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Third Anniversary Issue

(it's been three years since our first color issue, #8, appeared)

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It's not really a matter of putting my foot in my mouth. I promise. If you're a loyal reader of WHITE WOLF Magazine, then you know my position already. Just review my RUNES in issues #12 and #17 if you need proof.

What am I talking about? Well, about a week after it was first suggested in late September, White Wolf Publishing and Lion Rampant (the former publisher of **Ars Magica**, **Whimsy Cards**, and the new card game **The Challenge**) have merged to form a single game company called White Wolf. This new company will continue to offer all of the products available from each in the past. White Wolf offers **Ars Magica**, WHITE WOLF Magazine, **Storypath Cards** (the new incarnation of **Whimsy Cards**), the **Campaign Book** series, **The Challenge**, comic books in February, and **Vampire™** in May.

The sticky part of the matter is my reluctance, nay my complete unwillingness, to let another company have the honor of publishing WHITE WOLF Magazine or even letting it be hinted that the magazine is not true to its aim of being a game magazine which offers material for all games.

The first matter of reluctance is easily taken care of in this matter since I am a co-owner of the new White Wolf. Mark Rein-Hagen, former owner of Lion Rampant and brilliant co-designer of **Ars Magica**, is the other owner. I will remain at the helm of this magazine, so from your perspective nothing should change.

On the second count, I guess I'm dead in the water. By merging with a company that offers roleplaying games for sale, it's inevitable that at least a hint or rumor of WHITE WOLF Magazine becoming a house organ will slip into someone's mind or from someone's tongue. I have to accept that. So, I will simply leave it to the magazine to continue to prove the statement that I made in my RUNES in issue #12:

"And I can promise that WHITE WOLF Magazine will never, no matter what comes, be anything other than a multi-game magazine."

Then, in issue #12, I proceeded to say, "Take this issue for instance." The point is valid once again. There is material for **AD&D**, **Shadowrun**, **Torg**, **Warhammer**, and **Quest for the Ancients**. Yes, there's also an adventure for **Ars Magica**, but when in the past have I ever failed at any opportunity to plug the game?

Ever since I reviewed **Ars Magica** in WHITE WOLF Magazine #11, and before I knew the face of a single person who worked for Lion Rampant, I supported this wonderful game. The adventure in this issue is the first freelance submission for **Ars Magica** that I have accepted for publication in WHITE WOLF Magazine and its publication was scheduled long ago. See "On the Horizon" in issue #23 for proof; that issue was printed and released before this merger was even being considered.



Stewart Wieck

Sure, we'll continue to print material for **Ars Magica**, and I'm sure we will print material for our next roleplaying game, **Vampire™**, after it is released in May 1991, but WHITE WOLF Magazine will not become a house organ magazine. While house organs do service to the company they represent, they ultimately do harm to the

roleplaying industry. Small companies with good products will be ignored unless there is a place they can go for affordable advertising and an editorial staff willing to print material for the game or at least print a review of the game. WHITE WOLF Magazine is still the place for this.

Our new approach to reviews should go a long way toward affirming my stance and the desire of White Wolf to continue in this direction. We have assigned Line Reviewers for several RPGs (there are still openings, so call if you are interested) and the first of these reviews appear in this issue. Products from TSR, West End Games, Iron Crown Enterprises, Stellar Games, R. Talsorian, Chaosium, "Lion Rampant," and **AD&D** are all reviewed. Plus, there are reviews of the first products from a couple of new game companies, Atlas Games and Creative Encounters. The Capsule Review section of WHITE WOLF Magazine will continue to be at least as long as it is now. In fact, I hope that it will grow even more. My eventual goal is to print a review of every new game product that is released. That will be a while in coming, but shoot for the stars I say. Plus, I would have you note that even the products that White Wolf produces will be reviewed by a Line Reviewer from outside the company, thus assuring an unbiased review.

White Wolf has other lofty plans too. These plans go well beyond the magazine itself. For starters, the comic books we planned to release in January are still on the way. They are now scheduled for release in February, but information has already been sent to stores and advertisements are appearing. **Storypaths**, in December, will be the first joint project to be released. **WHITE WOLF Adventures**, a compendium of adventures that have appeared in WHITE WOLF Magazine, will be available in January. **Ars Magica** will be supported with more products, including adventures and sourcebooks. A new set for use with **The Challenge** will appear in February. But the big one looms a long way on the horizon (at the time of this writing, anyway). **Vampire** will be released in May.

In the end, I encourage you to stick with the magazine, because it will only get better. And be sure to notice the special holiday subscription deal we are offering.



Rat's Den

a scenario for Shadowrun

by Stephan Wieck

Introduction

Orion sleazed through the blazing energy field unscathed. He was just another office memorandum to the Okowa computer system. The software and deck the Yak had provided him with were making short work of the system's defenses. The raw speed of the jazzed-up deck both thrilled and scared Orion. If the Yak were investing this kind of hardware in his run, they must expect him to encounter something heavier than what the system had thrown at him so far. Of course, the data he was collecting would probably indenture Okowa to the Japanese clan for a long time and a lot of nuyen, so the Yak could afford expensive decks and cutting edge programs.

He slipped through the Sub-processor and routed to a data bank. One last browse and then he was jacking out. Famous last words. He dove into the datastore and immediately the system kicked into overdrive. Red node, he thought. Access whirled at him barring his entrance into the node itself. He tried to silence the Access while he called up the Sleaze again, but things were happening too fast; he was out of his league here. A Trace leapt from the midst of the Access wall and rocketed out of the node, backtracking along Orion's entrance route. He ignored the Access and followed the Trace. It was too fast for him. The simulated reality of the matrix started to fizzle with static around him and sharp pains stabbed his brain. He jacked out.

The Yakuza deck was smoking as the Trace and Burn fried it. Orion tore the molding case apart and snapped free the optical chips

storing his collected data. The red hot chips sizzled the flesh on his fingers. He stared in disbelief at the smoking deck. In less than a second he had gone from being a rich man to be a dead man. The Yakuza would kill him for losing the deck and Okowa had his address. He grabbed the chip and hit the streets.

Plot Synopsis

Rat's Den is a scenario designed for FASA's *Shadowrun*. The adventure involves a lot of detective work as the players uncover one of Okowa Holding Company's ruthless corporate power plays. The character group will need both a decker and a magician (preferably kemetist). If the group doesn't have those Archetypes, the GM should consider adding one as an NPC for this run. The adventure was designed to be run in Atlanta, but can be transplanted to any city.

The storyline of the adventure begins with Okowa Holding Company. Okowa is utilizing two of its corporate holding companies, Chiwa Biotech and Southeast Real Estate, to wrest a profitable city housing contract from Southeast Real Estate's corporate rival, Liberty National Properties. The city government is currently contracting Liberty National to maintain a large housing project for the city's poor. Okowa has plans to take that contract away.

Okowa has had Chiwa Biotech develop a new strain of the Vitas-3 plague under the supervision of Dr. Dorean Peaks. The new strain is engineered to be carried in city rats and then kill its carrier after a few days. Dr. Peaks developed the virus strain and Chiwa Biotech agents planted several of the infected rats in Liberty National's housing project. The outbreak of plague caused several deaths in the project and the resulting bad publicity has forced the city to revoke Liberty National's contract.

The contract is currently up for bid and Okowa plans to have its subsidiary, Southeast Real Estate claim the lucrative contract.

However, the best laid plans of mice and men often screw up, and so did Okowa's plot. The infected rat's died out and this should have ended the plague, but unfortunately, the Vitas-3 strain was transferred to a pack of Devil Rats residing in the projects. The Devil Rats are immune to the self-destruct side-effect of the plague and they have continued to spread the disease. Now, Okowa is afraid that a city investigation of the spreading plague could lead back to them, so they're taking steps to wipe out the Devil Rats.

Through their street contacts, the Yakuza have gotten wind of Okowa's actions. The Yak hired the decker Orion to take a jaunt into Okowa's computer system to find some blackmail material that the Yakuza could hold over Okowa. Orion was stopped by the system's ICE. He is now running from Okowa's men and stumbles into the characters.

Never Take Candy from Strangers

The characters are contacted by Killer Fry, a Redskulls gang member. He meets them at 9 pm at Zonedancers, a dance club in a grimy section of town. The club is filled with youths zonedancing on the club floor. The dancers are each jacked into their own channel of music and dance to their own rhythm. The bar is strangely quiet as the dancers gyrate to the music pumped into their skulls.

Killer Fry is a scrubby youth whose only purpose in the adventure is to get the runners together so Orion can happen upon them. Fry wants the players to geek a rival gang boss. He'll offer the characters