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A Resection of Time

The Strange Case of Kyle Woodson: A Scenario

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Dedication

This book is happily dedicated
to Al Harris, who first pushed me into game design,
to Fred Valdez, who opened the world of the Maya to me,
and to Fred Johnson, who never got to see it.



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Ek'Be: The Black Road

"For it is the doom of men that they forget."

—Merlin the Magician, *Excalibur*.

A Resection of Time is a short campaign for *Call of Cthulhu* set in the modern day. It begins in early April, in San Francisco, and ends a little later in the steamy jungles of Belize, in Central America. Before plunging into the dark heart of the ancient Mayan world, the investigators also travel to Los Angeles and shadowy Arkham.

The details of Mayan architecture, culture, epigraphy, and theology, as well as the experts on these topics named in the scenario, are all real, modified slightly where appropriate to incorporate the Mythos. Likewise, the places mentioned herein (save, of course, for the Sanbourne Institute and Arkham), particularly the Belize locations, are real, although described for dramatic impact.

Originally titled "Fragments of Time", *Resection* was written for play at Texi-Con '92, then substantially revised for the Cthulhu Masters' Tournament at GenCon '94, and then revised again for publication within this volume. This scenario uses the fifth edition *Call of Cthulhu* rules. The *Keeper's Compendium* and the *Encyclopedia Cthulhiana* were frequently referred to. While the *1990s Handbook* is a helpful resource, it is not essential to this scenario.

Resection is a two-part scenario. Each part is (barely) possible to play within a single game session. The keeper can assume two game sessions if the pace is kept high, three or four sessions if the play style is more leisurely or discursive.

Importantly, all of the numbered handouts are gathered at the back of this book, forming a lengthy appendix. These handouts are not repeated in the text, so be prepared to flip back and forth as necessary, or photocopy a second set of handouts for yourself.

There is a second appendix as well, a set of dreams for the investigators. Keepers must choose among them for those dreams most appropriate to the investigators' situations, as well as the interest of the players.

Keeper's Information

There's a lot of information to absorb, and the information is of different kinds, so read this section carefully.

In play, connected mysteries begin to evolve. While trying to unravel the fate of Kyle Woodson, a missing archaeologist, the investigators come to perceive that shadowy forces are at work, watching their every move and trying to steal or destroy Woodson's research. Uncovering Woodson's fate and discovering the identity of these unknown assailants serves as the primary motivation for the scenario. During their investigation, a

second mystery arises, as the investigators' own pasts and memories come into question. Something happened to some of them during a jungle dig in 1994, but what? Attention to the first mystery is the primary focus of play, while the second mystery grows more or less unnoticed, slowly blossoming from vague suspicion to mind-blasting terror.

Mayan archaeology forms the core of this scenario. The investigators are hired to find a missing Mayanist (a person who is a specialist in things Mayan) and are assumed to have some background in Mayan archaeology themselves. Much of the dramatic tension in this adventure arises from Woodson's revelations of the Cthulhu Mythos lurking behind the facts of Mayan history and culture. As the keeper finds it appropriate, he or she should distribute free skill points in Machete, Mayan Hieroglyphics, and Mayan Lore. Because so many mysteries still exist about the Maya, even the most learned specialists have relatively few percentiles in these latter two skills.

See the boxes on pp. 4-5 for a summary of our current knowledge of the ancient Maya.

THE TLACHAN, MI-GO, MAYA, AND MYTHOS

The following secrets have yet to be discovered by archaeologists. The Olmec (a pre-Mayan civilization in the lowlands of Veracruz and Tabasco, in Mexico) were actually survivors of the lost continent of Mu. Thus the later Olmec and Mayan writing systems are derived from Muvian Hieratic Nacaal, as described in the *Keeper's Compendium*. As profound as the Muvian influence was, other inhuman forces also served as inspirations for Mayan civilization.

Around 500 BC, centuries before Pre-Classic Mayan culture would flower, a bloody empire arose at Chetumal Bay in northern Belize that would serve as a primary inspiration of later Classic Mayan civilization. The catalyst for the rise of this new state came, literally, out of the sea as deep ones from the great barrier reef off the Belizian coast (the second largest such reef in the world) subjugated and interbred with the local Mayan populations, infusing one particular group, the Tlachan, with their ichthyoid blood and blasphemous knowledge of the Mythos. Other Maya groups fled from the Tlachan and their hideous masters, who they called the *I'winik Ka* (ee-WEEN-eeek HA, literally "people of the fish"). Eventually the deep ones returned to the oceans, but the Tlachan remained. The Tlachan venerated Cthulhu (the Mayan god Chac), and regarded blood and semen as sacred. Their fearsome capital was called Xibalba, an infamous name that would survive on in Mayan myth.

Another profound inhuman influence on the Tlachan came from the sky. Long before humans migrated to the Americas,

The Ancient Maya

Mayan civilization flourished in and around the Yucatán peninsula from circa 300 BC to roughly 900 AD, across the jungles, mountains, and plains of modern day Guatemala and Belize, and in adjacent parts of Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador. Americans and Europeans rediscovered the ruins of the ancient Maya in the 1840s. At first, archaeologists believed that the pyramids of Central America had been built by shipwrecked Egyptians, survivors of Atlantis, or a lost tribe of Israel. After 150 years of excavation and careful study, a clear picture of Mayan culture has finally emerged.

Mayan peoples first began to build complex public structures around 300 BC. The oldest Pre-Classic Mayan city and temple complexes have been found in northern Belize, in and around Chetumal Bay. Influenced strongly by the Olmec civilization of central Mexico, from whom the Maya seem to have inherited their writing system, the Maya entered their Classic period in AD 300. Classical Mayan civilization is characterized by the construction of huge stone pyramids and buildings and the carving of hieroglyphic inscriptions. Maya culture reached its peak in the rain forests of central Guatemala around AD 750, then began a decline whose causes are still unclear. By AD 900 most Mayan cities had been abandoned, and those that remained no longer erected monuments or carved inscriptions. The Post-Classic Maya flourished in the northern plains of the Yucatán until the Spanish conquered the Maya in the mid-1500s. Local populations of Maya survive to this day, with a culture that carries within its myth and religious ritual tantalizing echoes of the Classic Maya.

MAYAN SOCIETY

Unlike the later Aztec culture in central Mexico, there was never a single, unified Mayan state. The Maya area was dotted with independent city-states, who used trade and marriage to form alliances in a pattern similar to that observed in ancient Mesopotamia. Each city-state was ruled by an *ahau* (uh-HOW, a “holy blood lord”) who acted as a divine priest-king. Various elite families vied for the attentions of the royal family, and saw to the administration of the city. The lower classes provided manual labor for the building of the massive ceremonial centers and formed the agricultural base of society.

Long thought to be peaceful, enlightened philosophers, recent discoveries have revealed that competition and warfare were endemic to the Maya from the beginning of their recorded history. Wars aimed at the capture of nobles from neighboring cities. Higher rank made them more pleasing as sacrifices to the gods. Later, wars of conquest were fought where city-states battled to control their neighbors and build empires. The dependence of Mayan kings on warfare as a source of their legitimacy led to the escalation of conflict throughout the region, and may have led to the civilization’s collapse.

MAYAN TIME AND MATHEMATICS

The Maya believed that the gods created humanity in order to sing their praises and to keep the count of days. Calendrics and astronomy were therefore absolutely critical to the ancient Maya. The Maya believed that ours was the fourth incarnation of the world (the previous worlds were each marked by an unsuccessful attempt by the gods to create Man, after which that world was destroyed), and that this creation began on August 13, 3114 BC. The central Mayan calendar, called the Long Count, was a count of days from the beginning of creation. On top of this the Maya also used a sacred calendar of 260 days called the *Tzolkin* (ZOL-kin), and a solar calendar of 365 days. Dates were also recorded based on the phase of the moon and the cycles of the planets. The Maya, obsessed with recording time accurately, developed the most precise calendars in the ancient world, which could be used to predict the cycles of the planets and even forecast eclipses.

The Maya developed numbers and mathematics to aid them in their astronomical endeavors. The Mayan system was base 20, with twenty units making up the larger units of 20’s, 400’s, etc. Thus, 1.19 is 20+19 or 39, and 2.5.8 is 800+100+8 or 908. The Maya used only two digit signs, a dot for one and a bar for five. They also devised a symbol for zero as a place holder, the first culture on Earth to do so. The Maya performed complex multiplication and division, and even had a system of correction formulas that could account for decimal remainders.

MAYAN WRITING

The Maya were one of only two American civilizations who developed a writing system. Mayan writing consists of hieroglyphic characters arranged into two columns. The glyphs are read top to bottom, left to right. The complexity of the system made it almost impossible for modern scholars to decipher but, starting in the 1980s, remarkable strides have been made. As of 1996, about three-quarters of all surviving Mayan inscriptions had been translated.

Each glyph in an inscription can serve a variety of functions. It can act as a logogram (like an Egyptian hieroglyph) where one glyph stands for an entire word, or it can represent a spoken syllable, Pa for example. The logographic and phonetic values of glyphs were completely interchangeable, making translation a contextual nightmare. In addition, two or more glyphs could be fused into one, or an entire glyph stripped down to one symbolic element which would then be attached to another glyph to modify its meaning. A modern Mayan epigrapher must have a ready knowledge of Mayan archaeology, copious references of translated inscriptions, and a good working knowledge of modern Mayan languages to spot phonetic parallels.

See p. 5 for information on Mayan religion and ritual, and p. 6 for additional definitions, some of which are related to the Mayan people. ■

the mi-go of the Andes had established a colony in the Belizian lowlands near Chetumal Bay. The fungi came here to worship Shub-Niggurath. They used the great cave as a focus for their reproductive rites occurring every dry season. The Tlachan felt the power of the area and built their capital, Xibalba, around the spot. The mi-go coexisted with the hybrids and introduced them to the worship of Shub-Niggurath, known later to the Maya as Ix Chel (EESH chell), goddess of fertility and the moon. The mi-go also managed to foster ancestor worship among the Tlachan through judicious use of brain cylinders, allowing the "spirit" of the ahau's ancestor to guide him long after death.

The Tlachan carved out a depraved and bloody empire. Their inbred, hybrid lords ruled from their ancient capital of Xibalba. After a century, they grew decadent, and could no longer adequately defend themselves. Vicious internal conflicts arose among the Tlachan, and soon this great empire was wracked with civil war. The last great ahau at Xibalba tried to unite his people by venerating Chac above all other gods, and decided to close Ix Chel's cavern. The mi-go, fearful that they would lose their ritual center, united the neighboring tribes in revolt. The people of northern Belize, who had long hated the Tlachan, rose up as one and destroyed the Tlachan empire. By 300 BC their reign of terror was a mysterious legend. The collapse of the Tlachan had little effect on the worship of Shub-Niggurath, and fungi from Yuggoth reside among the ruins of Xibalba to this day.

Xibalba and its colonies were swallowed by the jungle. Local populations later imitated Tlachano art, architecture, and rituals, and also incorporated echoes of Tlachan history into the Mayan creation myth, with the hero twins besting the lords of the night in Xibalba. The Tlachan thus left their mark on the Chicanel culture, regarded by modern archaeologists as the first great florescence of the lowland Maya. In post-Colombian times, one of the Tlachan ruins was renamed El Cacao by the Spaniards, a place of ill repute and ancient evil.

In 1959, a large group of Mennonites (see the nearby box for a definition) migrated to Belize from Mexico, fleeing legal persecution. The simple, Amish-like folk bought some of the land holding the ruins of the Tlachan. One particularly impoverished and degenerate group settled very near El Cacao and Xibalba, and soon entered into dark covenants with the buzzing voices they heard in the jungle. Their grandchildren now worship Shub-Niggurath alongside the fungi, and keep the aliens and their ceremonial cavern hidden from prying eyes.

THE HUGHBANKS EXPEDITION

In the late summer of 1994, an archaeological expedition from the University of Pennsylvania headed by Dr. Paul Highbanks (and including some or all of the investigators) carried out a survey and dig near Kate's Lagoon in northern Belize. The season was unlucky from the start, with transport and logistics problems, but seemed to look up when a survey team heard rumors of a huge, unexplored site in the nearby jungle, a site called El Cacao. Highbanks set up a team to survey and possibly to excavate at El Cacao. After a long, rigorous hike, they reached the shady ruin and disaster struck.

As the survivors remember, El Cacao was being used as a base for cocaine traffickers. A misunderstanding with the smugglers led to a shoot-out and the deaths of four students. The expedition fled, the project collapsed, careers were destroyed, and the survivors went their separate ways.

Mayan Religion and Ritual

The Maya believed (and still believe) in the existence of a supernatural world that lies close to our own. The Other World or the Spirit World is inhabited by the gods and the living spirits of the objects around us. Mayan theology is animistic and shamanic. Everything we see around us is alive, its essence having a physical, active form in the Other World. The Other World connects to the Underworld, a dark, watery place called *Xibalba* (shee-BAHL-bah, "the place of terror") where the Lords of the Night rule and torment the souls of the dead. Access to the Other World can be found through caves and wells, or through ecstatic ritual.

The Classic Maya also believed that the gods and spirits of the Other World made human existence and survival possible by providing sunshine and rain to the normal world. In return for feeding man with bountiful crops and game, man was expected to feed the gods. The gods require spiritual essence, or *ch'ulel* (CHOO-llel), to survive. *Ch'ulel*, the Maya believed, is focused in sacred fluids—semen, maize gruel, and especially blood. Bloodletting and human sacrifice formed the foundation of all Mayan ritual. The ahau either offered up his own blood (taken from the fingers, tongue, or genitals) to the gods, or could offer the blood of an elite captive from another city. In order to keep the world alive, frequent sacrifices were needed, hence the endemic warfare to acquire captives and their blood. During rituals, the ahau himself acted as the conduit for divine essence into the normal world; he bargained with the gods to bring favor to his city. An ahau legitimized his rule by performing these rituals, winning divine favor, and erecting monuments to himself. Thus, all of Classic Mayan civilization was driven by the blood of kings.

THE POPOL VUH

The *Popol Vuh* (POE-poel VOO) is the text of the creation myth, as recorded by the *Quiché* (KEY-chay) Maya. It tells of how the gods made the world, then tried to make men out of mud, wood, and straw, then finally made humanity out of maize. The book then relates the epic of the Hero Twins, the sons of the First Man, and their quest to avenge the death of the father at the hands of the Lords of the Night. After many perilous tests and challenges, the twins finally trick the Lords of the Night into giving them spiritual power over the gods themselves. The ahau's contract with the divine is the Hero Twins' legacy to mankind.

What actually happened was far more sinister. The survey team met not drug smugglers but the corrupted Mennonites, who drove them from the site by force. Desperate to keep their holy site safe, the fungi from Yuggoth attacked the camp that night, taking prisoner all of the investigators present and of most of the expedition. The mi-go surgically restructured the memories of the captives, excising any reference to the

Mennonites or themselves. The expedition returned home in disgrace as controversy and lawsuits swirled around Hughbanks and the University. Only one Hughbanks member, Kyle Woodson, afterward was able to attain success as a Mayanist. Woodson's death is the informing event in these adventures.

THE STRANGE CASE OF KYLE WOODSON

After the disastrous field season in Belize, Kyle Woodson found work with the American Foundation for Antiquarian Research (AFAR). Under AFAR's patronage he conducted several successful field seasons across Central America and published several books about the Maya. While conducting research for a new book about the Pre-Classic Maya, Woodson found a chance reference in an obscure book about a Mayan inscription found in Asia. He followed up on the reference, traveling down a long, convoluted trail of scholarship that led him to the Sanbourne Institute, the *Zanhu Tablets*, Arkham, and knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos. The blasphemous secrets Woodson discovered so jarred his mind that his mi-go conditioning began to slip. Hideous dreams were the result.

While at the Sanbourne Institute, Woodson met a Brother of the Yellow Sign, who immediately sensed that Woodson's brain had been altered by the mi-go. Hoping he might lead them to the fungi, the Brothers put Woodson under close scrutiny. The Mayanist soon found himself followed by unknown men and tortured by dreams of hideous creatures. He fled to Belize to find El Cacao, the heart of the mystery torturing his mind. He told AFAR that the trip, although unorthodox, was necessary to follow up on a new and startling discovery he'd just made. A few days later, Woodson, barely coherent, called Ramsey Schwartz, the head of AFAR, to tell him that extraterrestrials were operating in northern Belize.

A week later, Woodson faxed AFAR that he was coming home. He arrived, only apparently to die in a very public place.



KYLE WOODSON

More Definitions

Epigraphy—that branch of knowledge dealing with the deciphering and interpretation of inscriptions.

Mayanist—an anthropologist, art historian, or archaeologist who specializes in the study of Mayan cultures, both ancient and contemporary.

Mennonite—a evangelical Christian sect of German origin whose austere beliefs include the need for nonconformity with the world, noticeably among some the eschewing of technological advance. World-wide, there are about a million adherents.

Quiché Maya —a particular Mayan tribe who dwell today in the highlands of Guatemala. The Quiché language was one of the first Mayan dialects to be extensively studied. The Quiché creation myth, the Popol Vuh, is the only epic of its kind to survive to the present day. Mayanists use Quiché language and myth as a jumping-off point for studies of the Classic Maya.

That same night, an agent of the fungi broke into Woodson's home, trying to find and destroy his notes. The burglary was noticed, however, and a glaring inconsistency turned up during Woodson's autopsy. Ramsey Schwartz, who leads AFAR, noticed the holes in Woodson's autopsy report, and found the attempted burglary of Woodson's home too suspicious for coincidence. He has hired the investigators to find the truth. Woodson's true fate is detailed in the keeper's information of Part 2 of this scenario.

Involving the Investigators

This scenario presumes that one or more of the investigators was present at the disaster of the Hughbanks expedition in 1994. Optimally, all were there. This provides a common hook for involving the player characters in the story, as those who were at the scene have fond memories of some who were lost. Some investigators might resent having to reexamine such a dark moment in their pasts.

Actually, of course, any investigators who accompanied the Hughbanks expedition had their memories altered by mi-go. As a particularly nasty trick, keepers might decide that investigators who didn't attend actually did, and have had everything they know about their lives and personalities grafted onto them by the fungi from Yuggoth.

It would be convenient if one investigator is presently a Mayan archaeologist and epigrapher. If this is not possible, or if the keeper wishes to broaden participation, grant all investigators who belonged to the 1994 expedition 3D10 skill percentiles in Mayan Lore (see below), and 1D10 percentiles each in Mayan Hieroglyphics and Machete. (Investigators who later remember that they also participated in the expedition receive their percentiles when they remember, not before.) These free skill points may be useful in many subsequent adventures. Many players may volunteer their investigators just for these benefits.

Any investigator archaeologist who declares Mesoamerican archaeology as his or her specialty will receives a Mayan Lore skill equal to half of his or her Archaeology skill plus a quarter of the Anthropology skill.

CHARLES HARGROVE

As another option, the keeper can introduce Charles Hargrove, an epigrapher also hired by Schwartz to help in the search for Kyle Woodson.

CHARLES HARGROVE, age 27, Arrogant Epigrapher

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 13
DEX 15 APP 14 EDU 17 SAN 59 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapon: Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3+1D4

Skills: Anthropology 50%, Archaeology 65%, Art (sketching) 55%, Art History 65%, Bargain 37%, Fast Talk 52%, Library Use 50%, Listen 30%, Martial Arts 35%, Mayan Lore 65%, Mayan Hieroglyphics 50%, Quiché Mayan 60%, Spanish 15%, Spot Hidden 60%.

A participant in the 1994 field season in Belize, Hargrove is remembered by other participants as an aloof, abrasive student. Now he's an aloof, abrasive doctoral student. He exemplifies the arrogant disdain for the "real world" so common in acade-

mia. Grooming himself to be the next great expert on Mayan epigraphy, Hargrove has little time to think about anything else. He's coming along because he needs the money and because he remembers Woodson as a good archaeologist.



CHARLES HARGROVE

Hargrove is a wiry man about 5'11" in height, and of restless energy and keen perception. He wears wire-rimmed glasses. His hair is dark, closed cropped, and usually moussed. Depending on whether the viewer likes him or dislikes him, his face wears a permanent grin or a permanent sneer. Hargrove reads a book a

day, and summarizes every book on a separate 4" x 6" note card. He spends an average 1D3 hours daily on the internet, reviewing archaeological, anthropological, and climatological journals. When he sleeps, he sometimes emits a slight nasal whine intensely annoying to hear.

Player Information

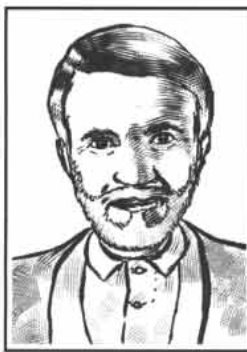
The investigators all receive a phone call from Ramsey Schwartz, the head of AFAR, asking for their assistance "in a very delicate matter". Schwartz goes on to list the qualifications he used to choose them (archaeological background, medical expertise, experience in investigation, knowledge of the Maya, etc.). Anyone who participated in the 1994 expedition is told that the matter concerns Kyle Woodson. Any investigator with a successful Knowledge roll (or who has done some simple research) can learn the information about Schwartz and AFAR contained in *Resection Papers #1*. Investigator alumni of the 1994 dig also receive *Resection Papers #2*.

Schwartz sets up a meeting for 2 p.m. later that week in the AFAR offices in San Francisco. His staff arranges for plane tickets (business class). The scenario begins with Schwartz's statement.

POWER MEETING

Arriving by limo, the investigators are whisked into AFAR, within a sleekly refurbished ferryboat permanently anchored along the Embarcadero a few blocks from the city's financial district. Investigator luggage goes on to the Hilton (on Taylor at Mason), while the investigators are escorted upstairs to meet Ramsey Schwartz.

Schwartz is extremely wealthy, a Vietnam-era Medal of Honor winner and now a retired computer industry mogul, famous for his parachute and free-flight balloon exploits. He has put much money into organizations like AFAR. The conference room reflects that commitment—spacious, decorated in grays and earth tones. Framed Southwest Indian prints line the walls. In one corner stands a miniature Aztec statue, leaning through its stone mask. Flanking the picture window view of Treasure Island stands a pair of six-foot-tall ebony and gold jackals, Egyptian, wearing medallions depicting an ibis-headed god.



RAMSEY SCHWARTZ

Three New Skills

Machete (15%)—Damage 1D8+1+db. A machete is a broad-bladed one-handed knife 18-30 inches long—a descendant of the hand-to-hand cutlass, minus the hand guard. In the tropics one might use a machete to hack away overgrowth, to harvest sugar cane and other crops, to substitute it for an ax, or as a handy weapon with which to attack. Lacking a hand guard, the machete cannot parry.

Mayan Hieroglyphics (00)—With this skill, investigators can translate and interpret Mayan hieroglyphic inscriptions. Sometimes a portion of an inscription simply proves untranslatable, no matter how good the translator is. There is still a lot to learn about the Maya.

Maya Lore (00)—This skill measures the amount an investigator knows about the art, architecture, and culture of the ancient Maya. Use this skill to tentatively date buildings or ceramics, identify images of gods or kings, and interpret the complex symbols contained within Mayan art. Reading Mayan hieroglyphics is a separate skill.

The furnishings are worth a fortune, even though there's far less artsy decoration than one might expect. The room is calculated to say the most with the least, giving an impression of sophistication and power. After a few minutes of waiting, Ramsey Schwartz, the investigators' new employer, enters.

Schwartz steps up to the end of the rosewood table. He is a slight man, not quite six feet, charismatic in bearing. He's impeccably dressed, firmly handsome, and although his face is slightly lined and there's gray at each temple, Schwartz's bright eyes impart an impression of youth, gleaming and intense. Folding his hands behind him, he speaks. The keeper can read aloud his statement or photocopy it and give copies of it to the players.

RAMSEY SCHWARTZ, age 60, Retired Multi-billionaire and Science Maven

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 18
DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 22 SAN 80 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: M16A2 Automatic Rifle 70%, damage 2D8
Fist/Punch 40%, damage 1D3+1D4

Skills: Accounting 35%, Anthropology 30%, Archaeology 35%, Art (History) 45%, Astronomy 25%, Ballooning 45%, Bargain 70%, Biology 25%, Cantonese Chinese 05%, Chemistry 18%, Computer Use 25%, Credit Rating 99%, Fast Talk 35%, French 10%, Geology 30%, History 25%, Japanese 05%, Library Use 60%, Natural History 30%, Parachute 80%, Persuade 40%, Physics 20%, Pilot (Civil Prop, Civil Jet) 60%, Psychology 65%, Russian 05%, Spot Hidden 40%.

"Good afternoon, all of you. I am pleased that you came. I need help in a strange matter. A trusted employee of mine, a man named Kyle Woodson, whom I believe some of you know may know, is missing. Or rather he isn't, and that's the problem. Allow me to explain.

"For the last three years, Mr. Woodson has directed successive excavations I've sponsored in northern Belize. Ten days ago, I received a fax from Woodson informing me that he was returning to Belize to take care of some personal business. He had been researching a new book about the emergence of Mayan civilization. Five days ago, I got a rather startling call from him. He told me he'd made an incredible discovery that verified all of the research for his new book. I got another fax four days ago telling me that he was coming home. On the way from the airport, Kyle's car was hit by another car. He didn't die immediately. At the hospital, the emergency room technicians made a startling discovery.

"You see, the blood coming out of his body wasn't Kyle's. The blood type matched, but there was a problem in the serum. He had caught malaria while in the field a few years back. Malaria is a chronic disease. You never quite shake it off. This information showed up in his records, but no trace of malaria or malarial antibodies existed in his blood. Two hours after the accident, the man carrying Kyle Woodson's passport died and was promptly cremated, apparently because of a clerical error. By the time I had been informed, it was too late to verify anything. But either Kyle Woodson had found a cure for malaria in the swamps of Belize, or the man who died wasn't Kyle Woodson!

"Interestingly enough, that same night the police were dispatched to Woodson's home here in San Francisco. A neighbor had reported a prowler moving about inside. The police found no prowler and no signs of a break-in, yet the house was a mess, as if someone had ransacked it. Coincidence? Unlikely. So, where is Kyle Woodson? Who is the mysterious stranger who died in his place? What was the incredible discovery that so excited him? Did his discovery have something to do with his disappearance? Finally, what were parties unknown looking for in his house that night? These are the questions I want you to answer.

"I stress to you that the people under me are my most treasured resource. I want you to know what happened to Kyle and, if there was foul play, I want the perpetrators brought to justice. You have full autonomy in this investigation. I have no wish to interfere with your methods. I expect periodic verbal or written reports. If you need something, contact my office. Believe me, we can assist you in almost any way. Good luck, all of you. And good hunting." Schwartz asks for questions.

Schwartz should seem a bit odd, but not suspicious. Psychology rolls directed at him indicate complete and utter sincerity.

He offers each investigator ten thousand dollars upon completion of the job. There may be danger involved, but he also estimates that the job will take only a couple of weeks. AFAR reimburses all receipted or itemized expenses. AFAR has already booked hotel rooms for the investigators in San Francisco at the Hilton. He provides a background file about Kyle Woodson (see *Resection Papers #3*), the address of Woodson's house, and a neatly labeled set of spare keys Woodson kept in his office at AFAR.

Schwartz can furnish equipment, within reason, but under no circumstances will AFAR pay for firearms or help to secure gun permits. He takes pains to equip the investigators with email, phone, and fax numbers for himself and certain key staff who can act autonomously in emergencies. The investigators can reach Schwartz through his answering service. He guarantees a response within a few hours after a call.

The interview over, the investigators are driven to the Hilton. They check into their rooms and then, over lunch at Kuleto's, they can decide on a course of action.

San Francisco

Several avenues of investigation present themselves. The investigators can talk to the police about Woodson's death, go to the hospital where Woodson was treated, or proceed directly to his home.

The Police

The New Hall of Justice is a generation old. It's crowded and buzzing with activity. There is some confusion concerning the investigators' quest, because the inquiry concerning breaking and entering at Woodson's home actually would be handled at Central Station, on Vallejo. After an hour or so of making calls, a duty sergeant decides that they should see Detective Rolston, Homicide, in the Investigations Bureau on the fourth floor of the Hall.

The Woodson case involves a hit-and-run manslaughter or murder charge at SFO (transferred from the airport police detail to downtown), serious irregularities in procedure at a hospital and a mortuary (involving violations in city regulation and criminal statutes of state law), a possible break-in at Woodson's house, and a missing person (one Kyle Woodson). Rolston is the man in charge of the unusual situation. He's a good choice, an expert in putting together odd bits of information to make one, unbreakable whole. When prosecuting attorneys bring one of his cases to court, they rarely lose.

Rolston suspects that all the incidents are linked, which requires the presence of a considerable criminal conspiracy. The investigators are the first people connected with the case who potentially fit that description. In turn, their connection with AFAR and Ramsey Schwartz only increases Rolston's interest, because Schwartz has enough money to make almost anything happen. Given means and opportunity, Rolston only needs motive to make a case.

Ask for Credit Rating rolls for the investigators. Those with failing rolls further provoke Rolston's suspicions. He briefly questions each of them about their involvement in this matter. If investigators have been involved in shady or questionable dealings in the past, he puts a tail on them. If any of the investigators have criminal records or have consorted with gangland figures, Rolston requests that they not leave town without keeping him informed of their movements. Since AFAR is also under Rolston's suspicions, neither it nor Schwartz is of the slightest help in removing police pressure.

If Rolston is suspicious, he asks for individual interviews. Make the interviews brief and fair, but let the questions be the sort whose effects linger. For instance, of those who knew Kyle Woodson, did they have grudges against him? Did they owe him money? Had they had professional disagreements? Did any of the investigators go to medical school? Have any of the investigators lived in the San Francisco area, or are they familiar with it? What do they know about Ramsey Schwartz? And so on—the questions should have to do with traditional police work; they should not expose anything that Rolston knows,



E. G. ROLSTON

which amounts to almost nothing. Later events can set things right, but now is the time for suspicions, unease, and paranoia.

Investigators who are known to local police as trustworthy go a long way toward soothing Rolston's suspicions, but a good cop always follows evidence, not reputation. The investigators are worth watching. So far, no other significant progress has been made in the investigation.

If the investigators favorably impress Rolston, he mentions that a break-in at Woodson's house apparently occurred the same evening that Woodson was hit by a car. It was reported by Morris Beachy, Woodson's neighbor. The report concerning the break-in is a matter of public record, but is something so apparently minor that the investigators might never notice it. The close timing between the death and the break-in is the most interesting thing that Rolston so far has learned. He dangles this information hoping that the investigators will supply him with some corresponding tidbit. He does not know that Ramsey Schwartz has already informed the investigators of the synchronous events. If the investigators tell him of Schwartz's knowledge, Rolston's suspicions thereafter focus on Schwartz, not on the investigators.

For more about the break-in, go to the sub-section "Morris Beachy", on p. 10. If the investigators do not impress Det. Rolston, they can still meet Morris Beachy when they go to Woodson's house, and he can describe the earlier break-in.

ROLSTON'S OTHER KNOWLEDGE

Woodson came to the police late last year, stating that a man or group of men were following him. Lacking other information, the police could do nothing. No threats or attacks were made, Woodson did not know who the men were, nor could he supply a motive for their activity. There the matter rested.

Rolston can confirm that the hit-and-run car was a 1997 Ford Taurus, by the broken glass from the right head lamp left at the scene. Metallic-gold paint was found on the deceased's clothing. However, this sort of detail is none of the investigators' business, however, nor will the car involved be found until Los Briones Reservoir is drained, years from now.

Rolston also knows that a Mrs. Felice Woodson arranged for Woodson's transport and cremation, but he sees no reason to mention that complication to the investigators. He has a tentative description, matching the description of The Stranger (whom the investigators may meet at Kyle Woodson's house). He definitely will not mention her if one or more of the investigators is female.

Detective E. G. ROLSTON, age 39, Lieutenant, Homicide Squad

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 15

DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 16 SAN 60 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

9mm Glock Automatic 75%, 3 shots per round, damage 1D10

Pepper Spray 35%, incapacitation for half an hour unless complicated by cocaine or similar toxin, whereupon emergency respiratory or cardiac failure may result.

Nightstick 45%, damage 1D8+1D4

Armor: if worn, his body armor has a 60% chance to block 8 points bullet or knife damage.

Skills: Bargain 65%, Boxing 55%, Cantonese 05%, Climb 35%, Computer Use 40%, Credit Rating 40%, Dodge 40%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 40%, Jump 40%, Law 35%, Listen 55%, Locksmith 15%, Mexican Spanish 20%, Persuade 20%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Thai 05%.

The Accident

The investigators have no access to police records. Since medical and other records have not yet been delivered to AFAR, which is the provider of record, the investigators have only written newspaper accounts based entirely on a single "blotter" police statement made public the day of the accident. The following brief story appeared in almost identical forms in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner*.

Hit-and-Run Accident at SFO

A man identified as Kyle Woodson of the City was struck by a vehicle identified as a metallic-gold Ford Taurus. Mr. Woodson is reported in critical condition at Cal-Med/San Francisco.

The accident occurred a little before 4 p.m. yesterday afternoon. Witnesses declared that the car first slowed after hitting Mr. Woodson, then sped away.

Police are initially treating this matter as an accident. They request that those with additional information call Lt. Rolston at the Hall of Justice as soon as possible.

The police press release (upon which the news stories are based) has more details, as summarized below.

At 3:38 p.m., Kyle Woodson was struck by a sedan while walking between the international terminal and the central parking garage at San Francisco International Airport. Witnesses reported that Woodson was jaywalking, and in fact police found him more than fifty yards from the nearest crosswalk.

The car involved was reported as a metallic-gold 1997 Ford Taurus which slowed, then sped away. Witnesses saw no license plate, and one said that the plate had been removed. Woodson was identified from his wallet, stabilized by paramedics, then rushed to Cal-Med/San Francisco, Woodson's medical provider, in critical condition from injuries to the head.

WITNESSES, PARAMEDICS, REPORTING OFFICERS

As is routine, Rolston keeps confidential the identities of all the witnesses to the Woodson accident. His case may or may not turn out to be murder, but his instincts strongly suggest that is the case.

Paramedics and police officers know the book concerning possible criminal investigations, and will make no statement. If asked about the accuracy of the blotter information, all agree without hesitation that the information is accurate. Psychology rolls show they are telling the truth.

One paramedic offers something fresh, though. Woodson's most serious injuries were to the top of the head, almost as though he dove headfirst into the front of the car.

The Hospital

Investigators going to Cal-Med's San Francisco hospital find themselves being forwarded from office to office of Client Relations, Records, and the Board of Administration. Regardless of department, Psychology rolls reveal that the people to whom they talk are oddly nervous.

As AFAR's representatives, establishing their right to see Woodson's records should amount to the presentation of the waiver that Woodson long ago signed, but the hospital's administrators have been panicked to find that they have nothing to offer to the investigators. No record of Kyle Woodson exists for

10 - A Resection of Time

that day, save for copies of admitting doctor Herman Zanca's written examination and for his carbon copies of the treatment and prescription orders he issued. Woodson has been totally deleted from the HMO's enormous and efficient computer database. Woodson's master file, several inches thick, has also vanished. The pharmacy records, subject to the tightest controls, make no mention of Woodson on that day. To the hospital administrators, this is the equivalent of anarchy and total collapse. Their confusion and dismay is understandable.

After an hour and a half, they decide to tell the truth, a decision that has gone all the way up to the Administrating Doctor and then back down. The truth is that the staff knows nothing except that records thought secure have somehow systematically disappeared. The investigators may choose not to believe these bureaucrats, but no evidence of malfeasance or collusion exists. The records are gone. No one can say who is responsible.

As a gesture of goodwill, Dr. Zanca is made available in a private conference room. Zanca enters in a surly mood, because he is needed on the floor to treat patients, and because he has already spoken to an agent from AFAR. (Schwartz chose not to mention this earlier agent, since he disappeared the next day. AFAR's legal department is waiting until three days, a standard interval, have passed. Then they will alert the police.) If the keeper wants to turn the investigators against Schwartz, this is a good path to follow, although he or she will have to create a new evidence path.

Friendly concern by the investigators soon soothes Zanca. Investigatorial pressure, on the other hand, incites him, and Zanca has a foul temper when treated with disrespect.

He confirms that he was the admitting physician when Kyle Woodson was treated. It was a hellish day, filled with heart attacks, comas, mangling auto accidents, and holes in bodies squirting geysers of blood from gunshot wounds. Admissions was jammed. The hours went by in a blur.

Woodson never regained consciousness. He never made a statement. His wallet was missing but he was carrying a passport. As a nurse tried fruitlessly to reach the wife scrawled in as next of kin on page four of the document, a brief glance at the stamps inside revealed that Woodson had just arrived from Belize. Zanca ordered blood work, to make sure the man wasn't carrying some disease or parasite that might complicate recovery. His patient died before the blood work returned. Zanca guesses that Woodson's wife took away the passport, along with the rest of Woodson's personal effects, though he never saw her.

No positive identification of Woodson was made, since the next of kin could not be reached, and (lacking as yet Woodson's master file) Zanca was unaware of Woodson's employment at AFAR. The patient was of the right height and same approximate build. His face was bloody and badly lacerated. Apparently he had hit the grill or windshield of the impacting car. No reason existed to question the identity of the hospitalized man.

Sometime during the night, Woodson's master file arrived in Zanca's in-basket, though it should have gone up to the Critical unit. (It was not unusual that a file was misplaced. The files travel from unit to unit in the hundreds, transported by hand in supermarket shopping carts.) The next morning, Zanca was



DR. ZANCA

startled to notice that the tests made the day before showed the right blood groups, but not the chronic malaria prominent in Woodson's medical file.

Now Zanca wondered about the identity of his corpse. He ordered another sample from the morgue, but that afternoon learned that the body and effects had already been transferred to a funeral home earlier in the morning. From the funeral home, he learned that cremation had occurred that morning. Woodson's wife had signed for everything. Somehow she had gotten a speed of action vastly faster than legally possible.

Zanca introduces to the investigators the duty nurse who had attempted to locate Woodson's wife, the next of kin about whom the police have no record. The nurse still has the Woodson address and phone number, since she never finished her mission.

Mrs. Felice Woodson
327 Hemlock Street
San Francisco CA 94109

Phone number and address are those listed as Woodson's in AFAR's file. Calls to AFAR establish that no one there knows of a Mrs. Woodson. Instead of gaining an answer, the investigators have a new question.

Zanca knows nothing more. His story over, his beeper can call him away.

Dr. HERMAN ZANCA, age 30, Emergency Room Admitting Physician

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 10	INT 16	POW 15
DEX 13	APP 10	EDU 19	SAN 74	HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: energy and natural wit.

Skills: Bargain 45%, Biology 40%, Cantonese 10%, Chemistry 20%, Climb 50%, Computer Use 20%, Fast Talk 23%, First Aid 90%, Flame with Anger 72%, Improvise 67%, Library Use 35%, Listen 35%, Medicine 78%, Persuade 35%, Pharmacy 15%, Psychology 29%, Samoan 05%, Mexican Spanish 25%, Spot Hidden 40%, Tagalog 08%, Vietnamese 10%.

Morris Beachy

Det. Rolston may have offered Beachy to the investigators as a lead. The investigators can also meet Beachy when he knocks at Woodson's door, questioning their search of Woodson's house. Or they can meet Beachy after he calls police during the investigators' pursuit of The Stranger (see further below).

Beachy is a round, pesky, excitable man who has little to do but feed his cats or walk his dogs. Excitement in the street or next door rouses his terriers, and their barks rouse Beachy, who then prowls and snoops endlessly to learn the source of the noise. Like many early retirees, his barren life has dwindled to complaint.

Beach lives next door to Woodson, at 325 Hemlock, in an identical wooden frame row house. As is common with vintage San Francisco houses, the walls of Beachy's building actually adjoin those of the neighboring houses to either side. From the front a covered way through garage or basement lets one reach the lightwell in back of such



MORRIS BEACHY

a house. In such close quarters, Beachy hears almost everything that happens to his neighbors to the side or back, and he is not shy in letting them know that.

At approximately 10 p.m. on the same day that Woodson was hit, Beachy called police to report suspicious sounds in Woodson's house. A unit was dispatched to the house. Investigating officers confirm hearing a loud noise from within, but all doors and accessible windows were locked. Aiming their flashlights inside, the officers thought they saw signs of a disturbance, and quietly entered the residence using the keys which Woodson had left with Beachy. Finding no intruder inside, nor evidence of a forced entry, they asked Beachy to report any new disturbance and left.

Beachy can remark that Woodson lived quietly and was usually a good neighbor—high praise from him. Beachy had never been in Woodson's house, but he is quite sure that no Mrs. Woodson lived there. Doubtless there was a divorce. He clucks his tongue about such decadent times.

MORRIS BEACHY, age 55, Aimless Retiree and Friend of Animals

STR 09 CON 10 SIZ 10 INT 12 POW 14
DEX 09 APP 09 EDU 11 SAN 55 HP 10

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none

Skills: Accounting (Creative) 40%, Art (Comparative) 45%, Bargain 70%, Credit Rating 55%, Fast Talk 55%, French 28%, History 25%, Library Use 45%, Psychology 60%, Work the System 65%.

TITIAN, a Terrier

STR 09 CON 14 SIZ 04 POW 08 DEX 14
MOV 12 HP 09

Damage Bonus: -1D4.

Weapon: Bite 30%, damage 1D6

Skills: Listen 75%, Scent Something Interesting 90%.

COROT, a Terrier

STR 08 CON 13 SIZ 05 POW 07 DEX 12
MOV 12 HP 09

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapon: Bite 30%, damage 1D6

Skills: Listen 75%, Scent Something Interesting 90%.

Woodson's House

The Woodson residence is at 327 Hemlock Street, on a slope of Russian Hill. Hemlock intersects Hyde Street not far from where the Hyde Street cable car line turns north to the bay. Hemlock was probably a mews in an earlier era, a place for carriages and servants to stay adjacent to the greater houses that stood on finer, broader avenues. Woodson's frame Victorian survived the great quake and fire of 1906, the defacement of asbestos shingles in 1947, and now Woodson's ongoing remodeling job. There is a basement, two floors, and an attic. See the plan on p. 13.

A notice and police tape warn passers-by that this house figures in a police investigation. The front door bears a police seal. Breaking the seal is a minor criminal offense, but nonetheless the spare keys work smoothly in the double locks. Within, the house is well furnished, though every rug is rolled up and the furniture is covered with drop cloths. Dust abounds. There are cobwebs in the upper corners. On the first and second floors, furniture cloths have been pushed aside, and drawers have been pulled out and dumped. Random bookcases have been emptied.

If the investigators have not first talked to Morris Beachy, and then talk in the house or turn on its lights, he comes to see who is there. His terriers are with him, snapping and straining at their leashes.

THE STRANGER

After the investigators have searched a room or two, and perhaps have already dealt with Beachy, an ominous thump comes from



THE STRANGER

upstairs. The mi-go agent, driven away before by the police, has returned, determined to find and destroy Woodson's notes. She is a young, handsome, extremely fit and muscular woman. She wears the hat, uniform, electronic notebook, and keys of a meter reader from Pacific Gas & Electric.

Having entered from the roof, she moves stealthily down from the attic into the study and begins her search. Make a Listen roll for her if the investigators try to Sneak up on her. If alerted,

she takes cover behind the study's desk and fires on the first person who appears in the doorway. Her gun does not have a silencer. It roars in the little room. If the gunfire is returned, she rushes out the study door, leaps down the light well for 2D6 damage (1D6 with a successful Jump roll), and flees through the front door.

If the investigators choose not to follow her or capture her, there's little the keeper can do except offer her again, in another encounter at their hotel or somewhere else. She both answers and raises so many questions that the keeper should strive to give her identity to the investigators.

THE STRANGER, age 26, Pawn of the Mi-go

STR 17 CON 17 SIZ 15 INT 13 POW 11
DEX 16 APP 14 EDU 15 SAN 45 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 80%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 70%, damage 1D6+1D4

Glock 9mm automatic 65%, 3 shots/round, damage 1D10

Grapple 50%, damage special

Armor: a 7HP bullet-proof vest (40% chance to take each hit).

Skills: Bargain 40%, Benchpress 75%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 80%, Follow Orders Ingeniously 60%, Hide 45%, Jump 65%, Listen 40%, Martial Arts 45%, Obtain Forgeries 65%, Persuade 60%, Sneak 50%, Spanish 10%, Spot Hidden 75%, Steal 75%.

If reduced below five hit points or in imminent danger of capture, she cries out, clutches her forehead, and falls to floor or street. She twitches with a brain seizure. After a few seconds of agonizing pain, the poor woman dies. Her death is so inopportune, so adroitly timed, that witnesses suspect a trick. Convinced of her death, all present desire an autopsy, to find out what has happened. That autopsy reveals something startling, as detailed further below, in "The Stranger's Autopsy".

She wears a PG&E picture ID in the name of Felice Woodson. PG&E knows nothing about her, though her ID and equipment are authentic. Police and FBI searches connect her with no known Felice Woodson. Shown her picture, witnesses at the hospital morgue and the funeral home confirm that she was the person who obtained Woodson's body and wrangled its speedy (and illegal) cremation.

12 – A Resection of Time

Assuming gunfire, shouts, breaking glass, or pursuit down Hemlock Street, Morris Beachy frantically telephones the police. As usual, his adroit suggestions of mayhem and murder bring quick response. The investigators have time to scour the study and the attic, then lock the front door and leave. If they do not want to be found by the police, emphasize that the police are approaching. If apprehended in the house and if Rolston was suspicious of them, he may decide to accuse them of Woodson's murder. They may be unable to leave San Francisco for days or weeks.

GENERAL NOTES ON WOODSON'S HOUSE

With successful Spot Hidden or Idea rolls investigators notice the following.

Basement:

- sprung rat traps.
- the keys to Woodson's car (hidden in the old couch).
- a large, feisty rat who now claims this floor as his own.

First Floor:

- heavy dark stains on the entry's paneled floor (a hint that the skylight leaks).
- footprints in the den and dining room (left by the police).
- three crushed-out cigarettes on the dining room floor (the police again).

Second Floor:

- more police footprints.

If the investigators look at the ceiling in the master bedroom, a Spot Hidden roll notices a trap door up to the attic's secrets. In the absence of a ladder, an investigator needs a D100 roll of STR x5 or less to pull himself up into the attic, which see a little further below.

The skylight, visible from the first floor entry, the study on the second floor, and the attic on the third floor are of special note, and are thus covered below.

THE SKYLIGHT

With a successful Idea roll, an investigator realizes that the stains on the entryway's floor represent water damage. Should they examine the sky light directly overhead (a tricky feat requiring two Climb rolls to scamper about on the peaked roof), they find that one section of the skylight's metal frame is bent outward enough that a pane of glass has been removed, enough to allow access to the house from the roof. As a result, there's a gap in the skylight through which rain has poured.

THE STUDY

This room has a large desk, three overstuffed chairs, a computer, and bookshelves. Books and papers are scattered about the room. Successful Spot Hidden rolls find the following:

- behind a painting on the wall, a wall safe (see below).
- the combination to the safe (R5 L16 R12) scrawled on a piece of paper taped underneath a desk drawer.
- a dark powder spotted with fingerprints on the safe, and furniture (the cops dusted for prints).
- three more crushed-out cigarettes (the cops again).

THE BOOKSHELVES: The bookshelves hold a wide variety of books on archaeology, anthropology, Latin America, and especially the ancient Maya. A successful Library Use roll suggests to an investigator that some of the books have been hastily reorganized. The former inhabitants of the shelves are stacked neatly by author on the floor nearby. Room was cleared for a large number of replacement books on the shelves nearest the desk. These new books are not in any order. All were printed between 1890 and 1930. They bristle with bookmarks.

Flipping through the books, an Idea roll notes that all marked pages have photographs or drawings of Mayan inscriptions.

A successful Archeology or Mayan Lore roll allows an investigator to realize that good photographs of these inscriptions are rare, and the inscriptions themselves are lost or eroded. A few of the glyphs in the photos are outlined in ink.

Finally, a successful Spot Hidden roll finds one marked page without a photograph. This book, *Lost Worlds of the Jungle*, talks about various crackpot theories dealing with the origins of the Maya (lost continents, etc.). The marked page has a highlighted paragraph which mentions an inscription of Mayan hieroglyphs found in Asia, and cites a Professor Matthews as the authority on these Asian glyphs. Anyone with an Archaeology or Mayan Lore skill greater than 30 will find this information as startling as Woodson no doubt did.

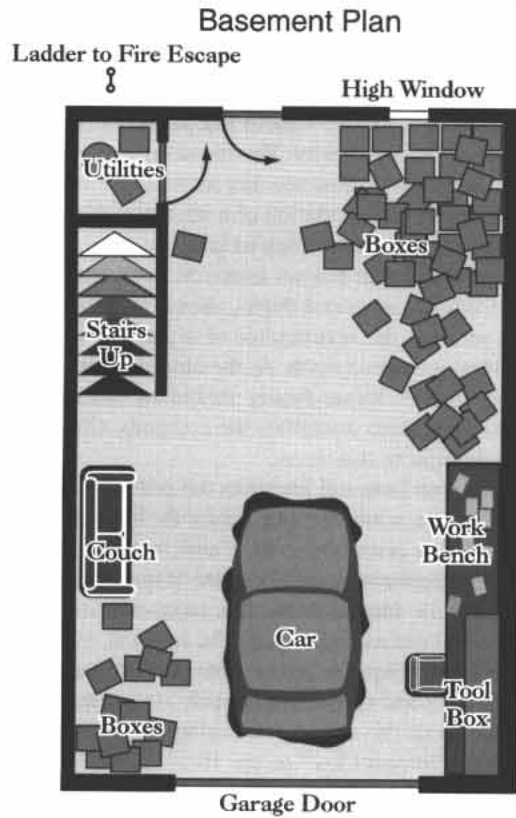
THE COMPUTER: If turned on, the computer displays an error message, something about a missing operating system. Everything has been wiped out—the hard drive has had a low-level formatting. A successful Computer Use roll shows that nothing is left on the drive and that there are no files to recover.

THE DESK: The desk drawers are wide open or dumped on the floor. A successful Spot Hidden roll finds two letters in the flood of unremarkable paper. These letters are from Fred Valdez and Linda Schele, both Mayanists at the University of Texas in Austin. The letters seem to respond to something Woodson sent them to read. They are scathing in their criticism of Woodson's new theory—Valdez criticizing Woodson's archeology and Schele his epigraphic interpretation. Both pledge to keep their doubts secret until after Woodson publishes.

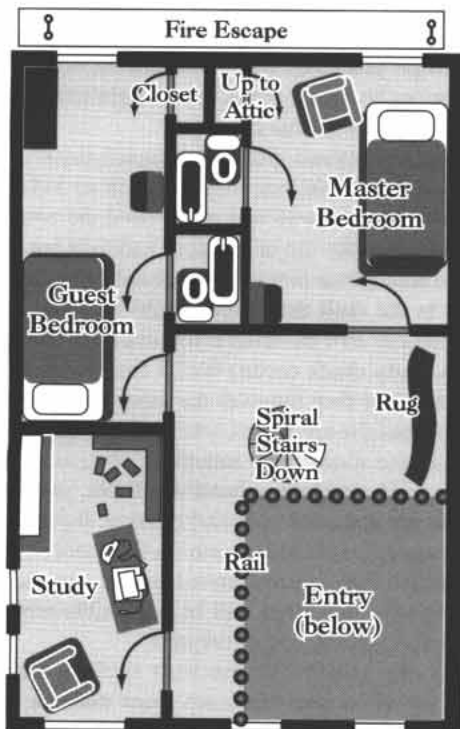
THE SAFE: The wall safe is a compact, sturdy affair, made of gray steel. The dial will not turn, making the combination useless (the mi-go agent froze the safe using a mi-go device, but had to flee before she could shatter the door with a second hammer-blow). The intense cold unequally contracted the delicate gears and tumblers and has ruined the lock. A successful Mechanical Repair roll after the safe is opened might diagnose the cause.

If the investigators try to break into the safe, they find that the hinges break easily, even though the metal has returned to normal temperature. The metal has lost its temper; the nearly absolute zero temperature generated hairline cracks throughout the door and front of the safe. Within are many things of interest. If the investigators see nothing else in the house, they should see this evidence.

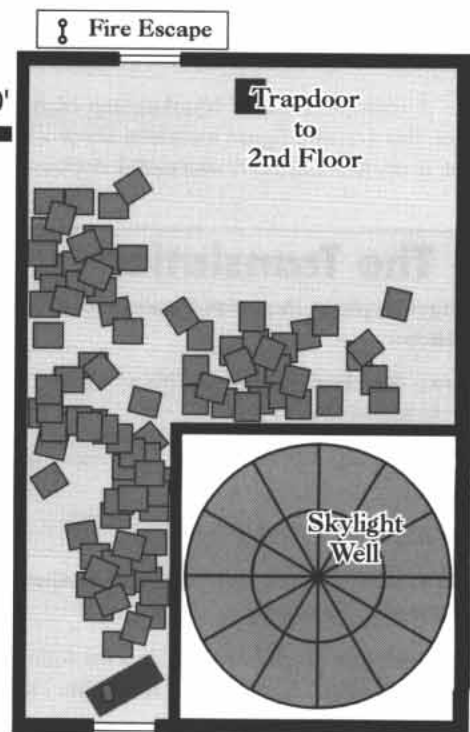
- a Master's thesis; see *Resection Papers* #4.
- a file folder marked "Miskatonic"; see *Resection Papers* #5-#8.
- a file folder marked "Zanthu"; see *Resection Papers* #9.
- the deed to 327 Hemlock Street.
- fifty new, consecutively numbered twenty-dollar bills.



Woodson's House



Scale : 1" = 10'



Second Floor Plan

Attic Plan

- a computer disk, partially demagnetized and no longer readable. A disk editor program and a successful Computer Use roll uncover a few garbled and meaningless sentences from Woodson's new book.
- an envelope marked "In the Event of My Death ... Or Worse", containing a letter, *Resection Papers #10*. A successful Mayan Hieroglyphics roll translates the glyphs at the end of the letter. Give the players *Resection Papers #11*. The nearby box, "The Translation" also documents this.

THE ATTIC

Among the boxes are many mouse traps. Behind a carefully arranged wall of boxes is a secret nook. This hot, dusty little space contains Woodson's most interesting items.

- a small, compelling idol (see pp. 16-17) which requires a sanity check for 0/1 SAN.
- a dog-eared copy of *The Zanthu Tablets; A Conjectural Translation* by Harold Hadley Copeland, see also *Resection Papers #12*. The 32-page pamphlet can be skimmed in five hours but requires eight weeks of study and research to completely understand. Skimming the book causes a sanity loss of 1D3/1D6 SAN, and imparts one point of Cthulhu Mythos. Complete study of the pamphlet costs no more sanity but grants two more points of Cthulhu Mythos, as well as skill checks for Anthropology, Occult, and Mayan Hieroglyphics. The book contains no spells.
- a file folder labeled "El Cacao", see *Resection Papers #13-#17*.
- an envelope containing airline tickets, rental car agreements, and hotel receipts indicating that Woodson traveled to Los Angeles in September of last year, then went to Arkham, Massachusetts, where he stayed from mid-October to February of this year; then traveled to Belize in late March, a few weeks ago. The envelope also contains a small key and the contract for a safety deposit box at the First National Bank of Arkham.

THE IDOL: A representation of Nyarlathotep crafted by the ancient Maya, this ceramic figure measures about a foot high. An image of it occurs nearby. A successful Archaeology, Art

History, or Mayan Lore roll identifies it as Mayan, but of an unknown style, never recorded before. The figure's robes and ornaments mark it as an ahau, or godking, but the Maya never drew or depicted figures with multiple arms. The two-headed snake is the double-headed serpent bar, borne by Mayan kings as a symbol of their authority. The blood-red tentacle in place of a head is very unconventional, but seems likely to be a blood scroll (a symbolic representation of a stream of blood), implying that this is a decapitated captive king.

A second successful Mayan Lore roll notes the god markings on the figure's arms and thighs, showing the figure to be a deity, and reminds the investigator of a passage in the Popol Vuh, the Mayan creation myth. At the climax of the tale of the Hero Twins, the two heroes finally tricked the evil Lords of the Night into letting them decapitate the evil gods. Could this figure somehow refer to that event?

A third Mayan Lore roll identifies the god. The lower of the two held masks has a tube sticking out for the burning of incense, giving the mask a resemblance to K'awil, or God K, the deity responsible for legitimizing the rule of the Mayan ahau. The snake foot confirms this identification; this representation of K'awil holds both a god and a human mask. The figure is, as any archaeologist could tell, unique. It seems subtly to shift positions when viewed indirectly, and is cold to the touch, even in the hot attic.

For more about this ominous statuette, see the nearby boxed material titled "Mayan Clay" on pp. 16-17.

The Stranger's Autopsy

If the investigators are friendly with Detective Rolston, he can get them access to the autopsy of the woman who called herself Felice Woodson. Alternatively, the investigators might not report her body, and instead steal it and conduct their own autopsy. If there is no qualified physician among the investigators, Schwartz can find an examiner who is willing to perform the extra-legal procedure for cash. (This anonymous specialist never removes his mask, gown, cap, goggles, or gloves, and the investigators never see his face.)

The autopsy reveals that the deceased suffered a massive embolism to the brain, one large enough to kill her. Having rolled back the chest wall and eviscerated the corpse, the specialist then opens the top of the skull and rolls back the skin of the face to take a look at the brain. He notices much more cerebral fluid in the skull than there should be. After some hesitation, he suggests that the brain is too small for the skull it is in! Require a sanity check costing 0/1D2 SAN.

The examiner then removes the brain and shows the investigators the massive embolism, stating firmly that this killed the subject. He also shows them something else. At the back of the brain is an odd structure, a band of pliable, gray-orange substance covered with odd lines and grooves. It joins the brain to the spinal cord. This sight is worth another sanity roll for 0/1D3 SAN to those with medical knowledge or knowledge of personal computers (the latter will be irresistibly reminded of an IDE connector in a personal computer).

Finally, the anonymous specialist sections and stains thin slices of the brain and examines them under a microscope. Filaments of the same orange-gray substance plainly run through the entire brain.

Though a DNA check will not be complete for thirty hours, the specialist suggests that he is confident of the outcome, given

The Translation

The four hieroglyphs in *Resection Papers #10* are translated as follows:

- 1) *U tz'apwa* (he planted) *Balam + Na* = "Balan" (the secret, the hidden thing)
- 2) *Utiy* (it happened) *Wacah Nal* (at the raised up, the high place)
- 3) Subject indicator (it was his doing)
- 4) *Ka + La* = "Kal" (kahl or Kyle) Child of Mother + *Te* (son of the tree, Woodson)

A failed Mayan Hieroglyphics roll renders the following translation: He slew the Jaguar, at the mountain, I did it, *Kal(a)* Child of mother + tree.

To someone who can read them, the glyphs represent instructions to go to the attic.

what he's already seen. He predicts that the DNA of the brain will be completely different from the DNA of the body. Ergo, this brain was transplanted from someone else's body! This revelation is worth a third sanity check for 1/ID4 SAN. (The gray-orange stuff is advanced biocyberneuralware from Yuggoth, defying human analysis.)

THAT NIGHT

After the encounter with Felice Woodson (or whoever she really was), wounded investigators are rushed to a private hospital where expert physicians in Schwartz's employ treat them and restore enough lost hit points that they can be safely released.

Accommodation at the Hilton is a suite looking toward the Bay Bridge. There is a connecting bedroom for each investigator (Schwartz's patronage allows the investigators really to live it up). The investigators probably had to leave Woodson's house in a hurry—now they have time to read his notes, and study anything else they have found. Schwartz will be very interested to learn everything the team has found. He's now in Washington, D.C., but is easily reached.

Once contacted, and if the investigators seem to have valuable information, the billionaire authorizes the team to travel anywhere they need to go in his private plane. He recalls that before leaving for Belize, Woodson had traveled to Arkham, Massachusetts, for research and stayed there about four months. Schwartz's secretaries at AFAR can have travel accommodations and rental vehicles ready at any destination in two hours. Schwartz also urges the group to keep quiet about Felice Woodson and her brain transplant.

If the investigators think to call ahead, they also can reach David Cox at the Sanbourne Institute to set up an appointment. All calls to Miskatonic University get misrouted—the investigators end up talking to janitors, clerks, or the graduate student lounge, and finally give up.

Beyond San Francisco

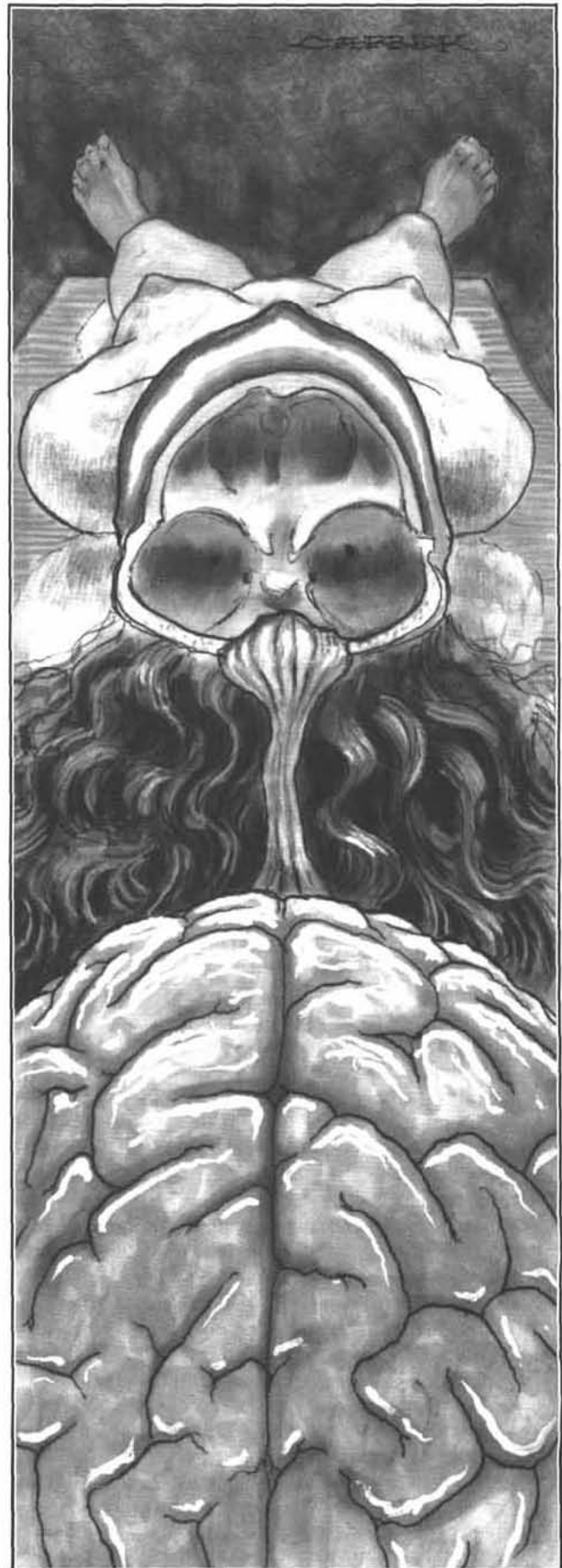
The next day, the investigators can proceed to Los Angeles, Arkham, or Belize (see below, in that order). The investigators can proceed to these destinations in any order, although following Woodson's order is recommended and is the most efficient.

- Los Angeles (includes The Institute, Company), p. 15.
- Arkham (includes Armitage Library, The Box, That Evening), p. 20.
- Belize (the whole of part two of this adventure), p. 25.

The Dream takes place in Los Angeles or Arkham, whichever comes first. The Attack comes the evening before the investigators leave for Belize.

Los Angeles

Schwartz's private jet waits at San Francisco International Airport. The Leer jet has a plush interior stocked with magazines and corporate reports about Schwartz's investments. It takes four and a half hours to fly to Boston and another hour to drive to Arkham. It takes five and a half hours



THE AUTOPSY

Mayan Clay

The investigators find no hint of the idol's origins among Woodson's papers and effects. Simple lab tests might date the object and pinpoint its region of origin. A sample of the clay is required. Scraping or chipping off a tiny piece is easily done. However, the inhabitant of the statue will not take kindly to such treatment (see the sub-section "The Statue's Secret", below).

A carbon date test of a clay sample requires a well equipped laboratory and about six hours time. AFAR has access to several local labs that are equipped for the procedure, and can easily refer investigators to them. Conducting the tests requires a successful Chemistry roll and a successful Computer Use roll. A separate test to analyze the clay's mineral content and determine where it came from requires successful Chemistry, Geology, and Computer or Library Use rolls. The lab technicians are more than qualified if no investigators are proficient, but using them delays the results by a day.

The results are startling. The carbon date returned is 3500 BP (before present), plus or minus 250 years. Even at its youngest possible age, the idol was baked in 1250 BC, a millennium before the Mayan Classic period began! At its oldest, the idol dates to 1750 BC, contemporary with the Olmec, the oldest known civilization in the western hemisphere. The statue's sophisticated design requires clay and kiln techniques that weren't developed by the Maya until the height of the Classic period in the 8th century AD. The date can be double checked with a second test from the same sample, which returns the same findings. Taking further samples annoys the inhabitant of the idol even further (see below), and only confirm the carbon date again. Either the clay itself has somehow been contaminated to give erroneous results, or this idol calls all of Mesoamerican archaeology into question.

As regards where the idol was made, tests place the clay as coming from sources in the northwest corner of Belize, in dense rain forests near the Mexican and Guatemalan borders. A successful Archaeology roll confirms that there is no record of Mayan civilization there until the late Pre-Classic period, around 500 BC. Also, a successful Idea roll combined with a glance at Woodson's file confirms that Woodson never conducted a dig in that region. The mysteries raised by the tests, however, are only the beginning.

The investigators can also inquire after the statue's function. A successful Mayan Lore roll, or three successful Library Use rolls, allows an investigator to guess that the idol may be the receptacle for a way (pronounced "why", plural *wayob*). To the ancient Maya, a way was a "companion spirit", a powerful supernatural being who acted as a helper and guide to an ahau during ritual magic. Such beings were often said to reside inside statues. Indeed, the Maya would have believed that the statue itself was alive, the cold clay only being the part that manifests in our world. The use of God K, or K'awil, as a subject also implies that the idol has a ritualistic or shamanic function. K'awil was often invoked by the Maya as a symbol of magical power, and was said to awaken

the blood of shamans and kings, imbuing them with supernatural powers. Who made the thing, or how Kyle Woodson ended up with it, remains a mystery.

The Statue's Secret

The idol was fashioned in 1346 BP by the ahau of Xibalba and used as a house for one of his wayob. It has rested, dormant, for millennia, patiently waiting for its master to use it again. Woodson kept the thing in his attic for a reason.

Each day that the idol is in the presence of one or more people, the idol absorbs one magic point from one of those present. In addition, anyone touching the idol loses one magic point to it, once per touch per day. Investigators show no ill effects from the draining, only a little light-headedness or euphoria which they notice if they can roll under the points drained on 1D10. As the idol accumulates more life force, it grows warmer to the touch. A successful Idea roll detects the phenomenon. Once the idol has absorbed ten magic points, the way partially awakens, physically manifesting to the investigators.

The Manifestation

A bird appears at the window of the room and flies in, if granted access. The bird looks at the investigators imploringly, and gives several strange, ululating calls. Investigators who went to Belize in 1994 recognize the bird with a successful Idea roll (those who didn't go need a Natural History roll). The bird is an *oro pendulo*, a mottled, crow-like bird native to Central America. Any investigator who receives a POW x5 roll can't help but notice the unnerving intelligence in the bird's stare. The mysterious bird hops from investigator to investigator, calling pitifully, then flies away again. It also flees if anyone tries to touch it.

Confused by its surroundings, the way expects its master to appear at any moment and then ritually invoke it. When no bloodletting ritual is forthcoming, the way grows annoyed and starts lashing out, trying to attract its master's attention. The way's displeasure is made manifest in several different ways.

The statue scorches whatever it sits on or is wrapped in, making a mess but not starting a fire.

It singles out an investigator to curse. This amounts to a fifteen percentiles penalty to characteristic rolls and Luck rolls. Whoever took a sample for carbon dating from the idol receives this treatment.

The idol moves itself into a prominent position, where it can easily be seen. The idol only moves when no one is looking, but awakening investigators or those returning to their rooms find the thing sitting in the middle of a table or on a counter top, seeming to stare at them maliciously (sanity loss for this startling turn of events is 0/1 SAN).

Again, if left alone, the way throws a telekinetic fit, hurling the contents of the room around, smashing furniture, breaking glass, shredding clothes, etc. It then seats itself in

the exact center of the room, as if the eye of the hurricane. Sanity loss for finding it this way is 0/1D3. Hotel management frown on this sort of thing, and Schwartz will ask why damages are being added to the hotel bills.

Finally, after it has absorbed twenty magic points, the way opens a portal to the otherworld and draws the idol into it. As far as the investigators can tell, the statue vanishes without a trace. Might it have been stolen? Allow investigator paranoia to run rampant.

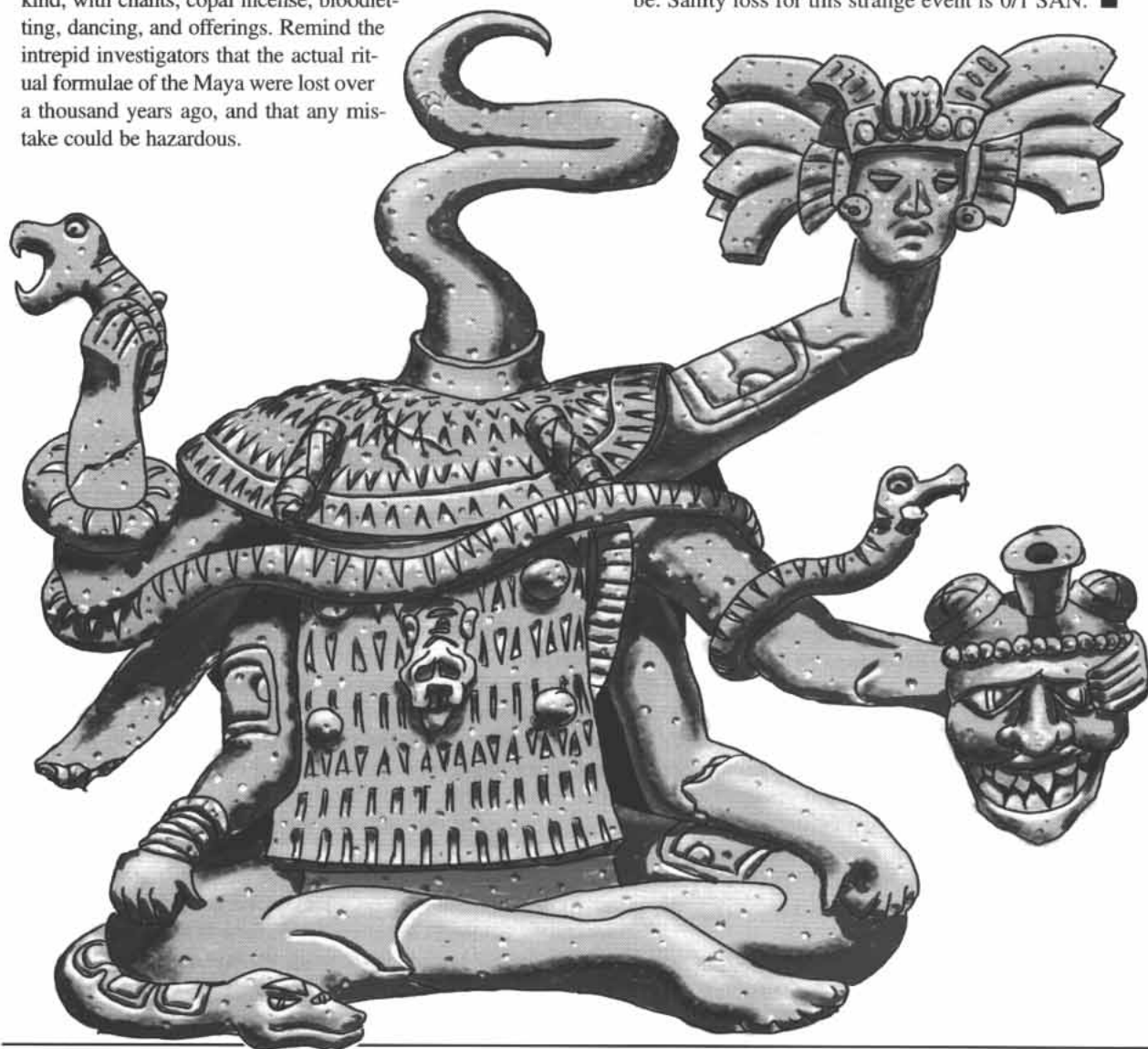
Dealing with the Way

The easiest way to deal with the cantankerous spirit is to leave it alone. For every day the statue spends outside of human contact, it loses a magic point. Once the statue passes below ten magic points, the way becomes inert again. This was Woodson's solution.

Of course, the investigators are welcome to try to give the thing what it wants. If the investigators have deduced that the statue is indeed the focus for a way, then successful Mayan Lore rolls determine that the way probably expects a ritual of some kind, with chants, copal incense, bloodletting, dancing, and offerings. Remind the intrepid investigators that the actual ritual formulae of the Maya were lost over a thousand years ago, and that any mistake could be hazardous.

Letting blood in the statue's presence instantly invokes the way, who drains 1D3 POW from the blood giver. The way tries to lead its new master into the Spirit World, but cannot; too many conditions aren't right. Outraged, the spirit lashes out at everything around it, causing another telekinetic storm. Investigators present take 1D6 points of damage from flying glass and debris (a successful Luck or Dodge roll halves damage), and the sanity roll costs 0/1D3 SAN. After a few moments the way departs. The statue comes to life, its serpent foot stretching out to impossible lengths. Opening its jaws comically wide, the snake then swallows the statue, and itself along with it. Witnesses to the way's exit lose 1/1D6 SAN.

There is another option open to the investigators. A successful Archaeology roll reminds the investigator that nearly every culture in the Americas believed in art objects containing magical powers, and that such objects often were ritually killed lest the power within them sour and cause harm. Plates, bowls, and even statues were "killed" by punching holes through them. If the investigators smash or pierce the idol, it dies with a loud bang. From inside, the oro pendulo bird emerges and fleetly flies away, through a solid wall if need be. Sanity loss for this strange event is 0/1 SAN. ■



to fly to Belize City from San Francisco, and a little under five hours to get there from Arkham. San Francisco to Los Angeles is less than an hour. At Los Angeles and Arkham, it takes another hour to get settled into the hotel. The private jet, once on the ground, can be refueled, serviced, and ready for flight in a few hours.

Perhaps along the way they read the *Zanthu Tablets* pamphlet, or play solitaire. Anyone reading the corporate reports and making an Accounting roll learns that Schwartz has substantial leverage in Bell Helicopter, Lockheed, IBM, Prudential/Bache Securities, and McDonnell Douglas, and is easily worth more than a billion dollars.

At Los Angeles International Airport a driver waits with a car and directions to the Hyatt Regency Hotel and the Sanbourne Institute. After a tedious drive along confusing freeways the investigators check into their hotel, then move on to the remote suburb of Santiago and the Institute itself. The Institute is in the town of Santiago, situated on a vast apron of ancient scree fallen from Santiago Peak, in the Santa Anna Mountains. The remote town is three hours from central Los Angeles.

The long drive carries the investigators past sweeping ocean vistas, then on into Anaheim, a desolation of shopping centers and strip malls. The investigators pass Disneyland, then wind into the mountains.

The Institute

The Sanbourne Institute of Pacific Antiquities was founded in 1875 by Philip Sanbourne and was once the driving force in Pacific Studies, funding all manner of expeditions to Polynesia, Micronesia, and Australia. A fire in 1929 interrupted the Institute's operations, and the Great Depression of the 1930s throttled its finances. New contributions from a long-lost heir breathed life into the fading institution, but it has long been a

comfortable retreat for a few lucky scholars, not a dynamic center of research.

The Institute is housed in a majestic Spanish colonial mansion on spacious, somewhat overgrown grounds. The long, four-story building and its several wings contain a small museum, a library of things Pacific, many offices and meeting rooms, and in its cellars room after room of crates filled with the bounty of previous expeditions, long ignored and lost in dusty storage.

If the investigators haven't made an appointment they will have to entertain themselves until David Cox, assistant director of the Institute, can meet them.

When the investigators enter his office, Cox starts at the sight of them and knocks over a glass of water on his desk. Apologizing profusely, he has the mess seen to, then leads the investigators on a short tour of the Institute.

Cox is a thin, wiry man with pale skin, blonde hair, and a remarkable penetrating gaze; he seems to stare right through whomever he looks at.

The tall galleries of the mansion are stagnant and lifeless. Dust motes dance in the pale sunlight as the investigators walk past glass case after glass case half full of ancient Polynesian bric-a-brac. The feathers and brightly colored thatch on many of the masks are faded. The massive canoe in one corner sports cobwebs on its prow. Between quick explanations of the various exhibits, Cox asks what business brought the investigators to the Institute.

Successful Psychology rolls notice that Cox seems edgy, almost suspicious of the investigators. If asked, he bashfully



DAVID COX

Cox's Secret

David Cox is very suspicious of the investigators, and keen to learn everything that they know about Kyle Woodson. Cox is a member of the Brothers of the Yellow Sign, a reclusive cult of immortal men from the blue-litten underground world of K'n-yan. These men have returned to the surface to combat the machinations of the mi-go. When they need, they find it pathetically easy to sign up surface world recruits for disagreeable or extremely dangerous tasks, and their telepathic skills allow the Brothers to herd the surface-worlders like cattle.

Cox met with Woodson, and telepathically detected the mi-go alterations to his psyche. Now Cox senses the same aberrant pattern in investigators who participated in the 1994 dig in Belize. He has already silently alerted his brothers across southern California that more agents of the space devils are afoot. (They cannot distinguish the difference between mi-go manipulation of investigator brains and personalities, and the mi-go creation of dedicated human agents such as "Felice Woodson".)

The Brothers have only recently infiltrated the Sanbourne Institute, and are in the midst of cataloguing and

studying the Mythos-related artifacts and books in storage. Cox and the Brothers will put the investigators under close scrutiny but take no direct action, hoping that they lead the Brothers to a new outpost of the mi-go.

In busy cellar rooms, carefully shielded from casual view, several dozen Brothers and staff work long hours to analyze and copy the clues hidden in what long-dead scholars had gathered during the great years of the Institute's existence.

If investigators stake out the apparently unguarded building and observe who enters and exists, they quickly understand that a cadre of about twenty people is putting in very long hours, and that the group rather carelessly uses a particular outside entrance to the basement floor.

At some point their surveillance is detected telepathically by the Brothers, of course, who call in the local police to remove the intruders from the Institute grounds. The investigators are never able to penetrate to the Brothers' analysis rooms; the Brothers continue to watch them in hopes of being led to a mi-go nest. At some point the investigators should decide to go to Arkham, where events pick up as written.

admits that he is going through a divorce and is currently under a lot of stress. Any mention of Kyle Woodson is met with a non-chalance that another Psychology roll can read as false. If asked about Woodson, Cox says that he never met the man, but remembers that somebody by that name came to the institute last Fall and did some research on the *Zanthu Tablets*. The tablets themselves were lost in the early 1930s (a pity), but Copeland made a decent facsimile of most of the inscriptions while translating them, and his notes are still on file here. Any archaeologist or scholar who succeeds with a Credit Rating roll can convince Cox to let him see the notes.

THE TABLETS

The role of Cox and the lack of a librarian or some other managing scholar for Institute resources will seem odd to the investigators. It's obvious that the Institute now lacks the staff to keep up with its own subject matter, and that the failure of Sanbourne is just a matter of time.

Cox himself leads the investigators to a dusty back room, where he leafs through a vast hanging file of manuscripts and finally comes up with the notes the investigators want to see. These notes are jumbled and confusing, requiring forty hours of study by a Mayan epigrapher (eighty hours for anyone else). The information in them functions as a copy of the *Zanthu Tablets* pamphlet (see *Resection Papers #12*). Ideally the investigators use the two together. Leafing through the pamphlet in conjunction with the notes allows complete study of the work by anyone in just thirty hours.

The facsimile of the tablets, while crude in some places and incomplete, also can be translated (slowly) with successful Mayan Hieroglyphics rolls. The scope of such a project is beyond the investigators' current mission.

Borrowing the original notes is prohibited. The investigators can either steal the notes (requiring a successful Sneak roll in the file room, another as Cox says good-bye, and a third for the guard at the front door) or use Fast Talk or Persuade to convince Cox to have the material photocopied (the library's suspiciously new industrial photocopier gets the job done in twenty minutes). Any successful roll will do, as Cox has no motive to keep the material secret from supposed mi-go agents, and the time spent to do this allows a carload of Brothers to get into position outside the Institute's gates.

Cox can also tell the investigators whatever they haven't heard about Copeland's ill-fated career or the Institute's checkered past. When this business is done, Cox bids the investigators a warm good-bye. Anyone making a Spot Hidden roll notices that Cox's face darkens to a scowl as he turns to go inside, and that he begins absently rubbing the large, yellow stone on his ring.

Company

As the investigators drive back to the hotel, have all the players make Spot Hidden rolls. A success notices that a car is tailing them, with four grim-looking men in it. With a success of 01-05, the investigator spots a second tail as well, which is hanging much farther back. The investigator-driver can try to lose them, making Drive rolls and opposing the results against the pursuer's 50% Drive. If the driver-investigator gets a success, the investigators throw off the pursuit, but only for a short while. The mysterious men keep coming back, in cars or on foot

(they can dematerialize and read the investigators' minds, after all). During such maneuvers, a Drive roll failing by more than 15 percentiles results in a speeding ticket or an accident, at the keeper's discretion.



A BROTHER

ize in front of witnesses but will, if only that can stymie capture.

A Spot Hidden roll made during a foot chase allows an investigator to notice that all the men wear rings or pendants set with yellow stones.

AVERAGE BROTHER OF THE YELLOW SIGN, age 30, Dedicated and Skilled

STR 15	CON 16	SIZ 13	INT 17	POW 19
DEX 17	APP 13	EDU 14	SAN 0	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 65%, damage 1D6+1D4

Gas Globe 45%, no damage, POT 20 knock-out gas in a 15-foot cloud; a successful resistance roll reduces the victim's effective DEX by 10 for the next twenty combat rounds.

Armor: none.

Spells: none, but their mental powers of Dematerialize, Mind Read, Hold, and Tamper are seemingly magical. See the box on p. 20 for more about them.

Skills: Climb 55%, Dodge 50%, Fast Talk 30%, Jump 40%, Listen 50%, Martial Arts 50%, Run Like a Wild Animal 80%, Sneak 65%, Stare Grimly 95%, Track 75%.

The Dream

Once the mysterious pursuit has vanished, the evening is uneventful. The investigators are free to collate data and theorize about their mission. Schwartz, if told about mysterious pursuers, advises extreme caution. That night while the investigators sleep, the Brothers break into their hotel rooms, psychically pushing them into deeper slumber. Their psychic tampering bypasses the mi-go programming, but those investigators all have nightmares. Pass around random "The Dream" handouts to the players whose investigators attended the Belize dig in 1994. All of these dreams prompt sanity checks costing 1/1D4 Sanity loss.

The next morning, investigators receiving successful Spot Hidden rolls notice that their rooms have been searched. Little things are subtly out of place. They deduce that someone went through a lot of trouble to conceal the search. While disconcerting, this perception prompts no sanity loss.

Smart investigators inform AFAR of what's happened, and what the group intends to do over the next few days. If they don't, Schwartz or an assistant finds them and firmly reminds them to keep in touch.

Shadowed Arkham

Touching down in Boston's Logan International Airport, the investigators are met by one of Schwartz's personal assistants who drove up from Washington. She provides a minivan, confirmations for accommodations at the Hotel Miskatonic in Arkham, and maps and directions to the small town. It's a tedious drive through north Boston. After about half an hour, the road narrows and winds through low hills outside of Salem, hills that here and there retain a subtle grandeur but which for the most part have been tamed by the suburbs that cover them like ivy made of concrete and asphalt. Trees with fresh leaves billow everywhere. Twenty minutes later, without warning, the highway sweeps into a tiny suburb of Beverly called Arkham.

Trees hide the knots of small houses. The prominent features of the town are three factories which dominate the skyline. One belches thick smoke into the air, while the two others loom

silently, victims of a spotty industrial recession that has plagued parts of the state for most of a generation. The roads in town are very bad, and all of the buildings look at least fifty years. Grass grows through cracks in the sidewalks, homeless lurk in the alleys, and the streets themselves are strangely deserted. Arkham more resembles Innsmouth now.

The once grand Hotel Miskatonic sports furniture and decor that hasn't changed in forty years. After a nightmarish trip aboard the rickety elevator, the investigators find that their rooms overlook the once lordly Miskatonic River that runs through the center of town. When the tide is in, the banks brim; when the tide is out, the depleted river becomes a mere creek crawling through stinking mud flats and lumps of garbage.

At the other end of the hall is a fine view of Miskatonic University. The older university buildings show retrofitted air conditioning and roofs badly in need of repair. One structure stands out, however, a tall building of beige brick and black glass that is much newer—the Henry Armitage Library, the object of the investigators' journey.

Armitage Library

The Armitage Library is an imposing structure with a wide entry. It is a product of late 1950s design and decoration, with oddly pastel colors and dated furniture that hovers at the edge of shabbiness. In the center of the lobby is a bronze statue of an elderly, bearded gentleman wearing a wing collar and an old-fashioned suit. There is a plaque on the pedestal.

Henry Armitage

1855-1939

His greatest service
must remain unknown

One wall of the lobby is adorned with large photographs of Miskatonic U. expeditions to the Antarctic, Australia, Central America, Tibet, Micronesia, and other interesting corners of the world. Many of these occurred generations ago, but some, apparently smaller ones, are recent. Of all that the investigators see at Miskatonic, this wall is the cleanest and best tended. A successful Idea roll notices that some or many members of each expedition are noted as having died in the same year as the expedition occurred.

The attendant at the circulation desk, lacking anything to do, dozes. Beyond, shadowy halls wait in silence. Like the rest of Arkham, the library seems utterly deserted. Then a wizened, frail looking face pops up from behind tall stacks of books at the Head Librarian's desk, peering at you through Coke-bottle glasses. "May I help you?" he whines.

The head librarian is Lester Whatley, A.M., who will, in his slow, heavily accented monotone, try to help the investigators. He remembers Woodson, "that smart-dressin' boy from California." He shudders as he looks in the Scholar's Register and sees what Woodson examined. "All of these books, they are on the Armitage Restricted List."

He studies the investigators for a moment. "I told the same thing to your friend, that Schwartz guy who was on the phone. Offered me money and references, he did. Money was good,"

Brotherhood Powers

DEMATERIALIZER: this power costs ten magic points. It allows the user to become invisible and insubstantial, letting him flee to safety through intervening walls and other obstacles at speeds equivalent to walking or running. There is probably a maximum extent for this power, after which the user must return to normal, but keepers should employ it for its effect and not worry about its parameters.

MIND READ: by spending one magic point and overcoming the victim's POW with a Resistance Table roll, the user can read the surface thoughts of an opponent and anticipate that opponent's moves for the next three rounds. To simulate this, give that Brother's DEX a bonus of three points while the Mind Read power is active. If the Brother's target changes to another investigator, then obviously a new or additional Mind Read would be needed.

HOLD: make eye contact, spend five magic points, and overcome the target's POW on the Resistance Table. With a success, the target's voluntary muscles are completely paralyzed for the next five combat rounds.

TAMPER: by spending three magic points, and overcoming the target's POW on the Resistance Table, the target's mind is left supine and agreeable to one suggestion that the tamperer chooses to impose on it. To sleep deeply is one such suggestion, to accept a contradictory memory might be another, and a third might be to forget something or to leave something in a particular location. Ingenious keepers will see many applications. The target's actual memory or personality cannot be altered by this power, but a target can be confused by it for 24-POW hours. A headache in the morning is the one symptom of tampering.



LESTER WHATELEY

Whateley smiles grotesquely. "So were the references," he adds after a moment of thought. "Schwartz didn't know what the list meant, or the reasons for the list. Do you fellas know why?"

Whateley is suddenly dynamic. His gaze is intense, and questioning. If they want to see the books, it's time for the investigators to make their pitch. They can seem to convince him with a successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll, but he needs to hear a reason that makes sense or he will send them packing.

Assuming that the investigators come up with something satisfactory, Whateley puts something small and heavy in a coat pocket, then leads the way back through the stacks, talking as he goes. "Now, the Old Man was very particular that these books be kept safe and secure. We left 'em crated up after the library moved to this building. Also, we never entered them into the new catalogue. Your friend Woodson was the first to come looking for them in a long time. Intense young man, he was."

Whateley leads them down a long flight of steep, dark stairs. Most of the lights in the basement seem to have burned out. At the bottom, the investigators find cavernous rooms piled high with boxes and crates of all descriptions, the floor drowning in dust and the ceiling lost in a haze of cobwebs. Spiders stroll without haste across the walls. Parts of the walls, the floor, and many of the crates are encrusted with a gray fungus which even a trained mycologist cannot identify. A successful Spot Hidden roll notices fresh-seeming footprints in the dusty floor, and Whateley follows the path that the footprints have blazed.

In a far, shadowy corner is an isolated crate. A chipped and dented steel folding chair sits before the crate. The crate lid is clearly marked: "RESTRICTED COLLECTION. Do Not Open."

Whateley takes out a small prybar from his coat pocket and wedges up the nailed lid. Inside are heaps of wood shavings used as packing material. The books themselves are gone! No sign of them can be found. As Whateley and the investigators search, they find themselves looking over their shoulders as the movements of the spiders, falling bits of fungus, and shimmers from the cobwebs. They get the impression they're not alone. Whateley makes a joke about the feeling, but it's not funny.

Though Whateley expresses shock and chagrin at the loss, and substantially accuses Woodson of stealing the books, a successful Psychology roll suggests that the librarian is faking his surprise about the theft. He is a practiced enough liar that he gives no clue as to why he might be faking. He notifies police about the apparent theft, but something in the way he reports the matter encourages the investigating officers to believe that the books somehow will turn up. That being so, the police have better things to worry about.

THE VAULT

If the investigators carefully stake out the library to watch Whateley's movements, he waits until he thinks they have gone, then exits the library, strolls down West College Street to the Exhibit Museum, engages in a conversation with the gardener, buys a cheese sandwich and sits in the spring sun to eat it, then returns to the library. If the investigators work to get Lester Whateley's confidence (they can do that in a day or two, if they tell him everything they know), he in turn will tell them the following.

Lobelia Tetlow is the museum's present gardener and custodian. As provided more than two hundred years ago in Jeremiah Orne's founding bequest, an unbroken string of Tetlows have since migrated from Dunwich to hold this position. Lobelia Tetlow is the present custodian of the Vault, which is in the



HENRY ARMITAGE LIBRARY, MISKATONIC U.

basement of the museum. Only Tetlows ever enter the nearly impregnable vault; it is said to contain dangerous or extremely fragile artifacts. Few on campus or in the town even know of the Vault's existence.

The books on Armitage's restricted list have been held in the Vault since the 1952 red-lining of a secure rare book room, during a budget fight about the new Armitage Library. Woodson got Whateley's confidence, and so book by book Whateley would fetch requested texts to and from the Vault, day by day trudging through snow and slush at odd hours, his inconspicuous black briefcase bulging like any other academic's. Whateley will do the same for the investigators, once he trusts them.

"A fine young man. Confused, but who wouldn't be readin' that stuff? Hope he gets along all right," Whateley smiles. "We ha'n't given up on 'im."

LESTER WHATELEY, age 46, Head Librarian at the Armitage Library

STR 12	CON 13	SIZ 10	INT 15	POW 17
DEX 12	APP 09	EDU 19	SAN 68	HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: none.

Skills: Accounting 10%, Bargain 68%, Computer Use 25%, Credit Rating 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 06%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 25%, French 35%, German 65%, History 45%, Library Use 92%, Listen 48%, Natural History 18%, Occult 16%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 75%.

The Safe Deposit Box

Investigators who found the secret cache of clues in Woodson's attic certainly try to examine the contents of his safety deposit box in Arkham. The First National Bank of Arkham is a run-down little building built about 1970. Astute investigators notice by the appearance of the sign that the bank has changed its name recently, perhaps more than once. Inside, a crotchety old clerk remembers Kyle Woodson and is quite suspicious of these strangers who want to open Woodson's box. A successful Fast Talk and a Persuade or Law roll gain access. Failing that, Schwartz sends an expensive lawyer the next day equipped with a court order which establishes the lawyer as Massachusetts executor and AFAR and its representatives as legal next of kin.

The clerk leads the players into the tiny vault where he retrieves the box, then leaves them alone in a conference room to peruse its contents. Inside the box are two items.

- a manila envelope containing an outline and sections of Woodson's new book, *Resection Papers* #18-20.
- a sealed manila envelope containing excerpts in Woodson's handwriting from books on Armitage's restricted list, *Resection Papers* #21.

That Evening

Accommodations at the Hotel Miskatonic are worn but comfortable. No doubt ominous revelations and hideous memories cloud the evening. Schwartz is intrigued by their findings. Schwartz reveals, reluctantly, that Kyle told him that he thought that there were alien beings in Belize. Woodson's suspicions marked the beginning of a general deterioration in the quality and frequency of his reports. Schwartz had dismissed Woodson's wild theories as fever dreams brought on by overwork.

Schwartz still does not mention the disappearance of the person he originally set investigating Woodson.

He urges the investigators to be careful and above all to keep tales of monsters to themselves. The investigators will want to discuss what they've learned, preferably over dinner. Let the tension wane. When the investigators go back to their rooms, someone waits for them.

The Attack

This sub-section concludes Part 1 of *Resection of Time*. It is intended to take place in Arkham, but could occur elsewhere if the investigator's do not visit Arkham. As written, the investigators essentially observe the action. This is by far the safest thing for them to do, but even though events move very quickly, a few investigators may be able to re-direct events either toward an extended conversation (unlikely but faintly possible) or toward a wholesale shootout (very likely if such investigators carry concealed weapons and have high SANs and high DEXs).

A random investigator opens the door of his room and turns on the light. He is shocked to see Kyle Woodson calmly sitting in a chair in the corner (sanity check, cost 0/1D2 SAN)! "Hello," Woodson calmly says, then calls for the rest of the investigators to come in and have seats.

Read aloud the following italicized description, and then either read aloud Woodson's statement or supply the players with a photocopy of it.

Woodson is dressed in a long black trenchcoat that covers him from the tops of his shoes to his throat, where the collar is turned up. His face and body seem thinner than you remember, almost gaunt. His eyes are bright and intelligent behind his spectacles. Woodson greets everyone, and when all are seated, he speaks.

"First of all, I want to apologize to you for the trouble you've gone through on my account. I'm more than a little embarrassed that all of you have been hired to track me down. You see, I think the events back in 1994 hurt me more than I knew, post-traumatic stress and all that, and field work was starting to wear on me. While doing some epigraphy research, I came across some rather startling theories from the twenties about lost continents and extraterrestrials. To my surprise, the theories seemed to fit in with what I was discovering in Belize. They seemed to.

"The further I dug, the more I discovered: a whole branch of science devoted to these crackpot theories, which were dismissed en masse in the 1930s. The books at the Armitage Library ... had quite an effect on my mind. I began to get paranoid, envisioning a vast conspiracy to keep this knowledge secret. That all of it is crap never occurred to me. I began to think that I was being followed, that unknown forces were spying on me.

"I cracked and fled into the jungle, where I wandered around for a long time before I came to my senses. I can see now what a fool I was. I'm getting some professional help. Anyway, I made my way back to Belize City and flew home. When I called Ramsey, he told me about you, and flew me here to meet you. I'm so sorry. As you can see, I'm much better now. I guess your errand for AFAR is over. You've found me. You can collect your money and go home."

Woodson, if interrupted or questioned, keeps to his story, denying that the Mythos exists and dismissing the old theories as rubbish. The hotel staff let him into the room. He doesn't

know anything about aliens or strange cults. "It seems those old books are making you guys a little paranoid, too."

Request Listen rolls. Those with successes notice either a strange, faint scent or a soft buzzing sound that comes and goes. Maybe the fluorescent lights are on the fritz. Anyone of CON 15 or higher feels a faint vibration in the air and senses that something is wrong, but can't identify what. The longer he sits there, the more these investigators are overcome by a vague, nameless dread.

Before the questions range too far afield (before they bring up Felice Woodson, or the misidentified man who was cremated immediately after he died, or other holes in Woodson's story, that is), an ominous thump comes from the bathroom. The door to there is closed. Kyle's head jerks to look at it, and those already uneasy need only a successful Idea roll to sense that Woodson hasn't blinked once during the entire conversation, not once! (Call for sanity rolls for them, costing 0/1D3 SAN).

Things start to happen very fast.

- Without a knock, a pass key slides into the lock and the door to the hallway whips open. Two men dressed as waiters enter, guiding a service cart bearing a covered platter. "Room service," one calls cheerfully.
- Woodson's head wheels to the two waiters, then makes a sound not remotely human. His trenchcoat bunches up and writhes as if it had a pack of weasels under it. Sanity check, costs 1/1D4 SAN.
- One of the waiters whips the cover off the platter, and the other hefts out something from under it that looks like a fire extinguisher.
- Call for Idea rolls. Successes identify the men as two of those who followed the investigators in southern California. Call for Spot Hidden rolls; successes establish that both waiters wear rings set with yellow stones.
- The bathroom door flies open. Everyone smells a stench like decaying leaves. In the door is a flat wall of blackness, as though the room beyond is absorbing all light. Call for another sanity check, costing 0/1 SAN.
- A flurry of thumping, buzzing, clattering, and slipping (sounding like a dog's claws on tile or linoleum) comes from the bathroom. So does the flapping of huge wings. The sounds from the darkened bathroom are so strange, and so inhuman that in themselves they require another sanity check for 0/1D2 SAN.
- Keepers, the two waiters are Brothers of the Yellow Sign in modest disguises. Two mi-go hide in the bathroom, while a third sits in the chair, disguised as Kyle Woodson. A round of combat follows, so take declarations of intent. Whoever received even a single failing sanity roll is too surprised to act in the next round.

THE FIGHT

- On DEX 18, a loud hiss sounds from the bathroom and a jet of white mist shoots out, missing the waiters but hitting the cart. Frost and icicles sprout all over it, and the temperature in the room drops ten degrees (SAN check, 0/1D2).
- On DEX 17, the waiter with the fire extinguisher lunges forward, knocking over the cart, which shatters as it hits the floor. The man thumbs the nozzle and a thick, greenish gas shoots out and into the bathroom.



THE DISGUISED MI-GO

■ Still on DEX 17, the other waiter looks at the investigators and pulls a glass sphere from his pocket. He will Hold motionless the first person who jumps up or draws a firearm. A hideous buzzing issues from the bathroom.



■ On DEX 16, “Woodson” stands up. He reaches a height of four and a half feet. His hands drag the floor, as does the trench coat. Woodson’s head, now much too big for his body, wobbles and suddenly falls to the floor, where it bounces toward a random investigator (sanity check, cost 1/1D6 SAN)! A terrifying buzzing shriek issues from “Woodson’s” chest, and then the lights go out in the room.

■ On DEX 15, the darkness spoils any chance for investigators to aim weapons. More thumping and buzzing occurs.



Furniture falls over. A waiter screams loudly. Investigators blunder blindly into each other, the furniture, or may even brush against some hideous, spongy mass—Sanity loss for that is 1/1D3+1 SAN. Gunshots are deafening in the tight space. There is the sound of glass breaking, and of fragments crunching underfoot. A

strong turpentine smell washes everywhere. Now all the investigators lose consciousness from the effect of the gas globe.

THE WAITERS

BROTHER AH OF THE YELLOW SIGN, age 43

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 16
DEX 17 APP 13 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: + 1D4.

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 65%, damage 1D6+1D4

Gas Gun* 75%, damage 1D10+2 to mi-go body texture per round; bio-armor does not defend against this gas.

Gas Globe 45%, no damage, POT 20 knockout gas for human targets, ten foot cloud, two-hour effect. A successful Resistance roll against its effects penalizes victim’s DEX by 10.

* See p. 27 for some additional notes on the Gas Guns.

Armor: none.

Spells: none, but the mental powers of Dematerialize, Hold, Mind Read, and Tamper give the effect of magic to onlookers.

Skills: Dodge 40%, Martial Arts 45%, Run Like a Wild Animal 80%, Sneak 65%, Stare Grimly 95%, Track 75%.

BROTHER BEY OF THE YELLOW SIGN, age 28, Self-Sacrificing and Tough

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 16
DEX 17 APP 13 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 14

Damage Bonus: + 1D4.

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 65%, damage 1D6+1D4

Gas Globe 45%, no damage, POT 20 knockout gas for human targets in a 10’ cloud, two-hour effect. A successful Resistance roll against its effects penalizes the victim’s DEX by 10 for two minutes.

Armor: none.

Spells: none, but his mental powers of Dematerialize, Hold, Mind Read, and Tamper give the effect of magic to onlookers.

Skills: Dodge 45%, Martial Arts 55%, Run Like a Wild Animal 80%, Sneak 65%, Stare Grimly 95%, Track 75%.

A SAMPLE MI-GO

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 10 INT 17 POW 16
DEX 15 MOV 7/9 fly HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Nippers 60%, damage 1D6+grapple

Mist Projector 45%, damage to unprotected human 1D10+1/round*

* See p. 26-27 for info on Mi-go technology.

Armor: bio-armor net protecting against ordinary damage for 8 points; all impales do minimum possible damage to these extra-terrene entities. See p. 28.

Spells: INTx2% chance of having 1D3 spells of the keeper’s choice.

Skills: Distinguish Infrared 35%, Dodge 35%, Listen 50%, Mi-go Hypnosis 40%.



Aftermath

The investigators wake slowly, finding themselves seated on chairs or the couch, guns clutched in numb hands or fallen uselessly to the floor, and with their joints stiff and heads aching. The door to the bathroom stands half ajar, the light on in the bathroom dimly illuminates the room beyond. Both rooms are now about forty degrees colder than they were. Condensation

drips from the ceiling and down the walls. A hideous stench like spoiled milk hangs in the air. There is no sign of Woodson, the two waiters, or the service cart.

By their watches the investigators see that two hours have passed. In the bathroom two heaps of greenish slime lie on the floor, ribbons and tendrils of the stuff running all over the



counter and into the tub. The goo is the source of the stink. Each heap is inert and quite dead. Someone has written a message on the wide bathroom mirror, in smears of the hideous stuff: “You are dealing with things you do not understand. Get out while you still can.”

Thousands of questions race through the investigators’ minds, but there’s no one to answer. Yet, somehow, they seem to know where the answers lie—deep in the jungles of Belize. ■



The intrepid investigators must journey to Belize to stay hot on the trail of Kyle Woodson. There, in the shadow of ancient ruins, they confront a shocking secret concerning their own pasts as well as brave deadly dangers to discover Woodson's final fate.

Run Part 2 as a direct continuation of Part I. If handouts were missed in Part 1 (ie, the items in Woodson's attic, or the materials found in his safety deposit box), they can be found among Woodson's notebooks, in the ruins of AFAR's camp.

Put aside qualms you may have about investigator death and derangement. Once the players leave the U.S., they're playing for keeps, and you should reward foolish decisions with quick and brutal deaths. All the safety nets of law and cultural procedure have been pulled away. Whatever happens now, it's up to them.

Keeper's Information

THE STRANGE FATE OF KYLE WOODSON

When Woodson returned to Belize, he quickly made his way to El Cacao. There the fungi from Yuggoth tried to capture him. He fled for his life into the surrounding jungle. He stumbled across a small village of Mennonites who took him in, listened to his story, then delivered him to the mi-go.

In a mi-go outpost somewhere in the Andes, the fungi removed Woodson's brain, put it into a brain cylinder, and replaced the inside of Woodson's skull with a complex piece of neuralware. His body became a puppet on a remote. A trusted fungi agent flew back to California with the archaeologist, then arranged his death in a collision with a stolen car. The agent infiltrated the hospital and arranged for Woodson's body to be destroyed before an autopsy could be made. The agent also tried, twice, to break into Kyle's house and steal his notes. Her work at Woodson's house was a failure, and attracted the attention of the police.

The agent did miracles at the hospital, but could not know that the advanced antiseptics used by the mi-go as they cut away Woodson's brain would inadvertently destroy the malaria hosted in his blood. No trace of malaria or malarial antibodies being found in Woodson's blood work, Schwartz began his misguided search for the "real" Woodson. Woodson's disembodied brain still lives, and awaits the investigators in the ruins of El Cacao.

DARK FORCES: THE MYTHOS COMBATANTS

The investigators have also stumbled into an ages-long war between the Brothers of the Yellow Sign and the fungi from Yuggoth. The goals and current disposition of each group are detailed below.

The Brothers' attack at Hotel Miskatonic was an unqualified success. Three mi-go were destroyed, and other agents were able to trace the mi-go presence in Arkham back to Vermont, where a large battle was fought off-stage, reported in the press as an unusual lightning storm. While the investigators were unconscious in the Hotel Miskatonic, some Brothers read their minds and found trace memories of the mi-go presence in northern Belize.

Hoping for another victory, the Brothers plan to follow the investigators to Belize and then to El Cacao, using them as bait to draw out the fungi. A team of six Brothers has assembled in Massachusetts to fly to Central America. Using magic to follow the investigators, they intend to be on the scene when next the space devils rear their faceless heads.

THE BROTHERHOOD PURSUIT TEAM

DROOSON G'TAL, aka Mark Widener, age 3417, Team Leader

STR 13	CON 20	SIZ 12	INT 21	POW 25
DEX 14	APP 12	EDU 50	SAN 0	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Ritual Dagger 75%, damage 1D4+2+1D4, enchanted 9mm Auto 55%, damage 1D10

Gas Globe 60%, POT 20 knockout gas.

Spells*: Bind G'yaa-yoth, Bless Blade, Cloud Memory, Contact Hastur, Curse of the Stone, Deflect Harm, Dominate, Mind Blast, Song of Hastur, Summon/Bind Byakhee.

* he usually has a Deflect Harm spell ready.

Mental Powers: Dematerialize, Hold, Mind Read, Tamper.

Skills: Anthropology 88%, Astronomy 65%, Climb 55%, Cthulhu Mythos

30%, Dodge 55%, History 90%, Listen 60%, Psychology 85%, Sing 65%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 75%, Track 65%.

Items: Drooson's yellow crystal amulet can store 50 additional magic points (it currently contains 36). He also carries an enchanted whistle adding 40 percentiles to his chance of success when summoning byakhee.

Drooson was born millennia ago, within the blue-lit vault of K'n-Yan itself. He is immortal (ageless, not invincible), and appears to be about thirty years old. Drooson joined the Brothers and came to the surface world 1,214 years ago. He is tireless in his pursuit of the fungi, fanatically devoted to his cult, and has spent centuries learning to live as a lesser human. Deep down, all surface humans are nothing more than corrupted cattle to him. In the right circumstance, his own team is expendable, as is his own life.



DROOSON G'TAL

Mi-Go Armaments

Typically, one mi-go in ten is armed. In defense of the station or the nexus cavern, dozens of armed mi-go will be dispatched to protect these vital resources. The fungi utilize the two light weapons detailed below. The exact armament of a mi-go assault force is at the keeper's discretion.

MIST PROJECTOR

A cluster of twisted metal tubes projecting a cone of icy mist in a fat cloud about ten feet across. The mist looks like



thick white fog, and is intensely cold. The mist does 1D10 points of damage per round of exposure, less one point if dressed in warm clothing or three points for thick, arctic clothing. Hiding inside a car affords four points of protection, but the mist freezes an automobile engine, running or not, stalling it so that it will not start or restart. The weapon's projection can be sustained—

mi-go generally play mist over a target for several rounds, ensuring the death of unprotected humans.

An investigator can figure out how to use this weapon with a successful Idea roll. The base chance of the weapon is 25%. Because the mist travels much more slowly than a bullet, investigators who have seen mist projectors in action and who have freedom of movement can dodge the mist streams with a successful DEX x3 or INT x3 roll. The weapons carry enough charge for twenty shots, each potentially lasting an entire combat round.

ELECTRIC GUN

This weapon looks like a warty, doorknob-sized lump of black metal, covered in tiny wires. Mi-go fire this weapon by clutching it tightly and changing the electrical resistance of the lump. When activated, the weapon fires a blu-ish bolt of sparks doing 1D10 points of damage to the target. When it hits, the electric jolt acts like a taser, causing violent muscle spasms which immobilize the victim for a number of rounds equal to the damage inflicted. Finally, the target must receive a successful Resistance table roll comparing his or her hit points against the damage done, or the target dies of heart failure.

To be able to fire this alien weapon, humans must realign the wires on the electric gun, a feat requiring two Electrical Repair rolls. So jury-rigged for human use, the weapon fires uncertainly. Roll 1D6 when attempting to fire: the weapon actually fires only on a result of 1-2.

Mi-go take normal rolled damage (surface burns to the carapace) from these weapons, but do not have electrical nervous systems, and are hence immune to other damage from electrical charges.



FIVE DEVOTED BROTHERS OF THE YELLOW SIGN

	one	two	three	four	five
STR	10	15	13	16	14
CON	14	15	18	15	13
SIZ	17	12	14	16	17
INT	20	10	14	16	12
DEX	11	16	15	15	14
POW	19	15	18	17	14
HP	16	14	16	16	15

Damage Bonus for All: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 65%, damage 1D6+1D4

Gas Globe 55%, POT 20 knockout gas in a 10' cloud.

Gas Gun (Brothers 1 and 3) 70%, damage 1D10+2 to mi-go body texture per round; bio-armor does not defend.

Heckler & Koch MP5 Submachine Gun 45%, damage 1D10, 2 shots per round or burst fire

Mind Powers: Dematerialize, Hold, Mind Read, Tamper.

Skills: Climb 40%, Dodge 40%, Listen 40%, Martial Arts 50%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stare Grimly 95%, Throw 60%, Track 75%.

THE FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH

The fungi fear that much Kyle Woodson's research has been uncovered. They also know the identities of the investigators involved. After setting a trap for them in Arkham, the fungi were bewildered when their stratagem failed and the three fungi involved were killed. They do not know why or how this happened, but believe that the later attack in Vermont was connected. To make matters worse, all of their agents in Arkham have been neutralized and the mi-go have lost contact with the investigators. However, since the investigators have been retracing Woodson's path, the fungi believe that the investigators must travel to Belize, to search for Woodson there.

The mi-go are dismayed by the recent turn of events, and concerned that the nexus at Xibalba might be compromised. They have told their Mennonite servants to be watchful for any strangers, and to deal with newcomers the way they dealt with Woodson. The crash of Schwartz's plane will be arranged afterward, to cover up the deaths. Perhaps close study of the investigators' brains can reveal why their conditioning has failed.

A SQUADRON OF MI-GO

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
STR	11	15	11	09	14	12	15	14
CON	08	12	09	11	18	10	11	10
SIZ	10	10	08	14	07	09	11	12
INT	13	15	16	15	16	13	14	16
POW	13	13	13	15	17	17	14	12
DEX	20	20	17	16	14	13	13	14
HP	09	11	09	13	13	10	11	11
DB	—	1D4	—	—	—	—	+1D4	+1D4
Nip%	35%	50%	30%	45%	40%	40%	45%	45%

Weapons: Nipper Attack damage 1D6+db+grapple

Mist Projector 55%, damage 1D10, see box, left

Electric Gun 55%, damage 1D10 + stun or death, see box, left

Armor: bio-armor net protects against ordinary damage for 8 points; bio-armor does not protect against impales, but all impales do minimum possible damage to these extra-terrene entities.

Spells: mi-go of POW 15 or higher know at least the following spells: Void Light, Contact Human.

Skills: Distinguish Infrared 35%, Dodge 35%, Listen 50%, Mi-go Hypnosis 40%.

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
STR	12	15	07	13	16	11	09
CON	09	08	09	14	15	13	08
SIZ	10	13	06	14	08	09	13
INT	14	18	14	14	08	09	13
POW	15	15	13	16	13	14	13
DEX	12	11	11	11	11	10	08
HP	10	11	08	14	12	11	11
DB	—	+1D4	-1D4	+1D4	—	—	—
Nip%	30%	50%	40%	30%	50%	30%	55%

Weapons: Nipper Attack damage 1D6+db+grapple

Mist Projector 55%, damage 1D10, see p. 26

Electric Gun 55%, damage 1D10 + stun or death, see p. 26

Armor: bio-armor net protects against ordinary damage for 8 points; bio-armor does not protect against impales, but all impales do minimum possible damage to these extra-terrene entities.

Spells: mi-go of POW 15 or higher know at least the following spells: Void Light, Contact Human.

Skills: Distinguish Infrared 35%, Dodge 35%, Listen 50%, Mi-go Hypnosis 40%.

Leaving Arkham

The scenario assumes that Part 1 concluded in Arkham, at the Hotel Miskatonic. Keepers should adjust the descriptions that follow to reflect another location, if necessary. The end of Part

Mi-Go Armor

Mi-go bearing armaments will almost always be armored as well. Others may be as the situation warrants.

BIO-ARMOR

In dangerous situations, mi-go typically wear these webs of semiluminous green slime. The harnesses provide 8 points of armor against blows, flame, etc., but do not protect against impaling attacks. Because of their extra-terrene body composition, mi-go take only the minimum possible damage from impales.



I left the investigators at an impasse. After trips to California and Arkham, the investigators have many clues, but no Woodson and no sign that Woodson is in Belize, only reams of notes about strange, dark gods and alien beings.

Searching the hotel room, the investigators find little trace of the fight they witnessed. The heaps of foul-smelling slime decay to a thin film within twenty minutes, dissolving before the investigator's eyes. Inquiries to the hotel staff are fruitless; no one remembers seeing anyone strange enter or leave. If guns were fired, no one heard them. The investigators are the only ones staying on their floor. Business at the Hotel Miskatonic is slow.

Weapons of the Yellow Sign

GAS GLOBE

These small, crystal spheres were developed by the Brothers to combat the mi-go, who are especially vulnerable to air-



borne toxins. Each globe, when shattered, releases a cloud of gas fifteen feet in diameter. It will disperse in five combat rounds, and fewer yet if outdoors in the wind. The Brothers possess four different types.

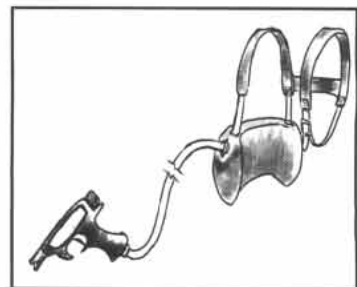
- Poison Gas, POT 25 to mi-go, POT 3 to humans.
- Tear Gas, POT 15 to mi-go, POT 17 to humans, immobilizes the victims for 20 minus CON rounds.
- Knockout Gas, POT 25 to humans.
- Smoke, blocks visibility into or through the affected area.

Each Brother typically carries one globe of each type. The

team has ten of each type of globe in reserve. The toxic agents are absorbed directly through the skin; holding one's breath is no help. A fumble when attacking with a gas globe means that the thrower has dropped the globe at his own feet, and is affected accordingly.

GAS GUN

Resembling a modern fire extinguisher, the pressurized container is designed to deliver a burst of gas in a concentrated stream up to thirty feet. The gun itself consists of a small grip and nozzle connected to a bulky gas cylinder. The whole unit weighs about fifteen pounds. The gas cylinder contains one of the four types of gas detailed above. The pursuit team is only carrying poison gas cylinders. Each gas gunner has one reload. Note that if the user rolls 00, or if the weapon is hit by a bullet, the gas gun explodes for 4D6 damage to the user and creates a cloud of gas forty feet in diameter.



Inspection of the rooms reveals that all the investigators' bags are packed. A quick search reveals that Kyle's notes have not been taken, though they are rearranged slightly, as if someone had inspected them. If the investigators brought it here, the strange idol from Woodson's attic has vanished.

The investigators probably have not read all of Woodson's notes. Studying them, the files from his home, and his Arkham researches takes twenty hours and requires successful checks in Mayan Hieroglyphics, Mayan Lore, and Archaeology. If successful, the reader sees the startling conclusions plainly, loses 1D3/1D6 SAN, and adds five percentiles to Cthulhu Mythos.

The investigators can pursue the lines of inquiry they wish. Ramsey Schwartz strongly suggests a trip to Central America. After all, the identity of the dead "Kyle Woodson" still remains a mystery, and it's possible that Kyle never really returned to the United States. Once the investigators decide to go to Belize, AFAR sets up the arrangements, including liaison with Pro-gramme for Belize, an archaeological and conservation organization with which AFAR partners when conducting digs in Belize.

Before the investigators depart for Belize, a shopping trip is in order in Boston. They'll need camping gear, durable clothes, machetes, a good supply of Pepto Bismol, mosquito repellent, a snake-bite kit, a variety of vaccines, and especially above all a booster shot against malaria. After spending a day or two rounding up field gear (on Schwartz's tab, of course), the investigators lift off without incident in Schwartz's private jet. The flight takes a little over four hours. Scholarly investigators can fill up the time reading Woodson's notes or the *Zanthu Tablets*.

Belize City

The flight to Belize is long and uneventful. After cutting across the green and sapphire waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the investigators finally make a bumpy landing on the Yucatán peninsula at a small commercial airport outside of Belize City, a field usually reserved for flocks of small planes ferrying tourists to the nearby keys. As soon as the door opens, the heat and humidity hits like a hammer, and more heat is relentlessly flung up from the tarmac.

Walking into the dusty terminal building, several of the seedy pilots loafing in the shadows have noticed the landing of the investigators' spiffy jet and throw suspicious glances at the investigators. The head of security, a tall black man who speaks with a strange hybrid of Jamaican and English accents, leads the group through customs. See the boxed text concerning Belize to learn what might be contraband.

Clearing customs, the investigators head back out to the



parking lot where all manner of signs welcome them to Belize, advertise the expensive hotels in Belize city, and proclaim that Belliken Beer, the beer of Belize, is the only beer worth drinking. The mosquitoes are already biting. Sweat drips off their

faces. The beggars have the decency to stay away. Then a well dressed man walks up to greet them.

The man is Jackson LeRoix, a Programme for Belize (PFB) representative from the office in Belmopan, the country's capital. LeRoix offers the investigators his regards, then leads them to what passes for a lounge to talk.

Getting with the Programme

Over ice cold bottles of Coke or Fanta, LeRoix chats with the investigators about their trip and about archaeology with any scholarly types. Pleasant and congenial, his voice has the same strange accent, not quite British and not fully Caribbean. Finally LeRoix gets down to business. He offers the group an old, wrinkled road map of the country and gives them the keys to an old, battered Ford van.

LeRoix tells the investigators that when Kyle Woodson last arrived in Belize, he approached PFB to get access to the maps and drawings from the University of Pennsylvania's expedition. He was particularly anxious to know if any survey work had been done near Kate's Lagoon, or if anyone was excavating at El Cacao. He seemed quite relieved to hear negative answers to both questions. All work in that area ceased in 1994, after the tragedy at El Cacao. No team or university has risked a return. LeRoix asked Woodson the reason for his sudden visit, but he avoided the question. He seemed very irritable, almost afraid.

Mi-Go Spells and Skills

CONTACT HUMAN, a new spell

With this spell, mi-go can mentally send commands or messages to their human servants. The spell costs 2 magic points to cast and effects a telepathic link to a human who has fallen at some time in the past under mi-go hypnosis. The contactee can respond, ask questions, etc. Each minute of contact after the first costs an additional magic point.

VOID LIGHT, a new spell

This spell subtly warps space, creating a sink from which photons will not emerge. The mi-go must spend one magic point for every cubic yard of blackness desired. No light can escape

the affected area, making useful visual protection for these sometimes fragile aliens. Depending on how the spell is prepared, the darkness may be like a sheet or a spherical volume.

MI-GO HYPNOSIS, a new skill

By introducing certain ultrahigh and ultralow frequency tones into its buzzing, the mi-go can put one or many humans listening to it into a trance state. An investigator within forty feet of the mi-go must receive a Resistance table roll of POW vs. POW or become incapable of action other than listening. Thoughts and commands can then be given to a specific human via the Contact Human spell.

Before he left, Woodson warned Jackson that other people might come asking after him, and asked him to say that PFB hadn't seen him.

Jackson can mark El Cacao's location on the map. The site is in the middle of nowhere, lost in the forests. Jackson recommends that the investigators stop at the PFB camp and dormitory located at Kate's Lagoon and stay there, if they can. Anyone who was present in 1994 remembers the old camp with a shudder (El Cacao is an all-day hike from there).

The nearest town, Orange Walk, is a half-hour drive away from the camp. The PFB camp was closed in 1994 and hasn't been used since. A farmer, Oscar Gutierrez, owns the land, however, and used to volunteer as a digger and laborer for PFB. Woodson might have headed there too.

LeRoix has nothing more to offer the investigators, save advising that they avoid the town of Orange Walk. Always poor and tumble-down, the drug dealers and smugglers are swarming there—the town is no longer safe for foreigners. A gang of cutthroats has even taken to butchering people and selling their kidneys on the black market. LeRoix wishes the investigators luck, then goes on his way.



JACKSON LEROIX

At some time during the interview with LeRoix, with a successful Spot Hidden, an appropriate investigator with fairly high POW notices a female face in the lounge mirror. Seated a half dozen tables away, she is studying the group with some interest. When the investigator catches her eye in the mirror, she abruptly rises and leaves the lounge. She is Chinese, tall, powerfully built, and dressed in khaki pants and a light blue blouse. Those investigators who see her are irresistibly reminded of "Felice Woodson"—though the face is not hers, her muscular, confident movement is very reminiscent. If an investigator pursues her into the terminal, she disappears around a corner.

Good Luck and Bad Luck

An investigator might search for her in the women's toilet. With a successful Luck roll, the Chinese woman is not in the room. With a failure she is, and she attacks as silently as she can, with the intent of knocking out or incapacitating the investigator and then escaping out the room's tiny window. After three combat rounds, loud noises in the room draw in the other investigators as well as airport security, and they then can try to make a capture.

If she loses the fight, a massive embolism sets her body quaking and shivering, just as with Felice Woodson. She dies within seconds. Her identification is false and she carries no clues. An autopsy reveals the same sort of brain anomalies as "Felice Woodson" showed.

THE WOMAN IN THE MIRROR, age 24, Pawn of the Mi-go

STR 16 CON 17 SIZ 16 INT 14 POW 10
DEX 15 APP 10 EDU 09 SAN 25 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 90%, damage 1D3+1D4

Kick 70%, damage 1D6+1D4

9mm automatic 55%, 3 shots/round, damage 1D10

Belize: An Overview

It is a small nation, only slightly larger than Massachusetts, stretching along the eastern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula. Once part of the Mayan heartland, Belize was first surveyed by Spaniards in 1508, but they bypassed it in favor of richer pickings. British pirates founded a town on the Belize River in 1641 and fought long wars with the Spanish, who finally gave up claim to the land in 1786. British Honduras became part of the British Empire. Slave labor fed a prosperous logging industry, which rapidly left most of the country a flat, deforested marsh. Soon the land was little more than a primitive, depopulated backwater.

British Honduras gained self rule in 1965 and became the nation of Belize. Tourism to the keys and coral reefs of the Belizean coast now forms the nation's primary industry. Drug trafficking is also a popular activity.

Three cities are of note in Belize: Belize City, San Ignacio on the Guatemalan border, and Orange Walk Town. All are typical of towns in developing nations, with poor roads, questionable sanitation, and rampant poverty. Most of the country is wild and empty. Because of disagreements with Guatemala over the border to the west, Belize remains a British Protectorate with a small English defense force.

Belize is an oddity in Central America: a melting pot of Caribbean Creoles, Latinos, English, expatriate Americans, reclusive Mennonites, Mayan Indians, and Chinese fleeing the transfer of Hong Kong.

The dry season in Belize lasts until the end of May. The weather in April is hot and humid.

An American dollar exchanges for about \$4.50 BZ (Belizean dollars).

ENTRY INTO BELIZE

A passport is required to enter the country. A visitor's visa permit for 30 days is stamped in each investigator's passport, and then bags are checked. Each investigator has a 50% chance of having a bag opened. What exactly do the investigators have packed?

Visitors to Belize are allowed to bring what they need during their stay, within reason. Twenty imperial ounces of liquor, 200 cigarettes, and one bottle of perfume may be entered duty-free. Medications should be accompanied by prescriptions. Narcotics are unacceptable and will be seized.

As regards firearms, only hunting rifles will be allowed into the country, and only with a permit costing \$150 BZ. No handguns are permitted. Unless arrangements were made in advance, firearms will be confiscated. An investigator who has broken this law also needs a successful Luck roll or he will be detained by the police. A gun permit takes three days to acquire. A successful Fast Talk or Persuade roll, coupled with a bribe of about \$50 BZ, cuts down the wait to hours, but the bribe must not be offered clumsily or insultingly.

Armor: 7HP bullet-proof vest (40% chance to take each hit).

Skills: Bargain 30%, Benchpress 55%, Contact Black Market 77%, Dodge 65%, Fast Talk 70%, Follow Orders Ingeniously 80%, Grapple 60%, Hide 55%, Jump 75%, Library Use 45%, Listen 50%, Martial Arts 65%, Obtain Forgeries 65%, Persuade 35%, Shoplift 55%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 75%.

The Black Market

Paranoid investigators can purchase almost anything in the narrow, winding streets of Belize City. Anyone wanting to buy guns of any sort will be able to do so, with a successful Luck roll and a successful Fast Talk roll, and a willingness to pay twice the price listed in the *1990's Handbook*. For instance, on the Belizean black market a new 9mm handgun costs about a thousand dollars U.S., an Uzi submachine gun about \$1500, and an M16A2 about \$2000. Don't forget lots of bullets.

Investigators who flash too much money might find themselves the victims of the criminals they hope to do business with. Buyers beware—the town is a tourist trap.

The Trip to Kate's Lagoon

The investigators' van has just enough room for themselves and their luggage. The van's blue paint has faded to a ghost of its former shade, and white dust coats everything. The van starts easily enough, and the vehicle negotiates streets that barely pass as paved. On the outskirts of Belize City, the roads are clogged with



traffic, mostly old rusted American cars or horse-drawn carts. As the city thins, the group passes a field of half finished houses, their cinder-block walls gleaming like bones in the blinding sun. A huge school bus full of Jamaican-looking people

rumbles by, covered in spray paint. The investigators finally stumble onto the New Northern Highway and speed into the countryside.

They first pass through a dense mangrove belt and then out into a landscape hazy with the heat. Tall, yellow grass looms on the roadside, and the road passes stunted pines, palmetto swamps, and dense savanna. In the distance, dark smudges of jungle can be seen. The ride is bumpy and hot. The van's air conditioning failed long ago, and one of the rear windows rattles with each jolt, the crack down its center growing longer and longer. The radio spews forth a wild melange of reggae, Latinized rock, rap, and religious programs, interrupted by official announcements, annoying ads, and relays of BBC news from London. It is a different world here. Hours pass without a sign of another town or of civilization.

As the shadows lengthen into evening, the investigators reach a junction with the Old Northern Highway and turn onto that dirt road. Occasional patches of pavement stand out from the white clay like leprosy sores. Sugar cane farms roll by, the trees and vegetation getting thicker and thicker. Carcasses of worn-out trucks huddle beside the road, skeletons encased in rust. At last, as dusk turns everything gray, they come to what seems to be the right gate. They have arrived at the PFB camp at Kate's Lagoon.

The PFB Camp

Passing through, the track winds to a wide, open area overgrown with grass and shrubs. There are a few lone trees. Two low rises, the remains of the Mayan site Kichpanha, stick out of the grass. Beyond lies the glassy stillness of Kate's Lagoon. But where are the lights? Where is the camp building, that should be standing like a monolith on stilts with the shower bunker close by? Even the small farmstead of the land owner seems to have vanished. Soon the headlights hit a twisted pile of debris, the old metal roof of the camp building flattened onto the rubble beneath. Something is wrong.

Nonetheless, the investigators have arrived at the right location. They can either move on to Orange Walk and seek cheap lodgings in the lawless town, or camp out amid the ruins. If they search the camp, they have one hour of light left this evening.

Refer to the map of the ruined camp. The dorm building was about eighty feet long and thirty wide, raised five feet off the ground on thick wooden posts. One end featured a kitchen with the generator shack below it. Concrete sidewalks led from it to the lab building, the latrines, and the shower bunker. Now the dorm is a heap of rubble, and there is evidence of a fire around the generators. The plywood of the building is rotten and splintered, the metal roof rusted heavily. Cracks run through the sidewalks, the grass pushing through. Plants also clutch the ruin of the lab building, the small house apparently pitched over onto its side. All that remains of the showers are two rows of cinder blocks, the concrete floor, and a few smashed pipes sticking out of the ground. The farm house has also been smashed and burned. With the roof gone, it is little more than a heap of kindling with coated with flaking white paint.

A water tower (not significant enough to be on the map) lies on its side, rusting amid the weeds. Out by the lagoon and up on the mound, the remains of a few tents can be found, the plastic savagely torn. The lab building is still intact, though leaning crazily to one side. The whole place is uncannily silent. Even the bugs seem to stay away. The longer the investigators stay, the more uneasy they feel. Those who were here in 1994 are haunted by flashes of memories, seeing the compound as it was, filled with people who have also disappeared.

Searches of the buildings takes one hour for every Spot Hidden roll (scores halved at night). Extensive search turns up lots of odds and ends—mostly plastic and metal items, for paper is too water damaged to salvage. A DEX x5 check should accompany each Spot Hidden roll, to avoid falling through the rotten boards, stepping onto nails, or getting cut on the sharp edges of ruined metal and concrete. A failed DEX x5 check results in 1D3 points of damage to the investigator.

Like the insects, all animal life is absent. With a successful Idea roll, an investigator deduces that the vegetation is so thick that no one could have been here for years. Did LeRoix know about these conditions, or has PFB acquired a tropical lethargy?

WHAT SPOT HIDDEN ROLLS CAN FIND

The Dorm Building:

- A machete, heavily rusted. The blade is broken, shattered in a strangely irregular line, like the edge of a snowflake.

The Kitchen/Generator Shack:

- The door of the refrigerator has not only rusted through but also seems to have shattered in one corner in a way reminiscent of the machete.
- Lots of bent cutlery. Pots and pans are warped, as if exposed to extremes of temperature.
- Several unopened cans of food bearing expiration dates in 1994 or 1995.

The Farmhouse:

- The water pipes in the kitchen have swollen and burst; flanges of metal and burst seams can be seen.
- A shotgun, ruined, with a bent barrel.
- There are holes resembling shotgun blasts in the wooden walls. If an investigator digs in the wood with a knife, he or she finds steel pellets embedded in the walls.

The Lab Building:

- Many self-sealing plastic bags are here, full of bits of pottery or chips of flint. Some seem to have been ground into powder.
- A large grinding stone apparently shattered from within.
- The remains of a recent campsite! There is a rolled up sleeping bag, old ashes from a campfire, and a large duffle bag. The duffle bag is badly waterlogged. Within, mildewed clothes can be found, a few with KTW written on the collar or shirttail. Was Kyle Woodson here? To confirm it, a badly damaged notebook rests under the clothes! Only the last few pages can be read. They form the body of *Resection Papers #22*.

Christian Andersen

As the investigators try to read Woodson's notebooks or search the rest of the camp, dusk settles over the camp like a shroud. Call for a Listen roll from the investigators. Those who succeed



CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

will hear a faint rustling. Footsteps? Turning, a figure steps into view. A short wiry man stands there, with a gnarled face, thin white beard, and deathly pale skin. He's dressed in dark blue overalls and a straw hat. Liver-spotted hands keep a double-barreled shotgun trained on the group.

"Vas are you doing here?" he asks, his thin voice drowning in a thick German accent.

The man is Christian Andersen. Anyone who's been in Belize before

can identify the old man as a Mennonite, a member of a religious sect common in the country, by the way Andersen speaks and dresses. He is nervous, obviously scared of the investigators. He demands to know their business on his land. A successful Fast Talk or Persuade rolls calms him down. The old man laughs if the investigators tell him they're archaeologists. "More of you, eh? Vel, did you find your treasures here?"

After more amiable introductions, he invites the investigators back to his home for dinner and good coffee. He won't take no for an answer, insisting that Orange Walk is too far away and too full of thieves. Successful Psychology rolls allow investigators to deduce that the offer is the old man's way of apologizing

for threatening them with the shotgun. If shown a picture of Kyle Woodson, Andersen's face lights up. "Oh, that one! Ja, he was here. Two weeks back. I'll tell you all about it over dinner."

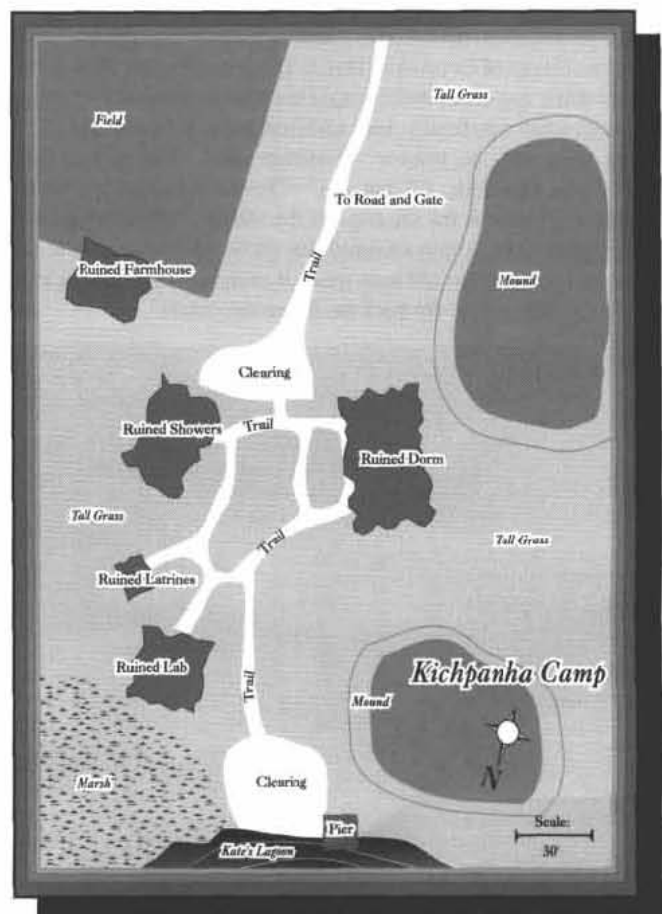
If the investigators refuse Andersen's invitation, that night ten armed Mennonites and three mi-go sweep the camp to capture everyone camping among the ruins.

If the investigators accept, he leads them back out to the road, where a horse-drawn cart and team waits. Anyone making a Spot Hidden roll notices that the wheels are all wood and metal, with no rubber at all (the mark of a truly conservative and devout Mennonite, as a Know roll can confirm). Andersen says he was coming back from visiting a cousin of his when he noticed the tire tracks on his property and came to investigate. He offers any two investigators who want it a ride in his cart, which only holds three people. If any accept, he drives the team on, and talks to his passengers all the way there. The rest crawl along behind in the Ford van.

CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S STORY

He is the grandson of one of the first Mennonite pioneers who moved to Belize in 1959. His village is very conservative; they try to seal out the modern world. Two years ago Andersen bought the land the camp sits on, since the former owner had gone and it was very cheap. He has no idea whatever became of Oscar, the former owner.

The presence of so many drug dealers in the area has left the land unsafe to work. "They're always drifting in, then moving on, camping out there with their cocaine and their guns." He had pegged the investigators for dope dealers when first he saw them. All of the farms hereabouts are empty now. Spot Hidden



rolls pick out dilapidated, desolate farms looming and fading in the thickening dusk. If pressed about Kyle Woodson, the old man puts off any answer until after dinner.

Keepers, Christian Andersen's story is a lie. He and his entire village have been corrupted. They have devotedly worshipped Shub-Niggurath for many years, and they loyally serve the fungi from Yuggoth. The fungi told him to look for the investigators, then lure them into a trap—the same trap in which they caught Woodson. Andersen has faithfully obeyed.

Mennonite Village

After a half-hour's slow ride through the deepening jungle, Andersen stops his cart. His village is just ahead, he says. It would be better not to drive the van closer to it. His people are very old fashioned. The van is a modern thing, and its presence would cause quite a stir. A Know roll confirms that the warning is plausible, and probably wise. Investigators who drove this far will have to walk the rest of the way.

Around the bend lies a cluster of ragged shanties and shacks, oil lanterns and candles glowing inside each. Upon closer inspection, the houses get even dingier. The paint flaked from their plank walls years ago, and not a single pane of intact glass can be seen. The dismal shacks' equally dismal inhabitants gather to watch the investigators pass. Pale round face after pale round face huddles in the windows or doorways. The monotony of the villagers' features whispers of incest and inbreeding. A musty, earthy smell hangs in the air.

One man steps out onto his porch and shouts angrily, his words in some dialect of German or Dutch. The investigators' Mennonite host calmly responds, and engages the man in brief conversation. The offended man finally nods and stomps back into his house. "I think there may be trouble," Andersen says. "My people, they don't like strangers. All but me." Christian Andersen's house comes into view at the far edge of the village, a little bigger and better than most. A thin mongrel dog slinks up and growls at the investigators, but the old man sends it cringing away with a kick and a German curse. He beckons the group inside.

The main room of the cottage is small and plain, with quilts hung on every wall. Christian's wife Emma has already set the table, and bustles off to the kitchen to get more place settings. Emma Andersen never speaks a word in the investigators' presence. Christian says grace, then presides over a somber dinner.

After dinner, the old Mennonite will finally talk about Woodson. He found Kyle Woodson six days ago, wandering through his fields. He had a fever, and was raving about someone being after him. Andersen brought him here and tended to the man, while he babbled about devils from the sky and fish people of the seas. When the fever broke, Woodson had decided to go home.

At this point, there is a knock at the front door, and loud voices from the porch. Andersen frowns. "It's Ezekial. I'd hoped for no trouble. The others have come to chide me. Here, wait back here. I'll make them go away." He shows the investigators to a small bedroom. A single window looks out over the village. He shuts the door firmly.

The Trap

The investigators wait for a few minutes. Through the door, they clearly hear what sounds like an argument between their host and at least three other men, all in the same confusing dialect. If an investigator speaks German, the dialog heard is somewhere between Plattdeutsch and Frisian, very difficult to understand, but apparently not so much an argument as angry instructions and counterthoughts. A successful German roll firmly establishes that all the speakers are agreed, but that just what they want to do is uncertain.

After a few moments pass, call for a Spot Hidden roll. Anyone who succeeds notices glints from something lying under the writing table, shoved nearly flush against the wall. It is a pair of eye glasses, the lenses crushed and the bows bent as if stepped on. One lens is smeared with a rusty-colored dried liquid, almost certainly dried blood. Anyone who knew Kyle Woodson recognizes the eye glasses as like those worn by him for reading or for studying artifacts. Sanity cost to realize this is 0/1D2 SAN.

Just then, something lands on the roof with a thud and a clatter of claws. Whatever it is, the thing sounds like it has eight legs! The sanity cost is 1/1D4 SAN for alumni of the dig, whose



subconscious minds suddenly well up the knowledge that they have heard these sounds before.

The investigators have about thirty seconds to act. What do they do? The clattering on the roof moves off toward the front of the house, and soon the room's door opens. In the doorway stand Christian and five other Mennonites, armed with clubs and farm tools!

CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN, age 64, Cultist Ringleader

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 13 POW 13
DEX 09 APP 08 EDU 10 SAN 0 HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapon: 12-gauge Shotgun (2B) 40%, damage 4D6/2D6/1D6

Spells: none.

Skills: Bargain 25%, Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Dodge 15%, English 30%, Farming 40%, Listen 40%, Mi-go Lore 12%, Natural History 20%, Psychology 36%, Ride 15%, Sneak 42%.

FIVE SERVANTS OF THE FUNGI

	1	2	3	4	5
STR	15	12	09	12	13
CON	11	13	10	13	09
SIZ	12	13	14	10	11
INT	10	11	11	09	11
POW	13	09	10	09	10
DEX	13	12	11	10	09
HP	12	13	12	12	10
D. Bonus:	+1D4	+1D4	—	—	—

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3+db

Sickle 55%, damage 1D6+1+db

Club 45%, damage 1D8+db

Wood Ax 40%, damage 1D8+2+db

Skills: Dodge 30%, Listen 40%, Sneak 60%, Track 65%.

A burst of gunfire scatters the hostile men in the doorway. They run from the house moaning if they've been hit by the unexpected gunfire, no doubt cursing technical progress. In the void of silence that they leave, all of the investigators can hear shouts in the distance. The whole village is on the move.

Escape is urgently needed. The window offers one exit, but the group can also fight their way out the front door. They'll have to face all six cultists to do it, though, including Christian Andersen and his shotgun.

Escape into Terror

Outside the house, a mob is headed toward the cottage, waving pitchforks and axes. Here and there a shotgun can be seen. The chaos of the mob distresses all the survivors of the 1994 dig. Those investigators must receive a successful sanity roll or lose 1 SAN and be overwhelmed for an entire combat round, frozen by terrifying flashbacks of the dorm building at night, of shouts and torches and the clattering of claws.

Escape can prove tricky. An obvious goal is the van, parked at the other end of town, but how to get to it? The group needs a successful Navigate roll to find the way back in the unfamiliar blackness. At a jog, reaching the van takes ten rounds. Each round represents a 50% chance that a cultist spots the group and calls to others. Hide or Sneak rolls offer brief respites, but make no progress. Let the players make their own plans. If some investigators get isolated and then get captured, the results may be unhappy but will certainly motivate the remaining investigators.

The road through the village is studded with searching cultists. The gardens behind every shack are tangled and overgrown and take longer to negotiate, but they are also much less occupied. Spot Hidden rolls reveal that the fruits and vegetables growing in the gardens are huge and bloated, sick parodies of themselves (sanity check, cost 0/1 SAN). Finally the van comes into sight. Just as the investigators make a run for it, something stirs on the van's roof and rises up in the star light.

Standing there is a pinkish thing with a serpentine body roughly five feet long and segmented, with a shiny exoskeleton that summons up thoughts of shrimp or lobster. From its back sprout a pair of massive, membranous wings, while from its sides grow eight long, segmented limbs, each ending in a crab-like claw. The thing is standing on its hindmost pair of legs. Where its head should be rests a lumpy mass of cilia or short antennae, which wave about like the tendrils of an anemone, glowing a bright green but quickly changing to red, orange, blue, then green again.



The sight of the mi-go requires a sanity check costing 0/1D6 SAN. Ignore the check for investigators who had their memories restructured in 1994. They automatically lose 1D3+3 SAN. If these unfortunates lose five or more points of sanity on that roll, they suddenly remember what really happened at El Cacao. Give them *Resection Papers #23*. All who go temporarily insane flee gibbering into the jungle. Those who remain sane can try to drive away the mi-go on the van.

The fungus tries to immobilize as many investigators as it can by buzzing at them with the Mi-go Hypnosis skill, but it flees if injured. Victorious or not, the investigators cannot start the van. Its battery has been hidden in the jungle. If the investigators tarry too long at the van, ten cultists, three with shotguns, race up and attack relentlessly. If the mi-go has been harmed, they shoot to kill. Only the dark jungle offers escape.

THE MI-GO on the Roof of the Van

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 16 POW 15
DEX 14 MOV 7/9 fly HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0.

Weapons: Nippers 50%, damage 1D6+grapple
Mist Projector 50%, damage to unprotected human 1D10+1 per round

Armor: none, but all impales do minimum possible damage to this extra-terrene entity.

Spells: INT x2% chance of having 1D3 spells of the keeper's choice, including Contact Human.

Skills: Distinguish Infrared 39%, Dodge 40%, Listen 40%, Mi-go Hypnosis 40%.

The Chase

The jungle swallows the fleeing investigators whole. As they run, they slip in mud and get tangled in thorny vines. It is all they can do to keep from getting separated, and soon find themselves stumbling, running into trees, and falling into gullies. Each investigator must make a DEX x2 check or lose all hand-held items; a successful Luck roll keeps backpacks. Each investigator takes a DEX x2 check and receives 1D3 points of incidental damage for a failure.

The chase lasts an eternity. All around them, the investigators hear shouts, the occasional shotgun blast, and a strange buzzing that is somehow more terrifying than the rest of the noise. At one point odd sounds like popping popcorn are heard far away. Things too big to be birds shift in the boughs above, and half-glimpses of pale things, things with wings and spider legs haunt the investigators. Lungs burning, limbs aching, bleeding from a myriad of scrapes and cuts, the investigators flee for their lives.

Investigators who attempt to use their Hide skills are immediately detected by the mi-go, who can easily distinguish humans in the dark by their body heat. Captured investigators are taken away to "The Station" (see p. 38). There their brains are removed for transport to Yuggoth. For a while, their fate can remain a mystery to the other investigators.

After some thrashing about, call for Spot Hidden. With a success, the investigator notices a path through the jungle, running left to right. Following it makes for much speedier movement, and soon the shouts of the depraved cultists fade in the distance.

Then the investigators enter some kind of clearing, because they can see stars above and the wide luminous arc of the Milky Way shining brightly in the darkness. Anyone failing a CON x2

roll collapses from fatigue on the spot. A tall shape looms in the darkness. Whoever has a flashlight can see that it is a huge pyramid mound, covered with trees. More mounds, some topped with ruined stone structures, loom around them. Any investigator who went to Belize in 1994 suddenly realizes where they are. Call for sanity rolls for them, costing 1/1D4 SAN. The investigators are in El Cacao.

A Keeper's Pause

From here on out, the actions of the cultists, the mi-go, and the Brothers of the Yellow Sign are entirely at the keeper's discretion. Nothing further is scheduled for them. The Brothers attacked Christian Andersen's village shortly after the investigators left it, and massacred the entire town. That was the popping-corn sounds the investigators heard from far away. The Brothers' attack drew away most of the cultists and allowed the investigators to reach

the ruins. The mi-go withdrew as soon as they heard automatic weapons fire, and will not come out again until tomorrow evening.

Ideally, the investigators explore El Cacao and find their way into the Station, as detailed further below. If they start to wander, cultist stragglers, the Brothers, or both can arrive to steer them in the



right direction. The fallen Mennonites are out for blood now, and attack without hesitation. The Brothers are searching, moving through the jungles in eerie silence.

The Brothers wear hunter's camouflage. They aim to shoot or gas the investigators. Ideally, the struggle pushes the player-characters into entering the temple and discovering the gate to Mi-go station. If the team is captured by the Brothers, proceed to "Puppets", in the Conclusions section, p. 45.

Just how much the player-characters see of the mi-go and the Brothers is up to the keeper. Ominous hints of pursuit and half-glimpsed shapes better serve horror than frequent bloody confrontation. On the other hand, if your players crave cinematic chases, the Brothers can pursue the investigators into the station and the encounters beyond. Be careful that the Brothers don't become a tired plot driver, however.

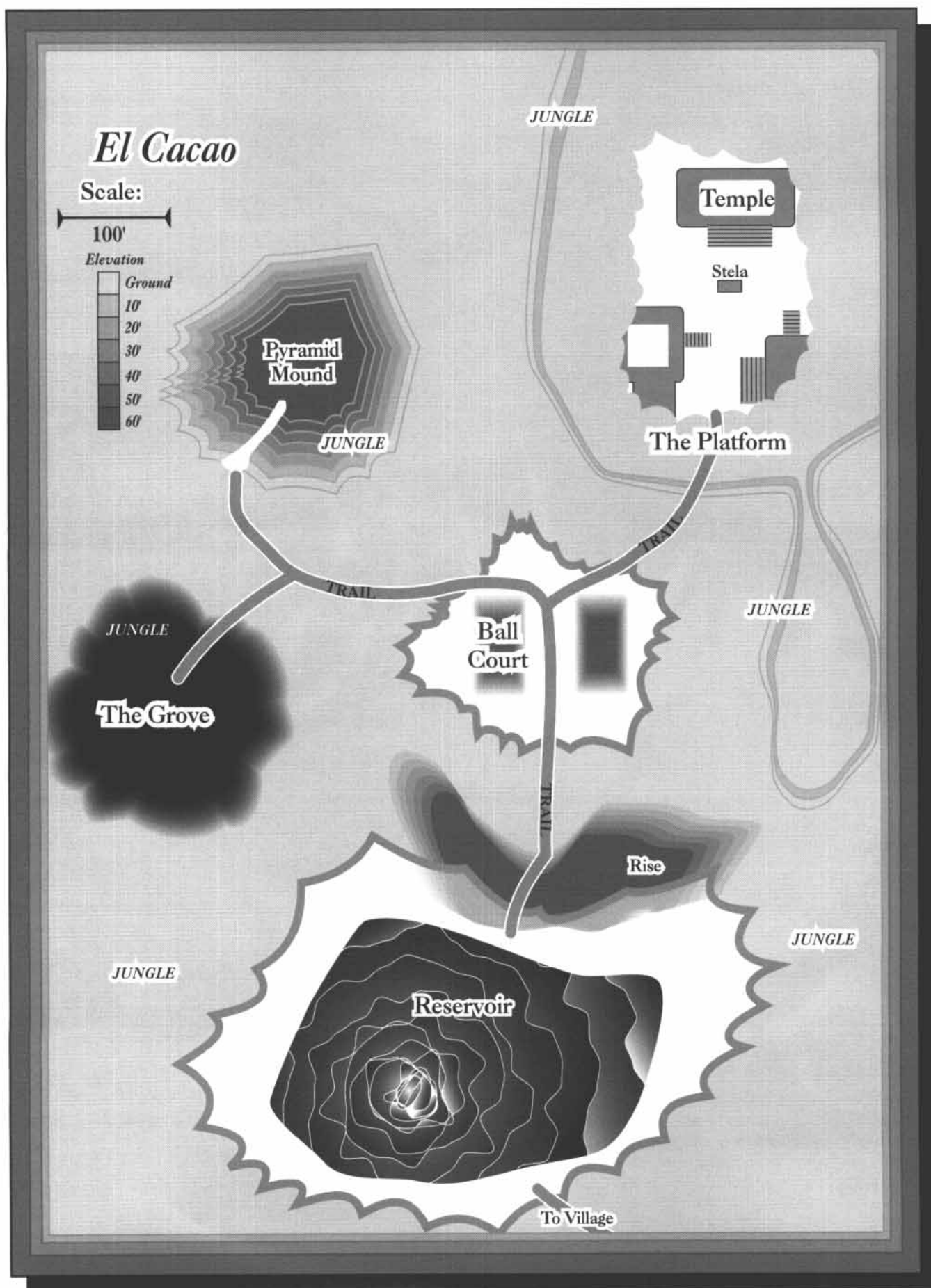
El Cacao

The investigators find good cover and some shelter among the mounds and undergrowth. Discourage exploration of the site by night; climbing around on pyramids and ruins in the dark is a good way to break your neck. There is no sign of the cultists for the rest of the night.

See the nearby map of El Cacao. The hillock closest to the investigators overlooks a narrow lane between two tall, thin mounds, likely a ball court. Both mounds are unmarred by looters' trenches, a rarity for Belize. The court is almost clear of vegetation, and the whole area looks much clearer than it should be. On the other side of the court, a clearly defined path snakes



THE MI-GO ON THE ROOF



away into the jungle, one fork moving toward a grove of tall trees while the other moves toward a rise that looks like a huge plaza platform. The jungle is ominously quiet.

As the investigators clamber about the ruins, those who've visited the site before are overcome with a nameless dread. Menace hangs in the silent, uncanny air. There is no wind, and nothing moves. For each hour the investigators spend here, call for sanity rolls costing 0/1 SAN.

THE PYRAMID MOUND

This large, tree-covered mound has a deep looter's trench cut into one side, opening a narrow path to the center of the mound. The edges of the pyramid's stone face can be clearly made out, and at the end of the notch is a shaft that runs up to the top of the mound and vanishes into darkness at the players' feet. The length of the shaft is lined with bands of decoration, hideous monster faces, and lines of hieroglyphs. The shaft smells strongly of death, and anyone who scrambles down it finds heaps of muck and questionable rotting remains at the bottom, as well as a heap of skulls. The sight prompts a sanity check for 0/1D2 SAN. All the victims were crudely decapitated; a successful Medicine roll establishes that the tops of the spinal columns are still attached. Various scrapes and nicks on the bones under the chin, around the eyes, and on the back of the cranium announce that each victim was skinned.

THE GROVE

This stand of trees has boughs so thick that they obscure the sun and bathe the grove in darkness. A monstrous seiba tree dominates the grove, its white bark luminous in the gloom. The seiba was sacred to the ancient Maya, as a successful Mayan Lore roll reveals. The tree represented a conduit through the layers of the universe, up through several heavens and down into Xibalba, the underworld. The world tree shown in so many Mayan carvings and paintings is a seiba.

THE PLATFORM

The path wends its way up to the steep side of a huge, tree-covered mound about eight feet high and at least fifty yards on a side. After struggling up onto the platform, the investigators are shocked to discover that the plaza atop the platform has been cleared and even partially restored. The ground is even and flat, covered in short emerald grass. Two ruined structures flank the path, completely excavated, their stone walls bright white in the dim light. At the far end stands a temple building that seems largely intact, with a lone stela rising before its entrance.

The 1994 massacre occurred here. Horrible memories flood the heads of the witnesses. Each endures sudden glimpses of men running from the temple, automatic weapons blazing, a vision prompting a sanity check for each, and costing 0/1D3 SAN.

THE TWO BUILDINGS

These structures are ruined and deserted. A successful Archaeology or Mayan Lore roll determines that they are very old but remarkably well preserved. A second successful Archaeology roll points out that someone has partially restored them. The architectural style is unique, a strange blend of Pre-Classic and Classic period elements, with other aspects alien to Mayan buildings. There is one roofed room in the structure to the left; within it investigators see the cinders and ashes of a recent campfire, remains perhaps only a few days old.

THE STELA

This tall stone slab stands before the temple. A rendering of it occurs in the handouts appendix as *Resection Papers #24*. Successfully rolling the Mayan Hieroglyphics skill reveals that the glyphs on the slab are very complex, with many elements unknown to Mayan epigraphy. Though worn, the phonetic words Tla-Cha-Na (under the king's elbow) and Xibalba (lower right) can be made out, as well as the name glyph for K'awil (on the ahau's forehead) and a date (lower left) of 7.17.8.1.19. A minute of quick calculation and a successful Mayan Lore roll pinpoints the date at 410 BC, roughly seven hundred years before the earliest known Mayan writing! The man pictured is an ahau vanquishing an enemy (note the blood scrolls pouring from the lower figure's head).

Though obviously Mayan in style, the carving shows some strange inconsistencies. The ahau's round eyes are very unconventional, and the creature behind him is occupying a space used usually for ancestors. The creature is identifiable with an Mayan Lore roll as Chac, the Mayan rain god (who a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll recognizes as Cthulhu). Although archaic in the extreme, the artistic technique of the stela surpasses carvings made at the height of the Classic period. Properly researched, El Cacao will throw Mayan archaeology on its ear.

THE TEMPLE

This imposing structure has only two doors instead of the usual three. Inside, the investigators are overcome by a musty, earthy smell. The interior is all one small room, claustrophobically cramped. The investigators' minds stray uncomfortably to the tons of stone in the roof cap pressing down, just over their heads. Although the walls are blackened with smoke and age, faint traces of painting can be seen. One mural, on the left wall, is very well preserved. Other features include an altar before the mural and a circular, foul-smelling pit that seems to drop into infinity.

THE MURAL IN THE TEMPLE: A drawing of the mural is included as *Resection Papers #25*. If not handing it out, read out loud the following sub-section.

This masterpiece shows two seated figures speaking to a seated ahau. Yellow flame-like icons emerge from the mouths of several figures are speech scrolls. The left figure is K'awil, the snake footed God K, patron of Mayan kings. Again, figures with multiple arms are unknown in Mayan art, and the portrayal of the man as faceless and holding a mask is also very unusual.

The large snake is a vision serpent. The Maya believed that such a serpent would appear at the end of bloodletting rituals and act as a conduit through which the spirits of dead ancestors could be summoned and asked for advice. The ancestor can clearly be seen emerging from the serpent's mouth. However, the box from which the serpent emerges is a motif unknown in Mayan art.

The figure on the ahau's left is enigmatic. It is adorned with stars (the half closed eyes) and sky bands (the bands on his chest), implying that the figure is from the sky or lives in the sky. In one of its hands it holds a cauac symbol, symbolizing earth or stone, and in another it holds a knife. The glyphs for *tlachan(a)* [tlah-CHAHN, the concluding vowel is silent], Xibal(a)ba, and K'awil can be found around the edges.

This third figure is a mi-go, a descender from the stars who covets minerals, speaks in imitation of men, and is a master surgeon. The investigators recognize the thing as a mi-go if they succeed with an Idea roll. The notion that the aliens have been here

for over two thousand years, and that they influenced the ancient Maya, prompts a sanity check costing 0/1D3 SAN. K'awil is, of course, Nyarlathotep, his crimson, baroquely branching nose reminiscent of the blood-red tentacle of the Howler in Darkness. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll makes the correlation.

THE ALTAR IN THE TEMPLE: A cylindrical stone four feet in diameter, the top face of the altar is adorned with a carved relief of a hog-tied captive awaiting sacrifice. The sides are covered with odd symbols, which a Mayan Lore roll identifies as god markings, blood scrolls, and signs indicating conduits to the spirit world. The whole altar is encrusted with new dark flaky stains. It's blood, as everyone guesses. A Medicine roll suggests that the blood is a day old at most, a discovery prompting a roll for 0/1 SAN.

THE PIT IN THE TEMPLE: In one corner, a round well drops down into darkness. A successful Mayan Lore roll reminds that wells and caves were sacred to the Maya, who believed that they were conduits to the spirit world. There is, however, no recorded example of a well ever being dug inside a building. In the dim light, the thing looks bottomless. A dropped stone clatters quickly, however, and the echoes seem to indicate some kind of larger space below. A flashlight reveals that the pit is only about fifteen feet deep, with an opening to the side at the bottom—a passage to a tomb, perhaps?

The pit is deep enough that anyone jumping down it must make a Jump roll or take 1D6 points of damage. Carefully climbing down requires a DEX x5 roll. At the bottom, there is space for two people to stand. A doorway leads into the heart of the temple's foundations. Large carvings surround the door, with prominent elements that look like teeth. A Mayan Hieroglyphics or Mayan Lore roll identifies the carvings as the jaws of the underworld, implying that the door leads to the land of the dead. Perhaps it is a tomb. Whatever lies beyond is the source of the strong odor. A flashlight reveals a large, empty chamber, with another door beyond.

Anyone stepping through the interior door feels suddenly disoriented and dizzy as they lose 3 magic points and 1 point of

sanity. They have no way of knowing, but they have traveled 2,500 miles in a single step. (There may be more of these losses. For each investigator, keep a running tally of points lost, but do not reveal them to the players unless a player tries to use points that no longer exist.)

The doorway is a mi-go gate to an outpost ("The Station") deep within the Peruvian Andes.

The Station

This place is a mi-go gate relay and work station designed for the storage and processing of captured humans. From here, other gates lead to the mi-go caverns on the moon and to the sacred cenote (ritual sacrificial well) at Xibalba. The nature of the lunar gate ensures that potential human access to critical mi-go bases is limited.

The chambers seem cut out of solid stone, with incredibly smooth walls and floors. Ceiling height is a uniform six feet. The portals to the central chamber are round, with no evidence of any kind of door. When any living thing with a SIZ of more than 6 enters a room in the complex, bioluminescent lichens covering the ceiling begin to glow, filling the room with steady, greenish light. Note that visibility through the gate to El Cacao is uninterrupted; the green light will spill out into the bottom of the well. This strange sight prompts a SAN roll with a cost of 0/1. The light dims to nothing a few seconds after the last living thing leaves the room.

Anyone making an Archaeology roll notices that the angles and corners are far too regular and precise to have been constructed by a preindustrial culture. A Geology roll can confirm at a glance that the rock in the walls is not native to the Yucatán peninsula; far from the limestone one would expect, the walls and floor look like the granites and shales one might find deep inside a mountain. The surface is highly polished, almost glazed. The suggestion that the station either exists outside of Central America or miles under its surface prompts another SAN check for 1/1D4 sanity points.

Except where noted, there is ominous silence. Six chambers and one occupant make up the station. All are detailed below.

THE CUSTODIAN

The station's only permanent resident, this gigantic blue slime mold creeps about, devouring all dust and filth. It keeps the station immaculately clean. The thing creeps along the walls and floors, looking like a thin puddle of blue paint about four feet in diameter. Although its appearance is startling, it is harmless, and it avoids touching or oozing onto a human. The Custodian's location is up to the keeper, who might note the effect its random movement can have on investigator explorations. Fire kills the harmless thing. It flees as best it can from any open flame.

THE CUSTODIAN, Slimy Creeper

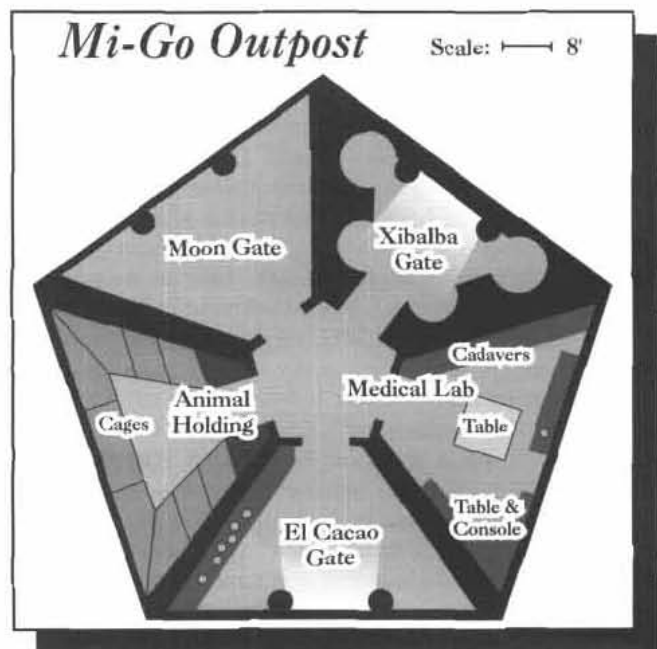
CON 10 SIZ 11 POW 5 DEX 4
MOV 3 HP 11

Weapons: none.

Skills: negligible.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D4 SAN to see the lurker in action.



EL CACAO GATE ROOM

This room is almost completely bare. There is no trace of any dust or cobwebs on the floor or walls. The only feature of the room besides the strange round door is a shelf that runs along the left wall, at a height of three feet. The shelf holds a row of six shining metal cylinders, with strange grooves and sockets on their faces. Room exists on the shelves for at least ten more of the things. The cylinders, if tapped, sound full. They are also very heavy. No evidence of a lid or seal can be found.



THE CUSTODIAN

These are mi-go brain cases. They contain the brains of the ancient lords of El Cacao, who have sat here dreaming for over 2000 years. The brain cases cannot be pried or smashed open without heavy industrial equipment. Their thick sides stop even bullets.

Anyone who was abducted in 1994 recognizes the green light and the caverns instantly. This is the place they were brought, all those years ago. The sight overwhelms each who experienced that. If those investigators have not yet achieved recall, they now lose 1D3+3 SAN and regain their rightful memories. Show them *Resection Papers #23*.

THE CENTRAL CHAMBER

As the investigators enter and the light slowly blooms, they can see four other round doors, all bathed in darkness. This room is absolutely empty, save perhaps for the Custodian on its rounds.

ANIMAL HOLDING ROOM

This room is filled with large banks of cages, eighteen in all. The cages are bare, constructed out of some kind of smooth, gray plastic, with grill work screens instead of bars. Floor and walls of each cage are lined with some kind of soft, pink foam that cannot be torn or cut. The latching mechanisms take an INT x3 roll to operate and cannot be reached from within.

Each cage is large enough for a man. Players of investigators who were captured earlier may now make Luck rolls for their investigators. Those who received successes are found in the cages, naked, sedated into oblivion. The cages are otherwise empty. On either side of the doorway stand two sets of cabinets. The clothing and personal effects of all captured investigators, lucky or unlucky, are found within.

MOON GATE ROOM

This room is identical to the El Cacao Gate Room, with two exceptions. First, the walls are featureless, without shelves for brain cylinders. Second, there is a pentagonal archway in an outer wall, but it is filled with solid stone.

The outer doorway resists all attempts to find a seam or hidden opening catch. It is a gate to the mi-go caverns within the moon. The mi-go have constructed the gate so that only non-terrene entities and implements can pass through it, assuring the security of their lunar base.

XIBALBA GATE ROOM

This room resembles the Moon Gate Room, except that the pentagonal archway is open. A flashlight reveals a large cavern beyond. Whoever steps through feels the same sensations of

dizziness and disorientation, and also secretly loses another three magic points and one point of Sanity. The gate transports them to the sacred cenote in the heart of Xibalba (see p. 41) on the Yucatán Peninsula.

This chamber also contains some very peculiar machinery. Four great booths line the side walls, each composed of some kind of incredibly tough metal. The outer surfaces are covered in tubes and wires, giving each booth a strange, organic look. Inside, the investigators note many small holes in the ceilings and floors, as well as a bank of levers. Successful Spot Hidden rolls allow investigators to notice faint traces of a brown, viscous liquid on the floors of the booths.

The booths are special machines used by the mi-go in preparation for their fertility rites to Shub-Niggurath. A mi-go steps into a booth, then is bathed in a potent chemical mixture which stimulates the fungus' reproductive organs and also alters the mi-go's consciousness, inducing an ecstatic trance state. An investigator who enters a booth and dares to play with the levers easily activates the pumps. He is bathed in a foul-smelling goo the color and consistency of maple syrup.

The mixture is a POT 8 poison to humans, inducing vomiting if ingested. External contact results in an annoying fungal infection which is startling to look at but harmless. Purple hair-like growths manifest in fifteen hours if a Resistance table check against CON is failed. The fungus spreads at the keeper's whim, is contagious, and itches ferociously. Treat the condition with a successful Medicine roll, sunlight, and a good anti-fungal cream.

MEDICAL LAB

This large chamber is full of horrors. As the ceiling light blooms, several things compete for the investigators' attention. A large table, eight feet square, stands in the center of the room, made out of a dull, gray plastic. A huge cluster of tendrils, arms, and tubes sprouts out of the ceiling directly over the table.

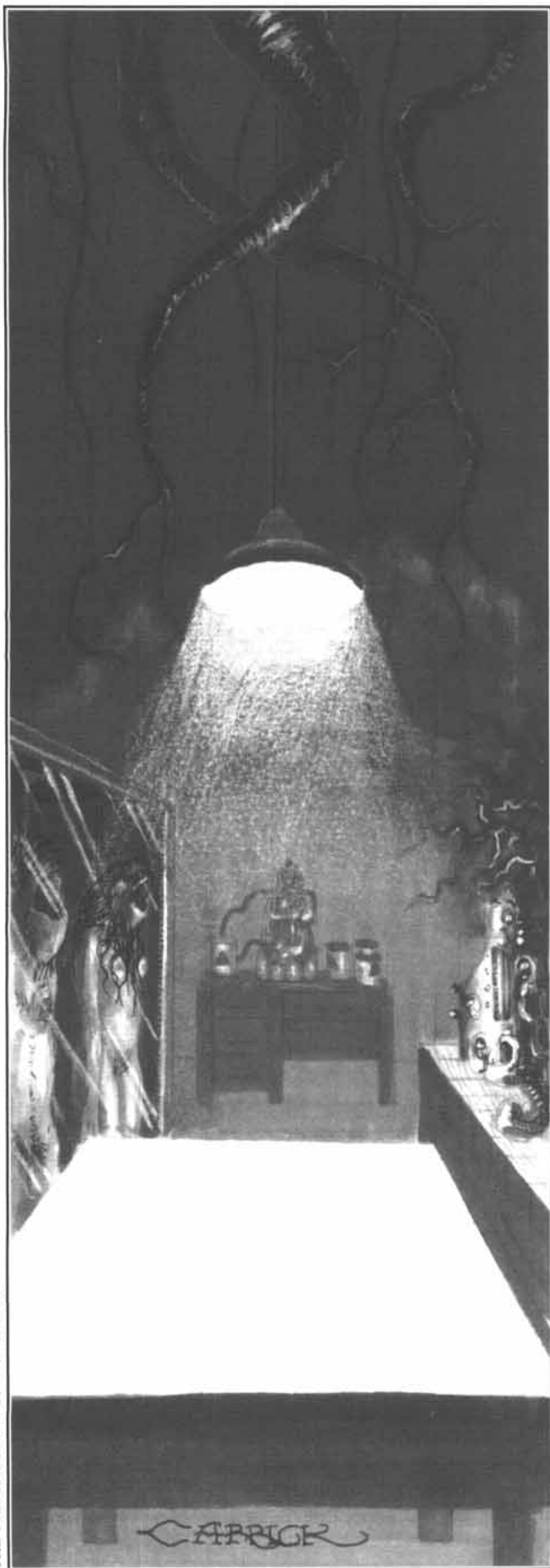
Investigators who were recently captured and who failed Luck rolls are lying on the table, naked, the tops of their skulls sawn off neatly, revealing empty brain pans. These pallid bodies have the ghastly blue cast of aging meat. They are irretrievably dead. This sight prompts a Sanity check costing 1/1D6 SAN.

The left-hand wall of the chamber consists of some kind of cabinet with a transparent door. Inside eight more bodies float, without visible support. Tubes have been inserted for nutrients and waste, and their lungs and hearts seem to be working normally. The skin color is normal. The eyes are uniformly closed, as if dreaming. From the back of each head extends the same sort of gray-orange plastic information link that the investigators saw at Felice Woodson's autopsy, but this time all the "cables" lead to the back of the cabinet and disappear through the wall.

Four of the bodies are female, and have the same athleticism and muscular development as did Felice Woodson and the anonymous woman at the Belize airport. Perhaps the mi-go find this a very useful body type. Or perhaps they have found a very useful set of skills and emotions that they find specially apt to this sort of body, and therefore implant identical copies in new bodies.

Faint pink seams can be seen crossing each forehead. An Idea roll suggests that the brain pans have been opened, allowing for the possibility that the brains have been changed.

The right wall is covered in tubes and strange machines, some of which are studded with lights. Their function is unguessable. All of the machinery looks as much as it has been grown as it has been made. All of it is of the same dull gray finish. Another table,



THE MEDICAL LAB OF THE MI-GO

something like a desk, extrudes out of the back wall. On the ledge of it sit several curious devices and several brain cylinders.

Two sets of cables connect a shiny new brain cylinder to one device. If any captured investigators have had their brains removed, their brains and protective cylinders sit next to this first one, in a neat row. They are connected to no devices. They are lost in hallucination and dream. Three empty cylinders, all with their tops removed, rest at the far end of the table.

If the investigators make any noise whatsoever in the room, a loud voice suddenly echoes through the chamber. "No. Stop. Not again. No More. Please. No More." The sudden outburst prompts another sanity check for a cost of 0/1 SAN. The voice is loud, metallic, lifeless, and plainly mechanical in every detail of its production. A Listen roll identifies a peculiar object on the back desk as the source. The thing looks like a tuning fork, and sticks out of the clump of machinery on the rear desk.

Speaking to the voice prompts a fresh string of questions: "Who is there Who are you No More Games Stop This Torture Wait Your Voices Are You Actually Human". The voice then rambles on and half-convinces itself that the investigators are a dream or a hallucination, or some kind of test. If asked its name, the voice says, "How Many Times Must I Tell You Stop This Now Let Me Go". It pauses again, then capitulates. "My Name Is Kyle Timothy Woodson". Call for sanity rolls at a cost of 1/1D4 SAN.

Finally the voice realizes what is happening. It recognizes the voices of other alumni from the 1994 dig and addresses them by name, the voice synthesis terrifying in its import. Woodson then reveals his fate.

THE STATEMENT OF KYLE TIMOTHY WOODSON

"My God Don't Know How You Got Here Are You Also Prisoners". He pauses for a response. "No Thank God Wait Look On The Table At The Rear Of The Room Find The Shiny Cylinder There Is A Cable With A Socket Put It In The Port On The Cylinder".

Once the investigators comply, two reddish orbs glow on the machine. Woodson continues in the same horrible monotone.

"Now I Can See It Is You You Must Go They Were Here All Along The Creatures They Say That They Tried To Keep Us Away That They Tried To Keep Us From Remembering Them They Were Here All Those Years Ago At El Cacao They Implanted Our Memories They Do It All The Time. The Dreams The Process Must Have Failed Once I Read The Books The Dreams Started I had To Find Out I Brought This On Myself They Were Waiting For Me They've Done Something To Me Something To My Body I Have No Contact With It I Can't See The Whole Room There With It I Can't See The Whole Room They Connect And Disconnect Machines That Let Me See Hear Speak They Turn On And Off My Senses Can You Find The Sight Machine Rotate It Turn It So I Can See Myself".

If the investigators do, Kyle emits a long, monotone howl, a pure tone done with no emotion, no wavering, and yet horrifying to hear. "My God What Did They Do To Me I'm In That Thing That Can Where Is My Body Where Is My Body".

His pause is very long. Hearing Woodson's anguish costs everyone a point of sanity. His flat, even voice haunts their dreams in the years to come. Finally Woodson breaks his silence.

"Listen You Have To Go These Things Not Even Animal Life They've Told Me Things Horrible Things They've Been Here Forever Before The Maya Before The Tlachan The Tlachan The Tlachan Were Real They Prayed To These Things And To Cthulhu Too It's All True They Told Me What They're Going To Do.

"Space The Universe Our Theories Are All Wrong The Pre-Humans Were Right But Now They're All Dead All Our Science Just A Conceit I Wanted To Be Famous I Wanted The Truth But Some Truths Must Not Be Known Leave Now Go Now Never Come Back You Can't Stop Them They Warned Us They'll Do This To You Tell No One Or They'll Take You Leave People Out Of It Just Go Just Go Only First Disconnect This Cylinder I Want To See No More Disconnect Me The Dreams They Put Horrible Dreams In My Head Disconnect Me Then Please Smash This Thing Please".

Once the investigators disconnect the speech, sight, and hearing machines, the brain in the cylinder is cut off from everything. Destroying it proves difficult. Assume that it has CON 20, which resists damage done to it. If it fails, or if the thing takes 300 points of damage, a gash opens in the side and a thick, green fluid leaks out, dooming the brain inside.

Company

Once the investigators have completed their quest for Kyle Woodson, several things might happen. A group of 1D6+2 mi-go arrive through the Moon Gate. A successful Spot Hidden roll notices the lights come up across the central room. The mi-go send back one of their number for reinforcements, then try to subdue the investigators. If more than two of the remainder are wounded, they all fall back through the gate to the moon. But 1D6+2 rounds later 2D6 of them re-enter through the moon gate.

Alternately, the Brothers of the Yellow Sign can follow the investigators through the El Cacao Gate. The Brothers will immediately scour the place, and also try to capture the investigators. Ideally, the presence of the Brothers draws in the mi-go and a firefight rages through the station, with the investigators caught between. Should everything look grim, Drooson accepts the idea of an alliance against the common foe. After they've fought their way out, preferably to Xibalba, the Brothers can betray the investigators and knock them out with gas.

Should the mi-go capture the investigators, they are destined for brain cylinders or to become spare parts via the dissection table. As disembodied intelligences, they are bundled off to Yuggoth and the further reaches of the mi-go empire for safe keeping and further study. If the Brothers capture the investigators and decide to use them, proceed to "Puppets", p. 45.

Options for escape are limited. If the team manages to flee back to El Cacao, proceed to the Conclusions section at the end of this adventure. They can also escape to Xibalba.

Xibalba

Stepping through the pentagonal door from the Station costs three magic points and one sanity point. The investigators again feel that twisting dizziness and disorientation, but find themselves in a vast cave, at least two hundred feet across and fifty feet deep. A dazzling pillar of sunlight shines in through a great hole in the ceiling, shimmering on a pool in the center of the cave. The hole in the ceiling is too round to be naturally formed. Ferns and vines fringe it and dangle far down into the cave. The walls of the dark chamber recede into the gloom, curving away like an inverted bowl.

Dark and sticky muck covers the floor. A smell like decaying leaves but much stronger pervades the vast, echoing chamber.

A successful Geology roll recognizes the cavern as a sink-hole formation. Water and chemical action commonly erode limestone from within. Successful Mayan Lore rolls strongly suggest that the investigators are standing in the bottom of one of many such natural wells that dot the Yucatán peninsula. The Maya hurled human sacrifices down some of these wells, called cenotes when connected with religious practices.

In any case, the dimensions of the cave are far too large for it to fit under the platform at El Cacao, so the investigators must not be in El Cacao anymore. If they haven't already, they must make sanity checks with a penalty of 1/1D4 SAN each for deducing the existence of the gates. (The keeper should now tell the players to reduce their investigator magic points and sanity points.)

The cavern has six important features.

THE FLOOR

The floor of the cavern is covered in thick, dark mud, the source of the pervading stench. Small heaps of what look like rotting vegetation stand out here and there. A successful Spot Hidden roll made while walking through the cavern notices tracks in the mud. The tracks are claw prints, like lobster or crab claws but much larger—the tracks of the mi-go. Interestingly, some bare human footprints can also be seen. A successful Tracking roll pinpoints the claw tracks as densest near the gate where the investigators entered, while the human tracks seem to enter and leave through a narrow crack lost in the shadows (see "The Passage" subsection, p. 44). Once the tracks begin to diverge, they seem to wander about in circles, crossing and recrossing, and leaving a tangled trail. The depth and orientation of the prints seems to indicate that both humans and clawed beings were running or dancing.

THE PILES

About twenty small heaps of rubbish are scattered throughout the cave. On closer examination, they are piles of some fibrous material, black, wet, and foul-smelling.

Unknown to the investigators, these are the decaying corpses of mi-go who died in fertility rituals. Swarms of mi-go larvae are patiently maturing within each one, and they rush out if a heap is disturbed. A larva looks like a transparent, gelatinous worm, about five inches long, with two rows of tiny legs and a sea anemone for a head. Dozens of them scurry out and try to latch on to any large animal, instinctively assuming that the hapless investigator is a mi-go adult.

The sight of the hideous things requires a sanity roll for a cost of 0/1D4 SAN. Ask for a successful Dodge roll for anyone poking around the heaps, or 1D3 larvae affix themselves to the investigator's legs with some sort of resinous secretion. A successful Luck roll means that the larvae have attached to clothing, and can thus be easily discarded. If one or more affix themselves to bare skin, the investigator automatically loses a point of sanity.

The little things, once out, start making a shrill buzzing noise, which rouses all of the other larvae. Soon the cavern teems with thousands of the hideous worms. They squish easily, dying with a loud pop and a squirt of goo. Dodge rolls each round allow investigators to avoid an infestation.

The larvae, other than their horrible appearance, do no harm to their hosts. Once stuck, they prove harder to dislodge than leeches. A failed First Aid, Medicine, or (in a pinch) DEX x3 roll results in a point of damage to the host as the resin pulls off hair and skin

Shiny Cylinders

As related in the text, one or several of the investigators may have been captured by the mi-go and been imprisoned within the Andean station. Call for Luck rolls. Those with failures will have had their brains removed by the fungi, and now occupy one of the shiny new cylinders on the laboratory shelf. While most would regard this disembodied existence as a fate worse than death, the investigators' brains and personalities have been preserved. Life, albeit a very strange and different life, can go on.

Brain Cylinders: Specific Details

As described by Lovecraft in "The Whisperer in Darkness", a brain cylinder is "a foot high and somewhat less in diameter, with three curious sockets set in an isosceles triangle over the front convex surface". Each cylinder is filled with a nutrient solution which sustains the brain within, and the inner surface of each cylinder is lined with a complex array of sensory filaments which detect electrical activity within the captive brain, interpret it, and channel neural impulses to a complex microcomputer behind the sockets. It in turn sends impulses out through the sockets into connected machines (see below), or funnels input from those machines back to the brain via a network of electrodes which directly stimulates the neurons in specific centers of the brain within.

Three accessory machines—a tall rig with twin lenses mounted on front, a box with vacuum tubes and a sounding board, and a small box with a metal disc on top—comprise the mi-go sensing apparatus. These machines, when connected to the proper sockets (an Idea or Spot Hidden roll allows an investigator to deduce which connector goes where), provide the brain with the faculties of sight, speech, and hearing, respectively. The mi-go, not possessed of human senses, have done their best in approximation: all visual input is grainy, of low general resolution, and the audio is flat, like that of a monaural phonograph. Speech, with all its subtle nuances of inflection and emotion, is utterly lost on the fungi. The speech machine talks with a mechanical, monotone voice, devoid of emotion. When the sensory machines are disconnected or deactivated, the encased brain falls into a sleep state filled with "especially vivid and fantastic dreams", or so says the false Akeley in "Whisperer".

Immediate Effects

When first activated, the encased investigator is utterly unaware of his predicament, and knows only that he feels tired and strangely numb. A successful Idea roll soon tells him that something is wrong: why does his voice sound so odd, and why does everything look so strange? Once he realizes his fate, the horror of the situation is more than most minds can bear. Ask for a Sanity roll, with a cost of 5/1D10+5 SAN. Madness, either temporary or indefinite, is assured.

Temporarily insane investigators either gibber and wail, crying out like Kyle Woodson for merciful death, or sink into silent catatonia, overwhelmed by the horror of the situation. Those who are indefinitely insane may after a time be brought toward sanity, but the time and effort needed to recover from such an immense shock is great.

Taking Them Home

The cylinders can be removed easily. Each is heavy (60-65 pounds), but the life support system within is completely self-contained. The associated sensory machines are lighter. Smart investigators take along spare cylinders and sets of sensory machines, to dismantle and analyze. Once the nature of the cylinders is better understood, perhaps some better manner of life can be established despite the investigator's unique disability.

Life in a Jar

The brain's INT, EDU, and POW (with their attendant Idea, Know, and Luck rolls) remain the same, as does SAN. The case is SIZ 6. All other characteristics drop to zero. The cylinder has 12 points of armor, and takes 20 points of damage to destroy. Note that every point of damage that exceeds its armor has a



cumulative 5% chance of killing the brain inside. The inefficiencies of the sensory devices reduce Listen and Spot Hidden skills by half. All physical skills (such as Climb, Jump, etc.) are reduced to 0. Knowledge skills are unaffected. Note that, without improvements to the speech machine, skills

requiring speech like Bargain, Persuade, and Fast Talk are quartered (halved once improvements can be made, see below), and that a skill like Credit Rating now is entirely situational: the former wealthy dilettante brain may have 70% Credit Rating via letter, but be zero in person!

An encased brain has no need for food, drink, or oxygen. The nutrient solution nullifies the aging process, rendering the brain virtually immortal if the nutrient fluid is kept fresh. See "Lifespan", further below

Secured from physical harm, the danger to a brain's viability is the sanity of the mind it contains. The encased brain invariably suffers from neuroses: catatonia, amnesia, paranoia, schizophrenia, depression, and multiple personality disorder are common indefinite insanities. The brain also tends toward an obsessive desire to learn anything it can about one area of study, or tends to make an obsessive denial of cir-

cumstance. One particularly cruel dementia is hysterical feeling: the brain feels hungry, or suffers from aches or itching in limbs it no longer possesses. These feelings may grow so strong that concentration becomes impossible.

The apparent hopelessness of being a captive of the cylinder can wear down the strongest of wills. For every month that passes, match the brain's INT vs. its POW on the Resistance Table. If INT wins, the investigator's idle imagination has forced it into further mental collapse, and the investigator loses 1D3 points of SAN.

Those who knew the brain under better circumstances also fare poorly. Acquaintances who later learn of this terrible fate take Sanity losses ranging from 1/1D2 SAN to 1/1D6 SAN, depending their degree of intimacy with the (former) person.

Staying Sane

Successful application of Psychoanalysis can recover lost Sanity points for the brain. Finding a therapist to treat the patient may prove difficult, but the case will prove most fascinating to the very best analysts. Distance would be no handicap: they would be able to work by telephone!

Another recourse lies in knowledge. With little left to do but watch, listen, and read (provided someone turns the pages), encased brains soon perceive that the lack of somatic distractions lets them learn at twice the normal rate, or 1D10 skill points per three months of study. Improving knowledge skills to 90% and beyond always raises the maximum Sanity of the brain, as detailed in the *Call of Cthulhu* rules.

Quality of Life

Cut off from its physical body, the brain no longer requires sleep (although the sensory devices can only run for ten hours before they run down and must recharge). Any physical activity is, of course, impossible.

Examination of the mi-go machines can lead to vast improvements in the brain's life. Anyone examining the mi-go sensory machines who has Mechanical Repair, Electrical Repair, and Electronics skills higher than 65% can, with six weeks' time and a critical success on any of the above skills, de-engineer the mi-go technology. Successful Electronics rolls at a penalty of 20 percentiles allow the engineer to jury-rig new interfaces to the cylinder. Better vision could be gained from most camcorders. Stereo hearing could easily be added. Developing these novel improvements should be both time consuming and costly. Successful Computer Use rolls in combination with Electronics rolls could interface the speech machine with modern voice recognition software. Once this is accomplished, the brain could operate a phone, a television, a computer, or any device fitted to respond to voice control.

More significant advances could be made in conjunction with an engineer who knows a thing or two about robotics and rehabilitative medicine. The principles that operate artificial

limbs could, with time and experimentation, connect the cylinder to a waldo (mechanical arm), giving the investigator hands again. Eventually, the cylinder could move about in an electric wheelchair. A wax-work dummy could be used for public mobility!

Each useful improvement grants the brain 1D3 sanity points, and such progress also benefits the brain's general attitude. To reach the final stage (dummy in a wheel chair, mechanical arms, etc.) might take years of expert research and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Creative representation of the problem could aid in getting backers: the investigators have, after all, found immortality, albeit in a can. The fact that the investigators do not have the means to put further brains into cylinders is, of course, a drawback. But what a marvelous new area for research!

Lifespan

A specialist with skills in Chemistry and Biology higher than 65% can, upon examination of the nutrient fluid in a brain cylinder, deduce its composition and synthesize limited quantities. Also, analysis will show that the fluid must be replenished once every five years or so, or the brain will begin to die. Note that the brain has no idea that this time limit exists. Changing the fluid is an easy process, accomplished through a complex series of osmotic filters in the cylinder's base. The fluid, once used up, is utterly inert. With periodic infusions of fluid, the brain will live forever. The three-thousand-year-old ahau brains at the complex's entry are still alive and well.

As a final note, the nutrient fluid interacts with certain nanotech agents inside the cylinder that cannot be reproduced by human science. The fluid, while quite good for corporeal investigators, does not yet represent immortality, but its successful synthesis does offer the brain centuries of active life.

Campaign Roles

Even if robotic mobility is beyond the means of investigators, disembodied comrades can still serve as valuable members of an investigative team, analyzing clues, reading books, interpreting data (either on site or off), and acting as knowledgeable consultants. The personality constructs of William Gibson's works come to mind. Also, remember that a metal cylinder doesn't have to buy a plane ticket (although getting it past airport security could prove an adventure in itself).

If an investigator in a cylinder can be developed into an interesting character, his or her requirements offer many potential adventures. Among them are more encounters with the mi-go, as they try to reclaim their property, or as they continue to be sources for additional devices and materials. ■





THE MI-GO LARVAE

with it. The larvae require an alien host and environment to grow in and thrive, and die in a week or so without them. Dead larvae quickly shrivel up and evaporate, just as do the adult mi-go.

Once the larvae start buzzing, the mi-go are quickly alerted and respond by means of some unknown mechanism. A party of twenty drones arrives at the cenote in 1D6+1 minutes. Destroying even one larva earns the investigators the undying enmity of the mi-go. Whether the player-characters meet the Brothers of the Yellow Sign there is up to the keeper.

THE POOL

A wide pool of stagnant water rests at the bottom of the cavern, surrounding an island of boulders under the hole in the roof. The water is shallow, about four feet at its deepest point. The rocks under the water are very slick with algae; anyone trying to move through the pool must make a DEX x3 roll or fall for 1D3 points of damage. A result of 00 could mean a broken ankle.

With a successful Spot Hidden roll, a curious investigator notices something half-buried in the slime and silt at the bottom of the pool. Dredging it out, the investigators find a jade plaque, intricately carved. Digging around, the investigators find other treasures lying in the shallows: carved shells, jade beads, and obsidian blades that easily cut careless fingers.

The carvings, if analyzed with a Mayan Lore or Archaeology roll, are identifiable as Mayan, although with strange and unique elements. They are treasures of the Tlachan, cast into the cenote as divine sacrifices thousands of years ago. The investigators can find enough stuff to fetch about \$20,000 on the black market. More legitimate investigators might insist on their return to proper authorities. If given over to a university or a museum, the pieces inspire lots of analysis and debate in various journals, and win the discoverer some brief fame in the field of Mayan archaeology.

THE ALTAR

Toward the rear of the cavern stands a great, round stone, another Mayan-style altar. The carvings that cover the face of the stone are worn and weathered, and barely can be made out. There was once a hieroglyphic inscription, but it is completely illegible. With a successful Mayan Lore roll, examination of the great pictograms on the side of the stone identify a large carved figure as Ix Chel, the moon goddess of the Maya, who was associated with fertility.

The entire stone is stained dark with a substance a First Aid or Medicine roll identifies as dried blood about two weeks old.

THE VINES

With a successful Jump roll, an investigator can leap up and grab some of the vines that hang down from the surface. The network of vines will support a total of SIZ 15. A heavier weight applied to them snaps them, resulting in a nasty fall and leaving not enough vines for anyone else to climb on. Climbing investigators need two successful Climb rolls at a penalty of ten percentiles, or else must successfully match their own STR vs. their SIZ on the Resistance table. Investigators who make it out find themselves in "The Ruins", p. 45.

THE PASSAGE

This narrow crack is noticed only with a successful Spot Hidden roll or by interpreting the tracks found on "The Floor" (see above). The opening looks narrow, but the investigators find that they can slip through easily. Beyond, a narrow passage curves up sharply to the surface. The floor is choked in mud and

silt. Before long, a steep staircase, cut out of the rock itself, climbs to the surface. Each step has been worn down in the center by numberless feet. The way has been used for a long time. Recent muddy shoe and boot prints can be found on the steps. The steps lead up into "The Ruins", below.

THE RUINS

Emerging from the cenote, the investigators find themselves in the midst of jungle, stretching grim and silent all around them. The sinkhole is in the midst of a wide, flat area with few trees, surrounded by tall, tree covered hills. A trail leads off into the trees. Walking through the tangled forest, investigators notice alarming regularity to the hills rising around them. They are not hills at all, but mounds, ruins unguessably ancient. As the investigators proceed, hints of stone pillars and walls poke out of mounds or lie underfoot. The site must have been truly majestic, but little remains that isn't swallowed whole by the jungle.

These are the ruins of Xibalba. No structures are uncovered or intact enough for the investigators to enter. After walking a while, the investigators pass a line of stelae, all toppled and partly buried. If examined, little can be learned from them. The carvings and inscriptions have been crudely chiseled away, intentionally defaced. Tumbled heaps of stone blocks emerging from mounds allow investigators to deduce that the city was destroyed, not just abandoned. A close examination and a successful Archaeology roll suggests that the buildings were pulled down long ago, perhaps before the dawn of Mayan civilization.

Mi-go roused to the cenote do not pursue the investigators into daylight. The Brothers of the Yellow Sign stop to dynamite the cenote, gleefully destroying the Shub-Niggurath nexus. Perhaps fleeing investigators are knocked off their feet by the explosion and see the fireball rise into the air. If the investigators can be clear of the site by dark (an easy task if they don't tarry), they evade pursuit. Proceed to Conclusions below.

Conclusions

ENDING IN FREEDOM

If neither the Brothers nor the mi-go capture the investigators, their escape from the Station marks their escape from present danger. Whether the investigators escaped from the Station to El Cacao or to Xibalba makes no difference. The paths at both sites wind for miles through forbidding jungle, past bogs where alligators bask in shadow, through clouds of gnats and mosquitoes, under canopies of thorny vines and palm fronds.

If the investigators ignore existing paths, they're up for the hike of their lives. Miles of jungle, CON x3 rolls against exhaustion and disease, and three successful Luck rolls finally bring them, two days later, to a sugar cane field near Orange Walk. Taking the paths, the investigators come to the pseudo-Mennonite village, or what's left of it.

The houses of the village all stand empty, and several show the scars of a firefight. Dead cultists are scattered everywhere, covered with flies and bellies bloated, their faces blue and twisted into horrible grimaces. Some have been machinegunned. Others seem untouched. Medicine rolls for the latter indicate they died from asphyxiation or poisoning. Spot Hidden rolls find lots of footprints that seem to lead off into the jungle, as well as brass shell

casings, bits of broken glass that fit together into small globes, and a large metal canister, like the body of a fire extinguisher.

The Brothers massacred the village. The Jeep Range Rover driven by the prowling Brothers is still parked a few yards away from the investigators' dead van. Crafty investigators can, with an Electrical Repair roll, hot-wire the jeep and get back to Belize City, and then home.

What do the investigators tell Ramsey Schwartz? If they tell him the truth, he's astonished and horrified at how it all turned out. He advises them, for their own good, to keep the matter quiet. Kyle Woodson went mad and died in the jungle. The world need know nothing more. As the investigators go, Schwartz gives them each a hearty handshake, and only then do they notice the yellow stone on his ring.

PUPPETS

The Brothers of the Yellow Sign subdue the investigators with knock out gas. They regain consciousness on the side of the road, just outside Belize City, again with splitting headaches. It is night. As the investigators begin to stir, Drooson G'tal steps into view, facing into the headlights of an idling vehicle. Read his words to them out loud.

"You still live, by my whim alone. Know that you are avenged now, for the wrong that the Star Devils did to you years ago. I and my brothers have avenged you. The taint the Devils wove over your puny brains marks you for death, but knowing the truth, I spare you. You have served your purpose. We had hoped that Kyle Woodson might lead us here, but he eluded us. Now our task is finished. No more shall the spawn of Yuggoth come to these forests. The long ruin they wrought here is undone.

"You shall live, but you are now in my debt, and debts must be repaid. Someday you shall serve another purpose for me or for my Brothers. You shall know us by our sign."

With that, Drooson presents his amulet. The investigators see that upon it glows the Yellow Sign. As they gaze at it, its glowing tendrils writhe, costing each viewer 1/1D2+1 SAN. The writhing sigil mesmerizes their attention long enough for Drooson to vanish into the night. A shrill whistle, a blast of cold air, and the sound of wings mark the passing of his byakhee steed.

The investigators have been noticed by the Brothers of the Yellow Sign. The exact nature of any future obligation to the them is for the keeper to devise.

Consequences

If the investigators somehow manage to destroy the cenote at Xibalba, or learn of its destruction, grant each 1D6 SAN. Award an additional 1D4 SAN for discovering the ruins of the cultist village. They also each receive one sanity point for each mi-go killed (including the three that died at the Hotel Miskatonic, if the team figures out what happened there). If the investigators found Kyle Woodson's brain and were able to destroy it, ending his torment, grant another 1D4 SAN. Conversely, charge 1D4 points of Sanity for each investigator brain lost to mi-go surgeons.

Bear in mind that the investigators may walk away entirely uncertain as to what exactly happened. They do, however, now know a lot about another origin to the Maya and a little more about the Cthulhu Mythos. They may have also made the fungi from Yuggoth and the Brothers of the Yellow Sign aware of them. Truth always has consequences, especially when one pieces together too many fragments of the past. ■



Appendix One: The Handouts

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Resection Papers #1

What You Know About AFAR and Ramsey Schwartz

AFAR stands for the American Foundation for Antiquarian Research. Founded in 1927, the organization has served as a body to fund, evaluate, and publish the work of archaeological researchers. Although AFAR began as a tiny, primarily academic organization, in recent years it has risen to a position of some prominence. In 1980, billionaire Ramsey Schwartz began making massive contributions to the organization. As a result, AFAR now sponsors numerous archaeological projects all over the world, and hosts an annual archaeological symposium in San Francisco.

Little is known about Ramsey Schwartz beyond his fabulous wealth, philanthropic streak, and diverse hobbies. Widely praised (or reviled) as quirky and eccentric, Schwartz was one of the crop of new American tycoons, who include such names as Trump, Perot, and Gates. His generous contributions to AFAR have earned him a prominent position on the organization's board of directors, a position he has been heard to say he enjoys far more than business.

Resection Papers #2

What You Know About Kyle Woodson

Kyle Woodson. You recognize the name instantly. He was there with you in Belize, back in 1994. It all ended so badly!

In the summer of 1994, the University of Pennsylvania, in cooperation with the Programme for Belize, sponsored a field season in northern Belize. You (and about sixty other people) went there. The expedition was directed by Dr. Paul Hughbanks, who wanted to complete a new survey of a large, empty stretch of northern Belize, as well as conduct several excavations.

The season was very unlucky, with equipment failures, transportation troubles, and logistical mishaps from the very beginning. After a particularly nasty stomach bug swept through camp, the season finally started to look up when a survey team heard rumors of a large, unregistered site in the nearby jungle, a place called El Cacao. There was no record of the place, and nobody had ever excavated there or even surveyed the place. Dr. Hughbanks leapt at the news, hoping that a major find might turn the season around. The only voice of protest raised was from Kyle Woodson. Kyle pointed out that the group had no permits to dig at El Cacao and that drug smugglers (the second most common life form in Belize, right after mosquitoes) were supposed to be lurking in the area. Hughbanks would not be dissuaded, however. He assembled a survey team, and set out on the long hike to El Cacao.

The team got to the ruins, only to find that they weren't deserted. A large band of cocaine smugglers was camping among the mounds. Before anyone knew what was happening, four students were dead and the traffickers were chasing the survey team all the way back to the camp. The season ended right then and there. You always thought you were lucky to make it out alive.

There were investigations and recriminations, of course. Dr. Hughbanks lost his tenure, his job, and any chance of ever doing archaeology again. Lawsuits rocked the archaeology department. Bad news. The only one who came out of it all right was Kyle. As you recall, he was one of the few people on that dig who actually ended up in Mayan archaeology. Most of the others had lost their stomach for it.

You can remember Kyle Woodson very clearly. Big guy, but soft spoken. One of those people who seems to get along with everybody, and who really cares. He was the only graduate student who wasn't too high and mighty to share a tent with "the proles", that is, the undergrads. He really knew his archaeology, but never talked down to you while explaining it. It'll be good to see Kyle again. Funny, you haven't thought about Belize in years....

Resection Papers #3

AFAR's file on Kyle Woodson

Subject: Kyle Timothy Woodson
 Date of Birth: 06/19/66
 Height: 73"
 Weight: 185 lbs
 Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois

Education Record:

- Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin, 1987, cumulative GPA 3.967.
- Master of Arts in Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, 1989.
- Ph.D. in Mayan Archaeology, Harvard University, 1994.

Archaeological Expeditions:

- University of Texas Colha Project, 1985, 1986, 1987.
- University of Pennsylvania Cerros Project, 1987.
- University of Pennsylvania Field School, 1988, 1989.
- Peabody Museum El Mirador Expedition, 1990.
- Peabody Museum Chetumal Expedition, 1992.
- University of Pennsylvania Field School, 1994.
- AFAR Northern Belize Project (dir.), 1995, 1996.

Published Writings:

- Chan Dolum: Topography of the Past, 1990.
- Cerros and the Beginnings of Lowland Maya Culture (Thesis) 1991.
- Cultural Continuities Among the Lowland Maya of Coastal Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize (Dissertation) 1994.
- Echoes: The Belizean Lowlands and the Rise of the Maya, 1995.

Current Assignment:

AFAR staff archaeologist, field director of the AFAR Northern Belize Project, currently in its third season. Dr. Woodson is currently on sabbatical, doing research for a second book about the emergence of Mayan civilization in northern Belize.

Photograph:

Woodson in the field at the AFAR Northern Belize Project, July 16, 1995.



Resection Papers #4

A Master's Thesis

The paper requires five hours and a successful Archaeology roll to read.

Linguistic Linkages between Archaic Asian Pictograms and the Hieroglyphs of the Yucatan Maya, with a Particular Emphasis on The Zanthu Tablets

by Paul Matthews

Written to satisfy the thesis requirement for a Master's degree in Archaeology at Miskatonic University, Arkham, Massachusetts.

Submitted September 17, 1930.

This long-winded, dry document details the uncanny similarities between Mayan glyphs from ruins all over the Maya area and the strange glyphs found on the so-called "Zanthu Tablets" discovered by Harold Hadley Copeland in 1913. Matthews briefly sketches Copeland's tale: how he found the black jade tablets in an ancient tomb in Indo-China and was the only survivor of his ill fated expedition. Matthews mentions Copeland's attempt to translate the glyphs, published as "The Zanthu Tablets; A Conjectural Translation". Copeland's translation, as well as his theories about the tablets' origins on the lost continent of Mu, are dismissed as "inherently dubious".

Various glyphs taken from inscriptions all over the Maya area are then compared to the glyphs on the tablets, with shocking results. Matthews makes no attempt to translate either the Zanthu or Mayan glyphs, but does prove rather conclusively that many elements in the two scripts are identical. Matthews cannot find other examples of Mayan glyphs in Asia. Instead he launches into a survey of symbols resembling Mayan glyphs in such rare occult tomes as the Necronomicon, the Book of Dyzan, the Ponape Scripture, and Von Junst's Nameless Cults.. Less concrete correlation can be drawn between Mayan glyphs and these symbols, however.

At the end of the work is a special acknowledgment to Professors Morgan and Armitage for allowing Matthews access to Miskatonic's Orne Library Restricted Collection. The text, particularly drawings of the glyphs and the titles of rare books, has been annotated by Woodson.

(A Mayan epigrapher who reads the thesis comes away startled by the similarities between the tablets' glyphs and the Mayan language. Mayan glyphs in Asia? It has to be a hoax ... doesn't it?)

Resection Papers #5

The "Miskatonic" File

The first papers in the "Miskatonic" file are photocopied excerpts from New England college guides and other, more concrete documents concerning Miskatonic University. The school once was of high reputation, but shrank to almost nothing during the 1930s. Many schools then failed outright, but unlike many colleges across the country, Miskatonic also seems somehow to have missed out on the surge of post-war prosperity. Woodson includes one tantalizing note about MU's participation in secret projects apparently Cold-War-connected, but that is not followed up on.

Entries from the 1920s tell a plain story. Miskatonic was a vigorous, growing institution which sent expeditions to Australia and Antarctica. The university sported a fine sciences department, a reputable liberal arts faculty, and a collection of rare books rivalling that of any institution in the world. A yellowed, dog-eared faculty directory from 1928 is also here. In it, the names of doctors Henry Armitage, Albert Wilmarth, Francis Morgan, and William Rice are freshly underlined.

Also included in the file is a chamber of commerce brochure for Arkham, dated 1952. The pamphlet touts the small town's New England hospitality, its proximity to Boston and Kingsport, its lovely view of the mighty Miskatonic River, and the university as reasons for visitors to stop through on their way to Boston or Maine.

Resection Papers #6-8 are also contained in this file. #6 is a set of four old newspaper clippings from the *Boston Globe*, held together by a paperclip. #7 is a photocopy of a typewritten document. #8 is a yellowed, typewritten document.

Resection Papers #8

The proposal primarily deals with expected costs, staff, and a tentative itinerary for the expedition, while saying that recent Mesoamerican discoveries have opened a new archaeological field in which Miskatonic is obliged to participate by reason of her superior scholarship.

Proposal for an Archaeological Expedition
to British Honduras

Drafted by Francis Morgan
March 14, 1935

There are marginal checkmarks in ink beside the expedition's listed goals.

- ✓1) To search for new sites in Northern British Honduras which further illuminate the origins of the Maya, particularly the role or presence of any outside influences which the local legends of "sea peoples", cataloged extensively by Merwin, suggest. I hope to find in particular the site of El Cacao, surveyed by Merwin and again by Williamson, and undertake excavations there.
- ✓2) To follow the trail of Dr. Eric Williamson, a long time colleague and close personal friend. Williamson's last expedition is believed to have run afoul of treasure hunters while searching for the site of Bendal Dolum. He has been missing for two years. I hope to ascertain Williamson's final fate, perhaps finishing his work at Bendal Dolum, believed to be near the Guatemalan border.

Resection Papers #6

DISASTER IN ANTARCTICA

Miskatonic University's massive expedition to the South Pole, which met great early success, has lost contact with most of its polar party. Survivors of the group now confirm fatalities among those valiant explorers.

Two of the eight members have been rescued, one suffering nervous exhaustion from the horrible solitude of the empty continent. Expedition leaders believe that failures of their aircraft stranded the team and left them at the mercy of the elements. (11/16/30)

MISKATONIC EXPEDITION TO AUSTRALIA RETURNS

Bad weather in Australia has forced a premature conclusion to Miskatonic University's search for ancient ruins in the Great Western Desert.

Sandstorms and difficult conditions forced the team of archaeologists to abandon diggings at the isolated site, despite promising findings. They set sail yesterday from Port Hedland, Western Australia, for Boston.

A university spokesman dismissed rumors that Wingate Peaslee, the expedition director's father, had convinced his son to cease digging, lest supernatural forces be activated. These suppositions were termed inaccurate and potentially libelous.

The spokesman, Dr. McTavish of the Archaeology Dept., noted that archaeological field work is done under trying conditions, and that all scientific research yields important knowledge, whether or not it garners headlines. He downplayed connection of this expedition with last year's disastrous conclusion to the university's Antarctica research. (6/19/31)

ANOTHER MISKATONIC U DISASTER CONFIRMED

A lone survivor of Miskatonic's expedition to British Honduras, graduate student George Akeley of Lyndonville, Vermont, has been found at the edge of the colony's northern jungles.

Though ill from malaria, Mr. Akeley was able to report that the other nine members of the archaeological expedition had died of sickness or foul play. Among the lost is Dr. Francis Morgan, chairman of the department of archaeology at Miskatonic.

In his rambling interview, Mr. Akeley also told tales of lost cities and hideous beasts that guarded ancient temples. His doctors cautioned that his state of mind was still weak (11/10/37)

MASSIVE FIRE AT MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY

Fire of suspicious origin swept much of Miskatonic's famous Orne Library last night, aided by unusually high winds. Damage to the building is extensive, and the library's collections suffered both from flames and from the water used to fight the flames.

At least one person, Dr. Henry Armitage, university librarian, is missing and believed to have perished in the flames while heroically trying to save portions of the library's rare books collection.

The five-alarm fire was battled for much of the night, drawing fire companies from surrounding towns. Four companies of fireman were sent from Boston at about 3 a.m.

Police suspect arson, since the library had been systematically improved by anti-fire measures for the last decade. (5/16/39)

Resection Papers #7

The report discusses the itinerary of the expedition, led by Dr. Francis Morgan (whose name is underlined in ink). The goals of the expedition include "determining the final disposition of Dr. Eric Williamson's expedition, missing some three years".

Official Report on the Miskatonic University Archaeological Expedition to British Honduras

Compiled by John LaBadie
Miskatonic University Department of Archaeology
November 14, 1937

One of the early paragraphs is heavily marked.

Morgan followed Williamson's trail around Orange Walk Town, and spent three weeks looking for a site called El Cacao, first cataloged by Merwin, which Williamson had surveyed. Morgan did not find El Cacao or any evidence of the "sea peoples" so prominent in local myth. Morgan then moved south to the Belize River and proceeded toward the Guatemalan border. Morgan's final report and shipment of artifacts came from the site of Kalkamal, where he undertook a brief excavation. Morgan then proceeded further south, looking for Williamson's goal, a site known as Bental Dolum. Williamson 1936 find notes at peabody
still at MUP?

The report goes on to say that an expedition member, George Akeley, was found raving in the port of Punta Gorda two months after Morgan's final report. Dr. Morgan apparently suffered a mental breakdown in the jungle, and one expedition guide betrayed the band to local smugglers dealing in Mayan treasures, and all other hands were killed. Neither Kalkamal, El Cacao, nor Bental Dolum have since been rediscovered. Franklin was committed to Arkham Sanitarium. Attached is an extensive list of the artifacts recovered from Kalkamal, mostly the contents of an elite burial.

Resection Papers #9

The "Zanthu" File

This folder contains a number of newspaper articles, an excerpt from Who's Who in Archaeology (1910), and several biographic references regarding Pacific archaeologist Harold Hadley Copeland.

Copeland was an archeologist educated at Cambridge and Miskatonic University who won great fame in his explorations and excavations of some remote parts of India and China in the 1890's. After publishing travel logs of his adventures, he turned his attentions to Asia and Polynesia. Copeland's first book was a little known volume, Polynesian Mythology, with a Note on the Cthulhu Legend Cycle, published in 1906. Copeland spent several years doing anthropological work in Micronesia, publishing a second book, The Prehistoric Pacific in the Light of the Ponape Scripture in 1911. In May of 1913, he led the Copeland-Ellington expedition into Central Asia. The expedition vanished without a trace. Many months later, Copeland emerged from the jungles of Burma alone, emaciated, exhausted, and raving. He carried with him twelve black jade tablets he claimed to have found in an ancient tomb somewhere in Indo-China.

Copeland returned to the U.S. and wrote a partial translation of the tablets, claiming that they were produced in the lost continent of Mu and described Muvian society and the worship of hideous gods. Copeland's work was met first with skepticism, then later with outright contempt, by his colleagues. Once considered the finest Pacific ethnologist in the field, Copeland was publicly humiliated at symposia and conferences. Undaunted, Copeland undertook a thorough survey of the myth patterns of the Pacific, hunting down traces of what he called the "Xothic Myth Cycle." Upon his return to America, Copeland bequeathed the whole of his Pacific artifacts collection to the Sanbourne Institute for Pacific Studies, in southern California. The Copeland bequest consisted of a dozen steamer trunks full of notes and artifacts, as well as both the *Zanthu Tablets* and the infamous Ponape figurine. Copeland suffered an emotional breakdown, and was institutionalized in a California asylum in 1925. A report from the asylum tells how on May 15, 1926, Copeland burst his restraints while being shaved, overpowered an orderly, and slit his own throat with a straight razor.

The file also has clippings and brochures regarding the Sanbourne Institute for Pacific Studies. The Institute was founded in 1875 or 1876 by Philip Sanbourne, fishing magnate, to house and care for his late father Carlton Sanbourne's magnificent collection of Polynesian and Pacific artifacts. The Institute is located on the shoulders of Santiago Peak, near Los Angeles, California. After attaining a prestigious reputation, the Institute later ran into mysterious difficulties later in the twentieth century.

In 1928, the institute's curator of manuscripts, Dr. H. Stevenson Blaine, went insane after trying to catalogue the Copeland bequest. Local newspapers, still reveling in the hoopla of King Tut's curse, attributed his madness to the accursed influence of the infamous Ponape figurine. The strange idol was also rumored to be the cause of Copeland's madness. The Institute, hoping to capitalize on the scandal, set up an exhibition of the Copeland bequest in 1929. The very next year, Blaine's successor, Arthur Wilcox Hodgkins, also went insane. Obsessed with the Ponape figurine, Hodgkins killed a security guard and set fire to the Institute to prevent the idol from being exhibited. The Ponape figurine was lost and the grounds damaged in the fire. The coming Depression sealed the Institute's fate. Financially devastated, the Sanbourne Institute closed its doors in 1933, many feared for good.

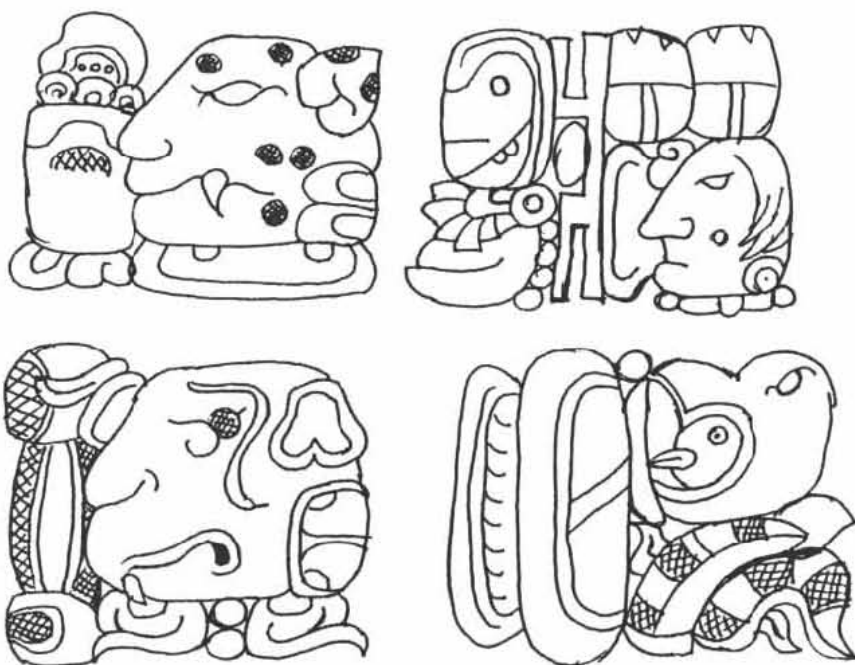
In more recent years, the Institute has risen again thanks to contributions from Kathleen Lewis, a wealthy philanthropist. By 1980 the Institute had reopened its old museum and was offering funding to Pacific anthropological projects. The file contains a new brochure, complete with the Institute's address and phone number.

Finally, there is a letter to Kyle Woodson from Dr. Samuel Turner, director of the Institute. The letter states that the *Zanthu Tablets* were stolen from the Institute in 1933. The Institute does still possess Copeland's original translation notes, which contain detailed drawings and a complete facsimile of the tablet inscriptions. Turner invites Woodson to come by and study them any time, mentioning that it has been a long time since anyone showed any interest in Copeland's tablets.

Resection Papers #10

To whom it may concern,

If you are reading this letter, I can only assume that I am missing or have died. I leave this statement not as a last will and testament but as a warning. I am certain that my demise is imminent. If you are looking for a vanished Kyle Woodson, I assure you that I have doubtless been murdered. The alternative is too horrible to consider. Having said this, however, I beg you not to mistake my intent. This letter is not a call for justice or vengeance, but an entreaty that you give up searching for me or following my work at once. Where once I would have warned an unsuspecting world, I must settle for warning you, my reader. I beg you again, cease all investigation into my death or disappearance IMMEDIATELY! Rather than rousing public attention to a grave danger, I entreat you to dig no further for fear of rousing hidden forces, forces that close in around me even now. I dare not say more save that the entire foundation of the modern sciences of history, archaeology, physics, and paleontology; in other words the cornerstones of our very civilization ARE DEAD WRONG. Indeed, the very notion of "science" as we perceive it is a DELUSION. Our simple perceptions of reality and causality are but shadows obscuring a huge truth, a truth too hideous to behold. In the dawn of this century other men found hints of this truth; all have perished. Now I have stumbled upon this dark secret, pieced together the fragments of the past. All I have done is awaken things best left asleep; soon I, too, shall pay the price. The worst of it is that I fear I am not alone in my discovery! For your own safety, leave my case unsolved. But if you are as full of foolish pride as I was, if you must follow me down the Ek' Be, the Black Road into terror, go to Miskatonic. It was the center of old. But the Ek' Way, the Black Gate of Transformation, is El Cacao. None of us who passed through that portal returned unchanged. If you do not turn back now, your journey to your doom begins here.

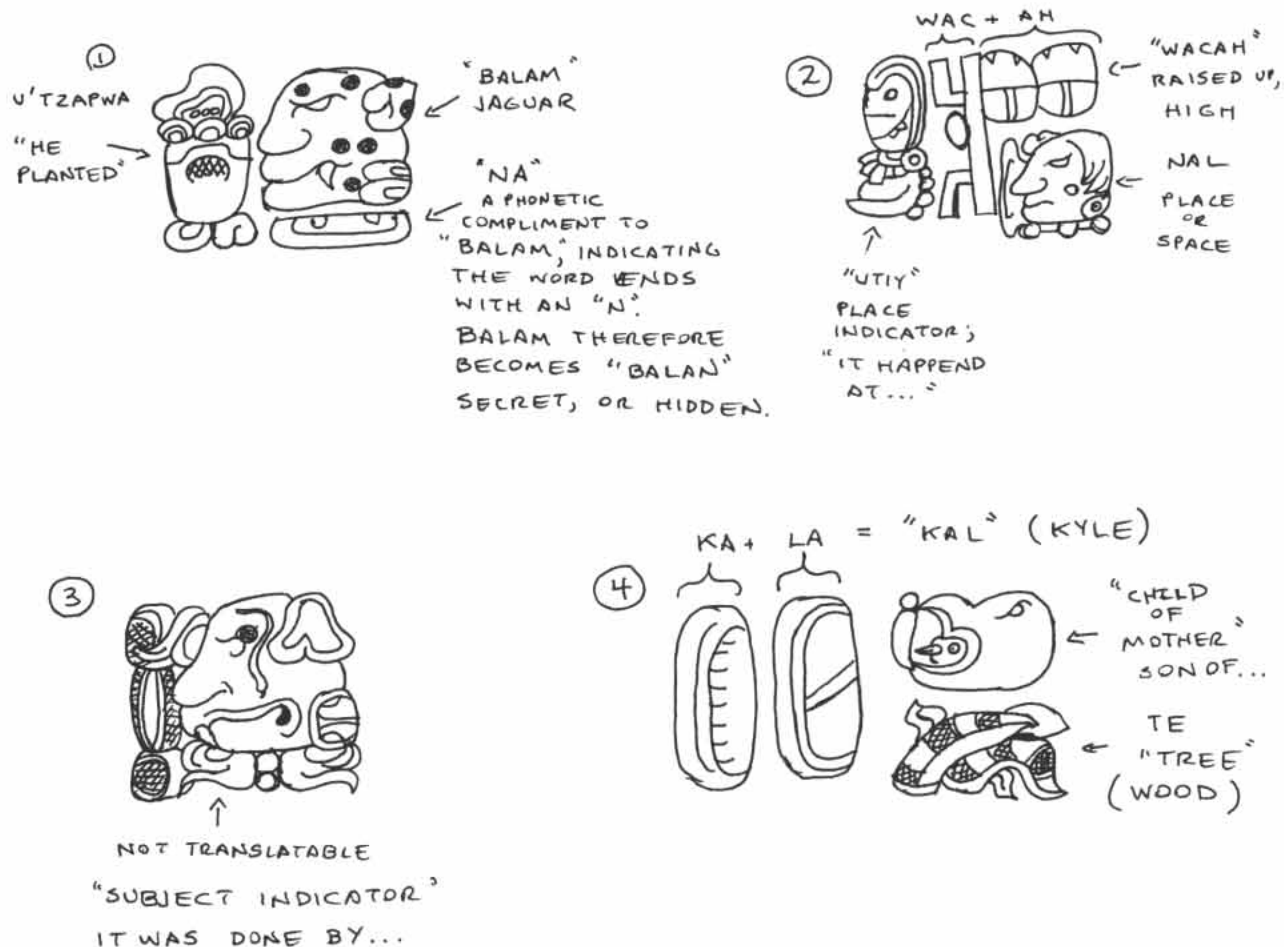


Resection Papers #11

Translation of the Hieroglyphic Letter

Anyone making a Mayan Hieroglyphics or Mayan Lore roll can identify the two Mayan phrases toward the end of the letter. Ek is Mayan for "black", and Be means "road". This phrase, unknown in Mayan inscription, would seem to be an inversion of Sac Be, or the "White Road" common in Mayan myth and archaeology. Mayan kings went down the White Road after death, to gain eternal life in the higher levels of the universe. The White Road is associated with the Milky Way. Ek Way means the "Black Portal" or "Black Transformer", the magical doorway through which Mayan shamans channel divine energy.

The hieroglyphics at the bottom of the letter are translated as follows with a successful Mayan Hieroglyphics roll.



The inscription, therefore, reads "Kyle woodson planted the secret (hidden thing) in the raised up (high) place."

Resection Papers #12

The Zanthu Tablets

A Conjectural Translation

This slim, 32-page brochure was printed in 1916 by the Sanbourne Institute for Pacific Studies in San Diego, California. Written by the noted American archaeologist Harold Hadley Copeland, it purports to be the translation of carvings found on a series of twelve black jade tablets discovered somewhere on the Plateau of Tsang in Indo-China. The author claims that the carvings are hieratic Nacaal, the high language of ancient Mu. The text briefly discusses the stones and the methods used to translate them. The translated text, which takes up most of the book, contains a running commentary by the author.

Originally written by the wizard Zanthu, in whose tomb the tablets were found, the tablets comprise a partial history of the lost Pacific continent of Mu. They describe in detail the worship of various Muvian deities, including Ghat-anatha, Shub-Nigurath, and Ch-ulhu. The tablets also mention Nug and Yeb, the supposed offspring of Yog-Sothoth and Shub-Nigurath. Zoth-Omog, Yig, Dagon, and Hydra are also discussed. Certain other passages hint at the existence of insubstantial beings called the Iloigor or yugeya, who act as servants to the Muvian pantheon of deities.

Resection Papers #13

Two excerpts from the journals of Raymond E. Merwin, dated 1913

...having proceeded out of Orange Walk Town on the Northern Road, we took the abominable back roads to the vicinity of Honey Camp Lagoon. We happened upon a small farming village, and stopped to ask if there were any mounds in the area. The farmers directed us to two brothers, chicle gatherers, who roam widely in search of tree gum. They told us that there were many, many mounds to the northeast, but that they should be left alone. The two would say nothing more. Michael talked to the village elder for some time, and learned about many of their local legends, some of which dealt with this nearby site. It was a place with a forgotten name that the Spanish named "El Cacao" for the chocolate trees surrounding it. Long ago, a "great, fierce, bloody, beautiful" people came out of the sea and built the city, enslaving all around to build their pyramids and drinking their blood in foul rituals. Long before the rise of the lords of Altun Ha, they were swept away. No one ever goes near the place, as the spirits of the sea people remain, and long to take revenge on the living...

...we trudged five more miles through the hot jungle. Just when I was about to give the order to turn back, the guides shouted from up ahead, and we raced to join them. At the base of the next rise was a shallow depression filled with tall reeds. It had to be a stone quarry turned reservoir, which meant an ancient center must be nearby! On the far side we found a faint trail into the dense jungle, and came to a huge platform, fifty yards on a side at least. It was a steep climb through incredibly dense undergrowth, but at the top we found a plaza grouping, remarkably well preserved, devoid of trees, with an intact stone temple structure at the far end. In the center rose a worn stone pillar flowing with intricate carving and covered in the strange writing of the ancients. The plaza was absolutely still, the silence unnerving. A startling discovery was made inside the temple; an intact mural! The colors! It is beyond doubt the finest example of Mayan artistry I have yet seen. It looked so alien, so utterly strange, I wonder how anyone could possibly believe these long lost people were scions of ancient Egypt or the lost tribe of Israel. The guides were increasingly restless, an uneasiness which began to affect me as well. I must return to that shadowed place someday, though the absence of roads would make any dig a logistical nightmare. Our stay was cut short when a fer de lance bit Michael on the arm while he was moving some brush aside from a building. Alas, we could not save him, the venom moved too quick. Grieving our dead, we departed, taking Michael back to Orange Walk town...

Resection Papers #14

An excerpt from *The Rise And Fall Of The Ancient Maya*, J. Eric Thompson, 1967

...most of the early Spanish explorers and later 19th century archaeologists presumed that the crumbling ruins all around them were made by lost descendants of Greece, Rome, Babylon, or the fabled isle of Atlantis. Few believed the local Indians capable of such wonders. This idea was, of course, later dismissed by the scientific community. The last archaeologist actively to pursue foreign origin hypotheses was Raymond Merwin, who claimed that legends of a tribe called the Tlachan, or 'sea people', indicated a foreign contact. The Tlachan, according to these tales, brought writing, stonemasonry, slavery, civilization, and religion to the Maya of northern Belize. Interestingly enough, the other Maya of the area refer to them as the I Winika Ha, or "people of the water." Cerros, just at the edge of the range of these tales, is considered to be the first site where Lowland Classic Maya culture flourished. Does its proximity to these tales, combined with the association of the Tlachan with frogs (the Mayan creation symbol) imply that these foreigners are the true fathers of the Maya? Most scholars say no. Merwin, struck down by illness, died before he could form the body of his work into any definite theories...

Resection Papers #15

A translated passage from *The Chronicles of the Travels of Father Ponce in the New World*, written by Antonio de Ciudad Real, 1588 (Care of the Henry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin)

...we were met by many of the naked savages, who built their houses among the heaps of stone and strange towering buildings. These, then, were the folk called the Huinicas, the people of the sea.

They lived in great wretchedness, the poorest and filthiest savages I have yet seen in this land. Our guides would not enter the village, saying that the people here were unclean. We had been told in Chetumal of the depravity of the Huinicas, but I had no hint of the moral degradation we also found.

All the folk were diseased, walking with a stooped posture, and many had a pox on their faces and necks like unto leprosy. Strange too were their eyes, large and staring like those of a toad. Their tongue was very different, such that I could barely understand their yammering speech.

Their elder, the most diseased of the wretched lot, spoke long with Father Ponce. He told the father that these called themselves the Tlachanos, and that they were chosen by the gods and the Huinaquib Huyub, the spirits of the forest. He invited us to join in their holy rites, where there would be great fornications in a nearby cave and the drinking of much sacred blood. At the old man's words my heart was enraged, and the soldiers held back no longer. All of the savages were put to the sword, and the father ordered the place cleansed by fire.

Many strange bark scrolls were found in the house of the elder, filled with the strange writing of the Maya and many drawings of hideous devils and vile rites. These too were burned in a great bonfire, and Father Ponce delivered a benediction over the ashes. As they left, the soldiers gathered and ate many chocolate beans. The Captain named the blighted place El Cacao...

Resection Papers #16

An article from the American Journal of Latin American Archeology, March 1990

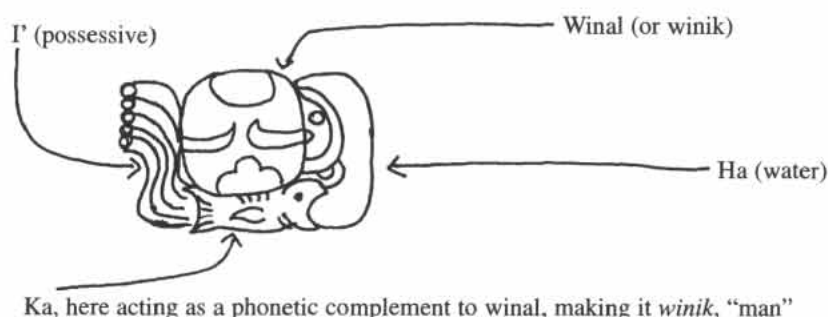
This article by epigrapher Julie Acuff deals with some advances in Mayan epigraphy. Apparently, a glyph which had been turning up in ancestor expressions and dynastic lineages all over northern Belize can be translated as I' winik ha or people of the water — "sea people".

New Evidence for an Old Theory

Did the fabled "sea peoples" of the Maya exist?

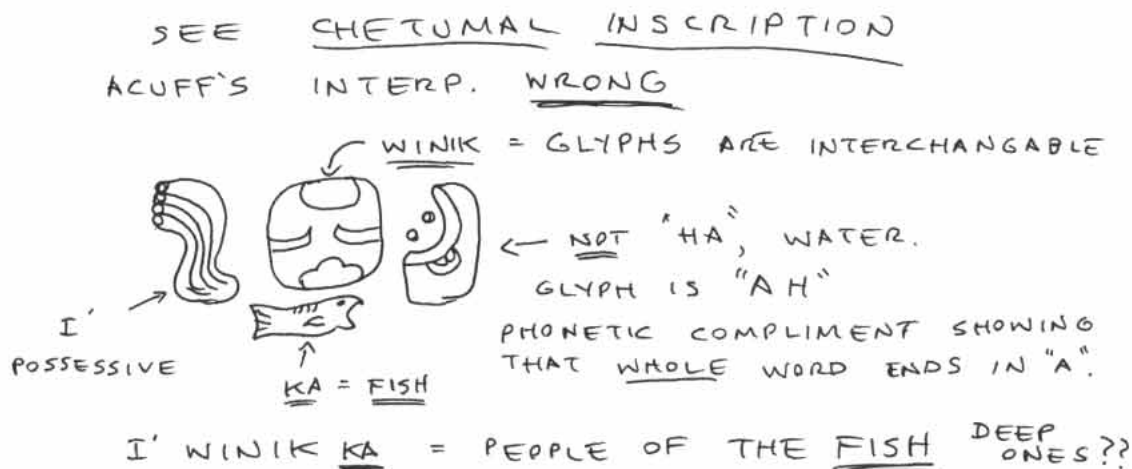
The glyphs seem to say yes.

The figures which illustrate the translation are of particular note:



Acuff goes on to suggest possible interpretations of these so called "sea people". Are they the foreign originators of Mayan culture from Asia or some lost continent, so common in theories from the turn of the century? Acuff says no. According to Mayan mythology, the last creation before ours ended in a great flood, destroying the wooden men who peopled the earth of old. Since these previous humans all "went into the water" (a Mayan metaphor for death) they are probably the water people mentioned. The fact that the expression is found exclusively with names that are identified as captured foes or defeated enemies backs up this assessment. The enemy is being labeled as one of the wooden men who the gods deemed unfit.

Far more interesting than the article are Kyle's notes, scribbled in the margins:

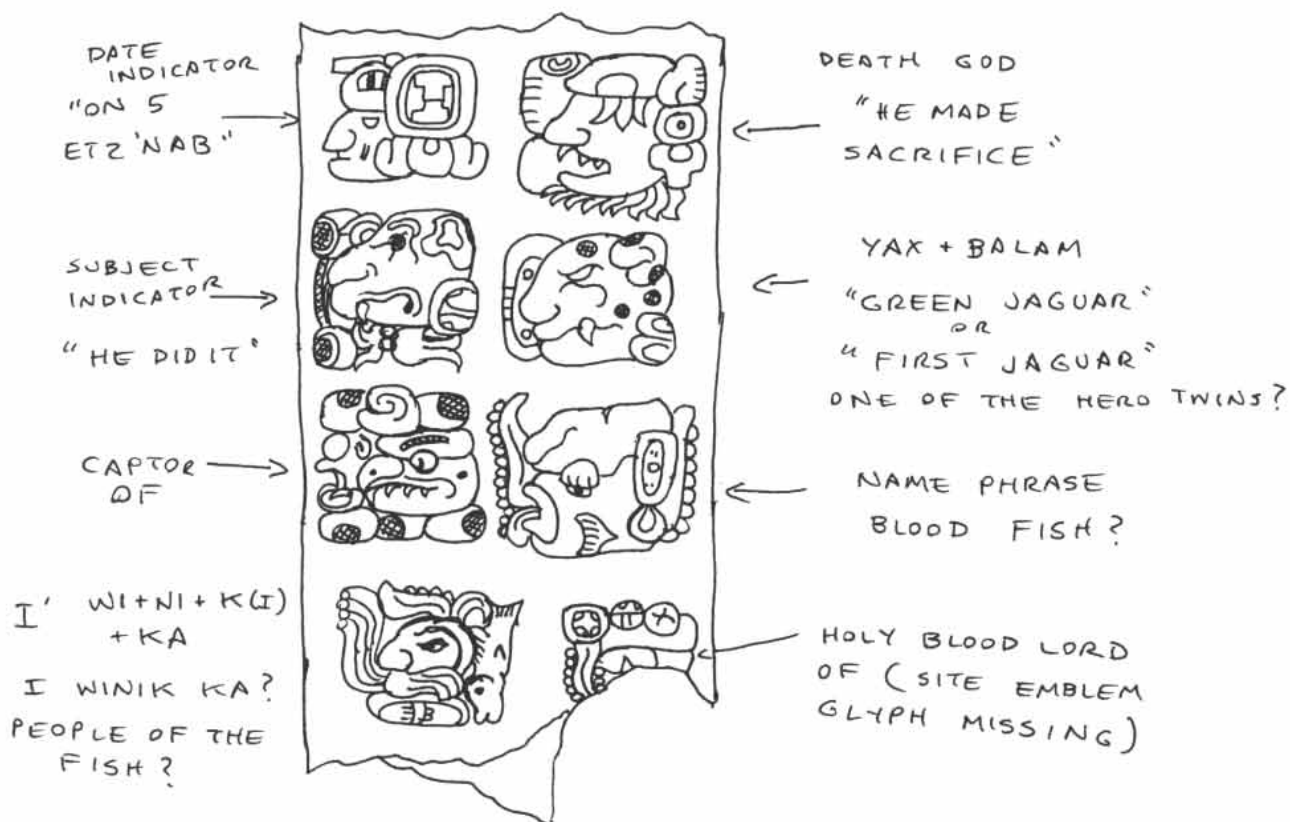


Any investigator making a Mayan Hieroglyphics roll can tell that Woodson's interpretation, while a bit unorthodox, is still technically correct. The conclusions he seems to draw, however, are startling. Fish people?

Resection Papers #17

A Rendering of a Hieroglyphic Inscription

LINE DRAWING, INSCRIPTION
 CHETUMAL, SITE 3
 OF 6, SUBOP A
 LOT 10
 PATRICK ST. CLAIR
 7-10-90



Resection Papers #18

NEW BOOK: Shadows of the Past?...
 Buried Secrets... Lost with the Eons?

1. Introduction - Reintroduce work
 of Angell, Peaslee, Shrewsbury,
 Sadowsky, Copeland
 A. Pre-human myth theory. "The
 Hyborean Age"

2. New influences on the Maya in
 the Formative Period
 A. Mu: Hieratic Nacaaal as the
 inspiration for Mayan writing
 system

- Matthews' + Copeland's
 work, *Zanhu Tablets*
- Maya: Muvian survivors?
- Churchward's Mu legends
- B. Potential oceanic influences:
 The Sea People
- New evidence for I'winik ka
 (Chetumal, 1990)
- El Cacao, the Tlachan link
 to Dyzan's T'la Chanlei?
- Merwin's, Williamson's Sea
 People researches.

3. Some startling evidence

- A. Deities in the "forgotten
 apocrypha" Dzayan,
Necronomicon, etc.
- Bolon Dzab/Kawil =
 Nyarlathotep
 - Chac = Great Othulhu
 - The Deep Ones = The Hero
 Twins, Tlachan, I'winik ka?
 (see notes)

4. Conclusion

Resection Papers #19

BOLON DZACAB = NYARLATHOTEP?

BOLON DZACAB = TEZCATLIPOCA (AZTEC)

TEZCATLIPOCA = "SMOKING MIRROR" DARK MIRROR?

THE DISTORTING REFLECTION/IMAGE →
NYARLATHOTEP'S "WAKEN MASK"? "THE DARK
POOL THAT SHOWS THE DARK SOULS OF MEN?"

TEZCATLIPOCA = ONLY DUAL GOD IN AZTEC MYTH
~~WHITE~~ AND YELLOW TEZCATLIPOCAS

ORIGINALLY 4 TEZCATLIPOCAS

NYARLATHOTEP → "THE MULTITUDE OF FORMS",
"THE MOCKING LEGION"

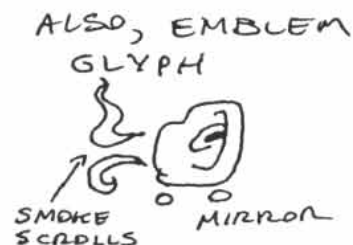
C.F. NECRONOMICON: p. 472, p. 677

★ BOOK OF EIBON p. 176

NYARLATHOTEP IS TEZCATLIPOCA!!

BOLON DZACAB = TEZCATLIPOCA

DEPICTIONS AS GOD K HAVE SMOKING TORCH W/
MIRROR SYMBOL ON HEAD



TORCH IN QUICHE = TAH,

HOMOPHONE FOR TAH = OBSIDIAN

TORCH NOT ONLY SMOKING, BUT ACTS AS PHONETIC
COMPLIMENT TO SAY MIRROR IS MADE OF OBSIDIAN
(C.F. LINDA SCHELE, BLOOD OF KINGS, p. 49)

TEZCATLIPOCA ALWAYS DEPICTED W/ OBSIDIAN
MIRROR ON HIM SOMEPLACE → USUALLY HIS FOOT
(GOD WAS CLUB FOOTED)

BOLON DZACAB ALSO DEFORMED → HAS SNAKE FOR
A FOOT

SNAKE = CRAWLING CHAOS??

BOLON DZACAB = TEZCATLIPOCA

TEZCATLIPOCA = NYARLATHOTEP

EGYPTIAN GOD ACTING AS BASIS FOR GOD THAT
AUTHORIZED MAYAN AUTHORITY.

INCREDIBLE!!

Resection Papers #20

III. TLACHAN → OF T'LA-CHANCEI? - SEEDYZAN

(A)

GI OF PALENQUE TRIAD → HUN-AHPV
ONE OF HERO TWINS IN POPOL VUH, 1ST
MEN TO CONQUER DARK GODS OF XIBALBA
+ WIN WISDOM:

GI HAS GILLS + GOGGLE EYES!!



IS THIS
A DEEP ONE

FOLK FROM THE SEA FOUNDED MAYAN
CIVILIZATION

OTHER TWIN, GIII JAGUAR GOD NYARLATHOTEP?

SEE PNAKOTIC MANUSCRIPTS,
p. 167

IF ONLY LABAN SHREWSBURY HAD LIVED
NOW...

FROG = MAYAN BIRTH/ORIGIN SYMBOL

DEEP ONES AGAIN; "LIKE FROGS THEIR LEGS
DID BEND, THEY WALKED NOT ~~BUT~~ STAGGERED
AND LEAPED..." CELAENO FRAGMENTS p. 189

MAYAN STANDARD OF BEAUTY = SLOPED
HEAD

"THE DEEP FOLK ARE HIDEOUS, WITH NARROW
HEADS, HUGE ROUND EYES, AND FOREHEADS
WITH NO BROW." IBID

UNDERSEA INTELLIGENT BEINGS - THEY DID
EXIST DO THEY STILL?

2ND LARGEST CORAL REEF IN WORLD RIGHT
OF BELIZE COAST → NEAR CHETUMAL BAY,
BIRTHPLACE OF LOWLAND CULTURE.

DEVIL REEF → INNSMOUTH Y'HA-NTHLEI??

Resection Papers #21

*Excerpts from Books on the Miskatonic University Restricted List**Excerpts from the Necronomicon:*

p.472, my numbering: "Go out among men and find the ways thereof, that He in the Gulf may know. To Nyarlathotep, Mighty Messenger, must all things be told. And he shall put on the semblance of men, the waxen mask and the robe that hides, and come down from the world of seven suns to mock.

"The cantor must repeat this verse six times, then mix the sacred elements within the bowl, and await the coming of the Dark God. Many are the masks that the Crawling Chaos wears, one thousand less one. His face shall seem a pool disturbed by wind, a dark mirror whose images are but smoke. Nyarlathotep has long walked the ways of men, and his Smoking Mirror has always shown men what they most longed for within themselves, but a hazed reflection. Beware His powers of temptation, for the Crawling Chaos knows all dark things that lie within men's souls."

p.467: "And the Jester from beyond taunted him, saying 'Did you think to bind me by the power of my name? My names are many, for I am, in me, as a legion. In the chill wilds of the north am I the Horned Man who dances in the trees by moonlight, in the burning south I am the Howler in Darkness, the bloody tongue. In Hyperborea I was the Black Man, man of the void. The Celestial Dukes of Harmony was I, and the Bloated Woman and the beauty in the veil. And across the oceans I am the ruling God, the maker of lineages. In Atlantis so long drowned and in the temples of the pharaohs did they know me best, and call me by my fondest name. I am the very tide of History itself, FOR I AM THE CRAWLING CHAOS, NYARLATHOTEP.' And Washur Timal wept, for he knew the depth of his doom..."

Excerpt from the Book Of Dzryan, p. 98

"In another vision Anwesh looked beyond the veil of time, through eight millennia to behold great terrors. Far to the south of our mighty isle, center of the world—Shadduth forestall our doom! May Ishnu make us worthy!—in a great wide land of steaming jungles that has never known the fall of snow, the horrors of the deep will swarm forth from the seas as they did of old

at Y'ha-nthlei, and the Deep Ones of T'la-chanlei will mix their blood with the naked savages of that land, bringing to them writing and war. The folk of T'la-chanlei will build a great place of terror called Sheballbow, where the immortal wizard Tlan-I-Nosh himself will rule as Godking and converse with the Mighty Messenger Nyarlathotep, who he will know as Kaweel, the Father of Lineages. With the sweat and blood of the conquered they will build great stone temples to their dark gods. Their foul blood will betray them to a grisly death, but their cruel empire will inspire an entire world unto itself, a world of blood and splendor, a world which will die all too young."

Excerpt from the Book of Eibon, p. 176

"... Must be warned of the cunning of that Dark God, Nyarlathotep. I, Eibon have seen him by night when the rituals were said, and did see him reveal himself in many masks. He was the bald man with skin of Jet, the patron of foul magicians, the hairy, Horned Man who dances by moonlight, The Black Pharaoh, absolute in might and cruelty, and the Bloated Woman, hideous behind the all too fragile veil. Then he was a tall, limping man, with bright plumed headdress and a shining black mirror at his ankle. The Crawling Chaos said that in this mask he did rule at Tenoshtitlan, and did drink the blood of thousands spilled to vilify him. Then his features were as smoke, and he became a great beast, which strode off into the night on three great legs, heaving its scarlet trunk to howl at the moon."

Excerpt from the Celeano Fragments, p.189.

"Then I saw the shapes in the surf, and the children of Dagon and Hydra surged forth to greet me. They were the Deep Ones, worshippers of Great Cthulhu, him who lay Dreaming, and they did teach me much while we swam between the pillars of their great city, lost in the watery abyss. Like frogs did their legs bend, so that they did not walk but rather staggered and leapt. They croak and bay. They are hideous, with huge unblinking eyes and foreheads without brow. They frowned at my talk of their ugliness, saying other humans did not find them so, indeed had found in them the measure of beauty. It was among these that they did spawn, and begot their bastard children, children that built an empire of blood and splendor."

Resection Papers #23

The Flashback

Suddenly something snaps in your head. The dreams, the little red doctors ... it all makes sense! Suddenly you can remember! The things that came by night, back in 1994! They weren't drug runners at all!!!! Hideous things, like lobsters, with claws and big bat wings! You hear yourself cry out as the barriers in your brain finally melt and you remember it all ... the THINGS that plagued El Cacao, and how they overran the camp and dragged the entire expedition away, took you deep underground and left you screaming at the sight of the gleaming surgeon's knives ... and then the final memory comes, of the glowing cavern, where the blue slime crept across the floor as your pink captors shoved you into surgery, past rows of cadavers hanging from the ceiling, the top of each skull neatly sawed away, revealing the EMPTY BRAIN PAN!!! The world spins around you as you feel again the shiny knives piercing your forehead, and you question every memory you've had for years..

Resection Papers #22a

AUGUST 16, 1986

DREAMS AGAIN. EVERY NIGHT, I SEE MYSELF
HERE, OR AT EL CACAO, JUST DOING EVERY
THINGS BUT IT'S ALL WRONG. IT'S ALL
WRONG!! I KEEP SEEING FACES I
KNOW THEIR NAMES, BUT THEY'RE NOT
ON ANY ROSTER FROM '86! JUST WHO
DID DIE AT EL CACAO?? WHERE IS IT??
MUST RETURN HOME BEFORE THE
DRIVE ME MAD - MUST GO TO ARKHAM

AUGUST 31

I HAVE FOUND IT!! IT'S ALL SO
FISHPEOPLE, THE TACCHARD, MY RESEARCH
GOT IT ALL. THE DOCS - MY
DREAMS - THERE ARE SHARDS OF MY
MEMORIES. I'VE BEEN MAKING SOME
THE BOOKS IN ARKHAM ARE SHAKING
IT ALL LOOSE -> BRAINS IN JARS,
MISSING SKULLS, MY MEMORIES -
IT'S THE BLOODY ONES FROM
THEY'RE INSIDE MY HEAD.

DID THEY TAKE US ALL??

DO THE OTHERS REMEMBER
THE DREAMS KEEP GETTING
THE OTHERS SUSPECT
SLEEPING.

Resection Papers #22b

SEPT 4, 1994

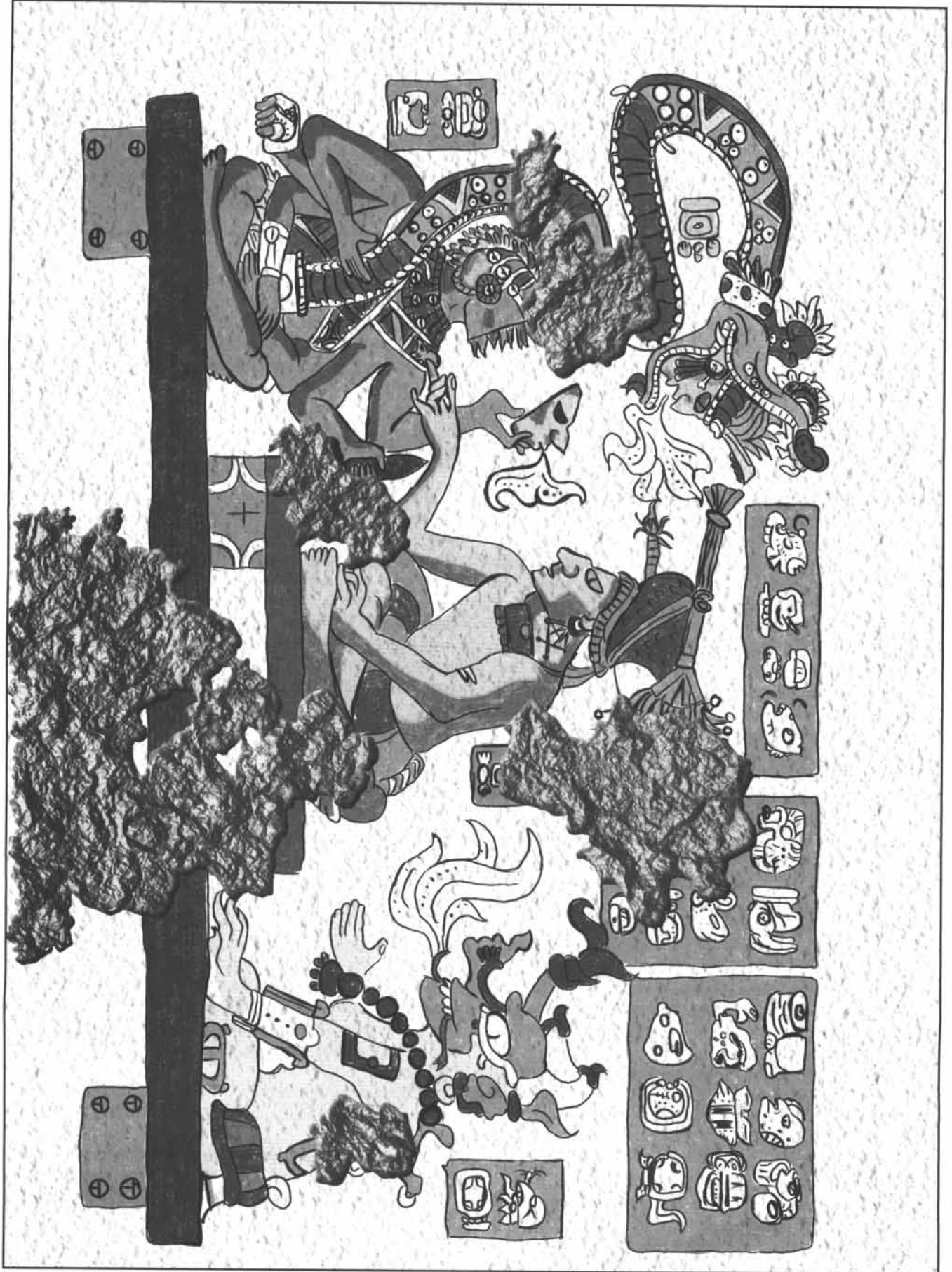
MY GOD, I REMEMBER!!
 I SEE IT ALL NOW -
 THEY WERE IN A CACAO -
 NOT DRUGS -
 THEY DO
 THE CLAY
 THE CLAY
 THE KNIVES
 THE WEBS
 ARE THEY STILL THERE?
 MUST WARN SCH
 HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO

THEY'RE REAL!! THE HOAR
 WHAT DID THEY DO TO MY
 MIND!!

POOR PAUL - ALL IN VAIN,
 I MUST GO BACK - MUST
 SEE IF THEY'RE STILL THERE



Resection Papers #25





Appendix Two: The Dreams

Read one of the following dreams to each investigator. The last two dreams are designed for investigators who were not in Belize in 1994. It otherwise does not matter which investigator has which dream. If there are more investigators than dreams, make up further episodes or simply repeat a dream. The last two dreams are easily repeated.

DREAM ONE

Bringing up the past made it inevitable —soon, you're trudging through the jungle again, sweating like a pig, the mosquitoes swarming around you. Paulito is up ahead, thrashing wildly with his machete, while the survey team trudges on behind. You top the rise, and gasp as you look on the ceremonial center of El Cacao. The plaza is clear of undergrowth, and the stone temple at the far end looks almost restored! Something is wrong.... It shouldn't be like this, someone has already excavated here. Then you feel a chill, and suddenly Paulito screams and falls to the ground as bullets tear through him, a misty cloud of blood hanging in the air. The men rush out from the temple, shouting in Spanish, the sun gleaming off of their rifles. You dive to the ground screaming, and two more die, students this time. You crawl for any kind of cover, and look up to see Bret Hauk take a hit in the shoulder. He falls, screaming madly. As you reach the trees and look back, a realization hits you. You can hear the shouts, the screams of the dying, the frantic clamor of the birds, even the ragged gasps of your own breathing, but not the gunfire. You stare at one of the men, watch the muzzle flash from his rifle, and realize that it's utterly silent. You wonder why, but then ... the dream ... shifts, and you're seated before the review board, the people who are reviewing the incident. They're going through their final statements, and a sound reaches you, like dripping water. Drip ... drip ... drip.... you glance up from your folded hands, looking for the roof leak. It's Dr. Nowlan—a stream of blood is leaking from his ear into his glass of water, the red blossoming through the still liquid. Then you gasp to see that they're all bleeding from their ears, and looking down at your suit, you see you are, too! You leap to your feet, overturning the table before you.

A doctor rushes into the room, his surgical scrubs stained blood red. You realize that you can't see his eyes! He runs at you and jabs a bright scalpel through your forehead ... and you wake up, screaming.

DREAM TWO

As sleep overtakes you, you drift through lazy clouds of half images. Finally, they solidify —and you're running.

You can't be late for Dr. Valdez's seminar again, you think, as you sprint across the common of the University, glancing up

at the main building. For the millionth time, you read the inscription YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND WISH YOU DID NOT SEE. No, wait! That's not what it says! You stop and look again —AND IT SHALL SET YOU FREE. That's better. You race down the steps onto the South Mall, and as you run past them, you notice that all of the bronze statues of presidents lining the quad have been vandalized. Damn fraternities, you think, wondering how they managed to saw off the crowns of their heads.

You rush into class, only to find that you're not in the right building at all, somehow you're in Dr. Valdez's house, the semester is over, and all of the seminar students are throwing a party. You mingle a while, finally settling into a conversation with John Hageman about stylistic continuities in Mayan art. The sense of inconsistency fades, and you wander into the kitchen, where Dr. Valdez is opening a huge can of diced pineapples to add to the party trays. He takes off the top, and inside the can you're shocked to see the gray, lumpy mass of a human brain! As Dr. Valdez dumps it on the platter, you start screaming wildly, and the guests all stare at you, wondering what's wrong. Suddenly, a man dressed as a surgeon leaps out of the pantry, his outfit a funny pink color, surgical mask and mirrored glasses hiding his face. He runs over to you, grabs your shoulder, and shakes you violently. You cry out for help, to no avail as the pink doctor raises a shiny scalpel high, then plunges it into your forehead. You feel the blade pierce your skull in a burst of pain ... and you wake up, screaming.

DREAM THREE

The screen door slams and wakes you up. Dammit, you think, as the hot night air seeps into your consciousness, they should fix that goddamn door. Then you hear the voices, and fear grips you. You jump out of your bunk and realize you're not at home —you're still in Belize (that's why it's so hot). You pull on some pants and run out into the common room of the dorm, lit harshly by the naked bulbs up on the corrugated ceiling. People are running around, shouting, and you catch a babble of things all at once.

"The survey team's back Did they find it?There's someone else out there. ... My god, they're hurt..... Where's Wayne?"

Then you hear the dogs barking outside, louder than you've ever heard them before. Chills race through your gut as the barking stops. Too abruptly. You rush into the crowd, looking for Kat. Has she been hurt too? You bump into Dr. Hughbanks, and he grabs you by the shoulders. It takes you a second to realize that he's covered in blood. "It's terrible!" he screams. "El

Cacao ... they were at El Cacao!" "Where's Kat?" you scream, when suddenly the lights go out. "They followed us back!" Hughbanks shouts, and then you hear something land on the metal roof of the dormitory, where it starts crawling about. It sounds, you think, like a huge crab or something, claws rasping on the steel. Flashlight beams cut through the dark, giving the scene an eerie, disjointed look. Suddenly the back door of the dorm opens. Ben swings up his flashlight, you see what's standing in the doorway, and start screaming. A blast of ice cold wind hits you ("In Belize?" you think), and suddenly strong hands grab you from behind. You turn to see a short man in a red surgery outfit, mirrored glasses hiding his eyes. More little red surgeons are suddenly everywhere, rushing through the crowd, grappling with the screaming students. Two more grab your arms, and you struggle to escape, but in vain. A surgeon runs by, a steaming, bloody human brain in his hands, and you scream hysterically. One of the doctors raises a scalpel, then drives it through your forehead. You feel a blinding burst of pain... and you wake up, screaming.

DREAM FOUR

You dream you're walking through an alley, hurrying home. Looking across the street, you see "El Caballo", the Belize expedition van. What's it doing here? By the side of the van you see a pair of boots ... your boots, still caked with mud, and suddenly you know something is **WRONG**. Looking up, a bat-winged shape passes against the stars, and you scream as you realize that its **ALL WRONG!** The hearing ... the smugglers ... there's something all wrong about it ... You can't remember ... then you realize you won't remember ... mind playing tricks... **ITS ALL LIES!** You stagger into an alley, head reeling, when out steps Kyle Woodson, spattered with blood, a huge hunk of his head missing. "It's all there..." he says in a gurgling, buzzing voice ... an inhuman voice. "It's all at El Cacao. You must go—". Then his head explodes in a shower of gore, and a short man in a blood red surgeon's gown leaps from the shadows, mirrored glasses hiding his eyes. **HE HAS NO FACE** you think, as he raises a shining scalpel and plunges it into your forehead ... and you can see a withered man in a strange cavern, lying there in silence. You walk to him and put your hand on his shoulder ... then you realize that the top of his head is missing! You scream in terror, and back away, tripping over another body. "**BE CALM. BE SILENT.**" says a voice, a horrible whispering, buzzing voice, and you turn and notice a shining metal cylinder sitting on the floor, connected by wires to a strange machine. Then, the cavern wall ripples open and something enters. You can't seem to look directly at it (**WHY? SOMETHING ... SOMETHING IN MY HEAD ... MUST FORGET IT**), but it scurries toward you, pincers outstretched... and you wake up, screaming.

DREAM FIVE

You swat the mosquito on your arm, leaving a smudge of blood around its squashed body. Too disgusting, you think, and turn back to your journal. It's been a long day in the field, and you hope to relax a little before dinner. Across the patio in the kitchen, you can hear the cooks babbling in Spanish. Another night of rice and beans, you think to yourself. This archaeology stuff would be great if only they had decent food. When you get back from Belize, you think, pizza will definitely be in order. You wipe the sweat from your brow and continue writing. Then, something crawls onto your foot. You look down to see a lobster,

bright pink, its feelers wiggling wildly. You kick the thing away, and realize there's one next to you on the bench. You stand up, and are shocked to see them everywhere, scuttling up and down the sides of the dorm building like bugs. "Damn things," you hear Dr. Hughbanks say, and turn to see him pulling a lobster off of his head, "just won't stay away." He hurls it to the ground, and you're shocked to see the bright green blood leaking from its shattered body. A cold breeze hits you ... and you see Fred McKinney's chest explode in a shower of red. You look around, and realize you're back at El Cacao, that the nightmare has returned. You dive for cover, and see Paulito the guide run into the jungle. You look back at the temple, and see six men dressed as surgeons, all in red, running out of the dark doorways, guns blazing. Weren't they supposed to be smugglers? You glance across the square and notice a pile of bloody human skulls, the dome of each neatly sawed off. You scream in terror, and one of the little red doctors turns, takes careful aim, and shoots right at you. You see your life flash before your eyes, and distinctly feel the bullet burrow through your forehead in a numbing burst of cold ... and wake up screaming.

DREAM SIX

You pass through a whirl of dream images, and end up with a fond memory. You're six years old again, running through the streets of your home town. It's time for you to do your homework, and you hope it won't be boring. Your young arms strain to lift the huge book onto the table, and you open up Gardner's Art Through the Ages. You're really gonna have to hurry if you're gonna beat the deadline for submitting that thesis proposal. (**WAIT—YOU'RE NOT SIX ... AND SOMETHING IS WRONG ... YOUR MIND CAN'T WORK ... CAN'T REMEMBER YOUR OWN NAME**) No, you are six, and the reality solidifies. You flip to the section on Central American Art, when something moves in the closet. You're paralyzed with the fear only children can imagine, and then the door opens. A group of men in black suits walks into the room. "Hello," their leader says cheerfully. You like his voice. You trust him. "This'll only take a minute. Be still." All right, you think, admiring the cool yellow badge he has on his lapel.

The men start tearing the room apart. They open every cupboard, dumping the contents. They pull up all the rugs, and even look under your bed! They seem to be in a real hurry. Boy is mommy going to be mad. "What're you looking for?" you ask the nice man. He turns and walks over to you. "Well," he says, "have you ever had an operation? Like at the doctor?"

"No," you say. The nice man nods his head.

"Does this scare you?"

He holds up something in his hand, some kind of bug or crab or something. It has big claws, and its head glows. It looks kinda neat.

"No," you say.

"Hmmm," says the nice man. All the other men in suits turn at the same time and go back into the closet. "Thank you, my child. Go to sleep now."

The wall of darkness hits you like a hammer, and you sleep more deeply than you ever have before.

DREAM SEVEN

Groggy with half sleep, you wake up with a start. Someone's in the room. You turn to see who it is, and a voice says, "Stop." You must still be asleep. Dreaming.... "It's all right," the voice

says. "Go back to sleep." It's a nice voice, very soothing. You go back to sleep.

You're dreaming again ... you're in a doctor's office. No, an analyst or something. He has you on the couch, telling him about your childhood.

"How did that make you feel?" he asks.

"Like I had no control."

"And have you ever felt like that since?" the doctor asks.

"Like what?"

"Like you have no control ... like you're being manipulated."

"Ummm." You think real hard.

"Don't worry about it," the doctor says cheerfully. "Tell me, have you ever had troubles with your memory?"

"My what?"

"Does this mean anything to you?"

He shows you a picture of some kind of insect, bright pink but with bat wings. You've never seen anything like it before.

You tell him so.

"Are you sure?" the doctor asks. He stares at you, and suddenly a sharp pain blooms somewhere behind your forehead.

"What ... owwww!" you yell, trying to stand up. You can't!

"Just a moment. There may be some ... unpleasant sensations," the doctor says, then he OPENS UP YOUR HEAD AND YOU CAN FEEL HIS FINGERS PUSHING INTO YOUR BRAIN! You try to scream, to move even ... but you can't. The pain gets worse. After a few seconds, the doctor closes your head again.

"No traces here." The doctor says to nobody, and that's when you realize that his MOUTH ISN'T MOVING!!! You hear him IN YOUR HEAD!!!

You leap to your feet, looking for the door. "Stop," the doctor says. His voice ... it's so soothing, you stop right where you are. All the pain is gone.

He looks right into your eyes. "Tell me, have you seen the Yellow Sign?" he asks ... and you wake up, screaming. ■



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MYTHOS

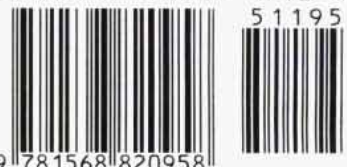
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