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SEARCH FOR THE LOST CITY

Part one of a *Shadowrun* scenario

With the introduction of the cyberpunk genre to the RPG market, it's become possible to blend various gaming systems with very unusual results. This month Steve Longley merges *Shadowrun* with *Cthulhu*, throws in some rule amendments for good measure, and comes up with a combination that sends the players in search of the lost city...

'You can hear the shouting and cheering before you even enter the bar'

▲ Warning!

If you're a *Shadowrun* player it is in your best interests to stop reading NOW as your GM may well use this scenario in the future and the information detailed below will spoil it for you. If in doubt, ask your GM if you can read the following material.

The cults worshipping the Great Old Ones are gaining in popularity in the Awakened Age. These cultists are learning more and more of an age gone by, when alien beings walked the Earth before man. The alien beings knew nothing of good or evil and possessed strange powers.

The cultists want to bring back these beings from the undersea cities where they sleep, so that they may rule once more. They also desire some of the power the aliens have. These cultists gained knowledge of spells and are able to summon some of these beings to do their bidding.

One such group of cultists, who worship the Great Old One, Cthulhu, wish to awaken their god from his slumber in the city of R'lyeh. Research leads them to believe they've discovered where R'lyeh lies, but they need divers to confirm this.

So they've developed a plan. They sent creatures to visit John Stafford, a high executive with Oceanic Mining Industries (OMI). After a few visits from the alien creatures, the cultists contacted him and demanded that he send an undersea mining plaform to where they believe R'lyeh is situated.

If he refused they would send their creatures to kill him. Stafford was petrified at the thought. Their visits had left him terrified. He told them he would do as they asked as long as they stopped sending the creatures.

The Atlantis Foundation have heard that OMI are sending a mining rig to search for a Lost City. They think OMI have found Atlantis and are desperate to find out where it is and all OMI knows about it. They decide to hire a group of shadowrunners to do the job for them.

● PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

You've been touring the bars and nighclubs of the city for the past three nights now, in seach of work, but to no avail. Business seems to be slow.

You find yourself in the Fort Lewis district and decide to check out *The Big 'O'*, a haunt for many shadowrunners and their prospective employers. You can hear the shouting and cheering before you even enter the bar, and as you enter you can see what the excitement is all about.

On the small, brightly lit stage you see a striking semi-naked man dancing in an erotic manner. The crowd of women at the front of the stage cheer every time a piece of clothing is taken off. A large troll bouncer is nearby to make sure no-one tries to 'help him along'.

You head to the bar, collect your drinks and sit yourself down in one of the many booths. The regulars are too engrossed in the strippers' routines to notice any shadowrunners or corporate suits which tend to hang around at the rear of the bar.

After you finish your first drink a tall man approaches your table and offers to buy you all a drink. Not wishing to offend the man, you accept.

When he returns you give him a good looking over. He's quite tall with short dark hair and a well groomed beard. He wears a cheap white shirt, jeans, basket-

ball boots, a battered black raincoat and a black hat with a large brim, drooping in places.

'My name is Mr Johnson. I'm trying to recruit a group of shadowrunners who are interested in doing little fact-finding job for my employer. Are you interested?'

● THE JOB

Presuming they are, Mr Johnson leads them into the back where his employer has rented a small private room. The room is small and simply furnished with a table and a few chairs. There waiting is a well dressed business man typing on a desk-top computer. He looks up at the PCs and puts away his computer. He introduces himself as Wade Elliott.

'I am a member of the Atlantean Foundation and we're looking for a group of fellows to obtain some information for us. Of course, we wish to obtain this information without its owners knowing about it.

'Oceanic Mining Industries have moved one of their Atlantic undersea mining rigs in a hushed-up operation. From our sources we've heard they're searching for a lost city. We believe they've located Atlantis. We want to find out all you can about this search and what they already know.

'When you return with this information I will give each of you ¥35,000.' Wade Elliott doesn't feel the task will be particularly dangerous, thus his payment is low compared to some. He will tell the shadowrunners this if they grumble.

They can try to negotiate an increase, though. They must do an Opposed Negotiation test. Elliott's negotiation skill is 6. For every net success the PCs gain ¥2,500. If they get one net success then he'll agree to pay them an extra ¥15,000 if they find the mission is more dangerous than he thinks. Wade Elliott gives the PCs a telephone number and tells them to phone him when they have the information.

● INFORMATION

This section deals with all the information relevant to the scenario which can be gained via contacts or computer files. The target number for all contact tests is 4. Appropriate skills are Negotiation or the appropriate Etiquette skill. Most of the information gained from contacts is not free. A bribe of over ¥100 will decrease the target number by 1.

■ OMI

OMI is a medium-sized corporation who deal with undersea mining of minerals such as iron, aluminium, silver, gold and other rare metals. It primarily deals with the actual mining but it does have a few processing plants. Most of the ore is sold off to other corporations.

OMI have seven mining rigs situated on the bed of the Pacific Ocean, and it has nine rigs in the Atlantic. These rigs are moveable.

The company President is James P Nelson. The second in command is John Stafford.

Successes

1 'I heard a really weird thing about OMI. They moved one of their Pacific rigs when it was working flat out mining iron core. They must have found something real big to stop mining and move it somewhere else.'
2 'I also hear that it was Stafford, OMI's number two, who ordered the move of the rig. And that's not all, he's keeping it quiet from their president.'
3 'And there's more. I reckon Stafford isn't up to the job any more. He's been seeing a shrink lately. Stressed out, probably.'
   Contacts: Any Decker, Company man, Corporate Official, Mr Johnson.

☞ John Stafford

He's been number two at Oceanic Mining Industries for seven years now and he enjoys his job. That is, he *did*, until he started having visitations from alien beings which have damaged his sanity somewhat. He now blacks out when he gets too much stress.

Unfortunately even small amounts of stress are now too much for Stafford and several times in the past few weeks he has passed out under the pressure of work.

He has had five visitations from a variety of creatures, none of which have harmed him, just scared him. Then he received a visit from a MR Ward who said that the next visitation he had would kill him unless he did as he said.

He was ordered to move one of his rigs in the Pacific and look for a lost city. He has kept this quiet from the President of the company as he would be in deep trouble if he found out. Luckily for him JP Nelson is in Washington and will be for another month.

Successes

1 'Well, he's number two at OMI. I have a feeling that he's up to something. He's just moved a Pacific mining rig. I'm not sure why he's done it, but he's keeping old Nelson in the dark. While the cat's away the mice will play and all that.'

2 'I've heard rumours that he's searching for a lost city. I bet Nelson won't be pleased even if he does find it.'
3 'His visits to Dr West, a psychologist, might have something to do with his search for a lost city. If you ask me he's gone nuts.'
   Contacts: Any Decker type, any Corporate type, Company man, Mr Johnson.
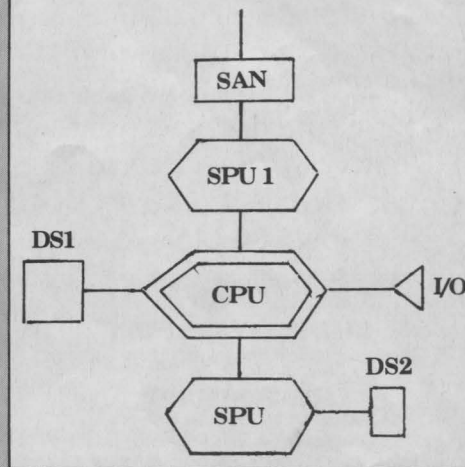
☞ Dr H West

Dr West is Stafford's psychologist. He's been seeing him for about two weeks. Dr West has been using hypnotherapy on Stafford to find out why he blacks out. He's also discovered that Stafford has a mild case of paranoia.

While under hypnosis, Stafford has told of his visitations and R'lyeh, the lost city. West thinks these are dreams as they sound too fantastic to be true. A lot of his accounts of the visitations are the mumblings of a mad man.

The PCs will not be able to get anything from him personally, professional confidentiality and all that, but West does keep notes on all his patients on computer file. The computer system is quite simple as it's only a databank and mailing system.

'Wade Elliott doesn't feel the task will be particularly dangerous, thus his payment is low'

DR WEST'S COMPUTER SYSTEM

SAN Listed number. Green-3. Access 4.
SPU Data routing only. Orange-2. Barrier 4.
CPU Orange -5. Trace and Dump 4. **Datastore 1** Contains patient files. Stafford's file is in here. Orange-4. **I/O 1** Terminal. Orange-4.
SPU Mails bills and patient appointments. Orange-4. Access 4. **Datastore 2.** Contains patient addresses and appointment dates and bills. Orange-5. Trace and Dump 4.
All datastores have Scramble 4.

If Stafford's file is accessed, this is what the PCs will find:

While under hypnosis, Stafford recollects what seem to be dreams. I think if I can establish the cause of the dreams I'll find the reasons for his blackouts and mild paranoia.

In his dreams he seems to be visited by some terrifying creature. I am unable to get a discription of this creature, because every time he encounters it in his dreams, he becomes overwhelmed with fear and cannot say anything.

Another part of his dream is a visit from a man called Ward. This man threatens Stafford with further visits by other creatures unless he finds the lost city of R'leyh. I think this man Ward represents a person in his life, perhaps his boss.

It's possible that Stafford is being blackmailed and his stress related blackouts and paranoia are brought on by this. Further study is needed.

■ R'LEYH

R'leyh is the city which holds the sleeping Cthulhu, one of the Great Old Ones. The city is located in the Pacific Ocean, a few hundred miles south-east of Easter Island.

It's here that the OMI mining rig has been sent. The crew of the rig will confirm there's a city at the location they were told to investigate. This will occur two days after the scenario starts.

Successes

1 'R'leyh. Ah yes, I remember now. It's a city lost to the sea. Some weird cultists believe in it's existence.
2 'I heard it's supposed to be located in the South Pacific. It's said to be the resting place of some ancient god or some thing.'
3 'Cthulhu is his name. The cultists who worship him say that when the stars are right, Cthulhu will wake from his sleep to walk on the Earth once more as ruler.'
4 'I think there's one of these secret cults right here in Seattle. I've heard they can summon up creatures that are so strange and horrible, if you see one you could go mad.'

Contacts: Any mage or shaman. If a PC has Magical Theory then they could look it up in a magicians' library.

■ SEATTLE CULT OF CTHULHU

It is only about 30 strong. The cult uses a magicians' society as a front for their activities, as human sacrifice is often frowned upon. The society is called 'The Hermatic Order of the Silver Moon' which is a select order who research magic. The cult worship Cthulhu and strive for his awakening so that he may walk the Earth once more.

Successes

1 'They're a bunch of weirdos who worship some strange god who looks like a giant lizard-like man but with wings and an octopus-like head.'
2 'I hear they do things like human sacrifice to summon monsters so horrible and terrifying that if you see it you could go mad.'
3 'They use The Hermatic Order of the Silver Moon as a front for their activities. It's a very select society who are supposed to research into magic. They have their office in the Redmond Barrens. I reckon they set up base there because there are so many down and outs which won't be missed if they use them for their rituals.'
4 'They have their base on the top of Novelty Hill Road. I heard that a decker broke into their computer and he went insane. Now he's in Crazy House. Their leader is a man called Ward.'

Contacts: Any mage or shaman. Additionally they can use Magical Theory to look it up in a magicians' library.

☛ Charles Ward

Charles D Ward is the leader of the cult. He's hopelessly insane. He's power mad. He wishes to bring Cthulhu back to the Earth. He believes he'll be given power when Cthulhu is woken from his slumber. So he strives to bring him from his sleep in R'leyh.

It was he who, after months of research, discovered the location of R'leyh. As he didn't have the means to check it out for himself, he decided to get someone to do it for him. He sent a few different creatures to visit John Stafford. The purpose was to scare him into doing his bidding. It worked.

It was Ward who designed the matrix of their computer (see later for a full description). His reasoning behind its development was if a decker was so afraid when he saw the monster ICE, he would be easier to defeat by the ICE.

Successes

1 'He's the leader of the Hermatic Order of The Silver Moon. It's supposed to be a real select group of mages who research spells and stuff. Their office is in the Redmond Barrens.'
2 'I've heard the Hermatic Order is only a cover for a cult who practice human sacrifice.'
3 'The cult worships someone called Cthulhu. Apparently they're trying to resurrect him from the dead or something.'
4 'I've heard on the grapevine that Ward has found the location of Cthulhu's resting place, the city of R'leyh. If he has you can bet he's gonna do some idiotic ritual to raise their so-called god. Personally I think they're all crazy.'

That's all for now. Next month, matrix data for OMI and the Cult of Cthulhu, a day-by-day guide to Ward's plans, sanity rules and more! Keep afloat for now!

'The cult worship Cthulhu and strive for his awakening'