

The Unclean

Synopsis

This is a non-Mythos investigation into human trafficking mingled with a horror from Russian folklore. Chort, one of the legendary Kam, has entered this world to punish those it finds disrespectful of Russian culture. In its twisted rationale, it's going after the victims of human trafficking. After all, if they're weak enough to be caught, they aren't worthy of life. As more bodies turn up, a friendly local LEO tries to keep things hidden until the agents can arrive and try to get to the bottom of matters. It's safe to say that most agents won't get out. At least not the same way they went in.

The Hook

A-Cell is contacted by Dmitry Bulganov, a LEO investigating the Russian Mafia. He's found some bodies and is doing his best to keep local law enforcement out until the agents can take a look. The agents are given the address for a condemned apartment complex in a bad part of town and will meet Bulganov there.

Investigation

The Basement

The entry to the basement, a solid steel door, is at the bottom of a flight of stairs accessed from an alley. The room is dark, dank, and covered in roaches but has a slight woodsy scent lingering under the other odors. Moldy sheets and a few mattresses line one wall. The real horror is in the second room. Five women and three men are chained to the walls with manacles. Their bodies all in various stages of decay. Anya, a badly mangled woman, is still alive, but insane from her ordeal. (SAN 1/1D6) She lashes out, trying to break free and screaming "angel smerti," – angel of death. If calmed, she remembers the smell of burning birch, a cold hand touch her, cold air wash over her, and then a shadow leave the room and hearing a repetitive "thud."

Spread across both rooms are several clues. Bulganov can provide a few more. An anonymous tip from a young-sounding man lead him here. The bratva, led locally by Mikhail Zamyatin, make millions from human trafficking; these people were destined for prostitution or slave labor, the primary buyer is named "Nichto" – Zero. Despite the decay on the bodies, there are no obvious signs of other illnesses. There's a matchbook for "Radost" – Mirth. Several blankets in the first room look like they were dragged toward the second room.

Bulganov offers to get street camera footage if needed. Outside, there are no cameras pointed down the alley, but a traffic cam at the nearest intersection captured footage of bratva coming and going every day. One day, it captures a group of boys sneaking down the alley, one of them wearing a leg brace. A few minutes later, they come running out, one of them making a call. As they emerge, several burly men appear in the frame and try to chase them down.

The Kids

Showing a still of the traffic cam can lead to the kids. No one recognizes the kid with the brace. The call was made by Vanya. He said some new kid, a cripple named Yuri, offered to show them some dead bodies. The only thing was, they weren't dead yet! One of Vanya's hands is peeling like it was burned. The men and women were still moaning and screaming. He thinks the boy, who smelled like Christmas, lives in an apartment a few blocks over.

The Apartment

Yuri stayed in a nasty apartment on the fourth floor. Even from the hall, the smell of decay, besom, oak, and borscht is palpable. Inside are an elderly couple, Ljubomir and Yekaterina, trying to eat their borscht through rotting mouths (1/1D6 SAN). Neither are able to talk, but they can write and will pass gore covered notes in response to questions. They woke up one morning their grandson Yuri was at the foot of their bed. He reached out and touched them both, then limped away. He forced them to cook and care for him, including keeping the two-room apartment blisteringly hot, but they haven't seen him in a few days. He told them he came to town to punish the weak. They realize now that he's possessed by Chort, a Russian devil and spreader of disease.

Nichto

Nichto appears to be a woman in her early 30s, covered in tattoos. In reality, she's a manifestation of Baba Yaga and prostitution is just this generation's version of selling children to witches in the forest. She's always surrounded by several heavily armed women. She operates a brothel in the upper floors of a swank hotel, and always "makes time" for law enforcement. She doesn't know what happened to her latest shipment, but if they were damaged, Mikhail, her supplier will pay. He can be found at a club called Radost, but the agents shouldn't worry. She'll take care of it. If she does, Mikhail, his crew, and any clubbers are brutally murdered. If plied, Nichto can tell agents about Chort and his fondness for heat. However, she will collect on any promise an agent makes.

Radost

At night, the club is packed with a morass of bodies writhing and squirming to a decades old beat. During the day, the bratva run their criminal enterprises. Entrance at either time is tough for law enforcement. Dropping Nichto's or Mikhail's name might help. As would mentioning the basement. Bulganov is persona non-grata here, and will tell the agents as much.

The place is crawling with bratva muscle and guns. Mikhail, who is missing an ear, is well protected and arrogant. He won't easily show how pissed he is at losing his latest shipment. He thinks Nichto did something to them so she wouldn't have to pay.

One of the men's hand is wrapped. He shrugs it off. He grabbed one of the kids he saw running from the building and caught some skin condition from the lame freak.

Red Herring

Anthropologists and occultists might try delving the depths of Russian folklore as soon as the scenario begins. The most obvious folklore connection to Russian bathhouses is the bannik, benign if propitiated but lethal if angered bathhouse spirit. Another possibility are the zalozhnye pokoiniki, unclean undead. These are the corpses of murderers, suicides, and other unconsecrated deaths. They're similar to, but much more intelligent and mobile than Western zombies.

Chort

Researching Chort reveals that he's a demon who spreads a wasting disease through either touch or breath. His totally hostile to humanity. He can possess any form, but must have at least one physical infirmity. His form can't be perfect. In the tales he was always found near fires or lurking in bathhouses.

There's a foundry, a steel mill, a YMCA with a sauna, and a bathhouse all within a mile of the apartment.

The birch, besom, and oak woods are commonly used in traditional Russian banyas.

The Bathhouse

There's an old public bathhouse that Chort has moved into. As his new domain, he has complete control over it. He will use every element of it to his advantage, to spray steam to blind and burn, lure the unwitting into areas where he can attack them, and cause the water to swirl and eddy. The agents will need to use cold to take down the devil.

NPCs

Bratva

The bratva are vicious, cunning thugs. They want to stop whoever is killing their profits, but don't trust the cops, or anybody that smells like a cop. If they help the agents, it'll be with the intention of double-crossing them once the goods are safe.

Chort

Chort is a malicious spreader of disease. In his current guise, he appears as a youth with a metal leg brace. As a demon, he is susceptible to extreme colds. If he learns the agents are on to him, he will try to surreptitiously touch or breathe on them.

Dmitry Bulganov

Dima to his friends, Bulganov is about as clean as any cop investigating the Russian mob. Which is to say, not very. His happy wife and two children don't know about his two mistresses or extensive debts. Born in Russia, Bulganov despises the bratva for selling his older sister into sex slavery. Once he emigrated, he decided to take the fight to them and isn't above looking the other way whenever lines need to be crossed.

He first came to the attention of A-Cell when he stumbled across a Green Box and thought he found a terrorist cell. His investigation proved thorough enough that he was tagged as a friendly.

He is disgusted by what he found in the basement and will do anything to shut the bratva down. Unfortunately, Dima will fall prey to Chort during this scenario. If the agents part for the night, Dima will contact them in the morning. His flesh will rot away, revealing musculature and bones, even though his mind and body remain as active as ever.

STATS

Armed and Dangerous bratva and thugs

STR 15
CON 14
DEX 12
INT 11
POW 10
CHA 10
HP 14
SAN 50

Skills: Alertness 55%, Athletics 50%, Dodge 50%, Firearms 55%, Melee Weapons 65%, Unarmed Combat 50%

Weapons: 9mm, 55%, 1D10

Tire Iron 65%, 1D6

AK-47 55%, 1D10, KD: 10%. KR: 2m

Chort

STR 21
CON 19
DEX 12
INT 65
POW 85
CHA 90
HP 20

Attacks: Breath or Touch 70%, damage is a wasting disease that destroys 1D6 CON per day. Victim also loses 1D6 SAN as they watch their body waste away. It's up to the Handler to determine how contagious the disease is between victims. In a playtest game, the disease was highly communicable. The slightest touch transferred it from person to person.

Possession: To possess a new target, Chort opposes his POW against the victim's POW. Vulnerability: Chort's body takes damage from weapons, but if reduced to 0 HP, he finds another host. However, if he takes the damage from extreme cold, he must return to his home deep in the bowels of the Urals for 1D6 months.

Skills: Alertness 60%, Bureaucracy 99%, Disguise 50%, Dodge 60%, History 99%, Law 99%, Melee Weapons 70%, Occult 99%, Persuade 80%, Stealth 80%

Dmitri Bulganov

STR 15
CON 14
DEX 12
INT 16
POW 12
CHA 10

HP 14
SAN 60

Skills: Alertness 65%, Athletics 55%, Bureaucracy 55%, Criminology 60%, Dodge 50%, Drive Auto 55%, Firearms 65%, First Aid 50%, Forensics 30%, Law 55%, Melee Weapons 55%, Persuade 60%, Search 60%

Weapons: 9mm, 55%, 1D10

Nichto

STR 17
CON 25
DEX 17
INT 75
POW 80
CHA 18
HP 16

Skills: Alertness 70%, Craft (Baking) 99%, Disguise 50%, Dodge 60%, Firearms 60%, History 99%, Melee Weapons 70%, Occult 99%, Persuade 90%, Search 65%, Stealth 80%

Attacks: Nichto will use whatever weapons at hand.

Compulsion: Nichto can oppose her POW against a target's POW to compel the victim to do her bidding, even if it's self-destructive. If she's successful, the victim can only be broken from the compulsion by loss of hit points or SAN.