

# LIGHTS OUT

A Call of Cthulhu Expansion

## DESIGNED BY

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We want to take a minute to discuss the racism and racial discrimination that took place at the real-life Chicago World's Fair.

The actual fair was segregated and had underlying white supremacist ideals that our group actively does not condone and vehemently disagrees with. Our game obviously will not include any of these themes as they are evil, and we do not want to call attention to that way of thinking.

Additionally, as a group of six white women, we did not feel like we were qualified in any way to respectfully broach this topic as it has so much pain and trauma for so many marginalized groups wrapped up in its history.

As a result, we have left such themes out of the game entirely, not because we want to take a revisionist approach to the real-life history of the fair, but because we do not want to speak on issues that we feel we are underqualified to represent.

We implore you to do individual research and learn about the topic, as it is a terribly silenced issue that deeply affects American Culture as we presently know it.

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# THE CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR OPENING DAY, 1893.

Hundreds of exhibits, millions of dollars, and a miles-long strand of electric lights now decorate the shore of Lake Michigan - empty and expectant.

LIGHTS OUT is a historical expansion for the Call of Cthulhu roleplaying game by Chaosium Inc.

Though the materials contained within this manual can be used as a setting for any group of investigators, they are adaptable to other mediums as well.

Game Masters welcome. Players beware!

Additionally, our team has designed a prebuilt module to introduce you to our world, circa 1893.

# PLAYING OUR PREBUILT ADVENTURE

Through a Twine-based creative system, we've designed a solo, prebuilt adventure within the world of 'Lights Out'.

In this adventure, you play as Henry Prendergast, a junior electrician and first-timer on the job. After being sent to fix a series of electrical screw ups before the fair's grand opening, a tangled mystery appears for you to unravel.

This module will present you with a series of descriptive passages detailing your adventure, with several options to affect your story given throughout. The effect these choices have is near astronomical, so be careful in your decisions.

Should you need, you can undo a previous action from the game's sidebar.

Here's an example.

[ You turn the page of your book to an example passage.

The words, once clear, begin to blur as you continue. They bleed into the page, now a near liquid that drips its way down toward you.

Shut the book.

Continue Reading. ]

And there you go!

Your decision would lead you on to another prompt, then so on and so forth.

SOMETIMES, you'll be unable to complete an action until you have the proper materials to do so.

In these instances, a passage will appear and tell you the necessary requirements, which you may complete by making more decisions in the same manner as before.

An aerial photograph of a city with a river. A white rectangular box highlights a specific area in the upper left quadrant of the image. The river flows from the top right towards the bottom right. The city is divided into a grid of streets and blocks. The highlighted area contains a large green space, possibly a park or sports field, with some buildings and a road. The text 'THE SETTING' is centered in the white box.

# THE SETTING

L.A. HERITAGE

## STATEMENT FROM A YOUNG HISTORIAN.

The following reports summarize my findings as they concern a previously undisclosed plot to summon an Eldritch deity at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

My thesis originally began as a deep dive into the fair's construction, but it quickly turned to a criminal investigation when I stumbled upon a particular lab diagram and a young engineer's diary entry from their time working at the fair.

From this, I deduced a potentially more sinister history to the fair and began, by my curiosity, to dive deeper and see if I could find any related accounts or artifacts expanding on the schemes implied by these original documents.



Coming up empty for as long as I did, I was thrilled to find a series of classified communications between the fair's creator, Daniel Hudson Burnham, and his secretary.

Here I compile all the information I have managed to uncover in my research concerning Burnham's attempt to summon the god Yog-Sothoth on the opening day of the World's Fair in 1893.

Unbelievably covered up for so long, this document will provide a thorough understanding of the malicious intents behind the fair, and one young engineer's unsettling fate to be entwined with this evil.

I have found all that I can.

**END STATEMENT.**

# DANIEL HUDSON BURNHAM

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Lead Architect of The World's Fair.



<https://www.britannica.com/biography/>

After a major accident which destroyed one of the fair's premiere buildings, Burnham moved to take tighter control of construction, distributing a memo to all the fair's department heads which read "I have assumed personal control of the active work within the grounds of the World's Columbian Exposition ...

Henceforward, and until further notice, you will report to and receive orders from me exclusively."

Burnham continuously rejected the suggestion that Root had been largely responsible for the fair's design

# LILLIAN PIETZEL

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Assistant to the Lead Architect of The World's Fair.

Lillian Pietzel spent several years in a State Home for "hallucinations" and "delusions."

She was admitted for female hysteria, where she would often ramble about lights and The One in All, but no one ever knew what she was talking about.

She was taken into the care of The Office of Daniel Burnham, and her whereabouts have been unknown for the past three years.

# THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING



Designed by Robert M. Hunt.

Served as headquarters for the chief officers of the Exposition.

This structure nobly sustained the expectations of the public, and held a sovereign position among all the wonders of the Fair.

It was extremely tall, composed of a massive base, grand Ionic colonnade and gilded dome. The plans comprised four square pavilions jutting out from the diagonal sides of a 120-foot wide central octagonal space, creating deep recesses for the arched entrance portals. As it was intended to be temporary, the Administration Building was built of a thick, reinforced plaster on an iron and wood skeleton. It was painted white to create the illusion of marble and fulfill Burnham's image of a "White City."

THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING acts as the fair's center,  
with a LEFT BRANCH and RIGHT BRANCH.

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### THE LEFT BRANCH

- The Wooded Island
- The Manufacturer's Building
- The Horticulture Building

### THE RIGHT BRANCH

- The Arts Building
  - The Moving Sidewalk
  - The Ferris Wheel
- 

THE EXHIBITS :  
COLLECTED PAGES.

# WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

1893

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## OFFICIAL CATALOGUE

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PART X.

ART GALLERIES

AND ANNEXES

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DEPARTMENT K. FINE ARTS

PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE,  
DECORATION

HALSEY O. IVES, CHIEF

---

EDITED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

M. P. HANDY, CHIEF

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CHICAGO:  
W. B. CONKEY COMPANY, PUBLISHERS  
TO THE  
WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION,  
1893.

## LEFT BRANCH

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# THE WOODED ISLAND

The only non-electric space within The World's Fair.

The island's only structure is a small wooden hut on its Southernmost tip.



<https://worldsfairchicago1893.com/2018/08/21/wooded-island-well-suited-for-climate-change/>

ARTHUR ERWIN is the purveyor of The Wooded Island.

Arthur's island has been purposely set apart from whatever Eldritch promise was made, a natural haven and hidden hovel. However, his attempt at safety borders on the extreme, and the woods are full of traps + creatures to keep intruders at bay. His hut, however, is a place of comfort and warmth.

Along with an extremely practical armory of rich kid weapons.

# WARNING: ALLIGATORS ON THE LOOSE

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Following the early closure of Florida's Local Waterlife Exhibit, several alligators have gone missing days before the fair opens.

Brought from Florida for an exhibit at the fair, Chicago scientists kept several alligators housed in the waters around the fair.

Quickly realizing the fatal effect of such a change in climate, the scientists attempted to take the now-sick and aggressive reptiles from the water and into safer temperatures. One died in this attempt, and the others were successfully removed.

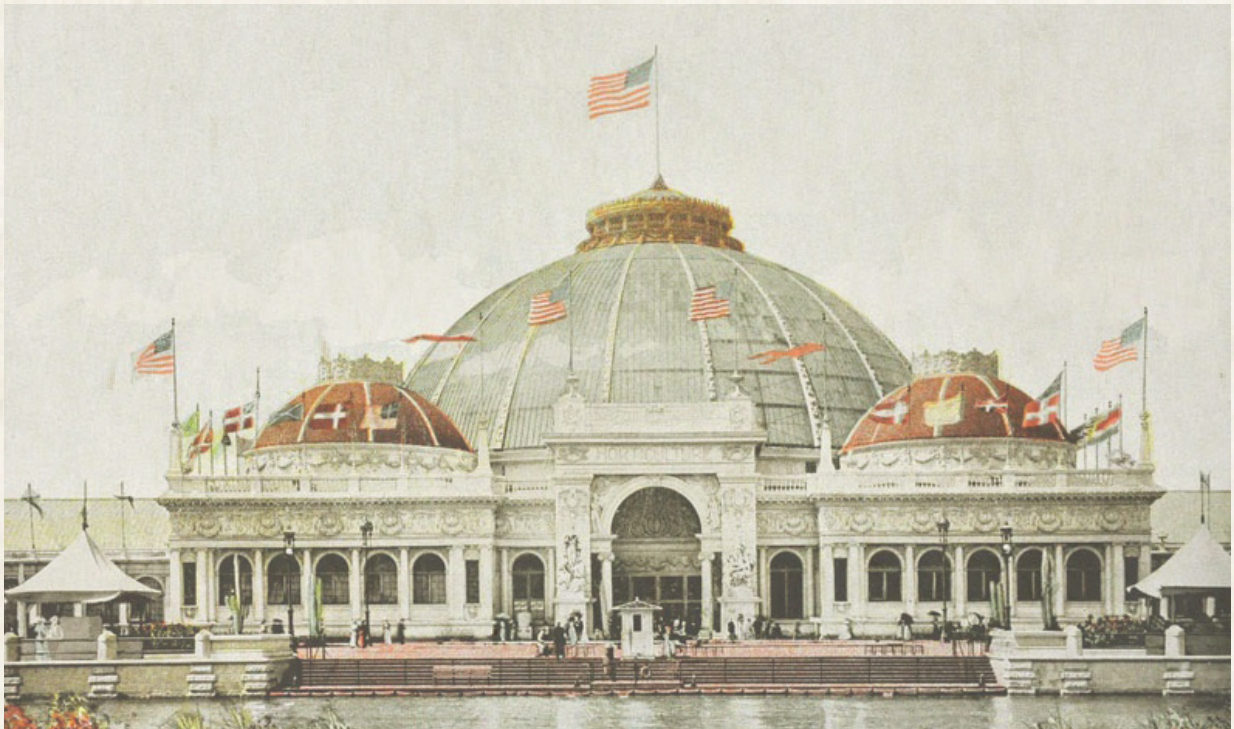
Nonetheless, documents of what occurred after its removal appear nonexistent. Where could they have gone...



# THE HORTICULTURE BUILDING

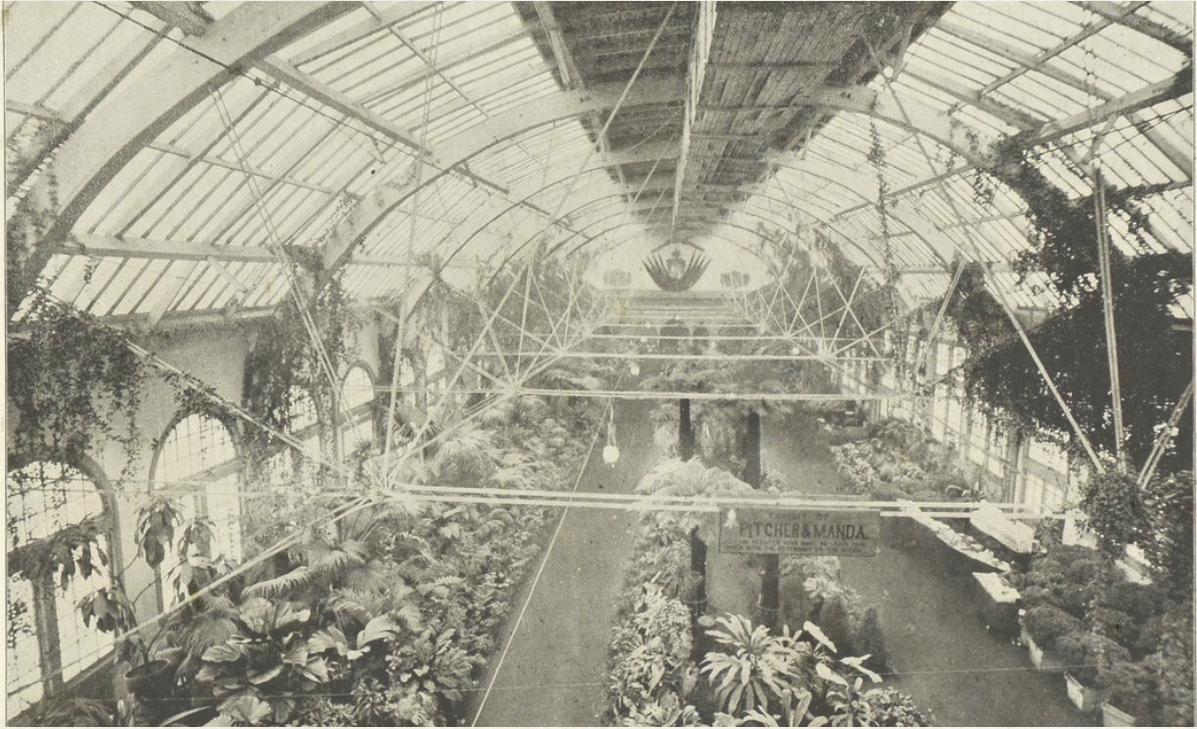
A sprawling museum of flora from far + wide.

Run by LYDIA ERWIN, the Horticulture Building is a near maze of greenhouses and aviaries, the center of which is home to a single spire that builds to a domed ceiling of clear glass, encased in thick vines.



<http://expo2016-antalya.blogspot.com/2014/11/history-horticultural-building-chicago.html>

Inside the Horticulture Building, you'll find a range of seemingly endless environments to explore: The Bayou, Midwestern Farmland, a Robust Jungle, a Butterfly Room, the Central Rose Gardens, and an Electric Floral Paradise at the building's center.



<https://www.periodpaper.com/products/1893-print-conservatory-chicago-worlds-fair-horticulture-building-plants-093758-far1-083>

THE GARDEN IS ENDLESS.

THE PLANTS CALL.

THE TREES GROW.

THE WALLS DISSAPPEAR.

But the plants are well fertilized. At the center of  
the building is a pillar. Inside the pillar is a man.

His blood will make the flowers grow.

We must make the flowers grow.

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THE ERWINS:

Jane and Arthur Erwin share three facts in common.

They are twins. They are botanical geniuses.

And they are both considered recluses by most of high society.

During preparations for the fair...

JANE ERWIN has become obsessed with her plants.

No one has seen her leave or enter the Horticulture Building.

She has begun to speak to flora, even in the company of others.

ARTHUR ERWIN has retreated to his forest escape within the wooded island, rarely seen and never heard.

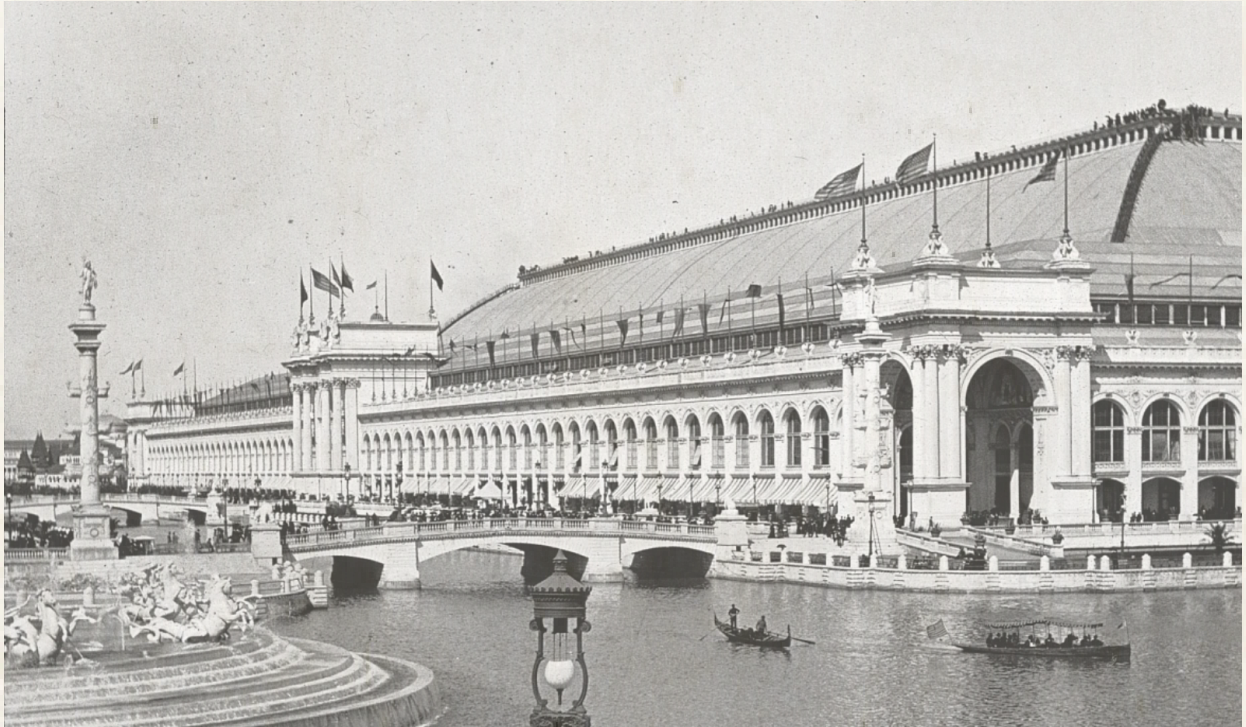
Any attempt at an electrical installation has been met with unnecessary violence on his behalf, and no negotiator has been successful.

Despite their oddities, the Erwin family cannot be denied by means of both money and genius.

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# THE MANUFACTURER'S BUILDING

The Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building was the largest exhibit hall at the fair and, at the time, the largest building in the world, a colossal 1,345,462 square feet.



<https://chicagology.com/columbiaexpo/fair010/>

Archways countlessly lined its pale exterior in two rows, reaching large columns on each side, it's grandeur reflected in the lake surrounding it. One of the major features of this exhibit hall was its national pavilions: countries would come and devise extravagant pavilions representing their nation, filled with exhibit items and goods for sale.

One such exhibit caught in controversy at the fair was the Russian pavilion, accused of selling goods declared as exhibits previously to avoid additional vendor fees.

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## THE RUSSIANS:

Two of Burnham's former agents were sent on a global hunt to collect information on various technologies proving useful for the harnessing of a large enough capacity of electricity so as to awaken an Eldritch diety from its slumber.

Originally in it for the money, these agents successfully infiltrated a number of government-run labs internationally, ranging from Germany to China and, now, Russia.

However, the project has finally been put into action, and these agents have realized the capacity for destruction that summoning a god could bring. To maintain the global order and save their own reputations, they've kept the project secret, but began plotting to corrupt its progres.

The World's Fair is the perfect time to head back to the US and  
**STOP THIS EXPERIMENT.**

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SEPTEMBER 11, 1892

Successfully infiltrated Russian lab.

Undergoing projects.

Hopeful progress.

Update soon.

NOVEMBER 2, 1892

New technology uncovered.

Fear the consequences.

Bigger intentions than we thought.

Pause.

DECEMBER 21, 1892

Dangerous discovery.

Loyal agent reported to head.

Need to prevent.

Meet soon.

FEBRUARY 6, 1893

Returning to fair.

Loyal agent shared diagrams.

Idea for how to stop.

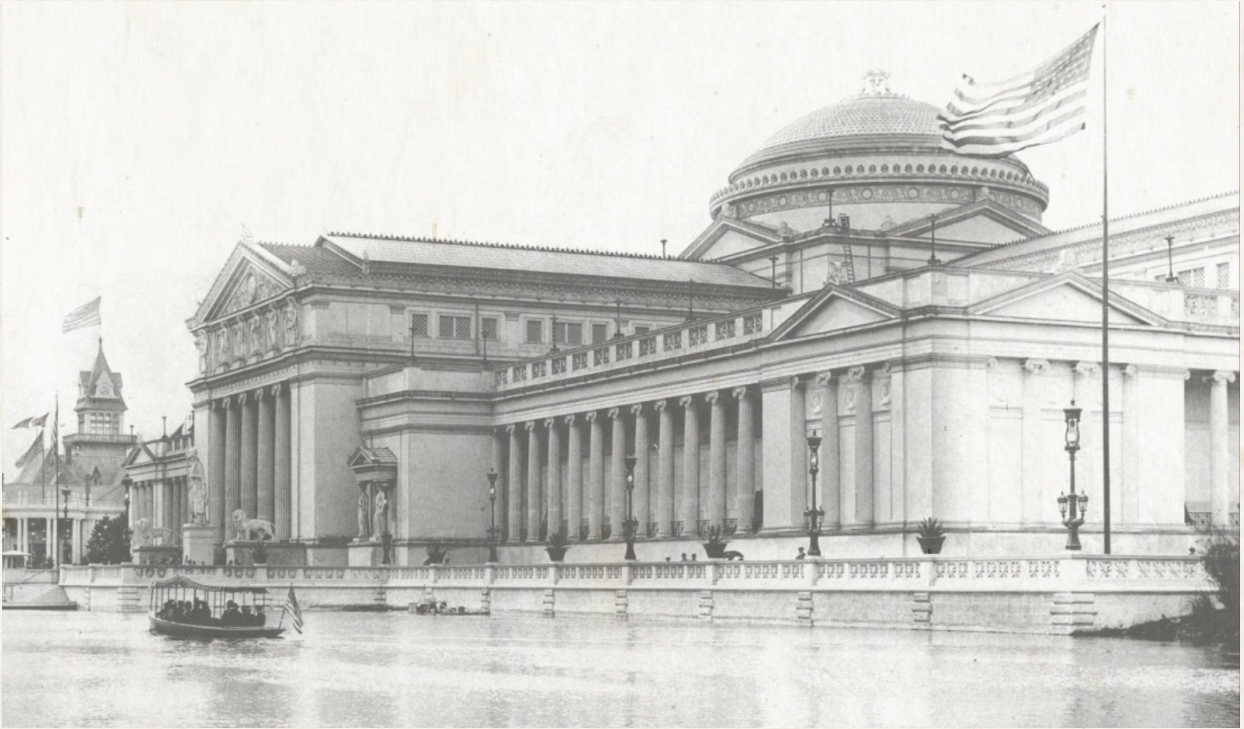
RENDEVOUS AT FAIR.

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## RIGHT BRANCH

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# THE ARTS BUILDING



<https://chicagology.com/columbiaexpo/fair039/>

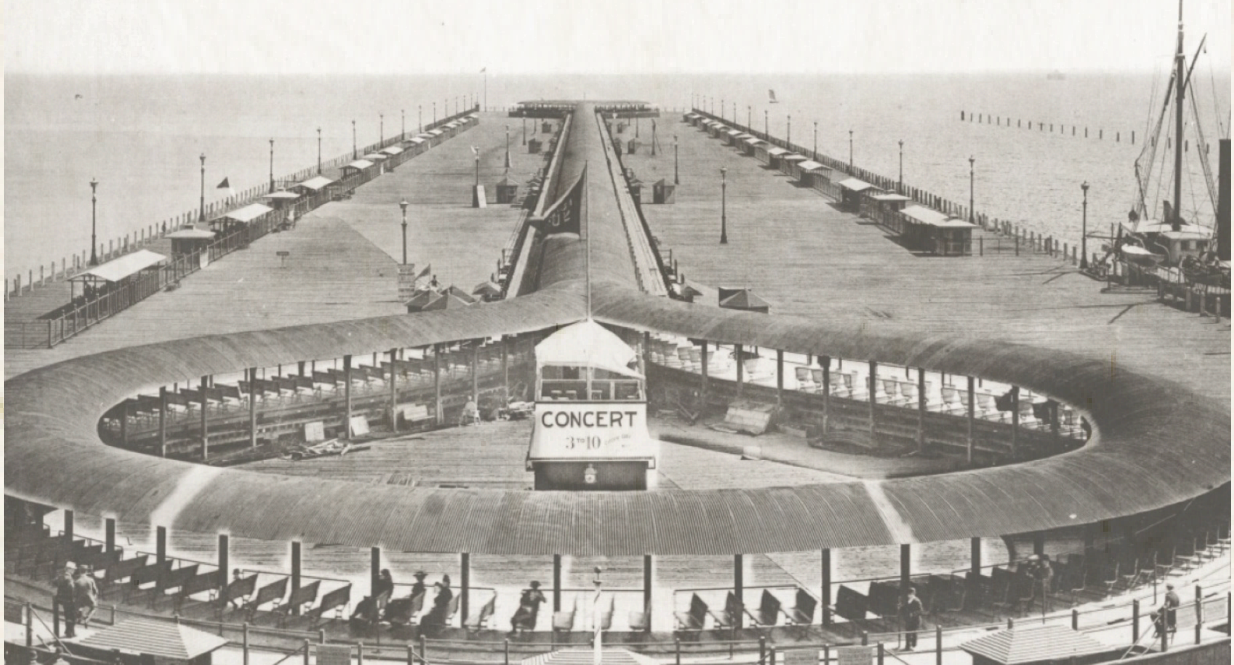
Designed by Charles B. Atwood for D. H. Burnham & Co.

The Art Gallery was home to many different paintings and many different sculptures by many different artists. The building itself was built before the fair and is one of the only structures that remained post-fair. It had no windows, a glazed ceiling, and its exterior facades were covered in mural paintings depicting the history of art.

The paintings are beautiful. It feels like you could step inside.

# THE MOVING SIDEWALK

The Great Wharf Moving Sidewalk stretches out into the bay, silent and still.



<https://chicagology.com/columbiaexpo/fair030/>

The Great Wharf Moving Sidewalk is the fair's only path to the Ferris Wheel, a technological innovation beyond fairgoers' wildest dreams. For the price of a nickel, one can feel the ground shift beneath them, traversing the pier as a mechanical snake.



<https://www.pcg.com/coinfacts/coin/1893-5c/3854>



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THE SINGLE RIDER:

A woman sits on the tracks of the Moving Sidewalk.

She will not move. She cannot move or all hope is lost.

Attempting to prevent Burnham's ritual, she is certain that a running sidewalk will cause the end of the world.

She will not move. She cannot move or all hope is lost.

This woman might be crazy.

This woman might not be crazy.

Is the end of the world truly near?

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# THE FERRIS WHEEL

The Ferris Wheel is grand! - The Ferris Wheel beckons all!

But The Ferris Wheel stands dark!

The Chicago Wheel is a pinnacle of steel design, a round of spacious gondolas circling the middle axle. At 264 feet, The Wheel towers above all, boasting the views of Chicago and the worlds beyond.



<https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-ferris-wheel-navy-pier-flashback-perspec-0515-jm-20160513-story.html>

An ALL-SEEING eye.

The perfect home for Yog-Sothoth.

The perfect place to know all things.

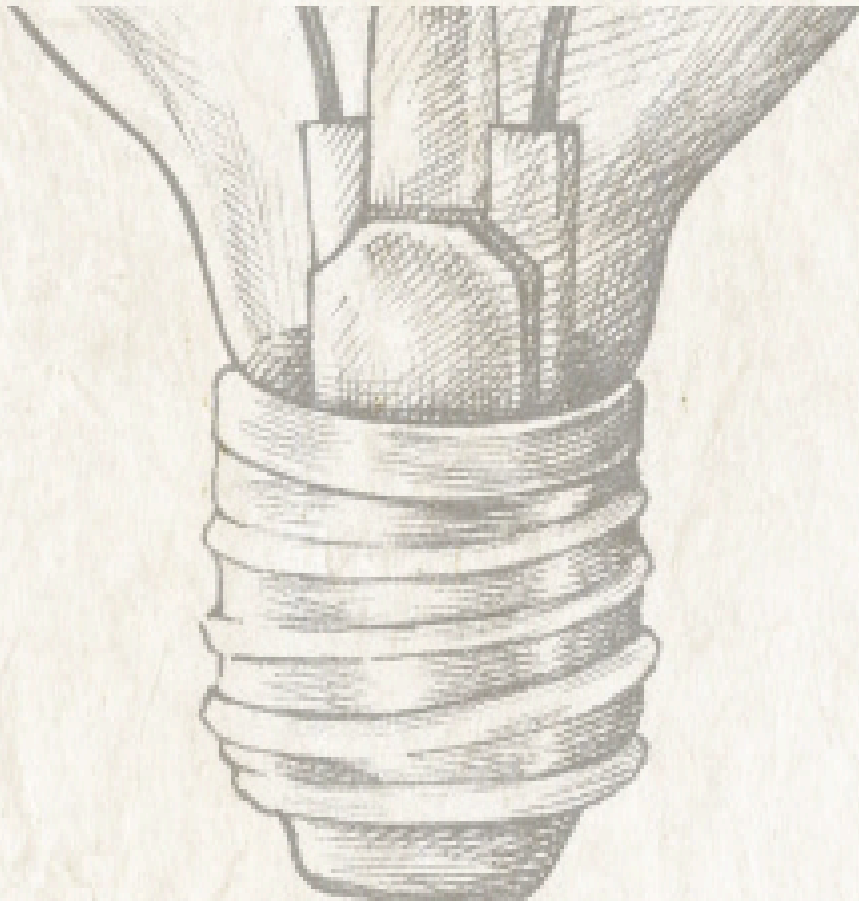
The perfect place to end all things.



# THE BEATING HEART

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Veins of electricity run throughout the fairground - lights, machines, and other such marvels. It's a near ritualistic synergy of cables and chords that connects every exhibit and inhabitant of the fair. And, on opening night, it **MUST WORK**.



An aerial photograph of a residential development, the Eldritch Plot, with a white text box overlaid in the center. The map shows a grid of streets, green spaces, and building footprints. A prominent blue water feature, possibly a canal or stream, runs through the site. The text 'ELDRITCH PLOT' is written in a bold, black, serif font within the white box.

# ELDRITCH PLOT

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Daniel Burnham and his assistant, Lillian Pietzel, intend to use the Chicago World's Fair as a cover to awaken the Eldritch Abomination YOG-SOTHOTH.

As the opening day festivities conclude and the fair's connected trails of electrical wiring are ignited, the sky will alight with his divine, glowing orb.

YOG-SOTHOTH KNOWS ALL.

No secret is hidden from Yog-Sothoth.

Yog-Sothoth will be freed from his slumber.

Yog-Sothoth will deliver us to our dream -  
to the dream America promised.

YOG-SOTHOTH. KNOWS. ALL.

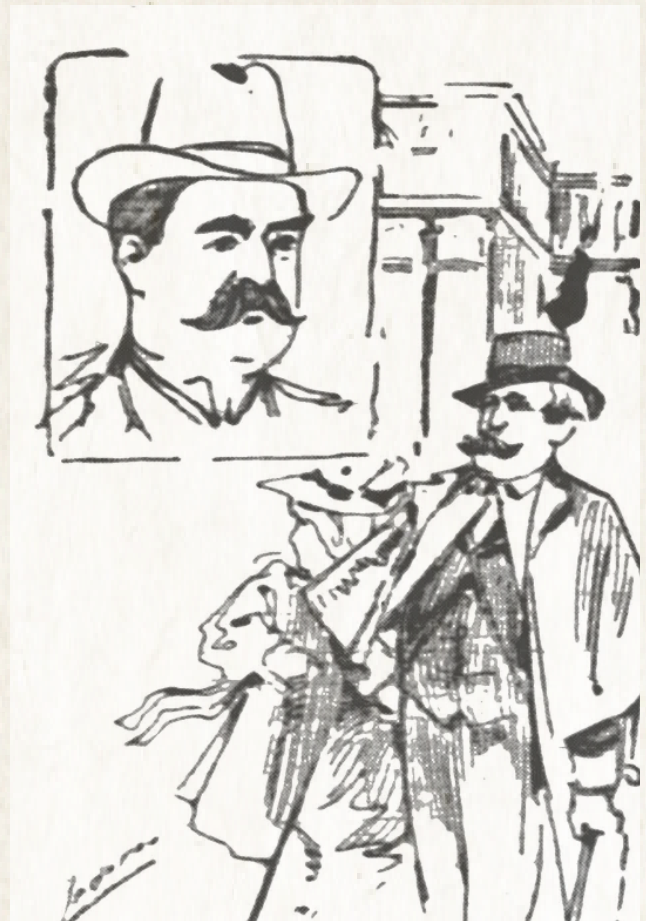
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# THE OPENING CEREMONY

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The Chicago World's Fair opens on May 1st, 1893 with an opening ceremony at the Administration Building, on the shore of its man-made lake.

The celebrations will begin with a presidential procession, followed by several rounds of original music, then a few that are newly arranged. A poem shall be read by the great Jessie Couthouli, written by W. D. Croffut and adapted for our fest. The night will end when the lights ignite, with a button then pressed by Burnham himself.



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THE POEM.

‘Prophecy - Adapted from W. D. Croffut’

Columbus watched the nascent moon  
Drown in the Ocean’s western deep.  
Strange birds that day had fluttered the sails,  
Strange flowers had floated round wandering keel,  
And yet he saw no land.

As thus he mused, he paced his deck  
And gazed upon the waves astern.  
In phosphorescent foam there came and went  
Prophetic pictures of new land.

He saw the end of his victorious quest.  
He saw, ablaze on Isabella’s breast,  
The gorgeous Autillean jewels rest—  
The Islands of the West!

He saw celestial Peace in mortal guise,  
And, filled with hope and thrilled with high emprise,  
Lifting its tranquil forehead to the skies,  
A vast republic rise.

He saw these cities beyond him bloom,  
A veil of knowledge to cover gloom,  
And from the barren prairie’s driven spume  
A people of his rank...

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A people pure and mortal see,  
A people pure as people be,  
No matter what consequence may be,  
These mortals they will come.

These mortals ruled by one so great,  
Whose power comes to separate,  
A dream from grim reality's state,  
A dream of glory alone.

The pictures came and paled and passed away.

Then the Admiral turned as from a trance,  
His lion face aglow, his luminous eyes  
Lit with mysterious fire from hidden suns:

“Now, Martin, to thy waiting helm,  
For I have had a vision full of light!  
Keep her prow westward in the sunset's wake  
From this hour hence and let no man look back!”

Then from the Pinta's foretop fell a cry —

A trumpet-song—“Light-ho! Light-ho! Light-ho!”

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## LETTER OF TERMINATION.

I'm sorry to inform you that as of MAY 1, 1893, you will no longer be an employee of the 1893 Chicago World Fair. This was a difficult decision for the administration board to make; however, given your recent breach of fair security and neglect of your assigned tasks, we agree that it is in the fair's best interest to release you from employment.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Lillian Pietzel.

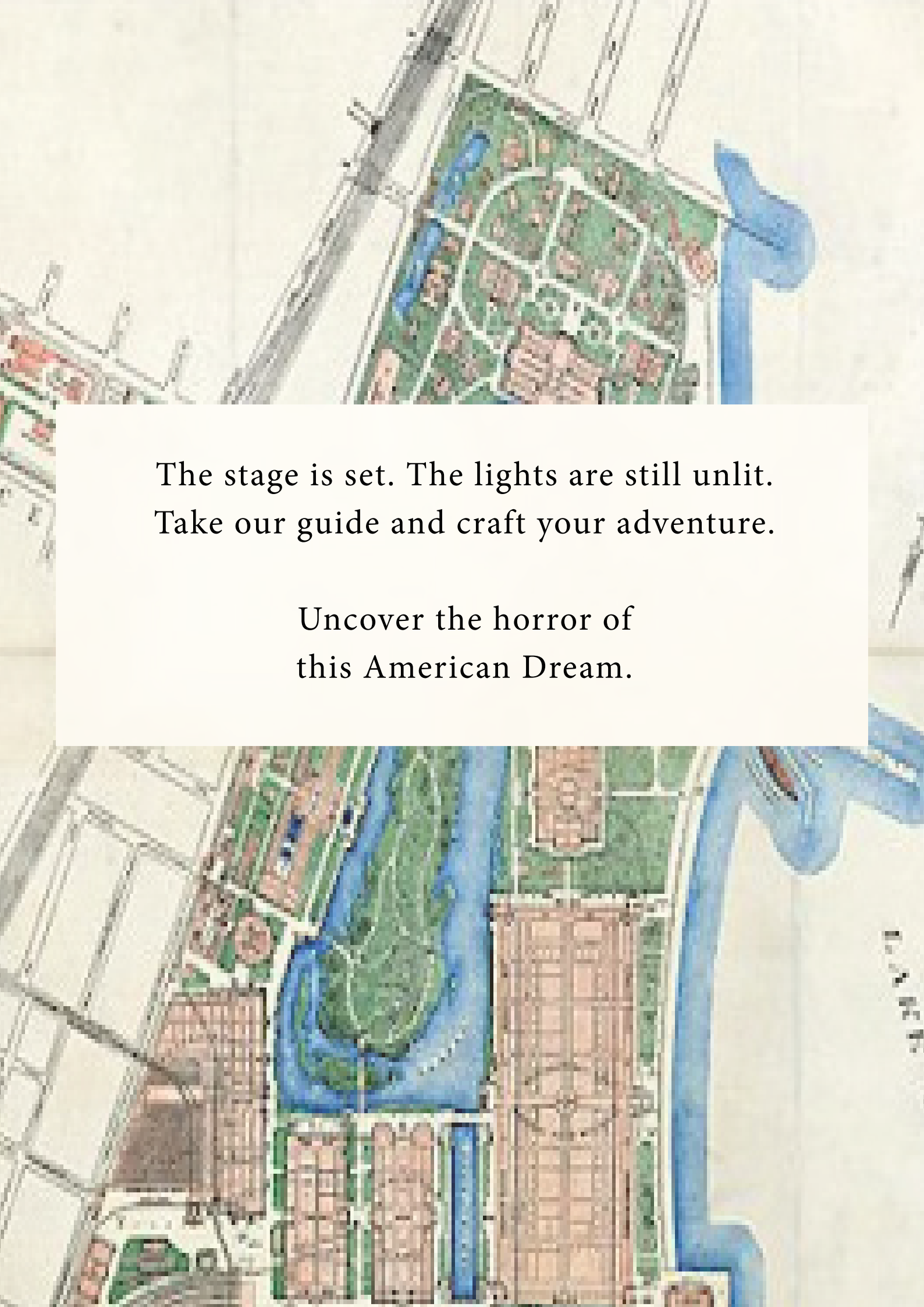
You will be receiving your last paycheck at the conclusion of opening week, along with compensation for sudden termination. This will come in the mail at the address of residence you provided at the time of your hiring. Following this, you will be removed from the fair's payroll as well as all aforementioned benefits the job guaranteed. Please also avoid returning to the fair grounds. Should you return, we will have to escort you off of the grounds. You will be subject to arrest if you resist.

Please keep in mind the contracts of nondisclosure and integrity to the fair that you signed when hired. Should you breach the promises made in these contracts, you will be subject to severe legal punishment and a destroyed reputation for employment.

Do not hesitate to reach out should you need clarification on any of the above information.

We wish you the best of luck.

STOP.

An aerial map of a suburban neighborhood. A prominent blue river winds through the center of the area, surrounded by green spaces and parks. The surrounding residential areas are depicted with brown and tan colors, representing houses and streets. The map is oriented vertically on the page.

The stage is set. The lights are still unlit.  
Take our guide and craft your adventure.

Uncover the horror of  
this American Dream.

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