

The Crystalline Mythos:
**THE INTERN
REPORT**



The Crystalline Mythos:

“The Intern Report”

**Artaro Investigation into the Journal Entries
and Voice Memos of a Recently Deceased Intern**

(A Short Story)

By Valor M.

Based on the story “Hypnotica” by Teej R.

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2023 Edition

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Introduction

This story is an investigation into the death of an engineering intern at Artaro University by the Artaro Corporation. It precedes 'Hypnotica' (the Crystalline Mythos short story) and runs alongside the beginning of the story. It is meant to expand that story and therefore is highly recommended that knowledge of 'Hypnotica' is attained prior to reading.

The entire thing is meant to be read like a corporate document from the Artaro Corporation, with a lead investigator inputting information when necessary. Referenced documents don't exist, except Artaro Corporation Incident Report #TR0213. That document is a slight reference to the short story 'Hypnotica' itself. Again, it helps to read that prior to this.

It's been really fun being able to add to the Crystalline Mythos. I became a fan of Teej's universe after reading the Dream Operations stories. This hyper-capitalistic society just offered so many opportunities for expanding some of the more callous aspects of our current system and the new technology and ideas he threw into the story really built a world that I was interested in. So after reading 'Hypnotica' and reading about a couple of interns that aren't named, I felt like I wanted to use them as my way of inserting my own perspective into this world.

I wanted to use my own experience as an engineering major, working with interns, and writing company documents as part of this story. I hope it brings about a sense of realism, like this document was actually taken from the Artaro records. I decided to make it a redacted document primarily because the interns weren't named in 'Hypnotica' and I could keep with that bit of canon. They have real names now after many talks with Teej, but I kept the redacted portion because I like inside jokes with myself.

Anyways, enjoy the story and I hope you take a look at the rest of the Crystalline Mythos as well.

ARTARO CORPORATION INCIDENT REPORT #VM0120

SECURITY LEVEL: *GAMMA*

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENT NO. 9372435

CASE NO. 5WGZ221

INVESTIGATOR NO.: 1007

INCIDENT DATE(S): 186 OCTUS 12

SUBJECT: *WORK RELATED INJURY LEADING TO LOSS OF ARTARO PROPERTY*

Investigator Notes

These journal entries and voice memos do not reflect the views or opinions of the Artaro Corporation. The following entries have been collected as part of the investigation by the Artaro Corporation into the life and death of [REDACTED]. During this investigation, no fault of the Artaro Corporation was found. All proper liability documentation was signed by [REDACTED], while he was of sound mind and body prior to his death (*see Liability Document No. 26571-7*). It is the opinion of this investigator that [REDACTED] knew the risks of his internship and therefore died of his own volition.

This investigator has included notes to clarify details of these journal entries. This was done for references and because much of what [REDACTED] has claimed within his journal was found to be false during the full investigation. Journal is considered unreliable for factual events. Except for visus mushroom infection mentioned near the end of this document. This event effected Dream Advert production and was investigated in *Artaro Corporation Incident Report #TR0213*. The few voice memos discovered were found to be more reliable as they were recording events happening in real time. They have been transcribed per Artaro protocol and placed within this collection in the correct time frame.

185 OAKUS 01 *Journal Entry*

So today was my first day at Artaro University. It's the first time I'd really seen this much nature. They've got pastures here and a shit ton of animals that the biology and life sciences department fuck with. Makes me super jealous, but not enough to make me lose out on the 2 years tuition I already prepaid. The university's contracts are airtight. I heard of a student that decided to change his major after a year and the changing fees were nearly as much as the full degree. That's a decision the rich pricks around here get to make. They aren't studying, their parents are paying for the degree.

The rest of us have to sign up for Artaro's loans and service program. Artaro gives me the loan, I'll put in my time here, get my degree, and while I work for Artaro the interest rate on my loan is cut in half. Should only take 30 or so years to pay off at that rate. That's what the counselor says at least.

That's not my path though. I'm going to do something brand fucking new. I have no idea what it is yet, but I want to shake the industry. I want to be part of something that changes the way we look at our lives, at Machina, at the whole of Enon.

That's part of why I chose my double major in Robotics Engineering and Dream Mechanics. That is what controls the world and if I want to steer this ship then I need to learn how the controls work.

185 BLUUMON 07 *Journal Entry*

So I know it's been a little over a month since my last entry, but I finally found something worth writing about. It was a lecture given by Dr. Charles Scathe, an old Ravell. I had seen Ravell before, but never like him. His grey skin, dark eyes, and pointed ears gave him a serious tone and you could tell all the students in the class were hanging onto his every word.

That's the kind of control I want. I want to be a part of something so profound that the rest of the world can't help but pay attention.

Dr. Scathe's lecture was on high level Dream Mechanics and some unorthodox uses. He's pushing the limits on what we can do with dream projecting and it's fascinating. I think the fact that Ravell can't dream gives Dr. Scathe a unique objective perspective that most of these half-wit tenured professors can't comprehend.

After the lecture, I overheard some students talking about Dr. Scathe's writings. I think they called it the Iconoclast Verses. I've got to get my hands on his work.

185 SAMUI 05 *Journal Entry*

I think I'm developing a pattern of a journal entry about once a month. At least it's regular. The campus has gotten cold as you'd expect this time of the year. Although it's not as cold as back home in [REDACTED]. Nothing really interesting has been happening with my classes. In my robotics class, we've taken apart a couple of decommissioned Artaro 800 robots. Mostly focusing on the mechanics of their limbs.

The professor let me take home some of the core processing units that were left behind. I'm gonna use them to boost the processing power of my wrist-connect watch when I'm in my dorm. It used to work fine, but recently has been a little slow and buggy since the newer models came out. Plus, I'm trying to run a low grade dream simulation on my wrist-connect. It'll cut my rendering time down by 50%. Gotta stay competitive if I'm going to make a splash in the job market.

It's proven more difficult than I realized to get a hold of the Iconoclast Verses. I visited the Artaro University's student library and a lot of the archives with Dr. Scathe's work required a professor's permission to view. My dream mechanics professor tried feeding me some bullshit about needing to understand the fundamentals before reading Scathe's work. What a fucking prick!

There is good news though, I met another student here that might have the Iconoclast Verses. His name is [REDACTED] and I met him in my robotics class. He's got this dumb fucking ponytail and square glasses that make him look all buggy eyed. He is a total betacog. He is giving them to me for free. I just told him to give me a copy and he is. He isn't any younger than I am but I can tell from the few conversations we had that he is not nearly on my level of intelligence. But I think he can get there. This may just become a side project for me. I can take him under my wing and mold him into something better.

Investigator Notes

[REDACTED]'s ownership of the regulated reading material has been investigated. He has revealed his sources in lieu of expulsion. Punishment was altered to a half point increase of his student loan interest rate along with notes added to his employment eligibility score. The Artaro Corporation holds no responsibility for the actions or behaviors of [REDACTED].

185 ENDEL 15 *Journal Entry*

Today was great. In my dream mechanics lecture I began asking questions to my professor about the reasons we use dreams to advertise to the masses. He went on the usual rant about the gentle nudging of people's desires not harming an individual's free will. Then I mentioned some of the rare cases of hypersuggestive individuals that went bankrupt because they kept buying everything ever advertised to them as a reason why no one really cares if we break free will.

The corporate government has always removed the ability to receive dream adverts from these people and said it was 'their punishment'. This was their way of getting around the admission of guilt in dream advertisements. Removing the ability to receive dream adverts from these people is really a way to make sure that creditors don't have to deal with them again. Then when creditors take everything from these people, the corporate government doesn't return their funds. By the time I had finished explaining this to the professor, he was supremely pissed off. He could tell I had gotten everyone's attention. He told me to leave and come back when I was willing to listen. What a hypocritical asshole.

Anyways, as I stood up to leave, [REDACTED] stood up and left with me. I could see the students rustling about as I left. I think I even heard the students cheering for me. I wouldn't have been surprised if a couple more followed suit and left after us. I didn't look back to find out though because I'm done with that class. It's the end of the semester and my grade is strong enough to pass. Also, with everything I've been reading in the Iconoclast Verses I won't need it.

Investigator Notes

Further investigation into this matter has revealed that the professor in question was never really able to hear [REDACTED]'s speech. According to most of the other students that were in this lecture on that day, the only person that seemed to understand what [REDACTED] was talking about was [REDACTED], who sat next to him. The professor claimed to kick [REDACTED] out because he ignored all requests to stop interrupting. Seven students I spoke to from that day also claim to have cheered in favor of the professor and the ejection of [REDACTED] from the class.

186 JANUARI 01 *Journal Entry*

New year, new outlook on everything. I've been rereading the Iconoclast Verses over and over. Dr. Scathe is so far ahead of the rest of academia. Controlling society through fear is by far the only real humane way to fix everything that is wrong with the world. Nightmares fuel fear and fear is the strongest emotion we have to control the masses.

I need to familiarize myself with Dr. Scathe's research through practice. He had mentioned the use of black visus mushrooms. I've never seen this hue of visus before, so I am currently assuming he altered existing visus mushrooms. The dream sim I made in my room is going to prove to be quite useful. I should be able to craft rudimentary dream adverts that work to an individual directly connected to my wrist-connect watch. I would never be able to create the high-quality ones that they make in the dream operations labs to send out to all of Machina. Those require large computers, complete neural pathway mappers, and crystal coding units. I just have my wrist-connect and a bunch of used Artaro 800 processors.

On a side note, first day of the new semester started strong. I got a dream operations course that will help me figure out some of the integration issues I've been dealing with in the simulator.

186 JANUARI 08

[REDACTED] got some red visus mushrooms! I can't fucking believe it. I knew this shit would pay off. I'm going to keep him around for a while. He has an internship in one of the university's dream operations labs. Somehow, he has been able to sneak out a couple of visus mushrooms to me. However, if we are going to make black visus out of these then I do not think testing it on myself is the best plan of action. I'm going to need test subjects.

No humans, not yet. There are bamboo lemurs bred by the biology lab. They use them in visus experiments because of some neural similarity with humans. I don't know exactly what they do to them, but I assume they will be good test subjects for now. They usually sell extras to the pet shops in the city. It's probably what's paying for half their tools and supplies. I could just pick one up from the city when I get the chance.

Investigator Notes

The method with which [REDACTED] was able to take the controlled substances from the Artaro University lab has been found and stronger policies and security have been put in place to remove the vulnerability.

186 FEBRUARI 13 *Journal Entry*

I haven't gone to the city yet, but [REDACTED] introduced me to [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953]. She is some high-level hiring manager in one of the legit dream operations labs and she finds students interested in internships. Apparently, [REDACTED] told me that she is the reason he got his last one. So

it only made sense for me to get her my information and get the same access to equipment and mushrooms he has.

She probably saw [REDACTED] and knew he was an easy target. Loyal to a fault for no reason and will do what you need. I could tell she thought I was different and wasn't surprised when she told me she was looking forward to working with me. She can see my potential. Finally, I'm going to get the recognition that's been coming.

Investigator Notes

[ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953] and her office confirmed that she took [REDACTED]'s information in the same manner as she took all interested students. No knowledge of the student's performance in or out of school was sought out.

***Regarding [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953]: Because [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953] was present during [REDACTED]'s death. Her involvement in death along with the other 3 Artaro employees: [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 0213, 0823, and 8623]. has been recorded in *Supplemental Doc. No. 9372435*. They have been found not responsible for any loss of Artaro property.

186 MANTIS 19 *Journal Entry*

So, I got a few bamboo lemurs. I stole all 3 from the bio lab by myself. They have multiple rooms with walls and walls of cages. Most cages had bamboo lemurs there. Each one have a little placard describing the lucidity rating of each lemur. None of them really got over 50%, but that's probably because the dream simulators are made for human minds. Some of the best human minds can achieve a lucidity rating in the 90's. I don't think I've ever read of anyone doing over 95% though.

I took 3 with lower 30% ratings. The higher rating ones would probably get noticed. I figure 3 should be enough to test this semester, at least based on the amount of visus mushrooms I have. My dream operations course has gone over enough information for me to try using these on my lemurs.

They are blue, green, and pink. I figured the color difference is going to help me keep track of them. I think I'll start with blue and just make sure the visus injection process is successful. Then I can move onto altering the mushroom to figure out how Dr. Scathe is making black visus mushrooms.

My sim is still having troubles, but I'm sure I'll figure it out. For now though, I'll focus on visus injection and dream lucidity. If I can get these lemurs to present the same percentages as they do in the lab then I should be at a good starting point.

Investigator Notes

The method of theft of lemurs was discovered to involve both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The biology laboratory lapses in security have been addressed.

186 MANTIS 24 *Voice Memo*

RECORDING START

Alright *COUGH* I'm recording the first of many tests I'm going to perform to recreate Dr. Scathe's nightmares in these bamboo lemurs. I've decided to start with the blue one.

ANIMAL HOWLING

Shut the fuck up.

Okay, okay. I've made the red visus mushroom into a serum and am going to inject it into the lemur. Here I go.

ANIMAL SCREAMING

Hold still you little shit. I shoulda tied you down. Next time. Next time.

There we go. Now I wait for the serum to take effect.

30 SECONDS OF SILENCE

ANIMAL SCREAMS AND CAGE RATTLING

Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit.

LOUD THUD

ANIMAL SCREAMS AND CAGE RATTLING BOTH STOP

What the fuck? *CHUCKLING* Well I didn't expect that. Fuck, I'm not going to be able to afford more lemurs for a while. Shit. This probably isn't worth recording. I can just delete it later.

RUSTLING

So in case I don't delete this, this was a huge fuck up. The lemur had a seizure, threw up bile then blood, shot shit onto my wall, and then died. I had to jump out of the way of the spewing shit. Ah fuck, he's corpse is leaking piss onto the table. Anyways, reconfigure how you make the serum dumbass. Oh, I'll bet [REDACTED] will freak if I show him this. That idiot can help me clean this shit up.

RECORDING END

186 MANTIS 24 *Journal Entry*

I just injected the blue lemur with some of the red visus mushroom and it fucking convulsed and died. It was the most gruesome thing I could have seen, but it was also really fucking exciting. As much as I want to study that reaction, I've only got 2 lemurs left and I need to be careful with them. I think there was something wrong with my preparation.

I've been reading ahead in my dream operations course and should have gotten this correct. I'll reread it and double check my dosage. I've changed it based on the bamboo lemurs smaller body mass compared to the standard for humans. Maybe I need to do it based on brain mass instead. The book doesn't go over lemur dosage.

[REDACTED] is coming over to help take care of the dead lemur. I haven't told him about why he's coming over yet. I kinda want to see the look on his face.

Update: So [REDACTED] is such a fucking betacog piece of shit that he screamed when he saw the dead lemur. He made such a big deal about it that our dorm manager came knocking. [REDACTED] at least shut his stupid fucking mouth in front of her. But as soon as she left, [REDACTED] wouldn't shut up about his own stupid morals. He must have been going on for half an hour to a full hour. I let him speak his mind. I completely disagree and don't think it's worth repeating here.

After letting him say his piece, I grabbed the knife I keep in my room and told him to fuck off. He knows I play with it and could take on a whole team of guys if I had to. I could see the fear in his eyes, he knows I'd gut him. He left and I don't care if I ever see him again. I got everything I needed from him.

Investigator Notes

Dorm manager, [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 4005], has been interviewed. She claims that she could hear a scream come from [REDACTED]'s dorm room. It sounded of fear and she thought someone may be hurt. So she knocked on the door. During her investigation of the situation both students were minimal with details. She saw the room was a mess and made a statement about cleaning up the room if the students ever wanted their deposit back. She sensed tension between them and, after leaving the room, waited nearby within view of the door. It was less than a minute before [REDACTED] left the room. Not long enough for any of the aforementioned conversation to happen. After seeing [REDACTED] leave so quickly, she left back to her own quarters.

186 MANTIS 29 *Journal Entry*

I've barely been able to clean up the mess from a last week. It's been exactly a week and the place still smells like bamboo lemur shit and piss. The stains are mostly gone. I couldn't get everything out of the paint on the walls, but they'll probably just paint over it when I leave. I'm not expecting to get my deposit back for this dorm room. From what I've heard, they always find enough wrong that the costs to repair and clean always add up to the deposit anyways.

I've still seen [REDACTED] in class, although he moves to the opposite side from me in all the lecture halls now. I sit in the back center in most classes because it forces him to sit up front and I know he hates being called on. I've already heard him nervously answer 2 questions. It gave me a good chuckle. Fuck him. I don't need him anymore anyways.

I figured out the bamboo lemur had the same brain mass ratio to humans as their body mass ratio. That's when I remembered that the brain stem is primarily involved in dreams. Human brain stem weight is easy

to find. It's something regular cogs would look up, but bamboo lemur brain stem weight isn't something you can just search easily on your wrist-connect watch. Luckily, I stored Blue in my Glammo mini fridge. It's part of Artaro's home appliance line that they dubbed the Glamorous Glammo Collection. Anyways, it isn't cold enough to freeze him, so I was getting ready to throw him out anyway.

I crack his skull open in the shower with a hammer. I only needed the brain stem, so I didn't mind damaging the rest. I was surprised how small it was, much smaller than what you'd expect based on body weight. I wonder if that's a side effect of the genetic fuckery they did to create these things.

Anyways, I've got the new mass ratio to base my dosage off of and hopefully that works. I'm coming up on midterms though and need to focus on those. Might be some time before I get a chance to do it. At least Blue isn't stinking the place up anymore.

186 MAI 30 *Journal Entry*

Barely getting another entry in before the end of the month. This sixth week of Mai has been super fucking busy. But I figured I needed to give some monthly updates.

[REDACTED] is still avoiding me in class and the halls. I doubt that betacog will ever get over it, but I don't mind. I work better alone.

Classes have been boring. I barely go as none of the professors will even talk to me after hours anymore. If you can't make time for me then I can't make time for you.

Pink and Green seem to be enjoying their new arrangements. I let them out every once in a while to get some exercise and lock them up when I leave. They stay away from the corner Blue died in. I don't smell anything but I'm sure they can.

186 OCT 02 *Journal Entry*

Okay so I know it's been 4 months since my last entry but something crazy just happened. The red visus mushrooms just turned black. I don't know what could have happened. I've been running experiments for the last 4 months to improve my in-dorm dream sim, but it's all software development and I don't think that has affected it.

I'm trying to study it, but something about the black color seems like a living ooze. Is this what black visus are? I tried cutting the mushroom and it's black throughout. It's like the whole thing is the ooze but still a mushroom.

I'm going to have to attend a lab class for some new clean supplies, but I need to run a test with one of the lemurs. This is something I can't pass up.

Investigator Notes

A full investigation into the 'in-dorm dream sim' was conducted. In the search, a custom female love and leisure android was discovered

charging in a closet space. The android was taken into the custody of the Artaro Corporation. Her insights may be revisited by a separate department. Again, see *Artaro Corporation Incident Report #TR0213* for more information. Actual cause of Nebuzalorian Spider infestation is currently unknown.

186 OCT 07 *Voice Memo*

RECORDING START

Okay, so I have a vial of black visus serum made from the red visus that turned black a few days ago. This is gonna be the beginning of a revolution in Dream Advertising.

ANIMAL HOWLING

Green here is fucking ready to go. Tied him down this time. Okay, it's now or never.

ANIMAL SCREAMING *approx. 10 seconds*

SILENCE

No. no. no. no. no. no. no. Fuck. fuck. fuck. fuck.

SILENCE

This was supposed to be it. Fuck. I got it right this time, didn't I?

SILENCE

At least this is easy to clean up.

RECORDING END

186 OCT 07 *Journal Entry*

So I tested out the black visus serum I made from the red visus mushroom that turned black. I strapped Green down and almost immediately after injecting him, he died. I don't know what happened. It wasn't as rotten as last time. Almost like Green just immediately went to sleep.

There are a couple possibilities I came up with:

1. The black visus behaves differently than any other serum. So an even lower dosage is required for my next test.
2. This is not black visus, but instead a rotten mushroom. The problem is that I've never heard of rotten visus mushrooms.

In case the second case is true then I don't think I want to waste my last lemur on something that might be rotten. So I'm going to get some more visus. Since [REDACTED] isn't around anymore, then I've got to get it myself. It'll be easy.

In fact, I just got a call from that hiring manager that [REDACTED] was working with and, of course, she wants to see me tomorrow about an upcoming opportunity. I'm sure it's something big. Probably way higher level than that betacog, [REDACTED], could ever understand. But I'll have to question her thoroughly to make sure it aligns with my career goals. I'm not wasting my time on things that will pull me away from my focus.

Investigator Notes

[ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953] described the interview with [REDACTED] as extremely brief. [REDACTED] seemed eager to go on internship before knowing any details. However, [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953] still made clear of all details and dangers to [REDACTED] during interview. [ARTARO EMPLOYEE NO. 1953] received biometric signatures from [REDACTED], which can be found in *Liability Document No. 26571-7*.

186 OCT 09 *Journal Entry*

So I'm getting ready for the internship trip happening today! During the interview yesterday, I really got down into the details with that hiring manager. I could tell she was impressed. She hired me right away.

[REDACTED] was waiting outside the office when I left. Once he saw me, he immediately looked away. I just walked past him. I doubt he'll get hired. That hiring manager isn't going to need his idiotic mind now that I'm on the team. He probably got rejected right away.

So, we are supposed to be going out into the Crystalline Forest System to harvest more visus mushrooms. Which is weird because I thought they were all lab grown. Like the ones we give to the big name dream advertisers are even lab grown. There is not supposed to be a difference.

Which got me thinking that what happened to my mushroom might actually be happening everywhere. It sounds a little wild, but why else would we be doing this? I don't know what would have caused it. For all of Machina to lose that many visus mushrooms seems like a big deal. I just figured I might have heard about this somewhere on the news or on campus, but then again I haven't been to a class in a while. Doing my own side projects in my dorm takes up most of my time. Artaro might be keeping it quiet though. Not like they can't just do reruns of older adverts until we come back with more.

I've got the basics that I was told to bring; a pair of hiking shoes, a sleeping bag, a water canister, and a jacket. Apparently, I'm getting an official Artaro shirt. I just hope it's not red. I hate red. I've also packed my knife. It's got to be the most useful thing to bring out there in the wild. They'll probably all be jealous watching me use it. Plus, if anything comes after us then it's a perfect opportunity to show off some of my skills.

One other weird thing to mention is that Green is still warm to the touch. I haven't had him in the sun or near anything generating heat, but he is still warm. There is no pulse, breathing, or reaction to poking. I'm not sure if it means something, but I put him in the closet so Pink doesn't see it. Pink's been quiet, but I left enough food for a couple days. So, he'll be fine.

Anyways, I'll write something as soon as I get back. I've got my wrist-connect watch on me, so I'll record some more audio and upload it when I get back.

Investigator Notes

The details of the trip are recorded in *Artaro Corporation Incident Report #TR0213*, which the Corporate Management Office has labeled, "*Hypnotica*". However, to briefly summarize [REDACTED]'s death, the crew was attacked by individuals infected by Nebuzalorian Spiders. [REDACTED] reportedly attacked one of these individuals and was quickly overcome. While the crew witnessed the death, recovery of Artaro property was deemed too dangerous and [REDACTED]'s body was left behind.

[REDACTED]'s room was emptied and found to have no significant 'side projects' as previously mentioned. This is excluding the 2 lemurs and the black visus mushroom. The pink lemur was sent back to the laboratory to undergo regular testing. The remains of the green lemur were sent to the Artaro Corporation research and development group, where it is to be disposed of properly.