



THE WATERS OVER HEAVEN

AN ADVENTURE FOR THE CALL OF CTHULHU
D20 SYSTEM
BY JONATHAN STOUT

PART I IN THE CTHULHU HARDBOILED CAMPAIGN



DISCLAIMER

The majority of the graphics contained in this adventure were taken off of various sites throughout the Internet. It'd probably take me days to track down all of the places I've taken stuff from, so let me just say that I do not own nor do I claim to own any of the pictures or graphics in this text with the exception of the Hemingway Investigations ad and the player and GM maps of the Park (both of which were made with Dungeon Crafter).

The molochim template is roughly based off of DnDChick's Deep One hybrid template. I invite you to visit her [web site](#), which is nothing short of amazing.

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GM INFORMATION

This adventure has been designed as the first mission in a campaign centering on a private investigations firm known as Hemingway Investigations. It is intended for a group of 1st-level investigators. It is set in January of 1928, in and around the city of Los Angeles, California. The general tone of the mission is film noir in the style of Raymond Chandler and the movie Chinatown (with a certain amount of inspiration from Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo).

BACKGROUND

At the beginning of the adventure, the players are hired to work for a private investigation firm known as Hemingway Investigations. Their section chief, Ernie Zulli, assigns them to a suspected adultery case for a wealthy man by the name of William Deaton. William Deaton suspects his wife, Vivian Haase-Deaton, is having an affair; he wishes the investigators to keep track of her while he goes to work one day and bring him any proof they might find of an extra-marital relationship. Sounds simple enough, right?



PUBLIC FACTS

William Deaton is the director of the Haase Shipping Company, a large corporation with interests in cargo transport and ship-building up and down the West Coast. Subsidiaries of the company include Atlantic Shipyards, Inc., and the Pacific Star Line (a passenger transport company, specializing in transport to China and Southeast Asia).

The company was founded in 1903 by the family of Vivian Haase-Deaton, William's wife. Vivian received a majority share in the company's stock after her parents passed away, being the sole heir to the Haase fortune (her brother James having died while serving in the U.S. Navy during World War I). Under their prenuptial agreement, William controls Vivian's stock rights within the company. Other than William, the only other stockholder of note is one Lawrence Cross, a family friend of the Haases and also the division head of Atlantic Shipyards, Inc. Cross is a well-known philanthropist within the Los Angeles area, with a particular interest in the arts.

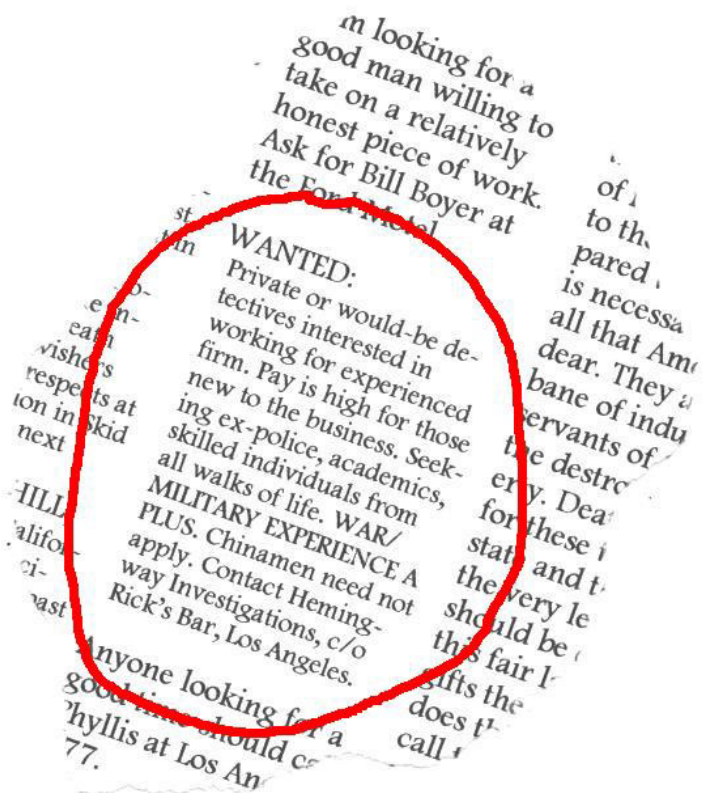
The US-Mexico border is roughly two hours' drive south of Los Angeles. The town of Long Beach, California is a thirty-minute drive southwest from downtown LA, while the city of Santa Barbara is roughly one hour and thirty five minutes directly north.

A RELATIVELY HONEST PIECE OF WORK

thursday, january 5, 1928, 10:05 am
la office of hemingway investigations

This adventure contains a mechanism to get the players together as a group.

Specifically, it is assumed all the players come across the advertisement pictured to the right somewhere in the back pages of the LA Times. You may wish to give cut this article and give it to the players ahead of character creation (Oh, and by the way, the “no Chinamen” policy mentioned in the article is strictly for period feel; needless to say, it wouldn’t have been something rare to see in 1920’s Los Angeles. I apologize if I’ve offended anyone; please believe that that was not my intent. And should one of your players decide to play a Chinese character, I can’t really imagine Ernie caring enough to do anything about it.)



Ernie

It’s a relatively innocent action, picking up a newspaper. You figure that as long as you haven’t murdered anyone, say your prayers and do whatever it takes to keep your head down, there’s no particular reason for a torn little piece of the LA Times to ruin your day.

Except here you are in a tiny office above a bar. It’s a sweltering January day, and crammed in as you all are around a small square table, you feel every degree, which all in all isn’t doing anything to help the hangover you still have from New Year’s. You stare through the cigar smoke, barely able to breathe, at a short, fat little man with a Kaiser mustache, a cheap Cuban seemingly attached to the ends of his fingers. He lifts to his lips again, takes another pull, and lets it out. You do your best not to cough.

“Why I don’t start by being honest with you,” he says. “I lied in the ad. The pay sucks. Management back east made me put that in to draw flies. Worked, didn’t it ?” He smirks at you and draws in another breath.

“Let me lay it down for you. You get a buck-fifty an hour with this gig, plus twenty-five as a tip from the customer if you finish a case in a quote, timely and efficient matter, unquote. Sometimes we can talk the client into paying for your expenses, but that doesn’t happen too often, so I wouldn’t count on it. Otherwise, you get a fifty dollar

budget from the organization each month. That's for all of you, by the way, and if you misspend a single penny I'm obliged by management to hunt you down and kill you myself." He looks like he might be kidding, deep down inside.

"That having been said, there's one other thing you should know about. Maybe you've read the pulps and decided that this is a glamorous lifestyle. Adventure. Exotic women. Shit like that. How do I put this to you best... do I look like someone who has any of those things?" He pauses to take another drag off his cigar.

"We don't do murder cases; we don't do theft. What we get is the stuff the police wouldn't touch with a thirty-foot pole. Nine out of ten of our cases are adultery stuff – client wants to get pictures of his wife with her hubby, or vice versa. It's dirty, it's stupid, and at the end of every day you'll pray to God that when you wake up the next morning you'll be doing something else.

"So. All that having been said, anyone who wants to leave, the door's right there." He pauses.

"Well, all right. Welcome to the business. You'll be regretting this decision for a long time. I'm Ernie Zulli. You'll be answering to me. Welcome to Hemingway Investigations." He takes a puff, and then adds, "No relation to the writer, by the way."

Q&A Session: Ernie

Just in case your players have any additional questions for the boss man before the sign the contract:

If asked for more information about Hemingway Investigations:

"Isn't much to talk about. We've been working for about the last ten years. Management's based in Chicago; we've got two other firms otherwise in New York and Atlanta. They sent me out here to hire a few teams to cover the West Coast. You're the second."

What happened to the first?

"What do you think happened? They found better jobs."

So why's 'military experience a plus'?

He shrugs. "Mr. Hooker has a soft spot for vets."

Why "Chinamen need not apply"?

"Mr. Hooker doesn't like Chinese."

Who's Mr. Hooker?

"Jeb Hooker. He's my boss back east."

So do I have any reason to take this job whatsoever?

"None whatsoever. Door's that way, if you want it."

"Timely and efficient manner"?

He smiles unpleasantly. "Read 'if the customer decides to.'"

So when can we start ?

“Right now, as a matter of fact. Got some poor sucker waiting in the other room. Sounds like a standard adultery case. By the way, can we hurry this up ? Rich types tend to get cranky when you leave ‘em waiting.”

Meeting William Deaton

Ernie passes you each the standard working contract over the table. Those of you who bother to read it over quickly notice it basically just summarizes everything’s Ernie has just said, the only addition being a clear disclaimer that the company is not responsible for the medical or legal bills of its employees. After pausing for a moment to meditate on the clear charm and goodwill of your new employer, you sign and hand it back across the table to Ernie. He again gives you the unpleasant smile. “Welcome to the firm. Trust me. You’ll regret it.”

He gets up from his chair. “All right. Let’s go meet your first sucker.” He turns around and exits the room behind him. As the door opens, you notice it’s marked “Washing Room.”

You follow Ernie into a room that only slightly larger than the first. Waiting there in what looks like an uncomfortable chair is a man whose picture could be put in the dictionary next to “businessman.” He looks about forty and is dressed in a plain grey suit with matching tie. He has thinning blond hair and a well-trimmed moustache. He also has an expression on his face that combines two parts nervousness and disgust, kind of like a man whose had a gun and a turd shoved simultaneously into his face. Anyway, between you and him there’s a wide desk, which Ernie takes a seat at. There are no other chairs in the room, you notice.

“Mr. Zulli, I assume ?” says the man, with a tone that matches his expression.

“That’s right,” says Ernie. “Boys, this is Mr. William Deaton; he’ll be our client today. Mr. Deaton, these are my field operatives. I won’t bother introducing them, because as far as you’re concerned their names aren’t important. Now, Mr. Deaton – why don’t you start from the beginning.”

Q&A Session: William Deaton

Mr. Deaton looks uncomfortable for a moment, then begins. “I suppose there’s no other way to put this other than to be blunt about it. I believe my wife is having an affair. She spends a great deal of time out of the house, and has been taking more than a hundred dollars monthly out of our bank account. If my suspicions are correct, I will need photographic proof as soon as possible. Furthermore, the situation is... complicated, so I need a certain measure of discreetness during the investigation.”

Ernie coughs. “Meaning you want us to follow her and take pictures.”

Mr. Deaton nods. “Exactly.”

The players can ask questions of Deaton from this point forward. Deaton has the air of a quiet, dignified businessman, only slightly uncomfortable in this situation. He can and will tell the players anything from the Public Facts section above. If you think the players are missing something particularly vital, you can have Ernie step in and ask any questions the players might not have thought of.

What's your wife's name?

"Vivian. Vivian Deaton. She sometimes goes by her maiden name – Haase – in certain business af... while dealing with business."

Physical description ?

"Blond. She's shorter than me, about five foot, I'd say. Very... very pretty. She'll turn twenty-seven this next October."

So what do you want from us?

"Like I said, in order to begin any divorce hearings, I would need you to... to follow her and obtain definite photographic evidence. I would need such pictures as soon as possible."

Any suspicions who she's having it with?

He looks uncomfortable. "If I had to guess... there's a certain business associate of my company. His name is Lawrence Cross. He was a friend of my wife's family for a long time."



So what do you mean when you say things are complicated?

"It's somewhat of a long story. I am the director of the Haase Shipping Company; we own a number of shipyards and cargo transports firms up and down the coast. It was founded by my wife's family; as part of our prenuptial agreement, I exercise her stock rights within the company, which represents a majority share. Recently, I've heard rumors that a number of other stockholders are making discreet attempts to undermine my authority within the firm. The main conspirator, I believe, is a man named Lawrence Cross. I believe it is... possible that he lured her into an affair in the hopes of separating me from the stock rights. God only knows, Vivian is impressionable enough... if such is the case, I will need to start preparing a divorce case as soon as possible. For that, I need hard evidence."

What makes you think she's having an affair?

"Her behavior has changed over the last few years... she's become extremely distant to me. Then a year ago she started leaving the house for hours on end. The neighbors tell me she leaves practically every day now, as soon as I leave for work. She has her own car, you see. She doesn't say where she goes, and doesn't come back until late at night. And she always has a dreamy expression on her face... I've also found evidence in our finances that suggests she is keeping at least one apartment in the area. I'm not sure where it is."

Do you have a picture of her ?

“Yes. I brought this with me.” (*hands the player the photograph above*)

What is her schedule ?

“I leave the house for work every morning at 8:30. The neighbors tell me she generally leaves a short time afterwards. I don’t know where she goes. But I check the odometer on her car after she comes home; sometimes it’s only fifteen miles. Once it was as much as a hundred and fifty... in any case, she’s usually home before I come back at 6:30. I don’t know when she comes in – the help won’t say a word about it. I think they might be covering for her; all of them used to work for Vivian’s family. She insisted we hire them when her father passed away.”

Really ? So why don’t you just hire new servants ?

“Vivian would throw a fit if I fired them. And besides, I’m sure you know how difficult is to find good domestic help these days.”

What does her car look like ?

“A green Model A Ford. We just bought it recently.”

Have you tried confronting Cross ?

“I would prefer not to. Again, I would like to keep this as discreet as possible for as long as I can. I don’t intend to smear Vivian’s reputation unless it is absolutely necessary.”

Where do you live ?

“Our home is in a development in the north of the city. I believe I’ve provided Mr. Zulli with the address, as well as my office address and phone number.”

After all the questions have been asked:

“All right, Mr. Deaton,” says Ernie. “We’ll be in touch.”

Deaton nods and rises to his feet. “Thank you. You will send the contract to my office ?”

“Already have,” says Ernie. “Take care of yourself.”

Deaton walks out the door. Ernie turns to you. “All right, you heard the man. I want you at his house by eight o’clock tomorrow. Keep out of sight, and keep as close to her as you can. And if she so much as sneezes at another man, I want a picture of it, all right ?”

He glances over where Deaton exited. “Welcome to the business, people. And you’re welcome to it.”

From this point forward, the players have little more to do than explore the Hemingway Investigations offices and plan for the next morning. The office is set up in a small two-room suit that apparently served as a laundromat sometime in the past. The larger of the two rooms is a combination waiting room and office where detectives meet customers;

the smaller back room, where the player initially met with Ernie, is set aside for files and private conferences. Bathrooms are downstairs in Rick's.

Rick's is a shabby bar and restaurant below the offices. There isn't much left a legal bar to during Prohibition; the bar serves juices and drinks along with a limited and somewhat tasteless menu. Still, the booths are a good place to conduct business, and the chili is occasionally decent, provided you don't mind permanent intestinal trauma.

A WOMAN IN WHITE AND A MAN IN BLACK

Friday, January 6, 1928

The Deaton

Residence, 8 am:

The Deatons live in a fashionable, Spanish-style house just north of Los Angeles. You arrive bright at early, just as Ernie ordered, and stake out the other side of the street. At 8:30 on the dot, Deaton walks out of the house and gets into a grey luxury car parked out in front of the house, just next to a green Ford Model A. You watch him drive him off.



Ten minutes later, a woman walks out and goes to the Model A. You're assuming this is Vivian, being that the adjective "blond," "beautiful" and "distant" all seem to apply to her on sight. She's wearing white, just like she was in the photograph. She gets in the Model A, starts it up, and drives off towards the highway.

Have the players make a Drive check (DC 10) to successfully follow her while avoiding detecting (it isn't that hard; truth of the matter is, she isn't really looking).

Pss. Hey, GM – wanna know the trick here? The woman that the PCs are following isn't Vivian Deaton. It's a woman by the name of Joanna Maurey disguised to look like Vivian. She's a dead ringer for Vivian, and as the players only have a photograph to work off of, it's next to impossible for them to detect the deception. If you're feeling generous, you can make a Spot check (DC 35) on behalf of your players. Keep in mind, though, that it's really going to set things off if they see through the deception this early.

The Bradbury Building, 9:10 am:

You drive for about half an hour. She heads into the city, specifically the old historic district. At a fashionable building in town, she gets out and walks into the building, leaving her car to be handed by the valet at the curb.

You follow her into the building, which a sign declares to be the Bradbury Building. As you walk in, there's a heavy crowd in the lobby, mostly office workers sneaking in to work late. You can't help it: you lose her in the crowd.

Truth is, the players aren't actually going to lose her in the crowd; this is just to keep them on their toes. From the lobby, she goes up one of the elevators to the third floor. Have the players make a Spot check, DC 10, to spot her going into the elevator.

The Art Gallery

You finally find her on the third floor. You enter a private art gallery that's there, which apparently is offering a private exhibition. A fashionable framed poster at the entrance declares the exhibition to be titled "Images of the Surreal." The gallery is near deserted, save for Vivian. She's sitting on a bench in the middle of the room, staring at one particular painting. She remains in the same position as time goes by...

And she just stays there.



She will essentially stare at this painting non-stop for the next hour. The picture is titled "The Wicker Men," painted 1925 on canvas by one Mason Carver. It depicts three cloth-and-wicker men on a cliff overlooking the ocean being burned during the night, with the sea stretching off into the distance. The scene has a vaguely Celtic look to it, as well as a disturbing surrealist style reminiscent of that of Salvador Dali. The painting is more or less typical of the exhibition.

Examining the art gallery: on a Spot (DC 15) check, the players will notice additional text on the poster underneath the exhibition title. The text gives credit to the exhibition's sponsors, who are named as follows: the Massachusetts Association of Alternative Painters, the Rudolf Otto Trust for the Arts, Mr. Lawrence Cross, representing Atlantic Shipyards, Incorporated, and Mr. Mason Carver.

With the exception of Joanna, there is no one in the art gallery save the occasional curious passers-by. Should the players try to talk to her, she will prove cold and uncooperative to a conversation. She will ultimately not be deterred from her focus on the painting.

Eventually an hour in game time passes; if the players want to get lunch in the meantime, there's a couple of restaurants on the first floor.

How one person could stare at any of these pieces of crap for more than one minute is beyond you. Yet she sits there for what feels like forever; the entire time, she doesn't get up. She doesn't move, other than breathing. And she doesn't look at any of the other works in front of her – just at the one painting.

You, on the other hand, get bored almost immediately. You find ways to let time pass – trying to memorize your own fingerprints, staring down at your shoes, picking dust off of your hat, that sort of thing. Then you look up, and she’s suddenly standing up. She turns away from the painting and moves towards the doorway without so much as a backward glance. You glance at your watch; it’s been about an hour.

She’s heading towards the elevator; it looks like she’s on her way back to the lobby.



As indeed she is. She goes back out to the curb, gets her car from the valet, and drives off. At this point, the time is 10:15 am.

The Cemetery, 10:35 am:

Twenty minutes later, she pulls off to the curb and gets out. You’re guessing that she’s in the mood to go stare at some stained glass now; she’s parked right in front of Saint Vibiana’s Cathedral.

Instead of walking into the church itself, she walks around the side of the cathedral. When the players follow her around the side:

You find yourself in a small garden to the side of the cathedral. Correction: it’s a cemetery, and it looks like an old one. You spot her in the midst of the graves, her back turned towards you. She’s standing in front of a set of three tombstones; you can’t make out the letters from where you stand. For a moment, you wonder if this is how she’s going to spend this next hour; then she walks away from the tombstones.

She’s just crossing further down the path, however. She stops in front of a single tombstone at the edge of the cemetery. She sits down in front of it. And once again... starts to stare.

You’re starting to detect a pattern here.

The players must get closer where Joanna is sitting to get a closer look at the tombstones. The first three tombstones that she briefly stopped by at are engraved as follows, in the order in which Joanna looked at them:

Joanna Mauney. 1903-1928.
Priscilla Booker. 1899-1928.
Rose Rogers. 1907-1928.

As for the tombstone that she is staring at:

Captain Christopter Thulson
Rest in peace

Those who are dead do only dream
Waiting to be awoken by a hand unseen.

There is no date of death or birth listed.

There is otherwise nothing of interest about them. Joanna will stare at the Thulson grave for half an hour, until roughly 11:05 am.

She must be in a hurry this time. This time, she only stares for half an hour, by your watch.

She stands up abruptly and walks back down the path. From there she goes past the cathedral and back out to her car.

Joanna gets back in her car and will start to drive north, as described by the text below.

The Park, 11:50 am:

The drive's longer this time. She starts by heading straight west, back through downtown and up to the waterfront. From there she gets onto the Pacific Coast Highway and heads north. Traffic lightens up once you get out of the city. Eventually, the landscape on your right turns into farmland, and it's just you and her on the road, on a sunny California morning.

Forty-five minutes later, she hits the left turn signal. She turns into what looks like a small park right on the coast, with an excellent view of the ocean.

When the investigators pull into the park:

The park isn't much to look at. It's a concrete platform on a small cliff that overlooks the beach. There's a parking lot, a couple of wooden picnic tables, a bench, and a flight of stairs that lead down to the beach. There aren't any buildings except for what looks like a small maintenance shed next to the parking lot. A small metal plaque declares to anyone interested that they stand within the bounds of Pacific Coast Highway Rest Stop #21.

Well, at the view of the ocean is excellent. Vivian seems to think so; as soon as she gets out of her car, she walks over to a bench near the fence that guards the edge of the cliff and sits down. And she... well? Anyone care to take a guess? That's right – she *stares*. Straight into the ocean this time.

Joanna sits down at the park bench nearby the stairs (see map). The investigators have two game minutes to park and get themselves situated within the park. Once those are up, however:

A few minutes or so pass. Glancing southward down the beach, you notice a small black dot out towards the horizon. You're guessing it's moving, because over the next five minutes it steadily gets larger and basically man-shaped.

It's another few minutes before you can pick out any details. White guy, six and a couple inches tall. He isn't moving all that fast; he looks like he's got some kind of a limp, apparently in both legs. Other than that, you can't see much of him; he wears a dark black coat and a wide-brimmed hat.

You wouldn't think that he looks particularly interesting. But when you look up, Vivian seems to have dropped the ocean as her favorite thing. Now she's looking at the guy intently, proving beyond all evidence thus far that she is in fact capable of moving her head.

The man goes to the stairs and walks up to the platform. Joanna rises to meet him; they stand facing each other right next to the top of the stairway.

Looks like it's time to grab your camera and make some cash. They stand talking there, at the top of the stairs. She's doing most of the talking; she does so in a whisper you can barely over the sound of the ocean. She doesn't sound excited or panicked or emotional in the slightest.

If the players want to try and eavesdrop on the conversation, have them make a Listen check, DC 20, +1 for every ten feet of distance (Read Lips probably wouldn't work in this situation).. If one succeeds:

For a moment, it sounds like they're speaking in gibberish. Then you realize it's some kind of language. You don't know what it sounds like – it isn't Spanish or anything like that.

Have them make a Knowledge (linguistics) check, DC 15. If successful:

It sounds a little like Hebrew, or maybe Arabic.

In any case, whatever happens:

They whisper back and forth like that for a couple of minutes. They talk, they talk, they talk, they talk some more.

And then the man pulls out a very long knife... and he stabs her in the face.

This occurs at exactly 12 noon. SAN check 1/1d6+1.

A Long Knife, 12:00 am:

The stats for the molochim are in the NPC section. This particular molochim is referred to as #1; it's the one with the Expertise feat.

There's a confused moment where your brain refuses to believe what your eyes just told you. The area around her is covered in blood; the front of the man's trenchcoat has been stained red. He doesn't seem to care much. He pulls out the knife; she drops to the ground in a way that the living don't.

The man steps away from the corpse. He slides the knife into his coat pocket. He takes a long look around the park.

Then he steps over the body and walks towards the road.

If the players are in plain sight when the molochim looks around the park, it will look directly at the players, for just a moment. Its gaze will then move on.

Roll initiative only if the players decide to make their presence known and/or engage the molochim. In any case, the molochim will be mostly concerned with getting away from the park than cleaning up any witnesses. It will of course kill any PCs that get in its way without mercy, but it will not actively pursue the PCs should they make a run for it. It will head directly towards the area where the parking lot meets the road, straight through the number 1 on the map of the park.

1 minute or 10 rounds after the murder, an unmarked white Pierce-Arrow Touring will pull up in the driveway of the park, around the position marked 1 on the map. Two cultists (one of which will be molochim #2) will be in the front; both will have pistols. They will cover #1 as he gets into the back seat; the car will then pull a U-turn and head south towards the city. If the investigators try and follow them, the cultists will first try and lose them; if this fails, they will simply pull off to the side of the road and confront the PCs. Which, all in all, does not represent the best of all worlds for the players.

Examining the Murder Scene

THE INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

Deciphering the inscriptions on the back of the photograph will take two checks: the first to identify the language that the inscription is in, and the second to actually translate it.

Research DC 12 (takes 1d4 hours) or Knowledge (archaeology) DC 15:

As far as you can tell, the marks on the back of the photograph are letters in Akkadian. Akkadian is an ancient Semitic language created roughly five thousand years ago; it was the language, or at least was probably the language, from which Hebrew and Arabic are derived. It was rediscovered in the 1840's and has since been deciphered by academics.

Research DC 20 (takes 1d8 hours) or Speak Other Language (Akkadian) 15:

The inscription reads: "I give myself to you, lord-of-dreams, by the sword."

And assuming everything goes to plan, the investigators will be standing in the dust as the car pulls away with a corpse and a lot of questions. They'll have the chance to try and seek some answers from the evidence the cultists have left behind.

Looking at the Body:

Joanna Maurey is indeed dead once the investigators have a chance to check. Two cuts were made: one starting above the left eye and traveling diagonally down the face, underneath the nose and through the right cheek, and the other a direct horizontal cut across the throat. Her face, needless to say, is unrecognizable; blood is everywhere within five feet of the body.

She still grasps her small purse in her left hand. Investigators taking a look inside the purse will find exactly two objects: the first is her car key. The second is a photograph of Vivian Haase-Deaton – in fact, the same photograph that Deaton handed the investigators earlier on. On the back is written a strange inscription which the investigators can't read. It looks like a number of

strange symbols which look vaguely like letters, but aren't like any that the investigators have ever seen. See the text box to the left as to how the investigators can decipher it.

Looking in Vivian's Car:

The investigators can either try to break in (Open Lock check, DC 23) or they can just get the key out of the purse.

The investigators must make a Search check.

DC 15: In the very back of the glove compartment, hidden behind a clutter of maps and various papers, you find a small paper bag. Opening it, you find a number of dark brown cylinders, each wrapped in paper and roughly the size and width of a pencil. The material feels dry and sticky; it has the texture of some kind of vegetable.

(Knowledge [streetwise] or Knowledge [medicine] check, DC 10: The stuff is opium.)

DC 17: Underneath the driver's seat, you find a small black spiral-bound notebook. Flipping through it, it seems to be some kind of address book. The back of the cover is marked lightly in pencil with the initials "V.H."

Examining Vivian's Address Book:

The investigators can examine the notebook they find in the car whenever they wish to. The address book contains roughly a hundred names, addresses and phone numbers in no particular order or combination. Finding a particular name or address in the mess requires a Spot (DC 10) check. Listed names and addresses include: William Deaton (office address), Mason Carver, John Szepasszony, and Lawrence Cross (both home and office addresses).

Spot (DC 17) check: In the middle of the book, there are three consecutive addresses without names or phone numbers attached to them. This is not unusual for the book; they are only differentiated by a light pencil mark next to them, so light that it might be easily missed. The addresses are those to three different apartments: one in Los Angeles, one in Long Beach, and the last in Santa Barbara.

These are the three apartments that Vivian has been renting on behalf of her doubles. The Los Angeles address is for Joanna Maurey; the Long Beach address is for Priscilla Booker; the Santa Barbara address is for Rose Rogers.

SO. WHAT NOW, CHIEF?

At this point in the mission, events cease to occur in a predictably linear fashion. What happens next, and indeed from this point forward, depends entirely on what the players decide to do. The only predictable occurrences are those mandated by the ritual; these will continue on an exact timetable. See the Timeline for the order of these events.

The most logical thing to do after the murder would probably be to call Ernie.

CALLING ERNIE

Calling Ernie directly after the murder should be an interesting experience for the players. Initially there's a period of shock ("She's fucking dead?!"), followed by one of something close to panic ("Did anyone see you there? Did he see you?"). But all in all he handles it rather well.

Once he calms down, Ernie will advise the investigators to leave the scene of the crime as soon as possible. They shouldn't go back to the office or their apartments at first

– best thing to do is to get back to the city and lie low for a few hours. Should any of the PCs have been injured in the battle, he will recommend them to a doctor he knows by the name of Dr. Daniel Lubomir (see Other NPCs). They should refrain from making any calls whatsoever, especially to the police. And they should wait until that night until contacting Deaton, just to give things a chance to cool down.

Ernie will at first be opposed to letting the players continue their investigation. Should they push on, he will reluctantly offer his support. If asked, he will make any Research or Gather Information checks that the investigators will require (with the exception of translating any inscriptions; Ernie will be strangely reluctant to deal with such things).

CALLING DEATON

Should the investigators contact Deaton directly after the murder, Deaton will know nothing about it and will react with an according amount of shock. He will probably contact the police, and require the investigators to submit to their questioning (see CALLING THE POLICE to see how that turns out).

Deaton will be out of touch from 5:30 to 6, even through his office. He will return home at 6:30 that night. Should the investigators wait until then to call him at home, he will react strangely to their news.

Specifically, he tells the investigators they must be mistaken; his wife is alive, and sitting right in the next room. He just had dinner with her. To all appearances, she's been home all day.

As the conversation continues, Deaton will report that his wife's car does seem to be missing. If he hears the full story, he will be reluctant not to contact the police. This will require a Diplomacy check on the part of the investigators; DC 20 will convince him to wait until the case fully plays out. DC 15 will make him agree to wait for 1d4 days before contacting the police, but not a moment more. Even if the players make the check, Deaton will still express fear for his wife's safety (divorcing her is one thing, seeing her killed is another), and ask if he should take her out of town.

MEETING DEATON

Both times that I've run this mission, the players have asked Deaton if they could meet with him at some point the next morning. He will agree to meet them at Mozart's, a fancy restaurant across the street from the Haase Shipping Company offices. Deaton has a private table there which he uses for business meetings. He will politely offer to pay for breakfast (and no, they don't serve lobster in the morning).

Deaton has already told the players all that he knows. There is only one piece of information he can contribute: should the players show him a photograph of Joanna taken before her murder, he will look closely at the pictures for a few moments before announcing: "That's not my wife. It looks exactly like her, but it's not Vivian." He will be unable to explain how exactly he can tell this; perhaps it's a collection of small details that he can't put his finger on. Perhaps it's just intuition. But he knows that the woman in the photo isn't Vivian.

CALLING THE POLICE

So what happens if the investigators decide to go to the police, despite Ernie's advice to the contrary ?

Calling the police by phone, the investigators will initially be put through to a female secretary, who will then transfer them to a Lieutenant John Szepasszony. Lieutenant Szepasszony will request full information from the investigators; once they receive the salient details, he tells them to stay where they are; for safety's sake, he will send down a squad car to take the investigators to headquarters, where they can be interviewed on the public record. About an hour and fifteen minutes later (assuming the investigators are still near the park; if they've returned to the city, cut that to half an hour), a paddywagon will pull up to the investigators' location. The two police officers in the front will get out and introduce themselves as Sergeants Pollock and Bartel. They'll tell the investigators to get in the back – after surrendering their weapons, as a matter of procedure.

Assuming the investigators agree, they will be placed in the back of the wagon. The back of the wagon is only accessible through the door in the vehicle's back; there is a two-inch thick steel wall separating the back compartment from the front of the vehicle, where the driver and passenger's seats are. There are no windows, save a small slit for air at the very top of the back door, which is barely wide enough for the investigators to put their hands through. Pollock and Bartel will close the back door and get in front; the wagon will start to move.

About thirty minutes will pass. Then the wagon will abruptly stop. The investigators will hear the front door open; there will be some slight whispering, which the investigators cannot quite make out. Footsteps will approach the back door. The door opens – and the investigators see in the doorway a man dressed in a black trenchcoat with a wide-brimmed hat. With a Tommy gun.

As the investigators have probably guessed at this point, this is a trap. Szepasszony and the secretary are both cultists; they've both been told by Cross to keep an eye out for incoming reports from possible witnesses. The secretary will route the investigators' call to Szepasszony, no matter what they say. He, in turn, will contact the molochim; #3 will meet the paddywagon.

Pollock and Bartel aren't cultists; however, they are corrupt cops willing to do anything for money. Assuming the investigators survive to interrogate them, as far as they know, they're in the pay of an unknown customer who contacts them through Szepasszony. They were told to meet the investigators, drive them to a field just outside of the city (which is where the investigators are now), and let the guy they meet there take care of business. That's all they know.

What's the first lesson of Cthulhu, class ? Don't trust anyone.

Investigating Jason Szepasszony

A corollary to this scenario came up the second time I ran this mission. One of the players, an ex-cop, recognized Szepasszony's name in Vivian's address book. The investigators decided to go to talk to Szepasszony at his office within LAPD headquarters. This was logical – not particularly smart, but logical.

Should this occur, Szepasszony will leave the investigators in his office for a moment, saying that he needs to briefly handle something elsewhere in the building. He

comes back with his gun drawn, backed up by Pollock and Bartel. They'll search and disarm the players, handcuff them, and lock them up in an isolated concrete interrogation room in the basement of headquarters. Szepasszony will then call the molochim.

This scenario is... somewhat more survivable than the one previously described. The players will be handcuffed (Break DC 26; Escape Artist check, DC 30). The only entrance and exit to the room is a single iron door (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28) with a Good lock (Open Lock check, DC 30). The interrogation room has no windows, and all four walls are made of at least a foot of concrete. The only source of illumination is a single lightbulb hanging from the ceiling. The molochim will arrive about two hours after the players are locked up; it will go down into the basement and kill the players, probably with its machete.

Well, a true gamer loves a challenge.

When my group did this, I decided to show them some mercy. They were smart enough to have two players stay outside while two went in to talk to Szepasszony. The other two players got away and called Ernie; he managed to get in touch with a friend of his within the LAPD who sneaked into the cell block and opened the door.

Should you choose to do something similar, the players should spot on their way out of the department Szepasszony standing outside of his office door, talking to one of the molochim.

REVISITING THE GALLERY

Players revisited the gallery after Joanna's death will find that nothing has changed. The gallery's hours are from twelve to five on weekdays and Saturdays. Players will most likely learn no new information, other than perhaps finding information they missed the first day they were there.

That's not to say the visit is a complete loss. One of the players is in for a surprise.

One player who looks at "The Wicker Men" again for an extended period of time will for one moment see three human figures trapped within the burning wicker men. In his mind he hears the screams of three different voices – three different women – in extreme pain. Then the vision is abruptly gone.

SAN check 0/1d4.

Should the players decide not to revisit the gallery, this might also happen with a photograph the players might have taken of the painting.

REVISITING THE GRAVEYARD

If the players decide to revisit the garden graveyard next to St. Vibiana's Cathedral, there is only one way that they may learn new information that they could not have learned during their first visit: they can try digging whatever's under the tombstones up.

It's essentially impossible for the PCs to try this during the day; there are worshippers and staff in and around the church grounds all day. During the night, the church has hired a night watchman to circle around the premises (see Other NPCs for stats). He revisits the graveyard area once every hour.

Should the PCs successfully duck the watchman or perhaps come up with some excuse to violate said sacred area, they may be interested by the results. Underneath the tombstones of Joanna Maurey, Priscilla Booker and Rose Rogers, they will find nothing:

the grave plots are of course empty. The tombstones were placed there by the cult as part of the ritual. The cult does not intend, by the way, to ever put the women's corpses there; the tombstones merely serve as a symbolic component to the ritual.

Exhuming Captain Christopher Thulson

At first, the PCs will find nothing. Then, roughly seven feet under the ground, one of the players' shovels will hit something hard; it feels like wood, or some softer material. The players hurry to pull the object out of the ground – it turns out to be a canvas, a painting of some sort. The front is predictably covered by dirt; one of the players rubs off what he or she can. They struggle to make out the front in the dim light... and then drop the painting in horror. Read this description to them:

The painting seems at first to be of a man. Then you realize in an instant that there are other shapes there – things that extend and form and bend like no human form should. You see in the bare light before dawn a face that seems to be part squid, part man, and part things that you cannot possibly contemplate. A tentacled visage, like a beard, trailing down to the end of the painting... and worst of all are the things' eyes. For they look in that strange light to be almost human – and in them you see madness, and horror, and some nameless emotion that fills you with a fear you have never known before.

SAN check 0/1d4. This is a painting of great Cthulhu himself, as created by Mason

TRANSLATING THE
INSCRIPTION ON THE
PAINTING:

Research DC 20 (takes 1d8 hours) or Speak Other Language (Akkadian) 15, -2 if the players have translated a previous inscription:

*"One by the sword. One by fire.
One by water. To be closer to
you, my lord."*

Carver during the rising of R'leyh in 1925. Upon a second inspection of the painting, the players will find around the edge of the picture a grouping of strange symbols – Akkadian again, of course. The tombstone and the painting were placed in the graveyard as a hidden shrine to Great Cthulhu (think about it for a second: Christopher Thulson).

Something to bring up at this point: even characters who have a background in the occult may not have heard of Cthulhu. During my first session, I required a character who stumbled upon this to make a Knowledge (occult) check,

DC 25, to see if he'd even heard of Cthulhu. However, he was playing an archaeologist who specialized in strange cultures; I leave it up to the GM to decide whether or not any of your characters could do the same.

VISITING MASON CARVER

Thanks to Vivian's address book, the players do indeed have access to the office address of Mason Carver, the artist who created "The Wicker Man."

Mason Carver works and lives out of a trendy LA studio downtown, just a few blocks from the Bradbury Building. The building also houses a law firm and two other artists; a secretary in the lobby on the ground floor handles messages for the entire building. In any case, it doesn't matter, because Carver's out of town; the secretary says that he's been abroad in Europe for the last month.

Should the players decide to break in, they'll be up against a Strong Wooden Door (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23) with a Good Lock (Open Lock DC 30). The

secretary does not, by the way, have a key for Carver's studio. Should they still succeed, they will find that the studio has been completely cleaned out; there's no furniture, no decorations, and not so much as a drop of paint.

All in all, there is exactly one thing that might help the players here: there are a number of sketches and paintings hanging in the front lobby. They are all by Mason Carver. In the corner, there is a sketch of a beach; a Spot (DC 12) check will assure that the players recognize it as the same beach where Joanna Maurey was murdered.

VISITING LAWRENCE CROSS

Lawrence Cross makes his home in the penthouse of a posh downtown apartment building. Should the players go by in the attempt to contact him, they will be informed by the receptionist that he is currently out of town. Security in the apartment building is extremely tight; there are three guards on the ground floor, and two others patrolling the building at all times. The receptionist will call the police at the first sign of trouble. A resident's key is required to even access the elevator and the stairs from the ground floor (both Good locks). And once the players are past all of that, the door to Cross' apartment is a Iron Door with an Amazing lock (Open Lock DC 40). There is a fire escape, but even accessing that from the ground requires getting past an Above Average lock (Open Lock check DC 27).

In other words, it isn't going to happen.

Visiting Cross' office address, on the other hand, will bring the characters back to the Bradbury Building; it seems that Cross has a private office there. Upon finding it, the players will be informed by the receptionist that Mr. Cross is in the process of moving to a different office in the city, and is furthermore left for a business trip to San Francisco and Seattle Friday morning. Breaking into the office (Strong Wooden Door, Average Lock) will find that the office has merely been cleaned out, without anything left behind.

So, long story short: this is a dead end.

VISITING JOANNA'S APARTMENT

Going to the Los Angeles address will lead the investigators to the apartment of Joanna Maurey. She lived in a small, cheap apartment on the second floor of a Skid Row hotel. The apartment includes a main room/bedroom and a bathroom. The apartment has no fire escape.

Main Room/Bedroom

This is the first room you've come to, and already you're not sure what to think about this place. It's a small little room with no wallpaper, just plaster walls, and no carpeting; there's a window across from the door, and what looks like a bathroom through a door to the side. There's only one piece of furniture, a musty old couch that looks like it doubled as a bed. But you can't really make out any specifics of the room's features.

That because every inch of wall, every part of the floor, most of the couch, and even parts of the ceiling are covered in photographs. Some are framed, some are pinned up, and some just scattered around like scrap paper. They're of all colors, sizes and descriptions, but they do have one thing in common. As far as you can tell, they're all of Vivian Deaton.

Have the players make a Search check:

DC 12 – You find a small wallet, tucked underneath the cushions of the couch. You leaf through it; there’s roughly ten dollars in cash. There’s also an Iowa driver’s license for one Joanna Maurey, age 25.

DC 15 – Searching through the piles of Vivian photographs on the floor, you find one small object that sticks out – it’s a playing card from a standard poker deck, specifically the Queen of Hearts.

Bathroom

The bathroom’s even smaller than the bedroom, with a toilet, a sink, and a bathtub competing for space. The room is, oddly enough, photograph-free, with the exception of one shot of Vivian in her white coat that is pasted to the mirror above the sink. There is otherwise nothing notable about the room, save for the face drawn on the mirror.

It’s a basic sketch, right underneath the photograph, which is pasted to the top of the mirror – a mouth that’s drawn in a frown, two dots for eyes, and what looks like a tear drawn underneath the left eye. Underneath the face, there are a number of strange little squiggles, which go down the remaining length of the mirror, onto the wall, and then down onto the top of the sink. And – by the way – all of it seems to have been drawn in blood.

SAN check 0/1d4. Once again, the symbols are in Akkadian. See “Translating The Inscription On The Mirror” below for details.

VISITING PRISCILLA’S APARTMENT

Going to the Long Beach address will lead the investigators to the apartment of Priscilla Booker. It is probable that the investigators aren’t going to figure out what’s going on in time to save Priscilla. As a result, when the investigators go to the Long Beach address,

they’ll find it leads to an upscale apartment building, entitled Sea Breeze Apartments, presently under lockdown by the Long Beach police. There are police officers at all entrances to the building; they will refuse to let the players in.

The LA Times will publish an article reporting information

TRANSLATING THE INSCRIPTION ON THE MIRROR:

Research DC 20 (takes 1d8 hours) or Speak Other Language (Akkadian) 15, -2 if the players have translated a previous inscription:

“I give myself to you, lord-of-dreams, by the sword. By the sword.

I give myself to you, lord of oceans, by fire. By fire.

I give myself to you, lord of life and death, by water. By water.

Grant thy servant’s request. To be closer to you, my lord.”

about the event in the evening edition, released at 7 pm the night after the murder (that would be the night of Saturday, January 7). See pg. 46 for a clip-out of the article’s text.

Should the players pump one of the officers at the door for information, he will be able to volunteer no more information than is contained in the newspaper article.

VISITING VIVIAN

Should the players decide to talk to Vivian, or merely wish to talk to William in the privacy of his own home, they know where his house is. As usual, William is at work during the day, leaving at 8:30 am and coming home at 6:30 that evening. Vivian has recently taken to sleeping in; she won't be up until 10 am, and will refuse to take company until at least 11. Other occupants of the house include the butler, John, and two maids, Natalie and Judy.

Should the players decide to explore the first floor while they're waiting:

First Floor

- 1 – Foyer. This ornate room, with a floor of marble tile and a number of tasteful paintings, is the first thing that visitors see upon entering through the front door.
- 2 – Waiting Room. Consists of a number of uncomfortable but fashionable chairs and a few more tasteful paintings. John, the butler, will tend to herd visitors into this area.
- 3 – Drawing Room. The marble tile gives way to plush white carpet here; a number of sofas and tables litter the scene, dominated by a massive stone fireplace set into the wall.
- 4 – The inner parlor. Apparently a more private room where Mr. Deaton can conduct business. More chairs, more tasteful paintings, an impressive-looking desk, etcetera.
- 5 – Dining room. More marble tile here, and a very long table underneath a crystal chandelier. The table is made to seat at least twenty at a time; you wonder where Vivian and William sit, most mornings.
- 6 – The kitchen. Features a maid skittering around, many shiny and modern appliances.
- 7 – The ballroom. You've never known anyone who's had an actual ballroom before. There's room for at least fifty people in here. The wood floors are shiny and unmarked.
- 8 – Visitor's bathroom. Apparently the main bathroom on this floor. God only knows how much money is sunk into this room alone; the marble tile is lighter here. There are a number of small statues here and there; the water taps are fashioned out of crystal.
- 9 – A small storage closet. Includes a number of chairs, a few spare tables, also what look like a few leftover party favors.
- 10 – This looks like a small bedroom, accessible only through the bathroom. It's nicely carpeted, though dim, with a comfortable-looking cot set up in the corner. Nightstand with a lamp set next to it. You wonder what it's for.
Have the players make a Search check, DC 10: You notice a small object underneath the bed. You bend down and pick it up – it looks like your standard deck of cards, held together with a rubber band. Looks like someone dropped it there.
Don't tell the players unless they ask: the deck is missing exactly one card, the Queen of Hearts. Joanna was in this room Thursday morning. The help let her in through the back sometime before Mr. Deaton got up; she hid in this bedroom until he left.
- 11 – Staircase. Leads up to the house's second floor.
This floor is reserved for the Deatons' private use; the butler will refuse point-blank to admit any visitors upstairs.

Second Floor

It's improbable that the players will be able to access this floor while calling on Vivian. This floor is generally reserved for the Deatons' private use. As a result, the butler will most likely refuse to let any visitors go upstairs (and he's too loyal to Vivian to accept bribes, by the way). So if the players want to examine this area, they'll either have to bypass the butler or break in at some point.

11 – Staircase

12 – Living room. Apparently a private sitting area. The furniture looks older, but a lot more comfortable than most of the stuff on the first floor.

13 – A small bedroom off to the side of the living room. The furniture is much cheaper; there's quite a bit of clutter, including a large stack of magazines next to the side of the door, mostly old issues of the Ladies Home Journal and the Sears catalogue. You guess that one of the servants must live here.

The maid keeps Vivian's opium supply in this room. It will take a Search check (DC 20) to find roughly twenty of the same dark, brown cylinders the players found in the car, carefully wrapped in newspaper and tucked underneath a layer of clutter in the maid's dresser.

14 – You open this door off to the side of the living room. Everyone make a Will save against being impressed*. It doesn't matter what you get: you fail. You are looking in on an immense bedroom, easily the size of the ballroom below it. Every section of the wall is covered with mirror-glass; here and there ornate paintings and small crystal statues hang or stand on pedestals or metal display platforms highly polished to blend into the mirrors around it. The bed is immense, easily enough to fit four or five people comfortably (why you'd want to, there's the question...). The plush carpet is an immaculate and unstained white; another door towards the back gives you access to the large, marble-tilted private bathroom, where the water taps seem to be made out of diamond. Towards the back of the room, an immense window gives you a view of Los Angeles that extends for miles; you think you might even be able to see a glimmer of the ocean, somewhere in the distance. All in all, you'll take two, please.

**see how many of your players actually do this.*

15 – A tastefully decorated guest bedroom. There's quite a bit of dust in here – looks like no one's been in here for a while.

16 – This looks like another storage room; there's also a wringer, a clothesline, and one of those new electric washing machines. You think about making some kind of joke about dirty laundry to the others, but think better of it.

17 – *This door is locked (Open Lock DC 20, Break DC 25).*

This probably was another guest bedroom, just like the other one. Emphasis on *was*. You are standing in a room with the décor that might have resembled that of the other guest bedroom at some point. It doesn't anymore, because everything in this room has been effectively destroyed. The furniture has been overturned. The mattress has been torn apart. The wallpaper has been scratched off the walls and lies around in tatters. Even the carpet has been torn up by its roots, exposing a rotting wooden floor. The air is smoky, to the point you can't barely see through it; it smells like human urine, and cigarettes, and sweat and semen and maybe even blood. The stench fills your lungs; it takes every shred of willpower in your soul to breathe. *Fort save DC 15, against nausea.*

Across the room, on the wall opposite to the door, the window shutters have been drawn shut.

Knowledge (medicine) check, DC 15: It's hard to pick out anything distinct in the horrible stench of this room. Nonetheless, you think, as you hold down your gag reflex, that you might smell burnt opium somewhere in that terrible smoke.

Search check, DC 10: Looking through the debris in the room as your eyes water, you find little of interest, save, here and there, a few long, blond hairs.

Vivian has been sleeping in this room ever since the ritual began. She attacks everything around her in her sleep, perhaps under the influence of the unholy powers she has contacted. When awake, she retires to this room whenever the stress of the ritual gets too much for her. It's in here that she smokes the opium, mostly to relieve the immense psychic pain her growing contact with R'leyh is causing her.



Talking To Vivian

Assuming the players stay in the waiting room until Vivian comes down:

You're just starting to think about lunch when you hear the soft sound of feet coming down the carpeted stairway. You wait a few moments; you hear the strides of the butler across the marble. He opens the waiting room door a moment later. "Mrs. Deaton will see you now," he says, and turns away.

And through the door walks the woman in the photograph. Vivian Haase-Deaton is wearing a white nightgown that somehow manages to be baggy and eye-catching at the same time. She stands in the doorway for a moment, then slowly approaches you. You can see what William was talking about: she has a distant, dreamy, just-woken-up look in her eyes that you can't really pin down the cause of. She has the walk of someone who doesn't quite believe there's ground underneath her feet. She holds a newly lit cigarette carelessly in her left hand.

Yet she seems to focus as she approaches you. She sits down in the chair and looks out the window, drawing the cigarette to her lips and inhaling. There's an awkward silence for a moment before she turns back to you. She exhales slowly, and looks at you through the smoke. "So," she says suddenly, "you must be the people my husband hired to spy on me."

And then there's another awkward silence, as you figure out how to react to that.

Q&A Session: Vivian Deaton

Vivian speaks in a sort of a singsong, with a very slight English accent. She also has an extremely unstable personality; sometimes, she'll lose focus on the conversation, and just stare out into nowhere. Other times, she'll switch into an aggressive, femme fatale mode. It's hard to say where the conversation will go; just improvise, and keep in mind that this woman can essentially do anything.

Oh, yes, and if any of the players actually touch Vivian... see pg. 26.

How do you know your husband hired us?

"When all is said and done, William is an immensely predictable man. Why don't we just leave it at that."

Why did you marry William, then?

"My parents told me too. They needed a businessman, after James died in the war..."

Who was James?

"My brother. He was my brother."

How did James die?

"The war. He died on a ship."

We were hired by your husband to follow you. We followed a woman who looked exactly liked you from this house, thinking she was you. She was murdered. Do you know anything about it?

"What did she look like?"

When the players describe Joanna:

"That sounds like me. It must have been me."

But if it was you, how are you still alive?

Vivian loses focus and stares off into space.

When the players catch her attention again:

"Oh... I'm sorry. What were we talking about?"

If the players press the point, she will continue to lose focus. She will essentially say no more.

Do you know anything about ancient Akkadian?

"Akkadian?... like what the Bible's written in?..."

Somewhat, yes.

"No... no, not really."

Does this inscription sound familiar to you? (in terms of any of the inscriptions the players have encountered)

"It sounds... familiar..."

Can you think of where you heard it?

“... no.... in a dream?”

Have you heard of Joanna Maurey, Priscilla Booker, or Rose Rogers?

“No... no, I don’t know them. I might have dreamed that I did... I might have...”

Are you having an affair?

“... an affair?”

Yes. An affair.

“Is that what William thinks?” She puts her head back and laughs. “Do you want to know something? He’s right. He’s absolutely right.”

Who are you having an affair with?

She leans forward to you. Her smile widens. “Which one?”

Are you having an affair with Lawrence Cross?

“Oh, no... not Lawrence. He’s ancient, we go back ages... it would feel a little like incest.”

Who, then?

“Do you really want to know? Do you really, absolutely want to know?”

Yes.

“William.” She laughs again. “No, that’s a joke. I’m joking.”

Then who already?!

“Whoever I like.” She smiles at you again.

This is essentially all the information the players are going to get out of Vivian. If they continue trying to interrogate her, she might fall into the following monologue.

“I once heard something interesting about the Bible. From James. James told me. He told me all about it. He said that according to the Bible, the oceans were there before God was. It says that. It also says that there’s water below the world. And there’s water above the world too, above Heaven and God and the angels. Water, water, everywhere... and everywhere water...”

The players can try and decipher these strange statements with the following checks:

Knowledge (religion) check, DC 10, or Knowledge (occult) check, DC 15: Vivian is referring to the first chapter of Genesis, verses 6 to 8: “And the Lord said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ And the Lord made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And the Lord called the firmament Heaven.”

Knowledge (religion) check, DC 15: The verse is interesting in that it reflects the ancient world-view that prevailed when Genesis was written. The ancient Sumerians, it is believed, tended to regard the world as a flat disk, over which the heavens were erected

like a dome. The entire world was then surrounded by water, somewhat like an egg bathed in a pool. Water, to the ancient Sumerians, tended to represent the primal chaos out of which the universe was born; the Flood that Noah survived, later in Genesis, can therefore be seen as God reversing creation, or uncreating the world.

Touching Vivian

During the conversation above, keep an eye out for any of the players touching Vivian, either for assurance or to make a point. If this does not happen, you can choose to roll randomly to see if any of the players accidentally brushes against Vivian at some point. Whoever does is in for a ride. That player receives a personal, one-time-only whammie. It is recommended you take the victim into another room, therefore keeping the other players unaware of what occurs. Another method I've used in the past is to copy out the text, print it off, put it in an envelope, and send the player off into another room to read it alone. Both methods have proved to be highly effective in the past.

In any case, read the following text to the player:

You feel your hand brush across Vivian's skin. It's soft, and clean, and smells sweet, like honeysuckle in the morning.

And then you are not there anymore.

You are surrounded by darkness. You seem to hang in the middle of the air, if there is air. There is not a sound around you, not a single shred of light that you can see. And yet... it seems like a section of the darkness, the one in front of you, is moving, back and forth, side to side, up and down. You stare into it for moments before you realize what it is, and where you are: you are hanging above an immense, dark sea, reflecting a moonless night sky.

And then you realize you are dropping towards it.

You try and stop yourself, as you would in a dream, but you merely twist in the gravity. As the distance between you and the water closes, you realize that the sea is growing more and more violent, the waves easily towering hundreds of feet, even miles, above the surface. You try and close your eyes – you try and make it stop – but even as you try the waves reach up to grasp you.

You hit the water. The contact knocks the breath from you. You are being drawn ceaselessly down, down – the water pushes around you, crushing you – you need air. You try and resist, but the pain gets so intense you can't stop yourself from opening your mouth – and then the water floods in, and the pain gets even more intense, and you're still being sucked down, down towards the featureless, lightless sea floor.

Except... again, in the darkness, you can make out a shape of some sort. Some sort of... greater darkness, miles and miles beneath you. And you realize you are being drawn towards it.

Again, you try to resist, try to swim. But you can't feel your limbs, or your muscles, and you can't even so much as move. And the greater darkness grows more and more immense, until in your mind's eye you can't help but think it resembles a structure, a tower of some sort, down in the impossible depths. And within it... within it waits something. Something immense. Something hungry. Something that is everything and nothing at once, something that can see everything and hear everything and is dead and alive and incomprehensibly intelligent and vast and oh God please no please no no no no

– you try and move but you can’t – you try and shut your eyes but your eyelids have been cut off – no no no please **NO NO N** –

And then... you are standing... in a strange, sunny room. Other things... other people... there. Your skin touching against hers.

She turns slightly away from you, breaking the contact. “I’m sorry,” she says, looking up at you. “Is something wrong?”

You look into Vivian’s eyes, as blue and as perfect as the oceans. And suddenly you can see through them, past all the barriers and lies and deceptions, and you know. You know that she has seen what you have seen. You know that she has been even closer, into the darkness, into the tower, into what waits there. She has seen everything, and she will see more.

And she likes it.

Have the player go back to the table and make a Sanity check: SAN check 2/2d10.

As for the other players: they see the player who receives this vision touch Vivian. He or she seems sort of distant for a moment, like he or she is thinking of something. Vivian notices and looks up at him or her: “I’m sorry. Is something wrong?” The player looks back at her for a moment – then abruptly collapses to the ground, coughing.

Vivian looks up at the other players: “I’m sorry... I think your friend is having some trouble. I think I’ll have John help you get him out to your car.” She turns away from you to call the butler; you have the feeling that the interview is over.

The player’s coughing fit continues until he or she is outside of the house. During this period, he or she cannot talk or communicate; ignore effects of San loss from the check for the time being. Once outside of the house, the player falls to his or her knees and vomits. Seawater comes out.

It’s at this point that any effects of Sanity loss kick in.

An additional note: when this happened to one of my players, I decided it would be best to leave the rest of the players wondering. As a result, I told her that the psychological damage of what she saw was such that she could not communicate the details of her vision to the other players, unless one of them made either a Psychoanalysis (DC 15) or Diplomacy (DC 22) check at some point in the game. She ended up staying silent for a full session, and eventually was able to tell the other players of what she saw at a climatic moment. Timing is everything. I just wanted to put that on the table.

VISITING ROSE ROGERS

Rose Rogers may be the only effigy that the players can save; at the very least, she is the key to shutting down the ritual. She lives in Apartment 403 on the fourth floor of the Silent Night Apartments building in Santa Barbara.

Rose Rogers is an aspiring actress, originally from New Jersey. She moved into the Los Angeles area about two years ago. She was hired by Vivian about a year ago to

act as a decoy, to stave off any investigations William might attempt (see the text below). She is about five-foot-two with light brown hair. Her reaction to the players depends on the context: should they wake her up, she will be extremely annoyed. She'll be somewhat disbelieving of the story the investigators are telling, especially if they start talking about cults and Akkadian inscriptions. If worst comes to worst, she will kick the investigators out of her apartment; should they refuse to leave, she will probably attempt to reach the phone in her bedroom in order to call the police. Again, everything depends on how the players handle the situation.

There is a map of her apartment and the floor it's on in the appendix. The apartment contains a large number of photographs of Vivian Haase, albeit fewer in number and more artfully (or sanely arranged) – in frames, taped carefully onto walls in a few select locations, etcetera. Stats for Rose can be found in the NPC section.

Q&A Session: Rose Rogers

All right, what's going on here ?

I'm sorry, I can't really tell you.

(The players must make a Diplomacy check, DC 25, or an opposed Intimidation check to continue)

All right, all right. But you have to promise not to tell anyone, okay?

I've been here in Los Angeles for about two years now. I'm trying to make it as an actress, only it hasn't been going too well. So money's getting kind of short, okay ? Well, it was about a year back when this woman... well, when Vivian contacted me. She offered me a job, enough money to set myself up here. New car. And plus I had enough time to keep acting in the meantime. It was best of all worlds, you know ?

What exactly did this job entail?

Well, it's kind of silly, actually. She wanted us – there were two other girls, I think – to dress up like her and just go around town. She didn't go into details, but I get the idea that she's doing some... things that her husband wouldn't approve of during the day. She doesn't want him to find out about it, so she had us go around to keep attention away from her. Like... like decoys. It was kind of stupid, actually, but at least I got a new wardrobe out of it. And that was basically the job... she'd sometimes ask us to do errands for her, pick up things... stuff like that...

What sort of things?

Well... that's not your business.

(Another Diplomacy or Intimidation check is required to continue)

Okay, okay... you promise you're not with the cops? Okay... well... she'd sometimes get me to pick up stuff for her. I wouldn't ask any questions; I'd just get this brown paper bag for her from this friend of hers every now and again. Sometimes booze too."

Who was this friend of hers?

I don't know, I never caught his name. Would have liked to, though... his phone number, too. Tall, dark and handsome. Looked like a movie star or something. Anyway, I'd just go to his office building and he give it to me, and I'd give it to her.

Where was his office?

I don't know. Somewhere in the Bradbury Building. He'd always meet me downstairs in the lobby.

What's with all the pictures ?

(shrugs) Have you ever heard of method acting ? Actually, it was sort of her idea. I think she might be a little sweet on herself, you know what I mean.

A Rose By Any Other Name

That is essentially all the pertinent information Rose has to offer the investigators. If the players wish, they may be able to convince Rose to let them stay the night in her apartment. Rose will reluctantly agree, with the provision that the investigators stay out of her bedroom. Just to make sure, she will lock the door behind her.

If it is the night of Saturday, January 7th (as it usually is by the time the players get to Rose), they'll be in the right place: at 6:17 the next morning, Rose will step out of her bedroom. She will be dressed in Vivian's distinctive white coat, have dyed her hair blond, and will for all purposes believe that she is Vivian Haase.

ENDGAME

Managing this portion of the adventure is going to be difficult, as a lot depends on the choices of the players. It's hard to tell where exactly things will go. These are the times that try GMs' souls...

Let's start with what Rose/Vivian will act like and will want to do.

Rose

As stated above, Rose will believe that she is Vivian Haase. She has essentially been possessed by Vivian's spirit; however, she will act nothing like Vivian as the players might have met her. As a result of the ritual, Vivian Haase is moving beyond humanity; Rose has been inhabited by the human self that Vivian is leaving behind. In essence, this is the woman that William Deaton married.

Rose will have most of Vivian's memories, with the exception that she will not recall anything about the cult or the ritual. "Vivian" will believe that this is her apartment; she rented it for those occasions where she feels she wants to live on her own for a while. She also believes that she has errands to run, and will want to leave immediately.

Should the players let her go, she'll go out to a yellow Ford Model A parked across the street from the front of the apartment building. From that point on, she will be unconsciously drawn to the park where Joanna was murdered; the molochim are waiting there to complete the last portion of the ritual. Absolutely nothing the players can say will stop her from going there.

Options

As far as I can tell, the players have three options: one, they can let Rose go and follow her. Two, they can stop Rose from leaving. And three, they can kill Rose to stop the ritual from going any further.

Following Rose

Should the players follow Rose, she will essentially drive to the park in a roundabout fashion. She will arrive there at roughly 10 am; the molochim and the cultists will be waiting for her there. See “One By Water” for how the final portion of the ritual plays out.

Stopping Rose

The players can also try and stop Rose/Vivian from leaving. Should this occur, “Vivian” will probably believe that she is being kidnapped and will immediately move to call the police.

At 8:30 am, the cultists will automatically know if something has gone wrong with the plan. The molochim will immediately move to recover Rose; they will know exactly where she is, as if using the spell locate creature (pg. 144, CoC). The only way out for the players is to somehow evade the molochim until noon, thereby breaking the ritual.

Killing Rose

So what if the players decide to kill Rose Rogers before the cultists get to her? Despite the moral implications, it makes sense; if Rose doesn't drown, the ritual is disrupted. All the same, this would require the players shooting an innocent victim; such an act would definitely result in a Sanity check (1/1d6).

And, unfortunately, even if such a step is taken... the ritual can and will continue. The cultists will first secure the effigy's corpse. They will then find another person in the area, preferably a woman, who need not resemble Vivian Haase in the slightest (if given a choice in the matter, the cultists will take someone who shares certain physical characteristics to Vivian – i.e. similar age, blond hair, gender, white skin, etcetera – but at this point it is not a definite requirement; as their time is limited, they will choose whatever they have on hand). Player characters – especially those captured while trying to defend Rose – are definite possibilities.

The cultists will take the victim to the effigy's body and hold him or her in a sitting position in front of it. One cultist – a molochim would be ideal – will take a knife or a machete and draw a roughly circular cut across the victim's forehead (this cut will not be deep enough to inflict damage ordinarily; however, should the victim struggle, the cultist must make a Reflex save, DC 15; upon failure, the victim will take 1d4 damage). The molochim will then take some blood from the corpse upon its fingers and draw an oval around the victim's face, continuing the curve of the cut around the victim's eyes and mouth. The cultists will then take roughly a cup of the effigy's blood and force the victim to drink it. The victim is counted as pinned in a grapple; to resist at any point in this twisted chain of events, he or she must make an opposed Escape Artist or grapple check versus the grapple check of the strongest cultist involved in the grapple. The cultists will probably have bound his or her hands with a pair of handcuffs; there will be

a minimum of two cultists pinning the victim down. The strongest cultist therefore receives a +4 bonus, as the victim is bound, with a +2 for every cultist assisting. Players who go through the entirety of this ritual must of course make a Sanity check (1d4/1d10) regardless of what happens, as must players who witness these actions (1/1d6).

Should the victim fail to escape, he or she must make a Will save (DC 25). If he or she fails, the victim will essentially become an effigy. He or she will become extremely passive, and will blindly follow any order given by the cultists (any player characters who end up in this situation will therefore for the time being become NPCs under the control of the GM). The victim has been caught up in the horrifying dance of the ritual. They do not, unlike the effigies, completely fall into Vivian's personality; with an excursion of will, a victim can temporarily escape the madness, for which reason the cultists will probably keep him or her bound. The more a victim attempts to oppose the ritual, the more difficult it is to escape. The victim can make a Will check (DC 20) every ten minutes. They can then make another Will check to call for help (DC 10), or make an attempt to escape for 1 round (DC 15).

Once the work has been done, the cultists will depart with the new effigy to the coast. They will continue the ritual as if nothing had changed. See "One By Water" below for the details.

(note: these rules will also apply to Priscilla Booker, should the players get to her in time).

ONE BY WATER

sunday, january 8, 1928, 11:50 am
pacific coast highway rest stop #21

The third portion of the ritual will take place at 12 noon on Sunday, January 8th. All three molochim will be in attendance, along with thirteen standard cultists (see the NPC sheet for the Soldier Noviates). It will happen, of course, in the same place where the first sacrifice occurred: the park north of Los Angeles.

When exactly Rose/Vivian arrives depends on what exactly the players decided to do. Whenever she does, the cultists will already be waiting for her there. Rose will have been completely absorbed into the ritual at this point, and will blindly follow the ritual's progress. The cultists will immediately take her down to the beach to await the proper hour; five soldier noviates will remain in the parking lot as security. The molochim will be on the beach; #1 and #2 will lead the ritual. #3 will hang back near the cliff-side.

The ritual will work this way: the effigy (Rose, unless the cultists had to find a replacement) will stand on the beach, facing the ocean. The remaining cultists will stand in a rough semi-circle roughly 30 feet around her. At 11:58 exactly she will begin to slowly walk into the sea. She will reach the ocean's edge thirty seconds (five rounds) later. She will continue to walk -- her feet somehow sticking to the bottom -- in a straight path. As she does so, the sun itself will begin to sink westward, keeping exact pace with her. This is a strictly limited effect, visible only to those observing the ritual. SAN check 0/1d6 to any investigators on the scene.

Rose will be up to her knees in five rounds; she will be up to her waist five rounds after that; and five rounds after that, at 12 noon exactly, she will disappear underneath

the water, and the sun will reach the horizon. The water above her bubbles for a few seconds underneath the red glare of the unnatural sunset, then she is gone.

Unless the investigators stop her. This might be the only point where the investigators can safely kill Rose without being drafted as her replacement: the molochim won't have time to perform the ritual to replace her. However, at this point in the ritual, Rose is under heavy protection. At this point and this point only, consider her as having DR 10/+1 and being immune to the massive damage rule. She will also keep walking until the players lower her to -10 hit points – no matter how much damage they deal to her.

But if they can't get through to her... determine which players are looking towards the west, and read the following:

theophany

You stare out into the ocean, searching for any sign of life or activity, knowing you won't find one. On the beach, the things in the long black trenchcoats and wide-brimmed hats look out directly into the sun. They project a kind of horrible, expectant silence. For a moment that seems like eternity there is no sound but the slow pounding of the water against the sand.

And then... then everything is thrown into darkness. You think for a moment that the sun, continuing its unnatural speed across the sky, has finally disappeared into the sea. But no: the sunset is still there, forming a red halo across the western horizon. It has been blocked... by one single, immense shadow. A figure, standing above the depths of the sea. You can't help yourself – you look into the massive twisted form and you see the shape of its face and in that moment your soul is annihilated, totally and utterly. You know only the shadow, and the sound of the waves eroding the beach, and the distant, inhuman screaming that is coming from your own throat. And you know, with every shred of the nothingness within you, that this is the end of everything.

And then...
... it is gone.

SAN CHECK 1d10/d%

The players have just witnessed a manifestation of the dream-self of Cthulhu. Immediately after the theophany, the sky darkens – and then the sun reappears in its proper place in the noontime position. The cultists and molochim will stand in silent prayer for 10 rounds; the investigators should take this opportunity to disappear. If they do not, at the end of the time, the molochim will massacre them without mercy.

THE BUSINESS WE'RE IN

monday, january 9, 1928

la offices of hemingway investigations

Irregardless of what happens, you can count on being able to use this as the cap to the adventure:

Monday afternoon finds you sitting at that same table in that small back room you remember being in maybe an eternity ago. Once again, you're looking at Ernie across it, with his cigar smoke stinking up the room. You could almost imagine that this is the

same time and place, that the insane days you just crossed through never happened, and you're sitting here waiting for your first day of serving jealous husbands and taking dirty pictures.

But the bullet holes and the bloodstains in your coat tell you otherwise.

Ernie takes another pull off his cigar and looks out the window. "Let it slide," he says suddenly. "That's my advice to you. If you keep following the case right now, they'll know, and they'll take care of you. Just let it slide and keep your heads down."

(If the players object: "I said you need to let it go for a little while. I didn't say you need to forget. You've already pushed them too far as it is. Push any farther and they'll deal with you, and then that'll be the end of that. Trust me. This'll come again. And when it does, you'll be in a position to do about it.")

He slides a number of envelopes across the table. "Your first paycheck, care of Mr. Deaton. Interesting bit of news from him, by the way. He said that he came home last night to find his wife was gone. She and the help cleared out – not a sign where they went."

He turns back to you and looks at you across the table. For the first time, you notice he's got a lot of lines on his face. He's also got old eyes. He takes one final drag, and then throws the cigar in the wastepaper basket. "Welcome to the business, boys and girls. And you're welcome to it."

The cigar smokes for a moment, then goes out.

EXPERIENCE AND SANITY AWARDS

typical story goals:

- Disrupt the ritual
- Figure out the nature of the ritual
- Save Rose Rogers
- Find the painting buried in the graveyard.
- Translate at least one Akkadian inscription involved in the ritual.
- Understand how ritual is meant to effect Vivian Haase-Deaton
- Entire group survives the mission (optional)

bonus sanity rewards:

Stopping the ritual by keeping Rose away from the cultists: d4 Sanity

Stopping the ritual by breaking in on the final ceremony: d6 Sanity

Killing at least one of the molochim: d4 Sanity

cthulhu mythos:

Cthulhu Mythos +1 rank.

paycheck:

Don't forget, the investigators are being paid for this. They receive \$36 each for three days' work.

APPENDIX A: NPC STATISTICS



VIVIAN HAASE-DEATON
3rd Level Cultist

HD: 3d6 (12 hp)
Initiative: +1 (Dex)
Speed: 30 ft.
Armor Class: 11 (+1 Dex)
Attacks: Melee +1, ranged +2
Damage: As per weapon.
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Abilities: Spells
Special Qualities: Mad certainty
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 18
Skills: Bluff +13, Diplomacy +9, Drive +2, Gather Information +9, Innuendo +9, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (occult) +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Psychic Focus +8, Read Lips +7, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +8
Feats: Sensitive, Mind Reading, Skill emphasis (Bluff)
CR: 3
Advancement: As investigator
Sanity: 30

Mad Certainty (Ex): As a cultist, Vivian is immune to the effects of temporary insanity as a result of sanity loss, and remains able to act.

Spells: *Contact Cthulhu*, *grasp of Cthulhu*.

Note: As part of the ritual which grants her additional access to the mind of Cthulhu himself, Vivian will lose 10 points of Sanity with the death of each of her effigies; on Friday, January 6th, she will have 20 points of Sanity following Joanna Maurey's murder. On Saturday, January 7th, she will have 10 points of Sanity following the burning of Priscilla Booker. And on Sunday, January 8th, she will finally reach 0 Sanity, should Rose Rogers drown as according to plan.

Vivian suffers from several psychiatric disorders as a result of her contact with Great Cthulhu, including disassociative amnesia, undifferentiated schizophrenia, and somnambulism (see text of case for the effect on her behavior). She is also addicted to opium.



WILLIAM DEATON

Male 2nd Level Businessman

HD: 2d6 (9 hp)

Initiative: +0 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 10

Attacks: +2 melee

Damage: 1d3+1 unarmed (subdual)

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Abilities: None

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +6

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Drive +4, Forgery +4, Gather

Information +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Accounting) +10,

Knowledge (Law) +7, Listen +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4, Research +6

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge (accounting))

SAN: 60



ERNIE

Level 5 Private Investigator

HD: 5d6+5 (20 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor Class: 11 (+1 Dex)

Attacks: Pistol +3

Damage: Pistol 2d8 (x3)

Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 11

Skills: Bluff +7, Cthulhu Mythos +3, Gather Information +8,

Hide +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Research +10, Search +10, Sense Motive +9, Spot +7

Feats: Weapon proficiency (pistol), Sharp-Eyed, Quick Draw

CR: 5

Climate/Terrain: Any

Advancement: As investigator.

Sanity: 60

Gear: Colt M1911 Pistol



ROSE ROGERS
1st Level Actress

HD: 1d6 (6 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft
Armor Class: 11 (+1 Dex)
Attacks: Melee -1
Damage: Unarmed 1d3-1 (subdual)
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Abilities: None
Special Qualities: None
Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +4
Abilities: Str 8, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 16
Skills: Bluff +9 (+11*), Diplomacy +7, Innuendo +5
Listen +4, Performance +10, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4,
Drive +3, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +4, Move Silently +3,
Intimidate +8

Feats: Persuasive, Skill emphasis (Performance), Skill emphasis (Bluff)*

CR: 1

SAN: 70



MOLOCHIM

HD: 4d6+9 (21 hp)
Initiative: +3 (Dex)
Speed: 25 ft., 20 ft. swim
Armor Class: 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural armor)
Attacks: Pistol +5 ranged, Machete +9 melee (or claw +9 melee)
Damage: Pistol 2d8 (x3), Machete 1d6+6 (19-20/x2), claw 1d3+6
Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft
Special Abilities: None.
Special Qualities: Mad certainty, low-light vision, DR 10/+1
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3
Abilities: Str 22, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 9
Skills: Climb +10, Drive +7, Hide +7, Jump +8, Knowledge (occult) +6, Listen +10, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +5, Speak Other Language (Akkadian) +5, Spot +9, Swim +11, Wilderness Lore +6
Feats: Weapon proficiency (melee weapons), weapon proficiency (pistol), Alertness, + one more feat of GM's choice

CR: 5

Climate/Terrain: Any

Advancement: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1d3 (if features are fully revealed)

Gear: Colt M1911 Pistol, 2 clips of ammunition, machete

Molochim are servants of Cthulhu, a genetic variant of Deep Ones specifically bred to operate on land. They can be serving high-ranked members of the Cult as soldiers and assassins. They look almost human, with the exception of a thick coat of scales that cover their torso and back, a complete lack of hair anywhere on their bodies, and bent, frog-like legs. As a result, they tend to dress in long coats, allowing them to blend in with the human population (though they do seem to walk with a limp).

MOLOCHIM #1: 31 hp, feat Expertise (up to -5 attack = +5 AC)

hp 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

clip 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

clip 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

MOLOCHIM #2: 25 hp, feat Stealthy (+2 to Hide and Move Silently checks)

hp 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

clip 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

clip 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

MOLOCHIM #3: 21 hp, feat Multishot (autofire penalties reduced to -4)

Armed with Thompson submachine gun (+1, autofire [3 attacks], 2d8, x3, range 30 ft.)

hp 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

drum 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

MOLOCHIM TEMPLATE

(based off of DnDChick's Deep One Hybrid Template – see her site at

<http://members.aol.com/CountryGrrlHere/dndchick.html> for a whole lot of kickass stuff.)

Hit Dice: Increase by 1.

Speed: Decrease to 25 ft., and base character gains swim 20 ft.

AC: Base character gains a natural armor bonus of +2.

Attacks: A molochim gains all the attacks of the base character and also gains a claw attack.

Damage: Molochim have a claw attack which inflicts 1d3 damage.

Special Qualities: A molochim gains low-light vision, plus the ability to temporarily breathe water. A molochim can remain submerged in salt water for a number of minutes equal to his Constitution score. After that, he must return to the air or begin to drown.

Also gains DR 10/+1.

Saves: The molochim's high saves become Reflexes and Will.

Abilities: Str +4, Dex +2, Con +2, Cha -2.

Skills: A molochim continues to gain skills as an investigator.

Feats: A molochim receives the Alertness feat for free.

CR: As base character +2

Advancement: As investigator.

San Loss: 0/1d3 (1d4 if person was formally known to the viewer)

SOLDIER NOVIATES

Hit Dice: 1d6+2 (8 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 ft

Armor Class: 9 (-1 Dex)

Attacks: Pistol +0, Machete +2

Damage: Pistol 1d10, Machete 1d6+2

Special Qualities: Mad certainty

Saves: Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13

Skills: Bluff +4, Gather Information +5, Innuendo +4, Intimidate +5, Listen +4, Move

Silently +2, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4

Feats: Weapon proficiency (pistol), Improved Initiative

SAN 65

Gear: Astra M1921 (9mm), 16 ammo (2 clips), Machete (19-20/x2)

A list of pregenerated cultists for your convenience. They dress like the molochim, in black coats and wide-brimmed hats, primarily to confuse opponents.

1 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

7 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

13 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

2 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

8 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

3 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

9 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

4 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

10 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

5 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

11 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

6 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

12 – hp 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
clip: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Sergeants Pollock and Bartel. Male 1st level. HD 1d6+2; hp 6; init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11; Atk Nightstick +1 melee, Pistol +3 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +7, Gather Information +6, Hide +5, Intimidate +7, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +5

Feats: Weapon proficiency (pistol), Persuasive

Gear: Nightstick (1d4 x2), Colt M1917 Revolver (2d8 x3)

Church Night Watchman. Male 1st Level. HD 1d6+1; hp 4; init +0 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Atk Nightstick +2 melee; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +3, Search +3, Sense Motive +5, Speak Other Language (English) +4, Spot +8, Use Rope +3.

Feats: Weapon proficiency (melee), Alertness.

Gear: Nightstick (1d4 x2)

Jean. Male 2nd Level Butler and cultist. HD 2d6; hp 6; init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 11; Atk Pistol +2 ranged or unarmed +2 melee; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Drive +5, Heal +6, Innuendo +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Spot +6, Sense Motive +8, Search +7.

Feats: Weapon proficiency (pistol), Sharp-eyed.

Gear: Colt M1917 Revolver (2d8 x3)

Doctor Daniel "Dirty Dan" Lubomir. Male 3rd Level Doctor. HD 3d6; hp 9; init +0 (Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 10; Atk Winchester M1912 Shotgun +1 ranged or scalpel -3 melee; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills: Bluff +4, Diplomacy +5, Drive +1, Forgery +5, Heal +12, Hide +4, Knowledge (chemistry) +6, Knowledge (medicine) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Listen +7, Research +5, Spot +7, Slight of Hand +4.

Feats: Weapon proficiency (shotgun), Alertness, Skill emphasis (heal)

Gear: Winchester M1912 Shotgun (12 gauge buckshot, 3d6/2d6/1d6, crit x4), scalpel (1d3, crit x2). \$2,000 in cash (hidden on person), clothing, complete first aid kit, medical equipment, Pierce Arrow Touring car, apartment.

Description: A doctor of Ernie's acquaintance; runs a back-alley hospital out of his apartment for criminals and gangsters. In his early 40's, bearded, somewhat lecherous in personality, especially once he's had a few drinks. His apartment is in Los Angeles.

APPENDIX B: MAPS AND PICTURES

m looking for a
good man willing to
take on a relatively
honest piece of work.
Ask for Bill Boyer at
the Ford Metal

WANTED:
Private or would-be de-
tectives interested in
working for experienced
firm. Pay is high for those
new to the business. Seek-
ing ex-police, academics,
skilled individuals from
all walks of life. WAR/
MILITARY EXPERIENCE A
PLUS. Chinamen need not
apply. Contact Heming-
way Investigations, c/o
Rick's Bar, Los Angeles.

Anyone looking for a
good time should c
hyllis at Los An
77.

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all that Am
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The Hemingway investigations ad.



Photo of Vivian Haase
Taken 1925



The Deaton Household and picture of Mr. William Deaton

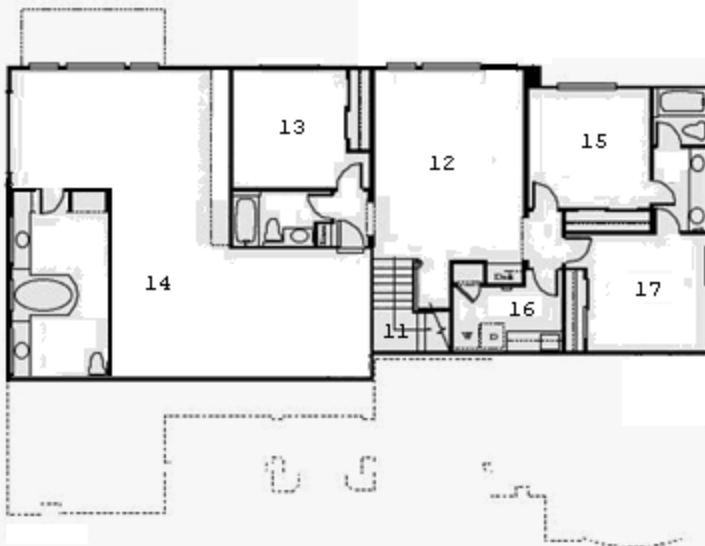


deaton
household



first floor

- 1 - entry/foyer
- 2 - waiting room
- 3 - drawing room
- 4 - inner parlor
- 5 - dining room
- 6 - kitchen
- 7 - ballroom
- 8 - visitor's bathroom
- 9 - storage closet
- 10- small bedroom
- 11- stairs to second floor



second floor

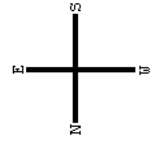
- 11- stairs to first floor
- 12- living room
- 13- maid's room
- 14- master bedroom/master bathroom
- 15- guest bedroom
- 16- storage closet/laundry room
- 17- guest bedroom

park gm copy

- 1 - parking lot
- 2 - position of Vivian's car
- 3 - park bench
- 4 - stairs down to beach (roughly 50 ft. distance to cross)
- 5 - chain link fence around platform
- 6 - maintenance shed
- 7 - cliff edge (where grass "meets" sand; drop is roughly 40 feet)
- 8 - wooden picnic table

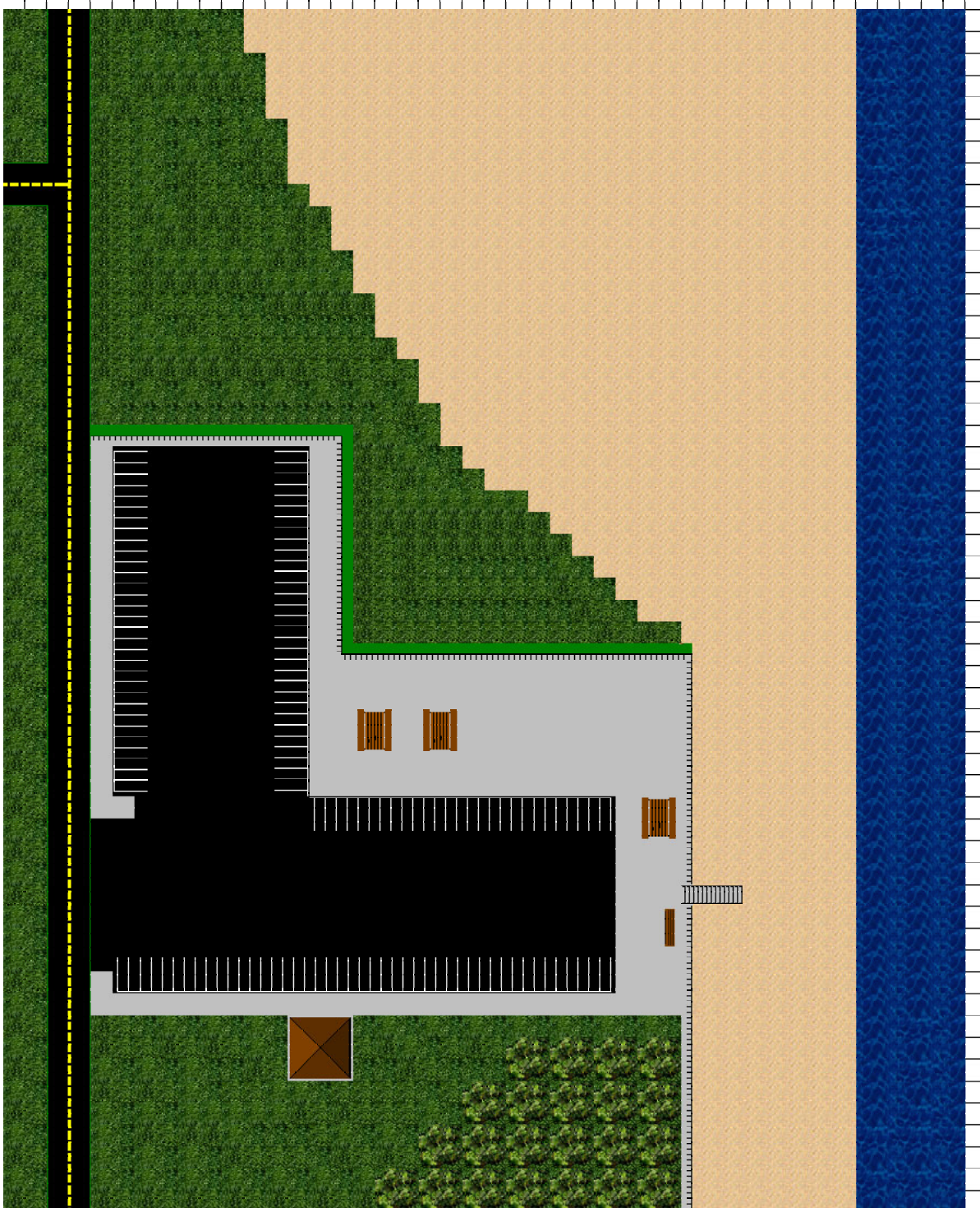
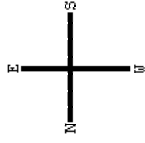
other notes:
the map is surrounded by farmland (essentially flat terrain) for miles. The park is on top of a hill, which ends in a cliff down to the beach; the terrain begins to level off both to the north and the south; the terrain and the beach are level a mile south of the map and two miles to the north.

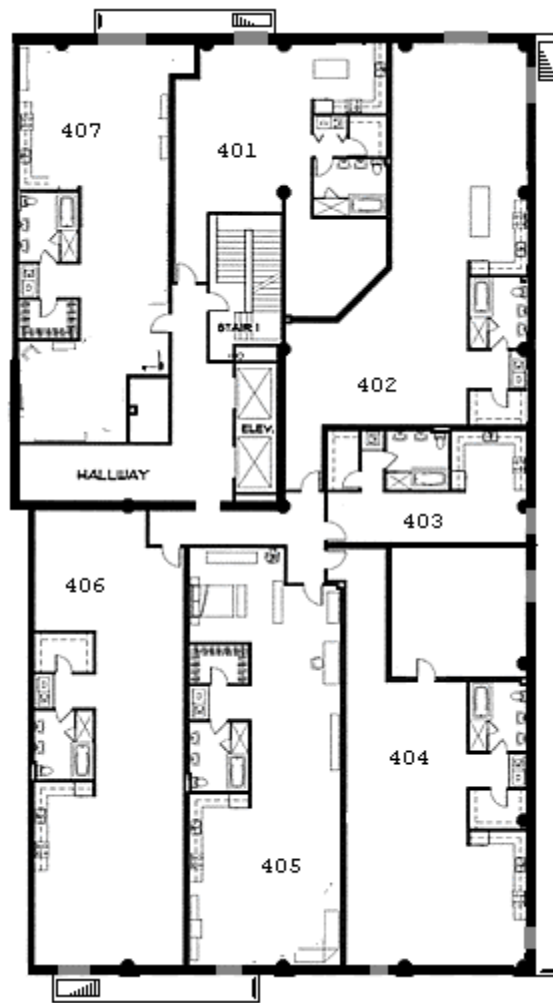
□ = 5 ft x 5 ft



park
player copy

□ = 5 ft x 5 ft

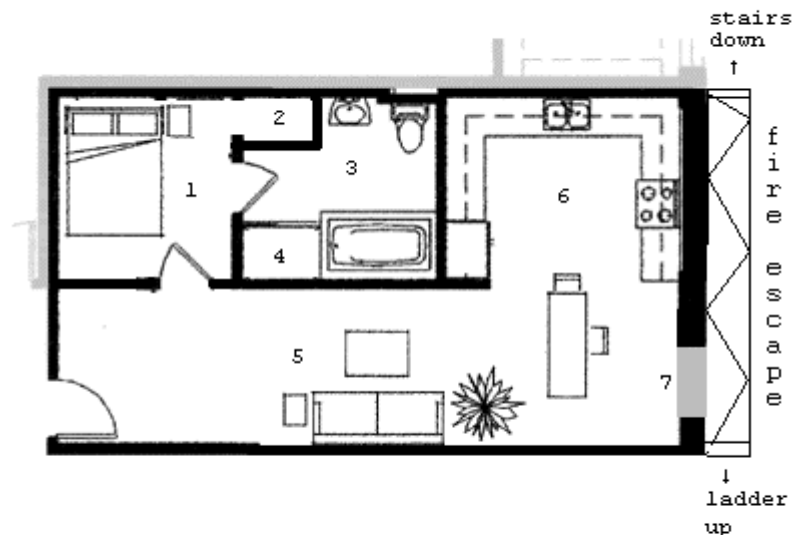




Silent Night
Apartments:
Fourth Floor

Fourth floor of Silent Night Apartments. Rose Rogers lives in Apartment 403.

apartment of rose rogers



- 1 - bedroom
- 2 - closet/wardrobe
- 3 - bathroom
- 4 - bathroom closet
- 5 - sitting area
- 6 - kitchen area
- 7 - window/access to fire escape

MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF WOMAN HAS POLICE BAFFLED

A few minutes after noon today, police and firefighters responded to the report of a small but active fire on the roof of the Sea Breeze Apartments building in Long Beach, at the corner of 1st Street and Elm. According to witnesses, police found within the fire the body of a young woman, burned outside of recognition. Police have refused to confirm the woman's identity, but this paper has learned that the mutilated corpse was that of one Priscilla Booker, 26, a resident of the Sea Breeze Apartment buildings. Occupants of the building said of her that she was a quiet young woman, thought to be new to town. The police have yet to decide whether or not the event represents a murder, suicide or mere accident. This paper will of course strive to keep the public informed of any forthcoming evidence.

Article on Priscilla Booker. Evening edition of the Los Angeles Times, January 7th, 1928.

APPENDIX C: TIMELINE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5th (Day 1):

Investigators meet with Deaton. They with any luck agree to accept the case.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6th (Day 2):

Joanna Maurey leaves the Deaton house at 8:40 am.

9:10 am: She drives across town for half an hour to an deserted art exhibition at the Bradbury Building, where she spends an hour staring at a painting called “The Wicker Man” (painted 1925 by Mason Carver).

10:30 am: She then drives twenty minutes to the old section of Los Angeles, specifically the cemetery garden next to St. Vibiana’s Cathedral. She briefly visits three graves for Joanna Mauney, Priscilla Booker and Rose Rogers, then spends half an hour staring at a grave for one Captain Christopher Thulman.

11:30 am: She then drives half an hour up the coast to a small, deserted park, overlooking the ocean. She sits down on a park bench and waits for half an hour. She is then approach by a man wearing a dark trenchcoat. They talk for a brief moment. Then at exactly 12 am, the man pulls out a machete and stabs her in the face. She falls to the ground; the man flees down the beach, where he is picked up by another car.

7:00 pm: Assuming the investigators have not moved it, the police stumble upon Vivian’s Model A Ford where it was left in the parking lot. They trace the license number back to William Deaton; they call to inform Mr. Deaton of finding the car at 8:15 that night. They do not, however, find the corpse of a young woman.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7th (Day 3):

12 am: Phyllis Booker is burned alive by three cultists on the roof of her apartment building in Long Beach, CA, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. She does not make a sound.

12:15 am: Long Beach police and firefighters respond to a report of a small fire on the roof of the building. They discover the corpse and cordon off the building. The police will remain at the crime scene for the next two days.

7 pm: The evening edition of the Los Angeles Times is released, including a preliminary report on the death of Priscilla Booker on the sixth page (see page 46)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8th (Day 4):

6 am: In her apartment in Santa Barbara, Rose Rogers begins to dress herself up as Vivian. She has been taken by the ritual; she now believes she is Vivian, to all extents and purposes, and cannot be shaken out of it.

8:30 am: The cultists automatically detect if Rose Rogers has been waylaid or otherwise blocked from getting to the final portion of the ritual. The molochim will immediately move to recover her.

12 am: Assuming the investigators have not intervened, the cultists will escort Rose Rogers to the park. There, she will walk without resistance into the ocean, until she drowns.

APPENDIX D: VIEW FROM THE BACKSTAGE

Note: this section contains long-term campaign information and is for the GM's eyes only.

It occurs to me, looking back over the material I've assembled, that even after reading it you may not still understand what exactly is going on. So this is the official spoiler section for this adventure. Sorry if I ruin the tone for you.

Needless to say, Vivian Haase-Deaton and several other characters – including Lawrence Cross, Mason Carver and John Szepasszony – are all part of a powerful conspiracy and cult. In the course of this adventure, they are undertaking of a ritual of great importance to their agenda, centering around Vivian herself.

Now for the specifics: the conspiracy is specifically a group of Cthulhu worshippers, inevitably linked into the greater, globe-spanning cult H.P. Lovecraft described in “The Call of Cthulhu.” Vivian is undergoing a process that will psychically link her to the presence of her god. She will become a mouthpiece for Cthulhu's dreaming mind – which will be an undeniable benefit to the sleeping god's human followers. Therefore the purpose of the ritual: “To be closer to you, my Lord.”

In doing so, Vivian is being cleansed of her humanity. One by one, her soul – her humanity personified – inhabits Joanna Maurey, Priscilla Booker, and Rose Rogers, who respond to this possession by taking on Vivian's mannerisms, clothing and memories (though they will remember nothing about the cult or the nature of the ritual). They are in effect acting as effigies – representations of Vivian's self, which, in being sacrificed in the proper ways and times, bring Vivian away from humanity and towards the Great Old One In R'leyh.

Needless to say, the players won't figure all of this out, nor should they. They will, in all probability, understand just enough to be able to stop the ritual and complete the mission.

campaign recommendations

Like I might have mentioned, I've run this adventure twice for two different groups. Both went out pretty well, but there are a few suggestions that I'd like to make, mainly concerning starting funds.

One problem with the way that starting funds are set up in Call of Cthulhu is that... well... players usually end up with quite a bit of cash when all else is said and done. It makes \$36 seem rather paltry when you have about \$2,000 in the bank, when in fact that's a pretty good sum of money in 1920's terms. So if you're starting out this campaign, I'd recommend you take some steps to limit the amount of cash the players have to start out with. The trick is that you'll want to leave them just enough to buy all of the starting gear that they need, but not enough that they'll be financially secure when they're finished shopping.

There are two ways that I can think of doing this:

- a) Assume that the players are broke and unemployed to begin with. In this case, apply a -2 modifier to their initial starting funds role. If they end up with a negative number (as is, truth be told, usually the case), assume each negative

number to represent one-half off the starting funds. So if a character rolls a -1, they'll get \$1,000 (1/2 of \$2,000). If they roll a -2, they get \$500 (1/4 of \$2,000), and so on.

- b) Have them roll starting funds as normal, but tell them that they can only use the money to buy gear. Whatever is left over you take away before the game begins, leaving them perhaps \$100 as savings.

See page 15 in the CoC guide if you have no clue what I'm talking about.

I would also highly recommend that you strictly limit the amount of dynamite the players have access to (yes, despite the time-honored CoC tradition of throwing around dynamite like there's no tomorrow).

hooks

It won't be too hard to come up with additional adventures, as this one leaves a lot of questions unanswered. Where did Vivian Haase go? If the players managed to disrupt the ritual, how did it affect her? What role did Lawrence Cross and Mason Carver play in these proceedings? Who or what are the molochim? What exactly are the cult's long term plans?

Another rather fun possibility that I wanted to bring up: you know how Rose was inhabited by Vivian's soul? Well, I improvised something that worked out rather well when I ran this adventure the second time around. In essence, I decided that Vivian's soul (as opposed to Vivian herself – it's a bit complicated, speak to your local theologian) wanted to continue to exist, and was looking for some way to escape its fate. So when the players attempted to rescue Rose – and failing that, killed her by tossing a stick of dynamite at her head. Shortly before this happened, one of the characters, a nurse, who just happened to be the person who touched Vivian earlier, managed to come into contact with Rose. To make a long story short, I had Vivian's soul jump into the character's head. She only became aware of the fact that she was carrying, in her words, "a crazy lady inside my head" in the third adventure of the campaign, having had many disturbing dreams features Vivian Haase up until that point. The soul of Vivian became a semi-ally of the characters from that point forward, essentially serving as an NPC under the gamemaster's control.

(Any *Farscape* fans out there? Harvey. Enough said.)