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### DEMONS IN CHILL

August 21, 2016 · by growlingdoorgames · in *chill* · [Leave a comment](#)



Screen cap from Deliver Us From Evil (2014, dir. Scott Derrickson)

One of the more frequent questions we get about **Chill** is: Where are the demons? Seeing as how the next book we're working on is a book of monsters, it's natural to think about putting demons in there. Doing so, though, opens up a whole mess of questions, and since I have a little time this fine Sunday morning, I figured I'd do a post and talk about them.

### What is a Demon?

There's the big question.

In the context of **Chill**, what is a demon? I did a little light research this morning, and what I discovered is that the word "demon" gets used in two very broad contexts. The first is "a malevolent supernatural creature." Doing a bit of reading on folklore and the boojums and beasties of legends, you see the word "demon" thrown

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around quite a bit, but at the guts of it, it doesn't mean anything different than "monster." A creature referred to as a "demon" in this context might very well show up in **Chill**, because "malevolent supernatural creatures" are kinda what we do, here.

The other use for the word is an "unclean spirit" or "fallen angel" kind of demon, and here's where we run into problems. Whenever you try to include creatures that resonate with a specific culture or religious system of belief in **Chill** (or any RPG, I'd argue) you need to be mindful of that culture or that system and what you're saying about it. I address this in the **Monsters** book a bit, actually:

*Work in Progress, please ignore typos. Also, in context, this is written "in character" from the perspective of Ruby Garrett. You can learn more about her in Chapter Six of **Chill Third Edition**.*

*One final point about monsters and their nature: The reader may notice that some of the monsters I mention here and throughout this report share a name with creatures of legend. The adlet I described earlier, for example, takes its name from Inuit legend. Black Annis is a common figure in English folklore. SAVE case files mention creatures dubbed "manitou" and "wendigo." It is important to remember that the creatures we fight are not the beings from these legends.*

*Some SAVE researchers state that creatures of the Unknown may have inspired the legends in question, and this is certainly possible. Whether or not that's true, however, is beside the point. One case file that I read described a creature that, while capable of appearing human, displayed the ability to change into the form of multiple different animals. The case file referred to the creature as a "skinwalker." In doing some research, I learned that the word "skinwalker" is used in Navajo legend to refer to a witch capable of changing in various animals, and that the legend has some cultural importance that the writing of the SAVE*



Patricio Gonzaga on  
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*report clearly did not understand. Further, the case took place in the eastern part of the United States, while the Navajo are a southwestern tribe. There was no reason for the envoy to have chosen this appellation for the creature, except that it loosely resembled a being described in legend. (As a point of interest, outside of that one report, I have not found the term “skinwalker” used in a SAVE document, though many, many other Native American and other cultural-specific labels for creatures of the Unknown are.)*

*Using these titles for monsters is both disrespectful and dangerous. From a practical standpoint, naming creatures after beings of legend carries an expectation that they will behave like those creatures. I had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Alise Suwamba some years back, and she told me about a mission in South Africa in which a group of envoys discovered a pack of diminutive, deformed creatures who attacked sleeping victims. Some of the survivors referred to these creatures as “tikoloshe,” the name of a similar creature from Zulu myth. The envoys, researching the tikoloshe, learned that legend stated that place a brick under one’s bed would protect a sleeper from the creatures. One of the envoys was found dead in his bed the following morning. His head had been bashed in with a brick.*

If we include “demons” in **Chill**, we need to be mindful of what we’re saying those demons really are. One of the example demons that has been suggested to us is Pazuzu. Most folks know Pazuzu from *The Exorcist* (or *Futurama*, I guess), where Pazuzu is portrayed as a demon possessing a little girl. Now, a quick Wiki search shows us that **Pazuzu** is an Assyrian or Babylonian spirit; evil, but capable of driving away other evil spirits. In either case, if we include that mythology (Christian or pre-Christian) in **Chill**, we have to think about what that means for the setting. Bluntly, I don’t want **Chill** to imply that one religion is “correct,” and if the demons of a given religion are real as that religion depicts them, that moves us

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dangerously close to confirming a particular's culture or religion's view of the supernatural. It's always been the intent in **Chill** (well, my read of it in previous editions, and certainly our intent for **Chill Third Edition**) that no human culture really gets the Unknown right – it's at once a lot simpler and a lot deeper than people suspect.

So, bottom line, will **Monsters** include demons? The book includes a lot of different creatures, include some that behave like mythological demons. However, I think that “evil beings that possess people” is better suited for inclusion in the book *after* **Monsters**, which deals with human beings as antagonists a little more directly.

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