

# Proof of Life

## Trail of Cthulhu Conversion notes

“Proof of Life” is a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario written by Keith “Doc” Herber and published in *New Tales of Miskatonic Valley* by Miskatonic River Press in 2008. *New Tales of Miskatonic Valley*, which marks the return of Keith Herber to writing and editing for *Call of Cthulhu*, is a new collection of scenarios taking place in the Lovecraft Country of the Miskatonic River Valley in the 1920’s.

This scenario takes place in Foxfield, a town in the Miskatonic River Valley. It was created by Lovecraft as a potential location for a story, but such a story never materialized.

This scenario can be set in another rural community. There are several particulars of geography, resources, and social structure (and tensions) that will need to be taken into account by a Keeper who chooses to change the setting. The scenario can be set in the 1930’s easily.

The scenario provides a number of events that will propel the plot forward. Many Investigators will spend time gathering clues and then advance to the climax once Shirley Sutler is killed (and if they delay, the Ike Copley-Thing is utilized by the Mi-Go). Investigators who are brash or lucky may find their way into the Mi-Go base earlier than that if they break into Supervisor Barnes’ home or catch him on one of his semi-regular night-time forays.

### Supervisor Henry Barnes

(Page 65)

Athletics 9, Health 8, Scuffling 7, Stability 9

**Hit Threshold:** 4

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

### Ike Copley

(Page 66)

Athletics 5, Health 7, Scuffling 6

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

## Places & People

### Louise Madsen

(Page 66-67)

- Louise is friendly and is a good source of information for Investigators with **Oral History**.
- The sight of Rodney’s misshapen head and face causes a 1-point Stability test.

### Louise Madsen

Health 6

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

### Rodney Greene

(Page 68)

Health 5

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

### The Mailman

(Page 68)

- Sydney is fairly talkative. It requires an **Oral History 1-point spend** to get him to talk about his opinions on the timber lease.

### Sydney Etzler

Health 6

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

### Shirley Sutler

(Page 69)

Health 8, Firearms 4

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** +0 (20-gauge shotgun)

### Richard Slate

(Page 69)

Health 7

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

### Dora Slate

(Page 69)

First Aid 5, Health 5

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fist)

## The Rodney Greene Home

(Page 69)

- Ida likes a little gossip, so she is easy to talk to. She is quite open with her opinion on the timber lease. It requires an **Oral History 1-point spend** to get her to discuss what she knows about Supervisor Barnes.

## The Old Pickering House

(Page 69)

- A diligent search of the records, **Accounting**, and at least 16 man-hours show that over the last few years town expenses have exceeded the budget by almost \$2000, and there is no clear indication of where the extra money came from. A **1-point spend** finds the same information in half the time.

## Offices of the Foxfield Courier

(Page 70)

- **Pickering Mill and Family: A Library Use 1-point spend** is needed to find this information.
- **The Congregates: Library Use** finds several references to the Congregates of the northern farms, but nothing damning or even suspicious.
- **Strange Occurrences: Anyone with Library Use** who looks for articles on strange occurrences in the area finds these.
- **Follow-ups: Dora Slate** opens up more and tells the Investigators that there was surprisingly little brain matter at the scene, if a **Reassurance 2-point spend** is made.

## The Foxfield Unitarian Church

Henry Barnes

(Page 71)

- **The Timber Lease: History** or **Outdoorsman** allows recognition of John Muir's quote.
- **His Family: In person, Bureaucracy 1-point spend** or **Reassurance 2-point spend** gains the information that neither child is enrolled in Brookdale, or has ever been.

## Church Records

(Page 72)

- **Church Accounts: Locksmith 1-point spend** opens the cabinet without damaging it. Spending six man-hours going through the records with **Accounting** reveals that there seems to be almost \$2000 gone unaccounted for over the last few years. If the Investigator

has already discovered the excess money in the town accounts (or does so later), he or she surmises that Barnes has been siphoning church funds to the town.

## The Schoolhouse

Betty Ward

(Page 73)

Athletics 4, Health 6

**Hit Threshold: 3**

**Alertness Modifier: +1**

**Stealth Modifier: +1**

Bobby Kirkland

(Page 73)

Athletics 5, Health 7

**Hit Threshold: 3**

**Stealth Modifier: +1**

Aida Simpson

(Page 72)

Health 6

**Hit Threshold: 3**

## The Southern Farmers

(Page 73)

Typical Southern Farmer

Athletics 2, First Aid 4, Health 7, Scuffling 6

**Hit Threshold: 3**

Typical Southern Farm Wife

Athletics 2, First Aid 4, Health 6

**Hit Threshold: 3**

## Barnes' Residence

(Page 73)

- **Locksmith** allows an Investigator to break into the house.

## A Mysterious Object

(Page 74)

- A **simple search** of the desk finds, in the lowest drawer on the right, an oddly shaped object made of stone.
- **Geology 1-point spend** establishes that this stone is of non-terrestrial origin, possibly carved from a piece of meteor.

## The Upstairs Bedroom

(Page 74)

- The door is locked and **Locksmith 1-point spend** opens it, or it can be shouldered in with an **Athletics test against difficulty 6**.

- The cabinet's twin doors are closed and crudely fitted with a metal hasp and padlock. It requires a **Locksmith 2-point spend** to open this high quality lock. Otherwise, it will take a crowbar to pry open the doors, or a screwdriver to remove the hasp.

### Robert's Canister

(Page 75)

- Hearing Robert is a 2-point Stability test.

### Mary's Canister

(Page 75)

- Hearing Mary is a 3-point Stability test.

## Scuttlers—A Keeper's Toy

(Page 75)

Their Jump and Grab attack is very effective. If an Investigator is unaware of the Scuttler, he or she can make a **Sense Trouble test** (the difficulty is normally 7, but the Keeper can modify this depending on circumstances, such as terrain). If successful, the Investigator dodges out of the way of the first leap. The Investigators can attempt to dispatch it before it jumps again the following round (this can be done by stomping, among other methods; see below).

If a Scuttler succeeds in its attack, it holds on to deliver another bite the next round. Investigators making an **Athletics test against difficulty 4** can pull the bugger loose and throw it down. Nearby Investigators can also make the attempt. Once on the ground, a scampering Scuttler can be stomped with a successful **Athletics** or **Scuffling test against difficulty 5**, which automatically kills the thing. Up to two additional Investigators, if nearby, can also attempt a stomp with the same tests and difficulty.

The poison is non-fatal, but inflicts an automatic 1 point of damage. The effects of the toxin show up within ten minutes.

### Scuttler

Athletics 5, Fleeing 10, Health 1, Jump and Grab 30

**Hit Threshold:** 5 (tiny and quick)

**Stealth Modifier:** +3

**Weapon:** -4 (bite), plus 1 point of venom damage.

**Stability Loss:** +1

## Mill Town

### The Mill Town Squatters

(Page 75-76)

- Rose will not mention that she has seen Barnes acting strangely unless pressed or tricked with an **Oral History** or **Flattery 1-point spend**.

### Peter Chylinski

Athletics 10, Health 6, First Aid 3, Locksmith 2, Outdoorsman 4, Scuffling 7

**Hit Threshold:** 4

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Weapon:** -2 (punch)

### The Ruined Mill

(Page 76)

- The dam can be used to cross the river, but the water running over the dam's slippery top requires an Investigator to make an **Athletics test against difficulty 4**, or take a tumble. If an Investigator slips, the player should roll a die: on a 1-3 the Investigator falls into the mill pond, and suffers no more than a thorough soaking. On a 4-6, it is a six-foot drop to the rocky riverbed. The fall does 2 points of damage.
- If Peter Chylinski is with the Investigators, he can show them his "secret entrance" near the north door. A hole in the wall allows any Investigator of about 160 pounds or smaller to wriggle through the opening.

### Ground Floor

(Page 76)

Throughout this section, the Keeper will need to estimate how much weight is on the weak spots. The Keeper should take into account the descriptions of characters that have been established so far. The players and Investigators, however, will never know how much weight is too much, so when in doubt, the Keeper should choose to collapse a section or not, based on scenario pacing and other narrative needs. The Keeper may also allow Sense Trouble tests to warn the Investigators, especially if they are being careful.

- Peter is aware of both of the weak spots on this floor. They are both marked with Xs on the map.
- The western X can hold about 240 pounds before collapsing.

- The eastern X can hold no more than 170 pounds.
- Falling into the basement results in 2 points of damage as Investigators plunge into the stone cellar half-filled with three feet of scummy water.
- The stairs will collapse if about 240 pounds are on it at once. If the stairs collapse with Investigators on them, they are allowed an **Athletics test against difficulty 3** to lessen injury. If successful, Investigators take only 1 point of damage. If they fail to jump free, they suffer 3 points of damage.
- Opposite the staircase is a permanently mounted wooden ladder fastened to the wall, but obscured by rubble. It can be found with a **simple search** of the rubble, or with an **Architecture** or **Evidence Collection 1-point spend**.

## Second Floor

(Page 77)

- Peter knows of the weak spots at the western and center X, but is unaware of the third weak spot near the southeast corner of the building.
- The western spot can hold approximately 170 pounds.
- The center spot can hold approximately 145 pounds.
- The third spot can hold no more than 120 pounds before collapsing.
- Investigators falling through the weak spots suffer 4 points of damage, plus an additional 2 points when they collapse the floor below them and crash all the way into the flooded cellar.
- A burned staircase leads to the third floor. Capable of holding approximately 170 pounds before collapse, it is wobbly but comparatively safe. If the stairs collapse with Investigators on them, they are allowed an **Athletics test against difficulty 3** to lessen injury. If successful, Investigators take only 1 point of damage. If they fail to jump free, they suffer 3 points of damage.

## Scuttlers in the Mill

(Page 77)

- Examining the nasty mess left of a crushed Scuttler, **Biology** or **Outdoorsman** indicates the creature is of no known species.

## The Northern Farm

(Page 78)

### Typical Northern Farmer

Athletics 2, First Aid 4, Health 7, Scuffling 6

**Hit Threshold: 3**

### Typical Northern Farm Wife

Athletics 2, First Aid 4, Health 6

**Hit Threshold: 3**

## The Fire Tower

(Page 79)

- When an Investigator opens the door, Betty lets out a shriek. The Investigator opening the door must make a 1-point Stability test or stumble back against the guard rail. Making an **Athletics** or **Sense Trouble test against difficulty 4** lets the Investigator regain his or her balance. If the test is failed, the Investigator begins tumbling backwards over the rail. Another Investigator close at hand can make a grab for his or her companion. An **Athletics test against difficulty 4** allows the Investigator to grab hold of and pull his or her friend back to safety.
- If all else fail, the Investigator tumbles over the rail and takes 12 points of damage. Witnesses to the event must make a 2-point Stability test due to the despair of watching the Investigator plunge forty feet (if the Investigator dies, that should require another Stability test, as usual).

## Events in Foxfield

### Barnes' Late Night Walks

(Page 80)

- Following Barnes on his late night jaunts without being detected is difficult. Investigators cannot carry illumination without being spotted by Barnes. A large company of Investigators will probably also be spotted. The shadowing technique of handing off to the next Investigator in sequence doesn't work while following someone through the deserted rural countryside at night. Piggybacking won't work in this situation, so everyone will have to follow him separately (making their own tests) and at a discreet distance from the others. Following him is a **Shadowing test against difficulty 5**.

## Swing Voter Murdered

(Page 81)

- Seeing the headless corpse lying in a pool of congealing blood causes a 3-point Stability test (it is a 4-point test for those who discover the corpse).
- If the Investigators are late to the scene and do not have official authority of some sort, a **Cop Talk 1-point** or **Reassurance 2-point spend** is needed to get a closer look.
- **Core Clue:** Should the players ask if Supervisor Barnes is at the scene, the Investigators notice that he is conspicuously absent. If they aren't paying attention, someone else should point it out (either now or later) so that the Investigators proceed to the Follow-up scene.
- **Follow-up:** As before, **Locksmith** gains access to the house. A couple of heavy shoulders can force open either the front or back door.
- The last vestiges of Barnes' Sanity and Stability have been stripped away. His mind is **blasted** during this encounter; if he attacks in a frenzy or is barred from flight, his Difficulty Numbers for his General abilities are increased by 1.
- It is a **5-point Stability test** to witness the scene in the second-floor bedroom.
- The Keeper can use Barnes' babbling to provide any information that has been missed by the Investigators.

## The Ike Copley-Thing

(Page 82)

When the Copley-Thing is reduced to 0 Health, Copley goes rigid, then spasms while smoke pours from the alien machinery protruding from his head. The machine then destroys itself in a small explosion.

### The Ike Copley-Thing

Health 7, Scuffling 13, Weapons 11

**Hit Threshold:** 3

**Weapon:** -2 (fists and kicks), -1 (torch)

**Stability Loss:** +2

## Lair of the Mi-Go

(Page 82)

- The secret entrance to the Mi-Go lair is hidden behind a cunningly contrived secret door in the rocks behind the falls and can only be opened with the Mi-Go stone key.

- **Geology** or **Evidence Collection (core clue)** locates the outline of the pentagonal door, and the place where the key needs to be inserted.
- Inserting the key, and following the subtle twists and turns of the key's carvings (requiring either a **Locksmith 3-point spend** or an **Athletics** or **Mechanical Repair test against difficulty 6**), triggers the mechanism. The tests can be attempted again, either by the same Investigator or a different one.
- A stick of dynamite can also be used to disable the door. With a long enough fuse, an Explosives test is not required.

## The Sentinel

(Page 83)

- If a sentinel is present, the Investigators can make **Sense Trouble tests against difficulty 7** to spot it hidden on the ledge.
- The sentinel's electric gun appears in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook. A target that is hit with an electric blast must also make a Health test or die of heart failure. The target uses its current Health pool (after deducting damage from the hit) to make the test. The Difficulty Number is equal to the damage of the hit. Mi-Go (and other creatures without electric nervous systems) take damage from the blast itself, but do not make a Health test.
- If the Investigators are trying to sneak in while the sentinel is on guard, it is a **Sneak test against difficulty 6**.

### Mi-Go Sentinel

**Abilities** (on land/in air): Athletics 4/10, Firearms 6, Health 7, Scuffling 7/10

**Hit Threshold:** 3/4

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Weapon:** -1 (nippers), see page 144 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook; +1 (electric gun), see above.

**Armor:** The non-terrene composition of the Mi-Go reduces all impaling damage, including bullets, by 2.

**Stability Loss:** +1

## The Horror in the Hills

(Page 83)

- If Mi-Go still inhabit the complex, the first Investigator through the tunnel encounters 1 to 3 of the extra-terrestrial creatures. Keepers who wish to leave it chance can roll a die; on a result of 1 or 2, they encounter the leader only,

on a result of 3 or 4, she is accompanied by another Mi-Go, and on a result of 5 or 6, there is one more.

- The leader's underside is crawling with Scuttlers, and any successful attack against her results in 1 to 3 Scuttlers dislodged from her underside. These orphaned young hit the floor and attack 50% of the time (on a result of 1-3 on a die roll); others run away.

### Mi-Go Leader

**Abilities** (on land/in air): Athletics 4/10, Firearms 6, Health 8, Scuffling 7/10

**Hit Threshold:** 3/4

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Weapon:** -1 (nippers), see page 144 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook.

**Armor:** The non-terrene composition of the Mi-Go reduces all impaling damage, including bullets, by 2.

**Stability Loss:** +1

### Mi-Go #2 and #3

**Abilities** (on land/in air): Athletics 4/10, Firearms 6, Health 7, Scuffling 7/10

**Hit Threshold:** 3/4

**Alertness Modifier:** +1

**Stealth Modifier:** +1

**Weapon:** -1 (nippers), see page 144 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook.

**Armor:** The non-terrene composition of the Mi-Go reduces all impaling damage, including bullets, by 2.

**Stability Loss:** +1

### Entering the Chamber

(Page 83)

- **Cthulhu Mythos** identifies the crescents as some kind of hyperspatial gate.

### The Gate

(Page 84)

- Witnessing an unfortunate would-be gate user causes a 6-point Stability test.

### The Glass Tanks

(Page 84)

- Approaching the tanks, Investigators see that each contains some sort of semi-human form. The sight causes a 1-point Stability test. With or without success, they realize that

approaching closer may prove even more disturbing.

- Seeing the twisted form of Sarah Brock results in a 3-point Stability test (if the Investigator has seen Sarah's photo, it is a 4-point Stability test instead).
- The rest of the tanks contain further horrors of the same theme. Each is worth a 3-point Stability test, but the total loss is capped, so once Investigators lose 3 or 4 Stability, they will not need to make further tests to view these horrors.

### The Metal Chest

(Page 84)

- It requires a **Stability test against difficulty 4** to decipher the combination of moves required to open the chest.
- Seeing what is left of Sarah thrashing about requires a 5-point Stability test. If Investigators decide on a mercy killing, each must make a 1-point Stability test.

### Two More Chests

(Page 85)

- If the Investigators have managed to open Aunt Sarah's chest, the same method applies to these chests. Otherwise, it will require the **Stability test against difficulty 4**.
- Seeing one of the children in suspended animation requires a 5-point Stability test.

### The Machine

(Page 85-86)

- An Investigator with **Physics** can surmise that the machine is some sort of power plant.
- A **Sense Trouble test against difficulty 4** (an Investigator with **Explosives** tests Sense Trouble against a difficulty of 3) suggests that the black cylinder might be a bomb.
- The timer on the bomb runs for 1d6+5 minutes. The bomb (and resultant cave-in) does +24 damage inside the chamber, and +6 to anyone inside the tunnel.
- Attempting to disarm the bomb requires three **Explosives** and/or **Electrical Repair tests against difficulty 4**. All three tests must be made by the same Investigator (without assistance), but the Investigator may use any combination of the two General abilities. Failing any roll results in an immediate explosion.