

**A DBA
Production**

**Visual
Effects
provided by
Chaosium**

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**Starring
Your Hapless
Players**

**Directed by
You**

DISCLAIMER

Crude Oil is an adventure to be used in the *Call of Cthulhu* RPG. It contains material that may not be suitable for readers. (That means there's some gross and disillusioning stuff in here, people.) Those who think that good always overcomes evil and that heroes always succeed may be disappointed after playing *Crude Oil*. You have been warned.

CALL STAY

Crude

Introduction

"Crude Oil" is an introductory adventure for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game. The actual scenario is fairly short, and should be able to be played within a single evening. This is also part one of a two-part adventure. The second part picks up in the 1990s, nearly seventy years after the first part wraps up. Your players will be taking the roles of Agency Detectives and FBI agents in both eras, investigating the strange goings on in the small town of New Jerusalem. Their success or failure in the first part of the scenario will have a significant effect on the second part.

Background

The year is 1928. It's February and everything is covered in a fresh coat of snow. Thick flakes are still falling from the black winter sky. The small town of New Jerusalem (located just forty miles south of Boston) is about to encounter the horror of the Cthulhu Mythos. The town popped up around oil baron Sean O'Bannon. The Irishman was a petty gangster until he stumbled across his small oil field five years ago. Now he's a millionaire with a dead wife and a wild-eyed red-haired daughter. His oil field has three pumps and forty employees. What he doesn't know about is that his drilling operation has tapped into a lost temple of Tsathoggua where hundreds of Formless Spawn are sleeping. The drilling has disturbed their rest. The foreman, Scott Ridley, happened across one particularly intelligent Spawn two weeks ago. The Spawn flowed its viscous form into Ridley's body and took over his mind. The Ridley-Spawn then began making preparations to release the rest of its brothers from captivity. When Ridley disappeared, O'Bannon became concerned, but quickly replaced Ridley with another worker, Arthur Whipple. That was a two weeks ago. Three days ago, Arthur Whipple stumbled across Ridley on the site. Ridley and Whipple were competing for the affections of Kathy O'Bannon (Sean's lovely and rather randy daughter). Whipple had a bit too much to drink and the Ridley-Spawn didn't want its activities discovered. The Ridley-Spawn killed Whipple and dumped his body into the river. Three days later, the body was discovered down stream in Vermont. Since the body floated across state lines, the FBI was called in on the case. This is where our intrepid investigators come in....

Crude Oil

Oil

Adventure Structure

Crude Oil is divided into Days. Each Day contains four parts: **Events** (which tells you the things that will happen each day, regardless of the Investigator's actions), **Goals** (the things your Investigators should have done by the end of each Day), **Consequences** (what happens if they do or don't get things done), and **Details** (which fills you in on little details you can include to make you look thorough to your players).

Adventure Overview

On the **First Day**, the Investigators will arrive, have breakfast with O'Bannon and look at Whipple's body. That night, the Ridley-Spawn will perform its first sacrifice at the well, the first step in freeing the other Spawn.

On the **Second Day**, the Investigators will find evidence of the sacrifice and will get contacted by a very flustered Kathy O'Bannon. She will let them in on a few secrets just before she wanders off to the beach to get killed by the Ridley-Spawn. The Investigators will want to wait for the Spawn to show up at Well #3, but they will get detoured by the angry Irishman when his daughter's body gets discovered.

The **Third Day** will give the Investigators Kathy O'Bannon's diary, along with the secret rendezvous point she used to share with her two lovers. The Investigators will check out the lair of the Ridley-Spawn, and discover more than they wanted to know. Finally, at midnight, they will be forced to confront the Spawn on its own terms. Their success or failure will set up the circumstances for the Second Part of the adventure next month.

Day One

Events

- 5:00 AM: FBI Investigators arrive by train. Investigators from Burns agency have already been there for a couple of hours.

FBI Agents' Briefing

The FBI agents in "Crude Oil" are dispatched from the Boston bureau. They are brought into the case because Arthur Whipple's body, which was dumped in the Durant River, floated all the way into Vermont before it was found. The fact that the corpse crossed state lines, and the gruesome nature of the murder aroused the FBI's interest.

Consequently, Special Agent Harcourt, the PC's supervisor in Boston, sends them via train to New Jerusalem. Before they depart, Harcourt will give them the following briefing:

"Yesterday the mangled corpse of Arthur Whipple, an oil field worker from New Jerusalem was found in the Durant river, over the border in Vermont. As the body crossed state lines, our charter permits us to involve ourselves in the investigation - and we have also been contacted with a request for assistance from the sheriff in New Jerusalem. He will have more details for you upon your arrival, but keep in mind that all may not be as it seems. The owner of the oil field the victim worked in, Sean O'Bannon, has connections to East Coast organized crime. We've never been able to pin anything directly on him but his ties to the Finnerty family is well-documented. He is not a suspect at this point, but I felt you needed to be aware of his history. Keep your eye on him, but don't turn this into a fishing expedition; the sheriff already has a suspect in mind, a co-worker of the late Mr. Whipple. I don't have all the details, but it sounds like a promising lead. Are there any questions?"

[Continued next page]

FBI Agents' Briefing (Continued)

If not, Ms. Graves has your tickets — I believe your train leaves at midnight."

If the PCs ask the right questions, Harcourt will volunteer the following information.

- The victim seemed to have been killed by severe physical trauma to the upper body, but the nature of the murder weapon is currently unknown.

- O'Bannon has been clean for the last few years, as far as the Bureau knows. It may be that his new-found wealth from the oil business and the work of running his small field has reformed him.

- New Jerusalem has one of a handful of profitable oil fields on this part of the East Coast.

- O'Bannon's wife died a couple of years ago; his daughter lives with him.

To inquiries that fall outside of these grounds, Harcourt will either claim ignorance ("That's why I'm sending you, Special Agent!") or tell the PCs to speak with New Jerusalem's sheriff, who has the whole story. If the investigators ask some questions that are way off base ("How long has the Finnerty family been active in Boston?"), Harcourt will tell them straight out he thinks they're barking up the wrong tree.

- 8:00 AM: Breakfast and debriefing with O'Bannon.

- 10:00 AM: Investigators will view the body of Whipple at the local doctor's home.

- 11:00 PM: The Ridley-Spawn kidnaps a child. It is lucky enough to find the child's window open and makes off with the child without incident.

- 12:00 AM: The Ridley-Spawn sacrifices the child at Well #3.

Goals

The Investigators are expected to be brought up to speed on the events of the last couple of weeks and formulate a plan of attack for the next couple of days. O'Bannon will help them in any way he can, but the information he has is limited.

Consequences

The only real event of any consequence is the kidnapping of the child. The locals will find the withered body in the morning. The Ridley-Spawn will sacrifice the child, and will have transferred Power into the runes carved into the wellhead, thus bringing it closer to freeing its brethren.

Details For Day One

The agents are equipped with Colt 1911 .45ACP pistols, cameras, flashlights, and the usual assortment of handcuffs, notepads, and the like. They do not have radios. If they ask they will be allowed to take up to two 12 ga. shotguns, so long

as they are discreet about it; Harcourt doesn't want the Bureau to look like a pack of cowboys. Agent Reid Parker also has a small forensics evidence kit.

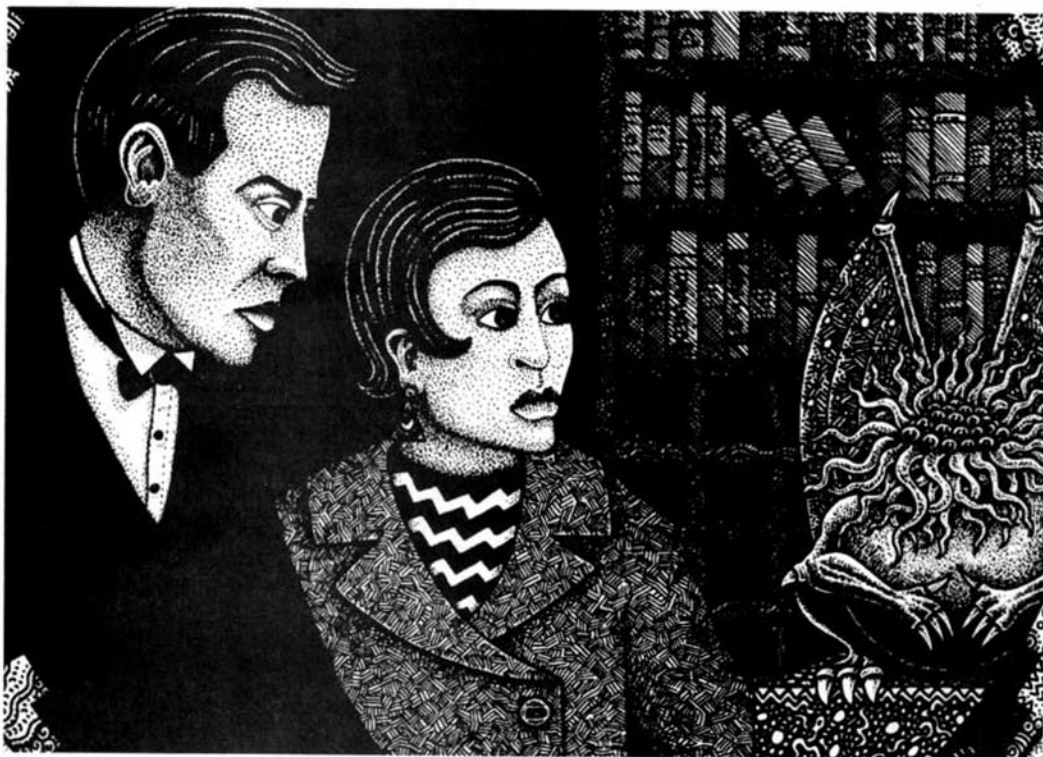
The agent's train leaves promptly at midnight, but mechanical trouble delays their arrival in New Jerusalem until approximately 5 A.M.

The Arrival

Give each of your players an "Investigator Run-Down" located at the end of this article. This will let them in on everything they need to know about their character. When they arrive in New Jerusalem, they all check into the local hotel (run by Joseph P. Cottonmaker, an old gray fellow who has a bad limp in his right leg that he got when he fell off the swings when he was seven) and are met by a big thug who tells them he's here to take them to O'Bannon. They drive up to the house in a black Packard Twin Six (the seven seater limo) and take a twenty minute drive through the snow-covered countryside to the house high on the hill overlooking the town.

When they arrive, they are offered brandy and escorted through the spacious and extravagant halls to the library. They will be quick to notice that the library is all but devoid of books. Empty shelves circle the room, but it is the only room in the mansion that sports a fireplace, and the Investigators can relish the warmth.

About twenty minutes after their arrival, the Investigators are greeted by the very Irish



O'Bannon. His red hair has not gone gray yet, and his steel blue eyes have no hint of fog. He is smaller than average, has a sloped jaw and a full set of teeth. His handshake is warm, and perceptive Investigators will notice a peculiar grip when he shakes their hand (a Federal agent shot off his little finger during a fire fight in Chicago two years ago). Sean O'Bannon is very tired and very cranky and more than a little drunk. Read or paraphrase the speech located in a sidebar nearby. This is all the pertinent information O'Bannon is willing to give them. When he's done, he'll send them on their way down to see what's left of poor little Whipple ...

The Autopsy

The local doctor, who has no pathological training, is ill-equipped to perform a detailed autopsy. Fortunately, Special Agent Parker is trained in the discipline, and the doctor will be more than happy to show him the body. Whipple's corpse is currently being stored in the doctor's shed, packed in snow to keep it fresh. It was returned to the town for burial (and police examination) only the day before. Agent Parker does not have all of the tools to conduct by-the-book autopsy, but he'll still be able to gather valuable information with nothing more than gloves, his kit, and lamp light.

Upon scraping away the snow, all the investigators except Agent Parker (and the doctor) need to make Sanity rolls. If they make the roll, they only lose 1 SAN. If they miss the roll, make them lose 1d3. Even the stoic Agent Parker is momentarily taken aback by the spectacle. Whipple has been torn almost in half; a huge ragged wound runs from his right upper torso down to approximately the location of his left kidney. From the wound jagged shards of his ribs protrude, and soft coils of intestine bulge and glisten in the lamp light. The body, which had been in the Durant River for several days, has taken on a repulsive gray-green tone, and facial features are gruesomely distorted by bloating.

Examination of Whipple's body will yield the following facts to Agent Parker upon successful Forensics rolls, or upon asking the right questions. The GM shouldn't hide information unless a roll is badly failed, or unless the player is going off on a tangent. Remember, Special Agent Reid Parker is a doctor, and a specialist in the field of forensic pathology. Reveal these facts in the order they are presented below.

- The murder weapon was not a blade. The wound is too jagged, and the bones show no

telltale nicks.

- Regular scrapes on the victim's back, and the back of the legs, would seem to indicate the body was dragged some distance after death.

- There is a large quantity of an oily black substance in the wound cavity. Traces are still visible in the hair, filming the eyes, and under the victim's nails.

- Bruising on the body indicates that the victim was tightly held, or perhaps crushed under an object, near the time of death. This bruising pattern is distinct from the small wounds caused by the body hitting debris in the river.

- The victim's throat was crushed. There is a curious bruise pattern extending all the way around the neck which is not attributable to hands, rope, or any other commonplace method of manual strangulation.

- The esophagus and stomach are curiously distended and ripped. The stomach has a tremendous tear in it. No stomach contents are recoverable.



- Judging by the manner in which the ribs are splintered and the internal organs are displaced, it seems that the body cavity was ruptured from the inside.

The PCs will not have time to have any lab work, like toxicology, done on the body. They may also be unable to identify the black liquid at first, but if any oil field worker (including O'Bannon) is shown a sample, they'll be able to identify it as crude oil.

Alert PCs will take photographs of the late Arthur Whipple. After the examination is complete the body can be prepared for burial.

Other Events

The rest of the day can be spent asking questions about Whipple. The only people who really knew him were his co-workers, and they will all say the same thing. Whipple was a quiet guy who kept to himself. He liked to read pulp magazines (he was especially fond of Robert E. Howard) and used to talk about going to college one day. They will also tell the Investigators that he and the old yard boss, Ridley, were competing for the affections of O'Bannon's lovely daughter Katherine. If the Investigators want to talk to Katherine, they'll discover that she's out of town for the day and will be returning late tonight. Everyone knows she's off in Boston spending her

O'Bannon's Speech

"I didn't call you," he says to the Federal Agents. "But I know why yer here. That's fine. If you get the job done, I'll be happy. Here's what I'm gonna tell ya, and ya'd betta listen up the first time 'cos I ain't gonna tell ya again. Two weeks ago, my foreman, that's Scotty Ridley, he disappeared without a moment's notice. That's bad. I liked Scotty. Then, just three days ago, the man who took his place, Arty Whipple's his name, he goes missing, too. That's bad. Now I ain't got nobody who knows how to work them pumps out there and everything shuts down for three days. Now just last night, Whipple gets found and he's floating down the river. All I know is that Whipple and Scotty were rivals for the job when I hired them. They ne'er got along well, those two. Now one of them turns up missin', I don't think nuttin' of it, 'cos Arty couldn't hurt a fly and Scotty could whip the temper out of a bull if you gave 'im the chance. But now both 'ave turned up missing 'r dead and I don't have one clue why. You can talk to anyone on the yard, talk to anyone in town, I don't care. Just find Scotty and find out if he's still alive. Then find the guy who did this to me and rub him out. Make sure he never does it again."

If anyone dares to ask O'Bannon why he doesn't have some of his Chicago connections investigate, he'll get real angry and go to his desk. Then, he'll think twice about pulling the gun in his desk drawer and say between gritted teeth, "Why don't you just go out and do your job?"

Katherine's Diary Entry

Daddy's all wrong about Scotty and Arthur. I can't believe that he'd think that Scotty was sent from Boston, I just can't believe it. He was so gentle, so kind. Maybe I'll go down to the cave today and watch the waves roll in and listen to the sound of them crashing on the shore and think of Scotty. Poor Arthur.

Flashlights in 1927

The Investigators' options here are: flares, kerosene lanterns, gas lanterns, electric torches and carbide lamps. Flares will set off a blaze in the cave, so they may be a very bad idea. Kerosene lanterns explode when dropped, so they may also be risky. Gas lanterns are a bit more safe, but carbide lamps (because of the open flame) are right out. The best option would be electric torches. Their light is very weak and thrown in a beam. Batteries will keep them alive for 2-4 hours, long enough for the Investigators to wander around the dark tunnel. If it's dropped, give it a 75% chance of breaking the filament. It will take about 5-10 minutes to replace the filament, plenty of time for the Ridley-Spawn to sneak up on someone in that dark cave.

allowance on whiskey and roulette, but only a significant bribe can get anyone to say so.

The Investigators are free to drive up to Boston (it's only forty miles away), but they will only be wasting their time. Kathy O'Bannon does not want to be bothered, and even G-Men are going to have a problem getting into the places that she's hanging out in. If you feel like a little change of pace, however, feel free to have your Investigators shlep themselves up to Boston to hang out in ritzy gin joints rubbing shoulders with gangsters to ask Ms. O'Bannon some questions. It'll keep them out of town for a day and allow the Ridley-Spawn to claim its first victim.

Little Billy Bowyer

Billy is four years old. He lives at #3 Peyton Place. Earlier in the day, his mother threw a stray cat who had made its way into the apartment out the window of Billy's room. She's deathly allergic to cats, and in her anxiety, she forgot to latch the lock on the window. At approximately 11 PM, the Ridley-Spawn will open the unlocked window, snatch up little four year old Billy Bowyer and carry him out to the well where the little boy will have his POW sucked out of him in a dark ritual designed to release the Spawn's sleeping brothers. The mother will not notice that he's missing until 8 AM the next morning. By then, it will have been far too late.

Day Two

Events

- **6:00 AM:** The Investigators are summoned to Well #3 by the foreman. The workers have found carvings on the wellhead along with a large quantity of blood. Along with the runes and the blood, workers will also find the withered body of the child.

- **10:00 AM:** The Investigators receive a phone call from Kathy O'Bannon at their hotel. If they aren't there, they get a message when they return. She wants to meet them to tell them of her trysts with Ridley and Whipple.

- **12:00 Noon:** They meet with Kathy O'Bannon in a private place (an abandoned water well on Oak Street). She tells them all about Ridley and Whipple and their violent competition for her affections.

- **3:00 PM:** Kathy O'Bannon departs for the seashore. She wanders by the old cave where her father first found oil seepage and is killed by the Ridley-Spawn. The Spawn throws her body out into the ocean.

- **11:00 PM:** Kathy O'Bannon's body is found by two kids making out on the beach.

- **11:55 PM:** O'Bannon's thugs drag the Investigators away from whatever they are doing into a meeting with O'Bannon. He's furious about the death of his daughter and demands results.

- **12:00 PM:** The Ridley-Spawn performs the second rite and sacrifices another victim to empower the runes at Well #3.

- **After Midnight:** The Investigators learn that



Crude Oil

O'Bannon is leaving town and they gain another clue.

Goals

The runes, blood and remains of the child should clue the Investigators that it would be a good idea to stake out the well.

Talking with Kathy O'Bannon will give them a suspect with a motive (Ridley).

Investigators will want to question the townsfolk about Ridley. People to question: Co-workers, Ridley's Mom, his landlady and O'Bannon.

Consequences

If Investigators go to the well that night, O'Bannon's thugs will "pick them up" for a heated discussion with the Irishman about the death of his daughter. If the Investigators decide to leave someone behind, he'll have a lethal encounter with the Ridley-Spawn.

Details for Day Two

The Little Old Man

When the Investigators get called down to the site where Billy's body has been found, they will encounter what can best be described as a "little old man." Billy's tiny four-year-old body has been shriveled. His skin is tight on his bones, almost translucent. Bones poke at the thin layer of skin and the thick black ichor that was once his blood pumps slowly through his veins with a sickening slowness. That's right: Billy is still alive. He's clinging on to life with his single point of POW. Finding Billy in this state will cause the Investigators to lose 1/d4 SAN. If the Investigators try and move him to the local doctor, they will find that his extremities are as brittle as sandstone. Trying to lift Billy will only complicate matters, as his fingers and toes will disintegrate in the party's hands. This sight will cost the Investigators an additional 0/1 SAN. Finally, ask the Investigators who are carrying Billy make DEX checks. If one of them fails even once, Billy's corrupted body breaks in half and his organs and thick black blood spill all over the ground and the Investigators. This will cause a 1/1d6 SAN loss. Even if the Investigators get Billy to a vehicle, he will die before they can get a chance to get him to medical attention.

The other very important clue at the site are the runes that are carved around Well #3. They are indecipherable and the well workers cannot explain how they got there. However, there is blood smeared into the carvings (found with a successful Spot Hidden check).

O'Bannon's Daughter

The Investigators get a message from Katherine O'Bannon. The way she gets the message to them varies on where they are at around 10 AM. She could send out one of her daddy's thugs to meet them, she could leave a message at their hotel, or just find them herself. Either way, she needs to talk to them about... things.

Katherine is small with dark red hair and a trim figure that she accentuates with her dresses. She has her hair cut short (quite scandalous in such a small town) and wears soft make-up to highlight her bright green eyes. She meets the Investigators for lunch (or dinner, if that's more convenient) and tells them quite frankly about her affairs with Whipple and Ridley. She smokes clove cigarettes



during lunch and makes shrouded flirtations at each of the Investigators as she tells her story.

When she started her affair with Ridley, she did so just to anger her father. They used to meet at the cave that made her father rich: a little cavern by the ocean that is thick with oil seepage. Her father used it as a hide-out when the Feds got a bit too close. When he realized what the oil in the cave meant, he got some investors and made a killing. He moved his wife and daughter to New Jerusalem to get away from the action that was going on in Boston. He kept all his contacts, left on good terms and retired a rich man.

Katherine, however, did not approve of the

Power & Sanity in Call of Cthulhu

In CoC, a character's magic ability is represented by the Power stat. Power (usually abbreviated POW) is also a measure of a person's intangible "life force" and can be sucked away by some creatures or magic spells.

The Sanity (SAN) stat represents a character's mental resilience. Unfortunately for investigators, the eldritch horrors they face will often be so weird, so monstrous, that they will inflict terrible damage on the human psyche — hence the need for SAN rolls from time to time. Horrible mundane events, such as viewing a mangled corpse, can still have an impact on one's Sanity too.

If a character loses 5 or more points of SAN from one roll, they will go temporarily insane if they succeed in rolling under 5x their Intelligence on 1d100. (This is called an idea roll.) The duration and effects of temporary insanity are varied. The character may flee in panic, become catatonic, or lash out against friend and foe alike. Indefinite insanity results when a character loses 20% or more of the Sanity in one game hour. It lasts 1d6 game months. Characters who lose all their Sanity are driven barking mad, permanently. Consult page 46 of the CoC rules for more details, but let's hope for your players' sake you won't need them...



The Formless Spawn

STR 25
CON 13
SIZ 25
INT 24
DEX 19
POW 12/18/22 (First night/
Second night/Third night)

Damage Bonus 2d6
Hit Points 19

Weapons: Whip: 90%,
damage 1d6; Tentacle:
60%, damage DB;
Bludgeon: 20% damage DB;
Bite: 30% damage see
below.

When in this form, the Spawn may perform a special Bite Attack. The victim is instantly swallowed. Each round thereafter, the victim takes an additional point of damage from constriction (second round he loses two, third round he loses three, etc.). While swallowed, the victim may make no action whatsoever. The Spawn can continue to swallow prey, making one Swallow attack per turn, until it has swallowed 25 points worth of SIZ in Investigators. While Swallowing, a Spawn may not move from its current location. It may continue to fight, however. If it does move, it dislodges any swallowed Investigators.

move. She loved the lifestyle of a gangster's daughter, and when her mother died of cancer a year ago, she snapped. She drives up to Boston every night and gambles away her allowance and drinks until she can't stand and spends the night with men who don't even remember her name in the morning. She started flirting with Ridley just to watch her father's fury, but even that was not enough, so she started up another affair with Ridley's assistant and best friend, Arthur Whipple. The two friends suddenly turned into bitter competitors. The morning before Ridley disappeared, there was a fist fight between Ridley and Whipple that ended

up with the other oil workers pulling the men apart.

Katherine tells the Investigators all of this (the workers on the yard won't; they want to protect Ridley because of their strong devotion for the man) and tell them that she's convinced that Ridley did away with Whipple. She doesn't know how he did it; "He was always such a gentle man."

Whatever time the Investigators meet Katherine, she will leave them feeling nostalgic and will wander down to the cave at the beach. Unfortunately, that's also where the Ridley-Spawn is hanging out. She will see Ridley hiding in the cave, approach her old lover and try to embrace him. The Ridley-Spawn will proceed to tear her into pieces and throw her into the ocean. Her body will be found washed up on the shore by two kids from Boston University making out on the beach at approximately 11 PM. Their screams alert a deputy who's watching them with binoculars. He'll come down to the beach, recognize the bloated face and notify the sheriff and O'Bannon immediately.

Staking Out Well #3

If the Investigators start putting one and one together, they'll figure out that they'd better stake out the well tonight. If they don't, no big deal. They'll just have another body on their hands in the morning and fresh blood on the runes. But if they do decide to stake out the well, they're going to be in for a rude surprise.

At about 11:45, that black limousine pulls up to the yard and O'Bannon's three thugs step out and walk right up to the Investigators. The boss wants to see them *right now*. If they resist, they get blackjacked. Notify them that killing the thugs would be a bad idea. Such an act would bring bad press to the Bureau and would also endanger the investigation. Going along with the thugs is the best idea. Of course, if the Investigators want to split up and leave someone behind, they are more than welcome to do so.

The Ritual

At midnight, the Ridley-Spawn arrives with its new victim and begins the ritual once again. Any

Investigator watching the ritual will lose 1/d4 SAN as the dark sorcery rips holes in time and space. Also, anyone watching the ritual must make a POW vs. POW test or get sucked into the energies of the ritual. The ritual has a beginning POW of 10. Every turn, this POW gains one point. Every turn they remain near the site of the ritual, the Investigators must make a new POW vs. POW test. If they fail the test, they begin losing 1d6 Magic Points per turn. When they run out of Magic Points, they start losing a point of POW every turn. Remember, an Investigator with zero POW suffers the same fate as poor little Billy. The only way to stop the POW drain is to stop the ritual. The only way to do that is to face the Spawn.

Facing the Spawn

This is a bad idea.

The Investigators are not prepared to face the Spawn and will get themselves slaughtered if they try. Bullets will harm Ridley's body, but not the Spawn. Black ooze will spill out and perform a Whipping Strike at the Investigators, striking with a 60% accuracy for 1d6 damage. It can attack d3 Investigators within reach with this attack (reach of the Spawn is approximately 15' in this form). The Ridley-Spawn can also use an Enveloping attack with a 30% accuracy. The Envelope attack involves a part of the Spawn exploding from Ridley's body and squeezing an Investigator to death. It can only attack a single Investigator a turn this way, and it may still use its Whipping Attack on other Investigators while it uses its Enveloping Attack. Once the strike is successful, the Enveloped Investigator will take 1 damage per turn. Witnessing the Spawn use each attack for the first time will cause an Investigator 1/d4 SAN.

You can handle an encounter with the Spawn one of two ways. You can make it gentle, or you can make it hurt. If the Investigators don't get the clue that they are outclassed, even after they've shot the thing up, make it hurt. You don't have to kill them, but you can sure hurt them so bad they wish they left the damn thing alone.

O'Bannon's Flight

The Investigators who don't stay behind are going to get to face a wrathful and drunk Sean O'Bannon. He's seen his daughter and he's convinced that his old connections back in Boston are trying to bring him back. Under all of his bravado, Sean O'Bannon is scared. Halfway through his drunken tirade, one of his aides informs him that his car is ready and the Investigators watch as he leaves the house with a whole lot of luggage. He tells them they can consider themselves off the case. He gives each of them a large envelope stuffed with cash (\$1,000 apiece) and he wishes them good luck. They will never see Sean O'Bannon again.

A Spot Hidden roll by any Investigator will see

an open book by the chair that O'Bannon was sitting in. It's Katherine O'Bannon's diary. The book is open to her final entry that reveals where she went before her demise. You can find the entry in the sidebar.

The Investigators should be able to figure out that Katherine went down to the cave before she was killed. Her body was found on the seashore, and if they inquire about the cave, they'll discover that her body was found not a mile from the location. That should be enough to convince the Investigators to go and take a look at the cave.

Day Three

Events

- **Sometime during the day:** The Investigators explore the cave where the Ridley-Spawn is hiding out. The black goo will move in "unnatural" ways (because of their paranoia and the unsteady light from their flashlights). They see heavy footprints and a human form in the distance. They chase the form. It runs away. They follow the footprints to a large pool of "oil" and the footprints walk right up to the edge and disappear.

- **Midnight:** The Investigators hide out at Well #3. They encounter the Ridley-Spawn (for better or worse).

Goals

The Investigator's primary goal is stopping the Ridley-Spawn from performing another ritual.

Consequences

If the Investigators do not visit the cave, they may not get the clue about the flammability of the Ridley-Spawn.

If the Spawn is successful, it will release the magical barrier that traps its brethren, and the town will be annihilated by a swarm of the Formless Spawn of Tsothoggua, which will spring from the well in an unholy gusher.

If the Investigators manage to stop the Spawn, its fellows will remain trapped in their cyclopean tomb.

Details For Day Three

At the Cave

Unless they are complete dunderheads (and that's what the Idea Roll is for, folks!), the Investigators will go down and check out the cave. It's a creepy place with long, shifting shadows and black water. The echoes from the

dripping are amplified a thousand times and everything seems to be moving all at once. You have an ample opportunity to really scare the pants off your players here. Keep them second-guessing about every shadow, every pool of black water, especially if they happened to see the Ridley-Spawn last night.

The Spawn is indeed here. It's hiding far back in the shadows. With the use of electric torches, the Investigators will proceed through the tunnel. Spot Hidden checks reveal footprints and distant footsteps running deeper into the cavern. The Investigators are free to try and chase the Ridley-Spawn, but if they get close, it will quickly leap into a nearby pool of crude oil and water and disappear.

The Confrontation

At midnight, the Investigators will once again stake out Well #3. If the Investigators stuck around last night, the Spawn will be ready for them. If not, they might catch the thing unprepared.



The Ridley-Spawn will perform the ritual once again, and anyone watching it will feel the tug on their POW as before.

Your Investigators will no doubt come up with ingenious ways to stop the Spawn. Since

O'Bannon has abandoned everything, they may even feel the need to use explosives. Let them

come up with whatever clever and destructive methods they wish to use to destroy the Spawn. The thing to remember is that it is hindered by its mortal body. Ridley's body should be quite near the point of disintegration at this point. If the Investigators cause 15 or more points of damage to the body, the Spawn will cast the body aside and reveal its true form (a gruesome sight that will cost the Investigators 1/d10 SAN). Here's a summary of ways that your Investigators may try to use against the Spawn:

- Normal mortal weapons will not harm the Spawn at all. Firearms, knives, axes, swords and the like will simply slice through its liquid body, allowing the Spawn to get close enough for a nasty attack.

- Explosives will cause the Spawn half normal damage. A stick of dynamite does 5d6 damage

Like Those Player Handouts Kiddies?

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- Pages from Katherine's Diary
- The FBI Run-Down
- Character Sheets and background for the five Investigators designed especially for this adventure
- NPC Stats and Role-Playing suggestions
- Illustrations and photographs, including a very very gruesome picture of Whipple's body at the autopsy. Those who have a weak stomach may want to pass on this one.
- And more!

It's a complete companion piece to *Crude Oil*. It's meant for **MATURE READERS**, so please, if you're under 18, get your parents' permission first.

And whatever you do,
don't ever call
1-900-CTHULHU.

There are some things man was just not meant to know.

Blowing Up Well #3

Enthusiastic Investigators may get the brilliant idea to drop dynamite down the well to keep more of "whatever the hell that thing was" from coming back up.

Let them.

First off, they'll need to get one of the roughnecks (oil workers) to pull up the drillbit. A few thousand feet of drillbit can't be pulled up easily by a few Feds and flatfoots. Once they've got the help and know-how, they can get all that steel up out of the ground and begin dropping sticks of dynamite down the shaft.

Remember, we've got crude oil down there. Explosions of this kind are likely to rip up the earth they're walking on, not to mention cracking the seals that are keeping the Spawn asleep. The waking Spawn will flow up the tube and (since they've been asleep for so long and are so very hungry) will start eating anything in sight.

That'll teach 'em to leave well enough alone.

normally, so roll for the damage and divide by half, rounding down.

- Fire will also do half damage to the Spawn. Small flames will do 1d3 per turn. Large bonfires will do 1d6 per turn.

And in case your Investigators get really inventive...

- Flareguns and cutting torches will do 1d3. Hand-held, home-made torches will do a single point. Molotov cocktails will do a d6 per round to the Spawn. Every turn, have one of the Investigators make a Luck Roll. If they miss it, the Spawn gets the flame out. The Spawn must roll for each flame every turn.

Do not allow your Investigators to use their Damage Bonus against the Spawn for any reason.

Oh, and just in case you were wondering, there are no flamethrowers in 1927.

If the Investigators Succeed...

Congratulations are in order. If the Investigators stop the Spawn from finishing the ritual, the other Spawn will remain locked away in their subterranean tomb. Stopping the Spawn will get the Investigators a d10 SAN reward.


If the Investigators Fail...

The Spawn will release its brethren and they will spill out from Well #3 with violent fury. Seeing this sight will cost the Investigators a d10 SAN loss, not to mention a sudden need to flee the area, lest they become overwhelmed by hundreds of Formless Spawn.

The entire town will be destroyed by the arcane explosion of Spawn. No man, woman or child will live through the chaos. Investigators that do (and that alone may make a very interesting adventure) will lose an additional 2d4 for the realization that their failure caused the death of hundreds of people.

Conclusion

The report the FBI agents bring back to the Bureau will be marked "CONFIDENTIAL" and will be locked away. The official report of what happened in New Jerusalem will be gang activity and sabotage. The Investigators know better, however, and their diaries and journals will keep the truth alive for another seventy years when a new batch of agents must return to New Jerusalem to solve a new mystery.

But that, of course, is another story. 

James Lawson Agency Detective

25 years old

STR	13
CON	9
SIZ	14
DEX	13
APP	12
SAN	85
INT	18
POW	17
EDU	19
Idea	90
Luck	85
Know	95

Hit Points	12
Magic Points	17
Damage Bonus	+d4

Bargain (05), Fast Talk (05), Fist/Punch (25), Grapple (25), Handgun (20), Hide (10), Law (05), Library Use (25), Persuade (15), Psychology (05), Sneak (10) Track (25) Credit Rating (75)

Notes: 380 Points on listed Skills; 180 on any Skills. You come from a wealthy family and may "acquire" things with a successful CREDIT RATING. You may not raise your Credit Rating Skill with Points.

Dalton Harris Agency Apprentice

20 years old

STR	18
CON	17
SIZ	18
DEX	13
APP	10
SAN	65
INT	11
POW	13
EDU	10
Idea	55
Luck	65
Know	50

Hit Points	18
Magic Points	13
Damage Bonus	+d6

Bargain (05), Club (20), Conceal (20), Fist/Punch (25), Grapple (25), Handgun (20), Head Butt (20), Kick (25), Knife (25), Persuade (15), Psychology (10), Shotgun (20)

Notes: 200 Points to spend on listed Skills; 55 Points on any Skills. You do not suffer SAN losses for seeing corpses or violence. You may also purchase any "criminal" skills with a base of 20%.

**Benjamin Halsey
Federal Agent**

22 years old

STR 17
CON 17
SIZ 16
DEX 15
APP 15
SAN 50
INT 13
POW 10
EDU 16
Idea 65
Luck 50
Know 80

Hit Points 17
Magic Points 10
Damage Bonus +d6

Bargain (05), Drive Auto (20), Fast Talk (10)
Firearms (20) Fist/Punch (25) Forensics (00)
Grapple (20) Hide(10) Law (05) Persuade (15)
Sneak (10) Spot Hidden (25) Track (25)
Occult (75)

Notes: 320 Pts to spend on listed skills; 130 on any Skills; you may use your Occult Roll Score (75) instead of SAN at any time. You may not raise your Occult Roll with Points.

**Reid Parker
Forensics Specialist**

32 years old

STR 10
CON 14
SIZ 13
DEX 15
APP 13
SAN 75
INT 17
POW 15
EDU 20
Idea 85
Luck 75
Know 99

Hit Points 12
Magic Points 15
Damage Bonus +0

Chemistry (00) Forensics (00) Law (10)
Medicine (05) Pharmacy (00) Photography
(10) Spot Hidden (25) Dodge (30)

Notes: 400 Points on listed Skills; 170 on any Skills; you do not lose SAN for seeing corpses or other gory scenes.

**Wade Derby
U.S. Marshal**

Age 52

STR 11
CON 12
SIZ 17
DEX 12
APP 10
SAN 90
INT 14
POW 18
EDU 18
Idea 70
Luck 90
Know 90

Hit Points 14
Magic Points 18

Damage Bonus None

Bargain (05)
Drive (20)
Fast Talk (05)
Handgun (25)
Law (05)
Listen (25)
Persuade (15)
Psychology (10)
Spot Hidden (10)
Track (25)
Dodge (24)

Notes: 360 Points to spend on listed Skills; 140 on any Skills. You always lose the minimum SAN unless told otherwise.

The Characters

The five characters on these two pages are the characters designed for *Crude Oil*. Adjust them to your taste. Two come from the FBI, two come from the Harris Detective Agency, and the third is the U.S. Marshal investigating the murder.

Crude Oil

Part Two

An Introductory *Call of Cthulhu* One-Night Adventure

Crude Oil is an introductory adventure for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game. While it has been designed to be easy to run for beginning players and Keepers, it can be easily modified to give more experienced Investigators a run for their money. The scenario is fairly short and can be run in a single session, or dragged out over several sessions if the Keeper so desires. This is Part Two of "Crude Oil." Part One can be located in the last issue of *SHADIS*, but you don't need a copy of it to run Part Two. A brief summary of past events is included to bring you up to speed. Your players will be taking the parts of FBI and CDC agents investigating a rather bizarre mystery. They'll be digging up files from 1927, informing them (somewhat) of the events of the past which may guide them (or mislead them) along the path to an encounter with the horror of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Background

Seventy years ago, Federal agents and detectives from the Burns Detective Agency investigated a murder in New Jerusalem, MA. They discovered an extraterrestrial creature possessing as an oil field worker, trying to free hundreds of its brethren from a magical tomb deep under the earth. Depending on the outcome of the first part of *Crude Oil*, the small town of New Jerusalem either survived or was destroyed by a thousand Formless Spawn. The man who built the oil field, Sean O'Bannon, left town after his daughter was killed by the Formless Spawn (she was torn to shreds), and now his mansion stands empty and abandoned.

Local rumors say that the ghost of Kathy O'Bannon wanders the hallways, looking for her father. Seventy years have passed since the Formless Spawn tried to unlock that subterranean tomb, and now, a mortal man is going to try it so

he may bring back the Formless Spawn's namesake: the Great Old One Tsathoggua.

Adventure Structure

While the first part of *Crude Oil* took place over several days, the events in the second part will take place in just a few hours. While the emphasis is not on investigation, there will be a great deal of deduction involved. There will also be much more action than in Part One, as Investigators will be facing many angry Formless Spawn while they try and save a pack of frat-house flunkies from a fate worse than death. Because of the free-floating nature of the scenario, a Timeline has been provided to allow you to keep track of events going on outside of the Investigators' viewpoints. What the Investigators do after certain events take place will generally not effect the Timeline.

Adventure Overview

Characters for *Crude Oil* can come from several sources. Most players will probably want to create their own, but if not, then the templates provided in Appendix 3 should suffice. Regardless of how they are made, however, the characters in Part Two should be similar in balance to those in Part One, and there should be at least two FBI agents in the group.

The investigators will be assigned to check out a possible new plague breaking out in New England. They will do the majority of their research over the course of a single day before flying to New Jerusalem to check things out.

The Investigators will arrive in New Jerusalem the next day and will either find a small village scraping up a living out of the railroad or a ghost town, devoid of any signs of life (which version they find depends on the outcome of the last episode). They'll be able to question the

How To Use *Crude Oil*

Crude Oil has been designed to be used by beginning Keepers and Players for Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game. However, it can also be used with just about any other modern horror game, and Keepers can easily adjust the scenario to give more experienced players a run for their money. The first part of this scenario took place in 1927, and the events can be found in the Background section.

**A DBA
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**Screenplay
Matt Staroscik &
John Wick**

**Editing
D. J. Trindle &
Rob Vaux**

**Starring
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- The FBI rundown on a pretty letterhead.
- Character sheets, stats, and background material for the five Investigators designed especially for this adventure.
- NPC Stats and role-playing suggestions.
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inhabitants or search out the remains, but in either case, they'll turn up next to nothing.

However, that night, a bunch of rowdy frat boys turn up for their yearly initiation rites. They've got a bunch of freshmen with them, whom they plan to scare in New Jerusalem's "haunted house." They'll enter and start their ghost story, but when they try to leave, they'll find all the doors locked with brand new padlocks. Then they'll discover that they're going to have all their Power sucked out in a grand ritual to summon Tsathoggua to New Jerusalem. One of them will escape and run screaming through the streets, awakening the Investigators and drawing them to the house where the ritual is taking place. From there on, the story is up to them.

The Briefing

(The introduction below assumes that the players will be running the pre-generated characters in Appendix 3. It should be adjusted to fit the particulars of your party.) On a rainy March morning, the two FBI PCs (who work at the Boston bureau) are summoned to the office of Special Agent Martin Trask. Trask has run the Boston office for eleven years, and is well-liked — and highly respected — by the agents who serve under him.

As the storm hammers away at the huge window behind Trask's desk, he gestures for the PCs to seat themselves at a small conference table. Once they are settled (and have helped themselves to coffee and donuts, which are piled in the middle of the table), Trask will address them.

"I have just been informed that we may have an unusual situation developing in New Jerusalem. For those of you not familiar with it, it's a miserable little burg about 40 miles south of here. I understand there was a profitable oil field there in the '20s, but nowadays it's practically a ghost town.

"Over the last several days, the residents have found four corpses in and around the town. While this might be unremarkable here in Boston, it's damn unnerving in a town with only seventy-some people to begin with. Furthermore, the state the bodies were found in is... curious. It was so odd, in fact, that the local doctor, Allan Miller, placed a call to the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta — he suspects there might be an outbreak of anthrax.

"So, Atlanta called me to let me know they are sending a man down. You're to pick him up from the airport, and then all of you will drive to New

Jerusalem. When you get there, get in touch with Dr. Miller so the CDC's agent can take a look at the bodies. While he's doing that, you will be coordinating your efforts with the Boston PD; they're sending a unit down there, too. The PD sure as hell isn't assuming these people died of anthrax, and I'm not either. Let's help them out.

"Oh, make sure you check out a Suburban from the motorpool. In this kind of weather, you're going to need it. The road between Boston and New Jerusalem is a mess, I'm told."

Of course, anthrax isn't the problem; it's the two Formless Spawn that Edmund Tillinghast released from the wreck of Well #3. The Spawn instinctively sought host bodies upon their release, but they are unpracticed in the maintenance of them, so they wrecked them in short order. Special Agent Trask knows none of this, and he's also totally unaware of what really transpired in New Jerusalem in the 1920s. He is telling his agents the truth as he knows it.

If the PCs ask the right questions, Special Agent Trask will tell them the following additional pieces of information:

• Sean O'Bannon used to run the oil-field in New Jerusalem. He was a small-time gangster until he got rich off his legitimate oil business. For some reason, he abruptly left New Jerusalem in February, 1927. He is believed to have moved back to Dublin.

• If asked about previous unusual events in New Jerusalem, Trask will provide the report of Special Agents Reid and Halsey, below. Note that this report has been tampered with; it glosses over the unsettling truths of the original investigation.

Special Agents Halsey and Reid's Report

Actual criminal investigation reports are long and full of dull legalese. There's no need to make your characters slog through a realistic one, but here are some of the highlights of the report Halsey and Reid filed in 1927.

"...the murder of Arthur Whipple at first appeared to be the result of competition for the affections of Kathryn O'Bannon with Scott Ridley, another oil-field worker. However, events took a turn for the worse with the murder of 5-year-old Billy Bowyer, whose body was discovered the morning of February 12, one day after we arrived. The body was found under the derrick of Well #3. There at first appeared to be no connection between the events, but at





approximately midnight on February 13th, we encountered Scott Ridley while staking out Well #3. Upon revealing ourselves and our identity as Federal agents, Ridley attacked us. In an exchange of gunfire, Ridley was accidentally immolated when a waste oil drum he was taking cover behind ignited, presumably due to the muzzle flash of his weapon. The connection between Ridley and the child could not be established, but it seems likely he was the perpetrator in the child's murder, though his motive remains unknown."

Those of you who have played Part One will notice right away that some things don't ring true here. Ridley didn't have a pistol, but rather was possessed by the Spawn. There's no mention of the runes on the wellhead, and the only photographs in the report are of Whipple's and Ridley's corpses. Furthermore, there is no documentation on Ridley's alleged firearm. In brief, most of the report is bogus, glossing over all the otherworldly details of the events that transpired in February 1927. Any agent reading the report will immediately notice these omissions but will be unable to fill them in. If they question their superiors, they receive nothing but frustration. Trask and anyone else in the Bureau they can get a hold of will be truly ignorant of the matter — the cover-up was long before their time. If the PCs continue to stir things up, they might attract some unwanted attention, at the Keeper's discretion.

Despite the fact that the report has been faked, it still has all the information that the first agents

were given in their briefing, as well as the Arthur Whipple autopsy results (see *SHADIS* #26: page 39 sidebar and page 43 proper). Perhaps the person who was responsible for "sanitizing" the original report wasn't familiar enough with the case to delete all the suspicious information. This might lead the PCs to believe, correctly, that the original investigators were not part of the conspiracy.

If an aspiring agent gets lab work done on the report itself, they'll find that the paper and ink used were not commercially available in the 1920's — a fake report apparently was used to replace the original one at a later date. The location of the original report is now a complete mystery, and asking too many questions about it won't be good for any PC's career. The only way they can get to the truth is to track down a surviving relative of one of the original PCs, who might be persuaded to part with a diary or other record of "grandpa's weird case." We'll leave the details up to the Keeper. Just remember that the PCs don't have to know the truth about 1927 to play Part 2, but if you want to turn *Crude Oil* into an *X Files*-style campaign this is one way to do it.

Lost in Time

New Jerusalem is not, by any means, a modern town. There are no cellular phone antennas; all calls have to go over land lines. Likewise, the characters will be unable to rely on pagers, if they have them. There is no cable TV; if you want HBO you need a satellite dish. And of course, the

whole town uses septic tanks instead of sewers. There is running water and electricity, at least.

The Fate of New Jerusalem

Depending on the success or failure of Part One, New Jerusalem with either be a slum or a ghost town. Here are two brief run-downs for the alternate New 'salem's your Investigators will encounter.

The Quiet Town

New Jerusalem has suffered since 1927. After O'Bannon left and the original Investigators stopped the plot of the Formless Spawn, the small town turned to the railway to survive. There's a small switchyard for the local rail service and all the trappings that surround such a place. A modest café/rest area stands next to it, where the railworkers can stay the night and get a hot breakfast in the morning before they take another job back to Boston.

Further down the street, there's a gas station and a small truck stop, with a large parking lot and a restaurant where truckers can stop and sleep, and get a meal if they need to. Across the street from the train station, there's a tiny grocery store run by an elderly couple, who manage to keep their place clean and tidy (in contrast to the rest of the town). Andy Cottonmaker's hotel (see "The Lost Town," below) is on the edge of town, on the road back to Boston. Down by the lake, a small fishing company manages to stay in business selling nearly all their catch to the cafés and the street markets in Boston. The workers there tend to keep to themselves, and ignore the transient population of the railway station and truck stop.

A substantial piece of New Jerusalem's economy has no set location. There's a whole lot of women who are eager to keep truckers and railworkers company for the night; they can be found around loitering around most of the businesses in town (although the elderly couple keeps them away from the grocery store). And high on a hill, casting its shadow over the entire town, is the ruins of the O'Bannon mansion. Of course, the place is haunted by the ghost of the

Irishman's daughter, Kathy.

The total population of New Jerusalem (including the families of those who work in the switchyard, the cannery, the grocery store, the two cafés, and the gas station) count up to only seventy-three people.

The Ghost Town

New Jerusalem has been deserted since 1932. The buildings are in disrepair and the great old mansion of Sean O'Bannon sits high above the ruins of the town. The only residents are squatters who stay for a while and jump the trains as they pass by the empty switchyard. Andy's hotel is the only legitimate business in the entire area. Stories of Kathy's ghost tell of a sickly white figure dressed in dripping wet clothes and empty eyes, calling sweetly and sadly for her father as she bleeds from every pore in her body along the empty corridors of O'Bannon's mansion.

Our Villain

The man responsible for the mess the Investigators are about to get themselves in is Edmond T. Tillingast, known to his friends as "Nightraven." He's twenty-six years old with dyed black hair and pale skin, and he looks about as fragile as an oak leaf in November. His hair has been cut short in the back and left long in the front (so he can hide behind it). He has no life, works at a goth clothing store in the mall and lives in a house his folks rent out. He's been attending Boston Community College for five years now and still hasn't achieved any kind of degree.

A couple of months ago, an anthropology professor was rather careless with an ancient document and Nightraven procured it. (The history of the book is provided in a nearby sidebar.)

Nightraven is a selfish, spoiled little brat who is only interested in furthering his own temporal power. He's a student of the new school of occultism (he's got a set of Native American Tarot cards, lots of rocks that keep his karma right and even an Ouija board somewhere in his closet) which means that he doesn't know



Crude Oil, Part Two

what he's doing. He's read the text and his early tampering has released a pair of Formless Spawn from their crypt (they promptly possessed a pair of transients and have begun murdering people, which is why the characters are here). He figures that if he can sacrifice some lives to the God Beyond the Gate, he can get some real mystical power. He knows the local frat boys meet once a year in the "spook house" in New Jerusalem to scare the pants off their pledges, and he figures that sacrificing jocks is "active Darwinism" and "thinning the herd." Unfortunately, the formula he's using is corrupt and incomplete, and when he uses it, the offense will be felt to the very bowels of the Earth, and the slothful Tsothoggua is actually going to get rather miffed...

Timeline

Here's how the events for the evening are going to unfold:

6:00 P.M. The Investigators arrive in New Jerusalem.

11:00 P.M. The frat boys arrive in New Jerusalem.

11:45 P.M. Nightraven sneaks about the house, putting brand new locks on the doors.

12:00 A.M. Nightraven begins the ritual in the basement.

1:00 A.M. One of the frat boys escapes the house and gets to the general store.

1:45 A.M. The Investigators are awakened by the owner of the general store.

app. 2:00 A.M. The Investigators arrive at the old O'Bannon house.

from app. 2:15 A.M. The Investigators have to find a way to close the gate Nightraven has opened, and the only way to do that is by completing the incomplete ritual that Nightraven has begun.

The Lost Town (6 p.m.)

At around 6 p.m., the Investigators will arrive in New Jerusalem. Use the descriptions provided above to give the Investigators an idea of what the town has become. Despite the fate of the town, there is a general store/gas station/wayside hotel near the road to Boston, run by Andrew J. Cottonmaker (a friendly fellow in his fifties who smiles with a bright smile and has a crimp in his back from working on the railroad). The place used to be owned by his grandfather, Joseph P. Cottonmaker and his father, Phillip A. Cottonmaker, before everything turned to dust. While the Investigators check in (it's a nice little place that Andy keeps very clean, because it's the only real hotel in the area and he takes pride in

his birthright), he'll give them the following speech:

"Town turned to dust about seventy years ago, or so I'm told. All happened twenty years before I was born. My father, that's Joseph, he watched grandpa go nuts when he saw what he saw. Grandpa said the whole night came alive that night. It was like the darkness come to life and moved. A bunch of flatfoots were there, hired by O'Bannon. They were there 'cos two of O'Bannon's boys was fighting over his daughter, a fine lookin' girl from what daddy told me, and one of them went a bit too far. His rival disappeared, and everyone figured he had done the poor guy in. The flatfoots was there to find out who did it — as if nobody knew.

"Anyhow, those boys found something they wasn't supposed to, and there must have been hell to pay. Grandpa — he was at the yard that night and saw the whole thing — he told me that something from the well did it. I don't know

what that means, but I do know that grandpa wasn't very well after that. He always slept with the light on, so there weren't any shadows anywhere in the room, and he kept a piece of this weird slab with him under his bed. Don't know where he got it, but he never slept without it. The night he died was the night that my mom took the slab out from under his bed and grandpa couldn't

find it and his heart kicked out on him that night. Bad time. Real bad time. That piece of rock's the only thing I got left of his — 'sides this store, that is.

"But anyway, you know that the house up there (Andy points up to the old O'Bannon place) it's haunted. O'Bannon's daughter — that pretty thing — she's up there walking around, looking for her father. She wanders the empty hallways, finding anyone who comes into the house and gives them a kiss. It's the kiss of death, they say. Makes your blood boil, and then you die screaming as your eyes and lips turn black as the night. Happened to Fred Tomilson twenty years ago, I tell you. My cousin, he saw it. And that's the truth."

After this little pontification, canny investigators may want to examine the stone slab Andy mentioned (see sidebar). It is an unremarkable piece of rock, like the headstone of a grave. It has been broken and a significant portion is missing, but the beginnings of a line of runes can be seen along one side. These runes have bearing on the conclusion of the adventure (see below) and players would do well to remember it.

The Clayburth Document

-1d3/1d6;
+3 Cthulhu
Mythos; x4
Spells; 2 days; one
Spell: Summon the Gate to
Heaven (see below)



The book Nightraven has is perhaps one of the most dangerous Mythos texts in existence — not because of its accuracy and insight into the Mythos, but because everything in it is wrong. It was written by Johannes Clayburth in 1889. Clayburth was the leader of a Mormon pilgrimage to California. His caravan stopped in the region that is now New Mexico and discovered a stone slab with peculiar markings. Clayburth remembered the tales of Joseph Smith and his finding of tablets with "strange carvings" and began his attempt to translate the carvings. The stone slab belonging to Andy's grandfather is one such tablet (actually a piece of one of the coffins the Formless Spawn are often found in) and the carvings about the stone tell how to open a Gate to the realm of Tsothoggua.

Unfortunately, Clayburth's translation of the symbols on the tablets is corrupt and incomplete, and when the ritual Clayburth suggests is attempted, it will cause an offending energy surge in the Slothful One's lair, thus bringing great irritation to Tsothoggua and his Formless Spawn.

They can wander through the town and question the locals (if there are any left) but they won't come across any real evidence of foul play. Dr. Miller will not be available until the next morning and the four corpses they were sent to investigate will have to wait until then. However, the O'Bannon house will cast shadows across the entire town, and of course, that's where the Investigators will want to look ...

The O'Bannon House

It's all locked up. Padlocks are on the doors and all the windows are boarded up. The only opening into the house is through the storm cellar, which is isolated from the rest of the house. The walls of the cellar are filled with old shelving covered with spider webs and dusty jars of rotten preservatives. An old dog carcass is rotting in the northwest corner, covered in mold, spiderwebs and flies.

The Investigators are undoubtedly going to want to take a look at the house. Go ahead and let them. They'll have to break through the padlocks, but they should have no problem doing that. The inside of the house is deserted. They'll find old dust tarps thrown over the furniture and long, drooping cobwebs filling the halls. A map is provided for the layout of the house. Nightraven is hiding in the secret basement (where O'Bannon kept all his hooch). He'll hear the Investigators moving about upstairs and stay put. He'll watch them through the secret viewpoints (another installation of O'Bannon's) and realize that they are not the frat boys he's waiting for. The Investigators can search all they want, but right around 11 p.m., the frat boys are going to show up for their initiation whether they like it or not.

The Initiation (11 P.m.)

Seven brothers of BCC's Delta Tau fraternity arrive with three bound and gagged pledges. The pledges are freshmen who have no clue as to what's going to happen to them. Funny thing is, neither do the frat boys.

The new locks on the doors belong to the frat boys. They'll unlock the front door, bring the lock inside with them and lock themselves in with the pledges. Then, they'll put the pledges in the library (where the Investigators from the first part met with O'Bannon) and take their blindfolds off. Five of them will start telling the pledges about the ghost story that the Investigators heard from Andy while the other two run to the secret passages that O'Bannon used to use to run whiskey out of his house (see the map below). From those secret passages, the two brothers will

pound on the walls and make moaning sounds to scare the pledges. It's all pretty traditional stuff. Until midnight, that is.

Preparations (11:45 P.m.)

At 11:45, Nightraven will sneak out of the secret basement to where it opens up on the beach just below the house. He'll climb the stairs up to the house (which are obscured by false rock and a steep angle), put a new lock on the front door and creep back down the stairs to the secret basement. Then, he'll begin the ritual that will open the Gate to Tsothuggua.

The Ritual Begins (Midnight)

At midnight, Nightraven will begin the Gate spell. He's reading the spell from the Clayburth Document, which is incorrect. The symbols are in the improper order and corrupt. He thinks he's

casting a Summoning Spell, when in fact, he is casting a Gate Spell. This will open a doorway between the house and the deepest stygian pits, allowing Tsothoggua to come through and investigate (if he can get his big slothful butt off his throne, that is), but he'll more than likely send some Formless Spawn to do it for him.



The Formless Spawn

The ritual will suck Power from the pledges and the fratboys, draining them of one point of Power per fifteen minutes. The moment the ritual is begun, they'll feel the Power drain. This will go on for forty-five minutes, and then everything will go wrong. That's when Nightraven messes up the ritual. Suddenly, every living soul in the house will be drained of 1d10 Power (that's just in case some Investigators are hiding out somewhere; if they complain, tell them the story about a cat and his curiosity). A single frat boy (who's in the secret passage) will lose only a single Power point; he'll see what's happening to his buddies (they'll be shriveling up into prunes about this time; see sidebar for details), and smash through a weak spot in the wall, running to Andy's hotel for help.

Dilemma at Andy's Place (app.

12:30 A.M.)

At approximately 12:30 A.M., Andy will be awakened by the sound of pounding and screaming — the frat boy (Kip Winsler) trying to raise some help for his friends. Investigators staying there have a chance of getting awakened

Losing Power in Crude Oil

In CoC, a character's magic ability is represented by the Power stat. Power (usually abbreviated POW) is also a measure of a person's intangible "life force" and can be sucked away by certain creatures or magic spells. In this case, the opening of a Gate will cause a sudden drain of POW from everyone in the house. The human body cannot stand to lose so much POW all at once, and will begin to shrivel as it does. Eventually, the body becomes a mummified shell of what it once was. It will become grainy, like sandstone and the blood will become a thick ichor; it will seem as if the body's moisture has been sucked away. Despite this gruesome atrophy, a human will not die from it until they lose their last point of POW (or if they lose all their Hit Points from damage — a body can be very fragile when it's been drained of POW.) A grisly sight, indeed.

by the sound (a Spot Hidden roll with a 20% penalty may be appropriate). Kip will tell Andy about their prank and claim that the ghost is sucking everyone's soul. He swears that he's seen the ghost (he hasn't, but unfortunately, Kip is a little insane at this point) and further maintains that it's wandering through the halls, kissing the frat boys and drinking their souls. His wild-eyed testimony will drive Andy to go up and wake the Investigators (if they're not up already). If any late risers want to hear Kip's testimony, they'll be out of luck. By the time they get downstairs, Kip will be out like a light.

To Face the Ghost (Sometime after Kip's testimony)

The Investigators now have to go into the house and face "the ghost." Andy gets out his old shotgun (his grandfather's 1912 12 gauge Winchester pump action [4D6@10 yards, 2D6@20 yards, 1D8@50 yards]) and demands that he go with. Of course, the Investigators will decline, but he'll insist, starting out the door ahead of them. One way or another, Andy is going to show up at the House: Destiny (the plot) demands it.

When the Investigators show up at the house, it's all alight with eldritch fire. The ritual has successfully sucked out all the Power from the frat boys and is now starting to work on Nightraven. The Investigators will enter the shuddering building and discover that the thunder and screams are coming from below the house. As they move through the hallways, they'll eventually enter into the study, where they'll find the crimson light leaking up through the floorboards. A few shots with a shotgun will blast a hole big enough for them to peer through.

Nightraven is standing in a magic circle. The symbols around the circle are unfamiliar to anyone without Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. His skin is pallid and wrinkled, and his eyes are ablaze with an unearthly red flame. His face is turned up toward the Investigators, and he's screaming like a banshee. His cheeks are shallow, his teeth are gone and his tongue is black and bloated. He screams "Help me! Oh God, please help me!" just as his spine snaps and his last ounce of Power is sucked from him. His body will be torn in half and a black ichor will ooze from both sides of the ragged wound. This sight will cost the Investigators 1/1d6 SAN.

The Gate has been opened, however, and now comes the real trouble. If the Investigators are able to make it down to the secret basement (the 15 foot drop will cause 1d3 damage to anyone who fails a Climb or Jump roll; make a Luck Roll to see if anything's sprained), they'll discover the Gate. Viewing the Gate will cause another 0/d3 SAN loss. Looking into the Gate will bring attention to one's self, causing the release of a Formless Spawn within 10 Turns (roll a d10). Roll each time an Investigator looks into the Gate for the first time.

Tsathoggua isn't too pleased about this intrusion and he wants the Gate closed. If that means coming across the Gate himself, he will do so. But, more on that later ...

Closing the Gate

With the incoming Formless Spawn, the Investigators are going to have to shut down this Gate pretty quick. The only way to do that is by chanting the incantation in reverse and chanting it correctly. Unfortunately, the symbols in the magic circle are incorrect, and in the wrong order. Clayburth was rather creative with his interpretation of the magic runes (see sidebar above). The Clayburth Manuscript is lying on the floor of the secret library, just inches from the circle. It's been smeared with Nightraven ichor, but still legible. The page Nightraven was reading from has been marked and a reading is provided in a nearby sidebar. If the Investigators should read the text, they should make the connection to the slab Clayburth is referring to and the slab that Andy was talking about earlier. If they don't, have one of them make an Idea Roll, or have Andy make the connection (bad Investigators, no cookie).

The Investigators will have to get out of the secret basement (a successful Spot Hidden at a 20% penalty will spot the secret passage out to the beach. If they are actively looking for it, give them an even break). The slab back at Andy's place is also incomplete (the first seven symbols only), but it will have the beginning of the correct sequence. The Investigators are just going to have to put the rest together from there.

The Ritual will involve putting the runes in the circle in the correct order (they're incorrect the way Nightraven drew them) and chant the words written in the text (those are right). Once this is done, the Gate will close and Tsathoggua will be happy. Everyone in the area loses 1d6 Magic Points each time the Ritual is performed incorrectly. Any character that reaches 0 Magic Points will lose 1 POW each time the Ritual is muddled. A character that reaches 0 Magic Points is unconscious. A character who reaches 0 POW is dead. It takes ten minutes to perform the Ritual correctly. Remember, the Investigators are also going to have to deal with angry Formless Spawn. Details on the Spawn can be found in Appendix One.

At the conclusion of a successful Ritual incantation, a total of 10 POW must be sacrificed in order for the Ritual to be completed. This 10 POW can come from any character(s), including Andy. The Ritual implies this sacrifice. When it's completed, all in the area will suddenly become aware that they must sacrifice a small bit of their souls in order to compensate for the insult against Tsathoggua. If the Investigators decline, Andy will give up the ghost to close the Gate.

Each time they fail to close the Gate, roll d100.

The Runes

Both Clayburth and Nightraven have got it all wrong. In order to perform the spell correctly (and, in order to shut down the Gate), the runes must be positioned in a Magic Circle in the proper order. Here are the runes as Nightraven has them:

SATBOTYAT

And here is the correct rune usage, found on Cottonmaker's stone slab:

TSATBOTIYA

The players can discover this by way of Andy's old tablet, or by careful examination of Clayburth's book.

After the first failure, there is a 10% that Tsathoggua shows up personally to deal with the Investigators. All future attempts add 10% to the roll (2nd attempt = 20%, 3rd attempt = 30%, and so on). We've provided stats for the Great Old One just in case he decides to show up. He will not be accompanied by any Formless Spawn. He will quickly sit on the Investigators and give them miserable deaths. Those that are driven insane by the experience are brought back to Tsathoggua to serve as mindless slaves for the rest of eternity.

Conclusion

If the Investigators successfully close the Gate, they deserve a hand. Let each of them roll a d10 SAN gain. If they did not allow Andy to participate in the POW sacrifice at the end of the scenario, they deserve another d6.

If the Investigators fail, well, they'll either get killed by Tsathoggua or end up as slaves. No need for Sanity loss here.

This is the end of *Crude Oil*, but it need not be the end of your Investigator's careers. Provided below are a series of Lights, Camera, Action! set-ups to direct your FBI guys in new directions.

Appendix One: Tsathoggua and his Formless Spawn

TSATHOGGUA, Great Old One

STR 50 CON 120 SIZ 30 INT 30
POW 35 DEX 27 Move 24 HP 75
Damage Bonus: +4d6

Weapons: Tentacle 100%, damage Grapple; Characteristics Drain 100%; damage 1 point per characteristic per round.

Armor: Regenerates 30 hit points per round of wounds and punctures, but fire, electricity and other such forces have natural effects.

Spells: He knows 'em all.

Sanity Loss: 0/1d10 to see Tsathoggua.

FORMLESS SPAWN, Lesser Servitor Race

STR 20 CON 11 SIZ 25 INT 13
POW 11 DEX 19 Move 12 HP 19
Damage Bonus: +d6

Weapons: Whip 90%, damage 1d6; Tentacle 60% for Damage Bonus; Bludgeon 20% for Damage Bonus; Bite 30%, damage special.

Armor: Immune to all physical weapons, but fire and chemicals may harm them.

Spells: None

Sanity Loss: 1/d10 to see Formless Spawn

For complete details, see the CoC rulebook: pp. 102-103 for Formless Spawn and pg. 123 for Tsathoggua.

Appendix Two: Lights, Camera, Action!

Hidden Agenda

(note: this LCA could well stir up inter-party rivalry, and so won't be everyone's cup of tea.)

Lights: The characters begin their investigation of the four corpses. One of the PCs with some medical knowledge — or Dr. Miller — spots the CDC agent PC handling the allegedly anthrax-ridden corpses in an unsafe manner; perhaps he is seen working on a corpse without gloves or a mask.

Camera: If pressed on the matter, the CDC man will spin a quick tale about how the infectious power of the organism that causes anthrax declines dramatically after the victim's death. This cover story will be easy to see through for anyone with medical knowledge.

Action: The CDC's man is not from the CDC at all. He's on site because when Dr. Miller called the CDC about the bodies, the right people — the people who know what *really* happened in 1927 — found out. Their immediate goal is learning more about the current Mythos activity in New Jerusalem, and the faux CDC agent is their key to doing so. Their long-term goals could be anything from destroying the menace for good to capturing one or more Formless Spawn (and there are still two out there at the moment). The identity of these powers is up to the Keeper, but we suggest creating a cabal within the FBI or the military.

If the cabal is ultimately working for good, they may recruit the PCs to their cause, which could be a springboard to a campaign. If they are working to further their own power, or to harness the power of the Mythos for America (bad idea) they can become the antagonist for a different sort of exciting campaign. Remember, in *Call of Cthulhu* the PCs are usually working to thwart the human agents of the Mythos, with encounters with otherworldly beings used as terrifying accents.

Ain't it dead yet?

Lights: Instead of being messily killed, Nightraven disappears in a flash of actinic light while performing the ritual. Let the investigators assume that he's dead, or at least summoned to Big T's side for an eternity of torment.

Camera: Nightraven was in fact summoned away, but not for torment. Tsathoggua saw in him some potential. To tap it, he guides a very special Formless Spawn into poor Nightraven's body. The Spawn, though alien and impossible to fathom, is at least as intelligent as a human. It's also adept at taking care of hosts, and Nightraven will be kept painfully alive as long as Tsathoggua's Spawn minion has need of his body.

Action: Helpless, Nightraven will be only able

Bradbury
STR: 17 DEX: 11 INT 14
CON13 APP 10 EDU 20
SIZ 17 SAN 50 POW 10
Idea 70 Know 99 Luck 50
HP: 15 Damage Bonus: +d6

LaRoche
STR: 12 DEX: 15 INT 15
CON13 APP 13 EDU 20
SIZ 13 SAN 75 POW 15
Idea 75 Know 99 Luck 75
HP: 13 Damage Bonus: +d4

Lynch
STR: 9 DEX: 16 INT 17
CON10 APP 16 EDU 22
SIZ 9 SAN 50 POW 15
Idea 85 Know 99 Luck 75
HP: 10 Damage Bonus:
N/A

Seaton
STR: 14 DEX: 12 INT 13
CON13 APP 11 EDU 12
SIZ 14 SAN 50 POW 14
Idea 65 Know 60 Luck 70
HP: 14 Damage Bonus: +d4

Abbot
STR: 13 DEX: 14 INT 18
CON13 APP 16 EDU 15
SIZ 11 SAN 50 POW 17
Idea 90 Know 75 Luck 85
HP: 12 Damage Bonus: +d4

to watch as the Spawn goes about its business, using his body. The Spawn can freely use any of Nightraven's abilities, and it has access to all of his knowledge of 20th century life. It can also use Nightraven's POW as needed. The Spawn's ultimate goals are up to the Keeper, but it's likely Tsathoggua will use it to revive his cult on Earth in some way. The PCs should be able to pick up the trail of the Nightraven-Spawn after they learn of a few Spawn-style killings in a nearby city...

"Pet-oh-tall rain!"

Lights: If one of the Investigators happens to be driven mad (or more conveniently, if any of the jocks lose their marbles), he babbles the same thing over and over again: "Pet-oh!-tall rain!" The Investigators confiscate all the evidence and return to FBI headquarters for analysis.

Camera: One by one, the Investigators begin having unusual dreams about a red moon, howling dogs, and a dark silhouette standing on a lonely hill. They recognize the hill as one they saw in New Jerusalem. They approach the figure, and as they do, it seems as if the scene were running backward. The words "Pet-oh-tall rain" echo endlessly all around them. They reach the man with the eerie red glow (from the bloody moon high above) and when he turns about, the Investigator is shocked awake by the sight, losing 1/2 SAN from the sight.

Action: The high level of madness and chaos that happens in New Jerusalem has a cause. The dreams are being sent by Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos with 1,001 forms. One of his forms (part of his soul) has been trapped in a small box under one of the abandoned buildings. A witch inherited the box about three hundred years ago, and Nyarlathotep has finally located it. He's sending the dreams to the Investigators to retrieve the box, thus releasing his 563rd form. If the Investigators refuse to return to New Jerusalem, perhaps the Crawling Chaos will send less subtle hints to get them there.

Deep Troubles

Lights: As the Investigators wander about the small town, they notice that the inhabitants have a rather sinister appearance, and keep odious personal habits (they all smell like fish). When the adventure wraps up, the Investigators notice that many of the townsfolk are watching them very closely.

Camera: A couple weeks after everything has settled down, the Investigators are surprised by an attempt on their lives. The assassin is unsuccessful, however, his eyes are a strange shade of yellow and he seems to be growing gills.

Action: The town of New Jerusalem has been infested with Deep Ones. They were the ones who were watching to make certain the subterranean tomb of Tsathoggua's minions was undisturbed, and now that mortals have discovered it, they also must be silenced ... forever.

Appendix 3: Characters

Provided below are five characters to use with Crude Oil. If you'd like to get the complete characters (along with nifty character sheets), check out the *Crude Oil Keeper Kit* sidebar above.

Special Agent Phillip Bradbury

Bradbury is a 43 year old black haired, blue eyed Bostonian with a heavy accent and a good healthy dose of skepticism. His broad shoulders and piercing gaze make him very intimidating and he's often tempted to use that to his advantage, even when he doesn't have to. Bradbury spent three years in the Secret Service before coming over to the Bureau and he doesn't like talking about why.

Agent Dayron LaRoche

LaRoche is a tall black man from Louisiana. He saved up all his life to go to Louisiana State, then moved to Washington to join the Bureau. He's only got a couple years under his belt, and this is the first time he's ever worked with Bradbury. He's quiet and reflective, and very, very Baptist.

CDC Agent Nancy Lynch

Nancy is a red haired, blue eyed medical doctor, specializing in exotic diseases. She's just on the edge of pretty, the kind of girl who would be if she wanted to be. Nancy's too busy with her studies to be worried about appearances, however. She dresses in blue jeans and t-shirts and isn't afraid to tell someone how rude it is to sneeze without covering your mouth.

Boston Detective Alex Seaton

Alex grew up in Boston across the street from Special Agent Bradbury. They've known each other all their lives and are close friends. Seaton is a Red Sox fanatic and knows every detail of their long and illustrious history. He's quick on picking up details and when he's not at the stadium, he's on the shooting range practicing.

Boston Detective Elliot Abbot

Elliot doesn't like being a cop. Dreams of making a difference and touching people's lives got shattered by nine-year-old drug dealers, apathetic parents and corrupt politicians. He was born a Catholic and still goes to church every Sunday. He hates profanity and comments on others' use of it regularly. ☹

The Feds begin with the following Skills: **Bargain, Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Firearms, Fist/Punch, Forensics, Grapple, Hide, Law, Persuade, Sneak, Spot Hidden, and Track.**

The CDC Agent begins with the following Skills: **Biology, Chemistry, First Aid, Latin, Medicine, and Pharmacy.**

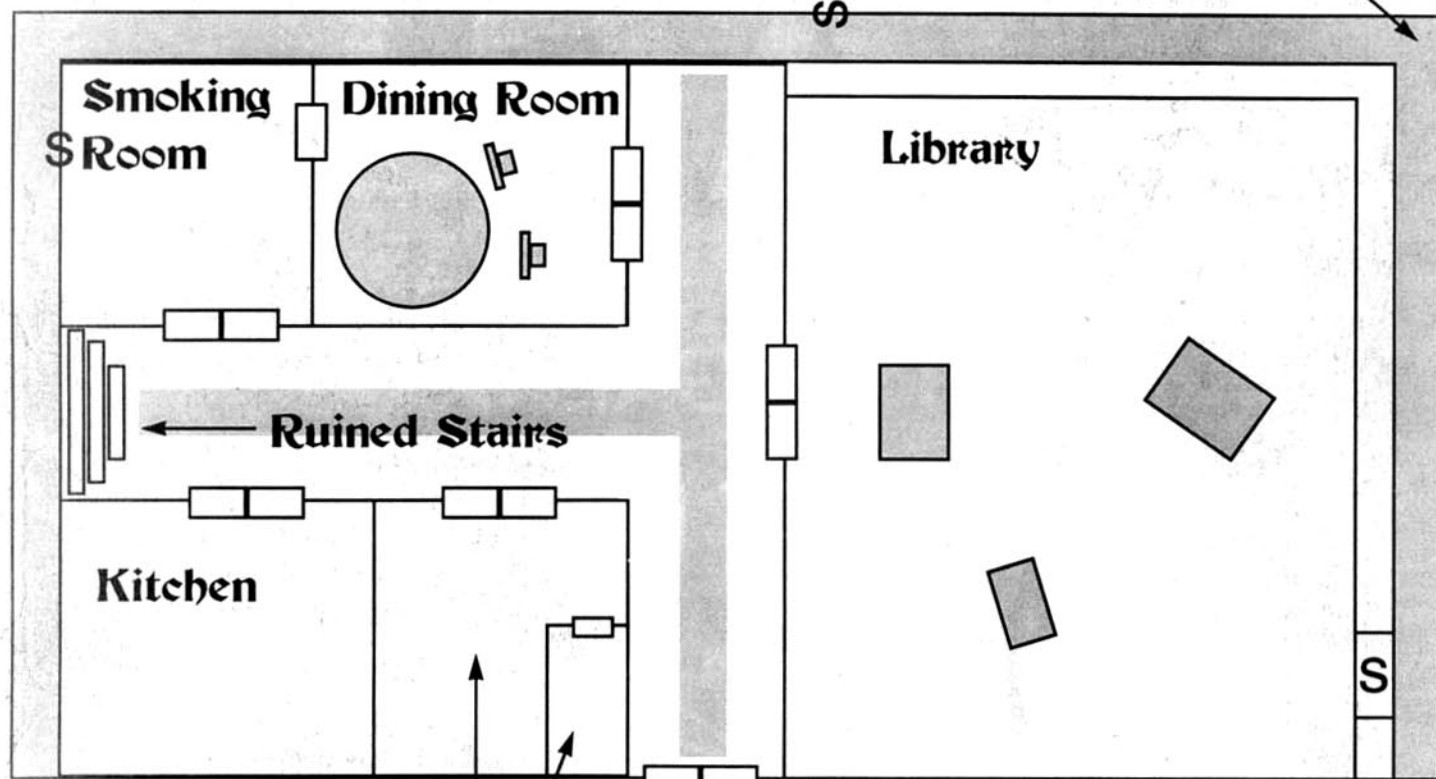
The two Detectives begin with the following Skills: **Bargain, Fast Talk, Handgun, Persuade, Psychology, Spot Hidden and Fist/Punch.**

The O'Bannon Mansion

1st Floor

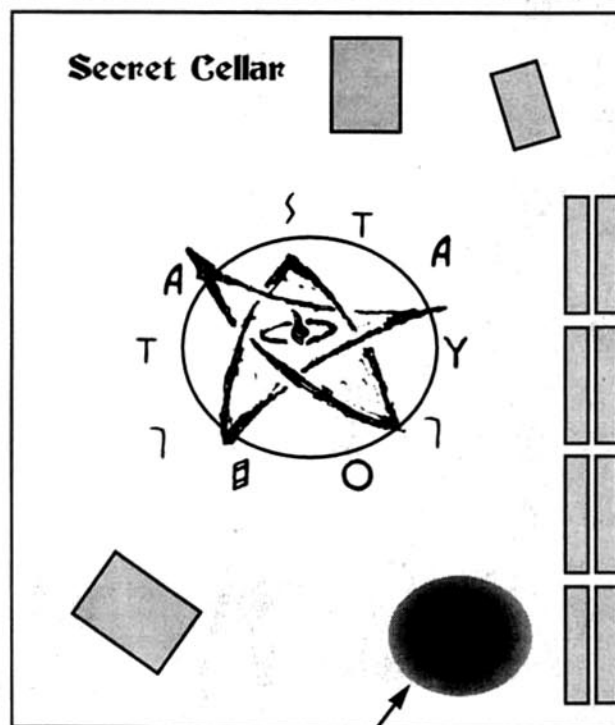
Secret passage
to beach

Secret Stairway
to 2nd Floor and
Secret Cellar



Butler's
Chambers
Coat Closet

The first floor and cellar of the mansion are really the only floors of concern in *Crude Oil*. The stairs to the west are ruined, and foolish Investigators who try to chance a climb should be rewarded with a d4 Hit Point loss if they miss a DEX/Luck check.



Botched Gate