

I will begin this message, like all my messages, by saying that the below is the opinion of me, and me alone. And who am I you might ask? At the end of the day, I am just a player like you. But currently, I am the Sabbath Coord. I was elected (by a slim margin this time!) to both lead and enforce genre within One World By Night as far as The Sabbath are concerned.

The Sabbath represents a large number of our active players in the Org. Last most recent survey counted somewhere around 100 active and unique players and I know it's functionally more than that. And while the struggles facing all of the Sects/Genres are different in their own way, a lot of them are shockingly the same/similar just wearing a different mask.

So with that out of the way, I want to clarify that the below message is intended to be read in a conversational, not confrontational tone. I welcome positive discourse, constructive criticisms, and intentional dialogue.

At the end of all of this, you only have me for 2 years (or less if I like... really screw up) and at the end of that, someone else will get the chance to hop in the seat, and I remain forever excited about the future of The Sabbath and One World By Night. I ask that everyone take a peak at my automated signature, the tag line underneath is my true belief in what OWBN is and what makes it the best.

With all of that said, I please invite you to join me in the journey of my thoughts below, and ask that you engage with them fully. Take the time to read the whole thing please! And thanks!

**Concerning Cross-Sect conflict, why the Consistories statement is not new, and the announcement is good for you. RE: You were always in danger.**

SO! At this point, I have released 3 other Sabbath Talks. Their topics were:

- How to better be our OOC Friends Enemies IC.
- How to dispel the Rumor Mill, and how it hurts our Org
- How Consequences are a good thing and you should try it!

All of these topics have been topical to the Org as a whole, not just Sabbath, but I am trying to stay in my lane and make sure I am focusing on The Sabbath and just hoping we will get some trickle down elsewhere. Each of those topics play into this one in a variety of ways, but to make sure we are all on the same footing I want to address some quick terms and what they mean for you, the player and your character within The Sabbath.

**Ecumenical Council:** For players familiar with Cam over Sabbath, EC is our conclave with some big differences, namely that PCs have a much larger say in what happens and what policies get proposed to change and alter the politics and laws of The Sabbath. EC is a weekend-long Ritae we run an Event game for, where all players can submit ahead of time, topics for debate, and

attending players can try and surprise a few more. A dias of attending Clergy (Bishops and Archbishops) will preside over the debates as characters stand in defense or offense of proposed topics. At the end, a vote is held as the dias determine how the Ecumenical Council will decide on the proposed topics. In conclusion, that vote is handed off to the Consistory for final deliberation and ratification.

**The Consistory:** The Consistory is a collection of named and unnamed NPC's controlled by the Sabbat Coords office. It is safe to bet that most if not all of the Cardinals are on the Consistory, but so are various other Archbishops, Bishops, Elders, and more. The Consistories job is to advise The Regent directly on matters of The Sabbat, and they also have some war time and judicial powers as needed and defined in a few of the Sabbat books. As far as Ecumenical Council goes, The Consistory is the body that Team Sabbat portrays to hand down the final decisions that players vote on at EC, filtered through Team Sabbat to make sure what we send to Council to vote on, is in the best interest of the genre, the players, and the Org.

**The Code of Milan:** The Code of Milan is to put it bluntly, the Constitution of the Sabbat. It is the document that dictates all of its laws and generally speaking, everything that all Sabbat should be following and doing at any given time. The Code of Milan does not change often, but has had amendments throughout its lifetime. The best way to edit the Code of Milan would be creating a proposal to edit it for Ecumenical Council, and politicking the backing of The Consistory or members of it. The Code can be found in Laws of the Night Sabbat.

**The Lex Talionis :** These are the general 'punishments' of the Sabbat. It is the standard by which The Sabbat shall hold each other to task and to account. This can be found in Laws of the Night Sabbat.

**Council:** One World By Nights governing body. Composed of each Coordinator, and 1 member of every non-satellite game in the Org. Each of those games (and sometimes those Coords) are given the option to vote for or vote down proposals made to Council, which includes the decisions by Ecumenical Council, as they have the ability to change the course of genre and affect more than just one game.

Now! With all that out of the way, let's look into the declaration made by The Consistory at Ecumenical Council 2024. I will preface this by saying, this is not a decision (a vote/policy change) handed down by The Consistory, this is just a public statement made by The Consistory. No new rules/laws/proposals were passed to warrant these words.

### **Announcement from The Consistory**

Before we begin with our deliberations, The Consistory has heard the great murmurings and ruminations of The Sabbat in recent nights, and have been approached by Faction Leadership to make a more formal stance on specific topics.

While The Consistory does not feel the need to enact, alter, or do away with any current or existing laws around the topic, we would like to make our stance abundantly clear, that it might be better heard by those who need a reminder.

- A reminder for the Sect that the punishment for Treason against the Sect is torture and dismemberment in whatever poetic fashion the judge decides. Should that Treason involve the divulgence of Sabbat secrets, a Wild Hunt is appropriate.
  - A clarification that Treason includes, but is not necessarily limited to, divulging Sabbat lore, knowledge of the Ritae, or knowledge of the inner workings of the Sabbat, and teaching powers of the blood to non-Sabbat.
  - A further clarification that severity, frequency, or quantity of the Treason may well warrant punishments beyond the above, up to and including Death.
- A reminder for the Sect that Associating with Camarilla vampires is a crime punishable by censure for the first offense, flogging for the second offense, and staking or death for the third offense.
  - A clarification that if a Sect member attends a Clan meeting where Camarilla vampires are present, this constitutes such a crime.
  - A clarification that the position of Consul was created and further defined to provide individual Discoes and Clergy an ability to interact as needed, with the expectation that such needs fall under the confines of the Treaty of Fire.
- A reminder for the Sect that there exist groups within the Sect who handle topics such as Hersey, Treason, Clerical Rites, and Diplomacy. Seek them out if you have questions or concerns.
  - A clarification that if a member of the Sect seeks to alter, add, or remove any of our existing laws or stated policies, they are welcome to submit a topic at the next Ecumenical Council.

-END-

The above is what was presented to Council along with all the debate votes and decisions. It, along with the changes/ratifications from The Consistory, based off of Ecumenical Council's dais and arguments, were passed by Council and thus, moved into the realm of active play in the Org.

The announcement above is about a lot of things. And why it was said is for a lot of reasons. As a small curtain reveal let's have a look at some below.

- The Announcement was proposed by PC's using political capital and boons/faction positions to ask the Consistory to make a specifically worded statement.
- The Announcement follows on the coattails of several high profile Faction Leaders and Sabbat PC's being killed for heresy, or being kicked out of The Sabbat and hunted down for doing exactly what the Announcement warns about.

- The Announcement follows on the coattails of wide spread rumors about cross sect-fraternization at IC Events (OOC- Event Games) and the trade of Sabbat Lore (which is against the Code of Milan, as Sabbat Lore is seen as Sabbat Secrets)
- The Announcement followed a heated debate on the Sabbat National List about these very topics that saw some of the highest player engagement on the national stage in a year.
- Finally, the Announcement followed an event most don't know about IC, but where Sabbat PC's joined hands with non-Sabbat PC's and hunted down/killed a number of Sabbat outside of monomacy to defend and avenge their clan and friends outside of The Sabbat, which did become public to a number of Sabbat and then eventually NPCs controlled by the Coord office.

Now I want to be super clear here: Me? Personally? I don't have any issue with any of the above having happened. One of my favorite places to LARP in OWBN is "I'm in danger if I get caught!" I think shady back room deals, getting away with murder, and more is more than in genre and acceptable in Vampire settings.

The issue here of course is that all of the above became public to a handful of characters in some cases, but a lot of characters to the entire Sect in other cases. The secret back rooms were blown wide open and characters started demanding action and results.

Now, as The Sabbat coord, it would be within my right to make some big sweeping decision, or a heavy handed decree. It would be within my right to make demands of my Black Hand PC's to start hunting, or for my Inquisition PC's to go after specific people. It would be within my right to ask ST's and try to pass by Council, a decision to have NPC's start killing PC's for engaging in behavior that was Anti-Sabbat. But honestly? That doesn't make for good storytelling, and I have always preferred letting Players lead the way.

So Player Characters have taken the crusade. Player Characters have started poking holes into peoples stories. Player Characters have started dragging their Sabbat peers in for questioning. And Player Characters have started enforcing the consequences of secrets, no longer being secret. This has happened before, many times on smaller and larger levels. It's the nature of the Org to have incidents inevitably occur where a secret ruse blunders and becomes public, or for someone to uncover a dirty secret and tell it to the authorities. Even more so amongst The Sabbat, who are encouraged to spy on their brothers and sisters and hold them to (sometimes violent) account, and for whom all others who are not the Sabbat are enemies at worst, recruits at best, and speed bumps every other time.

With the above points about why we did it, with the Sabbat nature being on full display, I think it is important for people to just know that I, The Sabbat Coord, and my Team, the Sabbat Coord Team, are not hunting down Characters or making demands that Characters be hunted down. We aren't advising characters to stalk characters at event games, we aren't tasking characters to sharpen their swords. But those things can and do happen, and what's really important to remember is, no rules changed.

What do I mean by that? Well, we get back to the topical line. **'You were always in danger.'** In the last few years the Org has gravitated towards more collaborative plots. And that has a lot of reasons why. Pandemic, the rise of Discord gaming, the need/want to have big wins and conclude large scale stories. But none of those plots that passed Council outlined a change to the genre or the sect politics of the Camarilla, the Anarchs, or the Sabbat as they concern one another. That is to say, the sometimes hot and sometimes cold war of hatred, ideological differences, and inherent violence between the sects has not changed or been changed in a very long time.

This creates a rough situation for OOC and IC. Where IC nothing has changed, but OOC there are some perceptive differences. New players who have only ever experienced Cross-Sect situations in times of Meta-Plot camaraderie. It is honestly very possible that newer players or players new to the Sect or regional/national play, had no idea the way things normally play out. And it's honestly unreasonable of me or any Coord to expect that every player in this game has read the LOTN, the Clan book, the specific Sect Splats, or all of V20 or even every packet that has been put out.

So, that puts us in a situation where characters IC, could be getting killed or attacked for what is standard cross-sect practices, for making decisions they thought OOC as the player, were perfectly normal and reasonable. And that? It leaves a bad taste in my mouth, it doesn't feel fair. I want to enforce consequence, it is very important to me that positive or negative, consequence plays out. But I do want to help players be accountable for their actions by at least ensuring they are informed.

And to that effect, I redirect you to The Consistories announcement. A stark, broad, direct reminder of the way things are. Piggybacked at the very front of the Ecumenical Council changes for the year, as a subtle nod to the concept of change being possible. Every year the politics play out again, and Ecumenical Council presents all Sabbat characters with a chance to offer up a change of policy, a change in the rules, or a change in the way the Sabbat addresses its masses.

Every year all Sabbat characters get the chance to then politick, scheme, plan, or sabotage other people's goals. You can owe boons to NPCs, you can call on your friends, you can lie, cheat, and steal! But what's important is that you do something, anything, to make sure you are pushing your agenda. Because someone always is, and if the agenda isn't what you want, and you aren't trying to make it happen, there is no promise that the way you want to see this genre evolve or change, is ever going to occur.

Anyway, there we have it folks. My take on the situation. A long winded way of reminding people that the genre is at war with everyone and itself, and if players want to enact real change to that fact, they need characters to enact change to that fact. If players want to know how? All they have to do is ask. I am so incredibly open to having players come to my office (with your staff's permission!) and just ask me literally anything. (How do I get thaum? How do I get into this

faction? How do I create dynamic change? How can I get on this NPC's radar? How can I join the team? How can I usurp my Archbishop and steal his favorite hellhound?) Please, always ask!

That's all I got folks, sorry this last one took a second to get out, the steam tank ran empty for a bit, but I hope it helped. And thanks to everyone who took part in my AMA last week, it meant a lot to me that I got to share more of myself with all of you, the people who make this volunteer stuff worth doing.

Be safe, have fun, and diablerize someone! Praise Caine!

~ Matt Armitage  
Sabbat Coordinator



*"We are One World By Night; a Community of collaborative story-telling, aiming to explore stories of triumph, loss, and the human soul. We are not just an organization of games and gamers, we are a Community of storytellers, together."*