



William Adcock

The Parsonville Horror

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INTRODUCTION

Spring, 1928. The mining and lumber village of Parsonville, Kentucky is a powder keg waiting to go off. The workers have been on strike for three weeks, protesting low wages and hazardous working conditions, especially in the depths of Parsonville Mine—the event that triggered the strike was the discovery of “creep” in Shaft #3—the floor of the mine is being pushed up between the support pillars due to the weight of the mountain above, which if left unchecked will result in the shaft’s collapse. The managing executive of Parsonville Mine, Robert McCullough, refused to listen to concerns about Shaft #3’s safety, and decided that the miners were exaggerating the danger of the mines to try and increase their pay. In response to this declaration from McCullough, the miners announced a strike. The lumbermen, while also wanting higher wages and to work shorter hours, have largely struck in solidarity with the miners. Many now wonder if Associated Anthracite Holdings Ltd., the company that owns Parsonville Mine, is preparing to call in the National Guard in order to end the strike. Others look to their dwindling savings and wonder how they will feed their families if the strike continues much longer.

KEEPER’S INFORMATION

Parsonville has become home to a monster. The Rasko family, having recently moved to Parsonville, have brought with them “Sonny”—the youngest son of Sarah Rasko, growing up not into a good-looking boy like his older brothers, but into a deformed, demonic-looking creature. The Raskos, devout Baptists, have taken Sonny’s deformation as a sign that their faith is being tested; Sarah is a faith healer, able to lay on hands and work minor miracles, and believes that if she gave up her gift she could have her son back, but refuses, convinced that God is stronger than the Devil.

What Sarah Rasko is not aware of is that her great-great grandmother, Sarah Goodwife, was a midwife, apothecary, and devotee of Nyogtha, the Dweller in Darkness. Barren, Goodwife performed a ritual to summon an “incubus,” and coupled with it, conceiving a child. Since then, female descendants of Goodwife’s line have been blessed with both a healing touch and a tendency to have many strong, healthy babies. A few years later, Sarah Goodwife would be hanged by a mob for witchcraft.

Sarah Goodwife’s granddaughter, Rebecca Haywood (Sarah Rasko’s grandmother), ashamed of being descended from a known witch, made every effort to erase Sarah Goodwife from family records and devoted herself to the church, raising her own children as strong, devout Christians. However, the taint still lurked in the bloodline, and it has finally manifested itself in Sonny Rasko, turning him into a beast at puberty.

Driven into a violent rage whenever Sarah Rasko lays on hands, Sonny is kept caged by his family, but occasionally breaks loose. Such an escape has taken place now in Parsons ville, and managing executive Robert McCullough is dead by the creature's hands. Investigating the scene of the attack and McCullough's body will put investigators on the track of a supernatural threat to the community. Sarah Rasko is likely to draw the investigators' attentions by her actions in Parsons ville in the wake of McCullough's death, an event for which she feels personally responsible. She and her husband and older children have agreed to keep quiet, deciding that involving the law would result in more deaths, and would especially result in "Sonny" being killed; this last is what truly keeps Sarah Rasko's family contained, as she still holds out hope of God eventually curing her son. Her arguments that God is testing them will only keep her family silent for so long, however, and they may turn to the investigators to unburden themselves if they becomes aware of the investigators' interest.

Ultimately, there is no cure for Sonny's condition; Nyogtha's corruption pollutes every cell of his body, and as he gets older, he's only going to get worse, finally transforming into an oily torrent of black slime to join Nyogtha in caverns deep beneath the earth. Already insane from the dreams sent by his alien sire, Sonny—when lucid—bides his time and awaits the day when he can act directly in the interest of the Dweller in Darkness. That time will come during their stay in Parsons ville.

Give this boxed text to the players or read aloud to them:

WELCOME TO PARSONSVILLE

The village of Parsons ville, Kentucky is a mining/lumber settlement, a "company town" sprung up around the Parsons ville Mine, a coal mine owned by Associated Anthracite Holdings, Ltd. Population is around 600 people, most of them miners and loggers, as well as their families, and the administrative staff employed by Associated Anthracite. The village has a diner (Lou's - "best hamburgers for fifty miles" reads the sign above the door), a bathhouse/laundry, a new schoolhouse and a single administrative building that functions as a general store, post office, and the onsite offices of Associated Anthracite, including the payroll office. As with many company towns around America at this time, the workers are paid in company scrip, redeemable for goods and services at company-owned businesses. There is running water in the public buildings, but individual houses are small affairs without running water and heated by wood-burning stoves. There are outhouses behind most "private" residences, the houses themselves being owned by Associated Anthracite and leased to workers and their families. Wells at the north and west ends of Parsons ville supply water for the residents. Many of the locals maintain small vegetable gardens, and it is not unusual to see chickens walking around people's yards or penned up. The roads are not paved with asphalt but are covered in "red dog" - a reddish slate-y by-product of the mines. When it rains, these roads turn into slippery, rust-colored mud.

Ostensibly, the town is run by a mayor, Fred Carver, an indecisive, nervous man at the best of times, with little real power. The de facto man in charge in Parsons ville is Robert McCullough, the Parsons ville Mine's managing executive. Mr. McCullough has been handling negotiations with the newly-formed miner's union on behalf of Associated Anthracite.

BEGINNING THE INVESTIGATION

Yesterday, Robert McCullough, managing executive for the Parsons ville coal mine, left his office, got in his car, and left to go home (he lives in the nearby town of Corbin, KY). However, he never arrived there. McCullough's wife, Jennifer, a striking brunette who, at 45, is fifteen years his junior, is frantic at his disappearance. If interviewed, though, she will prove more concerned that he may be in the arms of a younger woman than that he may be injured or dead. In 1917, he had had an affair with a secretary, which Jennifer had forgiven him for, lending weight to her concerns of infidelity.

Investigation of McCullough's disappearance is being handled by the Corbin Police Department, with the case being headed by Detective Dan Peabody, a no-nonsense veteran of the Spanish-American War, nearing retirement and eagerly looking forward to it. As such his interest in solving the case, versus finding an answer that explains the disappearance to his satisfaction, is relatively minimal. He wants to wind down towards retirement with easy, light-weight cases, not deal with grisly murders.

Fred Carver, recognizing that with McCullough missing, he might be expected to actually govern the community (and hoping that such a gesture may engender good will with the miners and bring the strike to a peaceable close), has announced a reward of \$25 US dollars—not company scrip—for information leading to McCullough's location. Spurred by the incentive of a reward, many miners and loggers have organized themselves into search parties to comb the hills and forests around Parsons ville for evidence of McCullough.

INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

While this scenario has been run successfully with scenario-specific investigators, composed of miners, undercover Pinkerton agents and scandal-raking newspapermen, the author recognizes and supports those who would prefer to incorporate this scenario into an ongoing campaign. In such case, the author suggests the following possibilities:

- Contacted by Fred Carver: Either Carver is a relative or associate of one of the investigators, or has become aware of their previous investigations and made contact with them, asking for their assistance and offering to cover the cost of travel and lodgings.
- Just Passing Through: The investigators, while driving on US Route 25E through Kentucky (either between investigations or while recovering from one), spot McCullough's battered Ford pickup in a ditch off the road and stop to see if anyone is hurt. Investigating the site leads them to McCullough's body, and the briefcase in the car leads them to Parsons ville.

FINDING MCCULLOUGH

McCullough's Model AA Pickup truck went off the road to Corbin, tumbling into a deep, kudzu-choked ditch separating the road from the dense oak forest. It is barely visible from the road from Parsonsville, and requires a Hard **Spot Hidden** roll to see amidst the clutching greenery (only a regular Spot Hidden needed if driving towards Parsonsville). However, the car can also be found by following the smell of leaking gasoline (**INT** rolls) or by careful study of the road; **Spot Hidden** rolls at regular difficulty reveal tire tracks on the tar-bound macadam. These tracks can be followed to where McCullough went off the road.

Studying the tire tracks themselves and making a **Mechanical Repair** roll tells an interesting story. McCullough appears to have hit the brakes hard, skidding for thirty feet before hitting something—or being hit by something—that altered the vehicle's trajectory and sent him careening off the road into the ditch. Small shards of glass from the truck's driver side headlight can be found in the road at this point. Hitting a deer or similar would have left a carcass in the road, but there is no roadkill to be seen. A black bear could possibly have survived being hit, especially at a lower speed, at least long enough to limp off the road. Examining the point of impact shows no visible sign of blood, just a faint, tarry stickiness smeared across the top of the pavement, which will evaporate completely within the next few hours.

The car itself is tipped over on to the passenger side, and there is no sign of McCullough in the car itself other than some dry blood on the steering wheel and seat. His briefcase, containing his notes on yesterday's negotiations and documentation relating to the productivity of the mine prior to the strike and the money being lost weekly by Associated Anthracite while the strike is in effect, was thrown clear during the crash into the ditch but is nearby and untouched.

The front of the truck has been crushed in on the driver's side, with the headlight being mangled and half-torn off. The driver's side front tire is flat, the front axle bent, and the windshield badly cracked. A number of deep dents on the driver's door look as if they were made with a large mallet, which is incongruous with the assumption that McCullough hit an animal. A similar sticky residue coats these dents and is smeared across the front of the truck.

Examining the ground around the crashed truck with **Spot Hidden** rolls (Hard unless the investigators specify they are clearing away kudzu) reveals a number of shoeprints in the soft, loamy soil. A **Tracking** roll will allow the investigators to follow the tracks up the far side of the ditch and into the woods, as well as to recognize that the individual who made the tracks was running, as evidenced by a lengthening stride and the toe of each print being pressed deeper than the heel.

McCullough's body can be found thirty yards into the woods. He's slumped at the base of a black oak tree, nearly glued to the trunk with dried blood. His jacket has been torn away, his shoes and hands are muddy and his head lolls at an unnatural angle. His once iron-gray hair is black with caked blood and his shirt—the portion of it that hasn't been shredded—is red and stiff. Even a cursory examination reveals a number of large wounds, from a heavy stabbing implement, in his chest and abdomen. Woodland scavengers have begun to nibble on him already. Viewing this horrific scene costs the investigators 0/1D4 SAN.

Examining the area around the body turns up two clues as to McCullough's assailant. First, six feet off the ground, there are three parallel, bloody gouges in the bark of the oak tree McCullough is under. They might remind investigators of a claw mark. Second, a **Spot Hidden** roll turns up five unusual prints around McCullough's body. They are smeared and indistinct, but deeply impressed in the dark soil, each imprint filled with some sort of greasy, tar-like substance. Dense root networks around the trees make the prints hard to follow, but a **Track** roll will suggest that their owner turned towards Parsonsville. Samples taken of the tarry substance will evaporate over the next few hours.

An **Occult** roll will remind an investigator of the Jersey, or Leeds, Devil of the New Jersey Pine Barrens, a winged, hooved monster said to have been born in Colonial times when a woman cursed her thirteenth pregnancy. Seemingly immortal, there was a flap of sightings of the creature in 1909, including a reported attack on a trolley car and policemen firing on the creature without effect. Similar mysterious tracks have been reported in conjunction with sightings of that creature.

Investigating back issues of the *Corbin Enterprise* in Corbin, or talking to older residents of that city or Williamsburg (Parsonsville having been established too recently and being mostly populated by people who traveled there to work) can reveal local legends of the Red Creek Goatman, a humanoid creature with long, curving horns and shaggy legs, said to haunt the banks of Red Creek and to lure victims to it with an eerie, high-pitched whistling.

BLAME AND BODIES

When the investigators report the discovery of McCullough's body to Fred Carver, he will pay them the \$25 reward; once the body is recovered and removed to the Whitley County Morgue in nearby Williamsburg, Detective Peabody will ask to speak with the investigators at the police station.

If they are local miners, he will be grim and irritable, hinting that they knew exactly where to look and whether they think they benefitted from McCullough's death. If the investigators are from outside the area, he will grumble about "outsiders" trying to make him look foolish—if the investigators are from more northern areas, **Listen** checks will allow them to catch Peabody grumbling the word "Yankee" under his breath coupled with less polite terms; he will make a point to refer to any African-American investigators as "Boy" or "Girl," instead of using their names. He will offer only grudging respect to any investigator who can vouch for their military service, rolling up his left sleeve to show the scarred bullet-wound in his forearm with a grunt of "Manila, 1898."

He will ask that the investigators submit to a brief "interview" with two of his subordinates, detectives Julius Tate and Lincoln Rye, with each investigator being interviewed individually to ensure their stories line up. They will be asked about how they found the car, the condition the car was in, how they found McCullough's trail, and how they found the body.

Detective Tate is short, balding, mid-40s, with rheumy eyes and nicotine-stained fingers. He will smoke through the interviews, shrouding himself in a tobacco haze. Detective Rye is in his mid-30s, blonde, with an easy smile and 5 o'clock shadow. He is normally easy-going, but Peabody's aggressively bad mood has rubbed off on him.

The line of questioning pursued by Rye and Tate will include asking about the investigators' opinion on unions; especially if the investigators are local miners, Rye and Tate will query them as to whether they are a part of the strike or supporters of it, and what they think of Walter Richardson, the man organizing the strike. While neither Tate nor Rye honestly believes the investigators had anything to do with the murder, and don't personally care about the investigators' opinions on unions, one of them is up for promotion when Peabody retires and both of them are jockeying for the position. By asking these questions, they're both trying to win a recommendation from Peabody, who is staunchly anti-unionist.

If the investigators know Walter Richardson, or seek him out, he's a tall, lanky man, seemingly ill-suited for the cramped quarters of a coal mine, with piercing blue eyes and a short, neat beard. He speaks slowly and precisely, valuing plain speech and placing a great emphasis on fair dealings. His efforts to negotiate better working conditions for the workers are couched in terms of Christian charity and duty to one's fellow man.

On their way out of the Corbin police precinct, the investigators will be accosted by Quentin Skinner, a reporter for the *Corbin Enterprise*, who wants to interview them about McCullough's death. Skinner is a gangly man in his early 30s, his wavy brown hair resisting his best efforts to slick it down and wearing a slightly shabby suit. If there are any journalists among the investigators, Skinner will focus his efforts on them, trying to use "professional courtesy" to get a story out of them.

McCullough's body will be held at the Whitley County Morgue for autopsy before being released back to Jennifer McCullough for burial (it is, unsurprisingly, expected to be a closed casket funeral). During the two days McCullough is in the morgue, rumors will begin to circulate in Parsons ville.

Among the rumors that the investigators will hear:

- McCullough was hacked apart with an axe, and the murder weapon was found by his body.
- McCullough killed himself, putting the barrel of a shotgun in his mouth and pulling the trigger because he knew the union would win better pay and hours.
- McCullough was mauled by a bear—and was probably in the woods meeting a woman for a tryst.
- McCullough was "got" by the Red Creek Goatman. Stories of the Red Creek Goatman begin to filter into Parsons ville on the second day after McCullough's death, due to a sensationalistic piece of journalism from Quentin Skinner in the *Corbin Enterprise*. Light on actual facts, Skinner has filled page space with a recitation of the legend of the Red Creek Goatman and empty speculation.

Concurrently with the release of McCullough's body for burial, Coroner Lawrence Dobbs releases his report to Detective Peabody, who makes it public: Dobbs' professional opinion is that McCullough likely died from having his neck snapped, and his body was then mutilated with a large, sharp, heavy object such as a miner's pick. This cements Peabody's opinion that McCullough was killed by one of the striking miners, and he calls for an increased security presence in Parsons ville in response.

Investigators interviewing Dobbs can learn that the bald, stoop-shouldered nebbish of a coroner is less than sure in his analysis of McCullough's wounds, and that "miner's pick" is a best guess rather than a certainty. The coroner is a weak-willed, cowardly man, easily intimidated, especially by bullying individuals like Detective Peabody. In between mopping at his forehead with a handkerchief, Dobbs can be brought to admit (via successful **Persuade**, **Fast Talk**, **Charm** or even **Intimidate** rolls, depending on which tack the investigators opt to take) that his initial report only speculated that a miner's pick "could" have caused the observed wounds, he was "encouraged" to revise his report by Peabody to "eliminate any doubt on the matter."

AGGRESSION IN PARSONSVILLE

One of the Parsons ville mine supervisors, a burly, thick-set man with cauliflower ears and a mashed nose named Howard Jackson steps up into the position of acting manager of the mine. A staunch anti-unionist, Jackson agrees with Peabody's assessment that McCullough was murdered by a striking miner. Peabody and Jackson quickly find much to admire in each other.

Jackson's first act is to announce to the population of Parsons ville that he is not "soft" like McCullough and that he will not be negotiating with the striking miners. Two dozen Pinkerton security agents will be arriving in Parsons ville the day after McCullough's funeral; upon their arrival, the striking workers will have 48 hours to either end the strike or be evicted from their homes and replaced by "men who do want to work."

This announcement divides the striking miners, who until now have enjoyed a peaceful and non-threatening strike; many of those who have families in Parsons ville begin to seriously consider abandoning the strike to protect their loved ones, while others (especially those who are unmarried) want to riot and "show that pig Jackson we're serious," as one of the miners will put it to the investigators if the subject arises. Walter Richardson has his hands full trying to reign in the striking laborers, calling desperately for non-violence in the face of Jackson's threat.

THE WAKE

Because of the horrific nature of McCullough's death, his wake proves to be a unifying event, and many of the strikers, despite their professional anger at McCullough, attend his wake to offer their condolences to McCullough's grieving widow. Likely the investigators will be among those attending.

The wake is held at the McPadden Funeral Home in Corbin, where undertaker Ronald Hughes handled the embalming and has done his best to make the body presentable. He has done an admirable job, and it is an open casket viewing. Robert McCullough looks peaceful in his coffin, dressed in a dark blue suit, his iron-gray hair cleaned and combed back from his temples. Along one side of the funeral parlor is a long table on which mourners have laid dishes to pass, composing a sumptuous spread of simple Americana.

Ronald Hughes, if sought out and talked to, proves to be a barrel-chested, red faced man with a crushing handshake and bright smile—just the opposite of what one would expect from an undertaker. He is easily flattered by any compliments regarding his work on McCullough, and is eager to talk at length about the work that goes into a “modern” funeral, though he is tactful enough to invite the investigators into his office before discussing anything relating to the preparation of the body, out of respect for the mourners present.

If asked about the wounds on McCullough’s body and if he thinks they could have been made by a miner’s pick, Hughes will consider the question for a moment and then shake his head. “No sir, I don’t think so,” he says, “because a miner’s pick, that’s more of a flattened wedge, ain’t it? The holes in that poor fella out there were more rounded, like a big ice pick or scratch awl would make, but I’ve never seen an ice pick big enough to make those holes.”

If asked for an opinion on what could have made the wounds, Hughes will reply with, “last month, I was up in New York City visiting my sister and her husband, and they took me to the museum that’s there where they got a bunch of them dinosaur bones. Some of those big lizards’ claws would make a wound like that I reckon, but if I were looking to kill a fella, I don’t think I’d use a dinosaur bone to do it, would you?”

While Jennifer McCullough is trying desperately to hold herself together, she will have a sobbing breakdown, either while the investigators are mingling with the other mourners or, if they choose to engage Ronald Hughes for information, while they are in his office (they will be able to hear her anguished wail through his office door without difficulty).

A thin, plain-looking woman in a worn but clean blue cotton dress, her silver-streaked brown hair worn in a tight bun, sets down a casserole dish on the sideboard and approaches Jennifer McCullough, clasping the grieving widow’s hands in hers and saying in a loud, clear voice, “Lord, heal thy child who is so heavily burdened! Free Jennifer McCullough from her torment, O Lord!”

Miraculously, Jennifer McCullough calms down at this, ceasing to weep and her breathing becoming regular again. Smiling, the woman will embrace Jennifer and then turn to try and leave. A successful **Spot Hidden** check will allow the investigators to notice a bearded man in his mid-20s, dressed in denim, is sitting in a pickup outside, watching the proceedings through the funeral parlor window. A Hard success on this roll can determine his eyes are locked on the thin, plain woman who has become the center of attention.

If the investigators approach her, she gets very shy, stating that she, “just did what was right,” in asking the Lord’s blessing for Jennifer McCullough. She is disinclined to talk, claiming not to want attention (despite her miraculous treatment of Jennifer McCullough), but can be brought out of her shell by a persistent, friendly investigator. Additionally, she responds better to just one investigator talking to her than being swarmed by a group of them.

The investigators can learn that her name is Sarah Rasko; she lives with her husband and sons in Parsonsville, having just moved there a week ago—“We didn’t know the strike was going on, or we might have passed by. But being able to do the Lord’s work here, I’m glad we stopped.”

If asked about her ability, she can explain that it’s a gift every woman in her family shares, “my sisters, my mama, and her mama too, bless her soul.” She first developed the ability at the age of 13, and attributes it to the blessings of the Lord on her family for their deep devotion.

The investigators can’t get too much information from Sarah Rasko at this point—in the middle of the wake is hardly an appropriate time, and she is very shy about talking about herself. If the investigators press Sarah here, her son Michael (the man in the truck) will enter the funeral parlor and encourage her to leave.

If the investigators are polite, they can arrange a meeting with Sarah Rasko to learn more about her at a later time, such as later that evening or tomorrow morning. If they get pushy or rude with Michael Rasko, he will glower down at them (he is a towering 6’4” tall, and broadly built, muscular from already having spent years engaging in hard physical labor) and ask if they’d like to take this outside. Any altercation with Michael Rasko will bring the police fairly quickly; a fist fight will be broken up with warnings against further mischief, but if the investigators escalate any conflict (Michael keeps an axe handle in the back of the truck as a club, but will not go for it unless the investigators try to draw a gun on him) they may end up handcuffed and brought in for questioning, which will bring them no end of unfavorable attention from Detective Peabody.

INVESTIGATING THE RASKOS

The investigators will likely have enough information on Sarah Rasko to begin researching her if they so choose. Asking around Parsonsville will confirm that Sarah Rasko, her husband Henry Sr., and sons Henry Jr. and Michael moved in about a week prior, taking up residence in a small house near the old schoolhouse (a relic of when Parsonsville was only a lumber town, and a quarter its current size). Henry Sr. has been looking for work in town, having been maimed in a lumber accident a few years ago—his left arm was shattered by a falling tree and healed poorly, leaving it weak and shaky. Henry Jr. and Michael have joined the strike rather than work as scabs in the lumber yard. They are well-regarded by everyone who has spent time around them, though some will note an emotional distance; the Raskos often seem slightly distracted, as if their minds are elsewhere, and Sarah and her sons are rarely far from the house for long.

Investigators who wish to use a news service in Corbin to research Sarah Rasko, or have access to a similar source of information (for example, a Pinkerton Agent calling on the agency to pull newspaper files), will receive two newspaper clippings from the Coldwater Gazette. The first, dated July 3, 1898, reports on the first recorded instance of Sarah, thirteen years old at the time, laid on hands and helped someone, as well as recounts a brief history of her mother and grandmother’s healing abilities. The second, dated February 11, 1926, is an account of Sarah Rasko’s youngest son, David, age 13 at the time, falling through the ice on a frozen pond and being considered dead for several minutes after being fished out, before reviving under his mother’s prayers.

HANDOUT 1, CLIPPING FROM COLDWATER GAZETTE, JULY 3 1898:

The congregation of the Coldwater Baptist Church is pleased to welcome another congregant uniquely blessed by the Lord among their number. Sarah Donaldson, age 13, the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth (nee Haywood), stood up before the congregation last Sunday and, praising the Lord, laid hands on Mrs. Agnes Finley, age 78, curing her of the palsy in her hands. Mrs. Finley was able to play the piano for hymns afterwards, something she has not been able to do for several years now.

Sarah Donaldson is following in a family tradition of laying on hands; Coldwater residents will recall that Sarah's mother Elizabeth is similarly gifted, having received her blessing at a similar age to her daughter. Sarah's grandmother, Rebecca Haywood, who passed away last August, was also a faith healer. Those Coldwater residents with long memories may recall speculation a half-century ago that Rebecca Haywood's gifts came from her descent from Sarah Goodwife, a reputed witch, a claim which Haywood vigorously denied. What cannot be denied, however, is the bright future Sarah Donaldson has ahead of her in the Coldwater community.

HANDOUT 2, CLIPPING FROM COLDWATER GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 11, 1926

Coldwater was witness to an incredible display of Sarah Rasko's (nee Donaldson) miraculous ability to heal with a touch yesterday. Her son David, age 13, fell through the ice on Kingfisher Pond, and was submerged for several minutes before being fished out by his older brothers, Henry Jr. and Michael. David was reportedly not breathing and had no pulse when brought to shore, according to eyewitnesses. Fortunately for David, his mother Sarah, known throughout Coldwater for her gift of laying on hands for almost thirty years now, was nearby. Witnesses report that as Sarah prayed over David's body, the sound of thunder was heard overhead, though no lightning was seen. As the last echoes of thunder died away, David sat up, spitting pond water, miraculously returned to life. So far the family has refused requests for an interview.

The investigators may wish to immediately research Sarah Goodwife, the reputed witch. A **Library Use** roll in the Corbin Public Library will turn up an account of Sarah Goodwife in a book on witchcraft in New England:

HANDOUT 3: EXCERPT, A HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT IN NEW ENGLAND

Of Sarah Goodwife of Pennsylvania, it is said she had knowledge of every plant in the forest and its use in medicine and midwifery. Reputed a kindly woman, beloved by all who had dealings with her, Sarah Goodwife's great sorrow was that she did not have children of her own. Years of prayer passed, and no child came, and she grew bitter. It is claimed that she then turned her back on Jesus Christ, and made a pact with the Dweller in Darkness: in exchange for a child, she and her line would serve the Black One faithfully unto the tenth generation. She delivered a healthy baby girl nine months later. A decade later in 1803, her sin became known, and she was hanged by the very community that once adored her. What became of her daughter is unknown.

If the investigators think to look for reports of similar killings to McCullough's, they can find newspaper reports of a string of them over the past year and a half—with the oldest taking place in Coldwater, Pennsylvania. Plotted on a map, these killings form a trail that leads from Coldwater to Parsonville.

Speaking with Sarah Rasko at home that evening or the next morning will find her still shy, but somewhat more comfortable and willing to talk about herself. She keeps glancing at her husband or sons, as if for reassurance that it is okay for her to speak, and her speech follows a pattern—starting very quiet and humble, she grows more and more enthusiastic and vocal before stopping herself, apologizing, and returning to a quiet voice.

She has a scrapbook of newspaper clippings not just about herself but about her mother and grandmother as well. Investigators will notice that the last several clippings are each from different towns in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and all from the past two years. If asked about this, she'll stiffen a little and say, "we've moved a lot these past two years...always looking for work but it always seems to dry up right after we get there."

Prominently displayed on the table is a battered family bible, obviously much thumbed through. If allowed to do so, it falls open naturally to the Book of Job. "It belonged to my grandmother," Sarah will say if asked about it. If the investigators ask to look at it, they will be allowed to; on the flyleaf has been written out a family tree; **INT** rolls will show that it traces the female line of Sarah's family, with her name the most recent one listed, being born in 1885. Two names have been carefully blotted out: Sarah's great grandmother and great-great grandmother. If asked about these, Sarah can only shake her head. "I don't know about them really, nobody ever wanted to talk about those two. I suspect they were looser in their morals than the rest of the family."

Investigators who have done their research may recognize that one of the names blotted out would be that of Sarah Goodwife, the reputed witch. They may also recognize from the newspaper clippings in the scrapbook that the towns the Raskos have moved to have been towns where grisly murders have taken place.

From her frequent glances at the men in her life and shyness, investigators may suspect that her husband or sons are abusive towards her. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Her quietness is as much to allow the men to listen for agitation from David as natural shyness and a desire to be out of the spotlight after decades of attention.

If asked about David, Sarah immediately breaks down crying, at which point the Rasko men will ask the investigators to leave; Michael, the spokesman of the family, will mutter to one of the investigators that David died of pneumonia two months after being pulled out of the pond, and that Sarah took being unable to save him very hard. This is a lie, but one Michael has become very practiced in telling; Hard **Psychology** rolls will be necessary to identify the lie.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SONNY

In truth, David Rasko, or “Sonny,” as his family calls him, has had a bed set up for him on the floor of the old schoolhouse, and food, mostly canned beans and vegetables, delivered to him here. While his full transformation is still potentially decades away, he has begun to show his inhuman lineage. Instead of blood, cold black ichor courses through his veins and black tracers are visible through his pale skin. His eyes have become reflective in low light, shining red; bright light has become painful to him and he avoids it wherever he can.

What his family doesn’t know is that “Sonny” has begun sneaking out after dark. He’s torn out part of the schoolhouse floor and slithers out on his belly from beneath the building, spending the entire night roaming the dark forest. His appetite is growing, and he craves raw meat; while deer and other woodland creatures sate him temporarily, he has a growing awareness that what he actually craves is human meat.

What’s more, he finds himself drawn over and over again to a single standing stone erected centuries ago in a clearing in the forest; this ancient megalith has been partially effaced by time and the elements, and covered in moss, but symbols carved on it by its creators are still somewhat visible. A coven of Nyogtha worshipers met here in the centuries before Europeans arrived in the New World, and were wiped out and the site forgotten. It is still a site of power, however, and Sonny often spends the entire night trying to read the symbols, having a sense that he somehow knows the language and has forgotten it.

Exposure to this stone has accelerated Sonny’s transformation; he’s begun experiencing occasional bursts of change—limbs growing longer and more robust, his jaw cracking and stretching into a muzzle, black slime pouring from his eyes, nose, ears, and mouth—that ebb away when the sun rises. Sonny does not understand these changes, but somehow knows that sooner or later, they will become permanent.

If the investigators enter the schoolhouse during the day, Sonny will move rapidly to hide beneath the floorboards; he will not go outside during daylight hours if he can avoid it. Searching the schoolhouse turns up a pile of empty bean cans and a blanket, all smeared with a greasy stickiness that the investigators may recognize as being identical to that staining McCullough’s pickup truck.

THE NEXT SLAYING

The morning after McCullough’s funeral, two new disappearances will be reported to Detective Peabody: Al Bialek, one of the striking miners, never returned home from an alleged poker game; and Gracie Peters, a window clerk at the Parsonsville Post Office, never returned home from an evening with friends. Frustrated by this turn of events and unconvinced of Detectives Rye and Tate’s abilities, he’s grudgingly willing to swallow his pride and deputize the investigators, on the grounds that they seem to know what they’re doing and can cover more ground than he can alone. Suspecting a revenge killing, Peabody’s sense of justice begins to override his anti-unionist beliefs, and he can be persuaded to argue with Jackson to temper the Pinkertons’ behavior until the person responsible for Al and Gracie’s deaths is brought to justice.

Visiting Gracie’s husband Jack reveals that he’s paralyzed from the waist down after being caught under a falling timber in the mine a year ago. Gracie’s wages from the post office have been their sole source of income.

Consulting with some of Gracie’s close friends—Kimberley Gibb and Hildy Willis are fellow employees in the administrative building, while Gloria Sokoloff lives next door and gives the Peters’ the excess from her vegetable patch—will be difficult for the male investigators, but if the possibility of Gracie being injured or dead is raised, they can learn that Gracie was not visiting them the night before. Gracie, they can explain (particularly to any female investigators more so than males), has been miserable in her marriage since Jack’s accident, and resents him for it. Kimberley and Hildy know that for the past few weeks, Gracie has been carrying on an affair, usually sneaking off once or twice a week—evenings or lunch breaks—to meet with a man for sex. They do not know the identity of this man.

Meeting with Al’s wife Claudia presents the investigators with a nervous, plump, middle-aged woman. She is well aware that as she’s gotten older she’s been less attractive to her husband, and the weight she’s gained hasn’t helped that, despite numerous attempts at dieting. Her fear is that Al has simply up and left her for another woman, starting a new life for himself with someone younger and prettier.

Consulting with Al’s closest associates provides confirmation. They will say that Al frequently referred to his wife as, “the ball and chain,” and “a cow,” and ogled younger and slimmer women around Parsonsville, whether they were married or not. They will also confirm that there was no poker game the night before that Al would have been at, and (with successful **Persuade** or **Intimidate** rolls) can be convinced to give up the fact that Al had mentioned having a new girl on the side, occasionally meeting her at Lou’s Diner.

Investigators may put together at this point that Al Bialek’s and Gracie Peters’ disappearances are connected, and that the two were unfaithful to their respective spouses together. This is correct; Al Bialek was having an affair with Gracie Peters, though they have not run off together.

THE PINKERTONS ARRIVE

Two dozen armed guards, courtesy of the Pinkerton Agency, arrive via the noon train, not long after Al and Gracie’s bodies are discovered, and at the direction of Sergeant Carl Dalton, take up positions around the mine. While Jackson is eager to see the Pinkertons deployed to violently crack down on the striking miners, Detective Peabody has cautioned him that doing so would be interfering with an active police investigation and crime scene. The gruff Spanish-American War veteran has the acting mine-overseer cowed for the time being at least, buying the investigators some time.

WHAT HAPPENED TO AL AND GRACIE

They had met in the woods for their weekly tryst, but were interrupted by Sonny Rasko—the boy in an irritable state due to his mother’s earlier use of her healing ability on Jennifer McCullough, his body bulging with power following a commune with the Nyogtha-monolith.

After killing Al Bialek, the adrenaline surge of murder caused Sonny to transform further; Gracie Peters dies as Sonny Rasko disembowels her with his newly-grown fangs. At sunrise, Sonny Rasko does not completely transform back to normal—his skin is now coal-black from head to toe, his eyes bulge and glow red, and his teeth are long and pointed. He can no longer pass for fully human.

FINDING THE BODIES

Finding out where Al and Gracie went after they met up yesterday will be more difficult. Astute investigators should realize that they would not go far—without a hotel or convenient place to hold their trysts, they would need some place secluded. Meeting at Lou’s diner suggests a nearby destination—the rear of the diner is a bit of an open lot fronting one of the main red dog roads out of Parsonsville, connecting to the road to Corbin. On the other side of this red dog road is forest—the lumber work of Parsonsville is done on the other side of town, where there are more pines.

Searching the woods turns up Al and Gracie’s bodies, still on the blanket they’d thrown down for their tryst, about a hundred yards past the tree line. Al’s pants are still down around his ankles while Gracie’s skirt is pulled up over her hips. Al was a good-looking man in his mid-40s, with a full head of hair just beginning to gray at the temples, giving him a distinguished look, while Gracie was a slim woman, barely over five feet tall, with her red hair styled in a fashionable bob and a band of freckles across her nose.

Now, Al’s neck has been broken savagely enough to twist his head halfway around, and an undeniable bite has been taken out of his throat, tearing loose most of the soft tissue—it is on the ground a few feet away where Sonny spat it. Puncture wounds, resembling those that had been found on McCullough’s body, mar Al’s arms and back.

Gracie Peters is covered in blood, her hands over her face, staring eyes peeking between slim fingers. Her stomach has been ripped open and the bloody cavity is buzzing with flies when the investigators find the grisly scene. **Medicine** rolls can confirm what appear to be tooth-marks around the edges of the wound. Both corpses are spattered with a thick, dark-colored oil or grease, similar to what was found on McCullough’s body and car. Seeing the bodies has a Sanity cost of 1/1D4+1.

While the rocky, root-filled soil doesn’t show any footprints, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll will show where the attacker stepped on a corner of the blanket, leaving a greasy footprint – resembling a bare human foot, about eleven inches toes to heel.

Detective Peabody will be shaken if shown the murder scene. The savagery on display will humble him, and he will apologize to the investigators for his prior behavior towards them.

Pulling himself together, he will suggest to the investigators that the matter of Al and Gracie’s affair be covered up, to spare the feelings of Claudia Bialek and Jack Peters, and proposes a cover story of Al walking Gracie home after dark, when they saw a figure they believed was the murderer and tried to make a citizen’s arrest. He soon has officers bagging up the bodies for transportation to the morgue.

It will take three days for Dobbs to complete his autopsies of Al and Gracie. He will discuss the results only with Detective Peabody and those he authorizes to hear the results, which will never be made public knowledge. The autopsy on Gracie Peters reveals that her liver, pancreas, left lung and heart have all been torn out and are missing. Dobbs hesitantly offers the hypothesis that, given the bite wounds surrounding the disembowelment, the organs may have been extracted and eaten by her assailant.

As with the death of McCullough, the deaths of Al and Gracie will cause rumors to begin to swirl through Parsonsville. Among these:

- They were killed by the Goatman, and the police are covering it up to prevent a panic.
- They were chopped into little pieces—the autopsies are taking so long because they have to be put back together.
- They died within sight of Lou’s diner.
- It was a revenge killing for Robert McCullough.

Similarly, smelling a story, reporter Quentin Skinner has begun lurking around Parsonsville. Correctly believing that the investigators know more about these deaths than is public knowledge, he is stalking them wherever they go, hiding nearby and trying to eavesdrop on their conversations. If any of the investigators (especially any journalists) were especially brusque with him during a previous interaction, Skinner takes it very personally, and will focus his attentions on them.

Keepers are encouraged to use Skinner as a red-herring at this point—give the investigators the sense of being watched, let them catch glimpses of a tall figure ducking behind buildings or trees, and they will soon believe the killer is following them now.

Any interaction with the Raskos after the bodies of Al and Gracie are discovered will be tense and strained; the family is frightened of Sonny’s growing aggression, and beginning to struggle with what to do about him. Michael has begun to suspect that Sonny will never return to normal, and has begun to discuss the possibility of “putting him out of all our misery” with his brother Henry Jr. Henry Jr., for his part, has suggested that since Sonny has left the schoolhouse, and seems content to live in the woods like an animal, the rest of the family could easily pull up stakes and move on, leaving him behind them like a bad memory.

Sarah Rasko will demand an end to that sort of talk, reminding her sons that Sonny is family, and that his curse is their cross to bear for as long as the Lord decrees they must—and if they abandon or worse, kill him, that God will punish the family tenfold for it.

THE DOUBLE WAKE AND THE BREAK-OUT

Once the bodies are released, a double-wake will be held for Al Bialek and Gracie Peters in Parsonville, and the contrast between their funerals and that of Robert McCullough is striking. Closed casket affairs, Al and Gracie will be laid to rest in unvarnished pine coffins in a small cemetery on the southern end of Parsonville. The caskets are laid side by side in a large barn normally used as a “city hall” for community functions, and Sarah Rasko asked to perform readings from the Bible over each of them.

Additionally, two rural practices will be observed: first, a call will be put out for individuals to act as “sin eaters” for the deceased, taking on the spiritual burden of any sins they died carrying to allow them access to Heaven. The “sin eater” is understood to then pray to eliminate these sins from their own souls. A collection has been taken up, and ten US dollars gathered for each of the two sin eaters needed. The act of “sin eating” involves eating a piece of bread that has been blessed, symbolically “eating” the sin of the deceased.

Second, a watch will be held all night over each casket, to ensure no evil spirits attempt to tamper with the bodies of the deceased. One person is needed to sit watch over each casket all night—it cannot be done in shifts, though others can deliver coffee, food, etc. to the watchers.

Henry Sr. accompanied his wife to the wake, but their sons Michael and Henry Jr. did not. Investigators who focus on observing Henry Sr. or Sarah will notice that he seems very nervous, and while for much of the service he stays close to her side, once she begins to read from the Bible he distances himself from her, and keeps throwing nervous glances at the doors and windows. **Psychology** rolls will suggest that he’s waiting for something bad to happen.

If the investigators make a scene, they will quickly find themselves thrown out of the wake and may be ostracized from the community. If they can Persuade Henry Sr. into talking with them privately (Charm or Fast Talk may be used as well), they will find him an exhausted and drained man, secretly eager to divest himself of his burden. Sympathetic investigators speaking with him can learn:

- Henry Jr. and Michael are out in the woods looking for their younger brother.
- Sonny is alive, contrary to what the investigators were told previously, but that after falling through that frozen pond, his whole personality changed, becoming mean and vicious.
- When Sarah laid hands on Sonny after he was pulled from the pond, the whole family heard a voice echoing from nowhere. The voice, sardonic and cruel, announced that the boy would live, but that he would belong to “the Dweller in Darkness,” not to the Rasko family.
- The boy’s blood turned black as ink and sometimes at night, his eyes shine red.
- He goes into a rage whenever Sarah lays hands on anyone, getting violent with anyone nearby.

- Sarah insists on treating Sonny like he’s a test of her faith; that, like Job, if she refuses to despair or to lose her faith in the Lord, her son will be restored to her. Henry Sr. has his doubts, and has come to suspect that Sonny will be a curse on the family as long as he lives.
- He’s gotten worse since arriving in Parsonville, and while they originally hid him in the old schoolhouse, he’s since taken to hiding in the forest.

Investigators succeeding on a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll will recognize the name “the Dweller in Darkness” as an allusion to the Great Old One Nyogtha, an entity described as a pool of animate blackness, like ink that flows with a purpose, which dwells in caverns deep beneath the earth’s surface, occasionally worshiped by ghouls and witches. If they have found the clue regarding Sarah Goodwife, they may also recall that the Dweller in Darkness was the entity she’d dealt with to conceive a child, and may put together that some essence or element of Nyogtha taints Sarah Rasko’s bloodline, manifesting for reasons unknown in Sonny.

THE RASKO BOYS

Michael and Henry Jr. have gone out armed with an axe handle and a shotgun, respectively, in search of their younger brother, intent on bringing him home to their mother. The improvised club and gun are carried with the intent of frightening Sonny into better behavior; when the two older Rasko children set out, they don’t believe that they’ll be using them. However, they have not seen what Sonny Rasko has become under the influence of the monolith; for his part, Sonny no longer feels any sort of family bond with his parents or brothers. While Michael and Henry Jr. stumble around the woods with flashlights, calling Sonny’s name, he stalks them, perfectly adapted to see in darkness. As they near the clearing where the monolith stands, Sonny attacks, pouncing on Henry Jr., undeterred by the blast of the shotgun and, trying out a new ability his body has developed, he pulls Henry into his semi-solid flesh, wormlike ropes of black gelatin pouring into Henry’s mouth, nose, eyes and ears. Michael swings the axe handle, connecting with the back of Sonny’s head before fleeing.

Michael will stumble into the barn after the end of the wake; if the investigators have not volunteered to keep watch over the bodies of Al Bialek and Gracie Peters, they will be summoned to the barn; likewise, Detective Peabody will be roused and called to Parsonville, giving the investigators a thirty-minute head start on talking to Michael.

Michael is in a state of intense psychological shock when the investigators see him, clutching the axe handle tightly, shifting constantly in the chair he’s been encouraged to sit in, and watching the doors of the barn obsessively. The end of the axe handle is coated in a thick, sticky, dark-colored substance that Michael steadfastly refuses to look at or otherwise acknowledge. The investigators will recognize the tarry substance as identical to what was on McCullough’s car and on the bodies discovered so far. All he can say in this state is to mutter over and over again, “it got Henry Jr.”

News of Michael's appearance at the barn and mental state will spread like wildfire through Parsonsville, and there will soon be a crowd of curious onlookers gathered around the door of the barn – and coming in for a closer look, if the investigators (and, when he arrives, Detective Peabody) don't quickly cordon off the barn. Almost immediately, the rumor will start to spread that the Rasko boys were attacked by the Red Creek Goatman.

Henry Sr. and Sarah Rasko will be among the first to arrive after the investigators, and Michael will, in his agitated state, refuse to look at his mother. Investigators can attempt **Psychology** rolls to try to calm him down; on a success they can get him to speak clearly about what he experienced. Failing that, Sarah's hovering attempts to fuss over her son will eventually trigger an explosive outburst from him.

If the investigators get Michael Rasko to speak about his experience, he will go over the following:

- He and Henry Jr. were looking for Sonny, who has taken to hiding in the woods.
- They entered a small clearing where a 10' stone was sticking straight up out of the ground.
- Something jumped on Henry Jr. out of the darkness, something human-shaped but all black with glowing red eyes and skin like hundreds of fat, writhing worms. Henry tried to shoot it but either missed or it wasn't bothered by buckshot.
- It covered Henry Jr.'s mouth and nose, smothering him.
- Michael hit the creature in the back of the head with the axe handle, and it turned, smiled at him, and hissed, "Is that any way to treat your own brother, Michael?"



If, instead, Michael lashes out in anger at his mother, the investigators will get the following:

- Henry Jr. is dead, murdered by Sonny, who has transformed into a horrible monster.
- This might not have happened if Sarah hadn't been so insistent that they were being tested by God, that this was their Book of Job moment, and if they stayed strong God would restore Sonny to them.
- Michael will conclude with a tearful, "God ain't watching out for us here, Mama. Can't you see that?"

Sarah Rasko will tearfully try to demand that Sonny be brought to her, that she can reason with him, and that she has to believe that God's power is stronger than that of Satan—that this is all part of the test of faith and she will pass it even if her family does not. Michael and Henry Sr. have finally had enough, and are done listening to her. They have come to the conclusion that Sonny Rasko has transformed into a curse upon the family and they can no longer smuggle him from town to town and try to cover up his violent behavior. Sonny has become a thing to be destroyed, and they will ask the investigators' help in doing so.

DESTROYING SONNY

Destroying Sonny will not be an easy task; as a Spawn of Nyogtha, he is immune to bullets, fire, electricity, acid, and radioactivity, and takes minimum possible damage from non-impaling weapons. However, the investigators do have a few options available to them.

EXPLOSIVES

While Sonny is immune to fire, he is not immune to the concussive force of an explosion, and there is a storage shed where dynamite is kept under lock and key on the grounds of the mine proper. The investigators would need to convince an overseer of their need for explosives to get the shed unlocked, or find a way to break in. The shed contains five crates of 100 sticks of dynamite each.

To calculate the damage a bundle of dynamite would do to Sonny, take the number of damage dice that would normally be rolled and divide in half; for example, if a bundle of dynamite would normally deal 8d6 of damage to a living being standing right next to it as it exploded, it would deal 4 points of damage to Sonny. However, dynamite can have other uses in dealing with him as well.

BLASTING THE STANDING STONE

Destroying the monolith will block the weird emanations that accelerated Sonny's transformation into his more monstrous form, and cause him to revert to his original human shape, though his eyes will continue to glow red. In this form he will have fewer hit points and consequently be slightly easier to destroy. Anyone examining the monolith will find it to be a very dense stone, shot through with flecks of black and green. A Hard success on a **Natural World** roll (or a standard success on a **Science (Geology)** roll) will identify the stone as kimberlite, a type of granite not native to the area. Due to the stone's density, it will not be easy to destroy, requiring at least 20 sticks of dynamite, bundled together, to blast apart. Sonny will attack anyone laying explosives at the monolith, as he recognizes it as a connection between him and his "great-grandfather."

COLLAPSING THE MINE

Investigators may recall that Shaft #3 of the Parsonville mine was experiencing "creep"—the weight of the mountain above pushing down on supports and forcing the softer floor upwards. Left alone, the shaft will eventually collapse under its own weight. If the investigators can lure or drive Sonny down into Shaft #3, they can then use the dynamite to collapse the mine. Whether this destroys Sonny, or opens a means for him to filter down into the earth to join his sire Nyogtha, is left up to the Keeper's discretion.

This will be a challenging option; the mineshafts are accessed from the surface via elevator cages, and require an operator at the surface to raise or lower. Shaft #3 is a 75-foot descent into the earth before opening into a horizontal gallery, ten feet wide, six feet tall and extending more than 300 feet, equipped with a trackway for moving a cart up and down the length of the gallery. The shaft is not wired for electric lighting; investigators will need to bring a light-source down with them (**Idea** checks before entering the elevator will notice that the shaft is not wired from the surface) or find themselves in complete darkness, a condition that will not hinder Sonny Rasko. Upon entering the gallery, anyone with skill points in Science (Geology) or (Mining Engineering) can automatically recognize the "creep" going on, as the wooden support beams are noticeably being sunk into the floor of the gallery. A success on a **Spot Hidden** roll will also recognize the danger of collapse this represents.

Escape upon collapsing the mine is also dangerous; if the investigators have used themselves as bait to lure Sonny down the shaft, they will need to be able to ride the elevator back up if they do not want to martyr themselves. Assuming the investigators throw a bundle of dynamite and ring the elevator bell to be brought back up, a success on a group **Luck** roll will be required to ascend without difficulty; on a failure, the elevator is rocked by the explosion and each investigator takes 1D3 of damage in the form of bumps and bruises as they're thrown around the cage. Should the group **Luck** roll be fumbled, the explosion triggers a coal seam fire; the cage is rocked and investigators take 1D3 damage as above, but now there is also a pocket of burning coal underground, slowly releasing poisonous gas and weakening the ground around it. This fire will spread throughout Shaft #3 and, in time, penetrate to Shafts #1 and #2, rendering all three completely inoperable and spelling the quick death of the town of Parsonville.

MAGIC

While the author neither expects nor requires the investigators to have access to magic, it is understood that experienced investigators may have learned some spells in prior investigations, or may resort to contacting friendly academic authorities (via telegraph from the post office in Parsonville) for assistance in defeating Sonny Rasko.

CONCLUDING THE SCENARIO

If unhindered, Sonny Rasko will spend the week following the death of Henry Jr. preying on the town of Parsonville. He will attack and consume the remainder of his family first, killing the Rasko clan and caching their bodies while he consumes them over the next three days. After this, he will go after anyone solitary he can find, including Pinkerton Agents. He will consume one human being per night. At the end of the week, Sonny will have grown from the biomass he has consumed, increasing his SIZ by 50%, and will seek to leave the surface world behind. At this time, he will return to the monolith and begin to dig his way under it; in time, he will burrow down to the caverns where Nyogtha surges and flows and there join his monstrous and alien ancestor. In this case, the scenario ends in failure.

A success for the investigators would mean destroying Sonny Rasko, most likely by one of the methods listed above. If the investigators do collapse the mine, and can do so without being caught by Jackson's hired security, it strengthens the miners' bargaining position regarding mine safety. Quentin Skinner will write an article about the mine collapse heavily slanted towards the miners' position, which will be picked up by newspapers nationwide. Public opinion will pressure Jackson into negotiating with the miners.

If the mine is not collapsed during the course of the scenario, Detective Peabody will not be able to hold Jackson's desire to punish the miners in check for long. The threat of prosecution for interfering in an ongoing police investigation will stay Jackson's hand for one week; if Sonny Rasko has not been stopped, the violent removal of the striking miners will coincide with Sonny digging his way down into the earth to reunite with his sire.

SANITY REWARDS

- Destroying Sonny Rasko +1D8
- Concealing Sonny's connection to the Rasko family +1D4
- Aiding the miner's cause +1D4
- Assisting in putting down the strike -1D4

STATISTICS

DAVID “SONNY” RASKO, SPAWN OF NYOGTHA (MONSTROUS FORM)

STR 135 CON 85 SIZ 115 DEX 65

INT 80 POW 95

HP: 20

Damage Bonus: +2d6

Build: 3

Move: 6 (1 when grappling a target, see below)

ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 3, or Grapple

Fighting attacks: Sonny can employ two claw attacks and a bite in the same combat round, or can attempt to grapple an opponent and engulf them in his cold, slimy flesh. If the grapple maneuver succeeds, the victim needs a successful opposed STR roll to resist being pulled against Sonny's unnatural, gelatinous form. If that happens, scores of worm-like tendrils sprout from his body, binding the target's limbs and forcing their way into every orifice. Once a grapple attack succeeds, the victim is treated as drowning (see Call of Cthulhu Keeper's Rulebook, p. 411). While grappling and suffocating a victim, Sonny can also attack with his claws (but cannot bite) and can even grapple additional targets, but he must then divide and allot STR between each victim.

Claw 65% (32/13), damage 1d6+db

Bite 65% (32/13), damage 1d8+db

Grapple (mnvr) 50% (25/10), damage special (see above); the target of this attack also suffers a 0/1D6 SAN Loss if the Grapple is successful.

Dodge 32% (16/6)

Defenses: Immune to bullets and weapons that impale; takes minimal possible damage from all other attacks. Immune to fire, acid, radioactivity and electricity.

Spells: In his monstrous form, Sonny Rasko knows the following spells: Cause Blindness, Clutch of Nyogtha, Contact Ghoul, Contact Nyogtha, Curse of the Putrid Husk, Possess Corpse, The Red Sign, and Summon Haunting Horror.

Sanity Loss: 1/1d10 to witness the monster Sonny Rasko has become.

DAVID “SONNY” RASKO, SPAWN OF NYOGTHA (HUMAN FORM)

STR 85 CON 85 SIZ 70 DEX 65 APP 85

INT 80 POW 95 EDU 30 Luck SAN 0

HP: 15 MP: 19

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Build: 1

Move: 8

ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: Sonny Rasko, in this form, is limited to kicking, punching, and any weapon he can lay hands on (at base percentage).

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1d3+db

Dodge 32% (16/6)

Defenses: Immune to bullets and weapons that impale; takes minimal possible damage from all other attacks. Immune to fire, acid, radioactivity, and electricity.

Age: 15

Spells: In his human form, Sonny Rasko knows the following spells: Contact Nyogtha.

Sanity Loss: None normally, 0/1D3 to see the black ichor that courses through Sonny's veins in place of blood, or to see his eyes glowing red in low light.

SARAH RASKO, TROUBLED FAITH-HEALER

STR 55 CON 60 SIZ 45

DEX 45 APP 55 INT 55

POW 70 EDU 40 Luck 40

SAN 62

HP: 10 MP: 12

Damage Bonus: None

Build: 0

Move: 7

ATTACKS

Sarah will not fight under any circumstances.

Dodge 22% (11/4)

Skills: Charm 20%, Fast Talk 70%, First Aid 60%, Listen 65%, Natural World 40%, Occult 45%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 45%

Defenses: None above base.

Age: 43

Spells: Healing (Folk)

HENRY RASKO, SR., CRIPPLED HUSBAND

STR 35 CON 50 SIZ 65

DEX 40 APP 50 INT 55

POW 50 EDU 50 Luck 60

SAN 41

HP: 11

Damage Bonus: None

Build: 0

Move: 5

ATTACKS

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+db

Dodge 20% (10/4)

Skills: Fast Talk 35%, Language (Pennsylvania German) 50%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Natural World 15%, Navigate 15%, Ride 10%, Science (Mining Engineering) 30%, Survival 35%, Track 20%

Age: 51

MICHAEL RASKO, CONCERNED ELDEST SON

STR	70	CON	60	SIZ	70
DEX	55	APP	60	INT	55
POW	50	EDU	50	Luck	50
SAN	41				

HP: 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Build: 1

Move: 8

ATTACKS

Fighting (Brawl) 70% (35/14), 1D3+db

Axe Handle 70% (35/14), 1D6+db

Dodge 27% (13/5)

Skills: Charm 20%, Climb 25%, Fast Talk 65%, Intimidate 30%, Language (Pennsylvania German) 20%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 15%, Natural World 15%, Navigate 20%, Sleight of Hand 20%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 30%, Survival 25%, Swim 25%, Track 30%

Defenses: None above base.

Age: 22

HENRY RASKO, JR., CONCERNED YOUNGER SON

STR	65	CON	60	SIZ	65
DEX	50	APP	55	INT	55
POW	55	EDU	50	Luck	50
SAN	44				

HP: 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Build: 1

Move: 8

ATTACKS

Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+db

Shotgun 60% (30/12), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Dodge 25 (12/5)

Skills: Charm (35%), Fast Talk 45%, Intimidate 20%, Jump 25%, Language (Pennsylvania German) 25%, Listen 40%, Natural World 20%, Navigate 20%, Persuade 15%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 30%, Survival 30%, Swim 25%, Track 35%

Defenses: None above base.

Age: 19

DETECTIVE DAN PEABODY, READY TO RETIRE

STR	55	CON	65	SIZ	60
DEX	50	APP	55	INT	65
POW	50	EDU	55	Luck	30
SAN	50				

HP: 11

Damage Bonus: none

Build: 0

Move: 5

ATTACKS

Fighting (Brawl) 30% (15/6), damage 1D3+db

Pistol 60% (30/12), damage 1D8

Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills: Accounting 10%, Fast Talk 35%, History 15%, Intimidate 20%, Law 65%, Library Use 30%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 10%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Natural World 20%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 25%, Survival 20%, Track 25%

Defenses: None above base.

Age: 61

HOWARD JACKSON, THUGGISH OVERSEER

STR	60	CON	70	SIZ	70
DEX	50	APP	45	INT	50
POW	50	EDU	40	Luck	55
SAN	50				

HP: 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Build: 1

Move: 5

ATTACKS

Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+db

Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills: Accounting 15%, Art (Whittling) 35%, Electrical Repair 40%, Intimidate 45%, Language (Appalachian English) 70%, Listen 30%, Locksmith 15%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Natural World 60%, Navigate 40%, Operate Heavy Machinery 25%, Ride 30%, Science (Geology) 20%, Science (Minerology) 20%, Science (Mining Engineering) 40%, Survival 40%, Track 40%

Defenses: None above base.

Age: 54

SERGEANT CARL DALTON, PINKERTON AGENT

STR	55	CON	65	SIZ	60
DEX	55	APP	50	INT	65
POW	60	EDU	65	Luck	50
SAN	60				

HP: 13

Damage Bonus: none

Build: 0

Move: 5

ATTACKS

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+db

Pistol 65% (32/13), damage 1D8

Dodge 35% (13/5)

Skills: Accounting 20%, Art (Watercolor) 65%, Drive Auto 30%, Intimidate 55%, Jump 25%, Language (French) 40%, Law 20%, Library Use 30%, Listen 55%, Locksmith 10%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Natural World 25%, Navigate 30%, Persuade 20%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 25%, Survival 25%, Swim 35%

Defenses: None above base.

Age: 53

AVERAGE PINKERTON AGENT

STR	60	CON	65	SIZ	60
DEX	50	APP	50	INT	60
POW	50	EDU	55	Luck	50
SAN	50				
HP:	12				

Damage Bonus: none**Build:** 0**Move:** 8**ATTACKS**

Fighting (Brawl) 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+db

Pistol 60% (30/12), damage 1D8

Dodge 40% (12/5)

Skills: Accounting 20%, Charm 20%, Climb 25%, Drive Auto 40%, Intimidate 55%, Law 15%, Listen 45%, Psychology 15%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 40%, Track 15%**Defenses:** None above base.**Age:** Varies**QUENTIN SKINNER, REPORTER IN SEARCH OF A STORY**

STR	50	CON	60	SIZ	50
DEX	60	APP	55	INT	65
POW	50	EDU	70	Luck	55
SAN	50				
HP:	11				

Damage Bonus: none**Build:** 0**Move:** 8**ATTACKS**

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+db

Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills: Charm 30%, Craft (Writing) 35%, Drive Auto 30%, Fast Talk 40%, History (35%, Library Use (35%), Listen 60%, Occult 15%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 55%**Defenses:** None above base.**Age:** 32

HANDOUTS

WELCOME TO PARSONSVILLE

The village of Parsonville, Kentucky is a mining/lumber settlement, a “company town” sprung up around the Parsonville Mine, a coal mine owned by Associated Anthracite Holdings, Ltd. Population is around 600 people, most of them miners and loggers, as well as their families, and the administrative staff employed by Associated Anthracite. The village has a diner (Lou’s - “best hamburgers for fifty miles” reads the sign above the door), a bathhouse/laundry, a new schoolhouse and a single administrative building that functions as a general store, post office, and the onsite offices of Associated Anthracite, including the payroll office. As with many company towns around America at this time, the workers are paid in company scrip, redeemable for goods and services at company-owned businesses. There is running water in the public buildings, but individual houses are small affairs without running water and heated by wood-burning stoves. There are outhouses behind most “private” residences, the houses themselves being owned by Associated Anthracite and leased to workers and their families. Wells at the north and west ends of Parsonville supply water for the residents. Many of the locals maintain small vegetable gardens, and it is not unusual to see chickens walking around people’s yards or penned up. The roads are not paved with asphalt but are covered in “red dog” - a reddish slate-y by-product of the mines. When it rains, these roads turn into slippery, rust-colored mud.

Ostensibly, the town is run by a mayor, Fred Carver, an indecisive, nervous man at the best of times, with little real power. The de facto man in charge in Parsonville is Robert McCullough, the Parsonville Mine’s managing executive. Mr. McCullough has been handling negotiations with the newly-formed miner’s union on behalf of Associated Anthracite.

HANDOUT 2, CLIPPING FROM COLDWATER GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 11, 1926

Coldwater was witness to an incredible display of Sarah Rasko’s (nee Donaldson) miraculous ability to heal with a touch yesterday. Her son David, age 13, fell through the ice on Kingfisher Pond, and was submerged for several minutes before being fished out by his older brothers, Henry Jr. and Michael. David was reportedly not breathing and had no pulse when brought to shore, according to eyewitnesses. Fortunately for David, his mother Sarah, known throughout Coldwater for her gift of laying on hands for almost thirty years now, was nearby. Witnesses report that as Sarah prayed over David’s body, the sound of thunder was heard overhead, though no lightning was seen. As the last echoes of thunder died away, David sat up, spitting pond water, miraculously returned to life. So far the family has refused requests for an interview.

HANDOUT 1, CLIPPING FROM COLDWATER GAZETTE, JULY 3 1898:

The congregation of the Coldwater Baptist Church is pleased to welcome another congregant uniquely blessed by the Lord among their number. Sarah Donaldson, age 13, the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth (nee Haywood), stood up before the congregation last Sunday and, praising the Lord, laid hands on Mrs. Agnes Finley, age 78, curing her of the palsy in her hands. Mrs. Finley was able to play the piano for hymns afterwards, something she has not been able to do for several years now.

Sarah Donaldson is following in a family tradition of laying on hands; Coldwater residents will recall that Sarah’s mother Elizabeth is similarly gifted, having received her blessing at a similar age to her daughter. Sarah’s grandmother, Rebecca Haywood, who passed away last August, was also a faith healer. Those Coldwater residents with long memories may recall speculation a half-century ago that Rebecca Haywood’s gifts came from her descent from Sarah Goodwife, a reputed witch, a claim which Haywood vigorously denied. What cannot be denied, however, is the bright future Sarah Donaldson has ahead of her in the Coldwater community.

HANDOUT 3: EXCERPT, A HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT IN NEW ENGLAND

Of Sarah Goodwife of Pennsylvania, it is said she had knowledge of every plant in the forest and its use in medicine and midwifery. Reputed a kindly woman, beloved by all who had dealings with her, Sarah Goodwife’s great sorrow was that she did not have children of her own. Years of prayer passed, and no child came, and she grew bitter. It is claimed that she then turned her back on Jesus Christ, and made a pact with the Dweller in Darkness: in exchange for a child, she and her line would serve the Black One faithfully unto the tenth generation. She delivered a healthy baby girl nine months later. A decade later in 1803, her sin became known, and she was hanged by the very community that once adored her. What became of her daughter is unknown.