

# Secret Shopper

The day after Thanksgiving is the first day of the Christmas shopping season. Crowds of consumers get out early to hunt for special offers. This year something is hunting consumers.

## Keeper's Information

Gideon Bonner owns and manages an independent bookstore his family has run for multiple generations, Bonner Books. Like many small bookstores today, Bonner Books has experienced a downturn in business due to increased competition from the national chains and online marketplaces. Bonner resents the big book stores, in particular the one that had opened in the shopping mall across the street, Wharton's. Every day from his store window he can see Wharton's doing brisk business while his slowly dies. As a result Bonner has had to shutter the family business. His life in shambles, Bonner found a way to get revenge. Through recent travels to Los Angeles and the Mojave Desert, Bonner acquired a collection of Hotethk rituals, Blood Prayers, which contains the spell Become Spectral Hunter. Bonner plans to use this on himself, in the mall, during the busiest shopping day of the year. A massacre will follow unless the agents can intervene. The key to stopping him rests in destroying a small doll (a kachina) which contains his life essence.

Note: Bonner Books and the shopping mall across the street can be located in whatever town or city suits the Keeper's needs.

## Dinner Interrupted

Agents are contacted by A-Cell on Thanksgiving for a simple black bag job. They are informed a dangerous manuscript, Blood Prayers, is in the possession of Gideon Bonner, owner of Bonner Books. They are told to retrieve and destroy this document. Keepers are encouraged to role play scenes of family strife as the agents inform them they are going to miss another family holiday.

## Bonner Books

Agents arrive at Bonner Books late in the evening. A "Going Out of Business Sale" sign hangs from the window. The store is closed and there are no lights on. Agents will need to succeed at a Locksmith roll at either the front entrance or the back door alley entrance. Alternatively agents can force entry at either door with a successful STR vs. STR 10 roll. If agents attempt to break in the front door, keepers should force a group luck roll to see if they attract unwanted attention.

The building has two floors. The lower floor contains the bookstore; the upper floor is the apartment where Bonner lives.

Investigating the bookstore reveals most of the shelves are empty. There are several boxes on the floor containing various popular books of the day. Successful Spot Hidden rolls reveal the following:

- A ledger is found in a drawer underneath the cash register. An Accounting roll reveals the bookstore has been failing to turn a profit for several years and Bonner has acquired considerable debt in attempting to keep things afloat. A handwritten receipt shows Bonner purchased Blood Prayers from a book dealer in Los Angeles a month ago.
- Agents will notice the bookstore across the street in the mall, the Wharton's sign blinking silently in neon red. They also notice the parking lot filling with cars.

- A framed newspaper dated February 13, 1895 with an advertisement for the Grand Opening for Bonner Books, hangs on the wall close to the front door.
- An advertisement slipped through the front door mail slot. "Wharton's Black Friday Mega-madness Book Sale. 20 - 50% off select items. Open at midnight".

Bonner's apartment has one bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room. On the kitchen table is a small bowl filled with blood. Bits of cornhusks and torn cloth are spread about on the table. Successful Spot Hidden rolls reveal the following:

- A folder under the livingroom couch contains used boarding passes, to and from Los Angeles International Airport.
- A handwritten letter in a bedside table. This is Bonner's manifesto, a long rambling tirade against corporate greed, the internet, and sheeple. Segments of the manifesto stand out for the agents (see Player Handout below).
- A wallet containing Bonner's driver's license rests on his dresser.
- The bedroom closet contains a gun safe, open and empty.

By the time agents completely search the building, it will be 11:45 PM.

## The Mall

The mall opens its doors this year at midnight for its Black Friday Midnight Sale Event. This event has been thoroughly hyped and stores are expecting record sales. Most of the stores within the mall are participating in the early Black Friday sales event, including Wharton's. Although some of the stores have outside entrances, there are two main entrances on the north and south ends of the mall. Wharton's is five shops up from the southern entrance. As it approaches midnight the parking lot fills and people line outside both of the main entrances. Bonner is among this crowd, waiting at the southern entrance, kachina doll made of cornhusks and bloody rags, Blood Prayers, and a gun all hidden in his coat. Any agent who looked at Bonner's driver's license may locate him waiting in line with a critical success Spot Hidden roll (It's dark, crowded, and the driver's license photo isn't the best quality). If Bonner is stopped by the agents here, he will try to flee, firing his handgun at them and people in line. If he finds a hiding spot, he will begin the Become Spectral Hunter spell.

## Timeline of Terror

Once the mall opens and Bonner is inside it will be impossible to find him in the crowd. Events follow this timeline:

12:04 AM - Bonner enters the mall at the South End.

12:10 AM - Bonner enters a restroom and begins the Become Spectral Hunter spell (1D3 rounds to complete). Transformed, he clumsily hides his kachina in the ceiling, leaving a ceiling tile ajar (Spot Hidden to notice). He leaves Blood Prayers and his gun on the restroom floor. (Blood Prayers: 1D2/1D4 points of Sanity to read. +1 point Cthulhu Mythos. Spells: Become Spectral Hunter.)

12:16 AM - A customer enters the restroom and is savagely killed. Bonner becomes invisible, leaves the restroom, and heads toward Wharton's, bumping into confused shoppers along the way.

12:20 AM - A shopper discovers Bonner's victim and calls for help. Charlie Vance, Captain of mall security responds. Discovering the body, Vance calls police and tries to secure the scene. He orders his staff to be on the lookout. A concerned crowd forms around the scene.

12:25 AM - From the video room, security are able to see glimpses of Bonner as he passes by security cameras. Frightened security relays what they are seeing to a baffled Vance.

12:30 AM - Bonner arrives at Wharton's and begins slaughtering customers and staff. Wholesale panic spreads.

12:35 AM - Vance orders all mall doors locked until police arrive. Shoppers flee Wharton's. Bonner finishes off stragglers and returns to the mall at large.

12:45 AM - Police arrive and surround the mall, not entering until they get a better idea of what's going on. Bonner continues killing.

1AM - SWAT and backup arrive.

2 AM - Police launch concussion grenades and tear gas, and storm the mall. Bonner hides invisibly and immaterially in the restroom, waiting for the day to start the killing all over again.

## The Hunt

Depending on the agent's actions the timeline may or may not reach the final stage. The sooner they can stop Bonner the better. If any security guard notices the agents brandishing guns, they will assume they are part of the problem and attempt to apprehend them. Agents identifying themselves as some kind of law enforcement officer will get security's grateful cooperation.

In the form of a spectral hunter, Bonner is over 7 feet tall. His flesh is rubbery and inky black. He has large red eyes and an oversized mouth filled with rows of sharp tiny teeth. His arms end in grotesque, crab-like pincers. Bonner can attack once per round with either a bite or a pincer. He will remain invisible most of the time. While invisible, he can only be seen by security cameras and camera phones. Bonner will stay in the mall, close to the kachina which contains his soul. There will be no shortage of victims for Bonner, although he will prefer to strike at any isolated shoppers he can find. If severely wounded, Bonner will become invisible and immaterial before returning to the restroom. If the kachina is destroyed, Bonner will instantly die and will revert to human form.

## Aftermath

- Killing Bonner: + 1D2 points of Sanity
- Destroying Blood Prayers: + 1 point of Sanity
- Erasing video record of Bonner from security tapes: +1 point of Sanity

## Player Handout

"...Wharton has taken everything from me, everything my family worked for ...This won't stand...The Hotethks have shown me...I will be transformed to something greater...Must keep the kachina hidden and safe...Unseen, I will harvest them...Let Black Friday mark a bloody new day."

## Statistics

### Gideon Bonner - Book Seller

STR 8 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 13

POW 15 DEX 10 APP ? EDU ?

SAN ? HP 11

Move 8, Damage Bonus 0

Weapons: .38 Auto Handgun 35%, damage 1D10

Skills: Feel Sorry for Himself 90 %, Hate Life 80%, Rant 85%

### Gideon Bonner - Spectral Hunter

STR 20 CON 4 SIZ 24 INT 13

POW 27 DEX 10 APP ? EDU ?

SAN ? HP 14

Move 8, Damage Bonus +2D6

Weapons: Pincer 50%, damage 1D6+db; Bite 30 %, damage 3D6

Armor: 1-point hide

Skills: Listen 30%, Spot Hidden 30%

Bonner can become both immaterial and invisible. While invisible he can only be hit with an impale and gains +20% chance to hit others. He can be seen with any type of digital camera. Anyone attacking invisible Bonner while using a camera phone for sighting receives only -20% chance to hit. While immaterial, Bonner can only be hit with magical weapons or spells.