

Fimbulvinter

On the 21st December, 2010, in the night sky, the moon is apparently swallowed whole during a lunar eclipse. To most this is a poetic interpretation of events. But to a few this idea takes on a terrible reality of its own. The eclipse is visible in North and South America, Iceland, Ireland, Britain and northern Scandinavia, and so the scenario is best suited to a city within these locales.

The setting is any major city of around Latitude 50N, within the area mentioned above. In the UK a Latitude of 53N, where Manchester and Liverpool are is suitable, whilst in North America you might want to nudge it towards 47N where Seattle sits.

The scenario involves a plot by The Fate. Since Delta Green has an "agreement" with the fate it makes sense to have the PCs represent another agency. Alternatively a game where the Delta Green agents are effectively reduced to witnesses may work perfectly for you.

THE SNOWBALL EFFECT

In November memory sticks begin to turn up within certain circles. Mostly these are to be found on people in clubs but a few find their way into the possession of criminals and cultists apprehended by the authorities.

On the memory stick can be found a musical track entitled 'Fimbulvinter' (pronounced 'FIM-bull-VIN-ter) alongside related videos. The track combines a stirring ambient orchestral version with a rhythmic chant, laid over a dance beat. The videos show wintery scenes and dark forests, cut together with close-ups of an unidentifiable white smiling man with snippets of music. It is impossible to identify the musicians involved.

A text file on the memory sticks encourages people to join a mailing list for more information.

Research reveals that Fimbulvinter is the name for 'The Great Winter' that precedes Ragnarok, and the end of the world. There's a wealth of information about Ragnarok to be found elsewhere, but nothing suggesting a real world future event. Some agents might link the predicted Fimbulvinter to the Winter Solstice on the 21st (and a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll might allow an agent to recognise it as a date important to Ithaqua). However checking events that coincide with this date are likely to throw up all sorts of results, as it's a key point on the pagan calendar. Nothing details an event relating directly to an event called Fimbulvinter

The mailing lists have been set up by Whole Earth Enterprises on behalf of Conqueror Worm Music. Unless an agency goes in heavy handed, they're unlikely to get anything more than a press release concerning an "exciting new signing to the Conqueror Worm label", an upcoming launch party and precious few details. "More information" seems limited to additional teaser videos.

Rumours begin to spread that Fimbulvinter is approaching. Some cultists use it as a veiled threat. At much the same time the music and videos appear online, loaded up by fans. The origins of these files suggest that this is some sort of global campaign and particularly well organized. This may also become apparent from the mailing lists, as there appear to be unique mailing lists for each country (two in the US).

On Monday 20th December members of the mailing lists are sent details of a private event that starts before the eclipse. Each mailing list reveals a location within the appropriate country. The event is described as 'Fimbulvinter, Celebration of the Solstice' and lists local DJs involved. Promoters within clubbing circles will also get texted details.

The agency has enough time to mobilize local agents and/or police, although the organizers have been legally authorized to use the building indicated. By the time agents arrive there are guaranteed to be a lot of people already there, and the organizers have had much of December to set up generators, sound equipment and big screens, and to ensure all health and safety requirements have been met.

Fimbulvinter takes place at five cities simultaneously, the invites appearing just two hours before. In Manchester, UK, for example, the invite appears at 10pm local time. In Boston it'll be 5pm whilst in Seattle it'll be 2pm. Tailor these cities and times according to your scenario.

THE EVENT

Unless you've got a deserted building in mind, consider setting Fimbulvinter in a large abandoned theatre or hotel. The front of the building has a large foyer where there's an open bar. Toilets are in working order. There are several large communal areas, including one which has been converted into a dance hall. Smoke machines pump in dry ice, spotlights strobe beams of light across the room, a big screen is tuned into white noise and DJs have set up beneath it. It's incredibly loud. A mix of dance music is playing. Throughout the night the screen comes to life, with extended clips of the Fimbulvinter videos playing out an unclear narrative: a enigmatic smiling man stalking a forest inhabited by characters lifted from fairy tales or dreams, children playing in the snow, a vaguely defined wolf. It's cut together with live camera feeds from the four other venues. Between songs vocals from the Fimbulvinter tune tease the audience, encouraging them to sing along.

Many people here will be particularly music and dance orientated, in brightly colored clothing (or stylish black), but others are more conservatively dressed and watching from the sidelines. Agents are most likely to fit in with is last group.

The majority of the building is off limits even to people working here, the DJs, those serving drinks and the hired muscle. They themselves have no cult connections - they tend to be local talent and are well known. In fact there are no masses of cultists hidden away, although a couple of technicians with inside knowledge are stationed to ensure things go smoothly.

The agents have five and a half hours to search around before the eclipse begins, assuming they arrive as Fimbulvinter begins. By the time of the eclipse people will be drunk, some asleep in quiet corners, with new party goers filtering in, people who've been at other clubs or who have just heard about Fimbulvinter. The venue will be full.

ECLIPSE

Immediately prior to the eclipse the night sky appears on screen, the music fading away to an extended introduction to the Fimbulvinter tune. People in the crowd chant along with the vocals as the screen shows the crimson shadow of the earth creep over the face of the moon. Artificial snow falls. Yet some people see something else. The dry ice in the venue contains chemicals, possibly derivative of Black Lotus, that cause those that inhale it to 'see' the Dreamlands just beneath the surface of reality. With everyone in the venue having inhaled the smoke to some degree, and having all been subjected to the same surreal dreamscape on the screens, those dreams become a little more real.

PCs must make a CON roll to resist the effects of the smoke, and those that succumb are allowed a POW roll to "snap out of it" with just some lingering effects. Those affected experience a Dreamland forest much like the one on screen, the lights now resembling stars, the large moon disappearing behind the earth's shadow. The music begins to fade out until barely audible above the sounds of wind and distant howling. The snow is genuine, freezing cold. They are alone in the forest, their footprints the lone trail in the snow. Those who've researched Ragnarok, knowing that the wolf Fenris is supposed to swallow the moon, see this happen.

Those unaffected will see those caught up in the spell staring into space, chanting. They won't stop until the eclipse is complete. With the chanting complete, the screen switches to static and white noise. The chanters, in turn, turn away from the screen, still consumed by visions. Many fall down, asleep.

The effects of the smoke last several hours. Until then the victims see themselves lost, cold, alone, under a sky when the moon never reappears. SAN loss is 1/1D10. Those who failed a CON or POW roll spectacularly badly will be taken over by dark, cannibalistic passions. There should be at least a few people in the venue who begin to turn on their fellow man, with the hunger of the wolf, the cold in their bones. These people are trapped in their winter fantasy. The moon will never reappear in their night sky.

CONCLUSION?

Should the five city wide ritual go "according to plan" the extent of Ithaqua's reach will extend further south to the cities in which Fimbulvinter occurred. It is likely that this threat will not become apparent til much later, with the more immediate danger of spontaneous cannibalism likely to take a front seat. By then it's too late anyway.

The only way to prevent a city being affected is to sabotage the sound system. The smoke machine and screens both play their part in conjuring the surreal winterscape, but without the music they are unable to unite the revelers in song.