



BLUE SCREEN OF DEATH

Using the Old Image Wall

All credits go to Erwan for sharing his idea with me. Again. Thanks my man.

Note: this short adventure happens before Memo's return. Including Triglav and Eidolon being stuck in Laibach is a nice plot entry but it would set the players on a course going in the exact opposite of the intended direction at this time and place, which is Toulon. Therefore, and to avoid any misleading trail, they're meant to see only pieces of what Memo saw before he vanished, years ago.

Whether from the Scrappers trying to scavenge any valuable relics from Lucatore's surroundings (maybe even the rubbles of the Cloister) or Scrappers from Bergamo, or even the Chroniclers managing the Alcove in the city of the White Wolf, the players paying attention to the rumors circulating around end up hearing about the Image Wall in the Lombard Bog.

Discovering the Wall's existence and the stories told about it shouldn't be difficult, a quite easy roll of *INT+Legends* or simply talking to the right people should do the trick. The real issue would be the mount the expedition to the site. From this point, the characters have several options:

- The local scrappers -> although northern Purgare is not a hot spot for scavenging, Bergamo is still a big city and the myths spread about the Image Wall, despite Memo's disappearance long ago, helped the place keep a sizeable scrapper community. The Rat heeds from this community, but despite being an alpha, is not well-liked. Therefore, if the players have managed to dispatch him somehow when in Lucatore, the remaining scrappers, even members of his crew, will have a positive opinion of them. It's not very complicated to convince some of them to accompany the group into the swamp, a hefty reward or the promise of being able to loot whatever is not necessary to the players should be enough,

although the trek may be complicated to endure as not many know the exact location of the Wall.

- The Neolibyan enclave -> simply put, Rachid couldn't care less, he's a diplomat with a poor business insight and will not fund such a pointless endeavor. Aïcha could be convinced but sadly she won't be able to sway her employer. Dead end.
- The Alcove -> Pentium the streamer has been seeking a way to reactivate the Image Wall for years, but while the group's attempt should be enticing to him, he's grown tired over the years and has somewhat given up on his goal to understand the device or simply reactivate it. It requires the players a very convincing argumentation to persuade him to support their expedition. Should they manage to do so (*showing him the disk of Jehammed and explaining that he acts as a emitter would be of nature to convince him for instance, although this would certainly bring more trouble for the group down the road – alternatively, sharing any new information about the Wall and / or using techno-savvy arguments could do the trick*), he will accept to fund a part of the expedition, by recruiting scrappers for instance, and to pinpoint the exact location of the Wall on a map. He won't come with them though, but will avidly seek them after their return.
- The Lombardi clan -> after the events of Lucatore, Vesapccio has a soft spot for the characters. Sort of. Let's say they were of use to him, albeit unbeknownst to them, and thus he's ready to hear their plea. Long story short, war is brewing with the Anabaptists over Lucatore's control and he has no man to spare to hunt for fairy-tale in the bogs. It's still possible, while very hard, to convince him to lend a squad of swordsmen to go along the group into the marsh (*Vespaccio could be swayed by the promise of military support, although a simple handshake won't suffice here, he needs guarantees, engraved in stone, that a substantial military force will assist him in his conquest. Alternatively, money, a big chunk of it, could work in this case. The last resort would be to point him in the direction of Altair's treasure, or rather what's left of it*). The guards may not be many but they're efficient, well-trained, and know the area very-well. They may be able to provide the safest mean to reach the Wall.
- The local Jehammedan -> just not interested in the matter, and waving the artifact under their nose with no intention to deliver it to them would be a terrible idea.

Whichever the group accepting to tag along the players, the trip to the wall must not feel like a walk in the park. Reenacting some of the fears they felt during their chase of Fernex just before meeting Barghest for the first time is a good indication of the mood to set.

Depending on their escort, the difficulty of the expedition should vary, the most difficult situation being them going there on their own without any support, and the easiest possibly the one with the Lombardi or the Scrappers.

A handful of *INS+Survival*, *INS+Orienteering* and *INS+Perception* rolls, either separated or combined depending on the situation, should do the trick. *INT+Legends* is also fitting should they have chosen to work alone.

When they finally find the Wall, the presence of the Disk of Jehammed magnetic field reignites the system and provided they succeed in rolling *INT+Artifact Lore* combined with *INT+Engineering*, they should figure out how to provide enough energy to the alimentation set years ago by Memo and properly power the entire installation. If they forgot to bring any petro or E-cube, shaming them is

perfectly fine at this point. Should they have chosen to go for the E-cube option, they must tinker the generator to adapt it to a different power source.

Once they do everything right, the Wall lights up, and between long silent sequences where it only displays a neon like blue screen with a few unintelligible code lines, short news flash from the Bygones appear and show them the last moment of a world they will never know.

First bulletin.

- Date on bottom part of the screen: 14th June 2064.
- Language spoken: something closely resembling Frankan
- Moving images displayed: a man sitting behind a desk wearing strange clothes, talking to the characters, and in the right corner of the screen, a group of men wearing long white suits resembling the Spitalians' walking in a dusty African village among corpses lying on the ground
- Text spoken: "After the tragic epidemic outburst in Ivroy Coast, the disease has reached Niangoloko where the death toll can already be counted in the hundreds. The researchers of the Pasteur Institute are formal, they have identified the virus responsible as an extremely aggressive strain of AIDS, one they have already christened HIV-E..."

Second bulletin

- Date on bottom part of the screen: 28th December 2046
- Language spoken: something only vaguely resembling Pollenese
- Moving images displayed: a mammoth calf strolling in a small paddock, surrounded by many persons wearing long white blouses
- Text spoken: "And here he is, Väinämöinen, the first real, living mammoth of our time. The calf born from his elephant mother is healthy and has quite the appetite already. This feat of biogenic engineering is nothing short of extraordinary. When the permafrost melted this last spring, no one could have foreseen..."

Third bulletin

- Date on bottom part of the screen: 28th March 2058
- Language spoken: unknown to all save the Chroniclers and the most technologically savvy cults (Spitalian possibly...) - English
- Moving images displayed: two men sitting in front of each other around a table, wearing strange outfits



- Text spoken:

“Good evening. I’m Tyler Durden and tonight, in Special Investigation, I’m receiving Salim Mushtar, visionary, futurologist extraordinaire, techno prophet, and member of the Recombination Group’s board of directors. Good evening Mister Mushtar, and thank you for accepting our invitation.

- Good evening Tyler, thank you for having me.
- Mister Mushtar, the Recombination Group is an ever-growing firm that defies any classic categorization, present in every advanced technological field in existence, sometimes not existing yet, and quite logically it fascinates the public as much as it frightens him. So tell me, what are you doing up there?
- Ah ah ah ah. Tyler, you know very well I can’t answer this question. By the sheer number of our research fields, and this is omitting the fact that I have a very strict non-disclosure close in my contract, I couldn’t possibly summarize what we’re doing since it’s too broad to be explained.
- So what can you tell us then? Surely you didn’t come here just to dismiss my indiscretions?
- Hmm... Well, I could tell you about the Stream.
- The Stream?
- Yes.
- What about it?
- Undoubtedly you’ve heard about those groups, those communities, that have emerged around the world, proclaiming that they’ve encountered a presence, an intelligence, a digital lifeform, hidden somewhere on the Stream, haven’t you?
- You mean the Streamers?
- Indeed. Well, in spite of what one could think of those testimonies, I wouldn’t be so unwise as to give my personal opinion on that matter, but be it as it may, one cannot prevent himself from questioning the very nature of divinity. What makes a god? What makes God? Is it a self-intelligent self-conscious entity that is so mighty that it forces its will upon all mortals, whether they have faith or not? Or, is it a concept, a creative principle born from the worship of its believers, a force moved by a collective, by millions of minds gathering into a single choir, breathing air into its divine lungs altogether? Did God make us? Or did we make God? Before, we needed a book or a prophecy to unite, now, at this time and age, now that our minds can move freely over the world without feeling the constraints of flesh and bone and commune into one Spirit, aren’t we the ones making the rules above?
- That’s all very fascinating, but how does this reasoning translate into your works?
- Through numbers.
- Numbers?
- Yes Tyler, numbers, or rather numerology, the science of numbers. Since the dawn of mankind, every people has considered numbers as a source of power, a way to understand the world

beyond what is immediately perceivable by the five senses. Numbers are a key to the hidden face of our reality, and numerology is the esoteric method that teaches us how to use them. The Mayans, the ancient Chinese, the Egyptians, the Greeks with the golden number, the ancient Indian empires with the zero, every human civilization has devised a method based on numbers to unveil the veiled, as a window on the invisible. Don't tell me you don't see that there's something eminently sacred in mathematics and numerology?

- Oh I wouldn't dare telling you that...
- Ah ah ah ah...
- Is this what you announced to the world a few years back? Is this the ushering of the Transhuman Era?
- My dear Tyler, there is no ushering. It's there already.
- I see... But, allow me to be blunt.
- Please.
- How this philosophical reasoning about the sacred power of the Stream relate to the Triglau project?
- Oh... I see someone's well informed.
- I'm just doing my job. We all are.
- Indeed indeed. Well, like I said, I can't speak about it. Yet.
- But... If I may..."

Blue screen is back.

After the transmission, allow the players to try their luck and tweak with the gear a little bit.

The group can spot that a flashing red light has started to emit from the top of an adjacent metallic tower with a simple INS+Perception (2) check. Should any wishes to investigate, he must climb atop of the tower with BOD+Athletics (3) and find a small electric box hidden within the metallic armature of the antenna.

The box must be opened with a simple INT+Artifact Lore (2) and then examined with INT+Artifcat Lore (4) to figure out that it is a transmitter that opened a special steam frequency to an unknown location. With a bit of tinkering with INT+Engineering (3), the flux can be turned into an emission / reception mode.

The screen then shows an empty room which walls appear like rubbles of concrete. Suddenly, a face appears in the frame. A steel mask covers a charcoal-dark face. Only the gaunt mouth and almond shaped glowing eyes. The monumental face towers the group. His voice is then heard, like a swarm of buzzing bees.

- If there's a Paler within the group, the head simply says "Filth" in disgust and cuts the communication.
- If there's a Chronicler, he gauges him during several long silent seconds before asking "Score?" and then replying "Insufficient.". He cuts the communication.
- If none of these cults is represented the twisted mouth sketches a smirk and simply says "Irrelevant."