

Briefing

A-Cell's monitoring algorithms buried within the NSA to have picked up internet searches including AZATHOTH, SHAN and SHAGGAI from an IP address traced to a hardware store in Cleveland, Ohio.

The player cell is tasked with investigating any Norwegian vectors, recovering whatever unearthed tome is responsible, and cutting any cult activity off at the source.

What's going on (keeper only)

During the chaos of 2006 Baghdad, a smalltime criminal Farhad Shirvani got the opportunity to fence a collection of artifacts from Tell Arpachiyah, including a series of urns from the ruins. The urns themselves were not distinctive to any known period of history, and thus nearly worthless, but inside he found several still-warm human organs. On the black market, a whole body's worth of transplant-ready parts can fetch as much as 300,000 USD, and the possibility of buying safety and comfort for himself and his family far outweighed any misgivings about where the viscera came from, how it could possibly be staying fresh, or indeed the welfare of the recipient.

Over the course of the following weeks 5 dying patients visited a clinic in Shenyang, China and have all received a new lease on life. Downside: K-Lleptutarmu'un, an immortal sorcerer-priest of Shub-Niggurath has begun gradually taking control of their bodies through his now scattered bodyparts.

His goal is to reassemble himself and take revenge against the Shan who dismembered him in the first place using any occult artifacts he can find.

The Investigation

If the players use government resources to investigate the address, they will discover that the shop, Rigg's Tools, is owned and inhabited (unsurprisingly) by the Riggs family. Background checks will further suggest that a recent trip to China has landed him in crippling debt.

On Site

Rigg's Tools is on the on a fairly busy main street just east of Beachwood.

A Best Western is a just a couple of doors down on the opposite side of the street, which makes surveillance fairly trivial. Alternatively agents may wish to spy from the upper floors of a construction site on the far side of the block, under the ownership of Lumiere International.

Vigilant overnight surveillance will show very little activity beyond note-taking at the computer, and an older blonde woman sleeping in what is clearly a child's bedroom.

The shop and the apartment above it are both completely normal, and the only evidence of any mythos activity is Thomas' internet search history and more significantly his notes:

- Printer paper string-bound into a rough journal of mixed English and hyperborean, his notes relate to the geography and geology of Iraq, the Shan and their infiltration of PISCES, and an artefact within a temple complex in Antarctica. They are hastily shoved down the back of

Thomas' armchair, and their discovery will turn the NPC violent, with the use of spells and whatever weapons come to hand.

The Hosts

K-Leptutarmu'un possesses the knowledge of all of his hosts, so if any hosts are neutralised, the remainder will focus on retrieving the implanted organs. These are invulnerable to conventional weapons, so the investigators will get a piece of the puzzle if they try to burn the bodies, but will be targets for interrogation if their MO involves unmarked graves.

If the investigators do not properly dispose of the bodies this will simply involve a break-in at the morgue.

Once two or more of the hosts have been identified, questioned, or searched for their surgical scars, the link clinic in Liaoning Province should become readily apparent, and by matching missing person's reports to flight records it should be at least theoretically possible to establish how many hosts they are dealing with.

The difficulty in this scenario lies in the hosts all being functionally innocent. Aside from A-cell's monitored keystrokes, the only evidence of any mythos involvement is five strangers meeting in a hardware store, and so players should hopefully be hesitant about pulling the trigger until it is much too late.

Ideally, the players arrive after dark on day 0

Day 1:

Thomas and Hanna will mostly continue researching the Shan and occult methods of defeating them, and the state of the earthly cult of Shub-Niggurath until the Players make themselves obvious. Thomas will leave the shop twice to shop for food for the pair, locking up behind him. Unless Angela is caught alone, questioning them will yield unfeigned confusion and denial of any occult knowledge.

Day 2:

Jerry Moore (arizona) and Angelique Moreau will arrive, sharing Jerry's car.

If the players have not made contact, or have maintained a non-governmental cover, Jerry and Angelique will enter the house and either wordlessly join the research or keep lookout.

If the players have alerted Thomas or Hanna in any way, they will bring pump-action shotguns to defend the property. If this encounter goes poorly, the last survivor will offer knowledge and cooperation in the common goal of defeating the shan, in exchange only for mercy. If consulted, A-cell will recommend fire and lots of it, but if A-cell aren't informed, the players will have access to a deep font of mythos knowledge and hypergeommetry.

Day 3:

Paul Hinchcliffe will arrive in town by rental car in possession of an urn containing K-Leptutarmu'un's stomach and intestines. Equipped with a hunting knife but unable to purchase firearms.

If the players have made contact he may negotiate, or steer clear of the shop altogether, only approaching to seek out organs lost with previous hosts.

If the players have lain low this whole time or managed to keep a low-key cover, he will simply enter the shop, and in a grisly 5-way surgery, the hosts will assemble K-Leptutarmu'un from their own bodies. The process involves more than a smidgen of mythos magic, so it shouldn't take longer than a few minutes to complete.

Should the players fail to intervene before this point, he will leave the hollowed corpses of the hosts in the apartment and take one of their cars as far as it will go on an expedition to the pyramids of the south pole. If he succeeds PISCES will have some trouble on its hands.

Conclusion

For this scenario, victory means working out that donor organs are the source of contamination, retrieving them, and sealing them away in separate locations, preferably Green Boxes.

If the players are satisfied that there is no foul play, feel free to move the timetable up.

For particularly conscientious players it should be possible to save Angelique, Paul and Gerry by removing K-Leptutarmu'un's organs, although even in this best-case scenario they'll be returned to the end of a very long waiting list...

NPCs

Thomas Riggs

6'1" Bushy-bearded shopkeeper in early 30s, listless and irritable.

He became confused and aggressive towards his family since returning from his trip, and his wife Emily has taken their two sons to stay with her sister in rural Illinois. Since his family left, he has fallen deeply under K-Leptutarmu'un's influence. He will feign ignorance, and be passively unfriendly in the face of investigation, claiming that his wife left because he met his new girlfriend Hanna online.

Hanna Oberhausen

5'4" Blonde, solid-looking accountant in her early 40s, some signs of distress.

In possession of a new liver, she has flown here from Austria for reasons she doesn't consciously understand, and is intermittently alarmed by her situation. If the players present themselves as government agents, and at some point Thomas is not present, then she will ask them for help in German or extremely broken English.

Gerry Moore

5'10" Plump, exceedingly wealthy, fake-tanned entrepreneur in his 50s, from Phoenix.

Belligerent, loud and opinionated, except for long periods of thoughtful silence imposed by his ancient left kidney. In all probability heavily armed.

Angelique Moreau

5'6" Athletic brunette in her mid 30's, personality rapidly variable between innocent and conspiratorial. A glamorous and attractive footballer's wife, in possession of K-Leptutarmu'un's pancreas. She speaks little to no English, but will be used by the sorcerer as a friendly/amorous bullet-shield to discourage violence.

Paul Hinchcliffe

6'0" Overweight, light brown hair, mid 40s. Birthmark on left temple.

Stereotypically soft, pale and bespectacled investment banker capable of eloquent reasoning and debate, and now lethal hypergeometric incantations too.

Credit: This shotgun scenario was very clearly inspired by the *Preserve Organ* spell in the 6th edition rulebook