

AGENTS OF OBLIVION

Liner Notes

The idea for this setting came to me when I was sitting about playing *Splinter Cell*—the first one—a number of years ago. I was Sam Fisher, superspy, sneaking about, applying chokeholds, sniping folks, and such and thought it'd be awfully neat if I could perform a Psylocke move, you know where you *manifest a katana with your mind*? That'd be something sort of special. I turned it around in my head, deciding what to do with it over the next handful of days, and I couldn't let go of it. If anything, the concept grew as I wondered what kind of world this psychic spy inhabited. What would a real government do with such power at its command? What if monsters were real? What if aliens had touched down ages ago? What if we got their technology? What if all the conspiracies you ever heard about existed in some form or fashion? If our hero inhabits a world where, essentially, everything is real, how dark is this world? If there is one spy group with access to such strange things, certainly there are others sprinkled around the globe. The mind boggles.

At this point, I'll add in I have a healthy love for spy, supernatural, and horror media of nearly every stripe, be they comics, graphic novels, video games, television shows, or movies, and I thought initially this world where our Agent—now capitalized, to stress his importance—resides should be an amalgamation of these things. Initially, the concept began as James Bond meets Cthulhu, but my friends rightly pointed out our dear Mr. Bond is a solo act, so I turned it around a bit, and decided, at its core, *Agents of Oblivion*, was more *Mission: Impossible* meets *The X-Files*. With that firmed up as the concept, the proper work of the setting began.

Now our Agents needed a rival organization, just as G.I. Joe has Cobra, MI-6 has SMERSH, and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* has THRUSH, Oblivion has Pandora. I turned some things on their respective heads as I am wont to do, and our Agents' agendas are not always as clear-cut as they may seem on the surface. You'll notice this as you go on, and there are wonderfully grey spaces to be found within the bounds of moral ambiguity and organizational extremism.

One of the greatest challenges was to present this large world and share our vision while still giving you a sandbox setting where you could tweak it to play a variety of ways within this framework. Do you want to play a gritty spy game along the lines of *The Bourne Identity* or *Le Femme Nikita* or do your tastes run more towards *The X-Files* or do you want to take it all the way to the limit and have it more akin to *Supernatural* meets *Fringe* meets *Dark Skies*? You can (and we do).

Make of this what you will with only one hard and fast rule: have fun!

-Sean Preston
June 30, 2011

Liner Notes

I remember the first time I learned of Sean Preston. I was a partner in 12 to Midnight, and we were the first licensee's with Pinnacle for the *Savage Worlds* system. Shane Hensley opened the *Savage Worlds* system to a few other game companies and one of them was called Reality Blurs. I remember checking out his website. He was working on a project called *RunePunk*, but had lots of ideas for other projects including one called *Agents of Oblivion*. We traded a few courtesy emails, then spoke on the phone with increasing frequency until we had become "industry" friends. I did a soft edit for *RunePunk*, and Sean wrote a *Modern Dispatch* for us.

We spoke often—sharing ideas and scenarios. We created an in-depth history of the universe for both the horror-campaign of *Pinebox* and *Agents of Oblivion*. I worked with him on several projects as an editor and wrote some of *Realms of Cthulhu*. We had become true friends.

Sean had won a contest with Green Ronin to create *Agents of Oblivion* for the *True 20* game, and I did a soft edit on it for him. I had fallen in love with the setting and wanted to be a part of it. As Reality Blurs grew, Sean took on several more product lines. One day he called me and said, "Ed do you want to work on *Agents* with us?" I told him I needed to think about it and about a minute later said, "You bet!"

The project was about two thirds written, but needed a lot of editing, polishing, and additional materials to round it out, as well as a true *Savage Conversion*, though Sean had issued a free player's guide via pdf to whet gamers' appetites. Sean made me the line editor and told me I could delegate some of the writing responsibilities to others. I did. Some anyway. I've never been one for delegating, and before I knew it I had gone through the entire document, editing, rewriting, revising, and adding new content. Sean and I share the idea of a "big sandbox." Give gamers everything they need to do anything they want to play the games they want. *Agents of Oblivion* does this. If you want to play a true modern spy game, you can. If you want a cheesy 70s spy type game with lots of gizmos and gadgets, you can. If you want to play with horror and magic, you can. *Agents of Oblivion* is perfect for *Savage Worlds*. It can be gritty, timely, horror-laden, high tech, geo-political, and exciting for any spy game.

Thanks to Sean for letting me come along for the journey. I hope you have as much fun playing *Agents of Oblivion* as I did in helping get it completed. May the immortal words "Stay on target," and "shaken, not stirred" be with ya'll.

Keep Gaming,

Ed Wetterman
July 7th, 2011

PROLOGUE

Hendrix hated taking a new partner along even more than going solo. Hell, it's why he became a wraith. He enjoyed quiet, clean wetwork. Send him to a military base. Let him assassinate a leader. Let him cause a coup. He didn't like the weird stuff. He didn't like a new partner. He was a company man through and through, so when he got the word he got to deal with both, he gnashed his teeth, cursed beneath his breath, and set up the rendezvous.

She went by Magick. Not too original, but she was a Zero, brand spanking out of the Academy. Her dossier indicated she was trained as Special Police Unit in China back in 1970 and had been missing until 2010 when she was found in a Pandoran stronghold looking not a day over twenty-seven. She had no recollection of the last forty years, yet she ramped up rapidly enough, her motor skills unconsciously remembering things she didn't. And, oh joy, she was a combat mage. Hendrix shook his head and set it aside. He didn't like the weird stuff, but knew it existed in spades.

The mission brief said they'd be performing an extraction in Rio. A simple in and out, but he doubted it'd be that simple. After all, it was Carnival, and why else would they send a wizard and a wraith? Airports were out—too crowded—so they parachuted just outside the city and trudged through the jungles for two days in relative silence. She didn't say much, but kept up, and he had little use for small talk.

Music and lights filled the streets as they made their way to Ipanema—the beach from *that* song—and it was crowded. Bikinis and Bermuda shorts made their suit and sun dress a bit out of place, but there was nothing to be done about that. They nearly reached the diamond district when a tan Mister E greeted them outside of Meia-Note, a small nightclub. “Right on time”, said Mister E, bowing and shaking hands, ushering them through the VIP line, through the sweaty, gyrating bodies on the dance floor, and into a small office.

He handed them two attaché cases. “You'll find what you need inside.”

Hendrix opened his. It contained a topaz broach and a pair of ladies' gloves. “This must be yours.” He slid it over to Magick, and opened his. His matte-finished Walther PPK awaited him, along with his Brausch silencer, and two curious clips. “Rune-etched,” said Mister E, when Hendrix gave him a look.

“Never used them, before,” he replied dryly.

“Oh, they're something the boys ran across doing inventory in the Vault. They may come in handy.”

Magick spoke softly. “And what good are these?” She held up the gloves. The broach already glittered around her neck.

“You'll find those amplify your already considerable martial prowess. In layman's terms, you'll hit harder. The broach, on the other hand, is a protective measure.”

“The brief indicated this is a simple extraction.” said Hendrix.

“It should be,” replied Mister E. “Once you dispatch the Pandorans guarding the British Ambassador. Magick here knows the exorcism ritual. Isn't that right, my dear?”

“Yes,” she said, smiling for the first time. “It *should* be a simple extraction...”

THE AGENCY AWAITS

Once upon a time, at least as far as you were concerned, the world was a simple place. Well, maybe simple is not the right word, but it was normal. You loved/hated your job, your life, and you did regular things, just like everybody else. Then everything changed.

Something happened in your life, something strange, inexplicable, and unexplainable. You chalked it up to bad wine, bad dreams, or bad eyes, but you shut it out. You tried to let things get back to normal. And they did—until the postcard arrived.

You got an uneasy feeling picking up the pristine white—too white—postcard. It looked as though it had never been touched before you touched it. And it was just resting there waiting for you. No return address. No postmark. Just your name simply printed in block letters. As you turned it over, you saw three words—*WELCOME TO OBLIVION*—and realized your life was about to change forever.

Six weeks go by in a whirlwind. You are trained. You are ready to hit the field. You are now a superspy monster hunter ready to face any challenge, be it alien, supernatural, or terrestrial in origin. Now get out there and take care of business!

DARKNESS BLEEDS

Agents of Oblivion takes place in the modern world. Things are much as they are today, but there are shadowy in-between places where darkness lurks and bleeds out into the mundane, hoping to twist and corrupt it. Conspiracies and cabals work to bring the world to its knees for its masters, be they old dark gods, maniacal madmen clinging to their perches of power, or ancient aliens from distant galaxies.

THE HIDDEN WORLD

As an agent, your eyes have been opened. You have been trained and equipped to fight the darkness, keeping the secrets of its existence from the world of man. You are a gatekeeper, an unsung hero, fighting without the hope of glory or recognition. Should you die, it is unlikely anyone shall ever shed a tear.

ORIGINS

The Agency, as Oblivion is typically referred to internally, opened for business on December 18th, 1969, one day after Project Bluebook—the United States Air Force’s study into extraterrestrial life—shut its doors for good. As Project Bluebook, and its predecessors Sign and Grudge, drew unwanted attention and became a political hot potato, the newly formed Oblivion was determined to keep and maintain a low profile so it could focus on its simple goals—keep the world safe from any danger at any costs.