first names out of all of the Smiths' that were originally written in Japanese characters, in the Japanese release. The other Smiths' names were written in English characters.

AI--[Q]: What are the circumstances surrounding Yoon-Hyun's "untimely death"? Did Emir kill him at the same time as he killed the other members of the Harman Assassins? [#VAI]

[A]: Emir did not kill Yoon-Hyun at the same time that he killed the other members of the Killer7 group. Yoon-Hyun was crucial to the effort to silence all media attention to the murders of the Harman Assassins. He would not have been able to do so, had he been killed.

The specific circumstances surrounding Yoon-Hyun's death are unknown. It seems likely that he would have been killed because of his knowledge of the murders of the Harman Assassins; having the knowledge that he had, when involved in government intrigue, makes for a shortened life span.

AJ--[Q]: What's the deal with the whole Russian Roulette scene?

[#VAJ]

[A]: Benjamin Keane's a little crazy. He says so himself, in fact, when he says, to Garcian, "We're sick people, you know that? We only feel alive when our lives are on the line."

Benjamin Keane started the Russian Roulette game for the thrill, and, also, to create an impromptu "contract" with Garcian Smith. He seems likely to have known who Garcian was; he wanted Garcian to kill the President, so that he (Keane) could become President.

Keane also just assisted in the murder of Greg Nightmare. The man had more than enough reasons to play a suicidal game.

Thematically, the game also touches one of the themes in the game's narrative: voting. What determines whether or not the bullet will be in the chamber, when a player of Russian Roulette pulls the trigger? Arbitrary chance. What are the consequences of that arbitrary chance? Life or death.

Think about the choice at the end of the game. Emir must choose whether or not to kill Matsuken. This, in itself, is like Russian Roulette. If Matsuken dies, Emir lives; if Matsuken lives, Emir dies. Likewise, if Keane dies, Garcian lives; if Keane had lived, Garcian would have died.

AK--[Q]: Why are Emir's eyes green in LION?

[#VAK]

[A]: SUDA 51 has answered this question in an interview, explaining that the eyes are green to indicate that Emir has awoken fully to his bloodthirsty nature.

The green eyes indicate that he is fully under the power of Kun Lan, his true father, who also has green eyes.

AL--[Q]: Why do the remnant psyches sound like they are talking through a garden hose?

[#VAL]

[A]: There are two answers to this. First, when the game was made originally in Japanese, the characters' lines were spoken in clear English. However, the language was closer to English: English made slightly incomprehensible through Japanese translation. Knowing that native English speakers would be disturbed by the poor grammar and syntax, the developers decided to present the voices garbled and accompanied with grammatically correct subtitles.

The second answer is that the voices help convey their otherworldly nature. When we, as players, can only understand the content of their speech by reading the subtitles, we are given more strongly the impression that Emir has a complex, intimate relationship with the shades. When we talk to the remnant

psyches, we are encountering them through Emir's perspective; he possesses the power to converse with them, and we can only take meaning from the subtitled text, his mental "interpretation" of the remnant psyches' speech.

AM--[Q]: Why is Travis in a tuxedo? [#VAM]

[A]: Straight up, the man's got class. He's not all wife-beaters and jeans, you know.

AN--[Q]: Was Master Harman really at the table with
Toru Fukushima? [#VAN]

[A]: I think so, yes.

Fukushima sits at the table, and so does Master Harman. No other chair has been presented to Master Harman, implying that he has his own chair. Second, after Kisugi has shot Fukushima, Master Harman escapes Kisugi's gunshots by pressing on the table and rolling backward. This choreography would not be possible, if the person was sitting in anything other than a wheelchair.

AO--[Q]: Are the three Harmans separate identities, or are they
all the same person? [#VAO]

[A]: I think that the entity collectively known as "Harman" is expressed differently, in each of his three parts.

Think of the concept of the Christian tripartite God, who is divided into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the transcendent, holy absolute; the Holy Spirit is the will of God working in the world; and the Son is the human incarnation of the Father's love for the world.

In Harman, then, we see an analogous division: H. H. is the Father, since his will is the absolute moral authority; Harman Smith is the Holy Spirit, since he is the "active" will of Harman in the world; and Master Harman is the Son, since he is the human incarnation of Harman.

Harman's biggest problem is Harman Smith. Imagine if the tripartite God had sent His Holy Spirit to the world--and the Holy Spirit was able to decide and act against the Father's desires. This is something like what happened to Harman. When his Holy Will--Harman Smith--entered the world of men and politics, he became corrupted toward Harman's nemesis: Kun Lan. (This corruption is how Harman Smith gained the powers of resurrection.) By sending Emir Parkreiner to kill and "consume" Harman Smith, then, H. H. was able to bring his delinquent part under control. Without this, the total identity of Harman would be always off-balance.

In a real sense, Harman is at war with himself.

AP--[Q]: How did Garcian gain the power to resurrect the dead?

[#VAP]

[A]: Originally, Harman Smith had the power to resurrect the dead. However, when Emir Parkreiner killed Harman Smith, he took Harman Smith's Vision Ring. With the Vision Ring and the awakening of Emir Parkreiner's "third eye," he was able to consume the souls of those who he had killed along with their powers.

So, for instance, when Emir consumed Dan Smith, he was able to use Dan's persona along with the Colateral Shot. Likewise, when he consumed KAEDE Smith, he was able to use KAEDE's persona along with her Blood Shower abilities.

His slaying and consumption of Harman Smith, then, allowed him the ultimate power of all: the power to resurrect from the dead.

AQ--[Q]: Are Susie and Ayame Blackburn the same person? [#VAQ]

[A]: No, they are not. Ayame Blackburn is alive and VERY well during the game--specifically, during the boss fight of the first half of ENCOUNTER. Susie Sumner has been dead for quite a while, by this point.

AR--[Q]: Who was Hulbert? What was his purpose? [#VAR]

[A]: Hulbert was an FBI agent, who was murdered on a mission to investigate Coburn Elementary School to determine the political integrity of the United States' voting system.

AS--[Q]: Dan Smith beat Emir to the draw in the Union Hotel flashback, but he didn't shoot. Why not? [#VAS]

[A]: In my layout and timeline of the events of the Union Hotel murders, Dan Smith the last of the Smiths killed before Emir took on Harman Smith. Also according to my timeline and interpretation, Dan Smith had been resurrected from the dead at least once before his murder at the Union Hotel.

He knew that his boss could resurrect him from the dead; he knew his boss was a total badass assassin. And his boss was on the floor immediately above him. He may have waited to shoot because he was pretty sure he wouldn't be permanently killed by the shot.

AT--[Q]: MASK De Smith seems out of place among the Killer7. He isn't bloodthirsty, and he's a hero to children. What's with that? [#VAT]

[A]: I think that this is intended to call our attention to the nature of heroes. A quotation from the Konami game "Metal Gear

Solid 2: Sons of Liberty" reads: "There's not much of a difference between heroes and madmen."

In the way that comic book characters often are heroes, MASK De Smith is a hero. He has a secret identity; he undergoes multiple transformations, each time revealing a deeper super identity; and he is portrayed as a defender of the weak. When he speaks his classic line to Jean DePaul, he implies the purity of his own strength: "Children are pure. They know who is the strongest."

When MASK De Smith kills, it is for the sake of justice. When Dan Smith kills, it's because he's crazy and he simply loves killing. Both are the same, in their actions. We judge them differently based on their motivations toward identical actions.

AU--[Q]: Why couldn't Garcian revive the Personae after they were killed by the Black Smiles in the Coburn Elementary Gymnasium?

[#VAU]

[A]: A couple of reasons suggest themselves.

First, Garcian no longer possessed the Vision Ring. His powers of clairvoyance and resurrection seem to have been contingent upon both his "third eye" and his possession of the Vision Ring. The "third eye" allowed him to perceive supernatural activity; the Vision Ring allowed him to act within the supernatural realm.

Once he lost the Vision Ring, he lost the ability to act within the supernatural realm. However, until he climbed to the roof of the Union Hotel, he could still perceive the supernatural realm.

Second, even granting Garcian the power to resurrect the dead after giving up the Vision Ring, he had none of their remains. It is important that after every death of a Persona, in the game, Garcian can retrieve some parts of their body in a brown paper bag. He doesn't have any of this, after they are killed by the Black Smiles.

AV--[Q]: Is there any significanceto the way that the Personae's powers work?

[#VAV]

[A]: Yes, I think so.

All of the Personae's powers suggest elements of their deaths, in the Union Hotel. All of the powers are inversions of the elements of their deaths.

Kevin Smith was in disguise, but his disguise failed. In the Killer7, Kevin Smith's disguise is perfect: he turns invisible.

Con Smith did not hear Emir enter his room, and he did not run away. In the Killer7, he has perfect hearing and he can run at impossible speeds.

MASK De Smith was completely nude, exposed, and he died without putting up a fight. In the Killer7, he is disguised entirely, and

he is the superhero-in-residence.

KAEDE Smith was a coward; she ran away when she had the chance to warn the remainder of her comrades, and she hid in a closet. In the Killer7, she instead slits her wrist and showers forth blood--an action reminiscent of self-sacrifice, the opposite of her behavior in the Union Hotel. As well, instead of placing a barrier between herself and a threat--as she did when she hid from Emir in the closet--she removes barriers.

Coyote Smith hid unimaginatively from Emir. In the Union Hotel, Coyote had the option of climbing onto the fire escape to flee. Lacking the imagination to do so, however, he was killed when Emir instead used the fire escape to catch Coyote off guard. In the Killer7, then, Coyote possesses the ingenuity and cleverness that he failed to display at the Union Hotel.

Dan Smith talked a lot of trash, bragged to Emir's face, and even beat Emir to the draw. In the end, though, he was unable to cash the check his mouth had written. In the Killer7, then, he is still a braggart, but he is able to follow through with the claims made in his speech. He is even able to fire the devastating Colateral Shot--a supernatural version of the gunshot that could have saved his life from Emir Parkreiner, in the Union Hotel.

AW--[Q]: Why does MASK De Smith get so many powerups, when the other members of the Killer7 do not? [#VAW]

[A]: Again, I think that MASK De Smith's powerups are intended to reflect his quality as a superhero. Every superhero transforms from his or her "secret identity" into a super identity. MASK De Smith is such a superhero, he transforms from super identity into super identity into super identity.

He rocks the proverbial party.

AX--[Q]: Does the singer with the guitar at the beginning of ALTER EGO have any significance? [#VAX]

[A]: Mostly, I think he is present for flavor. However, he also serves as a guide, much as do the twin boys in the cathedral.

AY--[Q]: What do the Odd Engravings mean? [#VAY]

[A]: At this point, I do not have any insight into specific meaning created by the design of the Odd Engravings. In general, though, I would observe that the precise detail given in the Odd Engravings contrasts the abstract geometry of the rest of the game's visual atmosphere well.

AZ--[Q]: What's the deal with Susie? What's her story? [#VAZ]

Susie is a Remnant Psyche, of the Killer7.

She has a troubled and stressful past. At one point, her mother committed suicide--and took Susie with her. Susie's mother died, but Susie survived. Susie got in trouble quite a bit--she had typical American teenager angst--and she seems to have had a hair trigger temper. Once, a young man came to take her out on a date in secret; he threw some rocks at her window, and accidentally hit her in the face. This tripped her wire: she got her father's gun and shot the erstwhile beau to death.

Susie was later confined to a mental institution. She killed a few of her nurses, and then escaped. According to Johnny Gagnon's letters, she requested work from the Killer7--though, it is unclear whether this means that she had requested to work FOR the Killer7, or that she had requested that the Killer7 do a job for her.

Either way, she was killed, and the exact details of her death are unknown. However, she appears to the Killer7 as a severed head, and is part of the psychic phenomena that surround them.

BA--[Q]: Why does Mills have the car that Clemence drove at
the end of Cloudman? [#VBA]

SUDA 51 has been interviewed on this issue, and he is quoted as having said that in the interim between Cloudman and Smile, Mills bought the car off of Clemence, who felt uncomfortable owning the vehicle that was dyed red from his former master's blood.

After Mills is assassinated, Garcian/Emir buys the car, which is what he drives across the intercontinental interstate to get to Battleship Island.

Interestingly, when Garcian and Mills converse in the car that Mills bought from Clemence, Garcian sits on the right side, as the passenger. In the car that Mills owned BEFORE he bought the car from Clemence, Garcian is seen riding on the LEFT SIDE, as the passenger. (You can see Garcian riding on the left side in the anime-style cutscene introducing the ALTER EGO chapter.) This implies that Mills' first car was not a vehicle manufactured for use in the United States; European roads require that the driver side be located on the right of the car, since European driving laws require drivers to stay on the left side of the road.

This is a nice detail, because it further evinces Japan's impotence: since Japan is no longer manufacturing cars for global purchase, Europe has picked up the slack and manufactures cars that are exclusively designed for European use.

BB--[Q]: What happened to Japan, at the end of SUNSET? [#VBB]

The game does not make the fate of Japan very clear. The most confusing scene plays at the end of SUNSET, when missiles fly over Mills and Garcian standing on the highway overpass.

According to the game, the only person capable of convincing the U. S. Government to intervene and intercept the missiles is Toru Fukushima, since he is the head of the U. N. Party--the strongest political party in Japan. However, the Liberal Party sends Julia Kisugi to kill Fukushima, to retrieve the Yakumo. (The Liberal Party could not have chosen a worse time to do so.)

During the cutscene that opens the second part of SUNSET, we see Matsuoka become the new leader of the U. N. Party, since Fukushima is now dead. Matsuken leaves, after having been touched by Kun Lan's "God Hand," and attends to matters that are not specified in the game. Since Fukushima is the only man who could entice the U. S. Government to intervene because of his position as the head of the U. N. Party, it is possible that Matsuken left to encourage the U. S. Government's aid in saving Japan.

The meeting in the KAKU Building, of course, was between members of Japan's Liberal Party and the U. S. Government. However, since the Liberal Party held no real influence with the U. S. Government, it is unlikely that they could have engaged serious consideration for the U. S. Government's intervention.

As of the end of SUNSET, the situation looks like this, then: Matsuken is the new head of the U. N. Party and is the only one who could encourage the U. S. Government to save Japan. The Japanese Liberal Party is losing the negotiations to save Japan. Matsuken leaves to attend to unknown business, at the time when the U. N. Party wants to save Japan. We have circumstances that allow for both possibilities: Japan could have been saved by Matsuken's intervention, or Japan could have been destroyed because of the Liberal Party's ineptness.

This brings us to the scene at the end of SUNSET, when the missiles fly over Mills and Garcian. The missiles are said to have been launched from an unknown location in Asia. Mills and Garcian are standing on a bridge in Seattle, Washington. If someone were to launch missiles as Japan, from Asia, it is unlikely that the missiles would need to pass over Seattle, Washington, to arrive at their destination. Further, if Mills and Garcian are standing on the bridge, facing west--that is, toward the Pacific Ocean and Japan--then the missiles that fly over them would have most probably been launched from WITHIN THE UNITED STATES. This suggests that the U. S. Government decided to intercept the missiles, by launching its own missiles to intercept those heading toward Japan.

The cutscenes and the in-game information is ambiguous, though the evidence suggests that Japan was most likely saved from total annihilation by the United States. (After all, Battleship Island is not far off of Japan's coast, and it certainly would have been destroyed in a nuclear explosion. Yet, we see that it has survived.)

BC--[Q]: The anime styles used in the CLOUDMAN and ALTER EGO chapters are different. Why is that? [#VBC]

I don't know a whole lot about anime. I will agree, though, that the styles used in CLOUDMAN and ALTER EGO are different enough

that it jars the audience's expectations. I think that the importance of the anime cutscenes in ALTER EGO should be addressed before explaining why they differ from those in CLOUDMAN.

Anime characters and images appear frequently in "Killer7," and they mostly appear in association with anti-U. S. forces. Think about the associations between anime influences, and the boss of ANGEL and Ayame Blackburn in ENCOUNTER. (For a fuller treatment of the significance of Japanese pop culture in the game, please read the last section in section VI of this document.)

Importantly, anime is a medium that is a sort of extension of Japanese comics, much as American animation has become an extension of American comic books. One presents static pictures that tell a story, when viewed in a certain sequence, and the other presents dynamic pictures that tell a story, when viewed in a certain sequence. Like comic books, most of the popular anime involves a superhero--think of Japanese manga and anime such as "Fist of the North Star" and "Jojo's Bizarre Adventure."

When the player encounters Curtis Blackburn's remnant psyche, Blackburn urges the player not to trust superheroes; he insists that they are fakes. Curtis's advice is ironic. At first, he appears to be talking about the Handsome Men; however, he may also allude to Emir Parkreiner's "awakening" from his possession by H. H.

The anime cutscenes in ALTER EGO express Emir Parkreiner's gradual recognition of his pre-Killer7 memory. The members of the Killer7 are all fantastic beings--Johnny Gagnon's letters even describe Dan Smith's Collateral Shot as a move straight out of an anime movie. Prior to ALTER EGO, all of the members of Killer7 are perceived as real, flesh-and-blood figures. During ALTER EGO, they are perceived as cartoon characters: larger than life mirages. During SMILE, they are perceived as ghosts and dismissed. The chronological order of the chapters reflects the movement of Emir's mind toward recognition of his identity; the anime cutscenes of ALTER EGO suggest that Emir is recognizing (on some primordial level) that the Killer7 Personae are not the real, flesh-and-blood figures he has believed them to be, until this point.

Since Emir's awakening is central to the plot of "Killer7," I think that the significant anime cutscenes of ALTER EGO are more important than those of CLOUDMAN. Consequently, I think that the anime style in CLOUDMAN is used precisely because it is so different from that used in ALTER EGO. The difference calls the audience's attention to the anime cutscenes of ALTER EGO, to make the audience question the meaning behind them more explicitly.

BD--[Q]: How does Garcian resurrect the dead Personae? [#VBD]

Following this document's interpretation that Garcian controls the Killer7's Personae from within Harman's Room--thereby explaining why he does not exist in the field, when any of the other Personae are out there--I think that the player's actions when accessing the television screen in Harman's Room are reflections of Garcian's own actions. In other words, Garcian controls the Killer7 in ways similar to the way that we control them--through

a video game.

Yet, when we access the television screen, Garcian Smith appears as an option, and he addresses the audience to indicate that he is inside the television--not accessing it.

All of the Killer7 and the phenomenae of H. H. and Kun Lan's game requires Emir Parkreiner's identity as a resource to use. Emir's body can shapeshift and assume the appearance of the various Personae; the material of his psyche is needed to create the personalities for each of the Personae, much like a yard of cloth can be used to make a shirt, a dress, or any number of garments.

When we resurrect a fallen Persona, we are required to "infuse it with life." The energy that brings the Persona back to life must exist in some other form, before it is transmitted into the dead Persona. In the relationship between the player and the game, the player's own physical energy is used to resurrect the Persona, since the player must press the A button rapidly in order to bring the Persona back to life. Likewise, in the game, it seems that the resurrection process involves "reinflating" the dead Persona with energy from Emir Parkreiner's psyche/soul.

Since Garcian is the only member of the Killer7 who bears any relationship to the previous identity of Emir Parkreiner, it is natural that he would be the only one who can bring the Personae back to life. In a sense, he is a ward over Emir Parkreiner's soul, and he is responsible for infusing the dead Personae with Emir's spiritual material.

BE--[Q]: What's the deal with the epilogue sequence that takes
place 100 years later? Why is it in Shanghai? [#VBE]

The "100 Years Later" epilogue conveys that the battle between Harman and Kun Lan is never-ending. SUDA 51 has commented that it represents the endless cycle of war. I would also add that it represents the INEVITABILITY of war, as long as extremist cultural factions within the Occident and the Orient fight each other.

The setting of the conflict, 100 years later, leads me to think so. Again, I interpret the significance of the setting in terms of allusiveness to the Second World War.

Prior to Japan's fated participation in the Second World War, Japan had staged several ethnocentric and imperialistic conquests into China. Japan saw itself as the purifier of the Asian nations, and it sought to conquer the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean populations in order to subjugate them under their proper ruler--the Japanese Emperor. While Western political powers were aware of Japan's military advances into China, they disapproved of the aggression without seriously challenging Japan. One of the moments that brought the West's attention to Japanese continental expansion was the Shanghai Incident.

Japan's war against the Chinese spread to Shanghai in February 1932. Until that point, the United States government held a reaction called "the nonrecognition principle" to Japan's territorial conquests within China. The "nonrecognition principle" was a

diplomatic trick that allowed the United States to refuse to recognize Japanese possession of conquered Chinese territory (which protected them from appearing to support the Japanese expansion to the Chinese). Until the Shanghai Incident, the Japanese expansion had occurred mostly in the north and east of China; however, the United States and Britain had significant commercial interests in Shanghai.

With the attack upon Shanghai, Japan began to irritate Western powers more directly with its imperialistic activity. Neither the United States nor Britain could retaliate, due to the trouble caused by the Great Depression; however, the Shanghai Incident marked the beginning of the West's wariness of Japan.

During the "100 Years Later" epilogue, Harman fights Kun Lan in Shanghai. The location in Shanghai, I think, suggests another political circumstance, in the future, which will result in another struggle between Harman (the West) and Kun Lan (the East).

BF--[Q]: At the end of ANGEL, the boss says that four of their children did not die in vain, but that the Killer7 killed the other nine children needlessly. Who were those children? What did she mean by 'not dying in vain?' Who were the other nine? [#VBF]

At the beginning of ANGEL, Mills tells Garican that there are fourteen Heaven Smiles inside, including the leader. Add four to nine, and you have thirteen Heaven Smiles referred to by the ANGEL boss. Include the angel just beyond the boss fight room--the one that Kun Lan hides behind--and you have fourteen.

As suggested earlier in this guide, three ways appear to exist for making Heaven Smiles: conversion (like in the intro to ANGEL), Frankenstein-monster creation (using the organs harvested by Pedro and Blackburn), and viral infection (as seen at the end of CLOUD-MAN). However, the egg-laying Duplicator Smiles seem to create weaker, less substantial Heaven Smiles.

The existence of the Duplicator Smiles seems to have been a surprise to everyone involved; even the Killer7's pre-operation intelligence lacked mention of them. (Remember Dan's comment: "The bastards are breeding!") The ANGEL boss doesn't appear to recognize the Heaven Smiles created by the Duplicator Smiles, when she mentions thirteen of her "children."

Importantly, three humans die in the course of ANGEL. (I do not include the person in the foyer, since he became a Heaven Smile and died in that condition.) These, I think, comprise the "four children" referred to in the ANGEL boss's speech. However, the ANGEL boss herself is an extra presence in the building. With her present, the total number of Heaven Smiles reaches fifteen. On her back, four faces that look like Kun Lan represent her weak spots, during the boss fight.

I think that her statement that "four children" did not die in vain alludes to her own creation, as a Heaven Smile entity. The four faces are representations of each of the people in the building who died in the building. The man who turns into a

Heaven Smile in the building's foyer explains that people inside have already died; likely, he alludes to the certain death of the other three people, in addition to another person who died before his encounter with the Killer7 in the foyer. Owing to whatever engineering process the Heaven Smiles use to create new beings, the three witnessed deaths and the fourth unwitnessed death contributed to the creation of the ANGEL boss.

The "other nine children" referred to in the ANGEL boss's speech are the Heaven Smiles in the building who were converted, rather than generated by the Duplicator Smiles.

BG--[Q]: Which Harman is lying on the floor, at the end of LION,
and why is he wearing all white? [#VBG]

The Harman lying on the floor at the end of LION is the whole Harman--all three of the earlier divisions again unified into one entity. Master Harman no longer exists as a mediating figure between Harman Smith and H. H.--H. H. no longer has to deal with controlling a delinquent Harman Smith--and Harman Smith no longer has to deal with a dominating H. H. They are unified, and they are at rest.

The white suit that he wears is related to the black suit that Emir Parkreiner wears, in the LION mission. Master Harman's and H. H.'s white-in-black appearance signified a relationship to Garcian Smith, whose appearance is black-in-white. Now that Harman and Emir are separated, the parts of each other that they possessed are returned to the original entity. Harman is no longer fractured by his possession of Emir Parkreiner, and Emir Parkreiner is no longer fractured by his possession by Harman.

Consequently, each character appears as a solid color, rather than as contrasting colors.

VI: THINGS THAT DON'T BELONG ANYWHERE ELSE [#VI2]

Think of this as a junk drawer for observations on the formal and plot elements of the game that don't belong, really, to any of the other areas.

A--SMILE STATIC [#VIA]

While playing through SMILE-PART 2, I noticed that the sound of television static vaguely resounded, in the background of most of the music and sound effects. At first, I thought that my television was acting up. I recorded some of the audio from the game onto an outside MP3 recording device--and, still, the static showed up. I even switched televisions and cables--and, still, the static showed up.

The conclusion that I draw from this is that the static is not

a technical malfunction on behalf of my PS2, television, or A/V cables--but, rather, that the static is an intentional, formal element of the game.

Two things combine, in SMILE-PART 2, that suggest an explanation for the static. First, recall that television is the medium for Garcian's communications with the personas. Second, recall that SMILE-PART 2 is the chapter, in the narrative, when the patchwork of Remnant Psyches and personas within and around Emir's soul begin to dissolve.

When changing personas, in Harman's Room, the player hears static most noticeably while changing channels. Though television static is avoidable today, mostly owing to cable and digital transference of image and sound, it is extremely common on old television sets that use rabbit-ear style antennae for their reception. The static during SMILE-PART 2 is a formal hint that the once-reliable medium of television (as a way to manipulate the personas) is dissolving.

B--TRAITOROUS STAINS (Special recognition goes to Sam Ellis,
who directed my attention to this.) [#VIB]

If you used Coyote to unlock the door to Room 406 in ANGEL, you can talk to Travis as he shuffles a ghostly frying pan over the eye of the stove. Travis explains that the Camellia Smiles are stained with blood, because red bloodstains are the marks of a traitor--and the Camellia Smiles are supposedly Garcian's contacts within the Heaven Smile.

If we take the definition of red-on-white as a symbol that recurs in the game, it raises questions about both KAEDE and Garcian. KAEDE is the only one of the Killer7 to have retained any scar or mark of her death. If the image of red-on-white applies to her character, what betrayal did she commit? KAEDE's act of betrayal may relate to her flashback, as Emir goes through the Union Hotel killing the Harman Assassins. Circumstantial evidence suggests that that, during the flashback sequences, KAEDE had just left Coyote's room. KAEDE is the only character who seems to have had knowledge of Emir's killings, before he arrived at her room. Perhaps her "betrayal" lies in her efforts to save herself, at the expense of warning her fellow assassins about Emir's killing spree.

Another possible explanation of KAEDE's betrayal may be her relationship to the political circumstances in the game, given her ethnicity. (A Japanese Killer7 guide states that KAEDE is Japanese American, born around Oregon.) Given the location of Coburn elementary in Washington State, her ethnicity, and the region of her childhood, it's possible that KAEDE was trained as an assassin by the Yakumo. Hence, her inclusion within the Killer7 group, as a group of assassins who work for the West (AKA H. H.) makes her a traitor to the values and allegiance that she was raised under.

Garcian's traitorous action may be similar to the second possibility ascribed to KAEDE. At the end, once he has seen

thirteen-year-old Emir Parkreiner shoot himself through the mouth, his white suit is stained red. In terms of being a traitor, Garcian's all over the place. Born as the son of Kun Lan, THREE TIMES, and working for H. H.--yet, while working for H. H., serving the interests of the Japanese contingency within the shadow-government of American politics--Garcian's certainly earned that blood.

C-ISZK

[#VIC]

The letters "ISZK" appear frequently through the game: from the television set used to change personas to the name of the amusement park that Curtis uses as a front for his collection of orphans. Kess Bloodysunday is the only character who gives a meaning for "ISZK." He remarks that he can't believe he's actually in "Ishizaka Land."

I believe that this is a reference to the post World War II Japanese novelist, Ishizaka Yojiro. I have not read any of Ishizaka's novels in translation, so my information (at this point) relies upon critical literary summaries and biographies that I have located on various digital servers. All sources describe Ishizaka as a Japanese novelist who helped introduce the idea of a "New Japan": a post-World War II Japanese culture that could see a future for itself, beyond the shock and depression of the horror of the atomic bombs.

In an eMail written to me, Cyril Lener cogently argues that the use of the initials ISZK may refer to the game's art director, Akihiko Ishizaka. Lener quotes the Brady Games Guide interview with SUDA 51, who explained that the Designer considered the real meaning behind each scenario and tried to represent it physically." Given the idiosyncratic, personal approach that Akihiko Ishizaka has taken to depicting the spirit of the world of Killer7, it is likely that the recurrence of ISZK (as well as the naming of the television station that Ulmeyda uses to broadcast his invitation to Garcian, ZAKA) may be Akihiko Ishizaka's artistic signature on the game's visual art.

D--FALLEN ANGEL

[#VID]

After defeating the Ceramic Smile in ENCOUNTER-PART 1, Dan Smith's Demon Gun is "revived." Dan receives both the Demon Gun and a Soul Shell from a figure named only "Fallen Angel." The Fallen Angel is not elaborated upon at any other point in the game. Within the bounds of the interpretation of Killer7 provided in this plot analysis, I suggest that the Fallen Angel represents Dan Smith's ascent toward the ultimate power he can amass, to confront Curtis Blackburn.

Dan Smith was killed by Curtis Blackburn. Some have suggested that Curtis only wounded Dan severely, and that Harman Smith came along and bandaged him up afterward. Following this reasoning, they explain that Dan Smith (in the Union Hotel, during the flashback of his murder) was bandaged up from his encounter.

I disagree with the interpretation just described. First, Travis and Garcian both specifically state that Curtis Blackburn KILLED Dan Smith. Second, Travis repeats the question, "Did you recover the body?" to the player, during ENCOUNTER-PART 1. Travis' use of the word "body" strongly suggests that Dan Smith, in fact, died.

Within the bounds of the interpretation ascribed to in this plot analysis, Harman Smith was given the power to resurrect the dead from Kun Lan. As a strong ally of Kun Lan, Harman Smith was given a share of Kun Lan's "Hand of God," his ability to create (or restore) life. Travis seems to suspect that Harman Smith (before being killed by Emir) came upon Dan's corpse and restored it to life.

If we go with the idea that (from a certain perspective) Kun Lan is a Devil-figure, Dan's resurrection is akin to having made a deal with the Devil. In a sense, Dan Smith has made a Faustian bargain: he gave Harman Smith his soul, in exchange for the longevity of existence that would allow him to get revenge against Curtis Blackburn.

Some argue that Dan's "death" actually occurred while Dan Smith was under Garcian. That is, they argue that Dan Smith was used as a persona on one of Garcian's missions, and that the mission involved the confrontation of Curtis Blackburn. During that mission, Curtis killed Dan Smith; consequently, the Dan Smith persona desires revenge.

I disagree with this theory. A few pieces of evidence suggest that Dan's death at Curtis' hands occurred well before Dan Smith's incorporation in Garcian's complex life. First, Dan was killed by Curtis Blackburn, WHILE Dan was still working with the self-defense department. Since Dan's existence and appearance can only be maintained by Garcian at the expense of the appearance of the other personas (as well as Garcian), it seems unlikely that Garcian would have dedicated enough time as the Dan Smith persona to have established a career in the self-defense department. Second, Dan Smith's reaction to Curtis Blackburn (during the cut-scene before the boss fight of ENCOUNTER-PART 2) suggests that the last time he and Curtis met, Curtis was much younger--placing Curtis and Dan's fight before Emir Parkreiner's raid on the Union Hotel.

Now, let's bring this back to the enigmatic Fallen Angel. Dan Smith died, and Harman Smith took his soul in exchange for prolonged life during which Dan might avenge himself. When confronting Curtis, Dan says, "I went to see the Devil. Now it's your turn." Within the context of the interpretation favored in this plot analysis, Dan (in this scene) refers to his exchange with Harman Smith. The Fallen Angel is a representation of his decadent decision: it holds both a Soul Shell--a representation of Dan's soul, when he gave it to Harman Smith--and Dan's Demon Gun. I deduce from the use of the term "revive" that Dan once used the Demon Gun, before his murder. The Fallen Angel is the keeper of Dan Smith's greater strength, as well as his mortal soul.

Some might ask (reasonably): "If the Soul Shell held by the

Fallen Angel represents Dan Smith's soul, and so does the Soul Shell in the 6th floor of the Union Hotel, are you saying that Dan has two souls?" My answer: yes and no. Dan's first soul was given to Harman Smith--and, when Emir Parkreiner killed him in the Union Hotel, Dan Smith's "second soul" (the animating force bestowed upon him by Harman Smith's miniature Hand of God) was contracted by Emir Parkreiner. In a sense, Dan Smith and Garcian Smith are incredibly alike: each man is running off of his third "incarnation" in life, only for different reasons.

The above interpretation would also explain the game instruction booklet's claim that Dan would kill Harman at any time. If Dan sees Harman Smith as his "owner," he would want naturally to deprive Harman of the authority that a master has over a slave. Doctor Faustus would have killed Satan, certainly, if doing so would release him from his unholy pact. Also, if this is accurate, Dan's relaxed reaction to Emir's slaughter of his teammates might be more understandable. Dan had a deal with Harman: he would kill for Harman, and Harman would keep him alive until Dan got revenge on Curtis. He likely did not expect Emir to kill Harman--and, instead, expected Harman to kill Emir and then resurrect Dan.

E--HEAVEN SMILES AS RELATED TO WORLD WAR II JAPANESE AERIAL
TACTICS [#VIE]

The Heaven Smiles have bombs planted inside them, and these bombs detonate upon their contact with their target. This bears a stark similarity to the grim tactics of Japanese World War II kamikaze pilots.

Further, the Japanese kamikaze fighting tactics came from a cultural history steeped in Bushido. Historically, "Bushido" incorporates a highly idealistic philosophy with formal social customs and martial arts practice. In the event that a person must choose between honor and death, he must choose death (according to Bushido ethics). The culmination of such idealism resulted in kamikaze pilot tactics. The level of idealism may seem distant (even impossible) to us, but during World War II volunteers for kamikaze missions flooded and amassed to three times the number of aircraft available for such missions.

Another important connection between the Heaven Smiles and the Second World War's kamikaze fighters lies in the broader application of suicide-bombing tactics. While kamikaze tactics were originally confined to air force pilots--often, young and inexperienced pilots who wanted to help the Showa Emperor's war effort yet who had no combat ability--the suicidal attacks were refined for implementation in all areas of military force. Kamikaze fighting tactics were the core of Japanese specialized military force. The following excerpt from Herbert Bix's excellent biography "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan" indicates the extent to which Japan applied the suicide-bombing tactics of kamikaze fighting:

"From April 8, 1945, until its capitulation, the Suzuki

government's chief war policy was "Ketsugo," a further refinement of the "Shoshango" (Victory Number 3) plan for the defense of the homeland. Its defining characteristic was heavy reliance on suicide tactics, and the manufacture of weapons solely for the purpose of suicide missions using massive numbers of kamikaze 'special attack' planes, human torpedoes shot from submarines, dynamite-filled 'crash boats' powered by truck engines, human rocket bombs carried by aircraft, and suicide charges by specially trained ground units." [pg 495]

The fighting tactics and the shocking variety of suicide attacks reflects the mobilized forces of the Heaven Smiles, in Killer7. Even the name "Heaven Smiles" bears similarity to the literal interpretation of the Japanese word kamikaze: "Divine Wind."

F--ANDREI ULMEYDA: POSSIBLE DESCENDANT OF INTERNMENT PRISONERS [#VIF]

As a Southerner (with family from Alabama and South Carolina) who lives in the South, I asked myself, "Who the hell would have the name 'Andrei Ulmeyda'?" The sounds are uncommon in the South, to say the least. However, Ulmeyda lives in Texas, where the cultural history deviates from most of the region that I recognize as the American South.

I must confess, though, that I have been helped toward the direction of thought that I will soon describe. Many warm thanks are due to Pedro Giglio, who offers the following observation from his home in Rio de Janeiro:

"'Andrei Ulmeyda' sounds like 'Andre Almeida', and the Brazilian flag on the Ulmeyda Collection logo menu sounds suspicious enough that he isn't from the U.S., but an immigrant (possibly illegal? who knows, he's just some postal worker)."

Intrigued by Pedro's suggestion, I researched Texas World War II history, the possible etymology of Ulmeyda's names, and derived a possible explanation for Ulmeyda's presence in Texas. His presence in Texas, of course, relates to the theme of U. S. World War II politics.

Ulmeyda City (in Killer7) is located in the same general area as Crystal City, Texas, during World War II. During World War II, the United States bureau of Alien Enemy Control either kidnapped German-descended South Americans, or it coerced South American nations to deport German-descendant citizens to the United States. During a legal hearing in the 1980's, Edward J. Ennis (the Director of Alien Enemy Control during World War II) described a federal program that involved the kidnapping of "alien enemies from other countries in South America."

Pedro suggests that "Ulmeyda" is a bastardization of "Almeida," and he then posits that Ulmeyda may have Brazilian roots. His suggestion, I think, is apt.

The possible decision to name Andrei Ulmeyda after the

Brazilian surname "Almeida" suggests an interesting correlation. John Almeida was a 16th century Catholic missionary, born in London, who traveled to Brazil during his life of devotion and prayer. His name was originally "Meade," but became changed to "Almeida" owing to the Portuguese surroundings. The connection suggests that "Ulmeйда" was a deliberate decision to link Andrei with Catholic piety--and not the easy kind, either. As Ulmeйда infected himself with various lethal diseases, John Almeida inflicted great pain upon his body to learn to endure suffering; he wore hair shirts, iron chains, and even wore metal plates with sharp points piercing his flesh.

The Ulmeйда-Almeida connection notwithstanding, the surname certainly suggests that he has Brazilian origins. Why, then, would he be related to the internment camp at Crystal City? His first name, Andrei, is a Germanic variation of the name "Andrew." His family seems to have been of German descent, living in Brazil, and were deported to the central-south Texas region during the World War II internment of suspected enemies of the United States.

Another variation upon Ulmeйда exists, in Catholic history: Saint Almedha. The biggest difference between Saint Almedha and Andrei Ulmeйда is gender; however, two notable parallels exist. First, those homes that refused to offer Saint Almedha shelter during the time of her persecution (immediately preceding martyrdom) were beset with disasters that led to their quick destruction. (This suggests the fate of the military personnel who suffer under Ulmeйда's rain of blood.) Second, the legend surrounding her martyrdom holds that a healing spring appeared at the site of her death. (This suggests the "healing spring" of blood that appears at the site of Ulmeйда's death, to which Clarence reacts without suffering--which, also, is full of antibodies to various lethal diseases.) Finally, Saint Almedha was beheaded--which Ulmeйда certainly was.

Another observation is that Ulmeйда figurine number two--the one in which Ulmeйда wears a karate gi--the left breast of his uniform has a logo variation of the Brazilian flag.

G--IT'S A SMALL WORLD AFTER ALL

[#VIG]

Through the course of my research into aspects of Japanese culture and history that I (previously) knew nothing about, I have run across paragraphs pertaining to U.S./Japanese relations since World War II that seem highly relevant to Killer7. I will quote these excerpts, and follow each quotation with a comment connecting the excerpt to the game.

EXCERPT: " . . . [The] critic Eto Jin . . . has characterized the [post-WWII] Occupation as a period during which the Japanese psyche was recast in an American mold--and with such success that the Japanese virtually lost the power to think critically about their national identity. Eto sees the operations of the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) as one of the Occupation's most powerful tools. With it, he says, the

Occupation was able to cut Japan off from the rest of the world and to wage, within this 'sealed linguistic space,' an 'invisible war of attrition' against Japanese thought and culture." (Rubin, Jay. "From Wholesomeness to Decadence: The Censorship of Literature under the Allied Occupation." Journal of Japanese Studies. Winter 1985. Pgs 71-103.)

COMMENTARY: Since so much of the historical context of the political emotion in Killer7 is drawn from post-WWII Japan, it seems fitting to read a critical assessment of the U.S./Japanese cultural relationship during those years. Killer7 effectively reverses the cultural subterfuge that Japan experienced after World War II--and it combines both invisible military domination with the cultural infiltration of pop Japanese cultural symbols, like anime angels, transforming anime school girls, and Sentai action heroes.

EXCERPT: The excerpt recounts the Japanese writer Sakaguchi Ango's reaction to the post-WWII disillusionment with warrior ideals. "Japan lost and Bushido perished, but humanity was born at last from decadence, the womb of truth. Live! Become decadent! . . . Human beings have not changed; we have simply become human again. People become decadent. Heroes and heroines become decadent. It cannot be prevented, nor can preventing it save us. People live, and they become decadent. It is our shortcut to salvation." (Ibid.)

COMMENTARY: The author of the article comments that "Ango feels a fascination for the transcendent and superhuman, but he has the sense to step back and say no." One might read some of this into Harman Smith's slaying of Kun Lan and H. H., at the end of SMILE. Kun Lan and H. H.--the transcendant and superhuman embodiments of the cultural values that both vied for his soul--are rejected violently; Harman Smith wins by taking the path of human decadence, forsaking his superhumanity, and becoming only human. Because of this, I think, his soul is asleep in Harman's Room, at the end of LION.

H--FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE YAKUMO [#VIH]

The rings that the Killer7 receives from Susie during the game seem to be embodiments of the Yakumo. Once more, "ya kumo" translates into "eight clouds." Andrei Ulmeyda is supposed to have gotten the eight part of the Yakumo, and this is responsible for the success of his business.

When the Killer7 talks to the cult member inside the restaurant, in CLOUDMAN, the cult member asks if we have seen "that adventure movie about the ring." He then describes the movie as Ulmeyda's autobiographical thanksgiving for his success. This suggests that Ulmeyda received his portion of the Yakumo in the form of a ring, much as the Killer7 have received their "powers" in the form of rings.

A final note about the Yakumo: "Yakumo" is the name of a German digital hardware company that manufactures (among other products) PDA's. (Special thanks goes to Sam Ellis, who pointed this out

to me.)

I--LION FLAG

[#VII]

If you reload your Save File after completing the sixth chapter, LION, you'll see the silhouette at the Mission Select screen filled in, like Kun Lan's in ANGEL and Curtis Blackburn's in ENCOUNTER. The flag is (presumably) a territorial flag for Battleship Island.

The flag is the symbol of the aggressive, militaristic U. N. Party in Japan. Toward the stern of the battleship's silhouette, we see the rising sun and its rays extending to the flag's extremities. The image of the rising sun with extended light rays is a direct allusion to the Japanese Naval Battle Flag, which features the risen sun with red rays emanating to the rectangular flag's borders. After World War II, the flag became regarded as distasteful, even socially offensive, since it represented the violence and aggression enacted by the Japanese within Asia during the nation's imperialism. (An American might consider it similar to the Confederate Battle Flag, in terms of the popular emotional reaction it incites.)

The deliberate allusion to Japan's World War II battle flag hammers home the idea that the U. N. Party seeks--not retribution for the East--but specifically Japanese retribution for the use of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The extension of the light rays from the lower right corner of the flag (symbolic of the eastern direction) extending forward beyond the battleship visually resonates with the image of Matsuken watching Japanese missiles and fighter planes screaming toward America.

The above explanation is incomplete, however. The flag also suggests the ambiguity found in the ending.

Inasmuch as the red ball on the lower right of the flag could represent the rising sun of Japanese nationalism, it also could represent a much crueler reality for the Japanese: the detonation of hundreds of nuclear missiles on their soil. If we view the flag from the perspective of a player who chose to kill Matsuken, then the red ball and the light represent Japanese destruction.

J--BATTLESHIP ISLAND

[#VIJ]

Readers who lurk or post on the Gamecube Killer7 boards will recognize the information on Battleship Island from various threads on the board. I do not have information on the first person to have recognized the connection between Battleship Island in Killer7 and Gunkanjima in Japan. To whomever first noted the connection, I apologize for the omission of your due credit.

However, I can credit (again!) Yoshiko Ohier, who redirected me to a web site that features the work of Japanese photographer Saiga Yuji. Saiga Yuji took many exquisite photographs of Gunkanjima, and the physical presense of the island in the photographs resonates with the images during the LION chapter

of Killer7.

Saiga Yuji's professional web site, in English, may be accessed here:

<http://www.ne.jp/asahi/saiga/yuji/menu/menu-e.html>

Another equally professional web site featuring photographs of Gunkanjima Island is available at the following URL:

http://www14.big.or.jp/~kawamura/m-city/english_top.html

The name "Gunkanjima" translates into "Warship Island," because its silhouette looks like a battleship cruiser from a distance. (See Saiga Yuji's first picture for a stunning example of this.) Since the word "Island" is included in the original name "Gunkanjima," I will not refer to the locale as "Gunkanjima Island," since this would be redundant. (Another name for the island is "Hashima Island," though I will not refer to it by this name.)

The descent into the center of the Coliseum, down several hundreds of feet of subterranean elevation, is plausible given Gunkanjima's remaining structure. Tunnels originally constructed for coal mining run from Gunkanjima's surface to below the ocean floor. The island's coal-mining days ended in 1976, when the industrial life of a coal-miner finally became obsolete; however, the structures remain.

In his article "Hashima: The Ghost Island," Brian Burke-Gaffney writes: "The history of Hashima Island reads like a chronology of changes in Japan's energy policies from the Meiji Period to modern times." Before its popular recognition as a fuel source in 1890, Gunkanjima was dominated by the Fukahori family; since coal was the best fuel source next to pine wood, the island's resources were in high demand. The island's mined coal became a centerpiece of the region's economy. After Japan became accessible, economically, in the 1850's, the island received greater attention: Nagasaki--only 15 kilometers from Gunkanjima--was one of Japan's most lucrative ports, especially to China.

In 1887, the Fukahori family installed the first real mining shaft in the island. Unable to do much more with modern technology, though, the family turned the island over to the Mitsubishi Corporation. Under Mitsubishi's ownership, the island whose legacy we recognize in the modern, industrial ruins of Gunkanjima began.

Before Mitsubishi took over, the Fukahori family had mined coal using pre-modern methods: picking and chipping at exposed rock. Mitsubishi plunged mine shafts deep into the island, to extract coal from its source at a vein that ran beneath Gunkanjima and its neighboring islands.

Using the slag from the excavated minerals, Mitsubishi engineered a flat surface on top of the island's natural terrain. Upon this flat surface, the corporation built the homes and industrial workspaces that now exist as colossal ruins. The island was home to Japan's first noteworthy concrete structure--erected to prevent

typhoon damage. Successive concrete buildings were erected, and the island became an industrial city unto itself.

Gunkanjima was one of Japan's top producers of coal fuel. Its continued operation was crucial during World War II--a war in which victory depended keenly upon modern industrial technology and the resources that make such technology possible. The island became a sort of concentration camp, where Japan sent Korean and Chinese captives to work as miners. These prisoners were kept on starvation diets and were only regarded as work labor; the death toll among those workers was high. These prisoners were forced to die while working to supply their captors with fuel for naval warships and steel for ammunition.

After World War II, Gunkanjima's resources were used to rebuild Japan out of wartime defeat. A community grew around the economy of the island. Almost all of the social effects of normal, mainland life were available for the island's residents, from housing to a Shinto shrine to groceries. As much as Gunkanjima's economy depended upon mined coal, though, it depended just as much upon imports from locations beyond the island's walls. As packed as it was, the island could not afford any land to grow food upon--in fact, given the terrain's history, it is unlikely that food could have been grown there at all.

Gunkanjima's life started fading in the 1960's, when petroleum-based products replaced coal as the main industrial fuel resource. By 1976, the island's whole operation was closed; everyone evacuated.

How, then, is Battleship Island significant?

Gunkanjima was key to Japan's military mobilization. As a threat in the Second World War, their industrial resources depended upon the wealth of coal-based products available from the coal mined at Gunkanjima. Similarly, Battleship Island (in Killer7) is implied to be the base of operations for Japan's military activity. Here, the Heaven Smiles are "built" and experimented with; here, missiles are installed to launch at the United States.

In addition, the economic life of Gunkanjima reflects the political reality of Japan, as it is explained in Killer7. In the game's hypothetical years of 2010 and 2011, Japan depends upon the help of other nations (most notably the United States) for its economic stability. It is also a site of notable resources, making it the "prize to any neighboring country" that Travis describes it as. In the same manner, Gunkanjima was useful as a community that provided coal resources, but it was entirely defenseless and unable to support its own population.

(You can't eat coal, after all.)

K--CHANNELS TEN AND ELEVEN

[#VIK]

After the player has unlocked Killer8, channel 10 on the television screen offers Young Harman as an available Persona.

This brings the list of channels and Personae to completion:

Channel 1: Master Harman
Channel 2: Garcian Smith
Channel 3: Dan Smith
Channel 4: KAEDE Smith
Channel 5: Kevin Smith
Channel 6: Coyote Smith
Channel 7: Con Smith
Channel 8: MASK De Smith
Channel 9: Harman Smith

Yet, channels ten and eleven remain blank.

Some players ask why.

First off: no new Personae are available on channels eleven and twelve. At all. Ever. In the name of Harman.

Second: I've considered channels ten and eleven from a variety of metaphorical and symbolic points of view, and I can refine no conclusion about any meaning of the channels beyond a simple wish (on behalf of the design team) to remain true to the representation of the technology.

Back in the proverbial day, televisions had channels one through eleven, and an extra band for UHF transmissions. The UHF band in Killer7 is changed to the dial spot where the player transfers blood to the surgeon. That, however, seems to be the extent of the significance of the television channels.

L--RACISM IN KILLER7 [#VIL]

Some have inquired whether or not Killer7 is another anti-American rant, designed to lampoon American ideology and political culture. The curious fact about opinions of the game is that people find it difficult to say whether or not the game favors America or Japan. After all, the player is given a choice at the end of the game, without editorial comment from any of the characters, whether or not to destroy America.

Killer7 carries ambiguous anti-nationalist and racist undertones that are difficult to extricate and understand. The cultural and political history of Japan creates great difficulty in separating racial distinctions from national identity, with respect to a plot that centers on Japan-U.S. tensions. Historically, as an island-nation, Japan has forcibly isolated itself from other countries' political and spiritual ideologies; specifically, Japan has reacted against Western ideologies: until the nation was forced into Western subjugation following World War II, it's elite cultural figures considered Communism and Capitalism equally detestable because of their Western origins.

Therefore, Japan came to associate its physical characteristics with its national identity. Shiratori Kurakichi, a turn-of-the-20th-century Japanese scholar who was charged with the education of Emperor-to-be Hirohito, wrote a five volume discourse on

Japanese history, titled "Kokushi." In explaining Japanese racial origins and national ideology, Shiratori wrote:

"The imperial house unified our land and people and created the empire. Not only did it rule as the head of state, it also became integrated with the people and the head of their religion. Because of the ineffable feeling of intimacy between the throne and the people, the imperial house was able to create an extremely firm foundation for a state. However, just as the imperial house is a line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal; the people too, from generation to generation, father to child, have propagated down to today. Not once has there been a change in the race. Therefore we, descendants of the people who assisted the founder at the time of her creation of the state, have carried out the will of our ancestors and become eternally loyal subjects. The successive imperial families have loved the loyal subjects of their progenitor and always trusted in the people's cooperation in carrying out their grand plans. This indeed is the essence of our kokutai There is no mistake . . . in saying that we have been a homogeneous race since antiquity" (Print source: Bix, Herbert. "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan." Page 71.)

Certainly, the concept of homogeneous racial identity may be disputed; the important aspect, however, is that Japanese culture implied a self-perception of racial purity. As well, this racial purity was tied directly to the people's relationship to their emperor. In other words, Japanese racial identity and political identity were regarded as inextricable. The United States shared Japan's racist views, as illustrated in its internment of Japanese descended Americans during World War II. As a nation at war, the United States regarded all people "of the Japanese race" as allies to the Japanese Emperor and, by extension, the Axis powers.

I do not think that Killer7 ascribes to the type of racism described above. However, since that racism was a cultural ideal that began to change as a result of the Japanese's occupation by Allied forces after World War II, I think that Killer7 taps into that tradition of Japanese racial-political succession for part of its atmosphere. The Yakumo, as described in section [#II-B] of this document, is connected directly to Japanese nationalist identity. It is important that all of the members associated with the U. N. Party are visibly distinct as Japanese men.

The anti-American sentiments present in Killer7 stem largely from the implied attitudes of racism, on behalf of the conservative Japanese ideologues in Killer7, such as Akiba, Kurahashi, and Matsuoka.

As an American myself, I am more sensitive to the game's criticism of America than I am to the game's criticism of Japan. However, as a scholar who has become more aware of Japanese history, I must recognize that I have become more sensitive to the game's criticism of Japan, too. The game describes Japan in the harshest terms, just like it does America: it is a politically corrupt state, war-mongering, ignorant, and hateful. The scene in the KAKU Building at the end of the SUNSET mission, wherein the diplomats from the U. S. and Japan's Liberal Party shoot each other over a symbolic game of Mah-jong, illustrates the dual criticism of American and Japanese political ideology.

Harman's division into three parts suggests another aspect of Western thought: Sigmund Freud's division of the psyche into Superego, Ego, and Id.

Freud's psychological theories evolved constantly, during his work as a professional psychoanalyst. Owing to the complex nature of his theories, as well as the ways in which Western culture has assimilated his ideas into popular awareness, a stark difference often exists between the popular notions of Freud's theories and Freud's actual ideas. A prime example of a popular misuse of Freud's theories is the Austin Powers film series, which mostly boils Freud down to phallic and vaginal symbols.

In the interest of specifying Freud's relevant ideas from the popular notions that (often) distort his thought, I will describe the Superego, Ego, and Id, as well as their relationships to each other.

The Superego is a residual memory of the father-figure, often perceived by an individual as God, a higher moral consciousness, or any authority whose mere will is a moral expectation. H. H. is the Harman-figure who embodies the Superego.

The Id is the individual's raw bestial energy. These are the elements of the individual's being which are trimmed and domesticated by civilization, because they are inherently unsociable. They can be understood most simply as sex-impulses and violence-impulses, all of which involve the assertion of the individual's power upon the world beyond himself. Harman Smith is the Harman-figure who embodies the Id.

The Ego is the individual's most acute layer of consciousness. It mediates between the separate demands of the Id and Superego--and, further, it mediates these two forces' desires with the forces that intrude upon the individual's awareness from outside the body. Of all three faculties, the Ego does not generate anything except combinations of the demands given by the Id and Superego, in response to objects that it perceives as existing outside the mind. Master Harman is the Harman-figure who embodies the Ego.

The psychic world created around Emir Parkreiner is a sort of miniature version of the order of Western civilization, according to Sigmund Freud's theories. Emir, a member of Western civilization, goes to Master Harman (the Ego) with news from the outside world; Master Harman, as the combined expression of H. H. and Harman Smith, balances this knowledge against the "holy" desires of H. H. and the violent desires of Harman Smith.

Importantly, the development of Superego, Ego, and Id is started by the problematic Oedipal complex. When the individual (as an infant) internalizes the moral expectations of his father, he creates the Superego; however, since the power of this moral code outlasts the physical life of his father, it becomes translated into what psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan called

the "Name-of-the-Father." In other words, it is the father's law given lasting power as an abstraction.

In this sense, Iwazaru's incantation "In the name of Harman" carries great significance. The relationship between Iwazaru and Master Harman becomes more interesting, here; as both represent "fathers" of Emir Parkreiner, both seem to carry a similar presence within the psychical world. (Note that Master Harman and Iwazaru both inhabit the same location, in Harman's Room.) When Iwazaru speaks to the Killer7, his intonation "In the name of Harman" suggests that he speaks on behalf of the "Name-of-the-Father," or the Superego.

At the end of the game, when Harman Smith kills H. H. and Kun Lan in the Forbidden Room, we see a dramatization of the triumph of the Id over the Superego. As a psychic force within Freud's theory, the Id must be frustrated, necessarily, by the Superego: the Superego is the psychic force that deliberately restricts the Id from doing whatever it pleases. As a result, the Id desires to kill the Superego because it wants full freedom; in Freud's Oedipal Complex, this is expressed symbolically by a man's desire to kill his father, from whom the moral code is taken.

N--THREE MONKEYS

[#VIN]

Many individuals with some education in the Japanese language have remarked that Iwazaru, his wife, and the spirit who helps find the Soul Shells are named after the Japanese words for "Hear no evil, speak no evil, see no evil." Iwazaru's name translates into "Speak no evil;" Mizaru's name translates into "See no evil;" and Kikazaru translates into "Hear no evil."

Their names suggest a close relationship to each other. Mizaru and Iwazaru's relationship is apparent enough; they were married. If you ascribe to the interpretation of the game described in this document, they were Emir Parkreiner's parents. However, not enough information is provided for Kikazaru to determine what relationship, if any, he has to the other two.

Their names suggest qualities of their relationship to their former lives. As Iwazaru was the former psychic presence of Kun Lan within Harman Smith, he is given the name "Speak no evil," meaning that he is to speak nothing against H. H. ever again. (Note, also, that Kun Lan's calling card laughter is also an extension of the mouth and speech.) As Mizaru was Emir Parkreiner's mother--and she sexually desired her own son--her name is "See no evil;" the eyes are credited often as cultural symbols for desire and lust.

Again, as little information is provided regarding Kikazaru, it is difficult to speculate on his identity. As such, it is difficult to speculate on why he earned the name "Hear no evil."

O--MESSIAHS

[#VIO]

In the Christian tradition, Jesus Christ began his ministry on earth when he was thirty years old. His ministry lasted for three years, at the end of which he was crucified by the Roman Empire and resurrected from the dead. His resurrection resulted in the opening of a relationship between God and humanity, through which human sins could be overcome.

The messianic symbolism is used heavily in Killer7. When we start the game, we learn that we are starting "Mission 34" of the Killer7's career. Symbolically, we are in a dangerous area, since we are past the messianic point of no-return. Further, Garcian Smith is described as being thirty years old--the age at which Christ began his ministry on earth.

Likewise, Kenjiro Matsuoka is thirty years old. While Matsuken has not shared the personal history of rebirths that Emir Parkreiner has, he is "adopted" by Kun Lan. (One might almost call Matsuken's scene at the opening of SUNSET PART TWO his "baptism.")

Think of Emir Parkreiner and Kenjiro Matsuoka as messianic opposites; given the relativism of the game's political perspective, this makes both Emir and Matsuken messiahs and anti-messiahs. Both are born in the "heartlands" of their respective countries. Hulbert's tapes recognize Emir as having been born in Alabama, in the American South, from which almost all of the United States' culturally distinct art comes. (Think: jazz, blues, rock and roll, and William Faulkner all come from Southern roots, and all the art is based in the life of the American South.) Matsuken is described on Capcom-Japan's web site as having been born in Hiroshima, the heart of Japan's post-World War II self-consciousness. Alabama and Hiroshima are twin Bethlehems for the messiahs of Killer7.

The time period between the end of SMILE and the LION mission is three years. Since both men are thirty years old at the time of SMILE, this makes them thirty-three years old at the time of LION. In other words, both of them are ripe for crucifixion; if the player chooses to crucify Matsuken, then Japan's messiah dies; if the player chooses to let Matsuken live, he implicitly crucifies Emir as America's messiah.

P--KENJIRO MATSUOKA AS SUGGESTIVE OF YOSUKE MATSUOKA [#VIP]

Going along with the parallel relationships between the ideological factions in Killer7 and the ideological differences that arose within (and against) Japanese political culture around the time of Japan's involvement in World War II, we might view Kenjiro Matsuoka as a reflection of Japan's WWII foreign minister, Yosuke Matsuoka.

Matsuken (from Killer7) represents conservative, isolationist Japanese ideals of total domination and the capitulation of flaccid democratic ideals. In a 1940 interview given by Yosuke Matsuoka, in order to provoke the American public's awareness of Japan's military and ideological presence, is quoted as having said:

"In the battle between democracy and totalitarianism the latter adversary will without question win and will control the world. The era of democracy is finished and the democratic system is bankrupt. There is not room in the world for two different systems or for two different economies Facism will develop in Japan through the people's will. It will come out of their love for the Emperor."

[Print source: Bix, Herbert. "Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan. Perennial Publishing: 2001. pg. 374.]

Even in the selection of Matsuken's name, we see a parallel between the game's political entities and the political activity of WWII Japan.

Q: A FEW NOTES ON THE MEANING OF 'EMIR PARKREINER' [#VIQ]

"Emir" is a name derived from an French word, "?mir," which in turn is derived from the Arabic word, "'amara," which means "to command." As a name, "Emir" means "a prince, a chieftain, or a governor." It can apply to the leader of a holy Muslim pilgrimage; in general, it connotes a leader of people who are traveling or working toward an ultimate destination or goal.

"Park" is a cognate, between German and English. It can mean a literal park; as well, it can connote a garden.

"Reiner" is a German adjective, generally meaning "more pure; clearer; more chaste." On the meaning of "Reiner," Markus Pfeffer, a German reader of this document, writes:

"There's more: 'Reiner' (also written as 'Rainer') is a common german name. Looking it up in a name lexicon reveals the following: It is derived from the medieval name Raginhari, which translates to "the words 'decision' and 'army'. It is not clear if it is a decision OF or FOR the army."

Again, Pfeffer is due credit for informing me on the specific use and nature of the word "reiner": the word is a comparative word--meaning, in English, that it would end with the suffix '-er' to imply that one object has more of a certain quality than another object. It is not a superlative word--meaning, it does not mean "purest" or "most chaste."

Taken all together, the name "Emir Parkreiner" can mean "Leader to the Holy Gardens." Importantly, the identity of the "Holy Gardens" is qualified using a comparative adjective. The gardens are more pure than other gardens, and these two places are being compared with each other in terms of holiness. The comparative nature of "reiner" reinforces the decision made at the end of LION.

R--KILLER7 AS COMMENTARY ON JAPANESE POP CULTURE [#VIR]

With all of the symbolism and historical references woven through Killer7, one should ask, "What is intended to be communicated by these references?"

Many answers to this question can be provided. The one that most interests me, now, is the ironic inversion of the fate experienced by post-World War II Japan, at the hands of the Allied (American) Occupation.

At the time of the Occupation's end, Japan was ostensibly "reborn" as a Western democracy. The specific factors involved in the "rebirth" were cultural. Three central influences were regarded as having led to Japanese participation in World War II: first, Bushido ideology; second, an isolationist (yet imperialistic) foreign policy; and, finally, a cultural belief in conservative Japanese values--values that regarded the family as higher than the individual, the emperor-god higher than the family, and the god of the emperor higher than the emperor-god. The Allied Occupation's specific goal was to convert the defeated nation of Japan from its feudalistic origins--including cultural socialism and Bushido ideology--into a state modeled as a Western democracy.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Allied Occupation was forced to filter and censor the literature created by native Japanese writers. The two biggest targets of censorship were (1) anti-American sentiments and (2) any explicit reverence for the conservative cultural values that made the Japanese participation in World War II possible. Through the control of the media, the Allied Occupation Forces succeeded in establishing a long-term democratic state out of the feudal conditions of pre-World War II Japan.

This is very important to keep in mind, when we think about how Killer7 reverses this against America. First, think about how the American Allied Occupation Forces undermined Japanese culture: control of the media and the cultural images. Now, think about all of the images in the game: anime angels, Ayame Blackburn's transforming schoolgirl routine, Sentai heroes, and ISZK branded on the televisions and amusement parks--representing "Yoishi Ishizaka," the post-World War II Japanese fiction writer. All of the cultural images rendered from Japanese pop culture are throw-backs to pre-World War II feudal Japanese culture. The anime angels and the transforming schoolgirl routine express the absolute certainty of virtue assumed by one who lives according to Bushido ethics: the morality implies an intrinsic superiority of the challenger (either angel or schoolgirl) over the challenged forces. As well, the Handsome Men Sentai fighters suggest the activity of Bushido values. Instead of settling the battle with Dan Smith at Trevor Pearlharbor's Dominican home, they arrange a formal duel in New York City--and take death before any loss of honor.

In the fictional world of Killer7, we see a reverse of the "cultural persuasion" that the West forced on Japan: we undermined traditional Japanese values with Western ideals of individualism that exceeds loyalty to code and government, and the Japanese (in Killer7) are undermining Western ideals of individuality and a reverence for private truth with Bushido ideology, that emphasizes self-sacrifice and righteous violence.

During the Allied Occupation, the cultural subversion occurred parallel to Japan's governmental reformation. In Killer7, the cultural subversion is likewise accompanied with governmental reformation. There are two different layers to this reformation, though, and I want to present this carefully. It can get tricky.

The first layer is the most obvious: by controlling the key voting district in the United States, Japanese interests will prevail through the accepted means of American governmental operation. This is accomplished through Coburn Elementary School's brainwashing--which involves the indoctrination of young students into the ideals of the Yakumo.

Earlier in this document, I quoted GameFAQs user Yoshiko Ohier, who explained:

"According to the CAPCOM official web site in Japanese, Yakumo is a text which was created by 7 Japanese founders (politicians) in the past. The Yakumo (text) is said to have a power to change the world."

In other words--just as we indoctrinated Japanese children with the ideals of Western democracy, at the expense of their native religion and government, THE JAPANESE ARE INDOCTRINATING AMERICAN CHILDREN under the ideals of Japanese governmental ideals at the expense of their native belief in individuality and democratic process.

The second layer is quite difficult to explain. I will try my best. I will start by addressing the fallacy of the location of Coburn Elementary school, with respect to the claims made about it.

Of Coburn Elementary school, Travis says: "This is the spot where the homeland's elections originate. The spot for the primaries for the first presidential election. The first president of the US was the principal of this school. Win over your neighbors, and win over the world. That's the way politics works."

Two things seem off, in what Travis says. First, the ideal of "Win over your neighbors, and win over the world" does not express the ideal execution of a democratic republic. Rather, it suggests the warring territoriality of feudalism. Second, Travis claims that "the first president of the US was the principal of this school"--yet, the school is in Washington State--and Washington State only entered the Union after the Civil War. (Needless to say, the first presidential election was finished by that time.)

The easy way to resolve this would be to conclude that the game developers didn't know much about American history when they made the decision to place Coburn in Washington State. However, that conclusion seems inconsistent with the care taken to associate characters and events with specific historical occasions.

The more difficult way--and, from my perspective, the truer way--is to conclude that the OBVIOUS fallacy behind the

suggestion that George Washington was the principal of a school that existed in a state that was only a guess on the left edge of a map of the New England territories MEANS that we are being lied to.

What are we being lied to about? "That's the way politics works."

If we, as players role-playing Garcian/Emir's circumstances, believe that politics works just as Travis explains, then we have lost our Western identity and accepted feudal ideals in their stead. Linda Vermilion tells us to "see with our own eyes how the system works, and then decide." Yet, all of the information that leads to the conclusion that politics works as Travis has described is SECOND-HAND information. We haven't seen how the system works at all, if we are going by Travis' explanations.

What, then, can we say that we saw? When the curtain pulled up behind Greg Nightmare's bloated corpse in the gymnasium, we saw a stage running into the distance, filled with voting booths. Think of voting booths on the stage, and think of who fills them (American citizens of a democratic republic)--and, then, think of Benjamin Keane's words as a Remnant Psyche: "The actor pulls the curtain himself." The one who opened the curtain--Garcian--is also the actor, the voter. Taken together, this affirms that a democratic process exists in the fictional America of Killer7--but it also affirms that the democratic process is DYING, owing to both terrorism and Americans forsaking their native culture and governmental system in the interest of ancient Japanese culture and government.

The Yakumo represent the ancient Japanese culture and government. One layer of significance to the scene at the opening of SUNSET-PART 2 is its illustration of the principles by which the Yakumo operates. The principles of the Yakumo's operation seem remarkably similar to the operation of Japanese culture and government during the Meiji and Showa periods of Japanese history--the decades before Japan's occupation by Allied forces!

Before I explain how the old men (Kurahashi & Akiba) in SUNSET-PART 2 illustrate pre-Occupation Japanese ideology, I would like to draw a parallel between the education given to the students at Coburn Elementary, and the educational goals of pre-Occupied Japan.

Pre-Occupied Japan educated its children to be able to mobilize as a violent force, as well as to conform to the culture's religious and nationalistic ideals. The training described by Hulbert, in his tapes, suggests that the students at Coburn Elementary are trained in precisely the same ways: they are either trained to become assassins (a mobilized violent force) or they are indoctrinated with Japanese nationalistic ideals, in order to pursue those ideals from within American government positions.

Now, to address the relevance of Kurahashi and Akiba. Their actions offer a direct insight into the principles that the

Yakumo seems to advocate, and they are similar to the political realities during the Meiji Period. During the Meiji Period, the emperor's power was superseded by a small group of elite elder men. They possessed political control of the government, despite the Japanese Emperor's more public presence. Prior to the Meiji Period, a more rugged version of oligarchy prevailed during the Edo Period, when samurai and shoguns possessed most of the political power. Succession in power was either determined by familial relationships, or by vassal relationships. Often, though, a younger man with great expectations might kill an older man whose position he wants to fill.

When Kurahashi and Akiba tell Matsuoka to kill himself, they are suggesting that his suicide would be better for him than his dishonor as an inept young member of the U. N. Party. This accords with Bushido ethics regarding honor and its importance. However, they also say that they killed many of their own elders when they were younger--and, further, that they are prepared to die at any moment! They talk as though they have lived through a time dominated by Bushido ideals, in which political succession is determined by the violence of ambitious youth against the older generation.

Kun Lan's manipulation of Kurahashi and Akiba--transforming them into Heaven Smiles--also suggests the influence of the Shinto reverence for ancestors. The contradiction in this management of political affairs seems obvious: one can only ascend to political significance by killing one's elders--yet, once killed, one's elders become more significant. Much as Matsuoka becomes more in tune with the Yakumo ideals followed by Kurahashi and Akiba (after he is touched by Kun Lan), a successor in a Shinto culture would simultaneously dispatch his elders, and then fall into a reverent relationship with them.

These, then, are some of the principles of the Yakumo ideals of political operation. Emir Parkreiner has already enacted the Yakumo ideals by killing Harman and the Harman Assassins. He is named SPECIFICALLY as "the successor" to the chief, and he earned that position by killing Harman Smith--his childhood mentor. Before we take control of the Killer7, the Japanese process of succession of power has already been put into motion.

Yet, when we play the game, we interact with the Killer7 through means similar to the process of voting on a candidate in a democratic republic! We approach the television, as though it were a voting booth, and we select the "candidate" who seems most likely to overcome the obstacles that confront us.

Julie Kusagi tells the player to "hand over the Yakumo," insinuating that Garcian possesses the knowledge of the code. If we look at the seven virtues associated with the Bushido ideology, and if we compare them with the members of the Killer7 (counting Harman as one of the seven), we see that each member of the Killer7 represents the opposite of one of the Bushido virtues.

Courage (Yu)--This conflicts with Kevin Smith, who turns invisible and can escape a fight better than any of the other seven.

Honesty (Makoto)--This conflicts with Coyote Smith, who is a thief.

Respect (Rei)--This conflicts with Con Smith, who's a fourteen year old punk.

Loyalty (Chuugi)--This conflicts with KAEDE Smith, whose bloodstained clothes suggests that she is traitorous.

Honor (Meiyo)--This conflicts with Dan Smith, who (as the Hellion) will kill however he can.

Benevolence (Jin)--This conflicts with MASK De Smith, whose pure power does not admit to any of the restraint required for benevolent action.

Rectitude/Right Decisions/Justice (Gi)--This conflicts with Harman Smith, who is unjust and brutal.

If, as Yoshiko has suggested, Andrei Ulmeyda possessed the "eight part" of the Yakumo--possibly his blood, for its purity--then Garcian is in full possession of the seven "clouds" or "spirits" that constitute the remainder of the Yakumo. Notice how Garcian speaks to Master Harman (as distinct from Harman Smith) with reverence, like a samurai addressing his shogun. Garcian is in full possession of the Yakumo--and he is fully possessed by it, as well.

What, then, does this mean for us, as players who do not live daily in the world of Killer7?

I believe that Killer7 is a subtle and brilliant cultural criticism of the intermingling between Eastern and Western cultures and ideals. It artfully juxtaposes actual historical relationships between the United States and Japan with fictional circumstances that illustrate the reality of the cultural relationship between America and Japan. In Killer7, we see a description of our age--and, perhaps, a choice about how to react to it.

S--SUGGESTED POLITICAL MEANING IN KILLER7

[#VIS]

The political meaning of Killer7 should also be addressed, as a related (but different) subject from the cultural meaning. Since the game involves the political activity of both Japan and the United States of America, it will be useful to regard the narrative as a commentary upon the political characters of both nations.

After the Second World War, liberal-minded Japanese citizens used Japan's defeat as a circumstance to advocate "degeneracy." By "degeneracy," they did not mean insurrection, violence, or other criminal behavior; rather, they meant a cultural "degeneracy" from the conservative Bushido and Shinto values that resulted in

the manipulation of the Japanese population during World War II.

As explained elsewhere in this document, "kamikaze" fighting was the Japanese military's most unique and idiosyncratic tactic. It developed as an extension of Bushido ethics, specifically with respect to an idea called "kokutai."

The "kokutai" is, literally, "community spirit." However, such a minimal interpretation neglects to explain the whole meaning of the idea. Japan's kokutai is its spiritual existence, which is also its political existence. The concept was most actively employed for the purpose of political persuasion before the Second World War. Essentially, it was a belief steeped in Shinto religious doctrines that Japan (as a nation) had a soul, and each of the Japanese were portions of Japan's soul. Various factions defined the kokutai differently, over time; by the time of the Second World War, the faction with political power defined the kokutai along conservative ideological lines. The spirit of Japan lay within the imperial house, and it was nothing less than the continued existence of the Emperor and his throne.

Kamikaze fighting tactics, in a sense, were violent expressions of the kokutai. The "divine winds" alluded to in the name given to kamikaze fighters were important facets of conservative Japanese ideology, as explained in the following excerpt from Herbert Bix's biography of Emperor Hirohito.

"[The conservative pamphlet 'Kokutai no hongii'] emphasized the centrality of the family-state, home, and ancestors, and reminded readers that the 'divine winds' (kamikaze), which had twice saved Japan from Mongol invasions in the late thirteenth century, proved indisputably Japan's divinity and indestructability" (pg 314).

Indeed, ancestry connects the thirteenth century "divine winds" with the Second World War kamikaze fighters. Japanese Lieutenant Colonel Eiichiro Jo, a skilled fighter pilot who drew up the first detailed plan for the military use of suicide pilots, was descended from the Kyushu warrior Takefusa Kikuchi, a samurai who participated in the same wars against the Mongols that involved the intervention of the "divine winds."

The idea of the kamikaze fighters--a violent expression of Japan's justification as a divine presence--may be argued to serve as an image of extremist, conservative Japanese ideology. When the war became more clearly lost by Japan, the emperor and his court believed that even the horror of the atomic bombs would not deter Japan's victory.

"Mobilized in the service of death, the collective memory of the 'divine winds' (kamikaze) that would save Japan helped to maintain the will to fight on" (Bix 496).

American intelligence analysts observed the Japanese population's behavior, especially after American bombers dropped leaflets into Japanese cities to drop the nation's morale toward the war effort, as a means of psychological warfare. Much to the Americans' surprise, the psychological tactics were ineffective. Bix explains:

"They saw how the Japanese had fought and died on Okinawa--

thousands almost daily for eight-two days--and how the whole nation had become enveloped in the imagery of national salvation through mass suicide" (pg 496).

Kamikaze tactics, extremist conservative thought, war in the name of Japan's kokutai, and Bushido ethics--liberal-minded Japanese writers saw these influences as factors that contributed to Japan's destruction during World War II. They believed that these influences resulted in a nation that would destroy itself, trying to destroy others in the name of Japan. In a pivotal post Second World War essay, Japanese writer Sakaguchi Ango contrasted the conservative Japanese values with an idea that he gave the name of the essay: "On Decadence." Disgusted with the worship of a political idea of honor, Ango declared that "Japan had lost and Bushido had crumbled, but humanity had been born for the first time in the true womb of decadence. We must live! We must fall into decadence!" Ango argues that decadence is humane, and it is the weakness and the ugliness that Japanese honor--Bushido--sought to defend human dignity against. Ango argues that he intervention of Bushido honor upon human nature, though, is ghastly. In an important passage, he writes:

"There is no way to prevent humanity itself from its natural degeneration from virtue to mediocrity, then finally into hell. Even if we establish moral codes such as those forbidding a virtuous widow from looking at another man or for a loyal retainer from serving another lord, there is nothing we can do to stop the degeneration of humanity. We can successfully preserve a woman's virginal purity by killing her, but when we hear the footsteps of decadence approaching with the inevitability of waves crashing against the shore we cannot help but remember that preserving her petty virginal purity through petty human action holds nothing more than the empty transience of a phantasm."

[Digital source: <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/aspac/papers/scholars/Smith/SAKAGUCHI.html>]

Ango affirmed that the Japanese people could no longer follow the strenuous demands of Bushido ethics. In his essay "Occupation Censorship," published in the Journal of Japanese Studies, Paul Rubin writes that:

"The last thing [the Japanese people] needed was high-minded idealism, more preaching about 'spirit' triumphing over the 'material civilization' of the West, such as had gotten them into the war to begin with."

The cultural and political change that Ango called for--and that liberalism in Japanese culture stood for, after the Second World War--was a retraction from Bushido and cultish worship of the kokutai.

Killer7's political commentary directed toward Japan is most striking during the scene at the beginning of SMILE, when Liberal Party member Hiro Kasai falls from the top of a building in Washington, DC, while U. N. Party leader Matsuken watches. The scene has led many players to think that Matsuken killed the man who became Iwazaru, as a remnant psyche. However, the bondage gear does not signify that Iwazaru and Kasai are identical; rather, it signifies that they are similar in their relationship to the

sadist-figure, the domme.

Byron Fenstermaker, a reader of this document who has written me, provides a fascinating insight regarding Kasai's appearance in bondage gear:

"To make a broad and sweeping generalization, Japanese, as a nation, are generally repulsed by the notion of body modification. Tattoos alone are frowned upon, and no Japanese businessman or official who wanted to retain ties to any branch of government would EVER have nipple piercings. In a country where one can lose their job for wearing a colored suit to work, and where unemployment and suicide do go hand-in-hand, any informant who underwent modification -- tattoos, piercings, and similar -- would be worse than useless."

Fenstermaker follows his explanation with this suggestion:

"It may be possible that Harman orchestrated his death, but he seems to be a willing participant, perhaps looking for the ultimate danger, sexualizing it, and allowing him to end his own life at the same time."

Before I continue to use Fenstermaker's suggestions and insights as supports for my understanding of Killer7, I would like to note that he wrote the cited quotations while arguing that the jumper was not Kasai, but, rather, Iwazaruscof. We disagree on this point, but I am delighted use his correspondence to build a relevant argument of my own.

Kasai, then, bears the appearance of one who practices forbidden self-mutilation, according to Japanese cultural expectations of politicians. As well, he appears at least somewhat willing to stand on the edge of the roof with Matsuken. It seems clear that Matsuken is the individual responsible for Kasai's body-mutilation. Despite the fact that they are political rivals, Matsuken and Kasai both appear as willing participants in--as Fenstermaker writes--sexualizing or fetishizing their political opposition.

I believe that the scene suggests the difficult relationship between liberalism and Bushido conservatism in Japanese political culture, as it intensified after the Second World War. A liberal approach requires a refutation of conservative Bushido principles and Shinto-based ideals. Yet, Japanese cultural identity is intertwined with those same ideologies. The architecture of Toru Fukushima's restaurant visually embodies much of conservative Japanese culture: the Shinto arches, the paper-door architecture, and the directional guardian statues standing at the North and South of his Guest Rooms all hearken to the mythic emperor-shogun-retainer ideals of Japan's past. Yet, a Japanese liberal holds his political and ideological views in order to SAVE Japan--culturally, politically, and materially--from the destruction that allegiance to Bushido ideals required from Japan in World War II.

Japanese liberalism exists in a state of contradiction: it must refuse to live according to customary Japanese values, in order to save Japanese identity from self-destruction--and the Japanese identity that it must save lies precisely in those values that Japanese liberalism must deny.

The scene on top of the building in Washington, DC, dramatizes the relationship between Japanese liberalism and Bushido values. Liberalism, in Japan, is described as masochistic; Kasai allows Matsuken to torture him, as a sexualized dramatization of Japanese liberalism's relationship to conservative reverence for the kokutai. Killer7's statement on Japanese politics is harsh: the effort to reform Japanese political activity will capitulate because of Japanese liberalism's worship of its own shame, in front of Bushido values. When the time comes for either liberalism or conservatism to rise above the other, liberalism will die willingly because it will love Bushido conservatism for punishing it. Hiro Kasai lives the fate of those who embrace "decadence."

Killer7's criticism of contemporary American politics is easier for me to identify, since I (as an American) am more intimately aware of American political activity. In short, because of the narrative's implication that the U. S. Government has been taken over by politicians raised under the influence of conservative Japanese ideology, the United States is compared with pre-Second World War Japan. Comparison between pre-Second World War Japan and contemporary American politics reveals strong similarities.

Two similarities stand out among others, between Showa Japan and contemporary U. S. politics: hegemonic wars and the identification of national aims with divine aims.

Currently, America is involved with a difficult war in Iraq. The war has been pronounced "over," even though soldiers still suffer by the work of terrorists and insurgents. The circumstances leading to the United States' attack on Hussein's Iraq and the circumstances leading to Showa Japan's attack on China bear remarkable similarities. As well, the results of the invasions are likewise similar.

First, some history should be given on Showa Japan's assault into China. As stated elsewhere in this document, Japan believed that it was the spiritual and political ruler of the East. It sought to save the East from contamination by the West. In order to do this, it needed to expand its political and military control into the Asian continent. Such expansion was difficult, however, due to Russia's presence just north of China; during Emperor Meiji's reign, a war between Japan and Russia left relations between the two nations sour.

To understand the development of Japan's attack and acquisition of Manchuria, it should be understood that pre-World War II Japan's political and military groups were not organized as the United States'. While the United States military is subject to orders from the political body, the Japanese military, navy, and political government were separate entities who coordinated with each other. Owing to the principle of the kokutai, and that the soul of Japan resided in the imperial house, the political government (whose center was the imperial house) was regarded as the body from whom approval must ultimately come for justification of any military action. However, owing to a breakdown in military discipline and an increasing disillusionment among members of the Japanese army and navy, these factions often acted on their own accord, seeking approval for their actions AFTER the fact.

On 18 September 1931, the Japanese army in China--the Kwantung Army--ignited the string of battles and political decisions that began the Manchurian war that resulted in the establishment of Manchukuo, a Japanese state in China.

The leaders of the Kwantung Army wanted to increase the Japanese Empire's presence in continental China; however, imperialism is never justified, diplomatically. The imperialist impulse is to take, and not to justify the taking; when a nation must be held responsible for imperialist action, though, some justification must be offered to other nations, to whom the aggressor is accountable. In 1932, Japan was held accountable to the League of Nations, formed at the end of the First World War. However, Japan perceived the entire League of Nations as a conspiracy against the East--it believed that the rules of the League that banned aggressive warfare could not work in the East.

The pretext for their attack on Manchuria was self-defense. Acting without informing Emperor Hirohito of their plans, Kwantung officers led by Lieutenant Colonel Ishiwara blew up a Japanese-controlled railway line. As they had vandalized their own nation's property covertly, they blamed the explosion on the Chinese military. Using the artificial attack as a pretext, the Kwantung Army attacked the Chinese soldiers stationed nearby.

Even though the Kwantung Army acted independently, their actions were not without sympathizers in Japanese political life.

"On every occasion between 1928 and 1931, [Japan's politicians] sought to leave open the possibility of exercising force in China in the name of self-defense" (Bix, 224).

Even after having learned that the Kwantung Army had acted without respecting the need for imperial approval of aggressive actions, Emperor Hirohito did not intervene. None of the conspirators were punished; in fact, many of them were given imperial rescripts, which were high honors bestowed upon military figures from the Emperor. When questioned by other nations' diplomats regarding the apparent violation of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Japanese government defended itself by arguing that the Army had acted without imperial approval, on the grounds of "operational autonomy"--that is, the authority to respond to an emergency situation without waiting for approval from the Japanese Emperor. (The fact that the emergency was fabricated by the Army itself was still a dubious matter, with respect to the information available to other nations' diplomats.)

Emperor Hirohito allowed the Kwantung Army to continue acting without respect to imperial will, because "[he] was not seriously opposed to seeing his army expand his empire. If that involved a brief usurpation of his authority, so be it--as long as the operation was successful" (Bix 240). The Emperor's Machiavellian approach to disciplining his military forces supports the idea that the political figures (including the Emperor) had wanted to attack China while remaining legal within the rules of the Covenant of the League of Nations. When the Kwantung Army advanced into Manchuria, they were not seriously opposed to the mutiny, because the Army had accomplished what the politicians had wanted all

along.

After the initial attack, subsequent assaults by the Japanese were similarly rationalized. Japan's foreign minister sent a message to the Associated Press of New York that some of the battles had been fought because "[when] the Chinese attacked, [the Kwantung Army] could not but perform the duty for which they were there--namely, to repel the attack and prevent its repetition" (Bix 243).

After the fighting, justified on the pretext that the Japanese were saving the lives and well-being of Japanese people in China, Japan established Manchukuo--a puppet regime that deferred its resources and land to Japan. Japan often tried to have Manchukuo recognized as a nation, but the efforts never succeeded.

Japan had won its war in China. The rest of the world disapproved, but did nothing beyond light economic sanctions. Happy with victory, brimming with national and racial pride, Japan thought of itself in terms that would ultimately bring the nation to defeat during World War II.

"[Japan's most chauvanistic political party's leader] had publicly rejected the League of Nations' recommendations on Manchuria and declared (in a phrase that recurs through the whole history of twentieth-century Japanese diplomacy) that Japan should 'escape from the diplomacy of apology' and develop a 'new, more autonomous road'" (Bix 245).

Aggression given bad justification was permitted, internationally. The next step was aggression without justification at all. Japan had the former Manchuria's resources, and it had obtained it as an expression of its national worth.

Japan's involvement with Manchuria is similar to America's present involvement with Iraq. Credible allegations exist that suggest that the United States' invasion of Iraq was planned at the beginning of President Bush's administration. The United States prevaricated its motivations to attack, describing them as a "pre-emptive strike." The associations made between the Iraqi targets and the supposed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD's) were self-serving allegations, offered to provide international justification for an illegal invasion of a sovereign nation. Yet, the justification for invasion was not regarding WMD's alone, but in the interest of "protecting American citizens" from extremist aggressors in the Middle East.

On the pretext of preventing harm done to American citizens, the United States attacked Iraq when the nation had not provoked a war. In both Japan's Manchuria Incident and America's Iraq War, the violence was ignited on unjustifiable grounds and eventually led to a protracted battle between local insurgents and the invading armies. Both Japan and America attempted to establish governments in the conquered territories that seemed distrustfully identical to the government of the invading country. And both countries conveniently "defended themselves" against opponents whose land held valuable resources for the invading nation's industrial activity.

Beyond the Manchurian/Iraq similarity, present-day America bears

similarity to Showa Japan, with respect to its patriotic ideals. Both opponents and proponents of the United States' Patriot Acts are engaged in an ideological battle that centers upon the definition of a single word: patriotism. The question arises: what does it mean to have patriotic spirit? To whom is one's patriotism ultimately responsible?

This document's purpose is not to attempt to answer these questions, but to show that the game Killer7 implies a connection between Japan's cultural struggle to define "kokutai" and America's struggle to define "patriotism." Further, I would argue that the game suggests that the definition of patriotism that is winning, culturally, is closer to the imperialistic definition of the Japanese kokutai than anything else.

In order to illustrate the relationship between Showa Japan's and present-day America's cultural disagreements on the meaning of a nation's identity, some explanation of the varieties of interpretations of "Japan's kokutai" should be given. A conference presentation by University of Toronto History professor John Brownlee provides a useful overview of the varying definitions of kokutai, within Japan's political culture.

The most liberal definition of the kokutai was presented by a man named Hiroyuki Kato. Brownlee describes one of Kato's more important details, in his kokutai definition: ". . . Kato made a distinction between the Kokutai, the National Essence, and the seitai, the form of government" (Brownlee 2000). The kokutai was the eternal Japan that transcended human governance; the seitai was the current governmental body of Japan.

Pushing Kato's liberal definition a little further, writer Yukichi Fukuzawa claimed that the kokutai was not a matter of Japan's government's structure, but in its national sovereignty. By placing the spirit of Japan within the context of national sovereignty, Fukuzawa ran headlong into the conservative definitions of his political countrymen, who believed that the kokutai resided wholly in the Japanese imperial house.

The Japanese Emperor was the conservatives' idea of the kokutai. They believed that only Japan had a line of emperors whose unbroken line of succession extended back to primordial history, and that the emperor was always a direct descendant of the gods.

To the frustration of many secular Americans, the group of people known as "the religious right" often expresses approval with President Bush's policies and ideals on the grounds that he is a confessing Christian who wants to involve his religious beliefs in political activity. In America, similar debates occur on the definition of "patriotism," and most often the conservative definitions require deferment to Presidential authority as key factors in patriotic behavior. More liberal definitions, however, believe that the "patriotic spirit" of America exists independently of the government, and that the government should be viewed as transient with respect to the nation's identity and well-being.

In an eMail dated 5 August 2005, from Jack Thompson (Florida attorney) to Patricia Vance (President of the E.S.R.B.), Thompson argues for the re-casting of Killer7 from a Mature rating to an Adults Only rating.

Thompson reasoned that the content of Killer7--in the wake of the "Hot Coffee" controversy directed at Rockstar Games' release Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas--could not stand the scrutiny of an eye that valued the protection of children from sexually explicit material. Presumably, the same standards of decency and honest evaluation that the E.S.R.B. is accused of having relaxed for GTA:SA have been relaxed for Killer7, too.

Thompson cites Matt Casamassina's review of Killer7, written for IGN.com and published on 1 July 2005, as evidence against Capcom's experimental release. Specifically, he quotes Casamassina's statement that: "We can't stress it enough: kids should not play Killer 7. Not just because there's an M on the box, but because for once that M really means something. There's much more than blood and guts in the game. Everything from the design of puzzles to the subject matter is designed for older players and it's really that simple." Thompson later quotes Casamassina's comment that "And there are cinematics that feature full-blown sex sequences" (Web resource: <http://cube.ign.com/articles/630/630908p3.html>).

Since this Plot Analysis addresses Killer7 as a game that "is designed for older players," I believe that it should include a brief commentary on Casamassina's quoted statements, as well as Thompson's activity and claims.

I agree with the spirit of Casamassina's comments. As a twenty-five year old college graduate, who has traveled globally and experienced many things, I reacted emotionally to the scene in which Curtis Blackburn threw Pedro's daughter's severed head at him. This scene alone is reason enough to deny almost all gamers under the age of 18 access to the title. The violence is more intense than mere senseless violence--it is infused with an intelligence that acts cruelly, deliberately, and without penitance. Certainly, I do not believe that the material should have been removed from the game; the purpose of Curtis Blackburn's portrayal is to create pathos in the player against him. It is essentially good Greek drama, wherein pathos is created for the purpose of later catharsis. This type of villain, however, is inappropriate for almost all teenagers.

Thompson offers a cunning piece of sophistry, with respect to Casamassina's statement that "for once that M rating really means something." Thompson argues that--because Killer7 deserves the rating it received--it should be given a harsher and more dishonest rating: Adults Only.

Many commentators on the E.S.R.B. rating system have ridiculed the distinction between the ratings of Mature (17+ only) and Adults Only (18+ only). They focus on the single year of maturity that sets the ratings apart, and conclude that the

difference is arbitrary. While their argument may be valid, it is distracting from the real significance of the difference between the ratings of Mature and Adults Only. The Adults Only rating is a symbolic statement of the game's content--implying that the content has portrayed adult circumstances in such a way that the portrayal lacks redeeming merit, and has become simply obscene. The "Hot Coffee" segment of GTA:SA certainly stepped across this chasm into obscenity; neither the sexual content nor the violence of Killer7, however, cross that boundary. Even the most violently distressing scene in Killer7--involving Blackburn and Pedro--ultimately redeems itself as a stress, because of its function as a creator of pathos.

The aspect of this controversy in which I am critical of both Thompson and Casamassina--though more so Thompson--involves the appraisal of the game's sexual content. Since Thompson uses Casamassina's assessment to draw his conclusion on Killer7's appropriateness, I first will address Casamassina's review excerpt.

The assessment of the sexual content of Killer7 as "full blown sex sequences" is misleading and exaggerated. Only one scene in the entire game qualifies as sexual, and--insofar as it contributes to the game's characterization and content--it is portrayed tastefully for the game's intended adult audience. The specific scene that I refer to is a cut-scene, at the beginning of the CLOUDMAN mission. Samantha Smith--the Save Maid and caretaker of a catatonic Master Harman--is interrupted while molesting Harman in his wheelchair. She wears sexually suggestive clothing--a Catholic school uniform--and audibly climaxes during the sequence. Then, exhausted, she collapses in a nearby chair--with suggestive posture--and offers Garcian sexual favors. Importantly for the game, Garcian refuses the invitation.

Other scenes contain sexually adult circumstances, but they are implicitly sexual (rather than explicitly sexual, as the scene described above). The two most notable scenes involving Samantha Smith are the animated cutscene at the start of the ALTER EGO mission--wherein the camera's point-of-view hints at a shot of Samantha's crotch while she is wearing a skirt (although showing neither genitalia nor much underwear)--and the cutscene the start of the SMILE mission, wherein Samantha is discovered dead and appears to have been raped. Naturally, the implicit and explicit sexuality of these scenes have not been created for an audience of children. Within the context of the narrative of Killer7, however, they are justifiable characterizations within adult circumstances. Description of these circumstances as "full blown sex sequences" implies a greater degree of explicit, pornographic sexuality; it also implies interactivity, such as was implemented in the "Hot Coffee" sequence of GTA:SA. Neither greatly explicit presentation nor interactivity are elements of the sexual scenes in Killer7. However, I am not critical of Casamassina for having described Killer7 in the terms that he has; the ambiguity of individual value judgments, with respect to what constitutes a "full blown sex sequence" and what constitutes a sexually allusive sequence, suggest that he and I played the same game and are describing the same scenes.

Casamassina's description of Killer7's content seems to be Thompson's greatest leverage for his criticism of the E.S.R.B.'s rating. Thompson, then, has relied upon a misleading and ambiguous description of the content of the game--and, from this reliance, has thrown insupportable accusations at the game and the E.S.R.B.

I do not think that Casamassina is at fault, here; his quotation about the sexual content of Killer7 is excerpted from a review article, and (as anyone who has read a review of any media that he or she enjoys may attest) review articles are highly subjective compositions. I may disagree with the language used in Casamassina's review article, but I do not believe it is inappropriate for the subjective claims of a review article.

Jack Thompson, however, has excerpted a subjective description of Killer7, and he has used it as a means of spreading disinformation about the game's content. Not only are Thompson's claims sensationalistic and unfounded, they are dishonest and undermine the sincere efforts of conscientious adult gamers to create room in the gaming medium for mature creations--while restraining the medium's corporations from making mature games available to immature gamers.

On a concluding note, I would like to add that maturity is a relative term. Some gamers (almost always teenagers) prefer to think of maturity as a character quality that transcends years; often, the age at which maturity can bloom fully is (coincidence!) the same age as the gamer. This is rationale is self-serving, I think. A minority of gamers, below the age of 18 years old, can handle the difficult scenes in Killer7; I would like to stress, however, that this minority should be recognized as exceptionally mature by their authority figures before being allowed access to the game.

Please keep thinking about the game. As I am ready to move on to other projects, this version of the plot analysis document constitutes the final revision. It may be updated in the future with the completed translation of the "Hand in Killer7" book, but otherwise, that will be all.

I apologize to all who have eMailed me and nore received a response. Feedback on this document has been almost overwhelming, and I am deeply grateful for everyone who has taken time to write.

I may be contacted at: LOGOS_AWAKENING@BELLSOUTH.NET.

Thank you very much--especially to all of the wonderful readers who have written their questions and recommendations. I really appreciate all of your communication.

VERY SPECIAL THANKS goes to Yoshiko Ohier, Sam Ellis, and Jerel Smith.

And, of course, to Iris, whom I love for all my life.

I have titled this segment "Apologetics," because of a type of criticism that I have received for my writing on this game. I refer to a particular breed of criticism, chiefly defined by its antagonism, animosity, and aggressive dismissal of everything written above.

This plot analysis is the document that it is, because Killer7 is the game that it is and I am the gamer who I am. Any analysis, no matter how scientific its context, is ultimately an act of interpretation. In scientific analysis, the difference between analysts depends upon their relative experience and talents. The difference also lies in their priorities: two scientific analysts, one with the military and the other with consumer products, could look at the same general information about, say, heat generation, and draw different conclusions about the information, because one needs to make better bombs and the other needs to make better toasters.

As a creative writer--a poet, in fact--my analytical priorities are aesthetic. I desire to analyse a story in terms of the beauty and pleasure it inspires; and the beauty and pleasure it inspires, I think, depends upon its sense of balance and its ability to convey a relevant truth. The latter aspect is WHAT a story does, and the former aspect is HOW it does it.

With that said, I will offer examples of the criticisms leveled toward my interpretation of Killer7, as it developed on the GameFAQs message boards: "ShockleyHaynes, no offense, but your posts are closer to fanfics than plot analysis. Maybe you should go make your own thread;" "your theory only holds together if the reader accepts distinctions and terminology that you made up;" "you made **** up to fit your ideals! Well, whatever;" and the classic: "Yeah, you would know better than the game creators huh?"

Those who level criticism of this sort mistake "self-confidence" for "certainty of truth." Yes, I am self-confident that my interpretation is sensible, coherent, and respects the content of the game. No, I am not certain of the absolute truth of my interpretation.

I believe in history; I believe in culture; I believe in myth; I believe in the human need to understand coherently the world of experience. I am a Southern American man whose family has roots in Alabama and South Carolina, and I was raised on German military bases until I was ten years old. I have lived in a number of European countries, have traveled to most of them at one time or another, and lived in Finland for four months. I love learning. I am, in short, an American scholar--specifically, a Southern American scholar, which comes through most keenly when discussing post-modernity, a worldview of which I am skeptical when it is taken as a faith.

Yes, our times may be described as "post-modern," eminently

subjective, ultimately pointing toward no absolute truth. Yet, we conclude that no truth can exist, because no truth can be absolute. This is as ridiculous as Beat Poetry and pure atheism. Everyone over the age of twenty has a value system; and interpretations are born from value systems, whether ancient or invented.

In most plot analysis documents, this sort of long and abstruse explanation of the plot analysis would be quite out of place. Killer7 is a post-modern story, and (as such) leaves many holes for the gamer to fill with his or her personal explanations. If I wrote this plot analysis with the intention of wresting those holes from the reader and filling them with my own explanations, then I would have betrayed the vision of the creative team.

This game can be anything from the extended commentary on Japanese-U.S. relationships that I have suggested above, to a story involving the bad-ass adventures of Garcian and Dan Smith. Pick your cup of tea and drink it, but don't say that because you have a choice of cups, there is no tea.

IX: LEGAL NOTES [#IX]

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APPENDIX: "HAND IN KILLER7" [APPENDIX]

Publication information for "Hand in Killer7":

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or challenge that copyright. If an English-language version of this book is published, the following translation will be removed in accordance with international copyright laws.

I: INTRODUCTION

[APPEN-I]

In August 2005, Capcom released the book "Hand in Killer7." Like other companion books to video games (such as the books that complement the Silent Hill games), "Hand in Killer7" offers new insights into the world of Killer7. Many fans of the game expected the book to fill in many of the empty spaces left in the plot. In fact, even after having written my length plot analysis document, I wondered what the "official version" of the story was.

After having reviewed the content of "Hand in Killer7," however, I think that it would be a mistake to believe that the information contained within the book answers all questions within the game. Information within the book outright contradicts information given to the audience during the game, and the book introduces characters to the story that are never mentioned or shown in the game. The problem seems obvious to me: what good is a video game, if the game cannot be relied upon to give the relevant details of its own narrative?

In my plot analysis document, I have endeavored always to respect the details of the game before conjecturing with regard to symbolic meaning and historical allusions. I have based my interpretation around the game. The content of "Hand in Killer7" does not do this. Rather, it assumes that the story of the game is flexible enough to be bent in a different form.

Two options suggest themselves: one, "Hand in Killer7" has the "true story" and all of us paid \$50 to \$30 for a game that was wrong about itself; two, "Hand in Killer7" is not an attempt to reveal the truth about the world of Killer7, and it tries to convey to its readers the story that the creative development team had wanted to make, but could not.

For the sake of justifying the money spent on the game--and of exculpating SUDA51 and Grasshopper from the charge of ripping off their audience--I prefer to think of "Hand in Killer7" as the latter. Think of it as the same characters, with the same atmosphere, and the same setting--only a different story.

Some have suggested that I argue the point, because "Hand in Killer7" invalidates my own lengthy plot analysis and interpretation. I disagree with these claims. Foremost, I began the Plot Analysis document with the intention to analyse the Capcom 2005 release "Killer7"--a video game. As I have written above, my analysis attempts to wrap itself around the facts of the narrative with as little invention as possible. "Hand in Killer7" invents freely. Regardless of the source--and regardless of the authority granted to the source, such as that granted to the originator of the story--information about the game that does not come from either the game or materials packaged within the game falls short of being "canon" for an interpretation.

They had their chance to tell a story when we spent \$50 to \$30 on a video game. If they didn't do it right then, they have lost the opportunity to revise--unless, of course, they would either give us all free copies of the revision, or fully refund our purchases.

My plot analysis is an interpretation of Killer7, the video game, and not the development team's good intentions.

I may sound like I am addressing SUDA 51 or the development team harshly. I assure you, I am not. I address gainsayers harshly.

I include the translation of "Hand in Killer7," because I love the mythos of the game. As a result, a variation upon the story in the game--created, no less, by the game's creators--is a welcome experience. I believe it will be welcome for my readers, too.

Please enjoy the following translation of "Hand in Killer7."

"HAND IN KILLER7" TRANSLATION [APPEN-II]

"HAND IN KILLER7: KILL THE PAST, JUMP OVER THE AGE"

Translated by Yoshiko Ohier; edited by James Howell.
Proofread by Yoshiko Ohier and OVERDRIVE JEREL Smith.

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I: FACTIONS [APPEN-FAC]

A: THE UNITED NATIONS PARTY [APPEN-FAC-A]

After the Second World War, the United Nations Party was founded by former members of the Liberal Party. Since its establishment, it has become Japan's leading political party. Toru Fukushima is the party's leader; he is a former member of the Liberal Party. Some members of the party are older men, like Hiroyasu Kurahashi and Shinya Akiba. The party also includes younger people, whose leader within the party is Kenjiro Matsuoka.

When Fukushima was killed, the party briefly fell into chaos. Fukushima was supposed to attend the Japan-U. S. meeting in the Kaku Building; in his place, the Liberal Party sent its members. Negotiations between the Liberal Party and the U. S. Government had concluded well before the meeting in the Kaku Building, so the meeting was intended to be a mere formality. Unexpectedly, the U. S. Government broke off negotiations; as a result, both sides ended up killing each other.

B: THE LIBERAL PARTY [APPEN-FAC-B]

The Liberal Party is the second most powerful political party in Japan. Ohta and Kuramoto (the men who attended the negotiations in the Kaku Building) are members of the Liberal Party, and Hiro Kasai works as an informant for the Liberal Party. Intent on destroying the U. N. Party, the Liberal Party wants to reclaim its lost place as the forerunning political party in Japan.

The Liberal Party desired an extension of the Asian Security Treaty, and therefore kept its relationship with the U. S. Government in good condition. Oppositely, Toru Fukushima completely severed his relationship with the U. S. Government; he ended the security treaty in the interest of establishing Japan as a truly independent state.

When the Liberal Party learned about Fukushima's annulment of the Asian Security Treaty, it sent Julia Kisugi to assassinate him. As well, Kisugi was instructed to retrieve the Yakumo. The Liberal Party wanted to reclaim control of

the Japanese Government, to protect the Japanese people's interests. It regarded Fukushima's action as reckless. Since the Liberal Party desired a more complex relationship of support with the United States, it was only natural that they should try to assassinate the leader of their Japanese competition.

Kasai asked the Killer7 to eliminate Jean DePaul. He wanted the Japan/U. S. Government meeting in the Kaku Building to succeed, in order to strengthen the security treaty.

Fukushima, however, had known for years that the U. S. Government was plotting against Japan. He took his anti-U. S. position in preparation.

C: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA [APPEN-FAC-C]

Since the foundation of the United States of America, many organizations and political parties struggled for power. Although history recognizes the United States of America's government as a democratic republic, it is rumoured that a shadow government really runs the country.

D: THE U. S. GOVERNMENT [APPEN-FAC-D]

The U. S. Government's cold attitude toward Japan resulted in a rupture in its relationship to Toru Fukushima. The Killer7 receives its missions from the U. S. Government, through Christopher Mills.

Jeffers and Dudley--the U. S. representatives at the meeting in the Kaku Building--were sent to the meeting in order to break off negotiations with Japan. They were expendable pawns, who were sent to end the negotiations by killing the Japanese representatives--and being killed themselves.

As a result, Japan was thrown into total chaos. Some wondered whether Japan's disorder was the President and the U. S. Government's intention from the start. However, the President's delay in response was due to the prolonged settlement on the distribution of Japan's land and natural resources, with European countries.

The true "test of Japan's value" for the U. S. Government was nothing more than determining what benefit the U. S. would receive from Japan's destruction. If the U. S. had received fewer concessions and benefits from Japan's destruction, the fireworks are likely to have been launched.

E: THE U. S. OPPOSITION PARTY [APPEN-FAC-E]

Behind the scenes, the U. S. Opposition Party is connected with Kun Lan's EAST; it tries to help him crush the United States. The U. S. Opposition Party controls the U. S.

F: THE INTERNATIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

[APPEN-FAC-F]

The International Ethics Committee [IEC] is a peace-keeping organization that mediates in international conflict. The IEC intended to make the United States attack Japan. It sent Jean DePaul to Restaurant Fukushima with orderst to eliminate Kisugi, to destroy Japan's Liberal Party. (If Fukushima was allowed to live, Japan's isolation would be maintained.) The rationale behind sending DePaul to the Kaku Building was similar: to break off the negotiation by killing members of Japan's Liberal Party, who wanted to extend the security treaty. However, DePaul encountered MASK De Smith before he reached the meeting room; DePaul's mission failed. His life was wasted, since the IEC's desires were fulfilled without the need for their intervention.

The next objective of the International Ethics Committee is to colonize Japan with Russian and Asian populations. They have already occupied Hokkaido and Kyushu; now, they are arguing over concession of Honshu with the United States. In Singapore, the negotiations regarding the division of Japan continue.

G: THE YAKUMO CABINET POLICY

[APPEN-FAC-G]

The Yakumo Cabinet Policy was created in 1953. It was the work of the group known as the Union 7, who were young members of the Liberal Party. The Yakumo Cabinet Policy (called "Yakumo" for short) addressed such subjects as "the ideal nation," foreign policy, and other matters of nationalism and diplomacy. The policy was given to the Liberal Party's chief secretary, after which it disappeared. The Union 7 was forced to disband, owing to internal conflict within the Liberal Party.

Julia Kisugi was hired by the Liberal Party and sent to the United States, to retrieve the Yakumo. She was hired as a secretary by Toru Fukushima, who she later killed. However, the Yakumo had been taken by Jean DePaul (a spy from the International Ethics Committee), who had taken work in Fukushima's restaurant as an apprentice to the head chef.

The whereabouts of the Yakumo were unknown, after that. However, it was rumoured that a young mail clerk in a small Texan town named Andrei Ulmeyda had found part of the Yakumo, somehow. Ulmeyda established a company called "First Life." As his company grew, he employed most of the town's residents. "First Life" developed the town and became much more than a simple business.

H: THE ASIAN SECURITY PROTOCOL

[APPEN-FAC-H]

One of the primary causes of international conflict is the limited number of energy resources, in conjunction with different economic systems and environmental concerns.

In 1975, in Hakone, Japan, an international conference met to find solutions to energy security problems, specifically as they related to Asian countries. The Hakone Protocol contained three different possible routes:

[1] The Pipe Plan. This plan was advantageous to oil producing countries in the Middle East.

[2] The Civic Plan: This plan was advantageous for China and its allied countries, all of whom had a high dependency on coal.

[3] The Massive Plan: This plan was advantageous for the United States and Europe, who desired oil concessions from the Middle East.

One of these three plans was adopted by the countries who attended and voted during the international conference. However, there was no formal announcement regarding which of the three plans was selected.

I: FIREWORKS

[APPEN-FAC-I]

In 2003, the United Nations Army intervened on international conflicts and brought true peace to the entire world, for people of all races. The United Nations declared world peace. [EDITOR'S NOTE: The "United Nations" referred to here IS NOT THE U. N. PARTY. The U. N. Party is specifically Japanese, and specifically operates within the context of U. S./Japanese diplomacy. The United Nations, in this section, refers to the real-world global welfare organization.]

Global disarmament commenced. All members of the United Nations signed a formal agreement, dedicating their countries to a total abolition of weapons of mass destruction. The agreement stipulated that the disposal of the weapons of mass destruction must occur within plain view of the entire world's population; this meant that undersea or underground detonations were not allowed. The United Nations decided that the missiles should be launched outside the Earth's atmosphere, then intercepted by other missiles, thereby exploding all missiles at once.

These explosions lit up the night sky. Because of their resemblance, these explosions were called "Fireworks." They were the most anticipated event in the history of the world. The International Photographic Mapping Office transmitted photographs of these explosions all over the world, so that anyone who missed the explosions could see proof. In April 2005, the Fireworks took place in the sky above Ibiza island. The sky over Japan was chosen, also, as a point of detonation.

All this is how history records the events. However, in reality, the "peace for people of all races" was imposed by the United Nations Army, and the World Peace Declaration was superficial. Oppositely, racial tensions increased under pressure from the United Nations.

J: INTERNATIONAL MASS-SCALE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM [APPEN-FAC-J]

The United Nations feared that it could no longer control the international market, owing to the hastened development of means of distribution of materials. Therefore, it enacted greater restrictions on the air transportation industry.

Additionally, research institutes reported that an unknown virus was transported via airplanes; this virus had the potential to spark a global epidemic. A decline in the use of airlines was inevitable. In order to replace air transportation, a network of "Intercontinental Expressways" was planned for construction.

After the construction of the Intercontinental Expressways, a next-generation distribution system was slated for construction, using the Intercontinental Expressways as their foundation. For its successful operation, a newly discovered power source would be used to move a a gigantic metal plate across the sea floor. The plate would have a base area of several kilometers. This next-generation distribution system was called the "Intercontinental Mass-Scale Transportation System."

Construction of the new transportation system began in 2003; by 2005, forty percent of the project had been completed. As of the events of Killer7, construction continues. Many politicians became rich from under-the-table concessions granted to private corporations, who supplied materials for the large-scale construction.

As of 2005, the project had concluded its experimental phase. It was proven workable. However, nations still struggle between each other, over concessions promised at the beginning of the project, regarding the maintenance of the infrastructure.

K: NETWORK [APPEN-FAC-K]

In 1996, the International Photographic Mapping Office was created as an organ of the United Nations. Initially, the office was supposed to sort and distribute aerial photographs for the United Nations Army. Several years later, however, the office was involved fully in controlling media and commercial images.

In 1998, the private use of the Internet was banned globally by the United Nations. Under the influence of such organizations as "Security Council," "Economic and Social Council," and "Human Rights Committee," regulation on the

uses of the Internet was reinforced. The restrictions were established to help protect national secrets, as well as individual information, and to protect against cyber-terrorism in the global market.

As a result, analog devices replaced digital devices to support the networks and other media.

However, even after 1998, a computer network still operates that supports hackers and devoted online gamers. Love Wilcox rose to celebrity status among the members of this underground subculture.

II: TIMELINE

[APPEN-TIM]

[1750]

New Southampton, Wineport: HARMAN DELTAHEAD was born. He was the first-born son in his family.

[1750]

Lhasa, Tibet's capital: KUN LAN was born. From birth, he was the heir of the governor. He was born an adult.

[1753]

Kun Lan (at the age of three) became worshipped as the reincarnation of a demon. An underground organization recognized him as their leader.

[1758]

Harman Deltahead (at the age of eight) met a man who introduced himself as Harman's neighbor. The man had an angelic smile.

[1768]

Harman Deltahead's beloved Susan was murdered. Until this point, Harman had lived an ordinary American life. With his loss, he went mad. He first encountered the REMNANT PSYCHES at the villa where Susan had been killed.

When Harman entered the villa, he saw a vision of six corpses and Susan, who was tied up. The neighbor with the angelic smile had guided him to the villa.

It was then that Harman Deltahead decided to change sides: from victim to killer.

[1772]

Harman Deltahead joined the JIM TOWNSEND SURVEY COMPANY. While the J. T. Survey Company outwardly portrayed itself as a census institute, its real work involved taking "contracts"--missions of assassination.

Harman entered the world of professional killers.

[1774]

Harman Deltahead left for a mission that brought him to the

Union Hotel. On the rooftop, he met a man named DIMITRI, whose nickname was "Three Eyes."

The neighbor with the angelic smile--Kun Lan--appeared in front of Harman Deltahead. Kun Lan became the medium through which "Three Eyes" spoke.

Harman and Kun Lan quickly became close friends. They met for tea regularly.

[1775]

Harman Deltahead killed Jim Townsend, head of the J. T. Survey Company. Harman was revered as one of the world's best killers.

He formed the FIRST SMITH SYNDICATE and changed his name to "HARMAN SMITH." Harman Smith was feared globally as one of the most horrific assassins.

Dimitri was the first member of the First Smith Syndicate; he was Harman's first victim, and the origin of Harman Smith's "God Killer" powers. Dimitri was believed by others to be Harman Smith's bodyguard, and inspired fear equal to that inspired by Harman Smith.

This was the start of Harman's multiple personalities.

[1778]

Harman Smith unexpectedly quit professional assassination. He disappeared from society and history.

Dimitri was rejected by the core persona. The core persona separated from Harman Smith and became Harman Deltahead, once more.

[1780]

Harman Deltahead founded Coburn Elementary School and became the school's first principal. Secret underground organizations funded Harman Deltahead and Coburn. They wanted Coburn to specialize in educating individuals who would spread and cultivate capitalism.

[1789]

The first presidential primary election was held at Coburn Elementary School.

[1820]

The dead bodies of Harman Deltahead and Kun Lan were found at Coburn. They had been killed while playing chess.

[1942]

EMIR PARKREINER was born.

Dimitri disappeared from society and was not heard from again.

[1946]

In the political turmoil following Japan's defeat in World War II, the LIBERAL PARTY proved itself so inept that it couldn't pay for the rental of its own facilities. TORU

FUKUSHIMA was working as an aide to a member of the Japanese Diet, when he was contacted by the U. N. PARTY.

Fukushima became a political "architect" for the U. N. Party.

[1948]

According to official records, Emir Parkreiner's parents died in a car accident.

[1952]

Emir Parkreiner killed his parents and disappeared from society. At the time, he had been living with his parents, under the surveillance of the U. S. Government in an isolated state.

[1953]

The "UNION 7" wrote "the Yakumo Cabinet Policy" [YAKUMO]. The Union 7 was comprised of young Japanese political figures, who were members of the Liberal Party, though they stood apart from the internal conflict that threw the party into chaos.

The Yakumo was given to the Liberal Party's chief secretary, but it vanished. The Union 7 was dissolved as a group. The following year, the U. N. Party overtook the Liberal Party in the political arena.

[1954]

The horrific crimes committed by the killer known as "THE BLOODY HEARTLAND" became serious problems to society.

[1955]

The Union 7 attended a secret meeting at the Union Hotel, which was called "the Yakumo Secret Meeting." They were killed by a serial murderer, though the whole incident was hushed up. The affair was called "Killer7."

On the rooftop of the Union Hotel, Harman Smith met a dying boy with three eyes. The boy was Emir Parkreiner.

Harman Deltahead and Kun Lan resurrected.

[1957]

The SECOND SMITH SYNDICATE was formed with seven personae. They were called "KILLER7".

[1959]

CURTIS BLACKBURN was in his mid-teens. Though he became notorious among Seattle's underground societies, he did not belong to a criminal organization. He worked for the government, and his work consisted of contracts from the U. S. government.

[1960]

Japan and the United States signed a security treaty.

[NOTE: the text of this treaty may be read here:
<http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/docs/19600119.T1E.html>]

[1967]

HIRO KASAI met Harman Smith in Hakone, Japan; he had a mission for Harman.

Kasai wanted Harman to investigate the security of the votes of countries involved with the Asian Security Treaty. After his investigation, Harman promised Kasai that the treaty would be ratified, and gave Kasai the report of his investigation.

Harman Smith met the chairman of the countries who were members of the Asian Security Treaty. The treaty was ratified, and Japan became a member of the council. In front of Harman, the chairman committed suicide.

[1969]

TRAVIS BELL became the first victim of the Second Smith Syndicate.

[1973]

Harman Smith lost his chess game against Kun Lan.

As part of his loss, Harman promised to give Kun Lan control over the major cities of the west coast of the United States of America. Harman began the process by sending DAN SMITH to Curtis Blackburn in Seattle, to destroy the small gangs there and establish Blackburn's control.

CHRISTOPHER MILLS, as a young boy, became Blackburn's informant and entered the world of underground society.

[1975]

Blackburn ended his role as Dan Smith's mentor. On a basketball court, Curtis shot Dan to death.

GARCIAN SMITH recovered Dan's corpse, and he obtained the power to resurrect the dead.

[1978]

The Killer7 took a mission from the head of a Spanish organization that specialized in cleaning up the aftermath of accidents. They left for Spain. The target was the son of one of the organization's workers: KESS BLOODYSUNDAY.

[1980]

KEVIN SMITH fought the pharmaceutical mafia in Miami, Florida. During the fight, Kevin killed the man he loved.

[1982]

In Madison Square Garden, , MASK DE SMITH fought a decisive battle against an army of prototype Heaven Smiles and "Mask Smiles."

Kun Lan's shadow began to creep over the Second Smith Syndicate.

[1987]

Using their connections within Seattle's base for the nation's Self-Defense Department, Curtis Blackburn and PEDRO MONTANA created a black market organ-trafficking route. They

did this by manipulating the Immigration Department's procedures.

[December 1990]

In southern France, the Killer7 took on a mission to dissolve a secret meeting that was scheduled to be held at a first-class resort hotel. There, they confronted large numbers of "Rollout Heaven Smiles."

The Killer7 decimated the Heaven Smiles, but an unknown woman appeared in front of them. She killed one persona after another; she nearly annihilated the Second Smith Syndicate. In the end, though, Harman Smith successfully cut her down.

The personae were so heavily damaged, it took Garcian Smith ten years to resurrect all of them. During this time, the activity of the Second Smith Syndicate was suspended.

SAMANTHA SITBON began serving Harman Smith. In the absence of the other personae, she took work as a persona of the Killer7.

[1992]

HULBERT, an FBI Special Agent, infiltrated Coburn Elementary School and was murdered.

[1998]

The world enjoyed its first year of total peace. The international community banned all air transportation, in the interest of suppressing terrorism. The analog network system rapidly developed.

[1999]

Samantha Smith--who was a temporary persona of Harman--killed JOHNNY GAGNON.

[2000]

Garcian Smith succeeded in resurrecting all of the fallen personae. The Second Smith Syndicate was back.

However, Dan Smith tried to kill Harman in a fit of lunacy. Harman was wounded mortally; he fell into a state of suspended animation. Samantha left her work as a killer-persona and began taking care of him.

[2002]

The Network of Intercontinental Expressways opened.

[2003]

Construction of the International Mass-Scale Transportation System began.

Radioactive waste and other materials were sent to an energy disposal facility, a dome structure built in the Indian Ocean. The international community's ultimate goal was to eliminate all intercontinental missiles.

The number of terrorist attacks using "Heaven Smiles" increased.

[2010] ----- ANGEL

Harman Smith returned. The battle in the "Celtic Building" occurred.

[2010] ----- SUNSET

200 missiles launched toward Japan.

JULIA KISUGI was contracted by Christopher Mills to kill Toru Fukushima. At the restaurant Fukushima, Kisugi, JEAN DEPAUL, and the Killer7 met. DePaul was an agent for the International Ethics Committee. Kisugi killed Fukushima, but the location of the "Yakumo Cabinet Policy" was unknown.

Hiro Kasai informed Garcian Smith that Jean DePaul had infiltrated the Kaku Building, wherein the final secret meeting was held between the United States and Japan.

The Killer7 headed for the Kaku Building. There, they fought a spiritual battle with Hiroyasu Kurahashi and Shinya Akiba. Meanwhile, Kenjiro Matsuoka was chosen by Kun Lan as his messiah.

The missiles hit Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, and Sapporo: the four major cities in Japan. Japan was obliterated.

[August 2010] ----- CLOUDMAN

Andrei Ulmeyda announced on television that the amphitheater wherein Stacy Spangles was giving a concert would be blown up by Heaven Smiles. During his public declaration of the act of terrorism, Ulmeyda challenged Garcian Smith to "find him out."

Garcian left for Texas. There, he witnessed Ulmeyda turn everything over to Clemence.

[2011] ----- ENCOUNTER

Dan and Curtis had their final confrontation: between the master and the disciple, Dan brought Curtis to his end.

[2011] ----- ALTER EGO

The comic editor of ZTT published "Handsome Men." Each time an issue was published, the events of the comic book occurred in the real world.

The Second Smith Syndicate fought the Handsome Men, in order to stop the serial murders committed by the Handsome Men.

Love Wilcox enacted her vengeance toward the largest advertising company in the world--Electro & Line Inc.--the force that controlled the crimes and the comics' stories, behind the scenes. The use of advertising as a means of propaganda and control was destroyed.

[2011] ----- SMILE

Hiro Kasai, a member of the Liberal Party, fell from a building rooftop in front of Matsuken.

Garcian Smith recovered Emir Parkreiner's memory.

The Second Smith Syndicate dissolved.

[2014] ----- LION

The Bloody Heartland--Emir Parkreiner--was awake. He entered Battleship Island alone to end everything.

Deep underground, he encountered Matsuken. He killed the final Heaven Smile--"Last Shot"--who bore a striking resemblance to Kun Lan

[2017]

The United Nations dissolved for the sake of global reform.

The world entered an age of total globalization. National barriers ceased to exist.

[2020]

Part of the "Yakumo Cabinet Policy" was made public. It became the subject of devout worship.

[2050]

A new type of terrorism appeared: "Heaven Tears." The meaning of "terrorism" changed, again.

[2053]

The Third Smith Syndicate was formed to combat the "Heaven Tears" terrorism.

----- 100 YEARS PASS -----

[2115]

In Shanghai, the battle between Harman Smith and Kun Lan continues.

[2170]

The final battle takes place in Detroit. Billions of "Final Smiles" fly to Detroit from the East.

OVERDRIVE MASK De Smith--the main persona of the Fifth Smith Syndicate--confronts the horde of "Final Smiles."

[2171]

The chess game between Harman Smith and Kun Lan never ends, fearing HIS apparition

III: CHARACTERS

[APPEN-CHA]

A: HARMAN SMITH

[APPEN-CHA-A]

"Good night, child. It's past your bedtime."

(1) Born in New Southampton, Wineport, Harman Smith is of Irish descent. He is sixty years old and handicapped.

(2) He is the Deltaheads' first born son.

- (3) He is the leader of the world's most powerful group of assassins, the Killer7.
- (4) Because of his power, he is known as the "God-Killer."
- (5) He is the origin of the multiple personae.
- (6) In his twenties, he worked as an agent for the Jim Townshend Survey Company. He has been an assassin ever since.
- (7) His weapon is an armor-piercing rifle.
- (8) He is better than Kun Lan at chess.
- (9) In 2000, he was nearly killed by Dan Smith.
- (10) In 2010, he was resuscitated.
- (11) He is tied intimately to Coburn Elementary School.

B: KUN LAN: Terror from the East. [APPEN-CHA-B]
"Harman . . . the world won't change. All it does is turn.
Now, let's dance."

- (1) Half Tibetan and half Chinese, his age is unknown.
- (2) He is the son of a governor.
- (3) He is an incarnation of the demon, Marla Parpiner.
- (4) He became the leader of underground societies at the age of three.
- (5) His power has made him known as "God's Hand."
- (6) He studied at a prestigious American university.
- (7) He lost his Tibetan citizenship when he was twenty-four years old.
- (8) Using fake passports, he has moved through underground organizations all over the world.
- (9) In the past, he worked as a taxicab driver in Japan.
- (10) His objective is the destruction of nations, using billions of Heaven Smiles.
- (11) Kun Lan is Harman's most distant neighbor, closest observer, most sympathetic companion, and target.

C: GARCIAN SMITH: The man who killed the past. [APPEN-CHA-C]
"I feel something . . . like somebody's calling out to me."

- (1) Garcian Smith was born in Miami, near the border with

Mexico. He is thirty-three years old.

- (2) His nickname is "Garcie."
- (3) He can see Heaven Smiles, using his powers of clairvoyance.
- (4) His weapon is a handgun, with a silencer attached.
- (5) He is not good at fighting; he is the weakest in battle.
- (6) After recovering a body, he has to tap the button on the controller rapidly.
- (7) He was "killed" by Harman in the past.
- (8) Presently, he is Harman's faithful servant.
- (9) Garcian is a sweet man who would not hurt a fly.
- (10) He is the most important personality in the story.
- (11) He is "the third eye."
- (12) The Golden Gun rightfully belongs to him.
- (13) He is also known as "the Bloody Heartland."
- (14) His birth name and identity is Emir Parkreiner.

D: DAN SMITH: A tyrant in a three-piece suit. [APPEN-CHA-D]
"I went and saw the Devil. Now it's your turn."

- (1) Dan Smith was born in Detroit, Michigan. Of Irish descent, he is thirty-three years old.
- (2) He is a tyrant--the true Hellion.
- (3) His weapons are a revolver and the dreaded Demon Gun.
- (4) He is best at eliminating the Duplicator Smiles with his Collateral Shot.
- (5) He is a former agent of the Seattle Self-Defense Department.
- (6) He and Mills have known each other for a long time.
- (7) Curtis Blackburn was his mentor--and his mortal enemy.
- (8) His room in the Union Hotel was #601.

E: KAEDE SMITH: She walks in a storm of blood. [APPEN-CHA-E]

- (1) KAEDE Smith was born in Portland, Oregon. Of Japanese origin, she is twenty years old.

- (2) Her nickname is "Barefoot."
- (3) She cuts her wrist to send out her "Bloody Shower."
- (4) Mizaru serves her.
- (5) Her weapon is an automatic pistol, with a scope attached. She reloads slowly.
- (6) She is a formidable fighter with kicks.
- (7) Her brother is a member of the Liberal Party.
- (8) She was killed by her own brother, who received his orders from Matsuken.
- (9) Her body was recovered by Garcian.
- (10) Her room in the Union Hotel was #404.

F: MASK DE SMITH: A profesional wrestler, the strongest.

"Children are pure. They know who's the strongest."

[APPEN-CHA-F]

-
- (1) Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the masked man is thirty-eight years old.
 - (2) In MASK De Smith, Luchadore meets Lancashire: Mexican wrestling with Anglo-Irish tactics.
 - (3) He is very strong, even without weapons, using his German Suplex and Headbutt moves.
 - (4) His weapons are two grenade launchers that fire normal shells, Shock shells, and Focus shells.
 - (5) He is the most destructive member of the Killer7.
 - (6) His room in the Union Hotel was #306.

G: CON SMITH: Sound hunter, speed star.

[APPEN-CHA-G]

-
- (1) Of Chinese descent, Con Smith is blind at fourteen years old.
 - (2) He is known for his supersonic footwork.
 - (3) He has perfect hypersensitive hearing.
 - (4) His weapons are two automatic pistols.
 - (5) He is a big fan of the Handsome Men.
 - (6) He is very attached to Coyote Smith, and he hates Dan Smith.

(7) He whistles, when he is in a good mood.

(8) His room in the Union Hotel was #203.

H: COYOTE SMITH: The Hellion's nemesis.

[APPEN-CHA-H]

(1) Coyote Smith is Puerto Rican and twenty-eight years old.

(2) He is known as the Thief, and he is extremely athletic.

(3) He has the power known as "Deadly Jumping" for use in burglary.

(4) His weapon is a modified revolver.

(5) He loves to unlock heavy padlocks.

(6) In the past, he was killed by Dan Smith.

(7) His room in the Union Hotel was #502.

(8) He speaks in the dialect from Hiroshima.

I: KEVIN SMITH: The taciturn killer.

[APPEN-CHA-I]

(1) Born in England, Kevin Smith is thirty years old.

(2) He wears sunglasses.

(3) His weapons are a large knife and smaller throwing knives.

(4) When he turns invisible, he can bypass security systems easily.

(5) He is taciturn.

(6) He hates heights and loves dark places.

(7) His eyesight is weak.

(8) His shoulders are sloped, and he sometimes has bad posture.

(9) In the dark, his eyes are supposed to shine. However, this has not been confirmed.

(10) His place in the Union Hotel is in the lobby.

J: SAMANTHA SITBON: Obedient, aggressively sexual, and cruel.

"Don't worry about him. This gruff loves to play rough. You wanna have a little fun, too . . . ?"

[APPEN-CHA-J]

(1) Samantha Sitbon is a college student.

(2) She takes care of Harman for three days out of the week,

for scholarship aide.

- (3) In reality, she molests Harman.
- (4) Sometimes, she teases Harman.
- (5) She is mentally deranged.
- (6) When Harman is awake, she completely changes into a loyal servant.
- (7) She appears in the Pigeon's Letters.
- (8) At the end, she obtains the name "SAMANTHA SMITH."

K: CHRISTOPHER MILLS

[APPEN-CHA-K]

"What's sad is that we've gotten used to this. I mean our senses . . . it's pathetic."

- (1) Born in Seattle, Christopher Mills is forty-nine years old and of Scotch descent.
- (2) He is the Killer7's informant.
- (3) He is the connection between the U. S. Government and Killer7.
- (4) He is the U. S. Government's dog.
- (5) He was Curtis Blackburn's informant, when he was a boy.
- (6) He and Dan Smith are old acquaintances, but their relationship is very bad.
- (7) Mills is also an assassin, but his skills are terrible.
- (8) He is in possession of the car covered in Ulmeyda's blood.

L: TRAVIS BELL

[APPEN-CHA-L]

"This just ain't right. Is it? Is it right for time to march on like this?"

- (1) Travis Bell was the first victim of the Second Smith Syndicate.
- (2) On a hot, humid summer night, he tried to kill the Killer7. Instead, he died by their hands. He then became a Remnant Psyche.
- (3) He recalls that the feeling of being killed was exhilarating and exciting.
- (4) Now, he stalks both the Killer7 and underground society.
- (5) He is obsessed with T-Shirts. His emotions and states of mind are always printed on his shirts.

(6) He has a wealth of information regarding underground society.

(7) His last words to the Killer7 are: "Die like a dog, and then laugh it off."

M: IWAZARU

[APPEN-CHA-M]

"In the name of Harman"

(1) "Master, it is I, Vincel Dill Boris VII, Iwazaruscof!"

(2) "We are in a tight spot!"

(3) "This is harsh/"

(4) "Ew! Major grossness."

(5) "It's wonderful!"

(6) "Enough!"

(7) "Very good"

(8) "That won't do."

(9) "This is it!"

(10) "This is hot!"

(11) "I can feel it!"

(12) "In the name of Harman"

N: KIKAZARU

[APPEN-CHA-N]

(1) Kikazaru is Iwazaru's retainer.

(2) His favorite things are the Soul-Shells, which the Master forgot.

(3) He crawls everywhere, to inform the Master of the Soul-Shells' whereabouts.

O: MIZARU

[APPEN-CHA-O]

(1) Mizaru is Iwazaru's ex-wife.

(2) She is KAEDE's servant.

(3) Her cue to appear is KAEDE's blood shower.

(4) When she is called, she appears, shielding her eyes.

P: YOON-HYUN

[APPEN-CHA-P]

"Ah, welcome, my little loser. I don't see you going places...."

- (1) Yoon-Hyun was the Killer7's first informant.
- (2) He desires thick blood.
- (3) He possesses the True Mask.
- (4) He regards the Master as a loser.
- (5) His most frequently repeated quotation is: "Tomorrow, it could be you."
- (6) The last advice he gives is: "Don't count on the others."

Q: SUSIE SUMNER

[APPEN-CHA-Q]

"I'll leave the rest to your imagination. The imagination of a killer"

- (1) She always says, "Hello, Mr. Smith," as her greeting.
- (2) She is portrayed always as a freshly severed head.
- (3) She is responsible for returning the rings.
- (4) She loses her temper very easily.
- (5) Her favorite hiding place is inside a dryer.
- (6) After diving from the second floor of her home, mutilating a man by castration, loving chocolate sundaes in the South, using her father's rifle to kill a young man who courted her, and spending time in an isolation room, Susie Sumner died the death of a killer.
- (7) She frequently uses Internet emoticons.

R: KESS BLOODYSUNDAY

[APPEN-CHA-R]

-
- (1) Kess Bloodysunday is a boy who lives in his nightmares.
 - (2) He is always lost.
 - (3) Kess is keenly aware of someone having suddenly disappeared.
 - (4) He only sees all white, in front of his eyes.
 - (5) The scenery of his nightmares often fades.
 - (6) He confessed: "When I grow up, I will become the President of the United States."
 - (7) His fantasy is to go someday to ISZK-Land.

- (8) A serial killer, he became a murdered killer.
- (9) His final memories are of his mother, father, and the monster with three eyes.
- (10) His final words are: "Who is the person taking my hand?"

S: GATE-KEEPER

[APPEN-CHA-S]

- (1) The Gate-Keeper is the guard of the Vinculum Gate.
- (2) He will let a person challenge the demons beyond, if they give him enough Soul-Shells.
- (3) If the person is not serious about challenging the demons, he will not let them pass.
- (4) The Gate-Keeper is a fearsome man.

T: MAD DOCTOR

[APPEN-CHA-T]

- (1) The Mad Doctor can strengthen the Personae.
- (2) He must be given blood, before he will help a person challenge the demonic forces.
- (3) He uses a mysterious blood machine; it operates similarly to an espresso machine.
- (4) Sometimes, the blood machine is out of order.

IV: "Study Article on Multifoliate Personae Phenomenon"

[Editor's Note: The following selection from "Hand in Killer7" is a news and research article written within the universe of Killer7. Think of it as a file you might have found in the game.]

"Study Article on Multifoliate Personae Phenomenon"
by Jack Foley

After his disappearance from his professional and social circles for twenty-three years, the body of neurologist Graham MacAlister was found. His death is a mystery.

The following article (his professional legacy) was published in the monthly magazine "Spreading the Truth" (August 1998).

I first met Harman Smith in 1975.

I had driven to Seattle to visit my old colleague, Doctor John Gibbon, who practiced clinical psychology in the area. When I rolled through downtown, it was already very late. I felt a premonition--something dark.

To complicate matters, my naturally bad sense of direction caused me to become lost in the city. I ended up in a back alley, and I met Harman Smith. He was in trouble; someone had stolen his car. (Later, I learned that the car belonged to Harman's companion, Christopher Mills.)

When Harman and Mills saw my car crawling down the alley, they forced their way into the passenger and back seats. I should have panicked. I should have run from the car-jackers, but I didn't. I allowed their presence. Maybe it's because of my premonition--some dark fate I knew I could never escape.

I surely would have fled, had I known what was in their luggage: a stiff corpse.

They told me in the car that they had no where to stay the night. I pitied them, and I let them stay in my hotel room. They removed the corpse from the bag, and told me that they needed to hide in my room for the night to avoid pursuers.

When I saw the body, my face palled. I boiled with self-loathing at my foolish invitation for them to stay the night. My recrimination quelled, though, after I saw their "ritual." Curiosity and inquiry--how much human despair has grown from these tendencies?

The "ritual" concluded by Harman absorbing the corpse--into his own body! When Harman focused his mind, the corpse changed into thousands of small particles; Harman's body then absorbed these particles. Harman's middle-aged body then transformed, and he took on all of the physical features of the absent corpse! Harman more than resembled the man--he BECAME the man.

The man who he became--his name was Dan--insulted me a few times. Then, Dan turned into those small particles again, and Harman returned before my eyes.

I had witnessed an true phenomenon. In my excitement, I asked Harman for specific descriptions of his methods. I thought I had begun to annoy him with my questions. Instead of shutting me out, though, Harman smiled; he held up a hand to silence me. A normal person would have fled at the sight of the phenomenon, but my abnormal curiosity intrigued him.

The notes that he allowed me to take read as follows:

- (1) He can only absorb corpses that meet unknown requirements for compatibility.
- (2) When Harman's consciousness recognizes that a corpse is compatible with Harman, the corpse transforms into thousands of small particles, which Harman's body absorbs.
- (3) Incredibly, the absorbed body exists within Harman--with its own personality completely intact!

- (4) When a persona becomes manifested, Harman's physical form changes completely, as it did when he transformed into the late Dan. Additionally, Harman's mental qualities change, too, adopting the total personality associated with the body.
- (5) In addition to Dan (the persona whose corpse had been absorbed in my presence), another persona exists inside Harman. That persona is named Garcian.

The situation bore similarities to Disassociative Identity Disorder, in which the patient completely changes his personality. For readers of this article who are unfamiliar with Disassociative Identity Disorder, I should explain that it is a severe mental problem. In it, the patient creates a new identity for himself; the new identity is severed consciously from the patient's original identity. Through the new identity, the patient loses contact with the original identity's perceptions, self-awareness, and memory.

The similarities do not mean that Harman's condition is identical to Disassociative Identity Disorder, though. A patient with multiple personalities only manifests the new identities; Harman actually morphs into the other identity's body. Needless to say, the creation of a physically new person in time and space is rare in any field of medicine.

Further, in most cases of Disassociative Identity Disorder, the multiple personalities are created when the patient believes them to exist outside of himself. A patient may have a personality named John and another named Eric; John and Eric believe that each exists in another body apart from each other. This is not so with Harman. In his case--or, rather, in THEIR case--the separation of the spirit creates a new body.

In most Disassociative Identity Disorder patients, the different identities (or personae) pile up inside the patient. They stack one on top of the one before, burying the original identity (or persona) at the bottom. In Harman Smith, the personae all exist parallel to each other; their identities and their bodies keep their individuality, yet they are bound to each other.

I call this the Multifoliate Personae Phenomenon.

The next day, I begged Harman to hire me as his private physician, even though I knew that he was a professional assassin working with the criminal underworld. Harman Smith granted my wish.

I never met with Dr. Gibbon. As a scholar, it has been my duty to document and understand the Multifoliate Personae Phenomenon. During my study of Harman Smith, I learned that he can absorb adult men--and, also, women and children. If Harman tries to absorb a body, and if his consciousness rejects it as incompatible, the personality becomes a phantom. I name the rejected personae "remnant psyches." (I will describe the remnant psyches in detail, in a future essay.)

Writing all of this down is like drafting my own will; it is suicidal to betray Harman's trust. The contract I signed bound me to remain silent about the Multifoliate Personae Phenomenon, except with certain people. The contract never stated my punishment for crossing Harman,

but I am no fool. Harman Smith is a professional killer; I know what will happen.

Perhaps I am a slave to my greed for knowledge. Whatever the consequences, though, I could not neglect these phenomena, as a scientist. Future generations must receive some record of the strange power of Harman Smith.

I only want the public to know; as much as I can, I have revealed the truth.

Graham MacAlister

The document printed above was found on Dr. MacAlister's body, which was found hanging from a noose. The doctor disappeared from his social and professional circles in 1975, because he was regarded as a delinquent by the medical community. He fervently proposed a psychological theory that was fundamentally delusional.

In addition, an employee of the Union Hotel (where MacAlister stayed) confirmed that MacAlister showed exceptionally strange behavior. At times, he would shriek without reason; he showed symptoms of mental derangement.

For these reasons, the police concluded that MacAlister had committed suicide, impulsively, as a result of his mental illness. The document referred to in his article on the Multifoliate Personae Phenomenon, which described details of the so-called "remnant psyches," was never found.

[MORE TO COME 2 September 2005]

III: COMMENTS ON "HAND IN KILLER7"

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IV: CREDITS

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V: LEGAL NOTES

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