

Please find attached an item of interest from the Laundry's Acquisition Section. Any assistance from Operations Division in acquiring these particular items would be greatly appreciated.

A 4 ORNERY OCTAL - O V E R V I E W -

FOR INTERNAL LAUNDRY USE ONLY

A4.1 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

ORNERY OCTAL appears to be a battered eight-track tape cartridge. It is made from bone-coloured plastic, measuring 134mm (5.25 inches) in length, 100mm (4 inches) in width and 22mm (0.87 inches) in height. There are scratch marks down both sides of the cartridge from years of use, and several deep gouges on the non-tape end, as though it has been attacked with a blade of some description.

A slightly ripped label is affixed to one side, although some reports have mentioned that the glue on the back of the label is failing and it is now peeling off. The label is handwritten, bearing the words 'Country Classics'; the writing has faded and is now barely legible.



The cartridge has a compilation of obscure Country and Western songs on it. The sound quality is poor, with crackles and other tape noise quite audible.

The cartridge is also prone to jamming, due to wear of the tape inside from overplaying.

A4.2 HISTORY

The precise origins of ORNERY OCTAL remain a mystery. Rumours of its existence first appeared in the alt.folklore USENET group in the late 1980s. Several stories about the cartridge circulated with differing details, including what music was included on the compilation. Some reports claim that the songs were all by the same artist, while others state that the songs were a home-made compilation of different musicians.

The stories did however share certain core elements, namely that the tape contained an odd mixture of obscure Country music and that, despite the depressing nature of the songs, those who possess the item often find themselves with increased luck for a period. The stories all agree that listening to the tape too much drove the listener insane, but they differed on how much 'too much' was.

In the intervening two decades, stories of ORNERY OCTAL's existence surface periodically in Internet forums, although they have dramatically reduced in frequency since 2001, with the obsolescence of eight-track technology. Some versions of the story have changed the media into either compact cassette or, in one case, a CD-RW filled with MP3 tracks.

Several attempts have been made to verify the truth of the story. However, most of these attempts lack authenticity themselves, and often sound like urban legends in their own right. In one well-documented case, an individual named Jason Lauran, a college student in Los Angeles, decided in 1992 to locate and obtain ORNERY OCTAL. He kept detailed diaries and Internet logfiles, copies of which were obtained by Laundry contacts in the United States. Over the course of seven months, Lauran tracked down the

cartridge. Shortly afterwards, Lauran won large sums of money at the casinos in both Reno and Las Vegas, which he attributed to ideas he received whilst listening to ORNERY OCTAL.

Within two months of listening to the tape daily, Lauran began describing much darker dreams and even hearing voices during his waking hours. His journal entries became increasingly paranoid and he was convinced he was being followed by either the Mafia or, occasionally, the CIA. He gambled away all of his money and racked up large debts trying to keep out of sight.

Lauran stopped writing his journals at that point and vanished. Six months later, he resurfaced in a mental health facility in San Francisco. Records obtained from the facility indicated that Lauran was suffering from schizophrenic delusions, claiming that a demon had lodged in his brain and was constantly telling him to do things.

A4.3 CURRENT LOCATION

According to intelligence reports, ORNERY OCTAL is located somewhere in the south-western United States. The most recent posts have put it in Sacramento, California, but this is currently unconfirmed. (It should also be mentioned that these forums are populated by a wide variety of conspiracy theorists, whose world views should be considered suspect. Careful verification of their claims should be made before embarking on a detailed search for the item).

A4.4 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Given the information from the well-documented Lauran case, it is surmised that ORNERY OCTAL is somehow playing host to an inter-dimensional being – potentially a Level Two entity – who feeds on the emotions of the cartridge's owner. If this being is reacting to the specific emotional desires of the owner, this could explain the differences in the descriptions of the cartridge's playlist; the being is altering the contents of the tape to suit the needs of the listener.

The material on the tape is likely to be highly suggestive in nature, possibly to the point of being emotionally addictive. This is certainly backed up by the Lauran case. Extreme care should be taken when listening to the contents of the cartridge, as it would appear that even a single listening can put the listener under the control of the entity housed within.

A minimum of a Level Two Protective Ward should be employed before listening to the cartridge.

Care should also be taken when acquiring the item from its current owner. Previous stories indicate the owner is likely to be highly addicted to the contents of the cartridge and will be typically unwilling to release the object to another person's custody. Furthermore, if it is stolen, the previous owner may go to extreme lengths – potentially up to, and including, assault or murder – in order to regain possession of the device. This suggests that the owner may also be under some form of Geas, which will need to be broken.

Using ORNERY OCTAL in your own games:

- ORNERY OCTAL does host a Level Two entity.
- The more times a victim listens to the tape, the stronger the demon's power over them becomes.
- The victim will be under a Level Three Geas to keep the tape in their possession and to listen to it regularly.
- Parts of a conversation can be heard in the gaps between songs. Phrases like 'the Eye', 'Philadelphia again' and 'invoke the Prolonged-of-Life' imply the conversation was connected to the Black Chamber, but electronic enhancement or analysis of the sound is useless: the only way to hear the full conversation is to listen to the tape over and over and over

This is an extract from the short PDF supplement for The Laundry Roleplaying Game by Cubicle 7, Targets of Acquisition, by Geoff Skellams.

You can find more about The Laundry Roleplaying Game at www.cubicle7.co.uk

