

“Demons are symbols of the repressed elements of your personality. Demons do not exist, and any malevolent creatures that you may think you see or hear are hallucinations brought on by deep-state hypnosis.”

Most beta testers laughed when they saw that pop up when they loaded the app, but legal made us put that in. Not that any court would take serious a case involving demonic possession, but if for some reason they did... we're covered. If for some reason a beta tester stabbed her boyfriend twenty-eight times... the angel investors are covered. And most importantly, if the CTO sets himself on fire in his hotel room at an iOS conference... my equity is covered.

I was an iOS developer for Hallmark eCards. I made sure your grandparents were able to send you Hoops & Yoyo cards on your birthday on a device they barely understood how to use. It was uninspired coding, and my mind often wandered to fantasies of destroying the entire office. Guns. Bombs. Knives. I had one fantasy where I show up very early to the office and shoot each and every person in the back of the head as they walk to their desk. This fantasy gets more intricate every time I play through it. I wait by the elevator, follow each person to their desk making small talk about what they plan on doing this weekend. The moment they see another dead body, I shoot them with a silenced pistol. Soon the whole floor reeks of gunpowder and I just tell people “I don't smell anything” when they bring it up. I love the idea that people have a fleeting moment of realization that I'm going to kill them. I love imagining that our entire history together is completely re-evaluated in their mind in an instant. Eventually I just replay the look on their faces as my betrayal hits them. Soon I just montage the faces of everyone in the company with the same shocked expression. Over. And over. Again.

But I don't own a gun. I have to look away when people get shot in movies. I was very aware that this was just dissatisfaction with my path in life, and my own inner chaos wanting to strike out at the world around me. Still, by my estimates, the company was paying for at least 2 hours of mass murder fantasies a day.

While at Hallmark, I networked with Dan -- the future VP of Operations for Headspace, the meditation app. We connected via lunch table discussions on the sacerdotalism of Orphic Mysteries, Ahriman's role as the Nature of Evil in Mithraic Rites, the recently discovered fragments of the Book of Thoth, the unnamed gods in the Mad Arab's lesser writings, and the Gnostic teachings of Simon Magus.

Being raised Pentecostal, and witnessing many exorcisms performed by my father in trailers throughout the Dust Bowl, I always had an interest in Simon Magus and his abilities to force demonic forces to do his bidding. Most children would never hear much of the deeper mythos of Simon the Sorcerer, but my father wanted me to cast out demons from a young age. As you can imagine, the aspirations and practices of my father would lead to a bitter end to my parents' marriage. Before that fateful day, I was taught that Simon's demonic slaves were with him always. They supposedly spoke ancient truths to him that would make Hermes Trismegistus envious. I was hypnotized about stories of early opposition by Apostle Peter, and perhaps there

was some truth to their spiritual duels in Rome. But I doubt the most famous story: of how Simon Magus proved his power by commanding demons to fly him to heaven, and Peter banished them -- sending the great magician plummeting to his death. At the very least, this served as profoundly symbolic of the way the Christian church would persecute Simon's teachings and ideas for the next two millenia. They tried to eradicate the writings of the early Gnostic followers of Simon, but the texts would live on in the hidden corners of the church before passing on to Christian Kabbalists and onto the alchemists and down to the common Christians who fled to New England with Simon's belief in the power of man to wrend the supernatural to his will. The Shakers. The Mormons. The Pentecostals. All American religions had their roots in Simon. Of course, the elder powers that would be unleashed by the fringe practitioners in New England would become much of early American lore, and written about for centuries. In hindsight, these tales have served as an early warning to not provide the powers of Simon to those without the discipline of the "Bad Samaritan."

Alas, it was a discussion with Dan about my life goals, where I told him my dream was to put the powers of the religious elite in the hands of the common. I told him that I subscribed to Crowley's ideas of demons being repressed elements of the subconscious, and Jung's ideas of the shadow side -- which must be mastered to be a complete person. Simon's mastery of the dark elements of being is what made him and his teachings stronger than the church, because they eliminated the need for a church at all. I wanted to make everyone a Simon with the touch of a button.

When Dan went to Headspace, he mentioned that they had completed the first steps in my dream. The sort of meditation that was previously only accomplished by monks after decades of training could now be accomplished by any person in the world within minutes. But the market was already saturated with copycats. They needed more. They needed me to manifest my dreams into this realm. He offered me some company equity to do this, which helped pry me from the study gig with Hallmark.

Demonic evocation was the first step in a five years to market plan. Any sort of Elder gods or ancient deities would require actual sacrifice and be limited to the alignment of stars. This would be available as an in-app purchase in the final stage of the product, but there's a limited market for such things. We had weighed the possibilities of simply making a pseudo-AR experience that actually peeled back the hidden layers of insanity bubbling beneath our reality in the form of interdimensional abominations, but it became clear our customer churn rates would be through the roof if they all descended into madness. Demons were easy. Demons were fun. Demons were sexy. Marketing killed it with a concept for a series of teaser ads for an app called EVOKE, which sealed the deal. They even included a cute cartoon devil mascot that would walk you through the app. Gave him a calming british voice. The market validation was through the roof.

I had personally started using the Lesser Key of Solomon for evocation in high school. The reasons why require that I discuss my family life in middle school. In a most bitter of ironies, my mother ended up having an affair with one of the men that my father had cast a lust demon out