

H O L
E F A
G J D H

K-HOLE No5

A REPORT ON REASON
A REPORT ON AWARENESS
A REPORT ON DEATH
A REPORT ON DISAPPOINTMENT
A REPORT ON NEW YORK
A REPORT ON THE FUTURE
A REPORT ON REALITY
A REPORT ON BELIEF
A REPORT ON FAITH
A REPORT ON DOUBT.....

THE LAST 100 DAYS



Things were mopey in the K-HOLE offices. Dystopia texts no longer made Sean *zing*. Greg was depressed because he didn't feel like there was any imagination anymore. When Emily thought about what that meant, the only thing that came to mind was Disneyland. Chris refused to do any client work whatsoever. Dena had long since moved to Los Angeles.

When K-HOLE convened in 2012 to write the Brand Anxiety Matrix, things were a little bit different. We believed that we could get to the bottom of things by thinking. That we could get to the truth. There was a feeling that we could decode

things as a group; that our PDFs would make us powerful; that we could use our insights to gird ourselves against the storms that were coming, be they social, political, ecological, emotional, whatever. Since then, two things have become clear. One was that the storms we predicted never came. Rather, we woke up one day and Antarctica was warmer than New York. The second was that the truth was not enough. It couldn't keep Zuccotti Park open, it couldn't explain Normcore, and it couldn't keep our friendships intact. We needed something stronger.

We needed magic. 🦸





ECOLOGICAL,
EMOTIONAL,
WHATEVER

CHAOS MAGIC

The fundamental element of magic is the ability to manifest or sublimate things, whether they're emotions, states of being, people, or the Statue of Liberty. Magic is the art of making things appear or disappear, out of nowhere or into the void. This magic, the lady-in-a-box, rabbit-in-a-hat form of magic, is predicated on two questions: where did she go? And how did we get here? When you're a baby, things are constantly appearing out of fucking nowhere and vanishing with no hope of return, until at some point you learn pattern recognition. But let's not forget that on some level believing that the sun will rise again is rooted in magical thinking.



“My ex-boyfriend used to tell me witches are real in Colombia – because everyone believes in them.” Belief at an individual level changes you, and belief at a collective level changes the world. But if you believe something strongly enough, can you morph the individual into the collective?

Over cheeseburgers and beer, a friend explained an idea we were bound to ruin: Chaos Magic. On a bargain basement level, Chaos Magic lives in the same realm as the cult of positive thinking. But it goes beyond making mood boards of high-end apartments you’d like to will into your possession. Belief becomes a technology that creates change.





Chaos Magic creates realities which are temporary and subjective. It's not a tool for changing others — it's a tool for changing yourself. You opt into whatever belief system you think will help you reach your intended goals: Wall Street's Confidence Fairy, your Fairy Godmother, or the Church of Agape. Chaos Magic isn't just believing in The Secret, it's deciding to believe in The Secret to begin with. Mixing your own Kool-Aid, deciding how strong to make it, knowing when to drink it and when to stop, is Chaos Magic in practice. It's radical DIY that uses reality as the only necessary operating system. This is not to say that Kool-Aid will always take you on the path you intended. Drink too much and you might end up lost, alone, or dead.

A photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, two people are sitting on a colorful beach towel on the sand. One person is wearing a white t-shirt and black shorts, while the other is wearing a dark shirt and shorts. They are positioned between several palm trees. The trunks of the trees are heavily covered in vibrant graffiti. The background shows a hazy sky and some distant figures walking on the beach.

LOST, ALONE,
OR DEAD

Chaos Magic is what happens after will. It's the antidote to the tryhard problems that come with overthinking everything. If you really want change you have to go deeper.

Like branding, Chaos Magic is mostly concerned with inception. But where branding is about implanting ideas in the brains of an audience, Chaos Magic is about implanting ideas into your own. Both practices depend heavily on the creation of sigils + mantras. There is a tight homology here:



One guide says for your magic to work, you should make a sigil, forget about it, then stare at it at the moment of climax. Fuck someone wearing Chanel, stare at the label while you're cumming, and you'll become Karl Lagerfeld. Chaos Magic, like branding, is desire doomed to be commercial.

With respect to magic, our friends, Chronos, and God, we're going to try to avoid ruining the problem. The fuzzy uncertainty that floats around the idea of magic is more important than a slapdash explanation of how magic works.

K-HOLE took a stab at answering a few questions: Do we use magic? Do brands use magic? Does magic exist, or is it just a placeholder for our ignorance? Are we hearing voices, doing voices, or both? ↩





HACK YOUR
LIZARD BRAIN

DARK ARTS COMPETENCIES



A. Founder Mode

The startup founder, the Kool-Aid mixer, poor-but-rich (a collapsed masculine binary). Founders turn ambient anxiety *what is the future, how will we make money, what's a good investment, etc.* into specific fear in the forms of capital and employee misery (see K-HOLE #3, the Brand Anxiety Matrix). Founders often create real, tangible things that are worse than the anxiety they're responding to in the first place.



B. Forecaster Mode

À la Cayce Pollard, this is someone who is ‘early’ on her time signature, who can see or sense the future or correctly intuit the knowledge of crowds. This person “knows,” and knows early. She knows without knowing how she knows. This person modulates time (see K-HOLE #2, Prolastination). But seeing the future ≠ changing it. Networks of power and influence remain the same.

*SEEING THE
FUTURE
≠
CHANGING IT*



C. Stealth Mode

This person can ‘disappear in America,’ has the ability to modulate their visibility (see K-HOLE #1, Fragmoretation). They hide in plain sight, behind NDAs, or by means of actual escape. They weaponize their burnout – trading in social capital for actual control. After all, who doesn’t love to be noticed, especially when they’re missing? 🦸

ORACLES (OR FREE-RADICALS)



Who was the Oracle of Delphi? What was she huffing? And why did Aristotle believe her? In Grexit times, she still holds her own as a riposte to the conservatism of making sense.

First of all, smart-ass, she was a group of people. Like many occult technologies, the oracle used the alchemical quality of group dynamics to transform inside jokes, gossip, and petty infighting into advice fit for a king. The oracle processed groupthink as poetry. Its pronouncements containerized ambiguity. The oracle's way of creating new things in the world was to convert nonsense into sense.



**Collective creativity has always been a messy business.
(Maybe that's why monogamy has been around so long?)
And in the end some configurations are more stable than
others. The sturdy simplicity of two (the couple) vs. the
asymmetry of three (the thrupple) vs. the parallelism of four
(the double date) vs. the improvisation of more (the squad).**

**Looking around at the dynamics of contemporary art
collectives, it's easy to see these relationships at play.
Collective A is stable: two symmetrically bonded pairs.
Collective B is a troublesome three — one strong bond and one
molecule always bouncing in place, threatening to become a
free radical. Collective C is a little like collective D, a collection
of free radicals except without all the girls. But watch out.
Too much testosterone turns bromance into bromageddon.** ↗



*NO TREND
FORECASTER IS
AN ISLAND;-)*



HOSTING

In Los Angeles, you're always late. And you're in no position to make demands to the Clock Winders that live in the East. You are a perpetual late responder — never the first to know, but always on call for the aftermath. Living in constant temporal disjunction, your days begin by checking an endlessly scrolling inbox. Like you're at an Olive Garden being served the bottomless bread basket from hell.

Communication breakdown happens when all of your communication is asynchronous. You wake up to hundreds of unread emails, 70 unread texts from group chats, a missed call from a student debt collector, and GoDaddy.



Waking up in L.A. is a traumatic experience; it's very un-chill. The hikes, juice cleanses, B12 shots in the ass — those are all crisis management, not preventative care. But waking up in L.A. is also a magical experience. Information comes out of the black hat with no identifiable point of origin. It simply appears.

In L.A. you have the power to determine when you're seen by others and when you go dark, and how intimate the settings are when you make an appearance. It's like MTV's Unplugged — acoustic, emotional, flanked by white flowers and candles.

Moving to L.A. isn't about disappearing — it's about modulating between "being there" and "ghosting." Like the rabbit, we're not afraid of being sucked down the rabbit hole. We're freaked out about how and when we're going to get pulled out of the void by our ears. ↗



THE
AUSTERITY OF
IMAGINATION

K-HOLE OF THE FUTURE COMMISSIONED K-HOLE OF THE PAST TO CREATE A DOSSIER FOR THE PRESENT

CASE STUDY #1: POTTERMORE

A major side-effect of the Harry Potter franchise's spell is providing everyone with a new means of analyzing the internal constitution of the people around them: the Sorting Hat. A wise that plops Hogwarts frosh into one of the four houses, the Sorting Hat answers the question every student asks: *What house am I?*

CASE STUDY #2: BB GONE ROGUE



The proliferation of BB cream in the inter...
began with the intro...

CASE STUDY #1: POTTERMORE

A major side-effect of the Harry Potter franchise's spell is providing everyone with a new means of analyzing the internal constitution of the people around them: the Sorting Hat. A magical device that plops Hogwarts frosh into one of the four Hogwarts Houses, the Sorting Hat answers the question everyone has on the first day of school: who am I?

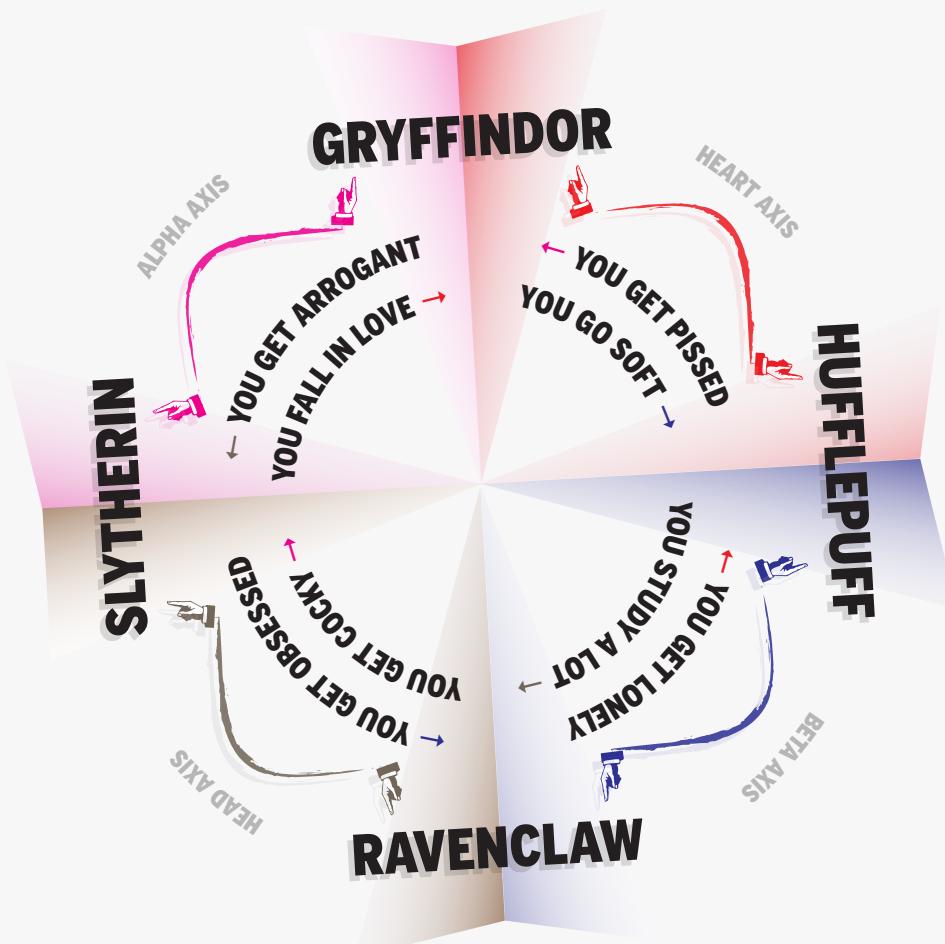
Today, everyone might intuit that Hillary is a Slytherin, that every hero lands in Gryffindor, and that nobody in Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw really matters. Compare this to astrology, in which there's an objective correlation between your late autumn birth and your predilection to hold onto grudges until you die. The cultural power and fun of the Sorting Hat is that nobody knows who belongs in what house for sure.

Pottermore is a complex social network-cum-roleplaying game officially endorsed by JK Rowling. But before Pottermaniacs can read canon unpublished H.P. lore, they must be sorted into Hogwarts houses through a seven-question multiple-choice quiz designed by Rowling herself. Given the choice, would you rather chug a potion that would grant you glory, wisdom, love or power?



From a fan POV, where JK Rowling's word is tantamount to God's, Pottermore is divisive and has spurred its own share of identity crises. You thought you were bound for Slytherin, but ended up in Gryffindor. You instinctively doubt the quiz. How could it possibly know how far you would go to make something of yourself? How could it possibly know your sorrow?

The Sorting Hat helps us see how magic is already an organizing principle in the world around us. We're talking about magic, not wizardry. People believe they are Slytherin; they don't believe they can fly on brooms.



CASE STUDY #2: BB GONE ROGUE



The proliferation of **BB cream** in the international beauty market began with the introduction of the popular Korean product to American audiences back in '12. Like a K-Pop band with a multiplicity of members whose name was hard to catch (was it Beauty Balm? Blemish Butter?) BB cream suggested a cultural technology related to, but more advanced than the American version. The facial equivalent of going outside without your contacts in, BB creams promised to smear your face into a blurry little cloud.

BB creams went viral – first as premium Korean branded imports, then as additions to every self-respecting Sephora-carried line. Models, moms, dads and dermatologists slapped on BB cream and were straight out the door. No single brand could take credit for the expansion of the BB in the American landscape.

BB is a brand particle, not a brand. As a prefix, this additional information (the mark of BB) didn't add specificity. Quite the opposite, it added a sense of generality, a magic blur – insinuating new multi-ingredient and multi-purpose qualities to

a previously bland host product. BB signified new. BB meant: "We're not going to explain how it works."

While face creams marched down the alphabet into CC ranges, the BB particle spread into other categories altogether, supercharging heat-protecting blow dry serum, eye shadow, cigarettes, and a variety of collagen-enhancing drinks.



When bb rose to prominence as a genderless form of address equally suited to one's casual acquaintances, sex partners, and family members, we knew it had jumped the shark. Less sexual than babe, less intimate than baby, and shorter than bae, bb retained a level of ambiguity akin to its creamy, facial twin. While "hey baby" would certainly be crossing a line in an iMessage to your manager, "sup bb" might be OK.

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, seen from the side and back, sitting in the driver's seat of a silver car. She is looking out through the open driver-side door. Her right arm is raised, resting her hand against the top of the door frame. She is wearing a light-colored ribbed turtleneck sweater and a black leather jacket. A black shoulder bag hangs from her left shoulder. A black smartwatch is visible on her left wrist. The background shows a blurred parking lot with several cars.

*BIG BROTHER,
AS ALWAYS, IS
WATCHING*



*SELF-
DESTRUCTION
VIA SUCCESS*



100 DAYS LATER

We said we needed magic. Did we get it?

“Magic is a quality of energy that has always been palpable to me,” said Emily. “I believe in magic and I believe that the important things I do are magic.”

“I wouldn’t say that,” Greg replied. “I don’t know if I think magic is real. It’s always beyond the way I actually rationalize and experience the world. I’m not sure I’ve ever experienced it. But the idea that it’s out there is interesting to me.”

Sean chimed in: “Magic isn’t an effect. It’s a way to create change through processes that you can’t entirely understand. There are aspects of human reality we can’t measure. I believe there are supernatural things that happen.”



At that moment, the lights flickered, and a glass of water inexplicably shattered on the desk across the room. Everyone's phones chimed with a group text from Dena:

“That moment when witches and wizards realize they have magical powers, when the little guy disappears the zoo glass and lets out the snake, it’s all because of some intense emotional experience. That’s magic, that’s when the spork bends, when you’re so in love or so upset that your emotions affect the physical world.”

“The unexplainable,” quipped Chris. “You can’t explain something, you say it’s magic. Like the dog trying to keep the fish alive. You could say it’s a very emotional dog, who has a thing about fish, but the fact that it’s captured on camera is magical too – there’s a .01% chance that it’s totally

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manufactured, super-advanced CGI. But I'm just going to say it's magic. Those DJ sets last night were magical. The feeling in the air and the auras were magical."

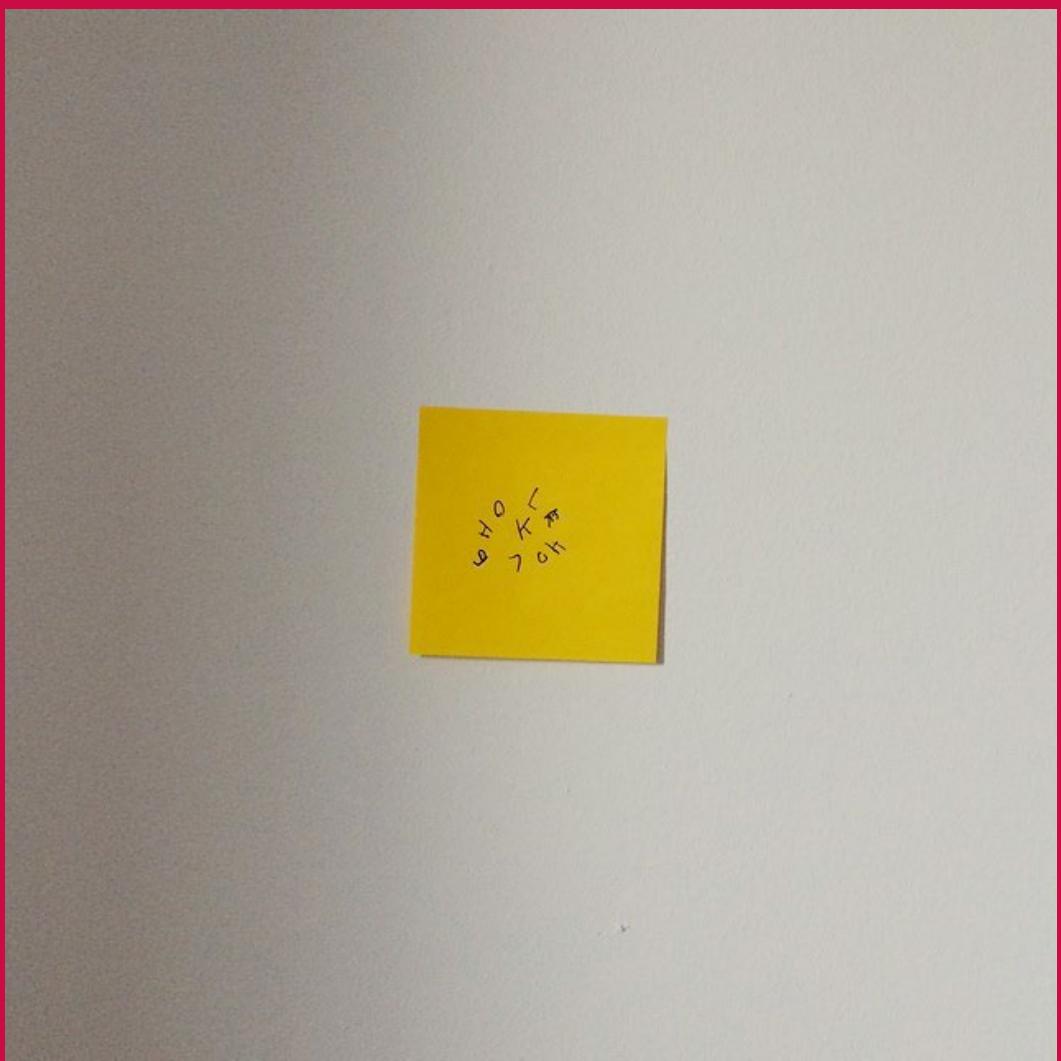
"Yeah, magic means you can give yourself an opportunity to stop analyzing things," Greg replied. "Even for us – how are we going to figure out what's next? How are we going to bend all the information at our disposal into a new truth? Sometimes, it's better to leave things alone."

"It's like the game Magic: The Gathering," said Chris. "Play a certain card, and anything could happen – rats, infinite squirrels – anything."



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We glanced around at each other with a look that was half
resignation, half relief. We were swimming in a universe
of squirrels. It felt good. 🐿



**K-HOLE IS A TREND
FORECASTING GROUP
FOUNDED BY GREG FONG,
SEAN MONAHAN, EMILY
SEGAL, CHRIS SHERRON
AND DENA YAGO.**

*AUGUST 2015
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