

# **THE HIDDEN BELOW**

**(c) 1994 by Soft Enterprises**

Soft Enterprises  
Nordstraße 10  
D-34630 Gilserberg

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# Credits

## **Programming:**

Martin Hoffesommer

## **Graphics:**

Michael Kolkau, Adrian Maleska,  
Björn Heußner, Yvonne Rinnert,  
Nicolai Beganer

## **Level Design:**

Björn Heußner, Tobias Warmann,  
Adrian Maleska, Yvonne Rinnert

## **Music/Sound effects:**

Dynamic Soundworks

## **Story:**

Nicolai Beganer

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If you are reading this, I have achieved my goal, because it means that someone has found my letter. I implore you to read each of these lines carefully, because I have something important to tell you, and this is how I must do it. By the time at which you hold this piece of paper in your hands, I am most likely already dead - if God was gracious to my soul. For in my situation, death can mean only salvation - I do not wish to think about the alternative.

Before you read any further, I want to ask you to make a promise: do not keep what I am about to tell you to yourself, but instead make my suffering mean something. Only if you share what you are about to learn with others, might there still be a chance to avert disaster.

My name shall play no role here, because I can trust no one: if this information were to fall into the wrong hands, I fear for the lives of my loved ones. All my life, I have dealt with filth, and experienced things that normal people would hardly have called ordinary. Murders, jealous wives, kidnapping, robbery ... all the filth of the earth. They paid me for it for years to eliminate this filth, because that's my job, private filth removal - they also call us private investigators. Now, for God's sake do not imagine some silver-screen hunk, born from the fantasy of some Hollywood director, surrounded by topless beauties, constantly full of booze and Colt 45's at hand. This job can be damn trivial and incredibly frustrating - at least it was until today. A single goddamn routine job has brought me into this deadly danger. It had all started so simply...

A regular client of my detective agency visited me early in the morning and asked me to investigate a mildly severe case of industrial espionage.

According to my client's statement, a rival company had copied engine parts from a special type of lawnmower he had developed. Of course, this was just a guess, but why else would you need my line of work? My task was to find the necessary evidence to convict the alleged spy – a completely routine job. Nevertheless, this thing had a huge catch: The company in question resided in a secluded location in the middle of the desert, not really the area where one usually imagines industrious lawnmower manufacturers. Then there was another problem, I could get no information about the exact location of the factory - probably due to fear of industrial espionage. However, my client was able to narrow down the area in question with relative accuracy, so that sooner or later I would probably be able to stumble upon the objective. Since I do not like to lose customers that pay well and on time, I took my entire daily ration of enthusiasm together, got into my rickety old car and started on my desert tour.

I do not believe in premonitions. Also, I cannot reliably say whether or not a desert is especially predisposed to stark changes in appearance. But this day seemed to be a little different than usual, and I could sense the change almost physically. It was late afternoon by the time I approached my destination. Twilight had already fallen and the sky darkened with ominous rapidity as I steered the car between bizarre rock formations that, in the ghostly twilight, appeared as threatening giants. Where the beam of my headlights wandered, they seemed to contract convulsively, as if the light caused them pain. The conditions outside seemed to me indicative of a sandstorm, and without warning a light wind arose, which seemed to support my suspicions. So I did the obvious thing and looked for a suitable place where I could most easily weather the rigors of the coming storm. I finally found shelter in the shade of a giant rock, behind which I parked my car. I turned off the engine and got out to try to confirm my suspicions about the

impending storm. Suddenly I was immersed in a sea of silence. Total silence hung over the oppressive sultriness of the country, eerie and unnatural. I grew up in this area, and I know that even this barren wasteland is usually not completely silent, but the only thing I could make out now was the sound of my own breathing. Suddenly a violent wind arose, which whipped grains of sand into my eyes. I hurried to my car, pulled the door open and hurriedly closed it behind me. Not a second too soon, because a moment later a massive storm broke out around me.

I cannot remember how long I spent in the hell of the storm, because my sense of time dwindled in the howling crescendo of organ tones and grains of sand. At one point I thought I saw a huge shadow far away from my car that seemed to creep along through the churning sand, but I attributed this phenomenon to my frayed nerves. While I write these lines, I know that this was not the case. But again, I digress. I do not have much time and must reach the end of my description.

Every sandstorm ends sometime, and since I had my car parked in a nice location, I did not need much time to recover the ability to drive. Meanwhile, it had become completely dark, and the cone of the headlights could cut through the oily blackness around me only with great difficulty. After I had gone some time, I saw before me the outlines of a massive fence, and eventually also the towering forms of gigantic factory buildings. I had finally arrived. What I did not know then was that this was not the factory that I was looking for.

After I parked the car at a safe distance to my target, I cautiously approached the building complex. Something about it immediately seemed strange, almost perverse. The architect who designed the monstrous buildings which

ominously loomed before me now, must have either been a crazed genius or a dangerous psychopath. There seemed to be no order in the tangle of large and small buildings, which stood out for their bizarre and completely impractical design. I could not continue to ponder this, as I suddenly arrived at a narrow opening in the outer fence. There did not seem to be any visible evidence of alarm systems, so I stepped through. To my right I spotted a half-open door in one of the larger buildings. Without thinking, I entered the hall.

Immediately a sickening stench enveloped me, which did not jive with the image I had in mind given the exterior of the factory. From the outside, the place seemed new - almost too new, but now here I was before an odor that one would have expected at a slaughterhouse.

Since the corridors were relatively well lit, I decided to explore the building closer to get some idea about the nature of the production facilities. If someone was to notice me, I was ready to tell them a heartfelt man-runs-into-a-sand-storm story. As I walked, I noticed that there were no stairs here which led to the upper floors of the building. So I followed a strange spiral staircase that had an elliptical cross section, and was made of some unknown clay material, deeper and deeper into the bowels of the building. The farther I penetrated, the more curious the interior became. I discovered maps of completely unknown lands that were provided in an unfamiliar writing. I saw walls that were covered with obscene pictures, which must have come from the imagination of a madman. And then I saw him ...

I had just walked through a low vault at the end of which I had seen an intense green light. I immediately surmised that this was the entrance to the production area. Suddenly, a humanoid creature staggered towards me, which seemed to come out of nowhere. I was immediately paralyzed with fear and tried to hide behind a false wall, but he had already spotted me and

staggered towards me. His legs were covered with large wounds and his long snow-white hair was present only in irregular tufts framing his pale and scarred face. The clothing of the figure consisted only of dirty rags hanging like threads around his emaciated body. He came up to me with outstretched arms and uttered unintelligible sounds. I wanted to do a headlong dive to the side for my own safety, because I wanted to avoid being touched by this walking pestilence. But this proved to be unnecessary. Just before he reached me, he collapsed, writhing on the ground as if in a febrile seizure, and let out nothing more than a quiet whimper.

Before the spirits left him, he directed his widened eyes on me like lunatic crosshairs. His final words were cried out as if in a trance, "They ... they will do away with the old ... destroy everything ... the world ... I've seen it ... someone has to stop them ... I have seen the damn generator ... God help us ..." Then he slumped to the ground like a bundle of rags and was dead.

I must have crouched, stunned, in front of him, because I did not notice the guard, who approached me from behind. He had apparently discovered me long ago. When I heard the noise behind me, I turned around and saw a creature that, despite my best efforts I cannot describe, for a definition of this horror would paralyze me even in writing. It was not a man but an incarnate hideousness, born from a terrible nightmare. I did not resist, as I was led away, because I knew that this was my end.

For many hours now, I have been sitting in a small honeycomb-like room and writing this report. My weapon was taken away from me, but they have not discovered the knife that I hide in my boots. If I correctly understood the poor devil who breathed his last before me, I do not have much time. Whoever these beings are, and from whatever nightmare they originate, they follow a

plan that puts all people on this planet in mortal danger. I do not think that I can thwart this plan, but I swear to God I will try anything to stop them.

Now I hear scuttling steps and shrill whistling outside my cell door. A foul smell begins pouring in through the door crack. They have come to get me. I take the knife and wait ...



# **1. Preliminaries**

## **1.1 Package Contents**

Your game package should contain the following items:

CD-ROM

Manual (this thing)

Technical Reference Card

Order form for the adult version of THB

## **1.2 Recent Notes**

The latest changes, improvements and/or corrections can be found in the README.TXT file on the CD.

# **2. Installation and Starting the game.**

After starting the game, you must specify which device you want to play with: keyboard, joystick or gamepad. Simply type the appropriate letter.

If you select the joystick, you will then have to calibrate it, i.e. The program will measure the joystick tolerances.

Next, the intro begins. This can be aborted - just like any other movie - by pressing the [Esc] key.

A tip: If you notice the movie sound effects stuttering, check your sound card installation. If this is correct, either your CD-ROM drive or your computer is too slow. If it is a slow CD-ROM drive, you can store the movies on the hard drive by choosing the "maximum installation" (see reference card).

On the other hand, if the problem is a slow computer, there is only one fix: In the Options menu, disable the cutscenes!

### **3. The Main Menu**

You have the following choices:

- New Game
- Load Game
- Options
- Credits
- Scores
- Music
- Quit

To select the different options you can use the [Up][Down] keys or use the joystick. Press [Space], or the fire button to select an option. These controls apply to all menus in THB.

### **3.1 New Game**

Before starting the actual game you have the choice of three levels of difficulty. These differ in the number of enemies and how resilient you are to damage.

Press [Esc] to return to the main menu.

### **3.2 Load Game**

The menu shows you the saved games. Choose the game you want to load and tap the [Enter] key. Use [Esc] to return to the main menu.

### **3.3. Options**

In this part of the program, you can adjust some settings. These options are selected with [Left / Right] and [Space].

The following options can be set:

- X Res: Select low (80 pixels), medium (160 pixels) and high (320 pixels)
- Y Res: Select normal (240 pixels) and high (400 pixels)
- Screen size: Here, the size of the screen image can be changed.
- Music volume: Set the volume of the music.
- F / X volume: Here you can change the volume of the effects (SBPro only).

- Movie F / X: If the movie effects stutter, you can disable them with this.

### **3.4 Credits**

This is the most important part of the game. It should, however, not be taken too seriously...

### **3.5 Scores**

This part of the game is designed for those who want to have another look at the rankings: Displays the high score table.

### **3.6 Music**

If you never tire of listening to the sound of THB, here you can play all of the available in-game music and effects .

### **3.7 Quit**

This ends the game.

## 4. Controls

**[Up] [Down]** Move forward/backward

**Shift + [Up] [Down]** Run

**[Left] [Right]** Left / Right Turn

**Shift + [Left] [Right]** Turn quickly

**Alt + [Left] [Right]** Strafe

**[Ctrl]** Attack / Shoot

**[Space]** to use things (video monitors, openable doors, take armor)

**[Caps]** crouch mode on/off

**[Tab]** Map window on / off (if card found)

**[M]** Full Screen Map on / off (if card found)

**[Q]** look up

**[A]** Look forward again

**[Z]** look down

**[Esc]** Load / Save menu, quit game

**[P]** pause, end the pause by pressing [P] again

**[F1] - [F3]** to select slashing weapon (if available)

**[F4]** Select mines (if available)

**1-9,0** Weapon select (if available)

**[F5]-[F6]** Increase or reduce horizontal and vertical screen resolution (HiRes)

**[F10] - [F12]** Select viewing mode: infrared, night vision, normal (if available)

When controlling with the Joystick, 'Attack / Shoot' and 'Strafe' are mapped to the two buttons. When using the GamePad, 'Run' and 'Use' are mapped to the other two buttons.

## **5. Load / Save menu (during the game)**

In this menu, you can resume the game, or load or save a game.

To load a saved game, simply move the gun to an appropriate place and then press [L]. The saved game is then loaded. Saving a game is similar, except you press [S] ("Save"). You can then enter a short description of the game state.

## **6. Game Elements**

### **6.1 Doors**

There are many types of doors in THB. Many are easy to open with [Space], or even open by themselves. Some, however, can be opened only with a corresponding key card, which is located somewhere in the game. These doors can be identified by reading the side-mounted control panel (or observing the fact that the door doesn't open when you don't have the appropriate card). There are eight different key cards.

### **6.2 Elevators**

Elevators in THB move regardless of whether someone is standing on them. Just position yourself on one and wait ...

### **6.3 Jumping**

Jumping is possible to a limited extent in THB. If you run towards a cliff, you can make it across short abysses. This is necessary in some later levels.

### **6.4 Video Mode**

Sometimes you will find an wall-mounted video terminal. Simply stand in front of it and press [Space]. The video mode is then activated, and you see through a camera that is placed somewhere in the level. If you have already found the map of each level, you will also see where the camera is located.

Normally, the camera is in automatic mode, ie panning and zooming are performed by themselves. This can be turned on and off by pressing [A].

In manual mode, the camera with can be controlled with the [Left] [Right] [Down] [Up] keys. Zoom in / out is carried out with left [Shift] and left [Ctrl]. The video mode is terminated by pressing the [Space] key again.

## **6.5 Switches**

A switch is simply represented by a lever in the wall. Whole sections of a level can be changed by a switch, and objects can be made to appear or disappear. Some switches can be operated only once, others can be toggled on and off.

## **6.6 Holo-Walls**

Some of the walls in the game look like normal walls, but in reality they are only holographic projections of walls, which are used to disguise secret rooms. You can easily walk through these holographic walls.

## **6.7 Opponents**

There are many different enemies in THB. They can be extremely stupid, but there are also more intelligent foes among them. If you hear a scream, for example, then this was an alien calling for assistance. In this case, you should seek cover as quickly as possible.

## **6.8 Teleporters**

To use a teleporter, simply enter it. You will then arrive at another teleporter. There are three different types of teleporters. You will always be transported between the same type of teleporter.

Sometimes it may happen that you encounter a one-way teleporter, i.e. you will not be able to teleport back.

## **6.9 Conveyor Belts**

These simply automatically move in one direction in the level.

## **6.10 Weapons / Ammo / Health Packs**

Weapons, ammunition, and health packs are easily absorbed by touch.

## **6.11 Stealth**

Opponents can cloak themselves. These will be virtually invisible to you. Conversely, you can also cloak yourself. Just pick up a blue S when you find one. You are then in stealth mode for a certain period of time. In this mode, the opponents cannot see you and will not attack.

## **6.12 Shields**

By picking up a red [S] you get a temporary shield that protects you from any damage.

## **6.13 Barrels**

You can destroy some barrels and other items by repeatedly firing upon them.

## **6.14 Acid and Acid Drips**

In later levels there are rivers of acid and acid dripping from the ceiling. Acid hurts the player when touched.

## **6.15 Infrared Vision**

If you have found the infrared vision device, you can activate the infrared view by pressing [F10]. In this mode, you can see cloaked enemies normally.

## **6.16 Night Vision**

In THB there are some rooms that are so dark you can see NOTHING. Here the night vision device is useful which - if found - can be enabled using [F11].

## **6.17 Armor**

In some places you can find in THB a combat suit. This intercepts damage. As long as at least half the energy of the suit is still available, there is a special display which shows where the next opponent is (even to some extent through walls). This display can be switched on and off by [T].

Note: Armor is not acquired by touch alone. Rather, you have to position yourself in front of the armor and then press [Space].

### **6.18 Compass**

If you have found this, the current direction of view is always displayed.

### **6.19 Card / Alien Scanner**

If you have found the Automap, this is always indicated on the top right corner of the screen. By [Tab] you can switch this display on and off, or switch with [M] to the full picture mode.

Additionally, the enemies in the area will be displayed, if you have found the Alien scanner.

### **6.20 Radioactivity**

In some areas radioactivity is present. However, this can be resisted by taking appropriate protection.