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THIS MEANS FUCKING WAR!!!



The following intervallic conversation with Erik Rutan, leader and founder of Hate Eternal, was conducted in the course of what could best be described as a kind of informal 'media conference' back in February 2004 at the Loppen venue in Copenhagen. Four interviewers from four different magazines locked in a merciless, if civilised skirmish for airtime... All of which occurred in the chaotic midst of a battlefield housing a crew of over-zealous sound technicians as well as two bouncers/bartenders overcome with a sudden motivation to reshuffle all the heaviest furniture in the venue. If nothing else, however, here was both a chance to meet Mr. Rutan in the flesh and a chance to nerd it out on a few trivia relevant to the second Hate Eternal album *King of All Kings*.

Disclaimer: Evilution Magazine cannot vouch for the intelligence level or sheer conversational acumen of the other interviewers involved in this media conference, as well as Evilution Magazine cannot be found accountable for obvious disclosures of said attributes. True to our usual fashion, all has been transcribed as it was spoken.

Media # 1: Could you tell me about the new album?

"Uh, what do you want to know?"

Media # 1: The production and the whole process...

"Well, it started with me, Derek [Roddy, drummer] and Jared [Anderson, former bassist/vocalist] just working together on material. *King of All Kings* was worked together by us as a unit, as a band, right from the beginning. The first song we wrote for the album was the title track and it just continued from there. We recorded the album in approximately two weeks in between the Morbid Angel touring."

Media # 1: How was the typical song written?

"It usually starts with me coming up with some riffs and melodies, after which I get together with Derek and just jam on it. I like to flow with all the songs from beginning to end and just work on it until it comes together the smooth way [pauses]. Are you going to take pictures the whole time while I'm talking?"

Media # 1: Yeah.

"Okay, that's cool [laughs]."

Media # 1: Do you use old-school techniques in the studio or is it all high-tech?

"Both. We run analog but we also use Pro Tools and some other stuff so we have four formats in all. Whereas *King of All Kings* was recorded to one inch, the next record will be recorded to two inch, and we'll start the recordings in May."

Media # 1: Is it affecting the sound using the old-school and new things together?

"I think so. Some of my favourite productions were done to tape, but the convenience and ease of Pro Tools allow you to do a lot of things very fast, which when you're the doing the same thing over a long time very much comes in handy. A lot of records that are done are recorded straight to Pro Tools because of time restraints and money restraints. Tape costs thousands of dollars for one whole record, and a lot of bands are dealing with a budget that is not very big. I just love the sound of the tape so it's a preference."

Media # 1: Inspirations?

"Excuse me?"

Media # 1: What are the inspirations; where do you come from?

"To write music? Well, it comes from a lot of things. Personal emotion is the first thing that springs to mind when it comes to my guitar-playing in general. It's not a thought-out process at all. I'm not schooled in music theory. It's all about feeling. The guitar is a part of me."

Media # 1: How old were you when you began?

"Uh, playing? I was 16. The guitar is just an extension of the person that I am, really. Through the guitar I'm able to express so much. That's a big inspiration for me."

Media # 1: What's the best album?

"Look, some of these other guys have got to be allowed to ask some questions as well."

Evilution: With the first album you conquered the throne, and with the second one you rose above all other would-be kings out there. What is there to achieve with the third and next record?

"I don't know! As far as the monarchy is concerned, I have no idea as to what will happen with the next album [laughs]. We're still working on it right now. We're going to work on it for quite some time after this tour is done since we've been touring for quite a while now. To date, we've done eight full tours for this record."

Evilution: How, if at all, does the writing process for this album differ from what you've done previously?

"It will be the same as for the last one. Derek, Randy and I will get together and just work on the songs. That is a very important thing which often gets lost when you have one guy that is sort of the leader or innovator in the band and so comes to dictate everything. Personally, I like Hate Eternal to be everyone's product, even if I write the majority of the music and I write all the lyrics. I still want everyone's opinion and input. We get together and jam as a whole band; that's what we do. The whole premise of this band is that we enjoy playing the music that we do. That's the number one factor. We love the music and we love playing it. It's important to think both as people and as a band – and that's where the process really starts."

Media # 2: How has this tour been going?

"It's been excellent. Yes, very good."

Media # 2: In which way?

"I'd say in any way, really. First of all, as far as the bands go, I like Dying Fetus very much, and we've toured with them before. That went very well, and I knew this would be great as well. The same goes for

Deeds Of Flesh, and Prejudice is an awesome band to open up the package. It's been a great package, and there has been a very good turn-out and response. I think all four bands have benefited tremendously from the tour. It's been great to have an all-death metal tour, which this is for sure even though we're all very different bands in the aspects that we put into the music. We all have elements of death metal; this is definitely a death metal package and it has worked really well. For me, personally, it's inspiring to end the touring for the records with this one because I have some great memories. It's been incredible and one of the best tours I can recall."

Media # 3: Where did you get the best crowd response?

"Spain was really good. Yeah, playing there was incredible. Portugal and Italy, just to name a few. Holland was great and hopefully it will be great tonight as well. I'll make it great no matter what! I didn't come here for any other reasons. I will play a great show tonight and hopefully the crowd will think so too and we'll have a good time."

Evolution: What about the show yesterday?

"Yeah, the show was good. There were a lot of really appreciative people. I think Dying Fetus have been here in Denmark once but we're never been here before. There are a lot of people in Denmark, specifically, that have followed my career for a long time. That is really strange but interesting because a lot of people know me from the days with Ripping Corpse. And I mean, we recorded the *Dreaming with the Dead* album 13 years ago! So that just goes to show that a lot of people are very loyal. They have known me for my work in Ripping Corpse, Morbid Angel and now Hate Eternal. I talked to a lot of people yesterday who were just really happy seeing me up on the stage and seeing the band. The Danish fans are very... I don't know what the word is."

Evolution: Inquisitive, perhaps?

"Yeah, for sure, but they are just on top of their stuff. As far as music goes, when it comes to information about it and explaining what they think and feel, the Danish people stand out. Plus, to my experience it seems that everybody in Denmark speaks English, and some of them are very good at it. If you take various other countries, people sometimes have a hard time expressing themselves in English. I speak English, a little Spanish and that's about it."

Media # 1: What song gets the best response?

"Well, that would be "Powers That Be". That's probably the one song that people seem to know the most. We did a video for it in America, specifically, which has been played on Headbanger's Ball many, many times. It's pretty interesting to have someone singing along to a song of that brutal kind, but a lot of people apparently seem to know that one. It's a pretty catchy song in a death metal way, I guess."

Media # 1: Is it different playing live in Europe compared to the States?

"Yeah, yeah. There is definitely a big difference, but even in Europe a lot of the countries are very different from one another. I can't just group Europe as a whole; especially since we play in around 20 different

countries on a tour like this and every country is different from the other, just like Spain is different from Denmark .”

Media # 1: The most ass-kicking country so far on the tour?

“Like I said, it was probably Spain . That was really incredible. We did four shows there and there were about 4-500 people at each show.”

Media # 2: Do you remember your last gig in Denmark with Morbid Angel?

“Yeah.”

Media # 2: How was that like?

“Every time I’ve played here with Morbid Angel has been great. A lot of Morbid Angel fans have been very faithful – and they should be, I think! [laughs]”

Media # 2: I think that Jared Anderson was a very good profile in the band, and he was also part of Hate Eternal for some years. Why did he leave?

“He had a drug problem, and it was basically just up to him to get his act together since it wasn’t doing anything good to himself or anything else. If you’re sick you have to become healthy and that was his primary goal. He was always there for me, and he still is, as a friend. He is still there for the band, but if you have personal things going on that you have to take care for, it has to take precedence over anything because it reflects on your entire life. You have to get yourself together, and I have learned that through many years of lots of things that I have experienced in my life which have made me be where I am at with Hate Eternal. You really have to take care of yourself and that is what he’s doing.”

Media # 2: How did you get in touch with him?

“Through Steve Tucker.”

Media # 2: He was a friend of Steve?

“Yeah. When I played with Steve in Morbid Angel and needed a bass player for Hate Eternal, he said to me that he knew a guy whose band had just broken up and he wasn’t doing anything. The thing is that I already knew Jared from his old band Internecine because they had opened up for Morbid Angel. That was five years ago, I think.”

Evolution: Will there ever be a follow-up to the Internecine album *Book of the Lambs* from 2002?

"No, he will never do another Internecine album. That was a one-off thing."

Evolution: Then what about yourself and Alas?

"I will do another Alas record, probably some time next year or so. But I will do another Hate Eternal record first. Alas takes a lot more work because the people involved in the band are from different areas. Everybody in Hate Eternal lives in Florida, but with Alas it's not so easy. However, most of the songwriting is completed so it will be done, definitely."

Evolution: Randy Piro has been a member of the band for almost a year now. What musical input has he brought to the band, and what do you think he will contribute with in the future?

"You know, he loves the band. He loved Morbid Angel and he loved Hate Eternal, and those were his two favourite bands before he joined. He has been friends with Derek for many years, but they had never really played together in a band or anything. Randy played in some local bands but that's about it. When Jared decided to leave we wanted to replace him with somebody that we had a sort of connection with on a personal level. Half of the battle in a band is how you get along with people. We have been together for six weeks on this tour and done 40 weeks of touring in all for this album. So you had better get along as people, because if you don't... The band is not going to last. Personality and musicality are equal to me."

Media # 3: How long were the breaks in between the different legs of the touring?

"Well, we did about 40 weeks of touring in about 60 weeks so we had some breaks in between. Practically, we have been touring for as long as the album has been out. So we've have been touring with Hate Eternal for about three thirds of last year, and it's been great to do. But I can say that Randy is hungry. He is younger and this is his first opportunity to really get out and tour. He brings that fire with him because everything is really fresh to him. It can be compared to when I joined Morbid Angel. I loved Morbid Angel and it was like joining your favourite band, and for Randy to join Hate Eternal is a big thing. I know exactly what it feels like for him. I was 21 when I joined Morbid Angel, and it was just phenomenal, and I can still get the feeling today. I played with Morbid Angel for almost ten years, and to me that is amazing. That band is a big part of my life."

Evolution: What do you think of *Heretic*?

"I think it's a really good record, though I love the production on *Gateways to Annihilation* a lot more, and in particular the sound of the guitars. I think the production was a lot thicker on that record, but I think highly of any Morbid Angel record. They will always be one of the best death metal bands because of the specific roles that each of the members play. Morbid Angel has never released a substandard record in my opinion. They are one of the true innovators on the scene, and any Morbid Angel record stands to me as the cream of the crop."

Media # 3: Do you think that you will get back in Morbid Angel?

"I will never say never but I don't think so. I have really thought it out and done it for the right reasons. When I left the band it was not like something I had decided overnight. 'Yeah, I'm going to leave the biggest band in death metal!' After all the time I had spent with the band, and a lot of great years as well, it was a tough decision. It was something I had thought out very and I just had this gut feeling about it. Hate Eternal will be the last band that I do in death metal, no doubt about it. I want to write it for as long as I can; as long as I keep writing it, I will keep playing it. Hopefully, I have left some kind of legacy in the history of Morbid Angel whether people perceive it as a small or a big contribution. I want to make a legacy with Hate Eternal as well, and I know it takes time to do that. I miss Morbid Angel, for sure, I always will. I love the band and the guys that play in it are like a family to me. I will always miss the band but I know that I made the right decision for the right reasons."



Media # 3: Who will replace you in Morbid Angel?

"I don't think they're going to replace me with a permanent guitarist. I think that Morbid Angel will remain a three-piece and hire a guy for live situations."

Media # 3: They have played with Tony Morgan from Monstrosity for this last tour.

"Oh, I see. Yeah, they're not going to get a permanent guitar player. I think that says a lot really. When I think back on all the years from *Covenant* to *Gateways to Annihilation* it was a tremendous experience. I really appreciate the fact that I was a part of it and I have the best of memories from that period."

Media # 1: What's the best and the worst with being in Hate Eternal?

"For me, the best thing with Hate Eternal is the intensity. Playing guitar and singing with Hate Eternal live is just a massive, intense feeling. It's different from when I played with Ripping Corpse and Morbid Angel because of the responsibilities connected with being a three-piece. There is a lot of responsibility behind it, but that is also what I really enjoy about playing in Hate Eternal. What gets my blood flowing is the intensity of singing and playing guitar. It's an incredible thing. The worst part of it is... nothing!"

Media # 1: Then you must be a lucky guy?

"I feel that way. I feel very lucky. I worked very hard to get where I am now, and I don't think anyone would deny that, but I feel very lucky to have experienced all the things that I have throughout my career. Even if something bad happened to me and I was gone or whatever, I have accomplished a fair amount of stuff with my life. Yet I have a lot more that I want to accomplish in this genre specifically and as a guitar player; there is still a far distance to my peak. I'm climbing, I feel, as a songwriter, as a guitarist as well as a person. I'm still improving and that is my primary objective in music and in life. To constantly improve."

Media # 1: What are your plans for the nearest future in terms of touring?

"I think we are going to South America for two weeks with Krisiun, which is one of my favourite bands. Then we might do a show in Japan but that's it. We're not going to do any more full tours. This was our second European tour and we did six American tours. So we want to do a new record and have it out by October. That's what we're shooting for right now."

Media # 2: Okay, the last thing for me: How do you like Christiania ? [the area around the venue that is (in)famous for its liberal marijuana trade and laissez-faire regulations].

"I've been here before and I think it's nice."

Media # 2: Do you know that the police come here often?

"Yeah, I've heard about that [laughs]. I'll be careful..."

Evolution: Even if you did not contribute substantially to the songwriting back when you played in Ripping Corpse, do you feel that there are still some impulses left from that time in what you write for Hate Eternal today?

"The band name Hate Eternal in itself was taken from one of the last songs that I wrote for Ripping Corpse. You know, me and Shaune [Kelley] did that one album *Dreaming with the Dead* that had 12 songs on it, but we had like 40 songs written past that day, and we never did anything with them. We co-wrote a lot of the material together, and about 70% of all the music that was done for Ripping Corpse was actually co-written by me and Shaune. Most of the material on the record was written by Shaune but I wrote some of it as well. A lot of the material that I wrote for Ripping Corpse as well as for Hate Eternal could not have been written for Morbid Angel because Trey is very specific with what he wants. So I was always working very hard, in particular with *Domination*, to write stuff that would fit into Morbid Angel, but it would always sound different. My playing is different from Trey's and that, I think, is what really worked well. We were very

different players and when you group that together it often works really well. It's just like Adrian Smith and Dave Murray from Iron Maiden or Glenn Tipton and K.K. Downing from Judas Priest."

Evilution: And that was the case with Richard Brunelle as well?

"Yeah, but he never wrote much though. He was definitely different from Trey solo-wise but he never really contributed much in the songwriting. I wrote seven songs for Morbid Angel, considering the fact that it was really hard to accommodate to Trey's direction. With Hate Eternal I just write what I feel and it all comes very naturally. I would also write what I felt with Morbid Angel, but I had to work under a structure. There is no specific structure in Hate Eternal and especially when I think of the new record. I think this new one is going to be very expanded because I'm not in Morbid Angel anymore. You know, there was a lot of stuff that I did in Morbid Angel which I wanted to do with Hate Eternal. Up until now I have sort of made Hate Eternal one way and I still want to keep that aggressiveness, but I'm definitely going to make the next record more expanded."

Evilution: I was told by someone who was at the concert in Aalborg yesterday that Derek Roddy broke his toe prior to the concert. How is he today?

[laughs]. You know about his toe?! Well, it's all right. It looks like his toe is broken. But he's a warrior, he's a trooper [laughs]."

Evilution: From following the forum discussions on his home page, I know that he uses a special technique with his foot to play the double bass...

"He plays with the ball of his foot. That's what he does. Derek has a great technique; he's a phenomenal drummer and I can guarantee that he is going to kick some ass tonight. That guy personally inspires me a lot. There are nights where he is jamming on the drums, and I just know that he's on fire with the groove that night. That inspires me – and vice versa. We work really well off his each other, and I'm sure he will play with extreme precision tonight, broken toe and all. [laughs]"

Evilution: Do you feel that the intensity, technicality and aggression of Hate Eternal sometimes make the music go over the heads of people?

"Yeah, we do every night. Some people don't know what to think of it all. I don't know if they're scared or don't understand the music... It's funny because with Hate Eternal it's more about intensity than anything like technicality and speed for instance. It's not really on our agenda to be the fastest of the most technical band in the world. There are a lot of bands that are more technical than Hate Eternal out there, no doubt, and there are probably faster bands and all that. But intensity is certainly a priority and that we capture. Some people can't handle the intensity, I'm afraid, either because it goes over their heads or because it's just too much. The intensity is right there and it's real. People know it. People that see it know the intensity and that the feeling behind it is the real deal. It all comes back to what I said about writing music from what I feel. I will continue to do that and Hate Eternal will continue to do that as a band. We hope that people like it, and obviously there are a lot of people who like it. You know, we've done really well with Hate Eternal and especially with our second record. When I think of what we've done with *King of All Kings*, I feel very accomplished. The next record that we're writing on right now is another level for the band from a creative aspect as well as a personal aspect. The music is definitely technical and all that, but we're a lot for some and we're nothing for others – and that is okay. The people that get it they get it and the ones that don't... well. You know, I learned a long time ago reading reviews of albums that I've done that you can't please everybody. There are always going to be people that say: 'We like this album better. Actually, we don't even like your band; we like you better with Morbid Angel.' When you hear that entire spectrum of opinions, you learn to just temper yourself with it and be able to take criticism, which is the hardest thing when you put

your heart and soul to the music. I've learned that you can't please everybody and that is why you've got to go for the gut. Please yourself first and then hopefully please others as well. That's how we approach it."

Media # 3: How many reviews do you read of your own albums?

"All of them, mostly. I try to collect the reviews but I don't have a closet full of them. At least for the interviews; I've done over 300 interviews, at least, for this album. Maybe even more. For a while, I told myself that I was not going to read reviews, because a lot of people don't read reviews so they don't have to deal with the criticism or whatever. But I expect criticism, you know. We got a lot of great reviews for the album, and that certainly made me very happy. Of course, you get some bad reviews as well, but as we say: 'You gotta eat it.' Just take it and... next! I mean, you can't worry about that."

Media # 1: Is the internet good or bad for a band like Hate Eternal?

"I love the internet in the sense of information, but there are also a lot of chat rooms and stuff like that which I'm not interested in. I think the internet is good, but with piracy and all that the internet is bad from the perspective of the music industry. Piracy is really hurting the industry which ultimately hurts the bands. With the exception of piracy and all that stuff, the internet is a positive thing, but it has definitely had an effect on record sales and the music industry as a whole – and not just the death metal genre. Some aspects of the internet are bad but some are good as well. We've had hundreds of thousands of hits on our Hate Eternal website, and people can go there to find information. I've had people contacting me just to say 'Hey' or 'I love your band'. So the internet is great but it can also be damaging. Basically, I love the internet and I'm online all the time on my computer."

Media # 3: How much fan-mail do you respond to?

"As much as I can. Right now, my server is just packed with thousands of e-mails. I did answer all the mail for a long time, but most bands don't even have personal e-mails. We all put our e-mails up there because we wanted to respond to people directly, and they appreciate that even if it's just a short reply like 'Hey, thanks a lot'. But now I get so much mail that it's very hard to keep up with, especially when we're on tour as long as we have been. I try my best to keep up but I don't think I'll be able to do that much longer."

Evilution: Those 40 Ripping Corpse songs that you mentioned... Did bits and pieces of the material end up in Dim Mak and Hate Eternal?

"No."

Evilution: Have you ever thought about releasing that material posthumously?

"Well, we never recorded anything that would have been worthy. We're re-releasing *Dreaming with the Dead* this year and there is an extra song that we recorded for the album that will be on there and then also a three-song demo that we did after the album and that was never released."

Evilution: What about the three demos that were recorded in the time before the release of *Dreaming with the Dead*?

"No, they're not going on there; just the demo after the album with three songs. That makes four extra songs in all in addition to the *Dreaming with the Dead* album, which I remastered in the studio. So 13 years later... That's pretty cool."

Evilution: Derek Roddy has played with tons of notable bands over the years for a shorter or longer period of time, including Aurora Borealis, Divine Empire, Nile and Council Of The Fallen. Does he have any side projects at the moment?

"No, not at the moment. Actually, I don't think he's going to do any other death metal bands besides Hate Eternal in the future. But he's got a lot of other things going on like the drum instructional video, and he's written a few columns for Modern Drummer and stuff like that. He's got other things that he would like to do besides death metal like jazz and fusion stuff for instance. But nothing right now, I think."

Evilution: Spawn Of Possession were supposed to play tonight. What do you think of that band?

"Yeah, they're good. I've heard them and I know that they're on Unique Leader. It sucks that they're not going to play tonight because I've been looking forward to that. For some reason, the club can't open until 21.00, and I guess there just wasn't enough time to fit in a fourth band or something like that."

Evilution: How was it like having Tim Yeung and Doug Cerrito in the band for the recordings and release of the debut *Conquering the Throne*, and what did they contribute with to the sound and identity of Hate Eternal?

"Well, not to minimise or anything but I don't really think that they brought that much into the band. To me, Hate Eternal wasn't really a band before Derek joined. Me and Doug have been friends since we were like 17. We traded demos before Suffocation and Ripping Corpse got signed. You know, Doug had retired after Suffocation split up and I was trying to bring him back, but he would only play with me for three months. He was never really an integral part of the writing process. I dropped a few songs so that he could write for *Conquering the Throne*. In fact, I had already signed the contract with Earache. When it came to touring and pursuing the band in the future, he just wasn't interested. Suffocation is back together now but he's not with them. What I think of with Doug is that the last record he played on was mine. I love Suffocation; they're one of my favourite bands, and Doug Cerrito is a legend to me in the guitar world, for sure. So I definitely feel honoured to have had him in the band, and the small part of the band that he was is still cool to me. Tim, on the other hand, was very young and I really had to push him to accomplish what I did with *Conquering the Throne*. I wrote most of the drum beats and stuff myself on a drum machine. With Derek I don't do shit... When it comes to the drums I don't do nothing: 'Here's the rest of the material. Let Derek Roddy take care of it!' I'm not worrying about him. He's got his end covered. That is his own creative aspect which I let him do because he's a pro. He's older and he's more experienced."

Evilution: It was more like a stepping stone for Tim?

"Yeah, just look at what he's done since. When I found him he was still in high-school, and when he did the Hate Eternal demo he was 17. He was just too young and didn't have the experience. He has a tremendous amount of talent, but he didn't have the experience or the technical skills to really bring Hate Eternal to where I wanted to. I jammed with Derek one time, and within a minute I was freaking out. I couldn't believe

it. When I jammed with him on that occasion I could just feel that it was meant to be. If I had known Derek back then, he would have been in the band from the beginning, and Hate Eternal was always meant to be a three-piece from the inception. But because I respected Doug and I really thought that he was a killer guitarist, a great songwriter and a good friend, I wanted to have him be a part of it.”

Evilution: Right, this will be my last question for this session: Considering the band name and the lyrical content, what is the focal point of your hatred?

“Well, it’s pretty expanded these days [laughs]. There is always a focal point but it’s deep-rooted. A lot of it is really personal, actually, so I’m not really going to discuss that. To me the hatred in Hate Eternal is definitely very personal which not only goes for me individually but for Derek and Randy as well. We all have our personal reasons that made us want to play this kind of music in the first place. I have always possessed that emotion and before I played the guitar I was in trouble in every way you could be with the law and school. I was a troublemaker. When I found the guitar I found something that I could express that rage into and turning a negative emotion into a positive attribute. That’s what I did with the emotion, and I guess that is why Hate Eternal will probably always be very angry because that is the person that I am inside. Through the vessel that Hate Eternal is I’m able to express all that, so in my own life I’m a much happier person than I was, say, ten years ago. Yet, the deep-seated feeling that exists is still there and it always will. The more I tap into that source, the more Hate Eternal becomes about anger [laughs]. The more you play the guitar, the more you’re able to really reach that source and express it. I have played the guitar for 16 years so I definitely feel very comfortable, and to watch Derek play drums is like ‘Jesus!’ He’s got his own fire in him as well and it’s definitely something personal. Everyday there is something that can make me angry – or anybody angry. It’s funny that people who don’t listen to death metal always think that Hate Eternal is a strong name. I’m always joking about it and saying: ‘Go to work; do what your asshole boss says; then come home and pop in our record and you’ll know exactly where we’re going!’ [laughs]”

Media 1: Do you have a final message to our readers in Scandinavia ?

“Well, it’s great to be in Denmark . I’m very happy to be here and play. It damn better be a good show tonight! Nah, I’m just joking [laughs]. It *will* be a good show and thanks a lot for having us up here. I hope to come back soon as well. Thanks for all the loyalty from all the Danish fans.”

Conducted and written by Misereion.