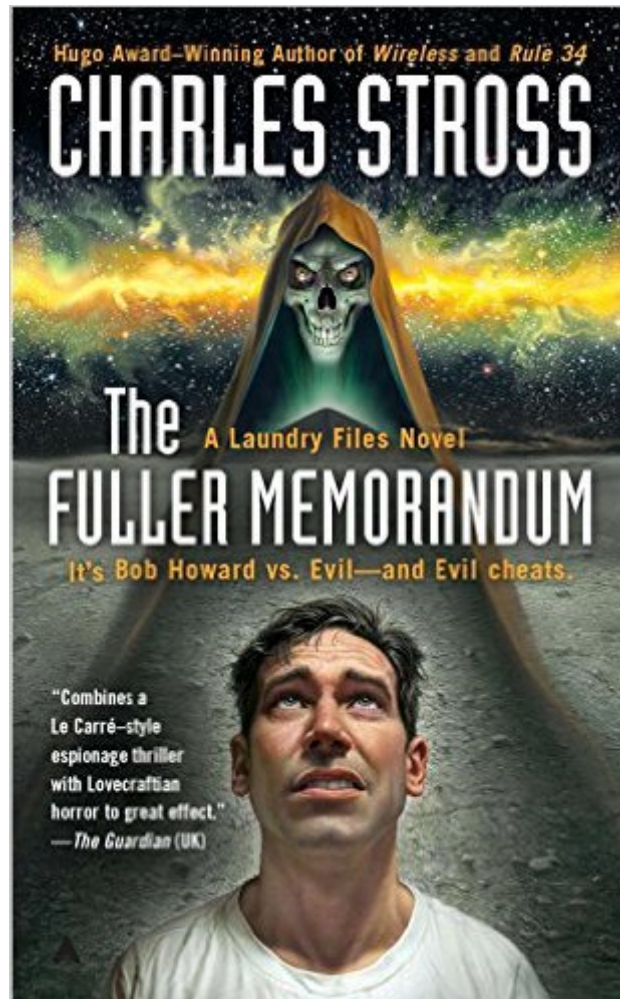


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# The Fuller Memorandum (A Laundry Files Novel)



## Synopsis

Computational demonologist Bob Howard is catching up on his filing in the Laundry archives when a top secret dossier known as the Fuller Memorandum vanishes-along with his boss, who is suspected of stealing the file. And while dealing with Russian agents, ancient demons, and a maniacal death cult, Bob must find the missing memorandum before the world ends up disappearing next.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bob Howard is a minor cog in a dangerous machine - the Laundry, a secret British department dedicated to protecting the nation from Lovecraftian horrors. In this universe, Lovecraft unwittingly stumbled on more of the truth than he knew. he was followed by Turing, who discovered that abominations from other dimensions can be summoned by mathematical theorems and invoked by computer code. Would be tech support worker Howard has much more to worry about than the office cabling or backups. This is the third in Stross's much praised Laundry series afterÂ The Atrocity ArchivesÂ andÂ The Jennifer Morgue. They are good, but in my view this is the best yet, pitting Howard against foreign spies, cultists and his own missing boss as he races to retrieve the missing memorandum itself. TFM picks up themes from the earlier books, being stuffed with technology in-jokes, nods to The Register (so, Bob's shiny new iPhone is constantly described as his "jesusphone"), and scenes of office life as well as darker humour. We also learn more about the Laundry itself - its history, personnel (look out for the "residual human resources") and why it is so

obsessed with paperclip security - as well as the true purpose of London's Post Office Underground Railway. The previous two books were styled and structured as tributes to/ affectionate pastiches of, respectively, Len Deighton and Ian Fleming, as Stross subverted the conventions of the Cold War thriller to address his cosmic occult threat. That added to the humour - watching Bob flailing in his part as James Bond, and ticking off the tropes in Jennifer Morgue, was great fun - but it also, possibly, sidelined the true and developing nature of the threat facing the Laundry and its world. The current book is avowedly based on the novels of Anthony Price, - see for example *Other Paths to Glory* (Coronet Books). When Stross made this known on his website I went off and ordered a number of them (they're mostly out of print now, which is a pity. I've been hunting second hand bookshops since to complete my collection.) However I didn't find *Fuller Memorandum* as close to Price as the earlier two books were to their models. Yes, some of the classic Price tropes are there - the urgent but mysterious threat whose secret can only be found in history, the trusted figure who has become unreliable. However, the one that strikes me most in Price's books - the bizarre skein of double, triple and quadruple motivations, the total perplexity about what is really going on - doesn't figure anything like so strongly as I'd expected or even as much as in many of Stross's other books. (It goes without saying that Stross has better characterisation and dialogue). I think that *Fuller Memorandum* is the better for this. Without ever being obvious - there is a lot happening here and you have to follow it carefully - it feels a bit less... crowded... than some of his other work, including the other two Laundry novels, and the book is the better for it. The plot has room to breathe. The characters really take shape. I think that as the series is growing up Stross is freeing it from the earlier models and forging his own tone for it, a distinctively Laundryverse tone which I'm looking forward to more of. While waiting, there's *The Laundry* role-playing game, which looks fun. So, go out, get this, read it, you'll love it (or else your soul has already been eaten by you-know-what).

This is Charles Stross's third novel in the ongoing story of Bob Howard, a career computer programmer and IT guy who happens to work at "The Laundry," the British Civil Service arm designated to protect against threats mystical and magical. Stross here cooks the familiar stew of geek references, office politics parody, spy thriller, and Lovecraftian occult esoterica that's flavored the Laundry series so well so far, and if you liked the first two books (*The Atrocity Archives* and *The Jennifer Morgue*) you'll like this one (although it's closer to the post-cold-war spy-thriller tone of the first book than the Bond-esque stylings of the second). Fans of the series will find out more about the mysterious past of Howard's boss, Angleton, and you'll see some further development of Howard's relationship with his now-wife, Dominique O'Brian. The book maintains a

thriller-appropriate level of tension throughout, with some lighthearted moments, and numerous references to geek culture (such as a series of comic descriptions of an iPhone, and a buried allusion to Jim Butcher's *Dresden Files* books). Where this volume does differ from the prior two books is in its sense of escalation. The occult players in Bob Howard's world are all moving towards "CASE NIGHTMARE GREEN," the coming apocalyptic incursion of Lovecraftian Elder Gods into our reality, projected to happen sometime in the next few years of series-time. This volume has a definite sense of players shifting for position in game with increasing stakes -- if the first two books were set to "warm," this one cooks at a simmer, and it's pretty clear Stross plans to take us all the way to boiling in the next few books. If he maintains this level of quality, I'll be looking forward to them. If you want a free foretaste of the Laundry series, there are two Laundry/Bob Howard short stories available on the web for free, respectively titled "Overtime" and "Funny Farm". "Overtime", at least, can be grabbed for free from the Kindle store, here: [Overtime: A Tor.Com Original](#)

Charlie Stross is an excellent writer and I can't recall anything of his that wasn't worth reading. The "Laundry" books, about the secret bureaucracy of, as it were, anti-spooks who guard the UK from Lovecraftian extradimensional horrors is, however, his best work -- with the "Merchant Princes" series a close second. The dry humor and dynamite action combine with considerable psychological insight to make this top-of-the-line scienced fantasy and just plain damned good writing.

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