

# Return to the Monolith



Michael LaBossiere

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*They say foul beings of Old Times still lurk,  
In dark forgotten corners of the world,  
And gates still gape to loose,  
On certain nights,  
Shapes pent in Hell.*

- Justin Geoffrey, People of the Monolith

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Version 1.0

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## INTRODUCTION

This adventure is a modern follow up to “People of the Monolith” which appeared as a bonus scenario in *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*, published in 1982 by Chaosium. This scenario was based on “The People of the Monolith” from Robert E. Howard’s *Tales from the Cthulhu Mythos*, published by Arkham House.

In this adventure, the investigators are part of a team creating a documentary on ancient occult sites, bankrolled by Steiger, Incorporated. As part of this project, they will be traveling to Hungary to visit a monolith with a dark and troubling past. They will find the monolith and far more than they bargained for. Which is par for course in the world of the Mythos.

## KEEPER’S BACKGROUND

Untold years ago, worshippers of a foul toad-like being arrived in what is now Hungary. They raised up a stone monument to their god and performed terrible rites around it, with the vilest rites taking place on Midsummer’s Night (June 23). The presence of a minion of their god, which took on the appearance of a toad-thing, and their wicked rites imbued the stone with a great and evil power. Shadows of the beings who worshipped and presided there became part of the stone and trouble the earth to this day.

Evil flourished in the area until Turkish soldiers encountered the toad-thing and battled it with blessed weapons, ancient magic and fire. Unfortunately, the death of the toad-thing did not entirely dispel the horror. The stone itself had become tainted with evil and madness. Because of this, shades from the past appear around the stone on Midsummer’s Night, bringing madness and horror to any foolish enough to visit.

The stone’s existence was only known to the local people and the rare odd scholars, until the English poet Justin Geoffrey visited the stone, wrote a poem about it, and then went mad. Shortly after Geoffrey died in an asylum, a few brave souls were hired by his publisher to investigate the monolith. They visited the stone on Midsummer’s Night and witnessed the horror and madness. Returning home, they took up the battle against the Mythos.

The stone returned to obscurity until 2015 when Dave Bunson, David Metz and Sarah Killeans went to the monolith to do a story for an occult website, *Strangest Eons*. Metz, who was into the occult, suggested they visit the stone on Midsummer’s Night and the others agreed. This fateful decision would result in Metz (who was never very stable) going insane. In his madness, Metz killed his friends as “sacrifices” to the stone. After hiding the bodies in a nearby cave (ironically, the same place the Turks killed the toad-thing) Metz wandered the world, hoping to find a way to serve his new god.

Metz dyed his hair, had some minor cosmetic surgery, changed his name to Christopher Russell and established this new identity. After that, he spent the next few years researching books better unread and meeting with people and things who possessed knowledge better not known. Russell learned a spell

to contact beings, the Lesser Toades, which serve his god. Summoning one of the Toades, he was told he would be rewarded with power for reviving the ancient sacrifices at the stone. Completely insane, Russell eagerly agreed.

Through his connections (he had built a reputation as a weird but strangely gifted photographer) Russell learned about the Steiger documentary and arranged to get on the team. Russell does not know that Steiger’s CEO has some knowledge of the Mythos and is, in part, sending the investigators to see if anything is going on with the black stone.

## GETTING THE INVESTIGATORS INVOLVED

The investigators will be contacted by Bruce Baston who is representing Steiger, Incorporated. Baston will inform the investigators that the company is producing a show for television and the web. The show, *Paths of Mystery*, is to feature several sites around the world that have occult significance. Since many shows have already covered the best-known areas (such as Stonehenge), this show will cover more obscure, but still interesting subject. If the investigators have a history with the Mythos or other strange things, Baston will say that this is the reason the company is interested in hiring them.

If the investigators are interested, Baston will arrange to meet with them at the Indignant Gecko (a bar and restaurant) to discuss matters. Alternatively, the meeting can take place online using Skype or a similar service. At the meeting, Baston will make it clear that he wishes to hire them as special consultants for a video segment on a curious black stone in Hungary. If they ask for more details, Baston will relate that the stone has a dark and curious history. If the investigators complain that this is too vague, he will respond that the investigators’ job will be to learn more about the monolith.

If the investigators agree to take the job, Baston will assign them appropriate responsibilities and prepare contracts which specify appropriate payments for the completion of the tasks. For example, investigators with high **Library Use** will be hired to do research. The contracts will cover the basics such as food, lodging, and reasonable expenses. The investigators will also receive a reasonable sum (as determined by the Keeper’s generosity or lack thereof).

## INVESTIGATION

The investigators will almost certainly want to acquire information before leaping into things. The following sections detail the information the investigators can turn up.

### Books and Articles

There are several books that the investigators might find, through **Library Use** or other means, during their search. The following outlines what they can find on particular subjects, such as the poet Justin Geoffrey.

### **The Monolith**

During their research, the investigators might find Dostmann's *Remnants of Lost Empires*, published in 1809 in Berlin. This book is rather difficult to find (a Hard **Library Use** roll is required) and the full edition is available only in German. There is a partial translation in English (requires a hard **Library Use** roll to find) which was written by an American graduate student, Hilary Stanton, in 1973. Stanton died of a drug overdose before she completed her work.

Dostmann claims that the monolith is a relatively recent construction, most likely erected to commemorate a Mongolian victory. He bases this on his belief the defaced characters on the monolith are Mongolian in origin. Dostmann admits he was not able to clearly make out the characters, yet he does not let this count against his claim. He does mention that the village near the stone is called "Stregoicaver", which translates as "witch town."

If the investigators find the partial translation by Stanton, they might decide to follow up on that lead. If they do, they can find one of her articles (**Library Use** roll), published in a rather dry anthropology journal, will be of interest. In her article, "Cult Artifacts in Eastern Europe", published in 1972, Stanton cites Von Junzt's *Inaussprechlichen Kulten. (Nameless Cults)*: "Otto Dostmann's theory that the monolith is a remnant of the hunnish invasion and had been erected to commemorate a victory of Attila over the Goths is as logical as assuming that William the Conqueror reared Stonehenge." This excerpt is from page 63 of *Shadows of Yog Sothoth*.

Stanton's article also refers to several books which would prove useful to the investigators. These books can also be found by independent research if the investigators do not find the Stanton article.

If the investigators check into Stanton's background, they will learn that she was a promising graduate student at the Ohio State University. If the investigators check on the co-authors of some of her other papers, they will find that her advisor passed away years ago, but that the co-author Dr. James Bretton is still alive and teaching at Florida State University. If they contact him and are civil, he will say that the death of Stanton was a tragic accident and there was no evidence of foul play. If politely pressed, he will be willing to relate that some of Stanton's research seemed to have unbalanced her and she warned him to not read certain books and papers she had found. He has no idea what happened to those books, since it was so long ago.

Stanton's death was, in fact, an accidental overdose—she was self-medicating in response to what she had learned in her research. As such, additional investigation into Stanton will dead end.

One of the books mentioned by Stanton is *Magyar Folklore*, by Dornly. This book was published in 1901. In his chapter on Hungarian Dream Myths, he mentions a stone known as the "Black Obelisk." According to Dornly, it has strange and terrible powers: "if someone sleeps near the obelisk, they will be plagued with terrifying nightmares for as long as they shall live." Dornly

also mentions various folk tales that speak of people visiting the obelisk on Midsummer's Night. Such visits, the tales claim, end in madness and death. Dornly also notes that the area in which the obelisk was located was called "Xuthltan." Dornly points out that "Xuthltan" is not a Magyar name and is rather odd name.

The investigators might wish to investigate the word "Xuthltan" further. A book by Schuman called *Myths and Magic* was published in New York City in 1912. This book is rare and will take some effort to find (hard **Library Use** roll). The book explicitly mentions Xuthltan as a town with an evil reputation. According to ancient takes, the inhabitants were inclined to kidnap young women as sacrifices in their evil rites. Schuman writes that the inhabitants of the village were slain by the Turks. Sometime later, people from Schomvaal, a nearby village, moved into the ruins. After rebuilding they called the place "Stregoicavar."

### **Stregoicaver**

The investigators might also wish to investigate more into Stregoicaver, Schomvaal and the Turkish invasion.

In his 1892 work, *Back Roads of Hungary*, Rachismoff writes about Stregoicavar. In his book he asserts that Stegoicavar is a "beautiful and fertile" valley in the Carpathians. As a point of historical note, he mentions that a battle took place in 1526 at Schomvall. In this battle, Count Boris Viadinoff fought against the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent. The town, according to Rachismoff, is a three-day coach ride from Bicske. Rachismoff suggests that the traveler watch for various ruins from the Turkish war along the road sides.

If the investigators pursue their investigations, they can find Larson's 1890 book, *Turkish Wars*. This massive six volume series mentions, in a chapter, the battle of Schomvaal. According to Larson (from page 63 of *Shadows of Yog Sothoth*),

An aide brought to [the Count] a small lacquered case which had been taken from the famed Turkish scribe and historian, Selim Bahadur, who had fallen in the fight. The Count took therefrom a roll of parchment and began to read, but he had not read far before he turned pale and, without saying a word, replaced the parchment in the case and thrust the case into his cloak. At that very instant, a hidden Turkish battery opened fire, and ... the walls crash[ed] down in ruin, completely covering the Count. Without the leadership of the Count, his army was crushed by Suleiman's forces.

The chapter closes with the lines: "Today the natives point out a huge and moldering ruin near Schomvaal beneath which, they say, still rests what the centuries have left of Count Boris Viadinoff." (From page 63 of *Shadows of Yog Sothoth*).

### **Justin Geoffrey**

The only contemporary book mentioned in Stanton's article, David Dormley's *Men, Myth, and Madness* (1970) mentions Xuthltan as well as Justin Geoffrey. According to Dormley,

Geoffrey was a brilliant young poet whose career was cut short by commitment to an asylum and an untimely death in the early 1900s. Dormley asserts that Geoffrey's strangest poem, "People of the Monolith," was written as the result of his journey to a place called "Xuthltan." Dormley also claims Geoffrey was driven mad by what he saw and experienced in Xuthltan.

If the investigators seek out further information on Geoffrey, they can find a collection of his poems. This can easily be found by using a search engine or on Amazon. The book, *Complete Works of Justin Geoffrey*, is still being published as an ebook and print book by a small press, Good Verses. "People of the Monolith" is his last and strangest poems. The other poems are of high quality but are quite different from "People of the Monolith."

If the investigators get a copy of the *Complete Works of Justin Geoffrey* they will learn from the introduction that Geoffrey did go to Hungary and then went mad. If the investigators contact the editor of the book, Diane Hutton, she will be able to tell them a great deal about Geoffrey's poetic style and early history. If asked about "People of the Monolith" she will say it is his most unusual poem and represents a radical conceptual shift for the poet. If asked about his fate, she will relate that he went to Stregoicavar. There, the story has it, he found a black stone that drove him mad. Hutton is mainly concerned with poetry and she has no additional information about the black stone. She also is not involved with the Mythos.

If the Keeper wishes an alternative way to get the investigators involved, they could be hired by Good Verses to research the "black stone." The small press has very limited resources, so the investigators would have to provide their own transportation. The investigators might be able to get some modest payment from Good Verses if they can get some interesting information to flesh out the history of Geoffrey.

### The Missing People

If the investigators are thorough, they will learn they are not the first people to go in search of the monolith. As noted above, Justin Geoffrey visited the stone in the early part of the twentieth century and went mad. There are also some rumors and stories about other people who visited the stone, some of whom never returned.

The most recent story, which is also the only one backed with hard evidence, is about two free-lance journalists who went missing in 1995. According to the story, which made a few newspapers in 1995, Dave Bunson and Sarah Killeans were doing a story on a "black stone" located in an obscure part of Hungary. According to the story, the two journalists never returned. The local authorities investigated the disappearances but found nothing.

Some journalists privately speculate that the journalists, who were on assignment for *Secrets of the Occult Magazine*, stumbled across some local criminal activity and were killed. It is also speculated that the local authorities were paid to "find nothing." The two reporters are missing and presumed dead.

Their families are obviously still interested in learning about their fate.

Another alternative way for the investigators to become involved in the adventure is to have them contacted by the families of the two-missing people. The families have limited resources, so the investigators would have to provide their own transportation to Hungary.

## PLACES

The following section details the places the investigators will visit during the adventure.

### Hungary

The team will fly to an airport in Austria and rent vans or SUVs at the airport. From Austria they will drive into Hungary. Steiger, Incorporated will have made all arrangements and their trip will go smoothly. Unless, of course, the Keeper wishes to erode some Sanity points by inflicting the horrors of delayed and cancelled flights.

### Stregoicavar

Stregoicavar is not a real place in the real world. It is located near the real city of [Bicske](#) which is [twenty two miles west of Budapest](#). The trip to Stregoicavar will take the team past the ruins where Count Boris Viadinoff was killed long ago by the Turks. In the 1900s, Stregoicavar was a quiet little town, still living in the 18th century. World War II, the following Cold War, and more recent events have all but emptied the village. Most of the structures are still standing, but most of the young people left in search of better opportunities.

### The Inn

The inn in Stregoicavar is still standing, though it has seen better days. The team has reservations and will be the only guests, unless the Keeper elects to throw in a red-herring or two. Or a sinister stranger to add a side-plot.

Laszlo Yukarskin owns and runs the inn and he knows much of the local history. If he is treated well and asked about Justin Geoffrey, then he will tell them that "local legend has it that the English poet went and looked at the stone. According to old superstitions, the stone causes madness. In the case of the Geoffrey, it certainly did its job. He was found gibbering, drooling and moaning. As I recall, he ended up dying in an asylum. Very sad."

If asked about the black stone, he will tell the team where to find it. If asked what he thinks about it, he will say "Well, they say that the stone is...unnatural. I don't place much stock in ghost tales and the like. Then again, I've no desire to visit the stone, especially at night. The night air bothers my arthritis, you know."

If asked about the people who went missing, he will say all three stayed at the inn and that he sent the belongings of two of them home. If asked about the third person, he will say he did not send his belongings because he was told the man had no

relatives. If asked about the third person, the innkeeper will check his records and tell them that his name was Metz. If asked what he thinks happened, he will say that he doesn't know. He is willing to speculate about the mafia, but he will say the three seemed like nice people.

#### *Talking to the Villagers*

Provided the investigators are polite (and speak their language) the villagers will be willing to talk about the stone and related matters.

In general, the investigators will learn that the stone still has a bad reputation and that people stay away from it. Local legend has it that the stone was erected by devil-worshippers who were killed by the Turks. Local legend also has it that there have been attempts over the years to destroy the stone. According to these tales, those who harm the stone suffer from "fits, madness, and terrible dreams."

The best source of information in the village is Geoff Stakuski. Stakuski served in a German SS armored unit (under a different name) and retired (anonymously) to this small village. Stakuski, who married a local woman, was fascinated by the history of the area and learned a fair amount about it. He knows that the village was originally called Xuthltan. He believes that the monolith was erected by people who worshipped a "god not well known to men." His wife's mother befriended an American who came to the village in the 1900s. According to Stakuski, the American was part of a small group who came to see the stone. The men stayed in the village and the American, named Sam Lorenzo, later returned for a short while, leaving behind some books and other items. If Stakuski is asked about the books, he will say that they were lost when the roof sprung a leak. He will say that they do still have a notebook and a beaker of odd powder.

The notebook is in English and is tattered and worn. The following passages are the most interesting and relevant:

We have seen the horror that plagues this place on Midsummer's Night. It is something best not described. Dr. Harveld thinks that it is just an image from the past, somehow electrically trapped in the stone itself. I think it is something far worse.

I have returned to the village to visit Mary again. She is a fine woman, but the things I have seen and experienced prevent me from asking for her hand. After all, how can I promise to protect her, when there is no safety from them? How can I bring children into a world in which such things exist? But, I can do some small thing for her. I learned the secret in the Arab scroll and found how to make the dust that is an acid to the horrors. I have created a beaker of the dust, sufficient for two uses, and I have left Mary with instructions on how to use it. She seems skeptical, but she has seen the stone.

I leave tomorrow. I hope to someday return to Mary.

If the investigators are persuasive, he will be willing to allow them to read the notebook. If they are very persuasive, he might be willing to allow them to take the powder. The powder is the Dust of Suleiman, which does 1D20 worth of damage when thrown on a Mythos creature, such as the Toade. Stakuski has two applications of the powder. Stakuski does not know what happened to Lorenzo, but this path could be developed as an adventure hook by the Keeper.

Stakuski spoke extensively with Russell (then Metz) and his two friends when they came to the village. Stakuski thinks that they might have been killed by the mafia or that they had some sort of falling out. Stakuski will say that Metz "had a look in his eyes..." and that he might have done something. Because he knows that Stakuski might recognize him, Russell will scrupulously avoid him.

#### ***The Black Stone***

The Black Stone stands on the summit of a mountain near the village. The monolith is roughly octagonal in shape. It stands about sixteen feet high and is about one and a half feet thick. The stone appears to have once been highly polished and is marked with strange symbols. The stone has been defaced this damaged the symbols.

The symbols on the stone do not appear to belong to any known language and the extensive damage makes it unlikely that anyone would be even able to seriously attempt a translation. An investigator who makes a successful Archeology roll will note that the symbols seem vaguely like those found on a large, apparently man-worked stone found in the Yucatan. Most professional archaeologists have dismissed the Yucatan markings as idle scratches or perhaps some type of art.

If an investigator with Geology skill examines the stone and makes their skill roll, they will be able to tell the rock appears to be volcanic in origin, but it definitely not from this area.

The stone is surprisingly resistant to damage, although the use of modern equipment and explosives could break the stone into fragments, but this is dangerous.

Physically damaging the stone will cause the stone to "yield" fragments and pieces of the horrible things that happened on or near it. The effect is that as the stone takes damage, people within 50 meters will have horrible images, feelings and sensations invade their minds. In game terms, for every 10 points of damage done to the stone, anyone within 50 meters must make a Sanity roll. If the roll fails, the person loses 1 Sanity Point. If the roll succeeds, there is no loss. If the whole stone is shattered at once with explosives, there will be a massive "shockwave" that will cause a 1D6/1D20 Sanity loss to everyone within 50 meters, 1D3/1D10 Sanity loss to all within 100 yards, 1/1D6 Sanity loss to all within 150 yards, and 0/1D3 Sanity loss to all within 200 yards. The "shockwave" will cause bad dreams in people within 100 kilometers of the stone itself. If the stone is blasted to pieces, it will lose all its power and will simply be normal stone.

*Visiting the Stone During the Day*

If the monolith is visited during the day, it will seem odd, out of place and spooky. However, nothing will occur.

*Visiting the Stone at Night*

Visiting the stone at night is not a very good idea. Those in the presence of the stone will feel a faint chill, as if something cold is brushing their spines. The shadows falling in the area create a very convincing illusion that the stone is at the center of a vast, alien city of forbidding towers and dark, unnatural spires. Bringing artificial lights makes the illusion even stronger, as the bright lights will make the shadows seem somehow more solid. Spending time in this area at night will cost one Sanity Point unless the investigator makes a Sanity check.

*Visiting the Stone on Midsummer's Night*

Visiting the stone on Midsummer's Night (June 23rd) is an exceptionally bad idea. As mentioned above, the stone has been imbued with the horror and madness that has occurred in its vicinity. This horror and madness is partially released every June 23rd. Anyone near the stone at this time will hear a faint moaning noise, which sounds like the wind through the trees.

A scene from the past will be re-enacted near the stone by phantoms of time. At midnight faint images of people will begin to form, growing more solid appearing as they move towards the stone. As they grow more solid appearing, a priestess in a strange headress will begin to lead them in an obscene ceremony.

If a person watches the events that happen from 12:00 to 12:30, he will lose one Sanity point unless he makes a Sanity Check. At 12:30 the ceremony picks up, with young women dancing about the stone while the priestess lashes at their bodies with a leather whip. While the dancing is going on, the other cultists begin to lash terrified people to a wooden log, obviously in preparation for a blood sacrifice. At 1:00, those still present must make a Sanity Check or lose 1D3 Sanity Points. From 1:00 to 1:30, the cultists continue their rituals, culminating in a bloody sacrifice at 1:30. When the blood spills to the ground, the image of a horrid toad-thing will appear over the stone. Those seeing this phantom will need to make a Sanity Check or lose 1/1D6 Sanity Points. The event stops at that point; leaving the area cold and still.

The bloody sacrifice is merely a horrid phantom from the past. While it can cost Sanity, the images are only reenacting a scene from the past and can cause no other harm. While the images appear solid, they can be walked through. Moving through the images will have no effect on the ceremony but will cause the person to feel the horror with even greater intensity. The investigator will need to make an extra Sanity Check each time they move through one of the images. A failed roll costs one Sanity Point.

**The Ruins**

The ruins where Boris Vladinoff died are still present, although they have been covered with years of debris and plant growth. If the investigators decide to muck about in the ruins, they will be able to find some bones, but they will also be able to tell that the ruins have been well picked over.

**ACTION**

The main action will center around Russell. Russell's general plan is to get the team to the monolith, summon the Lesser Toade and kill them all in a blood sacrifice.

Russell is very cunning and will try to determine which of the investigators might be dangerous before acting. If possible, he will try to secretly damage any weapons the investigators might have with them.

If the adventure is not taking place near June 23rd, Russell will have a plan to deal with the investigators. First, he will do his best to talk the team into having a team picture taken at night. Since the segment is supposed to be scary, this request is quite plausible. If they agree, he will summon the Lesser Toade and have it wait in the nearby cave. That night, he will say he is

going ahead to set up the lighting. He will do this, but he will also visit the Toade and tell it to attack when it sees the flash. Russell will rig up the lighting equipment to create a powerful, blinding flash of light. If an investigator makes a Luck roll, they will be only party blinded for 15 seconds (all

visual based skill rolls, such as combat skills, are made with one penalty die). If an investigator fails their Luck roll, they will be blinded by the flash for 15 seconds and partly blinded for another 15 seconds.

After the flash goes off, the Lesser Toade will tear into the nearest target, ripping and biting. Meanwhile, Russell will pull out his 9mm and start blazing away at who he thinks is the most dangerous investigator. The Toade and Russell will do their best to kill everyone. If things go against them, Russell and the Toade will try to flee.

If Russell cannot get them to visit the stone at night, he will set up the ambush during the day. While the flash can still blind the investigators, they will make their Luck rolls with a bonus die.

If the investigators refuse to visit the stone at all, Russell will persuade the NPCs on the team to visit the stone at night and try to kill them all. He will then endeavor to murder the investigators, although he will not bring the Lesser Toade into town.

If the adventure takes place in June, Russell will do his best to get the investigators to visit the stone on the night of June 23rd. Russell will hope the events will cause some of the team to go mad, thus increasing his chances of defeating them. In this case, he will summon the lesser Toade, which will act as if it is merely another image from the past. The Toade will then watch the team, waiting for the events and its presence (seeing the Toade will require a separate Sanity roll) to take their toll on the team

Time	Sanity Loss
12:00-12:59	0/1
1:00-1:29	0/1D3
1:30	1/1D6



members. If some team members go insane, the Toade and Russell will take advantage of this in their attack on the team. Once the attack begins, Russell will focus on the investigators he thinks are the most dangerous. If the battle goes against them, Russell and the Lesser Toade will try to escape. Regardless of when the ambush takes place, Russell and the Lesser Toade will chase the investigators if they flee, as per the chase rules. The Keeper can decide what sort of obstacles they will encounter as they flee.

## CONCLUSION

The adventure ends when the investigators defeat Russell and the Lesser Toade, flee, or are killed (or go insane).

If the investigators defeat Russell and the Lesser Toade, they should receive a 1D8 Sanity point award. If the investigators destroy the monolith, they should receive an extra 1D8 Sanity point reward.

If the investigators were working for Steiger, Incorporated, they will be paid if they are able to complete their jobs. Steiger, Incorporated will be very interested in hiring the investigators again in this case. As such, the company could prove to be a useful contact and adventure hook in the future. If the investigators are unable to complete their jobs or events go badly (team members are killed, for example), then the Keeper will have to decide what happens.

If the investigators flee without defeating Russell and the Toade, they will lose 1D3 Sanity Points. Russell will acquire sacrifices to bring back the "old religion" and he will soon gather a following of cultists and expand his operations. The investigators may return to face the greatly expanded evil at some point in the future.



## NPCS

### David Rolfe, Director

STR 70 CON 85 SIZ 70 DEX 65 INT 65  
 APP 65 POW 70 EDU 95 SAN 61 HP 15  
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 14 Luck: N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3

Armor: none.

Important Skills: Charm 55%, Credit Rating 45%, Direct 65%, Fast Talk 60%, Jump 45%, Law 15%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Occult 35%, German 25%, Russian 15%, Persuade 35%,

Description: Rolfe is a tall, middle-aged man. He has tanned, weather-beaten skin, black hair, and a neatly trimmed beard and moustache. He generally wears "outdoor" style clothing when in the field. Rolfe is an experienced director and made his reputation covering various wars and disasters. Because of this, Rolfe is very good under pressure. He does not really believe in

the supernatural but will aid the investigators should he become convinced of its reality.

### Brent Travis, Vocal Talent

STR: 11 CON:12 SIZ: 13 INT: 11 POW: 11 DEX: 10 APP: 15 EDU: 15 SAN: 55 HP: 13

DB: None

STR 55 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 50 INT 55  
 APP 75 POW 55 EDU 75 SAN 55 HP 13  
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 6 Luck: N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3

Armor: none.

Important Skills: Charm 25%, Fast Talk 32%, German 45%, French 55%, Japanese 45%, Russian 11%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 25%

Description: Travis is a handsome young man, with perfect hair, a perfect face, and a perfect voice. He dresses stylishly and favors expensive clothes. Travis is rather empty-headed and does not believe in the supernatural. If he encounters anything dangerous or frightening, he will attempt to run away.



### Christopher Russell, Insane Photographer

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 70 INT 70  
 APP 65 POW 60 EDU 90 SAN 00 HP 14  
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 6 Luck: N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3+1D4

9mm Pistol 35% (17/7) (damage 4D6/2D6/1D6)

Black Jack 50% (25/10), Damage 1D8+1D4

Combat Knife 45% (22/9) 1D4+2+1D4

Armor: none.

Skills: none.

Important Skills: Charm 21%, Fast Talk 35%, Hide 25%, Law 16%, Library Use 45%, Listen 35%, Mechanical Repair 37%, Occult 45%, Spanish 35%, French 25%, Persuade 24%, Pharmacy 15%, Photography 83%, Stealth 25%

Spells: Contact Lesser Toade, Summon Lesser Toade

Description: Russell (once known as Metz) is a thin, nervous looking man. He has brown hair, which is thinning badly. He is clearly well on his way to going bald. He smokes constantly and dresses in out of date clothing, mostly army surplus. He always has at least two camera bags with him (one of which holds his 9mm). Russell is a very good photographer and clearly knows his job.

Russell is completely insane and is the loyal servant of his new master. Despite his madness, Russell is extremely clever and is very adept at tricking people into getting what he wants. Russell prefers to deal with problems indirectly, through deception, tricks, ambushes and such. He always desires to have an advantage in any situation and will carefully plan his actions. Russell is very careful to maintain his image as an eccentric photographer and is careful to never have anything incriminating on his person or in his gear.



### Sam Gussett, Cameraman

STR 65 CON 70 SIZ 85 DEX 45 INT 65  
 APP 55 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 16  
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6 MP: 12 Luck: N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3+1D4

Knife 35% (17/7), damage 1D4+1D4

Armor: none.

Skills: none.

Important Skills: Fast Talk 22%, Electrical Repair 55%, Electronics 15%, Drive Motorcycle 45%, Hide 25%, Law 15%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Operate Heavy Machinery 50%, Photography 65%

Description: Sam is a very large, overweight man. He has dark brown hair, a thick beard, and blue eyes. He generally wears biker style clothing (leather jacket, T-shirts, jeans, and heavy boots), a left over from his days in a motorcycle gang. Sam is a skilled cameraman and able to lug around piles of equipment. Sam has been in some nasty bar fights and is not afraid to have it out with people.



### Diane Gussett, Camera and Sound

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 55 DEX 70 INT 70  
 APP 60 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 12  
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 12 Luck: N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3

Shotgun 12-gauge 40% (20/8), (damage 4D6/2D6/1D6)

Thompson SMG 30% (16/6), damage 1D10+2

Armor: none.

Important Skills: Fast Talk 25%, Electrical Repair 35%, Electronics 25%, Drive Motorcycle 35%, Hide 20%, Listen 55%, Mechanical Repair 35%, Photography 60%, Sound Recording 60%

Description: Diane is a thin, wiry woman, with sharp and harsh features. She dresses like her husband, Sam. She has dirty blonde hair and blue eyes. She found God a few years ago and made Sam leave the gang and take up an honest life.



Because of her religious beliefs, Diane does believe in the supernatural.

### Geoff Stakuski, Old Man

STR: 45 CON:50 SIZ: 60 INT: 70 POW:12 DEX:14 APP:12  
 EDU: 15 SAN: 60 HP: 12

DB: None

STR 40 CON 50 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 70

APP 45 POW 60 EDU 75 SAN 50 HP 11

DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 2 MP: 12 Luck: N/A

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3

12-gauge shotgun 60% (30/12) Damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Armor: none.

Skills: none.

Important Skills: Charm 45%, Electrical Repair 32%, First Aid 55%, Hide 55%, History 48%, Mechanical Repair 75%, Natural History 35%, Operate Heavy Machinery 56%, German 55%, English 24%, Handgun 28%, Machine Gun 55%, Rifle 45%

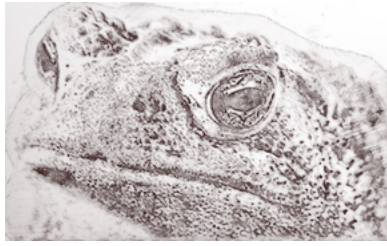
Description: Stakuski is an extremely old man, with white hair. He keeps his hair very short and does not have a beard. Stakuski was in the SS during WWII, but he has long since put the war behind him. As mentioned above, Stakuski has useful information for the investigators.



## CREATURES

### Lesser Toade

Description: The Lesser Toades are hideous, toad-like beings. These horrid creatures are servants of Tsathoggua and are related, in some odd way, to the Formless Spawn.



The Toades are intelligent, speak many human languages and often serve as emissaries for Tsathoggua when that horrid deity has business in the world. They look like very large toads with oddly gelatinous bodies. Unlike typical toads, the Toades are huge, have jagged black fangs, and sharp claws. In battle, Toades attack with both claws and bite at their foes with their crooked and jagged teeth. Because of their odd, gelatinous composition, Toades sustain only half damage from mundane weapons, such as guns and knives.

### SPECIAL POWERS

**Spells:** Lesser Toades always know Contact Tsathoggua and Contact Formless Spawn

<i>Char.</i>	<i>Averages</i>	<i>Stats</i>
STR	90	(3D6+6 x5)
CON	80	(2D6+6x5)
SIZ	105	(3D6+8x5)
DEX	60	(3D6x5)
POW	75	(3D6+3x5)

**HP:** 19

**Average Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Average Build:**

**Average Magic Points:** 15

**Move:** 7

### ATTACKS

**Attacks per round:** 3

**Fighting Attacks:** Lesser Toades can attack with both claws and a bite.

Fighting 55% (27/11) 1D6+db

Bite 55% (27/11) 1D10

**Armor:** None, but a Lesser Toade sustains half damage from all mundane weapons.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D8

## HANDOUTS

## Handout #1

We have seen the horror that plagues this place on Midsummer's Night. It is something best not described. Dr. Harveld thinks that it is just an image from the past, somehow electrically trapped in the stone itself. I think it is something far worse.

I have returned to the village to visit Mary again. She is a fine woman, but the things I have seen and experienced prevent me from asking for her hand. After all, how can I promise to protect her, when there is no safety from them? How can I bring children into a world in which such things exist? But, I can do some small thing for her. I learned the secret in the Arab scroll and found how to make the dust that is an acid to the horrors. I have created a beaker of the dust, sufficient for two uses, and I have left Mary with instructions on how to use it. She seems skeptical, but she has seen the stone.

I leave tomorrow. I hope to someday return to Mary.

**Handout #2**

An aide brought to [the Count] a small lacquered case which had been taken from the famed Turkish scribe and historian, Selim Bahadur, who had fallen in the fight. The Count took therefrom a roll of parchment and began to read, but he had not read far before he turned pale and, without saying a word, replaced the parchment in the case and thrust the case into his cloak. At that very instant, a hidden Turkish battery opened fire, and ... the walls crash[ed] down in ruin, completely covering the Count. Without the leadership of the Count, his army was crushed by Suleiman's forces.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Michael LaBossiere is a gamer/runner from Maine who went to school in Ohio and ended up a philosophy professor in Florida.

While acquiring his doctorate in philosophy at Ohio State University, he earned his ramen noodle money by writing for Chaosium, GDW, R. Talsorian Games, and TSR. After graduate school, he became a philosophy professor at Florida A&M University. His first philosophy book, *What Don't You Know?*, was published in 2008. He continues to write philosophy and gaming material. He is also a blogger, but these days who isn't?

When not writing, he enjoys running, gaming and the martial arts. Thanks to a quadriceps tendon tear in 2009, he was out of running for a while, but returned to the trails and wrote a book about it, [Of Tendon & Trail](#). He can be contacted at [ontologist@aol.com](mailto:ontologist@aol.com).

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