



ARBOR DAY

A Chill, Pacesetter edition, adventure for 3 to 6 SAVE
envoys

Gary Con 2013

Horrific axe murders committed in Oregon's Tillamook State Forest are identical to those committed by the legendary "Paul Bunyon Killer" 40 years earlier. However, the original murderer - now elderly and feeble -- remains behind bars. Has a copycat killer surfaced, or is this the work of the Unknown?

BACKGROUND:

In April 1973, a transient hermit named Logan Baxter beheaded six people with an axe. Baxter had holed up in a hidden ramshackle hovel he constructed in the Tillamook State Forest. The victims were hikers and visitors to the park. Baxter, obviously deranged, claims he was "protecting his property" when authorities discovered his shack...and the six shallow graves nearby. Nicknamed The Paul Bunyon Killer, Baxter was found mentally incompetent and was sentenced to life in prison without hope of parole.

However, unknown to all but Baxter, there was a seventh victim. This college student, Audrey Burke, studying to be a veterinarian, was visiting the park to research some of the flora and fauna found at the appropriately-named University Falls. Baxter found her and killed her there at the falls. He beheaded and buried her body there at the base of the falls.

Now, 40 years later, Audrey has risen as a powerful Revenant – a vengeful ghost who exists solely to take revenge on those she feels wronged her in life. She began with beheading two park rangers which is what triggered the summoning of the PCs. Audrey feels that her unsolved murder leaves her forgotten and she blames the following for "allowing" her to die:

Park rangers – They didn't do enough to drive out Baxter from the park.

Baxter – The man who killed her.
The local police – They were unable to find and stop Baxter before he killed her.

Audrey also plans to kill her mother whom she feels has "forgotten her". And she plans to kill any who stand in her way – such as the PCs.

Audrey has been joined in the afterlife by her loyal family dog, Muffit, who has become a Spectral Hound working at her call. Audrey also has the ability to command forest wildlife to do her bidding.

Audrey has been visiting Baxter in his cell, tormenting him with visions of his own death at her hands. Baxter was already pretty unhinged, but he's nearly incoherent with fear now. He knows that Number Seven is coming for him. And when she's finished with him, Audrey has a long list of others to eliminate....unless the PCs can find her body and show her she's not forgotten.

**SCENE 1:
THE LETTER ARRIVES**

Although humanity remains blissfully unaware, each of you knows that monsters DO lurk in the shadows, feeding on fear and ignorance.

At some point in your lives, each of you have encountered and defeated a minion of the Unknown – a dimension of pure evil from where horrific creatures spill into our Waking World. Due to this experience, you’ve all been inducted into a secret society called SAVE – dedicated to protecting humanity by investigating reports of the supernatural and stopping any incursions by the Unknown.

All of you reside in the northwestern United States, so it was no surprise that you were contacted by The Society to investigate a situation developing in Forest Grove, Oregon. The email you each received says:

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(HANDOUT ONE)

Dear SAVE Envoy:

Less than 48 hours ago, the bodies of two park rangers were discovered in the Tillamook State Forest 40 miles west of Portland. Each of the victims had been beheaded. These murders are identical to the infamous Paul Bunyon killings that occurred in that same forest 40 years ago. The original killer, Logan Baxter, was caught shortly after the original killings and has been behind ever since.

The reasons SAVE feels that these new murders are the work of the Unknown rather than a copycat killer is two-fold: One: the cuts that severed the heads from the victims

was so keen that it would have taken a blade of imaginable sharpness to make the cut so cleanly. This was not the work of a run-of-the-mill axe murderer. And Two: Baxter himself, who’s in the deepest of prison isolation, knew of the murders and the nature of the crime scene before anyone could inform him. When asked how he knew, he claims a “demon” told him.

We want you to travel to Forest Grove, Oregon, a small town on the edge of the Tillamook State Forest and investigate these murders. SAVE also discovered that Baxter is being transferred to a state psychiatric hospital for observation. While he’s being transferred, SAVE has arranged a stopover for Baxter at the County Jail in Forest Grove where you have been authorized to interview him for 30 minutes. Hopefully you can get him to reveal what he knows about this crime.

As always, the true nature of your investigations and the existence of SAVE must be kept secret. Revealing the existence of SAVE or breaking your cover will result in your immediate dismissal. Good luck.

Gordon Pym
SAVE Director
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You’ve all met at the Forest Grove Holiday Inn where you’re all staying, identifying each other through the SAVE indalo pendant, the symbol Envoys use to recognize each other. Baxter will be arriving at the County Jail in about 45 minutes, so you have some time to introduce yourselves to each other and plan what to do.

Allow the PCs to introduce their characters and what they’re abilities are. Inform them that they each have access

to a Smartphone that's tied into the SAVE database, a depository of all gathered information on the Unknown. However, to benefit from the information, they need to have some idea as to what they're facing. (They need to do some research and investigating before the SAVE database will be of true use.)

Places they may want to check out include:

The Forest Groves Gazette – The local paper. Has a lot of information on the Paul Bunyon Killings of 1973. If someone uses Journalism or Investigation, give them the clipping from Handout Two. The Gazette's chief editor is Lauri Newman. She remembers the killings from 40 years ago (she was 5 at the time), but not much more than the article would impart.

The Forest Grove Police Department – Doubles as the county jail. This is where Baxter will have his stopover. Most of the contact the PCs will have will be with Chief David Perry. Investigations or Police Skills may reveal the following:

- The two park rangers were cleanly beheaded. Unlike the original killings in which an axe was used, these murders were almost surgically clean.
- Not released for public knowledge, the foreheads of the two rangers had an unusual cut deliberately carved into it. Looks like a capital letter "L" perhaps?
- Scuttlebutt from the State Pen is that Baxter was...and is...bugnut insane. He never had any regard for human life, and he never showed the slightest emotion when arrested, convicted, or incarcerated.
- Baxter's being sent for psychiatric observation because he's claiming that he's being

stalked. And for a guy who never showed emotion, he's almost in a state of perpetual panic over his "phantom stalker."

Allow the PCs to do whatever else they want to, then it's time for their visit with Baxter.

SCENE 2: MEETING BAXTER

Baxter is being transferred to the state psychiatric hospital today. SAVE was able to pull some strings to have him held over for a few hours at the local county jail so the PCs have one chance to talk to him.

“You guys must have some impressive pull to arrange a meeting like this,” Chief Dave Perry says. “Not that’ll do much good. He don’t talk much from what I understand.”

PCs are to stay on one side of a thick pane of glass while Baxter is brought in by two guards through a rear door and strapped in a chair. No contact will be allowed with the insane mass murder.

As you come into your side of the interview room, you can see Baxter strapped to a chair on the other side of the glass. He looks to be about 70 years old, balding, thin, and frail. There are two guards standing toward the back of the room – the ones who brought him in apparently. One looks bored. The other glares at Baxter with unhidden contempt and disgust.

“I was told you were to have 30 minutes,” Chief Perry says. “Make ‘em count.” He leaves the room.

Baxter looks wildly about, wide-eyed. He may be crazy, but he’s obviously terrified – almost catatonic to speak to anyone. PCs may have to use Skills such as Interrogate or Convince to get him to talk. If PCs get him to start talking, he also responds to anyone who believes his story of “demons” or “stalkers”.

“They think I’m makin’ it up, but I’m not! Seven’s the one that killed them rangers! Told me it was gonna

happen, and it did. Told me I was next!”

If the PCs press on, they may be able to get Baxter to say:

“They thought there’s was only six. There was SEVEN! No one knew about Seven. She’s mad about that.”

“Seven appears in my cell, taunting me. Tells me I’m gonna die for what I done to her. Tells me everyone who done forgot will die. Tells me those that done failed her will die.”

“Seven wants me to remember something. Don’t know what though! I’d remember if I could, but I can’t!”

“I killed Seven in the fall, you know. I buried Seven there in the fall. Marked it with the big gold rock so’s I always knew where she was.” ((STRESS THIS SO THE PCS GET IT))

Baxter starts getting very agitated, struggling against his bindings, and guards move up behind him. Just then, Police Chief Perry races in.

“Oh my God, we just found another headless body – here in the station, hidden in a closet! Office Kyle Rutherford!” Chief Perry looks up into the other room and points at one of the guards. “Dear God, THAT’S KYLE RUTHERFORD.”

The false Kyle Rutherford – the one who was glaring at Baxter initially – grins upon being recognized. He lashes out at the other guard beside him with one hand....and the guard’s head is severed clean from his shoulders as his body crumples to the floor, blood spraying in gouts from the neck stump.

HAVE EVERYONE ROLL A FEAR CHECK (WILLPOWER CHECK AT LEVEL 6)

Audrey has killed the guard and taken on his form to take her revenge on Baxter. She has also caused the doors to the area to remain locked and shut. The PCs should be trying to get into the Interrogation Room to stop her from killing Baxter. Chief Perry is stunned by the carnage and will take a round to snap out of his shock. He knows the code for the keypad, but it will take a round before he can get to it. Give them one round of action, then...

“Remember me...” “Officer Rutherford” says as it moves to Baxter’s side. Baxter is shrieking at this point in fear and panic. Between wails, you hear him repeating SEVEN! SEVEN! SEVEN! “Rutherford” seems almost disappointed with his answer, then, using a sharpened fingernail, begins carving a 7 into Baxter’s forehead – the same symbol found on the rangers.

At this point, the door should be open and the players should be allowed to take action. Because Audrey is in physical form, she can take damage from any physical attack. Chief Perry may also draw his weapon and demand he surrender. Audrey may allow one or two attacks to land, but she continues her attack on Baxter. She then lashes out at Baxter, and the PCs may see her hand take on the look and properties of a shiny silver blade. It passes through his neck like a lazer and his scream is cut off in mid-shriek.

With Baxter now dead, the “officer” points to the PCs and the Chief. “Remember me....” it hisses.

Audrey uses telekinesis to throw the PCs and the Chief against the far wall.

(Have everyone roll versus DEX or take a wound of damage.) Audrey will be gone when they get to their feet.

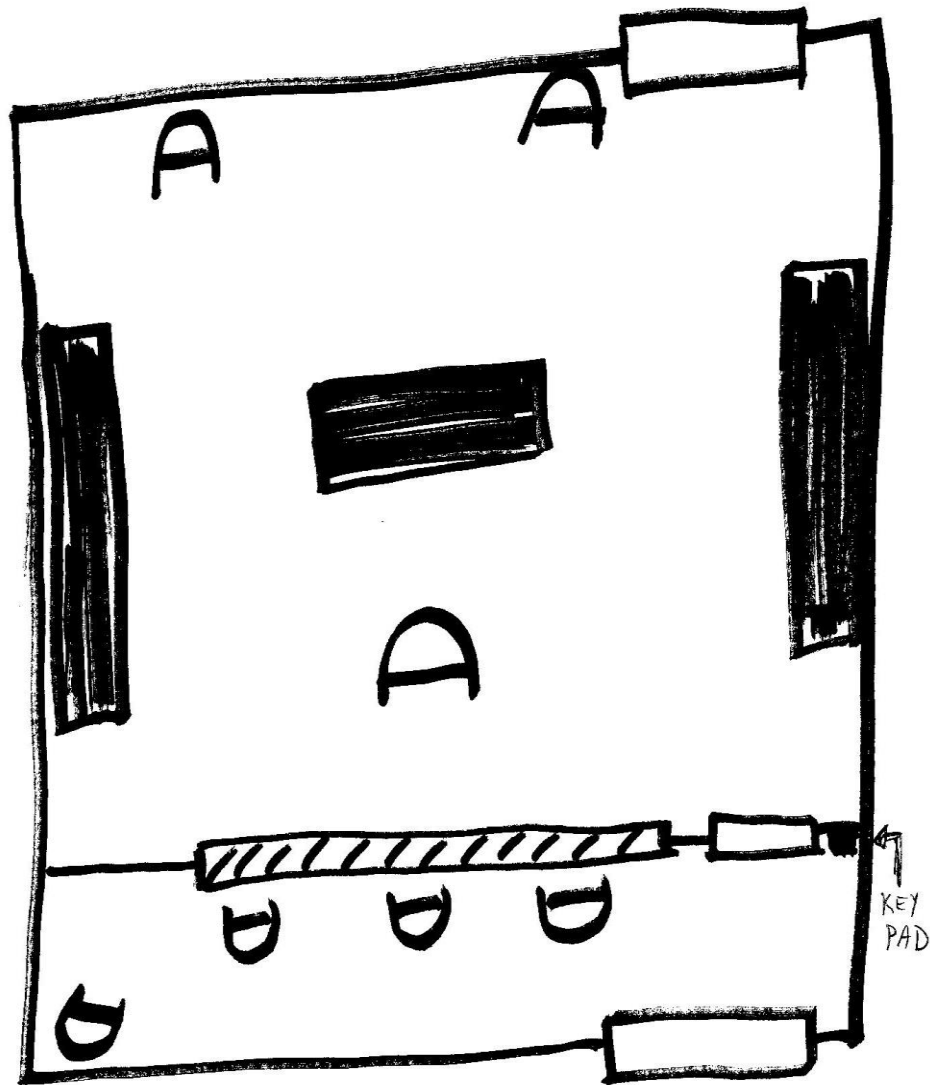
Chief Perry is stunned by the events. He steels himself up and turns to you all. “Two of my officers are dead as well as a prisoner under my watch. I want an explanation as to what that...thing...was, and I want it now.”

It is up to the PCs as to whether to inform Perry as to the existence of SAVE (he did, after all, just encounter the Unknown) or whether to try using some other explanation. Let them do whatever they want to try to either bring Perry into the fold or explain away what happened. Regardless of their actions...

Perry scowls with skepticism at what you say. “I don’t believe a word of it...” he growls, “...but I’ll be damned if I have any better ideas as to what happened here. But I do know that...thing...will kill again if it ain’t stopped. I’ll get some reinforcements called in handle what happened here. Don’t leave town because you’re all witnesses....or suspects. I ain’t too sure which right now. But somehow I think you’re better equipped to deal with that ...thing...than we are. So go, out the back door. I’ll be in touch.” Perry ushers you out the rear entrance. “And don’t come back to the station. Too many questions need answered and I don’t think we have the time to answer them.” He shuts the door, leaving you in the rear parking lot of the station. In the distance, you hear the wail of an approaching siren as the reinforcements approach.

The PCs should get the heck out of there before more cops show up looking for the murderer. Unknown to the PCs, Chief Perry will be assisted...and later approached...by SAVE for his experience with the Revenant.

POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM



D = CHAIR

[Solid black rectangle] = BENCH/
TABLE

[Hatched rectangle] = LARGE WINDOW

[Empty rectangle] = DOOR

SCENE 3: MORE INVESTIGATION AND AUDREY'S MOM

The PCs should now have a bit more to go on. They should know that they're dealing with the unknown seventh victim of Baxter's who's apparently back from Beyond and out for revenge. If anyone decides to use the SAVE database, "revenge," "demon," "ghost" or any combination will bring up the entry on REVENANTS.

(Give out Handout 3)

Once the PCs have determined what they're up against, they need to figure out who the seventh victim is. Investigation or Journalism (or any skill that's pertinent) will lead them to find out that there was an unsolved missing person case that occurred about the same time as the murders took place – that of college student Audrey Burke. Police investigations didn't turn up any evidence connecting her disappearance with the Paul Bunyon case, and she was written off as a runaway. Her mother, Cindy Burke, is 80 and living by herself in a small house on the outskirts of town. Her husband, Andy, passed away 15 years ago.

If the PCs decide to visit, Mrs. Burke regards them warily. She lights up if they ask about Audrey, especially if they begin to hint that they may reason to believe they know what happened to her.

She'll offer the following:

- She always assumed that that "evil devil" Baxter may have had something to do with her disappearance, but no trace of her was ever found at the original crime scene.
- Audrey was attending Oregon State University to become a veterinarian.
- Her dog, Muffit, was heartbroken when Audrey never returned, and pined away for her until the day it died.
- "I always keep her close to my heart" Mrs. Burke says as she touches the dog charm necklace she wears. "This was Audrey's. I gave it to her when she entered Veterinary school. The night she disappeared, I put it on and haven't taken it off since. I hoped to one day give it back to her."
- One of her favorite things to do was to go out to Tillamook and poke around University Falls, examining the flora that grows there. She always loved the falls.

There is a knock at the door. Mrs. Burke excuses herself to see who it is. Whether she or one of the PCs opens the door, there stands "Officer Kyle Rutherford" who seems just as surprised as the PCs.

This time, Audrey drops the manifest and appears as herself – a ghostly teen-aged girl who seems drenched and covered in mud and ichor. She reaches up for, and removes, her severed head, which hisses at the PCs.

((FEAR CHECK LEVEL 5, SINCE YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE))

She then hurls it at a random PC. (Roll as an attack.)

Let the attacks begin. The Revenant's hands are two sharp silver blades and the severed head tries to bite at the PCs.

Audrey tries to make a move toward her mother, hissing "Remember me...". The mother (who shrank back against the wall when the Revenant appears, asks questioningly "Audrey?" The ghost's expression softens and it seems confused. The mother reaches out, and the ghost reacts to the pendant as if it were a holy symbol. The ghost sighs, then screams as it disappears.

Mrs. Burke will be adamant that the PCs help her daughter find eternal peace. That means finding her final resting place so she can bring her daughter home for a proper burial.

"Here, take this." She hands you the charm necklace. "Maybe it will protect you and give her some peace as well."

The PCs need to find the final resting place of Audrey Burke and reunite her with her cherished necklace to prove to the spirit's satisfaction that it hadn't been abandoned or forgotten. But while still full of rage, it will attack the PCs as they approach her final resting place.

SCENE 4: AN EVENING STROLL THROUGH THE WOODS

The PCs should have enough data and information to know what the creature is and how to put it to rest. If not, allow them to do whatever additional research is needed to come to the correct and final solution to the situation. (You may have to spoon-feed them at this point.)

Following a map (or using GPS), they should be able to easily find one of the gates to the State Forest. The sun is starting to set, so the gates are shut. There is also a “CLOSED BY THE ORDER OF THE OREGON STATE POLICE” yellow tape stretched across gate as well. (The park ranger murders occurred in an isolated area of the park, so the PCs are not near the crime scene.

Getting into the forest, the PCs will need to park and take one of the trails into the woods. A sign points to the “Tillamook Memorial” location, so it should be an easy matter to find the site of the original murders. There is now a large granite block where the cabin once stood. A plaque which reads “In Memory of Those Who Lost Their Lives Here” is mounted to the stone. Any who get up close can see that the names have been scratched off as if by animal claws. (Audrey is enraged that these victims are remembered and memorialized.

A snarl and a growl comes from the darkness, and four large timberwolves come lumbering from the treeline. (*FEAR CHECK* at 4 – 2 attacks at 60%)

Wolf 1
Wolf 2
Wolf 3
Wolf 4

Audrey is controlling the wolves, having them attack any who dare to try to disturb her. The wolves will fight to the death or until driven off.

After that encounter, the PCs should follow the path for about 20 minutes until they reach University Falls. The site is not very well-known by most tourists, so the path is a bit overgrown. (Plus there’s a quiet unease about the location now that it’s been infested with the Unknown.) Until recently it was picturesque, but it’s become almost foreboding now that Audrey has returned from the grave.

When the PCs arrive, keep rolling behind the screen as if you’re waiting for something to happen. Give them a chance to find the “Gold rock” which is actually a 60-pound boulder glistening with gold pyrite at the base of the falls. (Mark it on the map) Let them roll it over. Hope they brought shovels or something to dig with.

The moment they stab the earth, there is a shriek that fills the small valley. Audrey appears nearby, seething with rage. She looks to her side, and shimmering into existence is a large Spectral Hound.

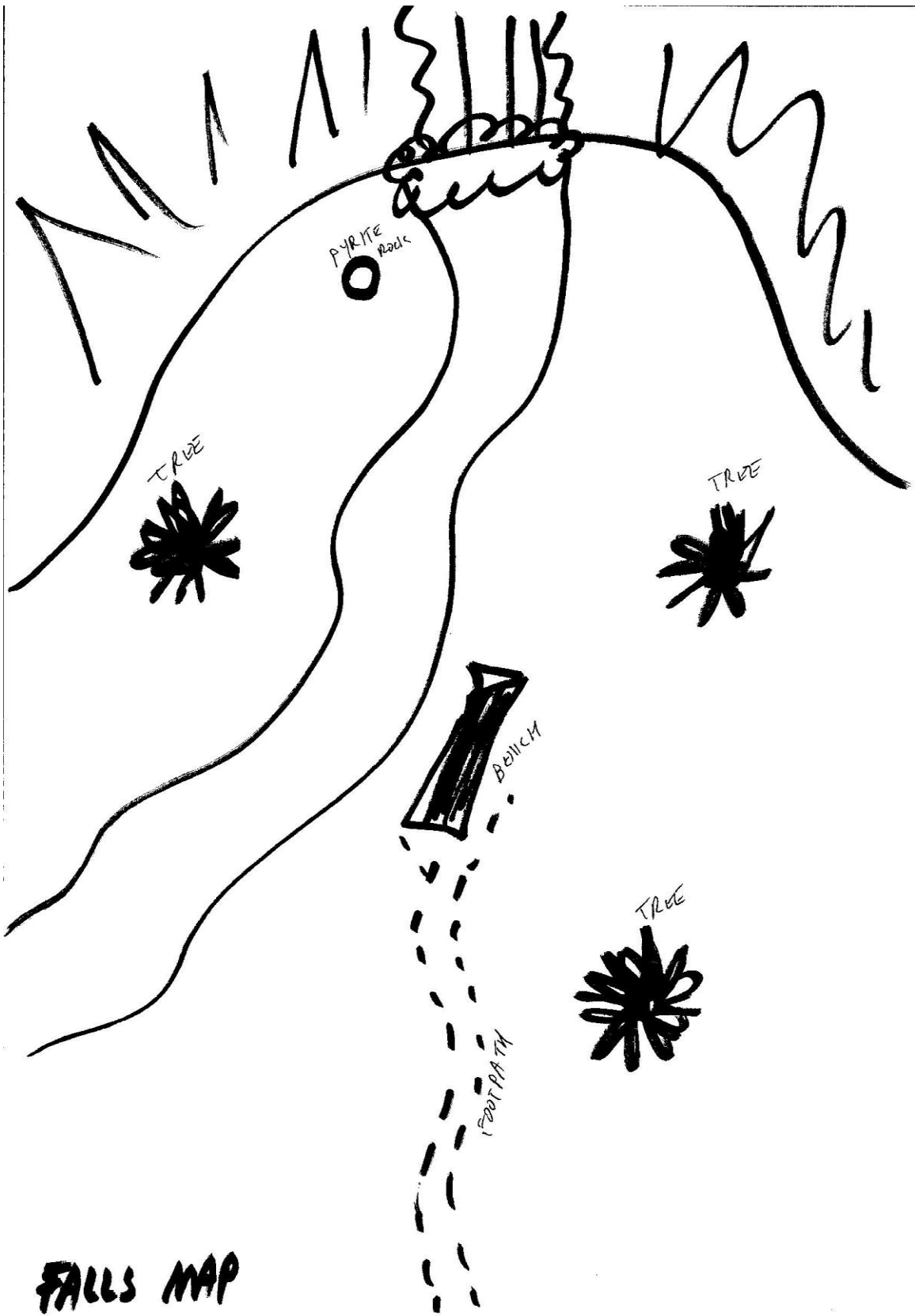
“MUFFIT, SIC ‘EM” she says as she points.

Both Muffit and Audrey will now fight to stop the PCs from digging up her body. Muffit attacks as a large ghostly dog. Audrey is in full bladed hands attack mode. It may be that

some PCs keep them busy while one or two others dig like mad. Audrey will cause the winds to whip up. Maybe a flock of crows darkens the moon. Rains start to crash all around.

Audrey's grave is actually fairly shallow, and a PC should be able to reach her body in about 6 rounds. When exposed, Audrey stops her attack. When someone places the necklace on her body, Audrey and Muffit both slowly change until they look like what they did in life. The taint of The Unknown has been purged from her spirit.

“Thank you for remembering me.” she says as she and her pet fade from view and from existence. Audrey Burke is now at rest and the corrupting stain of the Unknown has been purged from her soul.



SCENE 5

WRAP-UP

It's been a month since your adventure in Oregon and there has been no further word of Unknown activity in that area. Audrey Burke's body was recovered and laid to rest next to her father in Forest Grove Cemetery. Her mother made sure that the necklace was buried along with her daughter. Audrey's name was also added to the Tillamook Memorial plaque, which needed to be refurbished to fix the damage some local vandals apparently did to it.

The new killings of two park rangers, two police officers, and the original Paul Bunyon killer remains under investigation, but is still unsolved. It's theorized that a copycat killer surfaced who had hoped to become as infamous as Baxter, but no suspects have surfaced.

Fortunately for you, SAVE's secret contacts throughout the law enforcement and legal channels absolved all of you of any involvement in the new murders. And the person most instrumental in clearing your name? SAVE's newest envoy, Police Chief David Perry.

HANDOUT ONE

Dear SAVE Envoy:

Less than 48 hours ago, the bodies of two park rangers were discovered in the Tillamook State Forest 40 miles west of Portland. Each of the victims had been beheaded. These murders are identical to the infamous Paul Bunyon killings that occurred in that same forest 40 years ago. The original killer, Logan Baxter, was caught shortly after the original killings and has been behind ever since.

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We want you to travel to Forest Grove, Oregon, a small town on the edge of the Tillamook State Forest and investigate these murders. SAVE also discovered that Baxter is being transferred to a state psychiatric hospital for observation. While he's being transferred, SAVE has arranged a stopover for Baxter at the County Jail in Forest Grove where you have been authorized to interview him for 30 minutes. Hopefully you can get him to reveal what he knows about this crime.

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Gordon Pym
SAVE Director

Handout Two

Forest Grove Gazette
December 21, 1973

"Paul Bunyon Killer" Sentenced To Life Without Parole

Logan Baxter – no known previous address – was sentenced to life without parole in the Oregon State Penitentiary for his role in the Paul Bunyon Murders in April of this year. Baxter was found guilty of murdering six visitors to the Tillamook State Forest with a hand axe.

While police were investigating the disappearance of Stephanie Stevens, Roger and Rebecca Simmons, Paul Monroe, Jarrod Parker, and Will Barnes, they discovered Baxter living in a ramshackle structure deep in the state forest. The bodies of all six victims were found beheaded and buried in shallow graves around the small shack. When his motives were questioned, Baxter stated that he was simply "protecting his property," as he felt the state forest was his land. Baxter had been in trouble with police in the past for assault, theft, and vagrancy.

When asked by Judge John Myers if he had anything to say before being sentenced for the six killings, Baxter smiled as if he was in on some private joke and shook his head.

A memorial for the six victims was erected at the site of the murders in Tillamook State Forest as a tribute of remembrance.

Handout Three

SAVE DATABASE ENTRY

REVENANT

Unlike a typical ghost or phantom who haunts the living, The Revenant is an incorporeal creature bent on revenge for wrongs committed against it while it was a living human being. Upon death, the Unknown corrupts the soul and returns it to Earth to wreak havoc as a Revenant.

The Revenant's abilities are many. It can manifest itself in the form of a living being, and reports of telekinetic ability are also reported. The Revenant also has Evil Way disciplines that mirror its abilities in life. For example, a person gifted with a beautiful singing voice may have the ability to shriek with a banshee's wail as a Revenant.

To stop a Revenant's rampage, it is important to determine who the Revenant was when alive and what the Revenant wants other than revenge on the living. It may wish to be reunited with a cherished item it loved in life. It may wish to feel that its death was not in vain and that it's not forgotten in death.

It is said that a Revenant can be hurt if it's in a corporeal form, but that it cannot be destroyed or banished until its need for recognition and remembrance is met.