

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

We're Doomed and I Love It

My first encounter with Call of Cthulhu was at the very first games convention I attended. I had only ever played Dungeons & Dragons and variations thereof before, and had no idea that anything like Call of Cthulhu existed. I signed up and an hour later I find myself naked, running through the sewers of London with five other naked priests, pursued by an invisible monster.

Oh, and my hand had been turned to crystal by a magic mirror.

The other players and I knew something was going on. We had letters, diaries, clues, evidence that a cult was engaged in a nefarious plot, but we couldn't

put it together. Something connected the mirror, the invisible monsters, a 12th century monastery, legends of werewolves, a private club in London and our poor band of seminary students, but we were missing the key revelation that would draw it all together. We had all the clues, but we were running out of time and had to deduce the solution.

I'll never forget the excitement and intellectual exhilaration of knowing that if I didn't work out this puzzle, we were doomed to be eaten by horrible invisible monsters that were in some way connected to 12th century monks.

We failed dismally, as it happens, but it was still tremendous fun.

Ever since, this story has been my template for the ideal Call of Cthulhu

game — bizarre cosmic horror, genuine mystery and an atmosphere of confusion leading to a moment of terrible revelation as all the pieces fall into place.. The Mythos Detectives series is designed to evoke that mood, dropping the players into the middle of a mystery. The GUMSHOE system ensures that the players get all the clues, but putting them together is still a challenge for the players.

So, if you're stuck in the middle of a mystery, with a big pile of clues and a bigger pile of bodies, with strange omens multiplying and doom impending, remember — it's all down to you. Work it out before the monsters eat you.

Publisher: Simon Rogers
Written by: Gareth Hamraban
Art and Layout: Jérôme Huguenin

Extended Edition Editing & Layout: Beth Lewis
Proof-Reading: Sam Friedman
King's Men Handouts: Beth Lewis

Playtesters: Christopher Smith, Mark Loveland II, Patrick Loveland, Arianne Adair, Jay Mueller, Ronald Johnson, Elaine Johnson, John Santry, Carlos Needham, Sam Friedman, Daniel Bayn, Chris Malone, Harris Burkhalter, L.C., Yaochong Lou, Belinda Kelly, Philippa Borland, Dave Byrne, Malcolm Edwards, Bernadette Foster, Sandra Wilkinson, Tony Wilkinson, Kev Hickman, Iain-K Peake, Tony Sweeting, Dave 'Minty' Lodge, Nick Pickard, Mike Grace, Ralf Achenbach, Florian Merx, Wilfried Wurch, Peter Reimann, Guy Sodin, Vince Fisher, Allison Hadley, Chris McReynolds, Erik Wallenius, Aaron Jackson, Barry Dismorr, Krzysztof Kowalski

Polish translation (p 78): Piotr Burzykowski (LocWorks)

Trail of Cthulhu was written by Kenneth Hite, based on the GUMSHOE system by Robin D Laws

Trail of Cthulhu was created by arrangement with Chaosium, Inc.

© 2010 Pelgrane Press Ltd. 2nd Edition. All Rights Reserved. Published by arrangement with Chaosium, Inc.

Trail of Cthulhu is a trademark of Pelgrane Press Ltd.

www.pelgranepress.com

Publisher's Note to the Extended Edition

The editing and proofing for the first edition was rather poor, for which I take full responsibility. It also had no adventures set in Arkham. This version is completely corrected with an additional adventure set in that gloomy conurbation. I've learnt my lesson and in future, I will confine myself to mere publishing.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Contents



We're Doomed and I Love it	2	The Wisner House	21
Campaign Frame Mythos		Ma Wisner	21
Detectives	5	Ambrose Wisner	21
Setting	6	From Below	21
Style	6	More Like His Father	22
Mythos	6	Return to Red Hook	23
Investigators	6	The Hook	23
Reoccurring NPCs	6	The Horrible Truth	23
Rules Variations	6	The Spine	23
Pitch	6	Antagonist Reactions	24
The Kidnapping	7	Victory Conditions	24
The Hook	7	Shadows over Red Hook	24
The Horrible Truth	7	Scenes	25
The Spine	7	A Plea for Help	25
Antagonist Reactions	8	Initial Investigations	25
Victory Conditions	8	The Missing Mr. Hirt	25
Scenes	8	Records of the Red Hook Cult	26
The Kidnapping	8	Hirt's Apartment	27
The Missing Child	9	More Conversations	28
Background Checks	10	With Marlene	28
The Scene of the Crime	10	The Agent	29
The House	10	Marlene's Apartment	30
The Gardens & Outside	11	The Bookseller	31
Olga	12	Confronting Marlene	32
Olga's Fate	12	The Cult Strikes Back	33
Marta's Diary	12	Cat-Thing From Beyond	33
If Jacob Knows...	14	Return to Red Hook	33
Maria's Family	14	The Red Hook Cult	34
Awkward Questions	14	Madness By Moonlight	35
Jerry Grant	14	Blasphemous Rites	36
The Letter	14	The Thing In The	37
New York	15	Moonlight	37
Word On The Streets	15	Game Statistics	37
45th Street Station	16	Investigation	37
The Poster	16	The Nameless City	38
Drunk At His Post	16	Welcome to the City	38
On The Train	17	The Cats of the City	40
On The Streets	17	A Procession	40
Arresting Gang Members	17	The Bridge	40
The Horror on the Docks	17	The Bloody Trail	40
The Hideout	17	The Ceremony	41
The Fateful Telegram	17	Escape to New York	41
Raiding the Shack	18	The Book	42
Death in the Water	19	The Hook	42
The Trail to Shavertown	19	The Horrible Truth	42
The Town	19	The Spine	43
Investigations in Shavertown	20	Antagonist Reactions	44
Gary Olden, the Postman	20	Victory Conditions	44
Herman Long, the Spokesman	20	Scenes	44
The Church	20	The First Killing	44
Mad Zeke	20	What Happened Here	44

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

Geoffrey Hill's Apartment	44	Drawn Up, Hideously Chang'd	66	Locked-Room Murder	83
The Landlady	45	The Innsmouth Dreams	66	Room 317	84
Hill's Corpse	45	Dreams OfThe Book	66	Talby's Widow	85
The Flatmate	45	Dreams of the Deep	66	Speaking Ill OfThe Dead	86
The Second Killing	46	A City Going Mad	66	The Other Woman	86
The Tenement	46	Investigating the Artifact	67	The Funeral	86
Room 56	46	Investigating The Steamer	68	The Arkham Investigation	87
The Second Corpse	46	Atlas Industries	68	Talby's Movements in Arkham	87
Investigations in New York	47	Contacting Atlas Industries	68	Events in Arkham	88
Fordham University Library	47	The Innsmouth Connection	68	Arkham Historical Society	88
Professor Drew	47	Holding the Evidence	68	Miskatonic University	89
Martin Bellgrave's History	47	The Crew of the Star of		The Arkham Police	90
Lewis Holland	48	Mauritius	69	The Stolen Child	90
Francis Moon	48	Dockside Encounter	69	The Unvisited Isle	90
Francis Moon	48	Ships Passing In The Night	69	The Island	91
Introducing The Detective	49	Joe Palry	70	The Sleeper	91
Reading The Invisible Path	49	The Drowned	70	Irene Rosewall	91
Level 1: Hallucinations	50	The Break-In	71	Examining Irene	91
Level 2: Images of Martin		Return to the Scene of		Playing Irene	92
Bellgrave	50	the Murder	71	Threats from the Cult	92
Level 3 – Conversations	51	Robert's Boarding House	72	A Warning	94
The Horror at the Library	53	Agent Croft	73	A Break-In	94
The Annotated Book	53	Malcolm Croft	73	The Curse	94
Helena Tyler	53	Meet Agent Croft	73	Peine Forte et Dure	95
The Killer Strikes Again	53	Croft and The Artifact	74	Into the Dark Woods	95
Investigations in Providence	54	The Island	74	The Graveyard	95
Gollam & Sons	54	The Wilcox House	74	The Gravedigger	95
Lewis Holland	54	Ferry Anthony Wilcox, Esq.	75	Kingdom of the Ghouls	96
Haunted By The Past	55	'Dreams Older than		Poor, Doomed Souls	96
Next Steps	56	Tyre or Babylon'	76	The Rosewall House	96
The Bellgrave Ruins	56	The Artifact & Wilcox	76	Playing Harvey	96
Lights in the Sky	56	No More Sorcerers!	77	The Woods	97
Buster Locke	57	They Rise!	77	The Final Confrontation	98
The Society for American		The Artifact	77	Terrible Knowledge	98
Poetry	57	Fighting Back	77	The Cairn	99
Miskatonic University	58	Escape!	77	Aftermath	99
Confronting Francis Moon	58	Bargaining with the Deep Ones	79		
Holland's Death	58	Escaping the Island	79		
Banishing Bellgrave	59	Dreams of the Future	79		
The Wreck	61	The King's Men	80	Handouts	100
The Hook	61	The Hook	80		
The Horrible Truth	61	The Horrible Truth	80		
The Spine	61	The Spine	80		
Antagonist Reactions	61	Antagonist Reactions	80		
Victory Conditions	62	Victory Condition	80		
Scenes	62	Detective Thomas Talby	80		
Worse Things Happen at Sea	62	Optional Complication:			
Ten Green Bottles	62	Haunted by the Past	81		
A Cold, Cold Morning	63	Optional Complication:			
Exploring the Star of Mauritius	63	A Tainted Ancestry	81		
The Last Few Entries	65	Dreams in Arkham	81		
The Artifact	65	The Lonely Death of Thomas Talby	83		



Campaign Frame - Mythos Detectives

“POLICE METHODS ARE VARIED AND INGENIOUS. MALONE, THROUGH UNOSTENTATIOUS RAMBLES, CAREFULLY CASUAL CONVERSATIONS, WELL-TIMED OFFERS OF HIP-POCKET LIQUOR, AND JUDICIOUS DIALOGUES WITH FRIGHTENED PRISONERS, LEARNED MANY ISOLATED FACTS ABOUT THE MOVEMENT WHOSE ASPECT HAD BECOME SO MENACING.”

- THE HORROR AT RED HOOK

The various municipal police services in New York as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation have become aware that certain cases are... unusual. In this series of adventures, the players

take the roles of investigators who have proven to be adept at handling things that are out of the ordinary, they get called in whenever there's a hint of the occult. Each investigation begins with some terrible crime that stems from some ghastly corruption caused by the Mythos.

The characters have both the resources and the limitations of law enforcement on their side. They can flash a police badge or private investigator card and claim official business when consulting records, and they can hang in and ask difficult questions. They have colleagues

and other officers that they can draw on for help. Unlike the average amateur sleuth who must face the horrors alone and unaided, official investigators have support and authority on their side.

At the same time, they must answer for their actions. 'Abuse' of one's powers and responsibilities as a detective, even in the cause of protecting humanity from Things With Tentacles, will be investigated; questions will be asked, especially if the investigators are behaving oddly. The characters must carefully consider how much they reveal to their superiors; often, burying both



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

the evidence and the bodies is better than admitting Mythos involvement in a case.

Setting

Initially, New York, Providence and New England – all of ‘Lovecraft Country’. Later in the campaign, as the investigators become more trusted by the FBI, they might be sent anywhere in the continental United States. Most scenarios begin in the great metropolis – or seedy underworld – of New York.

It is the setting of a noir detective novel or movie, not the real world. The shadows are deeper, the colors more lush. Swarthy strangers lurk in alleyways, beautiful women hide terrible secrets, the rich are corrupt and the poor are desperate.

Style

The campaign has some pulp detective elements mixed in with a primarily Purist agenda, although is somewhat more hopeful and has more potential for the players to make a meaningful difference to the world. The threat of the Mythos is a subtle and terrible one, but human ingenuity and determination can turn back the tide. The primary emphasis is on the unraveling of the mystery and putting a stop to the Mythos activity, although each adventure does include some element of personal horror or juicy roleplaying for players to get their teeth into.

Mythos

The Mythos is unknown to most people, but poke around in the right musty bookstore or eerie church and you will uncover signs of the Cthulhu cult or another Mythos deity. Many strains of occultism conceal genuine magical secrets, and there are ghouls lurking in the subways. Our civilization exists on the fringes of older, greater inhuman civilizations like the Deep Ones or Mi-Go. The Mythos is hidden, but it is also all around us.

The primary manifestation of the Mythos encountered by the investigators is sorcery and summoned monsters – Mythos horror with a human motive to be investigated. Any contact with the inhuman elements of the Mythos, though, is overwhelming and incomprehensible. Human reason and detection fails when applied to things beyond our understanding.

Investigators

The investigators are mostly police detectives or federal agents, but the group could easily include a professor, antiquarian, doctor or other specialist as a consultant. The investigators should have a connection to New York, or to the occult, or both. They need to be competent and smart enough to be assigned important cases, but also flexible enough to cope with occult investigations.

Reoccurring NPCs

The head of the Bureau of Investigation is, of course, J. Edgar Hoover. For the purpose of this campaign, Hoover is the voice of authority who shouts at the investigators to keep them in line and stops them from going public about the existence of the Mythos. He can either be a paranoid, eccentric but generally helpful superior, a sinister manipulator of events for his own ends, or just a force of nature that sometimes helps and sometimes hinders the investigators. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is aware of several previous cases that involved the Mythos. In addition to the Horror at Red Hook, there was the successful raid on Innsmouth in ‘28, and Inspector Legrasse’s rounding up of the New Orleans cult earlier in the century.

Fictional FBI agent Joseph Fort is the investigator’s primary patron. A veteran of the Bureau, Fort is fervently religious and convinced that unholy forces are at work to undermine the United States. He watches for any reports of crimes or unusual events that might be the work

of ‘evil-doers’, and arranges for the investigators to be assigned these cases.

The New York Police Commissioner during this period is Lewis J Valentine, a cold and practical officer who has no time for stories about the occult, but approves of unorthodox measures - as long as they get results.

Several years ago, an NYPD detective named Thomas Malone led a task force composed of both city and Federal officers into the Red Hook district of the Bronx; many of these officers were killed or crippled when a tenement building collapsed on them. Malone had claimed the degenerate foreigners of that shadowed district were involved in bizarre occult rites and blasphemous ceremonies. As a result older officers who remember the Red Hook disaster will be instantly suspicious of any investigators who babble about occult weirdness and murderous monsters. Senior officials in the police department are aware that something is out there, but after the catastrophe are wary of any investigations related to such matters.

Any of the contacts from The Armitage Inquiry (see the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook, page 206) can also show up if the investigators visit Arkham.

Rules Variations

All investigators get one free point of Cop Talk and Evidence Collection. Everyone should have a Credit Rating of at least 3 or 4.

The *Drives Thirst for Knowledge* and *Revenge* should only be taken after consulting with the Keeper.

Pitch

Might range from ‘*NYPD Colour out of Space*’ to ‘*Like the X-Files, only it’s the 1930s and it’s flying polyps instead of flying saucers*’.

The Kidnapping

This scenario is aimed primarily at law enforcement officers, such as FBI agents, although any high-class professionals with a reputation as investigators can become involved. The game can be played in the Purist or Pulp style – the villains and theme are purist, but there’s plenty of Pulp elements that can be emphasized for a lighter game. The main plot revolves around the kidnapping of a child by a gang of petty criminals, but as the characters dig deeper, they find that there are two opposing occult powers at work. If the characters follow both trails of clues, then the scenario presents them with an unexpected moral quandary – what do you do with an innocent monster?

The Hook

An infant has been kidnapped from the Corneliszses, a wealthy New York family, and the investigators are called in to help track down the child.

The Horrible Truth

The Corneliszses are immortal sorcerers and worshippers of Yog-Sothoth and the kidnapped child – Adam Cornelisz – is not wholly human. He was born of a union between the Corneliszses servant, Maria, and a summoned god, like Wilbur Whately. They intend for the hybrid child to open up gateways between this world and other dimensions.

In the dark labyrinths far below the surface, where the world is gnawed by strange and terrible creatures, there dwell the folk of K’n-yan (see page 139 of *Trail of Cthulhu*). They were human, once, but millennia of living in the blue-litten vaults below has changed them. They know much of the Mythos,

and have no desire to see the Great Old Ones return. One sect, the Watchful, are dedicated to preventing the foolish surface people from meddling with cosmic forces or calling back those who should remain Outside. The Watchful learned of what the Corneliszses had accomplished and decided that the child must be dealt with, as a sacrifice to Tssathoggua.

Their first attempt failed when they sent a Formless Spawn to kidnap the child from the Corneliszses. But the mansion’s magical defenses destroyed the spawn before it got close to the child.

Enter Ambrose Wisner. In certain places, such as the timber town of Shavertown, the surface world comes very close to the underworld. Ambrose Wisner’s family once traded with those below, and owe favors to the Watchful. Since then, the timber industry in Shavertown has closed down, and many of the young people have drifted away to the big cities, looking for work. Ambrose was one of these, falling in with the Barrett gang, a group of bank robbers and thugs. When the Watchful contacted the surface world, Ambrose was the obvious choice for a pawn.

More than happy to return to his ancient masters, Ambrose proposed kidnapping the Cornelisz child to Barrett. It seemed like a perfect target – an isolated house and an intensely private and wealthy family. Barrett agreed, and had one of his men, Tommy Galiano, case the house. He managed to gain the confidence of the Corneliszses housekeeper Olga, who agreed to help the gang for her own reasons.

After kidnapping the Adam, Ambrose took him back to his home town of Shavertown, ostensibly to keep it safe while the rest of the gang collect the ransom. As far as Barrett knows, Ambrose will return the child to the family once the money is handed over. In fact, Ambrose is waiting for the K’n-yan Watchful to climb out of the earth and take the child. The Barretts will be killed to hide Ambrose’s involvement in the kidnapping.

The Spine

Like some loathsome abomination raised up from its essential salts by a bungling necromancer, this Trail of Cthulhu scenario has two spines. The first trail of clues leads from a kidnapping to organized crime, ending in tragedy and a bloody shootout. The second trail delves into the Cthulhu Mythos and rival sorcerers.

To find the kidnapped child, the characters need to:

- Discover the housekeeper, Olga, was involved in the kidnapping
- Follow the ransom money to the Barrett gang
- Confront the Barrett gang, either in a shootout or by identifying the criminals and arresting them one by one
- Survive the monstrous horror sent by the Watchful to kill the gangsters
- Track the last gang member, Ambrose Wisner, to Shavertown