



Introduction

This document outlines a few changes I made to *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign written by Charles and Janyce Engan and published by Chaosium in 1999. This material offers suggestions, variations, and additions to the campaign, and is designed to be used in conjunction with the published campaign book. These notes are intended for Keepers only! There are major spoilers ahead, so if you are planning to visit *Beyond the Mountains of Madness* as a player character, you should turn your plane around and immediately head back to lower altitudes.

Keeper's Note

This document is not meant to serve as a scenario text, and features two different presentation styles. For the most part, I address the Keeper directly, relating some of the changes I made to my own version of the campaign and offering a few ideas and tips. However, in some cases I include sections designed to replace, enhance, or supplement pages from the *Beyond the Mountains of Madness* campaign book. These sections are written in a more formal style. I have tried to patch over these awkward transitions with connective tissue, but there will be occasional shifts in verbiage, with the “playable sections” written in the present tense. I have organized these notes according to chapter, with some background material placed up front. Enjoy!

— TIPS FOR RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN —

So Many Non-Player Characters!

I can think of few other campaigns that have so many non-player characters to keep track of! Prior to the first session, I wrote the name and core statistics of each NPC on an individual, color-coded index card. In the upper-left corner of each card, I glued on a small picture of an actor I had assigned to that character. I found this helped players establish

more lasting impressions of the NPCs, and it gave me a handle on role-playing such a large cast of characters. For instance, James Starkweather was the Sean Connery of *The Man Who Would Be King*, Professor Moore was the David Thewlis of Harry Potter, Peter Sykes was a young Daniel Craig, and so on. When I was in doubt, or simply less invested in that character, I searched through online historical archives and selected appropriate random photographs. I revealed each card as its corresponding NPC was introduced. Stored in a recipe box, the cards were shuffled around during gameplay, and helped organize various groups and configurations of NPCs. Each card tracked changes in that character's HP and SAN, and collected handwritten notes about that his general status and condition. When an NPC died, we stamped his card with a red-ink skull purchased from a crafts store.

Investigator Attrition

Players should be allowed to select virtually any member of the Starkweather-Moore Expedition as a player character, or they can replace these NPCs with their own original characters. However, one of the problems inherent in running such a long and isolated campaign is player character death—what do you do if an investigator perishes once he has departed New York? There are many possible solutions to this issue. Additional characters may be drawn from the remaining Starkweather-Moore NPCs; recruited from Panama, Melbourne, or other polar expeditions; or they may result from chance encounters with a lost icebreaker, a secret team of Russian explorers, or a crazed isolato squatting in an abandoned meteorological station. These are all fine solutions, but after discussing the issue with my players before the campaign, we developed an idea that worked quite well as the campaign progressed.

Multiple Player Characters

Each of my players created an original “primary investigator,” most of whom replaced a similar NPC from the standard roster of expedition members. However, each player selected one of the remaining pre-generated NPCs as a secondary character. Not only did this give each player a familiar back-up if his primary investigator died, it took some of the pressure off me as the Keeper. Role-playing such a large cast of NPCs is difficult, but with a few secondary PCs scattered throughout the expedition, it diversified the game and added more creativity and flavor. It allowed players to become involved in a broader range of scenarios, especially if their secondary character was distinctly different from their primary investigator. For example, a person playing a rough-and-tumble pilot may also enjoy solving problems as an intellectual paleontologist, or the cautious photographer might welcome the opportunity to blow off steam as a Norwegian mountaineer.

— SCENARIO BACKGROUND —

While *Beyond the Mountains of Madness* is already an incredibly rich and detailed campaign, the following background ideas are offered as additional spices.

The Dyer-Lake Expedition

For the most part, the published campaign refers to Lovecraft's original expedition as the “Miskatonic University Antarctic Expedition of 1930.” I have changed that to the Dyer-Lake Expedition, abbreviated as DLE. Not only does it flow more trippingly off the tongue, it sounds more sinister, playing on the Dyer/dire homonym.

The Redacted Dyer Report

Believe it or not, only half my players had read Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* when we started this campaign in 2007. I used that to my advantage. I did not want Lovecraft's novella to be a "known quantity" for the player characters, so I had the full Dyer Report classified by the Hoover administration. I therefore introduced a "Redacted" Dyer Report, which the investigators were able to obtain through the Miskatonic University Library as described in the published campaign. Obviously, the bulk of this report recreates the text from Lovecraft's story, with all the Mythos elements redacted or removed. Once they obtained the redacted report, I made it "required reading" after the first gaming session. Behind the scenes, of course, Starkweather and Moore were in possession of the unedited report. Once things began to go south—er, sorry!—the situation deteriorated, and Moore was persuaded to reveal the complete report. When the characters realized they had been manipulated, tensions between the investigators and the expedition leaders increased considerably, leading to elevated levels of distrust and paranoia.

The Elder Things

Keeping in the spirit of the published text, the Elder Things of my campaign were, in a very real way, scientists—relentlessly curious and often afraid of losing control. As Lovecraft has Dyer exclaim, perhaps too hopefully, "They were men!" While Elder Things are certainly horrific, I portrayed them with a certain amount of beauty and grace—rippling with bioluminescence, they flowed through the air with an undulating, submarine motion, and spoke in a haunted, pentatonic fluting. I tried to emphasize their alien nature, and locate their shocking amorality in their inability to recognize human beings as equals. As one of my player characters explained to his horrified peers, "How do lab rats, roaches, or cattle view the world we've created?"

The Gedney Thing

As discussed in *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, the graduate student George Gedney is believed to have caused the failure of the Dyer-Lake Expedition by mysteriously "running amok." In my campaign, Gedney's father, a noted philanthropist and co-owner of the *Arkham Advertiser*, used his influence to keep reports of his son's more violent actions out of the press. The investigators privately interviewed the Gedney family, who revealed that their son suffered from epilepsy, but was "incapable" of committing such atrocious acts of sabotage and violence. "Clear his name!" his mother implored, pressing a photograph of young George into their hands.

On page 189 of *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, the investigators find the body of George Gedney. In my campaign, Gedney was never actually killed. Rather, he was *recreated* by the Elder Things to serve as a liaison with humans. As a result, the "Gedney Thing" is a hybrid of human and Elder Thing, with a little sled-dog and penguin thrown in. On the surface, the Gedney Thing appears human, but has oddly jointed limbs and strange bulges beneath his skin. When frightened, surprised, or aroused, the Gedney Thing suddenly opens up—or perhaps unfolds?—to reveal additional new limbs, alien organs, and quivering sensory appendages. The Gedney Thing first appears to the investigators during a blizzard early in the expedition, singing from the howling dark in an attempt to reconnect with human beings. It later materializes to rescue a trapped investigator, appearing as an awkwardly-built man who seems perfectly warm despite his lack of winter gear!

I used the Gedney Thing sparingly, attempting to maximize its horror and pathos. In the end, the investigators burned it alive after they saw it unfurl membranous wings and take to the air, ablaze in a chiaroscuro of bioluminescence and communicating to something in the outer dark with a mournful, hooting ululation.

Los Convocados

As a Keeper, I value role-playing, exploration, and mystery over combat. Nevertheless, the opening chapters of *Beyond the Mountains of Madness* contain a few longueurs, and I wanted some available “bad guys” to liven up certain passages. I therefore concocted a pulpy doomsday cult. Known in the Americas as *Los Convocados*, or “The Summoned,” these madmen have been responding subconsciously to a “Summons” heard in their dreams. Although they don’t know why, their goal is to stop any humans from reaching the Antarctic. The reason for this is simple—if the Construct fails, the apocalypse arrives, an outcome desired by certain nameless and sinister forces they refer to as *Los dioses desconocidos*, or “the Unknown Gods.” I deliberately kept the details vague, as *Los Convocados* were meant to play the role of inscrutable human adversaries. For instance, during the passage through the Panama Canal, I had a group of *Los Convocados* attack the S.S. *Gabrielle*. It added a lively bit of action to the scene, which played out against the magnificent backdrop of the Panamanian locks. Once the investigators reached the ice, *Los Convocados* faded into the background—well, at least until a certain investigator began hearing the Summons, of course.

— INTERVIEWING DYER-LAKE SURVIVORS —

On page 23 of *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, five survivors of the Dyer-Lake Expedition are listed. In my game, Wylie and Williamson have mysteriously vanished, and only Pabodie, McTighe, and Sherman are available for interviewing. However, my intrepid player characters also decided to research Paul Danforth and Zachary Watts, both of whom were institutionalized at Arkham Sanitarium. (An officer from the *Miskatonic*, Watts is my own creation—more on this below.) The following sections are meant to supplement the existing text:

Professor Frank Pabodie

Professor Pabodie is generally described on page 23 of *BMM*, but has a strangely distracted air, and occasionally glances into the void as his sentences trail away. This habit has earned him the nickname “Professor Spaceman” from certain uncharitable undergrads. He is missing the tips from his left pinkie and ring finger, the result of a frostbite injury sustained in 1930. Pabodie meets the investigators at Miskatonic University’s geology lab, where some of the stranger artifacts discovered by the Dyer-Lake Expedition are stored. One of these unusual artifacts is a green, soapstone-like carving of a five-pointed star. Pabodie refers to it as a “ventifact”—a stone shaped and polished by the wind. It seems to exert an almost magnetic attraction on the geologist, who nevertheless claims he doesn’t remember bringing it back from Antarctica.

The Ventifact

This pentacular stone is not an Elder Sign, but a wind-eroded carving of an Elder Thing’s

head, and once functioned as a Locator Stone (*BMM* page 141). Of course, there's no reason to inform smart-ass players about this, and anyone asking Pabodie if they can touch or hold the carving suffers a 0/1 SAN loss, and later experiences vertiginous nightmares about "dying at the bottom of the world." Despite this charge of residual energy, the stone has been depleted of useful power.

Arthur McTighe

Although he works as a radioman at Kingsport Head, Arthur McTighe is quite insane, and is nothing like the NPC described on page 23 of the published campaign. (McTighe's useful information has been "reassigned" to Sherman, as described below.) Although he has not resorted to violence or decided to seek out others like him, McTighe has been hearing the Summons, and has linked his increasing madness to a deeper understanding—or misunderstanding!—of his art.

If visited in Kingsport, McTighe proves to be obsessed with radio waves, and believes that he can hear "strange chatter" on nonexistent frequencies. McTighe contends that he uses "sub-radio waves" to speak with the dead, and has constructed a bizarre "anti-radio" that receives messages from various deceased members of the Dyer-Lake Expedition. McTighe is desperate to be understood—"All the radio waves we generate eventually collect at the bottom of the world, like spilled blood—you see? It's the photoelectric effect, all this light turning slowly into mass one photon at a time! You can't go down there, shipmates. You should leave the waves to gather, and pool, and deepen, that's the only way for *them* to come, for *them* to find us, like spiders crawling from a well, tracing the strands of the web back, back to *take us home...*"

No matter how willingly the investigators strain their hearing, McTighe's "anti-radio" produces only static; and any attempt to elaborate on who—or *what*—he means by "them" receives only more paranoid rambling, cheerfully invented by the Keeper as the need arises. If asked about other survivors of the Dyer-Lake Expedition, McTighe insists that Paul Danforth moved to Innsmouth, where he lives in the ruins of that blasted town, writing a more detailed account of what he saw "down there." Of course, this is untrue, and if the investigators decide to visit Innsmouth, they find only an abandoned ghost town.

Captain Alexander Sherman

A dashing aviator, Alec Sherman is now with the United States Army Air Corps, stationed at Langley Field and training new pilots on the Curtiss Falcon. Granted a small furlough, Sherman traveled to New York to share his experiences with Antarctic aviation. The captain spends most of his time drinking with Patrick Miles and Douglas Halperin. If interviewed by the investigators, buying Sherman a round unlocks the same informative dialogue assigned to McTighe on pages 23–24.

Paul Danforth

Biologist and amateur pilot Paul Danforth was confined to Arkham Sanitarium between May 1931 and October 1931. It is possible investigators may wish to visit the Sanitarium and inquire about its former tenant. Through university connections, a modest bribe, or a successful **Persuasion roll**, the investigators are shown Danforth's cell by Dr. Mayberry, one of the Sanitarium's directors. Bizarrely, Danforth's cell has been preserved for "further

study,” and remains unchanged since the night of his escape. In classic bughouse fashion, the cell is covered top-to-bottom with wild scribbles about “Black Ice,” “The Elder Pharaohs,” and “The Thing at the Bottom of the World.” A well-thumbed copy of Poe’s *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* is found on Danforth’s bookshelf, along with Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, William Hope Hodgson’s *The Ghost Pirates* and *The Night Land*, Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, and several supernatural thrillers by Sutter Cane. Mayberry mentions that Danforth attempted to burn down his room during his escape, which involved the non-fatal stabbing of an orderly. His current whereabouts are unknown.

Mr. Zachary Watts

As described on page 43 of *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, astute investigators may wish to research the sailors from the *Miskatonic* and the *Arkham*, the two ships that carried the Dyer-Lake Expedition to Antarctica in 1930. These rosters can be cobbled together by a few hours of research at the Miskatonic University Library through a successful **Library Use roll**. (They may also be obtained through Professor Moore later, onboard the S.S. *Gabrielle*.) The list reveals that Zachary Watts, the third mate of the *Miskatonic*, was committed to Arkham Sanitarium in 1931.

If visited, Mr. Watts proves to be quite insane, staring into the investigators’ eyes with a terrifying sense of prescience. He claims that he saw “nothing” on the ice, and that’s what the Starkweather-Moore Expedition will find, too: “Nothing, *nothing*, no-thing!” Like McTighe, Watts has been hearing the Summons, but has resisted its call to seek out others. He even avoided his fellow inmate Danforth—“Now *that* young man truly belonged here. Have you seen his cell? Why do you think the good doctors are preserving it?”

Watts has assembled a faux Tarot deck cobbled together from makeshift materials, creating a system of major arcana based on nautical and polar themes. He offers to read the fortune of each visitor—a dicey proposition, as there’s something unnerving about the mad sailor’s gaze.

Gameplay Notes

Visiting Watts offers an opportunity to have a little fun. Using a mismatched stack of cards made from different Tarot decks, playing cards, *Mythos* game cards, and even a Catholic funeral card, I bullshitted my way through Watt’s “readings.” I made sure he was able to correctly call out one uncomfortable fact about every investigator, as well as make vague predictions regarding potential nasty fates. I wrote these predictions down, and did my best as the game unfolded to work them into the campaign, using various SAN rolls, injuries, or unfortunate situations to my advantage. The reward came months later, when this or that player would squeal, “Aaaaaah! Just like Watts foretold!” In fact, some even played along, working their own SAN losses into Watt’s predictions.

— CHAPTER 1 NOTES —

The Starkweather Gala

There are many excellent ways of opening *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, with various combinations of player characters meeting each other and interacting with appropriate NPCs. I launched my game with “vignettes” based on each investigator’s history—the

expedition's quartermaster on a big game hunt with Starkweather, a biologist being recruited by Moore after a lecture about his controversial theories, a wealthy adventuress donating \$20,000 to the SME during a press conference, etc. While these jigsaw-sequences worked well to get the ball rolling, I felt some type of formal kick-off was needed to really bond the characters together—a black tie dinner, a photo-op at the American Museum of Natural History, a soirée at a financier's Long Island mansion, etc.

The Neptune Gala, September 4, 1933

In my game, one of the main funders of the Starkweather-Moore Expedition was an eccentric oil millionaire with connections to RKO Pictures. I therefore opted for a newsworthy gala, organized by Starkweather and his financiers over the head of the fame-averse Moore. All of the expedition members were invited to a special screening of the new blockbuster, *King Kong*. Fay Wray herself was the star of the gala, which was held aboard the *Neptune*, a pleasure yacht cruising the Hudson River. As background music, I played various contemporary artists such as Bing Crosby, the Boswell Sisters, and the Light Crust Doughboys. I also showed the players a few selected clips from Peter Jackson's *King Kong*, which depicts an ebullient New York City during that exact time period. This floating party gave the characters an opportunity to schmooze, gossip, and generally let off some steam before getting down to business. It was quite a spirited game session, fueled by a bottle of champagne “complements of Fay Wray,” and a tray of mixed drinks sporting homemade King Kong swizzle-sticks!

— CHAPTER 2 NOTES —

Death of a Sea Captain

In the published campaign, the death of Captain J.B. Douglas occurs during an off-screen accident, and the investigators arrive to search an empty apartment. In my campaign, Douglas was murdered in his room, stabbed to death by Anthony Sothcott. Hardly the “nice guy in a bad situation” portrayed in the campaign text, my Sothcott was a Nazi suffering from a mental breakdown, responding to the Summons and hiding his encroaching madness from his employers. He was not supposed to kill Captain Douglas, but you know these cultists—they just can't help themselves!

In the section labeled “A Private Assignment” on page 32, Professor Moore asks the most capable and appropriate investigators to check on Douglas in his hotel room—the sea captain has been acting unpredictably, and a rumor has reached Moore's ears that “Jim Beam” Douglas has been spending his signing bonus on “a sordid descent into vice.” Shifting the date from September 6 to September 5, the investigators arrive only a few hours after Sothcott has murdered Douglas and searched his room. The following section is meant to supplement the existing text on pages 37–43. Note that the rooms described below are a bit larger than those illustrated on page 40.

Room 23

The investigators arrive at Room 23 to find a cheap door labeled with tarnished brass numbers—or at least the “2,” as the long-missing “3” is only a ghostly impression in fading white paint. A **Spot Hidden roll** notices a puddle of liquid congealing beneath the door—it seems to be Ovaltine, but the drink is marbled with a darker substance that may be blood.

Opening the door reveals a terrible scene, erratically illuminated by a flickering lightbulb dangling from the ceiling. On the wall to the immediate left of the door, the body of J.B. Douglas hangs suspended by a coat hook. Douglas has been stabbed several times, and his blood covers the floor of the room. His right arm has been propped up by the floor lamp, its fingers curled into a strange, quasi-religious gesture using baling wire. Worse, a pair of lightbulbs have been screwed into the captain's eye sockets. Seeing the mutilated body costs 1/1D4 SAN. A successful **Medicine roll** or **First Aid roll** identifies defensive stab wounds on the captain's hands, and a second **Medicine roll** confirms the impression that the crime was committed only a few hours ago.

Investigating the Room

The room is in shambles, and may be quickly searched for details. An empty tumbler lies by the door, clearly the source of the spilled Ovaltine. A calico dress has been pinned to the wall near the captain by a large knife. The dress is bloodstained, but a **Spot Hidden roll** suggests it was used to wipe clean the blade. A pair of woman's stockings and a garter belt are draped over the bed frame. The contents of the room are otherwise as described in the campaign book.

Room 21

Douglas' room connects with the adjacent Room 21 through an door near the bed. Normally locked, a successful **Locksmith roll** reveals that the lock was inexpertly picked. Inside the neighboring room, a naked woman is found tied to the bed, her body painted with strange symbols—the same symbols that will later be found in Jude Pierce's lair onboard the *Gabrielle*. The woman is groggy and half-asleep, but is otherwise unharmed, and mutters unintelligibly in a mix of English and German. A can of black paint and a few small brushes are on the floor near the bed, along with a broken syringe and an empty bottle labelled "BAYER heroin. hydrochlor." A successful **Spot Hidden roll** made while searching the room finds a brand-new Miskatonic University Library card made out to "Anthony Sothcott." (Keepers: This offers a nice opportunity to use the [HPL Historical Society Miskatonic Library Card](#) prop!)

Crime Scene

How they deal with this situation is up to the investigators. They may dress the woman and smuggle her out, or they may call the police and turn everything over to the authorities. They may even slip out the window and abandon the hotel altogether! No matter what they do, the police will arrive shortly after they find the woman, as Dan Blair, the hotel clerk, cannot stay his curiosity forever. If the investigators get caught up with the authorities, they will be detained for questioning as described on pages 42–43, but it's clear they are not the killers, as Douglas was clearly stabbed several hours ago, and Blair will corroborate their story. The police take custody of the woman, after which she is unavailable for player questioning. If the name Anthony Sothcott is given to the police, it turns up no leads—it's an alias.

Gerdi Neumann

If the woman is removed from the room, she may be taken to a safe location for questioning. She sobers up after a few hours, terrified and thirsty, but willing to talk. She

speaks passable English, and identifies herself as Gerdi Neumann, a local “working girl” originally from Hamburg.

Gerdi’s Story

After meeting Gerdi at a local dive frequented by sailors, Captain Douglas engaged her services and brought her to his room at the Westbury. Gerdi had barely undressed when the door to Room 21 flew open and a pale German man stepped through. The intruder immediately knocked her aside, then stabbed Douglas twice in the stomach. Pulling Gerdi into the next room, he secured her to the bed and injected her with a drug—“Morphine, I think? But it was very powerful.” The German returned to Room 23 and completed his grim task. Gerdi could hear him stab the captain to death, after which he kept crying, “*Sie sehen im Dunkeln!*” (“You see in the dark!”)

Gerdi slipped into a narcotic haze, only to awake covered with strange symbols. Now stripped to his waist, the German sported a swastika tattoo on his upper arm, and was obviously a madman—he kept talking to *something* he stored in a small, blood-soaked box on the nightstand. The lunatic informed Gerdi that she was to be the “gate,” and gave her another injection. He forced her to repeat strange words that she can no longer remember, but made her head throb with pain. Suddenly a radio squawked to life, and the man began speaking to other Germans. Unfortunately, Gerdi couldn’t make out the conversation—“Between the headache and the morphine, I felt like I was in a terrible nightmare!” She does remember her captor talking about stealing a package from the hotel’s mailroom—“A book, or books, I think?”—but when his employers heard that he had killed Douglas, they responded with angry shouting. The German packed up the radio, grabbed his mysterious box, and fled the scene in a panic. The next thing Gerdi knew, the investigators had entered the room.

Aftermath

If the investigators follow up on Sothcott’s library card, a successful **Persuade roll**—or a modest “contribution to the overdue fund”—gets the librarian to turn over Sothcott’s request list: a nondescript book about the Shackleton expedition, a copy of the (redacted) Dyer Report, an Edgar Allan Poe compilation, and something called “Al-Azif,” which was greeted with a “request declined” note. If asked about this latter book, the librarian shakes her head, “It’s not even here right now. It’s on loan to Brichester University in England.” There are no other leads here. Aside for a variation on the newspaper article, the rest of the chapter unfolds as published—although Douglas’ gruesome stabbing adds more urgency to the investigation.

— CHAPTER 4 NOTES —

The Gabrielle’s Officers

One of the few inconsistencies in the published campaign emerges from the descriptions of the *Gabrielle’s* crew. According to these NPC profiles, the ship’s officers are a fairly inexperienced lot, and Vredenburgh has a long-time relationship with the *Gabrielle*. Considering he was only brought onboard a few days before sailing, this is highly unlikely. The inexperience of the officers is also unusual—it may be assumed the Starkweather-

Moore Expedition is paying good money to employ the *Gabrielle*, but Antarctic exploration is always risky, and the cost of insurance is high. While merchant officers and crews were certainly swapped between different ships, tramp steamers tended to keep the same people for extended periods. Indeed, some masters were actually owners or co-owners of their ships. Unless Vredenburg was master of the *Gabrielle* before J.B. Douglas was hired as a publicity stunt—an important piece of background information not stated in the text—this means that one of the most important NPCs in the campaign is a complete unknown! While there is nothing inherently sinister about this, it could be a good point for developing tensions, especially as the crew of the *Gabrielle* learn to adapt to their new captain and his inexperienced officers. In order to capitalize on this opportunity, I have invented a brief history for the *Gabrielle*.

The S.S. Gabrielle

The *Gabrielle* is owned by McIntosh & Sloan, which operates a line of tramp steamers out of Glasgow, Belfast, and New York. The most recent master of the *Gabrielle* was Captain Fitzwilliam Banks, who smoothly helmed the *Gabrielle* for the last seven years. After Banks retired in July, McIntosh & Sloan promoted his first mate to the master of a different ship. In preparation for the Starkweather-Moore Expedition, the *Gabrielle* spend a few weeks in port undergoing repairs, maintenance, and specialized refitting. With J.B. Douglas slated as master for the Starkweather-Moore Expedition, McIntosh & Sloan assigned one of their most experienced officers to serve as first mate, John Voss of the *Isle of Skye*.

Unfortunately, Mr. Voss injured himself in a car accident on July 18, and the significantly less-experienced Paul Turlow was handed the position a few days later. After Douglas was killed, McIntosh & Sloan asked Captain Henry Vredenburg to accept this risky assignment. Vredenburg requested additional money, which was simply passed on to Starkweather's financiers.

More on Vredenburg

A somewhat severe man, Vredenburg spent the Great War in the United States Navy, and was onboard the *U.S.S. Ticonderoga* when it was attacked by a German U-Boat on September 30, 1918. Of the 237 souls onboard, only 24 survived, including Vredenburg, who was taken captive onboard U-Boat 152. As a result of this ordeal, Vredenburg has a streak of military fatalism that may run against the grain of his more civilian-minded crew.

Note: A [revised and expanded description of the S.S. Gabrielle](#) is available as a separate resource.

Professor Pabodie Reporting for Duty!

This encounter occurs the morning of September 11, 1933, right before departure. The following section is meant to supplement the existing text on page 67:

As the expedition members and crew gather to board the *Gabrielle*, an unexpected visitor arrives at the pier—Professor Frank Pabodie. Appearing slightly dazed, the Professor is accompanied by his Antarctic gear and luggage. As an awkward silence descends over the docks, Professor Moore escorts his colleague to a more private location to explain the situation—“You know, Frank, you are not part of this expedition...right? You know it’s

1933, yes?” This leaves the professor’s gear setting unattended on the dock, just begging to be searched.

Pabodie’s Gear

The professor’s gear proves to be a surprisingly thorough inventory of cold-weather clothing, emergency supplies, scientific equipment, and relevant books. Granted, it’s a few years out-of-date and has seen some rough use; but the shell-shocked geologist could reasonably survive the Antarctic with this kit! A successful **Spot Hidden roll** uncovers something a touch less charming, and finds that Pabodie has stolen the five-pointed, star-shaped ventifact from Miskatonic University. This soapstone still radiates the disturbing sensation described earlier, and grants the same 0/1 SAN loss and disturbing visions to anyone who touches it.

Returning Pabodie

Moore eventually returns with his colleague, who appears to have come to his senses, and projects a more sober demeanor. Clearly embarrassed, the geologist accepts Moore’s offer to send him back to Arkham in an automobile, which arrives a half-hour later. If Pabodie has bonded with any particular character, the professor bequeaths his gear to that investigator—minus the ventifact, of course. This surplus of equipment grants 1D6 points to that character’s Polar Survival, while the good-faith gesture restores 1D4 SAN points.

The Ventifact

If the burned-out Locator Stone was removed from Pabodie’s belongings, he knows exactly who took it, and demands it back. Returning the item costs an immediate point of SAN; however, lying about stealing it and retaining possession costs 1D4 SAN, and opens the investigator up to whatever mischief the Keeper can dream up.

— CHAPTER 5 NOTES —

Henning the Saboteur

Henning has an accomplice: Jude Pierce, a former seaman from the *Miskatonic*, where he sailed under the unlucky name of Jonah Pearson. Pierce is not in the pay of Danforth. He is one of *Los Convocados*, and has attached himself to Henning out of opportunity. The following section is meant to supplement Chapter 5.

JUDE PIERCE, age 34, Able Sailor

STR 15, CON 15, DEX 12, SIZ 14, INT 11, POW 14, APP 15, EDU 9,
SAN 0, HP 15, Damage Bonus: 1D4.

Weapons: Fist 70%, 1D3+db; Club 65%, 1D4+db, Knife 60%, 1D6+db

Skills: Art (Drawing) 35%, Conceal 51%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Dodge 35%, Hide 45%,
Locksmith 58%, Pickpocket 65%, Sneak 65%, Throw 73%

Language: English 45%, Magic Speech 40%

Description

A lanky man with a slight stutter, Jude Pierce was born Jonah Judah Pearson in Kingsport, but recently changed his name to something more palatable—“Jonah” is not consider a particularly lucky name for a sailor! Pierce is shy and easily offended, and is not well-liked by the crew. Nevertheless, he has a surprising amount of wiry strength, and performs his duties with a meticulous attention to detail. Ever since returning from Antarctica onboard the *Arkham*, Pierce has been haunted by intense nightmares, and believes that the End of Days are nigh. He believes that he’ll be granted magical powers, and has invented an imaginary language he uses to cast “spells.” In his mind, Pierce reckons himself The Harbinger, a phrase he learned from reading too much pulp fiction. He simply utters a few nonsensical words, and Jude Pierce becomes “Judas Priest,” the Harbinger of the End of Days, Chosen to Accept the Invisible Blessing of the Unknown God, Bullet-Proof and Omnipotent, Warrior-King of Mars, etc. An incurable kleptomaniac, Pierce begins stealing from the crew before they even leave port, and the Keeper may casually note that certain minor items go missing over the course of the voyage to Melbourne.

Role

Jude Pierce does not take a direct part in Henning’s attempts at sabotage. Pierce sees his job as running interference for Henning and protecting him from discovery. As the investigators close around Henning, Pierce becomes more brazen, and attempts to frame, incapacitate, or even kill meddling characters.

Framing the Starkweather-Moore Expedition

Once word gets out that there’s a saboteur on board, Henning asks Pierce to frame a member of the Starkweather-Moore Expedition. He avoids popular expedition members, and focuses on characters whom have remained aloof from the crew. After Pierce has selected a patsy, he slips into his cabin and hides an empty bottle of sulfuric acid. He’ll also steal some personal effect belonging to that character. (A kind Keeper may permit the targeted character to make a halved **Spot Hidden roll** to find the bottle, or to realize a possession is missing.) Pierce then sabotages something obvious somewhere on the ship—nothing too drastic, and something that will be quickly discovered. He places the stolen belonging at the scene of the crime, and returns to his duties to await the fireworks.

If the investigators get too close to unmasking the real culprits, Pierce arranges for a series of unfortunate events—a luckless investigator may be pushed into a hold, tossed overboard, or simply stabbed in the dark with a galley knife!

The First Church of Judas Priest

Pierce is smart enough to realize that he cannot practice his strange religion in public. He has broken into one of the empty canisters located down in the #5 hold. There, he has crafted a small lair he refers to as his “church.” Inside this canister are several rugs, a pilfered flashlight, a red signal lantern, a few jugs of water, a bucket used as a chamber pot, and the remnants of a few meals. The ceiling is hung with little trinkets, many of which have been stolen from the *Gabrielle’s* crew. A battered cage fastened to the canister floor holds a pair of ragged-looking rats. Next to the cage is a cracked bowl containing a dead rat, its body apparently turned inside-out. A bizarre sigil has been painted on the bowl, and the

deformed carcass has begun to decompose, lending a foul odor to the “church” and attracting a small congregation of cockroaches.

The Harbinger’s Artwork

The walls of Pierce’s hideaway are papered with illustrations torn from pulp magazines, photographs stolen from the crew, and sketches Pierce creates when he slips into a kind of trance—all strange vistas, reminiscent of Roerich, but rendered by an amateur using paper and pencil. The themes seem to revolve around destruction, commonly depicting impossibly tall mountains collapsing in a tumult of fire and brimstone. Other drawings are more malevolent, and show human beings being ripped apart by weird, nebulous creatures rendered in thick pencil, always enigmatic and partially obscured. Occasionally, symbols are worked into his art—jagged glyphs of “Magic Speech.”

If Pierce’s lair is discovered, a successful **Spot Hidden roll** reveals a few drawings that are particularly jarring: crude images of a selected investigator, always surrounded by a storm of penciled darkness that threatens to tear through the paper. (The Keeper is invited to link this to any of Watts’ “prophecies.”) An **Idea roll** detects similarities between Pierce’s “Magic Speech” and the diagrams Sothcott painted on Gerdi back at the Westbury Hotel.

Unmasking Pierce

As Henning and Pierce ramp up their threats, the investigators naturally begin to search for the saboteurs as described on pages 89–90 of the campaign text. One logical question might be, “Are any of the *Gabrielle* sailors veterans of the 1930 expedition?” Of course, this question may have been posed before the *Gabrielle* departed New York; but if the investigators do not have access to the *Arkham* and *Miskatonic* rosters, Moore may provide them. Comparing this list to the *Gabrielle*’s crew shows no names in common; however, one “Pearson” is listed as “Whereabouts Unknown.” Could that be Jude Pierce? If the officers are questioned, they offer an additional clue—a list of all crew members added to the roster over the last year. This list shows what vessel each man worked on previous to the *Gabrielle*, and Jude Pierce listed the *Arkham*! Of course, that doesn’t mean he was present in 1930; he may have been a more recent addition to the *Arkham* crew. Could Jonah Pearson and Jude Pierce be the same man?

Confronting Pierce

If Pierce is confronted directly, he vehemently denies being “Pearson,” and claims he joined the *Arkham* crew in 1932. However, a successful **Psychology roll** detects that his stutter grows worse. If Pierce’s cabin is searched, it reveals only a few grimy pulp magazines—*Argosy*, *Amazing Stories*, *Weird Tales*, and *Oriental Stories* figure prominently, many with certain pages removed and artwork neatly clipped out. If Pierce is followed after his shift, he may be easily tracked to his secret abode in the #5 hold. Once braced in his lair, Pierce flies into a rage, chanting in his imaginary language and declaring himself “Judas Priest the Harbinger!” Despite casting “spells” at the investigators, Pierce is harmless, and collapses into tears the second he is physically attacked or restrained. Once his “magic” wears off, Pierce confesses the whole story—well, almost the whole story. Whether or not Pierce gives up Henning depends on other factors.

Sing Like a Canary, or Practice Omerta?

There are many confessional scenarios depending on which saboteur is apprehended first. Whether or not Pierce gives up Henning, Henning gives up Pierce, or they remain silent about their relationship is entirely up to the Keeper. Perhaps Pierce is caught quickly, allowing Henning to continue his diabolical work? Or Henning is caught first, and (falsely) claims that he was being “mentally-controlled” by Pierce? Or perhaps the Keeper would rather wrap things up, and whichever perpetrator is initially discovered concludes the episode? The only correct scenario is the most dramatic and enjoyable one to role-play.

Dealing with Pierce

Unless Pierce is killed, he may be dealt with in the same manner as Henning, described on page 91 under “A Few Loose Ends.” Of course, Pierce is actually crazy, and may remain a more entertaining wild card. Once he realizes he has failed, his dreams become worse, and may be remanded to Melbourne authorities as a raving lunatic.

— CHAPTER 6 NOTES —

Hard Seas

The following ideas may be included in the material found on pages 101–106.

Death In #2 Hold

Without a doubt, an NPC should meet a grisly death here, crushed by the wayward engine. Make it horrific and slow—his legs mashed to a pulp, his death certain and inevitable. His last words are a curse upon Starkweather and the mission! Of course, a random crew member may be selected, or the Keeper may kill off someone the players have become quite fond of—or perhaps even an officer?

The Relic: The S.S. Wallaroo

The Chapter 6 sequence, “The Relic,” is one of my favorite parts of *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*. As much as I love this encounter, I wanted it to be even more creepy and disturbing. So I revised it, borrowing the animiculi from later in the campaign and foreshadowing a possible future for the *Gabrielle*. Because this revised section is quite substantial, I have designed it as a [separate encounter](#).

— ENDGAME FRAGMENTS —

Endgame

There are many ways that *Beyond the Mountains of Madness* may conclude, and some possible scenarios are offered on page 285 of the published text: “This story has no true ending. Only echoes.” In my own campaign, the player characters fought bitterly over the fate of the Construct. Some believed they had a duty to inform the world, while others wanted to establish a secret society dedicated to maintaining the Construct. Two characters were convinced that the *Gabrielle* should be scuttled, with all trace of the expedition—and the Seeds of the Unknown God—sunk beneath the freezing waves. In the end, the characters turned on themselves, and the final session was an orgy of violence and betrayal. The *Gabrielle* was sunk, and most of its surviving crew was murdered or drowned.

Survivors

Only two investigators reached home again—Dr. Floyd Abernathy, the veterinarian in charge of the sled-dogs, and Simon Cole, the expedition photographer. Each was reduced to single-digit SAN. We then played through a coda, unspooling the next few years over the course of a half-hour. Dr. Abernathy returned to his wife and children in Maine and attempted to forget what he had seen. Simon Cole abandoned photography and became a writer of weird tales, coding his experiences into an increasingly bizarre series of pulp novels. When a new expedition to the Antarctic was announced after World War II, both survivors were forced to make one last SAN check.

Dr. Abernathy lost all of his remaining SAN. Loading his shotgun, he killed his dogs, his wife, and his two children—all to spare them the coming aeon of terror. He then placed the shotgun in his mouth and took his own life. Simon Cole, now reduced to a single point of SAN, continued writing his weird tales, taking a perverse delight in a world that began to increasingly resemble his bleak science fiction. The game ended with the world's radios suddenly producing only static. As the skies began to darken, Simon Cole looked to the heavens and started to laugh.

Fragments and Ideas

In a campaign this long and complex, a point is reached when the Keeper shifts from storytelling and world-building to creatively managing that world, responding to player actions, and shepherding the story to its dramatic conclusion. The following material represents undeveloped fragments and notes I made before the final few sessions. They are just sketches, but helped me frame possible endgame scenarios. Although I abandoned most of these ideas, maybe one will spark an idea in someone else's campaign.

1. *The Big Timeslip*

As part of the breaking of the Construct, a timeslip occurs across Antarctica, and the timeline leaps a few weeks into the future. This makes the weather more violent, and the crew of the *Gabrielle* more tense. Do they even remain behind?

2. *The Third German*

Dr. Uhr travels along with the expedition to the City. Uhr finds a Seed. It affects him, interacting with his dreams. It wants him to take it back to the BFE camp. Uhr steals the *Wedell* along with Baumann and Rucker. The other two men begin to suspect him. They land the *Wedell* at the fuel depot and refuel. However, Uhr steals the plane from them and flies toward the BFE, but he crashes just outside the camp. This is how the animiculum is first brought to the BFE. Due to Baumann and Rucker's distress call, Uhr is immediately apprehended. The Seeds in his possession are taken into the camp. The *Graf Zeppelin* is dispatched for Baumann & Rucker.

3. *The Destruction of the BFE Camp*

This occurs rather quickly as described in the text. The surviving humans radio the *Graf Zeppelin* and inform them of worsening storms and poor reception. They destroy the radio equipment and all forms of transportation. The animiculum is eventually caught in the metal safe and welded shut. The remaining two Germans, Falken and Barsmeier, agree to a suicide pact and kill themselves.

Keeper Challenge: How to prevent interference by the *Graf Zeppelin* or have it serve as *deus ex machina*? Continual bad weather forces its retreat? Early onset winter? Blow up the airship over the ice, producing a rain of flaming canvas?

4. *The Long Trek*

After the survivors are rescued from the City, a mishap of some kind occurs to destroy the remaining planes. The only solution is to travel across part of Antarctica using dogsleds, following the BFE fuel depot stations. Because the BFE camp is built for wintering, the long winter may be spent there, until the *Gabrielle* can get through the pack ice. This necessitates a terrible journey as winter approaches. Possibilities include timeslips, being hunted by Elder Things, possession of animiculi, starvation, murder, cannibalism.

Keeper Challenge: Why would the Starkweather-Moore people go all the way to the BFE camp? Why not head straight to the *Gabrielle*? Timeslip? Spatial distortion? Distress signal? Vision?

5. *Reaching the BFE Camp*

Of course, the party finds it to be a ghost town, with frozen animiculi. They are forced to winter in this cruel and haunted environment. Possibilities include Pym-related activities, animiculi attacks, discovery by Elder Things, shoggoths, always shoggoths.

6. *Rescue!*

The *Gabrielle* picks them up for homeward journey. Terrible weather forces mishaps, frozen again in pack ice, terrible storms. Animiculi are loosed, Chapter 16 scenario plays out.

7. *Conclusion?*

Party must either scuttle the ship, freeze everyone in a mass suicide, or risk bringing Seeds back to civilization. Knowing this group, they'll fight bitterly and probably kill each other. How can I promote this outcome?

Sources and Notes

This expansion is for [Beyond the Mountains of Madness](#), an epic campaign written by Charles and Janyce Engan and published by Chaosium in 1999. Thank you, Chaosium, for publishing the finest role-playing campaigns available! The banner image is based on a painting by Nicolas Roerich, one the inspirations for Lovecraft's original novella.

If the reader has noted any similarities in this material to certain scenes from *Blue Velvet*, they may treat themselves to a damn fine cup of coffee, and watch one of the many [delightful versions](#) of Lynch's *Dune*. "Es gibt viele Maschinen auf Ix...neue Maschinen..."

My Players

A final thank you to the players who animated my own campaign with their wonderful characters. "Bert Schenkel" replaced David Packer as chief of security, "Floyd Abernathy" replaced Gregor Pulasky as sled dog chief and veterinarian, "Dr. Theodore Unger" replaced Richard Greene as expedition physician, and the archeologist "Irene Wellins" replaced the botanist Charlene Whitston. We had three additional characters: a photographer named Simon Cole, a female pilot named Liz MacReady, and a playboy millionaire named Clyde Stennis, who insisted on his inclusion as a condition of his substantial donation. Tim, Rob, Michael, Tammy, Kevin, Samantha, and Dan—you guys were terrific! That's for going so creatively insane and dying so memorably!

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