

The Barrow Virus By Whiskey

Rapidly thawing polar ice releases a long frozen corpse into the sea. The strange body is host to a dormant virus. As portions of this corpse thaw, fish and sea birds feed upon it. The virus slowly moves up the food chain through seals, birds, and eventually polar bears. The virus is deadly to mammals.

One such bear approaches the isolated town of Barrow, Alaska in the early hours of day one. The bear kills three locals before it is gunned down. The excitement attracts many onlookers including a wildlife photographer and a tourist who become infected when they get too close to the bear. Two hours later they board a small turboprop aircraft bound for Anchorage.

Once the virus arrives in Barrow, Alaska, it finds a new host species. Two of the infected humans board a small turbo propplane bound for Anchorage. These hosts begin to spread the virus by the time they reach the oil town Deadhorse, where one of them leaves the aircraft to start a second vector via a bus tour back to Fairbanks. The turboprop continues on. All passengers and crew, 12 people in all, are infected when they reach Fairbanks. Passengers roam the airport while the plane refuels. Dozens are infected. Five passengers, including two bound for Portland that evening and one bound for Seattle the next day, begin new vectors.

The original host from Barrow starts to exhibit flu like symptoms by the time the infected aircraft reaches Anchorage with 14 souls. The virus spreads explosively through the airport and beyond to Vancouver, Seattle, Portland, Chicago, Denver, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Orlando, and Mexico City.

The photographer becomes homicidal early the next morning, less than 24 hours after initial infection. Nine people are killed and partially consumed before the patient is shot dead by police. Later that day, a coroner discovers the madman is a virus factory, and alerts local officials and the CDC.

The virus has now traveled across North America and reached Europe, Asia, and South America. By nightfall of day two, emergency services and law enforcement are stretched to their limits as a firestorm of virus fueled rage sweeps across the world. Reserve units are called to duty and quarantine attempts begin.

By nightfall on the third day, the infected outnumber their prey by an ever-growing margin. Society begins to collapse. The virus has reached all major population centers.



The Barrow Virus. Explosive Killer, Extreme Amplifier.

Named for the small Alaskan settlement where the virus was first known to infect a human host. The Barrow Virus is highly virulent, and can spread between hosts through physical contact with bodily fluids as well as through the air. Infection rates are very high, with only 5% of the human population showing signs of immunity.

Hosts begin to spread the virus within two hours of becoming infected. Within 12 hours, the host experiences severe flu-like symptoms and is explosively contagious. Within 24-36 hours after infection most victims become homicidal, seeking to kill and consume those uninfected.

The origin, and the end result of the virus is up to the GM. It could be an ancient filovirus that was less deadly to previous generations of mammals. It could be an extra-terrestrial virus which came to earth via comet, meteor, or alien craft that crashed into the polar ice, where it remained trapped for centuries or even millennia. It could be of Mythos origin, an attempt by Serpent People to wipeout humankind long ago.

Within a week of infections, hosts may suddenly “crash” or bleed out, ending their crusade against the uninfected. Alternately, they may rise again becoming mindless zombies. Perhaps the majority of the infected die off, while some transform into Ghouls.

Those who survive the initial pandemic, riots, and genocide will find themselves living in a very different world. Will the virus mutate and overcome their immunity? Will it drift upon air currents to infect the fortunate few who were not immune but managed to escape the plague through isolation? Perhaps those who engineered the virus will come out of hiding and enslave the survivors.

One could fashion a Basic Roleplaying campaign in which characters must first survive the initial pandemic, find a place of refuge, and then struggle to rebuild civilization under the shadow of new threats.

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