



What Lies Beneath #01

Ever gone back to a web page, to get that useful information you saw, as you *finally* had just the use for it in your Call Of Cthulhu Scenario? - Only to find its gone? Losing 1d4 Sanity? Aaaaaaagh! Me too!

These articles are all grabbed off the web, but now in a format that won't dissapear (unless **you** delete it!). We intend to include anything useful to a GM we find, no stories, no poems, no jokes or rubbish. Just scenaros, spells, ideas, people, items etc.

In this issue;

Scenario: And A Ghoul Hiding Under The Tree

Creature & Scenario Idea: Two Christmas Goats

Scenario: Four Visiting Ghosts (A Christmas Carol)

Scenario Template: Murderous Fiend

Scenario Idea: The Reanimated

Scenario Idea: Eleven Changeling Children

Grimoire: Some New Spells

Scenario: The Horror in the Mine

Scenario Idea: Mary Alpert's Homepage

Crossover Ideas: Tales Of The Blair Witch Mythos

Creatures And Scenario Idea: Ten Evil Toys

Good Goes Bad: The Book Bound In Human Skin

See you soon, don't let the Moonbeasts bite!

Scenario

And A Ghoul Hiding Under The Tree

Richard Upton Pickman demonstrated the relative ease with which a human can devolve into the homovoric depths of ghouldom. However, what if a human, once descended to that bestial plane, decides that it wants to recapture his humanity.

Meet Timothy Fenwick. Or rather, the ghoul who used to be Timothy Fenwick. Right now he's just a nameless ghoul gnawing on the bones of the dead. The tiny bit of the ghoul's mind that is still Timothy Fenwick has decided, "Hey, being a ghoul sucks." So, on a fine December day in the 1920s, he decides that he's going to be human again, and the surest way to doing that is by spreading Christmas cheer.

There are a few problems with Fenwick's little plan. First is that, well, Fenwick doesn't quite recall when Christmas is. Second is that he doesn't know what "spreading Christmas cheer" is all about. He dimly recalls stories of someone going into houses and leaving gifts, so that seems like a good idea. Which leads to problem number three: He doesn't recall what it is that you leave as a gift, so he leaves something he's fond of. That's right: Rotting human flesh.

So, Timothy Fenwick is going door to door in early December, breaking in (not particularly subtly, either), and leaving behind the grisly remains of his last meal. An ear. A hand. Sometimes a head. There's a lot of houses, and he's only one little ghoul, so he'll be at this for days to come. Occasionally he'll forget what he's doing, and grabs a small snack while he's leaving gifts.

Investigators, not to mention their friends and family, may come down the stairs to find bloody gobbets of human tissue piled in the general neighborhood of their Christmas tree. They may even hear a ruckus downstairs and descend to find Ghoully Tim leaving his bounteous treasures.

Seeing a body part causes 0/1d3 SAN loss.

Seeing the ghoul formerly known as Timothy Fenwick causes 0/1d6.

Timothy is a pretty average ghoul, so you can get his stats straight out of the main rules.

So where do you go from here? Well, investigators have a few options.

- Ignore the ghoul: This is the easy solution, and an awfully annoying one for a Keeper. The players may just decide they don't enjoy this lame mockery of The Nightmare Before Christmas and choose to ignore the problem and use it as an opportunity to talk about the upcoming Lord of the Rings flick. At this point all you can do is have the ghoul raid one of their homes and hope they care.

- Find the ghoul: This can be easy or hard, depending on circumstances. If the Investigator happens across Tim Fenwick in his living room leaving gifts, well, that's pretty easy. However, if the Investigator tries to go hunt him down through the city, it's

a little hard. The problem is, Timothy isn't very organized about this gift-giving spree of his. Each night the Investigators look for the ghoul, have them roll against LUCKx2. If they succeed, they find Timothy.

So what do you do with a gift giving ghoul once you find him? The typical gamer response is to blow the little git away with your shotgun. Because really: It's a ghoul. Even a well intentioned one is still a tomb-raiding eater of human flesh.

However, particularly clever/smarmy players may decide to try and capture the ghoul alive. This particular solution may leave your half your group having to make new characters after your attempt at a lighthearted and fun holiday session of Cthulhu. However, it's a noble one, in a strange sort of way.

Here are some possibilities for you to consider if you have a capture ghoul on your hands:

- Do you attempt to keep him as a pet? This is problematic in that, well, ghouls eat human flesh. And, what are you going to do with the ghoul in captivity, anyway?

- Do you attempt to rehabilitate him? At the Keeper's discretion, players may try to aid Timothy along his path to humanity. This could be a noble activity that could result in some SAN restoration for the players.

- Do you reintroduce him to the wild? One last possibility is that they just drive out to the middle of nowhere, and dump him out. It's then up to the Keeper what fate will then befall little Timmy Fenwick.

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Creature & Scenario Idea

Two Christmas Goats

The Finnish apparently refer to Santa Claus as Joulupukki. However, Joulupukki was not always the jolly old elf we know and love today. No, apparently Joulupukki, whose name literally means "Yule Buck", was originally an evil spirit with goat horns clad in goat skins. This Christmas Goat would go around demanding, not giving out, gifts. What's more, in Iceland they had a giant Yule Cat that went around eating lazy people. And where there are strange legends of demonic creatures, there's a Call of Cthulhu adventure to be found! (Or, at the very least, an X-Files episode.)

So, for this scenario, we create our own Joulupukki, a predatory creature from the hinterlands of Scandinavia. It has a sleek and lithe cat-like body covered in thick and shaggy white fur, with opposable thumbs on all four of its hands/feet. It has a lashing, barbed tale, long talons, and a horrid maw filled with glistening white fangs. Oh, and two goat-like horns (the straight kind, not the big curling kind) coming up from its head. It moves primarily on all fours, but can rear up and function as a biped as needed.

The Joulupukki primarily dwell in the great North, devilling communities throughout Scandinavia and parts of Russia. For the most part they prefer to dwell far from civilization, but occasional changes in their eating habits force them closer to the habitations of humanity, adding "human" to their diet.

Mortimer Doyle, a big game hunter, heard legends of the Joulupukki and decided he was going to seek out these rare and wonderful creatures for a private zoo that he was assembling. And, after several months of hard hunting, he captured a mated pair, loaded them on a ship, and set sail for home.

Home just happens to be wherever the Investigators are at. Convenient, isn't it?

To make a long story short: He gets back, they escape (and kill Doyle in the process) and set about investigating the area for places to get food and shelter. Investigators will find friends and relatives turned into light noshes for the Joulupukki pair. Responsible Investigators will seek to stop this problem. Irresponsible/sensible Investigators will decide that Palm Springs sounds lovely this time of year.

For responsible players, here's what they will face:

Joloupukki (2)

STR 21

CON 15

SIZ 14

POW 10

DEX 19

Move 10

HP 14

Weapons: Bite 45%, damage 1d10+DB
Claw 70%, damage 1d8+DB
Tailbarb 45%, damage 1d6+DB
Armor: 4-point skin.
Skills: Move Quietly 90%,
Hide in Cover 90%, Track 50%.
Damage Bonus: +1d6

They may investigate things and learn that Mr. Doyle was a hunter who wanted to add freaky Scandinavian monsters to his private zoo (he was going to put them between the elephant and the tiger). They can find his notes on the creature, his journal of the hunt ("Day 32: Damn, it's cold." "Day 33: Damn, it's cold." "Day 34: Still no sign of the critters. Damn, it's cold."), and some transcriptions of some Laplander legends of scary critters coming by in the winter and eating people, it's Yuletide legends and the like. In the end, they have to deal with the critters, either through TRACK tests or by LUCK rolls of some sort. Hijinks then ensue.

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Scenario

Four Visiting Ghosts (A Christmas Carol)

In 1843, Charles Dickens published A Christmas Carol, this is based upon the story.

Archibald Gladtree is a wealthy man about town in the town where the Investigators happen to be holed up at the moment. Unlike other rich people, he's generally likable, which sets him apart already from Ebenezer Scrooge. If he were a miserly bastard, then you'd have trouble convincing Investigators to help him. Instead they'd just scoff at his plight, claiming it he deserves it for being such a miser, and then get distracted talking about upcoming course of the Harry Potter books, and how to adapt Lord Voldemort to various game settings.

Mr. Gladtree's plight is this: he's been visited by an alleged spirit this Christmas Eve. The "ghost" of a dead business partner, Owen Smythe. Owen was going to claim, falsely, that Mr. Gladtree had led a selfish and petty life and would have to learn the meaning of Christmas through the visitations of three ghosts. But Owen didn't make it past his appearance before Mr. Gladtree lost enough SAN from the sight of his dead and slightly cadaverous friend to cause him to flee out of his house and through the streets. He finally found himself, coincidentally, at the doorstep of one of the Investigators.

The Investigators are, for sake of this scenario, spending a Christmas Eve together, recounting tales of misadventures past. ("Like that time the Deep One nearly bit Charlie's leg off. Lord, wasn't that a hoot!")

Once the Investigators are getting down to some serious nog consumption, a knocking comes at their door and, lo and behold, there's Mr. Gladtree gibbering something about visiting spirits. Hopefully your Investigators will feel obliged to do some actual investigating, especially since Mr. Gladtree is supposed to be a likeable chap. And everyone likes to help likeable chaps, right? Otherwise, well: Lord Voldemort.

So the background is this: a cabal of sorcerers, feeling peevish, has decided to play a practical joke on Mr. Gladtree. Unlike other cabals, they don't have any sort of agenda outside the accrual of base power, and they figured, "Hey, what good is base power if we don't actually use it?" We've never at any point claimed that these are clever mages. They're just talented ones.

What they have done is animated a few corpses from the local graveyard, including Mr. Smythe. (He's stayed remarkably well preserved.) The corpses have a glamour about them that makes them seem ghostly. The sorcerers are able to control the animated corpses from a distance. They are also able to create controlled mass hallucinations in the area around the animated corpses.

Mr. Smythe appeared at 11 PM of Christmas Eve. The others are to arrive hourly, at midnight, 1 AM, and 2 AM. For each of these creatures, they also possess the INT, POW and skills of their masters. Each spirit projects the occupants of the room into the mass hallucination described above. Each hallucination is tied in some way to the

particular "ghost". So, the Ghost of Christmas Past presents images from Mr. Gladtree's past.

However, all the images are false. They depict Mr. Gladtree as a bloody tyrant with peculiar sexual tastes. Investigators of more dubious moral bent may recognize some of the more lurid scenes as coming from a recent popular collection of ribald tales. This being the Victorian era, Investigators may lose 0/1 SAN for viewing such naughtiness.

Each vision lasts about an hour. Gladtree finds the visions insulting and vulgar, but seems most disturbed by the Ghosts that bring them. Gladtree and the Investigators will only have enough time to catch their breath before the next one comes. Provided they wait that long. There's nothing to stop them from beating the tar out of the animated corpses. Stats can be found below.

If the Investigators fight and destroy one of the animated dead, the vision ceases immediately. The cultists will abandon their fun, and seek to high themselves out of town. Investigators with a bit of Occult knowledge can figure out what the cultists would have needed to perform the raising of the dead, and can track down the cultists. What they do from there is entirely up to the players.

Ghost of Christmas Past

This is effectively a zombie child. Players may make an Idea roll to recognize the child as William Morgan, who died a few days prior after a sledding accident. His skull still looks a little pulpy in front from the rock that ended his life. He is glowing in a strange unearthly light. Players who recognize the child lose another 1/1d6 SAN.

STR 7
CON 16
SIZ 6
INT 10*
POW 16*
DEX 7
Move 6
HP 11

Damage Bonus: -1d4

Weapons:

Bite 30%, damage 1d3+DB

Punch 25%, damage 1d3+DB

Armor: Impaling weapons do 1 point of damage, others do half rolled.

Skills: See cultists

*Attributes inherited from manipulating cultist.

The Ghost of Christmas Present

This was Seamus O'Reilly, the local butcher prior to his unfortunate demise. (Doctors are calling it apoplexy!) Seamus was a big, fat cuss, with fists the size of hams.

STR 20
CON 20
SIZ 19
INT 10*
POW 16*
DEX 4
Move 4
HP 19

Damage Bonus: +1d6

Weapons:

Bite 30%, damage 1d3+DB

Punch 25%, damage 1d3+DB

Armor: Impaling weapons do 1 point of damage, others do half rolled.

Skills: See cultists

*Attributes inherited from manipulating cultist.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come

This is simply an animated skeleton in a robe. Use the statistics for "Human Skeleton" from the rules. Substitute INT 10 and POW 16 for normal stats.

STR 10
CON 10
SIZ 10
INT 10
POW 16
DEX 10
APP 8
EDU 18
SAN 0
HP 10

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Fist/Punch 50%, 1d3

Spells: Contact Nyarlathotep, Create Gate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, *Virtual Realism, **Animate Dead

Skills: Astronomy 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 81%, Fast Talk 40%, Hide 65%, History 40%, Occult 65%, Organize Cult 60%, Persuade 40%, Sneak 30%

*Virtual Realism is the mass hallucination spell. It effectively allows the caster to force victims to experience whatever the caster can imagine. Costs 3 Magic Points. A variant of this spell allows the caster interact with the area surrounding his animated dead.

**Animate Dead is a spell I don't feel like describing. It allows you animate corpses, and costs you bunches of SAN.

Scenario Template

Murderous Fiend

In the tradition of Friday the Thirteenth's Jason Vorhees, the murderous fiend is a template that can be added to any normal human to turn him into a virtually unstoppable killing machine. The murderous psychopath is a force of nature. He absorbs tremendous amount of punishment and keeps coming back for more. Worst of all, he tends to show up at the worst moment possible. Run all you want, he's always right behind you.

In Call of Cthulhu, such a figure can quickly devolve into self-parody. After all, slasher movie tropes are hoary enough that films such as *Scream* can build entire film franchise out of poking fun at them. The murderous psychopath is a dangerous tool that cultists can dispatch to defeat the investigators. Worse, he may have once been a valued ally whose sanity has been blasted away by exposure to alien entities, transforming him into a murderous fiend. The characters should never directly confront him until their decisive showdown with him. They come across the remains of his victims, find evidence of his activities, but he remains a shadowy, menacing figure. Make a point to avoid the cheesy boilerplate trotted out by slasher films: cars that never seem to start when the murderer is about, investigators who suddenly trip on their own feet as the slasher chases them, and so on. Call of Cthulhu demands much subtler horror than that.

Instead, the murderous psychopath lurks behind the facade of the normal. He may seem a little off-kilter, but not enough for him to qualify as a killer. Ideally, the characters find evidence of his actions while interacting with him socially. Such a quick turn can enforce the subtle horror of CoC and challenge the players' investigative and deductive skills. Only when the characters directly confront him does his ability to relentlessly stalk his victims become apparent. Think along the lines of movies such as *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and HPL stories such as *The Picture in the House*.

Creating a Murderous Fiend

"Murderous fiend" is a template that can be applied to any human whose sanity has dropped to —10. For all practical purposes, a murderous fiend has no sanity score and never makes checks against it. A murderous fiend's creature type becomes monstrous humanoid. Apply the following changes to the character:

Hit Dice: Increase to d8.

Attacks: The murderous fiend replaces his old base attack bonus with one equal to his total hit dice. He also gains a slam attack in place of his unarmed strike.

Damage: The murderous fiend's slam attack deals damage according to its size. Tiny fiends deal 1d3 damage, Small ones 1d4, Medium-size 1d6, Large 1d8, Huge 2d6, Gargantuan 2d8, and Colossal 4d6.

Special Attacks: The murderous fiend strikes with horrifying effectiveness. He gains proficiency with all melee weapons, increases the threat range of any melee weapon

he uses by 1, and boosts a melee weapon's critical multiplier by 1. In addition, the murderous fiend automatically confirms any critical threats he scores in melee combat.

Special Qualities: The murderous fiend gains damage reduction 10/+1. He absorbs physical attacks with ease and is incredibly difficult to put down. In addition, the fiend's twisted insights allow him to expertly conceal his involvement in any crime. Increase the Search or Spot DCs to find clues at the scenes of his crimes by +5. The fiend's peculiar madness also makes it easy for him to lie to others about his involvement in his slayings. He gains a +5 competence bonus to all Bluff checks. Characters using Sense Motive against him tend to read him as a guileless, if perhaps eccentric, innocent. Finally, the fiend's twisted mind is proof against attempts to influence it. He is immune to all mind-affecting spells and abilities.

Saves: The murderous fiend has a preternatural ability to avoid danger. He gains a +2 bonus to all Fortitude and Reflex saves.

Abilities: The fiend gains a +4 bonus to Strength, Constitution, and Wisdom.

CR: As base creature +2.

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Scenario idea

The Reanimated

Inspired by the rather amusing mid-80's horror film Re-Animator, which was in turn inspired by the HP Lovecraft story "Herbert West — Reanimator", this template that may be applied to any animal or humanoid that died and has been exposed to the loathsome revivifying process developed by Dr. Herbert West. West's process requires a freshly dead body that has not been preserved in any manner. Furthermore, all its vital organs must be intact. However, once a corpse is reanimated it attains tremendous strength, durability, and endurance.

Creating the Reanimated

"Reanimated" is a template that can be applied to any human or animal. The creature's type changes to undead. The creature must be dead, its corpse intact, and injected with the revivifying fluid developed by Herbert West. It retains its memories and acquires a tremendous drive to stalk and kill those responsible for its undead status. Once reanimated, a creature's statistics are modified as follows. Unless otherwise noted, it retains its original class levels, spells, skills, feats, and other abilities.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12.

Armor Class: The creature gains a +2 natural bonus to AC.

Attacks: The creature gains a slam attack using its original base attack bonus. It keeps any natural attacks it had in life, such as a bite or claw.

Damage: The reanimated's slam attack deals damage according to its size. Tiny reanimated deal 1d3 damage, Small ones 1d4, Medium-size 1d6, Large 1d8, Huge 2d6, Gargantuan 2d8, and Colossal 4d6.

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/+1, darkvision 60 ft., undead qualities, conceal state, track creator, we are legion.

Conceal State (Ex): The reanimated may disguise its horrific state by wearing bulky clothes and making an effort to blend in with its surroundings. At first glance, a reanimated without obvious wounds simply appears to be a hulking, shuffling brute. As a body must be relatively intact to undergo West's process, most reanimated appear normal at a casual glance. A reanimated may make a Disguise check to pass escape notice by the living.

Track Creator (Su): The reanimated has a constant sense of the location of its creator relative to its own. Though the creature does not necessarily know the exact location of its creator, it does know the general direction and distance it must travel to find him. A reanimated automatically recognizes the person or persons responsible for its undead state on sight. The reanimated live in a constant state of pain and seek to avenge themselves against those responsible for it.

We Are Legion (Ex): All of the creatures reanimated by a particular researcher share

a common bond. They eagerly work together to destroy the one responsible for their creation and have an intuitive link they use to sense one another and form an alliance.

Abilities: The reanimated gains a +8 bonus to Strength, a —2 penalty to Dexterity, and a —4 penalty to Intelligence and Charisma. As undead creatures, the reanimated do not have Constitution scores. If these changes drop an ability score below the minimum needed for a feat or other feature, the reanimated loses the use of those features. For example, a reanimated that had the Dodge feat in life may no longer use it if his Dexterity drops below 13 as a result of applying this template.

Skills: A reanimated creature gains 5 ranks in Climb, Jump, and Listen.

Feats: The reanimated gains the Toughness feat.

CR: As base creature +1.

Climate/Terrain: Any.

Sanity Loss: 1/1d6 or as base creature, whichever is higher.

Dr. Herbert West's Research Notes

These battered, yellowed notebooks' mundane appearance contrasts with the remarkably brilliant yet horrifying information they contain. In the course of Herbert West's studies, he unearthed ghastly secrets of the divide between life and death that allowed him to formulate a chemical that can bring a creature back from the dead. The body to be revived must be in good condition, complete with its vital organs. It may not have been embalmed or otherwise prepared for burial.

Herbert West never succeeded in reviving a person into a sane, fully thinking state. Instead, those he animated came back as murderous beasts who seek the death and dismemberment of the one responsible for their state. Unfortunately, West insisted that he merely needed a fresh enough body to successfully revive the dead. His notes make passing references to the horrors he unleash, but primarily focus on the potential his process holds for restoring the dead to life.

Herbert West's Research Notes: In English, by Dr. Herbert West, A. D. 1920. These three battered notebooks are written in a flowing, confident script. They summarize Herbert West's research into revivifying the dead but, unluckily for any who read them, make only passing mention of the difficulties West faced. Examination Period: 2d4 weeks (DC 25). Contains no spells. Sanity Loss: 0 initial, 1d4 upon completion. Cthulhu Mythos: +0 ranks. Special: Anyone who reads and successfully studies this work gains the ability to produce the formula used by Dr. West to re-animate the dead. Each dose costs \$25 (1920's campaigns) or \$200 (modern campaigns) to produce, one week of work, and a Knowledge (chemistry) check of DC 25. In order to fully comprehend the process outlined in this book, the reader must have at least 6 ranks in Heal or Knowledge (medicine). Upon completing an examination of this book, the reader must make an Intelligence check (DC 20) to ascertain the true results of West's work.

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Scenario Idea

Eleven Changeling Children

Do you know what Lovecraftian critter just doesn't seem to get enough credit? The Great Race of Yith. I mean, here they are, living five hundred million years in our past, yet swapping minds with people in our own world. They even have a cult that helps them out. This vast secret society, and not even Delta Green has a commentary on them. Well, it's about time we gave the Yithians more credit, and help them learn the meaning of Christmas in the process.

If the Investigators try to speak to parents of children who are not part of the cult, they find the parents are concerned, but unwilling to look into the matter. As though they've been bullied into complacency.

Actually breaking into the homes and rooting around will turn up all manner of arcane tomes, a few magical artifacts and a few technological goodies. All of them fairly new, in fact. ("A copy of *Al Azif*, in its native Arabic, but in mint condition?!")

Of course, if they do this much snooping, the cult will become very cross. A few of the cultists will in fact go so far as to try and snuff out the Investigators. If you're feeling as lazy as I am, feel free to use the stats for Artie Gumshoe from the back of the *Call of Cthulhu* book for the would-be assassins. Give them *Cthulhu Mythos* and *Occult* of 20%.

Things like this will escalate. Depending on the resources the Investigators have, this could even come to a showdown.

Should the Investigators attempt to rescue the children, they will find that the children don't exactly want to be rescued.

Yith-Possessed Children

STR 7
CON 10
SIZ 7
INT 20
POW 13
DEX 10
Move 7
HP 8

Weapons: Fist 25%, damage 1d3-1d4

Skills: Keepers Discretion, though high Library Use, Occult and Mythos would be appropriate.

Spells: 2 of the children, at the Keepers discretion, might have spells. Assign 1-3 spells as you see fit.

Come December 26th, the Great Race leaves the children, and the children have no memory of what happened to them. They will have occasional nightmares and flashbacks, but no firm recollection of their time spent in the past.

Should the Investigators continue their meddling, the cult will leave town at this point. The Investigators may never get a satisfactory answer for what happened to the children, and even if they did they will likely be unable to do anything about it. Sure, players may be upset about that, but the point of this scenario isn't to provide answers. It's meant to be creepy and confusing, and possibly a stepping stone into other adventures later on.

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Grimoire

Some New Spells

Awaken Rhan-Tegoth

This must be performed near a location that the Great Old One Rhan-Tegoth is known to inhabit, such as the frozen city in Alaska the god resides at. The caster loses 1d10 Sanity points, and must expend at least 1 magic point. Per every 1 magic point expended the spell has a cumulative 5% chance of success. The caster must chant:

Wza-y'ei! Wza-y-ei! Y'kaa haa bho-ii, Rhan-Tegoth—Cthulhu fhtagn--Rhan-Tegoth, Rhan-Tegoth, Rhan-Tegoth!

Upon awakening, Rhan-Tegoth requires the blood sacrifice of a living being no smaller than 10 SIZ points per every 100 years the god has been asleep, which he will then flatten and suck blood-dry. The reverse of this spell, placing Rhan-Tegoth in a deathlike slumber, has been lost for millenia.

Bind/Summon Child of Y'gononac

Must be performed near a location known to be infested with Children of Y'gononac, such as underground, or near a desolate, abandoned place. The caster expends 1 magic point per 10% chance of success. The caster must slashes their palms bleeding. A child arrives in 5 to 15 minutes. It may not be alone.

Feeding Hands

The spell opens wet fanged mouths in the caster's palms that cause 1D4 damage. The caster expends 5 magic points and 1D3 sanity points for each palm to be opened.

Music for the Masses

This spell will subdue a listening audience for an instrument-player. The instrument-player must first possess an enchanted instrument to play. When the instrument-player begins his or her songs, he or she loses 1D3 SAN, then his or her POW is matched separately against each individual audience-member's POW. This means that in an audience of five, the caster will roll five times on the resistance table, once for each audience member. It is possible to combine several instrument-players' POW together to match against the audience, thus likely increasing their chances. Those who succumb to the musician(s), become very calm and placid to the point of total abandonment—they are unable to move, and don't care to, feeling quite euphoric. This state lasts for the number of hours equal to the instrument-player's (or combined instrument-players') POW. Once incapacitated, webbing from above will cocoon the audience, for either later consumption by the spellcaster, or storage. It is possible this effect aligns this spell with Atlach Nacha, or has its origins with the Great Old One.

Steal Eyes

Causes the eyes of any passive recipient to shrivel away only to reappear in a sealed container owned by the spellcaster. The target must be in a relaxed state. The spell

costs 9 magic points and 1D6 SAN. It takes ten minutes to invoke (the caster must be able to aubilize the words of the spell) and then all with a three yard radius of the caster are affected. The caster can increase the radius by 1 yard for every additional magic point invested.

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Scenario

The Horror in the Mine

Mysterious disappearances have plagued the small town of Cheshire Peak, Massachusetts since its founding 175 years ago. The disappearances seem to occur in 15 year cycles and have remained unsolved and mostly ignored. The townspeople say the mountain, for which the town is named, is haunted. The cycle has begun again with the disappearances of 6 townspeople living near the peak.

Coincidentally, a foreign mining operation, which has recently begun excavation on the side of the mountain, reports finding a strange basaltic monument of some sort in a collapsed cave. Intrigued, Miskatonic University sends an academic team to the site to investigate the monument and the surrounding Geology.

What the investigative team finds in the mine is far from ordinary academia. What they find there is an ancient Hyperborean burial chamber, sealed for eons and preserved intact. Intact, that is, except for the intrusion of a pod of four Ghosts. Their tunnels have riddled this mountain. The Ghosts normally feed on small animals living on the mountain, but occasionally, they stray beyond the mountain for more delectable human prey. The team must fend off the Ghosts, then explore the mysteries of the burial chamber itself. Their investigative foray is cut off, however, by Marcus Henry (or one of the team) when he removes the fabulous Orb of Thalamuleet from its pedestal. This activates an antediluvian trap which quickly floods the chamber with boiling water. Only the fittest will survive The Horror in the Mine!

Event 1: Arrival in the Town. The townspeople are panicked by the recent wave of disappearances. They will help the investigators any way they can with information or aid.

Event 2: The Mine. Thomas Sean McGuire has his team already organized when the investigators arrive. The investigators are introduced to all the members of the team. They will begin immediately. The mountain, itself, is apparently riddled with tunnels caused by Geothermal activity. Steam rises from several vents on the side of the mountain. Perkins will navigate, warning when there might be danger.

Event 3: The Statue. The Statue resembles a basalt Obelisk with a ball attached to the top. There is a large Basalt slab that is cracked on one side and steam is venting out. Through some effort (strength checks) the slab can be moved aside, releasing the steam and revealing a tunnel. Perkins checks it out and gives the go-ahead.

Event 4: The Stairs. After exploring the cave (climb checks, possibly strength and dexterity checks), the investigators find a large spiral staircase carved out of rock leading down a vertical cylinder. Steam rises up the center of the shaft, condensing on the ceiling of the cave and dripping down in large "spacks" far below. There is an unearthly glow at the bottom of the shaft.

Event 5: The Chamber. At the bottom of the shaft the investigators find a large chamber carved out of the basalt. There is a large recessed pool of boiling water in the center of the chamber which covers the ceiling with a layer of swirling steam. On the

opposite end of the chamber are a wide set of stairs leading to a burial temple carved into the wall. The glowing Orb of Thalamulet hovers above a small obelisk of stone. Behind the team, hidden in the rocks of the collapsed wall (spot hidden check), are 4 sleeping Ghasts. If the team makes much noise or moves quickly about, they awaken and will leap out of the rocks to attack. Event 6: The Betrayal. After the fight with the Ghasts, the team may explore (spot hidden, archeology checks). They may find a trap door behind the temple and it's mummified remains. It leads to a treasure trove lined with gold, swords, and armor from thousands of years before the Egyptians. At that moment, Marcus Henry (who elected to stay outside, or snuck away) steals the Orb of Thalamulet, causing the boiling water in the pool to overflow and begin to flood the chamber. Anyone hesitating for a moment will be trapped by the boiling water. The team must now rush to escape (making dexterity, stamina, or any other physical checks) or be caught in the destruction. If they make it out alive, they witness the boiling water erupt from the mouth of the mine and explode into steam, collapsing the mine and the cave system forever. Outcome: The Mine should be destroyed. The mining company may opt to sue Miskatonic U. but will fail. The orb and the burial chamber should pique the interest of the players and characters into the history of the Hyperboreans.

Max Perkins, Spelunker

Str=18 Con=17 Siz=15 Int= 9 Pow= 7 Dex=12 App=18 Edu=10 San=35 HP=17

Skills: Climb 95%, Orienteering 25%, Jump 80%, Geology 30%

Max is a dashing cave explorer. He was hired by the mining company to explore the cave but is unaware of anything supernatural.

Thaddeus Larson, Archaeologist

Str=14 Con= 9 Siz=10 Int=18 Pow=11 Dex=12 App=15 Edu=18 San=55 HP=11

Skills: Archaeology 95%, History 85%, Geology 50%, Climb 45%

Thaddeus is a dedicated academician but rarely gets out into the real world. He is interested in anything found but will protest any disturbances.

Marcus Henry, Miner

Str=15 Con=18 Siz=17 Int=8 Pow=7 Dex=11 App=16 Edu=4 San=35 HP=16

Skills: Climb 80%, Jump 70%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 30%

Marcus is the only miner brave enough to enter the cave. He believes that whatever is plaguing the town is in the cave and means to stop it. Once he enters the burial chamber and sees the orb, he sees a quick means to get out of his present position and make something of himself. He steals the orb and attempts a getaway.

Thomas Sean McGuire, Mine owner

Str=10 Con=11 Siz=14 Int=18 Pow=16 Dex=13 App=12 Edu=19 San=80 HP=10

Skills: Accounting 95%, Credit Rating 90%, Bargain 90%, Law 50%

Thomas Sean McGuire is the bigoted mine owner. He was born and raised in Ireland and speaks with a heavy accent. He is a skeptic and will attempt to discount any claims of the supernatural. He views the finding of the statue to be a nuisance and wishes to resume digging his new mine.

The Orb of Thalamulet

The orb of Thalamulet is a glowing ball created by the Hyperorean sorcerors to propel them through time and space. It floats above a basalt obelisk carved with

Hyperborean glyphs and runes. Basically a "Create Time Warp" spell. It was buried with the Hyperborean mummies in this cavern. The orb grants an additional +5% to Cthulhu Mythos and skill checks in Archaeology and Read Hyperborean.

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Scenario Idea

Mary Alpert's Homepage

From the late 1970s until her mysterious disappearance in mid-2000, Mary Alpert was a leading scientific researcher of the occult, unexplainable phenomena, and other strangeness. A lawyer by training, she was renowned for her ability to use her forceful personality and keenly fashioned questions to pick apart supposed eyewitness reports and other frauds. For quite some time, Alpert made a good living as a lecturer and author.

Needless to say, Alpert acquired quite a few enemies amongst the frauds and occultists she debunked. One of them in particular was a backwater intellectual named Howard Craft who claimed to have uncovered evidence of an ancient aquatic civilization lurking off the New England coast that predated mankind. Craft launched a campaign to ruin Alpert's reputation. He claimed to have compiled a mountain of documentation showing that Alpert systematically destroyed evidence that proved the existence of strange phenomena. Alpert vociferously denied Craft's accusations, labeling him a bitter crank looking for revenge. The two confronted each other on a late night call-in radio talk show. During their heated exchange, Craft accused Alpert of covering up the existence of what he termed the Kulu Codex, an ancient historical text supposedly detailing the rise and fall of Atlantis in enough detail to prove Craft's theory of an aquatic civilization. Craft claimed to be on the verge of a discovery that would blow the lid off modern man's view of the world. Whatever this revelation was to be, the world would never learn of it. Soon after the show, both Alpert and Craft disappeared.

Both left behind few clues to their fates. Craft was known as a hermit with few friends. It was not until 6 months after his last public appearance that a missing person report was filed. Alpert was similarly a loner. She was reported missing one month after her confrontation with Craft. Her apartment was found completely stripped of all her possessions including furniture, an exceptionally odd fact given that her apartment building employed a doorman on staff 24 hours a day. Given her years of work with the occult, Alpert had quite an extensive collection of audio, video, and written records of her investigations. All of it was lost.

Except her web site.

A relative newcomer to the digital age, Alpert built a small, personal site on Geocities in hopes of eventually migrating the content to her own domain. Passing along the URL to a close circle of friends, she intended the site to serve as an easy way to exchange information with correspondents, allies, and fellow researchers. Her site lingered for a time before a cracker somehow infiltrated the account and deleted its contents. However, a few archived copies of her files still float around the Internet.

Mary Alpert's Homepage. In English, by Mary Alpert, A. D. 2000. This collection of anecdotes relating to madmen, conspiracy theorists, and occultists primarily describes the efforts of bunk artists and frauds. However, a careful examination of this material reveals passing references and brief descriptions of names, practices, and rituals that consistently appear in the rambling theories Alpert investigated. During the course of

her career, Alpert came perilously close to uncovering evidence of supernatural activity.

An investigator who knows what to look for can uncover some interesting leads on cults, otherworldly creatures, and the old ones.

Examination Period: 1d6 days (DC 15).

Contains 1 spell.

Sanity Loss: 1d4 initial and 1d6 upon completion.

Cthulhu Mythos: +2 ranks.

Into the Darkness: Battles against the Unknown!

Jim Fort was a child of the new economy. After dropping out of college in late 1993, he used his rudimentary knowledge of the budding Internet to become a millionaire. Fort started by buying up attractive domain names, such as softdrinks.com, and selling them for several hundred grand each. He then dropped his money into a series of hot start-ups, pushing his fortune into the millions. With his wealth secured, Fort decided that the Internet was almost played out. He next turned to computer games, anticipating that they would soon grow to rival the movie and music industries. Fort founded a small design house and went to work on his first release *Into the Darkness: Battles against the Unknown!*, a horror game patterned after the popular *Resident Evil* series. All his life Fort had cultivated an intense interest in the occult and wanted to produce a game that drew upon his personal tastes. He took an active role in developing the game's art and story line. Unfortunately, the game progressed at a glacial pace. Fort had a tendency to disappear for weeks or months at a time, during which work on the game was suspended. After several years of such delays, Fort's money dried up. Desperate for cash, he forced the game's release on a very limited scale. It met with crushingly negative reviews from the few critics who noticed it and only a little more than 100 copies made it into general circulation. Players complained of an incomprehensible graphics, aggravating controls, and a nonsensical plot. Soon after, Fort suffered a severe mental breakdown and was checked into a hospital where he has remained for the past few years.

In truth, Fort dabbled in the worship of otherworldly creatures. Always a bit of a hedonist, he quickly grew bored of mundane narcotics such as cocaine and found little thrill in seducing women who were more than eager to sleep with a millionaire. His search for something to spice up his life put him in contact with a small, orgiastic cult dedicated to the worship of Shub-Niggurath. Attracted to the cult's front as a swingers' club, he gladly embraced its true purpose on a weekend orgy that culminated in a ritual sacrifice to the Black Goat of the Wood with a Thousand Young.

Fort envisioned his computer game as a reflection of his newly found faith and a tool to attract others to the cult. The game plays as a third-person investigative horror game. The main character is a bored socialite who slowly uncovers evidence of a demonic conspiracy in charge of the US government. Easter eggs built into the game reveal previously hidden levels that incorporate mythos imagery, game levels that

mimic the layout of real-life temples and other Mythos-related locations, and game characters named after and drawn to match cultists, sorcerers, and other real-life acquaintances of Fort. Furthermore, at one point in the game the main character discovers a sprawling subterranean library. Hidden within the library as an easter egg are files containing digital copies of fragments from several blasphemous tomes.

Into the Darkness: Battles against the Unknown! In English, by Jim Fort, 2001 A.D. This tome is a computer game that the reader must play through in order to discover easter eggs that reveal Mythos lore. Easter eggs are hidden features in games that activate when the player completes some obscure task such as keying in a specific set of commands on a particular screen or using a game item in some nonsensical manner.

Examination Period: 2d4 weeks (DC 20).

Contains 1d4 spells.

Sanity Loss: 1d4 initial and 1d6 upon completion.

Cthulhu Mythos: +1 rank.

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Crossover Ideas

Tales Of The Blair Witch Mythos

Note: Numbers following a sentence are explained as footnotes.

"I don't know. I don't think it's the Blair Witch any more. Maybe. I don't know."
Heather Donahue, "Newly Discovered Footage," Added to The Blair Witch Project (1999)

The Blair Witch Project's legendary background was supposedly invented by filmmakers Eduardo Sanchez and Daniel Myrick, but research into the Cthulhu Mythos indicates a strong tie to the blasphemous horrors described by H.P. Lovecraft.

In an earlier version of this article, my comparisons of Blair Witch Project (hereafter BWP) to the Mythos were very general. I pointed out that BWP's intricate mythology, reaching from 1785 to the present, was very Lovecraftian. While early horror tales usually took place long ago and far away, Lovecraft's stories provided the reader with names, dates, places, newspaper clippings, and other "evidence" of the supernatural manifestation. The unearthed video cassettes and film canisters of BWP were the technological steps beyond Lovecraft's diaries and Edisonian wax cylinders.

For this rewrite I intended to delve into my whole collection of Mythos books, magazines, and gaming materials, but I soon realized that nearly every detail of the BWP folklore could be found in the 1990 edition of Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Sticks and Stones

In Karl Edward Wagner's "Sticks," a pulp magazine writer decides to go fishing in the woods of upstate New York. He barely starts off before he finds something odd: "The lashed-together framework of sticks jutted from a small cairn alongside the stream. Colin Leverett studied it in perplexment -- half a dozen odd lengths of branch, wired together at cross angles for no fathomable purpose. It reminded him unpleasantly of some bizarre crucifix, and he wondered what might lie beneath the cairn."

Leverett penetrates ever farther into the forest and finds more stick figures and arrangements of stones. "It should have been ridiculous. It wasn't. Instead it seemed somehow sinister -- these utterly inexplicable, meticulously constructed lattices spread through a wilderness where only a tree-grown embankment or a forgotten stone wall gave evidence that man had ever passed through."

Eventually he comes upon a huge old house. "The stick lattices were everywhere -- the lawn, the trees, even the house, were covered with the uncanny structures." He enters, finding that "Someone had been here, and recently. Someone who had literally covered the mildewed walls with diagrams of the mysterious lattice structures." ¹

"A darkened doorway opened into the cellar. Were there drawings there as well?" Leverett enters the cellar and finds something nasty. ² This is essentially the plot of BWP (and Leverett's misadventure takes up only the first chapter of a nine-chapter novelette!). One could stop here, but there are other Cthulhuvian ancestors of the

Blair Witch.

Coffin Rock and Sacrifices

The young woman Heather Donahue tells us the legend of Coffin Rock, where five men were found tied together and disemboweled in 1886, indecipherable runes carved into their flesh. Such an over-the-top mass murder in this low-key film puts one in mind of Lovecraft's cultists and creatures, with their grotesque rituals and excesses.

The centerpiece of *Tales* is Lovecraft's "The Call of Cthulhu," which introduces the infamous octopoid deity. In Part Two of this story, the New Orleans police are told of strange goings-on and mysterious disappearances "far back within the black haunted woods where no dweller ventured." Twenty men brave the Louisiana wilderness and find the horrible worshipers of Cthulhu. At the center of their gathering stands "a great granite monolith some eight feet in height" from which hang "the oddly marred bodies of the helpless squatters who had disappeared." 3

Also found in *Tales* is "The Black Stone" by Robert E. Howard: "I read of it first in the strange book of Von Junzt. . . his Nameless Cults in the original edition, the so-called Black Book." Books of occult knowledge and hidden histories abound in the *Mythos*; BWP has its Blair Witch Cult (1809), the crumbly tome Heather reads from at Coffin Rock (which must be of a later date, since it refers to the murdered men of 1886), and Heather's own journal. And BWP II is subtitled *The Book of Shadows*.

Howard's Black Stone is a "curious, sinister monolith that broods among the mountains of Hungary." The narrator learns "the name of the village adjacent to the Black Stone -- Stregoiacavar -- an ominous name, meaning something like Witch-Town." A precursor of Blair/Burkittsville? The narrator falls asleep near the stone and dreams of an ancient ritual that ends with another bloody sacrifice. 4

Blue Jelly and White Arms

Following Howard's story in *Tales* is Frank Belknap Long's "The Hounds of Tindalos," which is concerned with hideous creatures that live in an angular space-time as opposed to our Einsteinian curved universe. In BWP, after the film students flee their camp in the middle of the night, something tears up Josh Leonard's belongings and leaves them covered with "blue jelly." Soon thereafter Josh disappears. Perhaps, like the occultist of Long's tale, the unfortunate youth ran afoul of the Hounds: "Chalmers lay stretched upon his back in the center of the room. He was starkly nude, and his chest and arms were covered with a peculiar bluish pus or ichor." 5

Right after "Hounds" comes another Frank Long story, "The Space-Eaters," about terrible entities that descend from Beyond into a New England wood: "At first I didn't see anything but the tall trees, all white and glistening with the fog, and above them a thick, white mist that hid the stars. And then something long and white ran quickly down the trunk of one of the trees. . . It was like a huge white hand walking on its fingers with a terribly long arm fastened to it that went up until it touched the fog." 6

BWP's companion film, *Curse of the Blair Witch*, mentions the strange fate of a little girl named Eileen Treacle, who, in 1825, was playing beside Tappy East Creek near Burkittsville. Charles Moorehouse, supposedly a folklore professor at Hampshire College, tells us that several witnesses saw "a ghostly white hand come up out of the

water and drag the child under the water." Bill Barnes, supposed Burkittsville historian, adds that "she went under the rocks and the mud, and everything was calm again." Eileen's body was never found, even though the water was only a foot or so deep. Perhaps rather than under the mud, she was pulled into that Lovecraftian favorite, a non-Euclidean dimension.

Voices in the Night

August Derleth's "The Dweller in Darkness" follows "The Space-Eaters." "Dweller" is set in the deep, dark woods of Derleth's native Wisconsin. Laird Dorgan and Jack, the narrator, travel to an old hunting lodge on the shores of Rick's Lake, where a folklorist named Professor Gardner vanished three months earlier. Strange things have been reported in and around the lake, and the two protagonists hear weird voices and music emanating from the forest.

In BWP, the students are beset by strange nocturnal sounds, including the giggling of children and the bawling of babies. The night after Josh disappears, cries of agony (apparently his) echo out of the darkness. The second night after, Josh's voice distinctly calls to Heather and Mike.

In "Dweller", the two protagonists leave a dictaphone running one evening when they have business in town. When they check it the next day, they hear flapping wings, chants to Cthulhu and other gods -- and the voice of Professor Gardner warning them to leave:

"Was it. . . ?"

"I'd know that voice anywhere," he said shortly.

"He's alive then?"

He looked at me, his eyes narrowed. "We don't know that."

"But his voice!"

He shook his head. 7

Later Professor Gardner shows up at the lodge. He claims to have hoaxed the whole affair, creating the noises himself. Then he disappears again.

I thought even as I watched BWP: If the screams of pain were Josh's (as he had runes carved into his skin?), then the voice that called the next night certainly was not his. The first manifestation in "Dweller" was apparently the real professor (since he provides the protagonists with a magic spell that lets them escape); the second appearance of Gardner turns out to be Nyarlathotep in disguise!

There are many disappearances in both the Mythos and BWP; "Dweller" mentions Friar Piregard, an eighteenth century missionary who disappears two hundred years before the story begins. . .

...And who is found, perfectly preserved, "in the hollow trunk of a tree along the Brule River." Time is involved in this disappearance as well as space: though missing for two centuries, Fr. Piregard "hadn't been dead over five years" when found in the tree.

8

In Curse of the Blair Witch, David Mercer, supposed University of Maryland

archeology professor, tells how his dig group found the student's film canisters and videos beneath the foundation of a colonial-era house, under ash, timbers, mulch, and a stone wall -- all undisturbed. "It was as if it materialized," Mercer concludes. There is a time anomaly in BWP, also. In the book *Blair Witch Project: A Dossier*, by D.A. Stern, we learn that the foundation was that of Justin Parr's house. Heather and Mike spend the last few minutes of Blair running through an old, abandoned house, presumably Parr's -- yet Parr's house was burned to the ground by angry townsfolk in 1940. "All right, so they built a copy of the house for their movie -- I don't know," snaps Burkittsville Sheriff Ron Cravens. 9

Notebook Found in a Deserted House

This story title by Robert Bloch could be Heather's epitaph (although her diary was found under a house foundation). Willie Osborne, a twelve-year-old boy, lives with his aunt and uncle on a farm near an eerie forest. "Funny thing about those woods. They was so still and quiet. Gave me the creeps they was so dark and lonesome. . . No animals around or birds." (The Black Hills Forest of Blair seems peculiarly lacking in animal life as well; all we are shown is a dead mouse Heather finds.)

One day, close to Halloween, Willie plays in the woods. He hears strange sounds. "It was far-away at first, kind of a dropping noise. . . Sounded like a lot of people running or walking all at once, moving this way. Twigs busting under feet and scrabbling in the bushes all mixed up in the noise." The boy finds footprints "in the mud like goat's hoofs all green with slime that smelled awful -- not four or eight, but a couple hundred!" That night Willie dreams of the Thing responsible: "It was real tall and all inky-black, without any particular shape except a lot of black ropes with ends like hoofs on it. . . They was a lot of mouths all over the thing like puckered up leaves on branches." 10 Although identified as a Shoggoth in Bloch's story, the Thing in the woods sound more like the spawn of Shub-Niggurath, if not the old girl herself.

In BWP, on the film students' second night in the woods, the forest is filled with noises like branches snapping. Josh and Heather compare the sounds to footsteps - but only something with a hundred hooved legs could make that much noise...

Willie's uncle and aunt disappear, the latter right out of her bed. "And didn't Grandma tell about people who lived too near the hills disappearing and never being found again?" 11 The Black Hills Forest, as mentioned, is known for its disappearances, starting in 1785 when Ellie Kedward's accusers - and half the town's children - vanished from Blair, Maryland.

Curse of the Blair Witch mentions that the water of Tappy East Creek turned oily and undrinkable for weeks after the taking of Eileen Treacle. Willie of "Notebook" writes that there are two wells on his uncle's farm. The older one is useless - "some mornings water would be running out over the sides - green, slimy water that smelled terrible." 12 Later the new well gives slimy water, as well.

Going in Circles

Stepping away from Tales - but not the Mythos - for a moment, I note that people make fun of the Blair Witch characters getting lost in such a non-wild country as Maryland. Perhaps their plight was due to something more than incompetence. They spend fifteen hours hiking and end up at the exact same spot, which is in itself a

marvel. Heather's diary reads: "I still can't figure out how we hiked in a circle today. I had the compass out all day. All 3 of us checked it every 5 minutes." 13

Horror writer J. Ramsey Campbell has used this warped-direction phenomenon in Cthulhu pastiches like "The Church in High Street": "I ran blindly, wildly - but the hills of the open country came no nearer - and suddenly, horribly, I recognized the unlit intersections and dilapidated gables of Cloth Street - which should have been far behind me, on the other side of the river - and in a moment I found myself again in High Street." 14 In *Tales*, the nearest equivalent I can find is Willie Osborne's wild flight through the stormy night in "Notebook": "I kep [sic] running and I kep screaming forever, through the woods and the storm, away from that hill and that alter, and then all at once I knew where I was and I was back here at the farmhouse. Yes, that's what I'd done -- run in a circle and come back." 15

Witches in the Dream-House

"No longer could such quaint outmoded figures of European folklore as the ghost, the vampire, or the werewolf serve as source material for the modern tale of horror," proclaim the liner notes of *Tales*. Witches pop up in Lovecraft, however; the archetypal old hag with familiars, notably Keziah Mason and her rat Brown Jenkin from "Dreams in the Witch-House." Nyarlathotep, also, was the Black Man of certain European witch cults.

Returning to *Tales*, we find "The Salem Horror" by Henry Kuttner. Carson, a novelist, rents a house once inhabited by a "diabolical old hag" named Abigail Prinn, who made "detestable sacrifices" to a "fearfully potent god which dwelt deep in the hills." Carson discovers a hidden chamber in the basement and decides to write his novel therein. A visiting occultist is horrified by his decision. "The design on the floor -- when you sit on the black circle there you are abnormally sensitive to certain vibrations -- certain thought commands. . . you are merely an instrument, a microphone, tuned to pick up certain malign vibrations the nature of which you could not comprehend!" 16 This sounds suspiciously like Elly Kedward's control over Justin Parr, which drove him to murder at the "old lady ghost"'s bidding.

BWP and HPL

More parallels could be drawn between BWP and the Cthulhu Mythos 17, but I believe the point has been made: The Blair Witch Project was heavily influenced by H.P. Lovecraft in general and by *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* in particular.

The Cthulhu aspects might have been drawn upon unconsciously by Eduardo Sanchez, Daniel Myrick, and others of Haxan Films (though one wonders when reading "Sticks"). Of course, writers have for decades slavishly imitated Lovecraft's style, copied down his eldritch names and chants, and invented enough ancient tomes and scrolls to sink R'lyeh. Many a tale was a blow-for-blow rehash of something already in the Lovecraft canon. HPL was perfectly aware, for instance, that Kuttner's "The Salem Horror" was a virtual rewrite of "Dreams in the Witch-House." 18 The true successors to Lovecraft strike out in new directions.

The Haxan team could have picked up the ready baggage of the Mythos without damaging the documentary feel of BWP - many people believe in the existence of the Necronomicon, among other things - but they focused instead on the aura of terror

that should surround a "Lovecraftian" story. 19 "The Mythos, in other words, represents those cosmic wonder tales by Lovecraft in which the author had begun to direct his attention to the modern scientific universe; the Mythos deities in turn hypostatize the qualities of such a purposeless, indifferent, utterly alien universe." So writes James Turner in his introduction to *Tales*.

It does not really matter if this "utterly alien universe" is personified in the form of Nyarlathotep, the Hounds of Tindalos, Elly Kedward, or Justin Parr. Something incomprehensible stalks the three filmmakers in the Maryland wilderness. It encroaches more and more upon their camp, its manifestations increasingly blatant and frightening, and finally it gets them. The viewing audience hike and run and hide with the trio every step of the way, yet they fail at the last to pull a single veil from the face of mystery.

That is as it should be, for, as HPL writes: "some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age." 20

Footnotes

1 *In the quasi-documentary Curse of the Blair Witch (1999), a newsreel features Justin Parr, the Burkittsville serial killer. One of the reporters interviewing him asks if he drew the "strange symbols" on his walls; Parr denies it.*

2 Wagner, Karl Edward. "Sticks" [1974]. *Quotes from Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos by H. P. Lovecraft, et. al. (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1990), pp. 427-431.*

3 Lovecraft, Howard Phillips. "The Call of Cthulhu" [1928]. *Quotes from Tales, p. 15.*

4 Howard, Robert E. "The Black Stone" [1931]. *Quotes from Tales, pp. 56-58.*

5 Long, Frank Belknap. "The Hounds of Tindalos" [1929]. *Quote from Tales, p. 85.*

6 Long, "The Space-Eaters" [1928]. *Quote from Tales, pp. 93-94.*

7 Derleth, August. "The Dweller in Darkness" [1944]. *Quote from Tales, p. 139.*

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 119-121.

9 Stern, D. A. *Blair Witch Project: A Dossier. (New York: Onyx Books, 1999), p. 142.*

10 Bloch, Robert. "Notebook Found in a Deserted House" [1951]. *Quotes from Tales, pp. 233-235.*

11 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

13 Stern, *op cit.*, p. 162.

14 Campbell, J. Ramsey. "The Church in High Street," in *Cold Print* (New York: TOR, 1987), p. 25.

15 Bloch, "Notebook", p. 247.

16 Kuttner, Henry. "Salem Horror" [1937]. *Quotes from Tales*, pp. 250-257.

17 Stephen King's "Jerusalem's Lot" [1978], for instance, a prequel to both Salem's Lot and to Bloch's "Shambler from the Stars," mentions that "on the night of October 31, 1789, Philip Boone disappeared. . . and the entire populace of that damned village with him" (*Tales*, p. 484). Jerusalem's Lot is a worthy sister-town to Blair, Maryland, for sure!

18 Price, Robert M. *Book of Iod: Ten Tales of the Mythos By Henry Kuttner*. (Oakland, CA: Chaosium, 1995), p. 17.

19 Actually, I find it interesting how complex the Blair Witch mythos has become: the films, the videos, the documentary, the Internet sites, the folklore, the "old" diaries and newspaper cuttings, the people paraded before us as supposed sheriffs, university professors, newscasters, etc. And there are people who sincerely believe in it. All this in only a few months.

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Creatures And Scenario Idea

Ten Evil Toys

And now, because you had to have seen it coming a mile off, think, "Puppet Master!"

So, our story starts with infamous German toy maker Gustaph Schwimmer, a man who has absolutely no connection with Andre Toulon. In fact, there has never been anyone with the name Andre Toulon. And if there had been, Gustaph Schwimmer would still be cooler.

So, anyway, Gustaph was also an alchemist and sought to see his toys come to life. Kinda like Geppetto in a twisted and sick sort of way. Throughout the final years of his life (in the 1890s for those who go for those epic games which span the years) he struggled to bring life into his toys. However, before he could baptize his toys in the final ingredient, human blood, he died of apoplexy. No getting killed by Nazis for this toymaker.

Thirty years later, his creations are found and are being offered for sale in a second-hand shop at a discount. Because that's where all dangerous things can be purchased at cut rate. Just watch Gremlins if you don't believe me. To an interested collector they would be worth quite a sum, but instead they have fallen into the hands of the ignorant.

Enter Bill Marlowe. Bill was looking for a gift for his son, picked up the entire set of ten dolls. They were quite a steal for the quality of workmanship that went into them. Fully articulated wooden dolls. Ten of them for a dollar. Well that's something.

Cutting straight to the trite campy horror plot device: little Timmy Marlowe, age 9, opens the present on Christmas day, goes outside to plays with them, gets a cut on his hand but ignores it, and dabs a little bit of blood on all the toys.

The dolls come to life in the middle of the night, and they've gone bad. No, these don't have drill heads or the ability to spit leaches. But they are awfully good at using the tools at hand, and quietly kill the entire Marlowe family in their sleep. Then they move on to the next house.

This happens for a few days. They basically go house by house. Killing people in their sleep. The neighbors add two and two together, get four, and decide, "Hey, we haven't visited Aunt Mildred in a while..."

So, what prompts the investigators to get involved? Here's some happy suggestions:

Their house is next in line!

They are friends or relatives of one or more of the victims.

They are part of an elite team of federal agents bent on investigating to supernatural!

If none of these work, maybe you should play a game that requires less player-oriented motivation for stories. ("Hoi, chummers. My name's Mr. Johnson, and I'll give you 10,000 nuyen each if you frag the hoopy drek out of Renraku...")

Evil Toys

STR 10
CON 20
SIZ 2
INT 10
POW 10
DEX 20
Move 5
HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons:

Butcher Knife 25%, damage 1d6

Small Knife 25%, damage 1d4

Armor: 10 point alchemically treated wood. However, despite their resistance to damage, they are very easy to knock around. A hit that does 5 points, before armor reduction, will knock them on their backs. A hit that does 10 or more points in that fashion will send them flying across the room.

Skills: Creep People Out 50%

Sanity Loss: 0/1d2

The toys generally remain hidden during the day, coming out at night when they think people will be sleeping. They move over one house at a time. Investigators could take the tack of stationing one of their team at each house neighboring by a house recently victimized. Which house it enters from night to night is up to the Keeper, whether he chooses to have the toys move about randomly, or have them visit certain houses as befits the story.

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Good Goes Bad

The Book Bound In Human Skin

There's a lot of wierd stuff in Cthuhu. One of these things is the fierce dividing line between Cultists and Investigators. But they often read the same books etc, so what makes a cultist? Are they insane to begin with? Are they born with a desire to worship things with more teeth and tentacles then brain cells?

Well, I can't answer that question right away. But some Investigators slowly become cultists, such as in 'The Case of Charles Dexter Ward'. Originally the protagonist just read some books, and whilst he never worshipped anything, he did become a sorcerer of sorts, albeit in a scientific way.

So maybe there's something in the evil and blasphemous Cthulhu Mythos tomes that corrupts, makes the reader feel akin to cultists? After all, reading so much about Cthulhu etc. must make investigators mildly obsessive. Of course, it would be silly to assume an investigator reads a book and turns into a worshipper of Nyarthlotep.

So here's a rough idea.

Let's call Mythos Corruption a percentile rating, like Cthulhu Mythos. It starts as zero, and as Investigators get drawn into the occult, they become less hostile to it. So how does it increase? Well, each time an Investigator reads a Tome, look at its + to mythos.

You might want to add a + 1 bonus in terms of corruption tests if the Tome is especially potent. The player, upon completing the tome and gaining mythos, should make a resisted POW roll against the plus to Cthulhu Mythos that the book grants.

If the Player succeeds, then he gains no corruption. If he FAILS, then roll 1D10, and add that much to the Mythos Corruption percentage. ONLY when 100% is reached does the character become a cultist. However, in the interval, the character becomes fascinated with learning more and seeks out more Mythos tomes. Corruption also increases each time a character casts a Mythos spell. This applies to most spells in Call of Cthulhu, but some which are used AGAINST the mythos do not count.

Each time a spell that you believe is part of the general loathsomeness of Cthulhu, then ask for a resisted POW roll against a number between 1 and 10. Assign the number depending on how fully the character seems to be dealing with the Mythos. If the character fails the test, then s/he gains a percentile of Corruption equal to the number you set...

However, corruption can be decreased.

Each time an Adventure is completed, the characters may make a SAN check. If they pass, they may subtract 1D6 Corruption percentiles. However, if they fail, add 1D4 percentiles, as the madness begins to affect them... In addition, every time a player casts a spell against the mythos, you may subtract 1D3 percentiles...

General Guide To Corruption Affect On Personality.

1-10% = mild curiosity, certain phenomena may be beneficial to mankind if used correctly...

11-20% = A desire to research some more, the information has possible applications.

21-30% = Some experiments may lead to greater understanding of the universe, what we know is false...

31-40% = Fanatically seek out more information, the ANSWER MUST BE SOMEWHERE!

41-50% = Some of the saner cultists might know something, a polite interview may be in order.

51-60% = Attend some ceremonys, you have much to learn. Show some reverance to cultists.

61-70% = You're pretty mad, by now you don't mind dealing with Mythos entities regularly.

71-80% = Regularly cast spells, make forbidden pacts, sell out your friends.

81-90% = Mass Human sacrafice, Megolomania, fervent worship of unspeakable beings.

91-100% = Total devotion, even at cost of own life. Humans are fools and must be eaten etc...

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