

“Thin Jack” ©1992
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Call of Cthulhu

*"Is it not wisely said there are things buried in the earth that should never be disturbed?
Is it not said that there are things best left alone in their dark slumbers? Woe be it to
those that disturb such things, may Allah curse their names."*

-(Translated from the Arabic by Dr. Phileus P. Sadowsky)

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Keeper's Introduction/History

In 1849 a down on his luck miner named John Jones accidentally freed a Gaunt from the shaft it had been imprisoned in by Native American Shamans. The Gaunt killed the miner's companions, but took him as a servant. Jones was told to lure people into the area with the gold that had been used to imprison the Gaunt. He did so, and soon the Gaunt was feeding off the people who arrived and constructed the town of Green Grove. After learning that the townspeople planned to flee the area, the Gaunt killed them all in an orgy of destruction. The horror of the experience broke the being's hold over John and during the day, with the help of four mules, he sealed the entrance to the shaft in which the Gaunt slept with stones, wood, and all his gold. He died during his monumental effort and his bones lay amidst the rubble and gold. The empty town was discovered later and the incident became known as "The Mystery of Green Grove."

The area was undisturbed by anyone until 1992 when the King Movie Company began filming "The Mystery of Green Grove" a horror story loosely based on the historical mystery. The basic plot of the movie is that miners intruded on an ancient Native American burial ground and stole the gold within it. The ancient spirits that protected the tomb were released and set about killing off the miners and the rest of the town for good measure. The filming went along smoothly until the company suffered financial difficulties and the filming stopped. One of the actors, Dave Parker, wandering about while waiting to leave, came across the shaft and did some digging. He discovered some of the gold and then returned and dug the rest of it up. He sold it and used the money to fund

the film, and the shooting began again, with Parker as the new star. The being, which had dug its way to the surface after the gold was removed, discovered the movie people three days after the shooting had started up. It began killing that night, taking an immigrant worker back to its lair. The next night it took a cameraman who had a fight with the director. The third night, it took Dave Parker, who offered to serve it in exchange for his life. He told it about the nearby town and offered to drive it there at night if it would let him live and leave the film site alone. It agreed and Parker has driven it to the city each night, where it takes a victim.

Getting the PCs Involved

While the adventure must be located in an area that was part of the historical gold rush, it is up to the Keeper to decide exactly where to place it, based on his/her campaign needs. The PCs will be drawn into the adventure by a letter (or fax) from an old friend. William Gardner, a horror story writer, will write to say that he believes something unnatural is occurring. The letter will say that two people vanished from the movie site about two weeks ago and that there have been six reported incidents of people disappearing in the nearby town. He will also write that the local paper reports that Joe Miller, a night watchman, went insane, babbling about "a thin thing, a thin thing that ripped him apart." And two days later, William writes, the paper reports that a wino saw something that took one of his buddies. The night after the incident with the wino, William writes, there was another reported disappearance and the locals have started calling the unknown criminal "Thin Jack." William will conclude his letter by writing that he thinks that there is more here than just a psycho grabbing people and he will ask the investigators for aid. Most of William's money is tied up in the film, so he will only be able to provide very minimal financial aid to the investigators for their travel expenses.

Arrival

If the investigators decide to aid William, they can secure transport via airplane, bus, or they can drive out on their own. If they go by airplane, they will have to take the bus to the nearby town (a three hour drive) and William will pick them up in town. If they go by bus, they can go directly to the town and William will pick them up. If they drive, they can go all the way to the film site and William will meet them there.

William will offer the investigators a place to stay on the film site, or they can seek lodging in town at their own expense. There is one motel in town (\$20 a night for a single) as well as a YMCA (\$5 a night/person). If they select the film site, they will be sleeping in the barracks like building along with the camera crews, gophers, and minor actors.

Books

The various available books and the information they provide are detailed below.

Unexplained Vanishings: This book is typical of its ilk and it (and others like it) are available in almost any public library. The town library has a copy of it. The book briefly mentions the town of Green Grove which was found empty in 1849. The book goes on to note that none of the missing people were ever heard from again, even though almost all of them had relatives in other places.

Indian Legends: This book (and others like it) is available in almost any public library. The town library has a copy of it. One section of the book discusses a monster "that came from the earth" and was driven back from whence it came with magic and gold. It was supposedly sealed beneath the earth by the use of golden wards. According to the book, the monster's name translates into English as "The Thin One" , or "The Skinny One".

Book of the Underlands: This Mythos book contains information on the various beings (such as Chthonians, Ghouls, and Dholes that dwell beneath the surface of planets or are associated with the underground places (known as the Underlands). It is very difficult to find in English, and almost impossible to find in the original Greek. The town librarian, a descendent of an investigator who was active in the 1920s has a copy of it. She will only reveal it if the investigators earn her trust. The book has a section describing a race of beings known as Gaunts (no relation to Nightgaunts) that dwell beneath the earth. These beings are described as "inhumanly thin" and are known to "fear gold, for it is their bane." While these creatures are reported to be "invincible in battle" they are supposedly vulnerable because they had to "reside within their foul pits" during the day "and could not abide the light of day." Additional details of this book are given at the end of the adventure.

Newspapers: The local newspapers contain the articles William mentioned in his letter. One article makes reference to "The Mystery of Green Grove" and the writer wonders (but not seriously) if the same thing is happening to the town that happened in Green Grove.

Investigation

Listed below are individuals/groups the investigators may wish to talk to and the information they can provide.

The Police: If the investigators go to the police, they will only be told that the police are working on the case. If the investigators have enough clout, fame, or status to impress or influence the police, they will be told that the police have no leads, except that the person they are looking for (if it is just one person) is thin. The crimes are particularly baffling because they seem to have no common element, except for the fact that a person is taken. The police will be grateful for any help the investigators can offer, provided they stay within the law.

Joe Miller: Joe Miller is the security guard who went insane due to seeing the Gaunt feeding upon one of its victims. He is currently at the town hospital and will be transferred to the state mental institution if he does not recover soon. The investigators can see him if they get permission from the police or are able to bluff or persuade their way into doing so. An investigator using his/her psychoanalysis skill will be able to calm Miller down and draw out a description of what he saw. He will say: "It was horrible. Thin, very thin. Yes. It had him in

its claws. Was ripping him apart. Eating him bit by bit. He was alive. At the start. Alive. Yes. It was thin. Very thin. Yes." He will then stare up at the ceiling and begin drooling profusely (he will eventually recover and have no recollection of what he saw).

Bill Newsmith: Bill is the wino that the newspaper article mentioned. If the investigators inquire at the newspaper office, they can find out who he is and where he tends to hang out. Bill is a Korean veteran who was captured by the Chinese during the war and escaped after severe mistreatment from which he never quite recovered. If the investigators buy him a drink, or are willing to listen to his war stories for a while he will tell them what he saw: "It was real thin and smelt like a dead body, like the ones in the war. It grabbed up old Will and his screaming woke me up. Haven't heard screams like that since the war. It ran off with him. I think it was going to eat him."

People at the Film Site: Anybody at the film site can tell the investigators that three people vanished from the site. The first was Manual Padre, a migrant worker who had been hired to do manual labor at the site. Most people think he simply moved on. The second person to vanish was Homer Wilson, a cameraman. He was seen fighting with the director over pay and the way the film was being done. Most people think he just left one night. The general consensus is that there is some psycho loose in town, but the incidents in town are totally unrelated to the people that left the film site.

Dave Parker: If the investigators talk to Parker, a successful Idea roll will reveal that he seems to be under a great deal of stress (which is not surprising, given that he is playing his first major role) and a successful psychology skill check will reveal subtle signs of mental disturbance. Parker, being a skilled actor, will handle the investigators questions well and will do his best to keep them from suspecting him. He will say that he thinks that "this 'Thin Jack' individual is a psycho, like the ones you hear about all the time. I hope they catch and fry the bastard." He will say that he thinks the people vanishing from the film site simply left and were not victims of "Thin Jack."

Clues

The following passages provide descriptions of various clues the investigators may find.

Parker's Jeep: If the investigators examine Parker's jeep, a successful spot hidden skill roll will reveal small bloodstains on the back of the fold-down seats in the rear of the vehicle (Parker puts a plastic sheet down, but some of the blood has run off it). The blood, if tested, will be found to be human blood. A rolled up sheet of plastic can also be found under one of the seats. If confronted, Parker will claim it is from a hunting trip (Parker does hunt, and has often bragged about his kills to the others) and will tell the Gaunt about the investigators. The Gaunt will then seek out the investigators and try to kill them.

Personal Effects: If the investigators examine the barracks, they will find that the missing peoples' lockers are still locked. If they pop or pick the locks, they will find that both men's personal effects are still present. The fact that Padre "left

behind" all his hard earned money will probably convince the investigators that he didn't leave voluntarily.

Financial Matters and New Roles: The investigators are likely to learn that the film ran into financial difficulty a while back and shooting had to stop until new funding could be found. If the investigators can access the records of the film company (either by hacking into their files or by good old fashioned breaking and entering) they will learn that Dave Parker provided the money (almost one million dollars). If the investigators check on Parker's financial dealings and gain access to the broker he did business with (it is listed in the movie company's files) they can learn the money was from the sale of a great deal of gold. It is well known that Dave Parker replaced John Stand (a fairly well known actor who left after being replaced) in the role of the main character. Some of the people at the site think Parker must have had something to do with the new money, but they don't know what. If asked, Parker will say that he doesn't know where the money came from, but he got the new role because of his acting abilities.

Maps

Area Map

The area map shows the general details of the area around the rebuilt Green Grove.

Paved Road: This infrequently traveled road leads to town (it is north).

Dirt Road: This road was put in by the movie company.

Elevation Line: Indicates a gradual increase in elevation.

Trail: A successful track skill roll will reveal the presence of the tracks of some sort of creature, about the size of an adult mail. However, the foot prints are very odd and are clearly not human at all. This is the path that the Gaunt takes into Green Grove each night to meet Parker. A roll against one quarter of an investigator's tracking skill will reveal that a truck or jeep went up this way some time ago. This was Parker's jeep.

The Mine: detailed below.

Green Grove: Detailed below.

Green Grove Map

The original Green Grove was worn down by the elements. The current Green Grove is a movie set. All of the buildings are plywood mock-ups of the buildings they are supposed to be, with nothing inside (interior shots are actually done on a sound stage back in Hollywood). The stables, however, are real and hold the horse for the filming (6 horses).

Trailers: There are four trailers. Each houses two people (four actors, the director, and William) in relative comfort (shower, color TV, small kitchen, etc.).

Film Compound: The compound contains three buildings. One building is a wooden barracks style building with two bathrooms, two sleeping rooms with bunk beds and lockers and a common area. The minor actors, camera crews, gophers, and so forth sleep here. There are twenty men, seventeen women, and twelve children housed here.

The second building is what amounts to a mess hall where food is prepared and served. The third building is used to hold the equipment and props. Power for the buildings and trailers is provided by three generators which are located adjacent to the equipment building.

The Mine

The mine is a thirty foot shaft dug down into the earth that ends in a chamber. Parker knows about it, but no one else does. The mouth of the shaft is still clogged with hunks of stone and wooden timbers. There is a pile of rubble near the edge of the shaft and the timbers and stones show recent marks from the cables Parker used to winch them out. Any people in the area will notice a faint hint of a vile odor and a successful idea roll will indicate that the investigator notices that no animals go near the shaft entrance and that the plants around it are unhealthy looking.

If the investigators examine the shaft, they will notice that the smell is stronger in it and a successful spot hidden skill roll will reveal to the investigators that there are odd scratch marks on the timbers and stones in the shaft, as if something with claws had been climbing out of it. If the investigators decide to climb down into it, they must make their climbing roll one every fifteen feet. The old shorings are in poor shape, and there is a 20% chance that one will give way. Such an occurrence will require a luck roll on the part of the investigator to avoid falling. Of course, if the investigators think to use ropes, the descent will be much easier.

Chamber: The walls and floor of the chamber are odd looking. They look like some sort of solidified dark green resin material and from the walls hang tattered strips of some sort of reddish material. The chamber stinks of death and the floor is lined with human bones and is stained black from the blood. During the day, the Gaunt resides in this chamber and this is where it feeds.

Action

The Gaunt will leave its lair each night when it is fully dark. It then will lope to the saloon mockup, and wait until Parker meets it there. The two will then go to Parker's jeep and Parker will drive it to the town, where the Gaunt will select its next meal. Parker will then drive the Gaunt back and it will return to its lair to finish its meal. Parker will then clean out his jeep, wash off and hide the plastic under the seat. He will then go to sleep.

If the investigators are watching Parker, and he is not aware that they are doing so, they will be able to see him meeting the creature and transporting it. If Parker notices that the investigators are watching him, he will pretend that he doesn't notice and lure them into a trap. If the investigators attack the Gaunt, Parker will aid it, but not at the risk of his own life. If the investigators decide to go into town and wait for "Thin Jack", it is up to the Keeper to determine what results the investigators' efforts yield.

It is important that an aura of horror and mystery be built up over the course of the adventure. To build horror, the Keeper may find it useful to allow the investigators to catch a glimpse of the Gaunt (they might see it leaping from roof top to roof top, clutching its latest victim) and see some of its handiwork (it

may tear someone apart for no reason). To build/maintain the mystery, the exact nature of what is going on should not be revealed too quickly. The investigators should have to work for their clues and information and should have to think things through carefully before realizing what is actually going on. The Keeper may also find it useful to introduce red herrings and sidetracks into the situation to keep the investigators guessing. For example, the Keeper may wish to have a minor earthquake nearby which might lead the investigators to suspect Chthonian activity (especially if they have access to *the Book of the Underlands*), or the Keeper may wish to use a copy cat psycho as a red herring.

Resolution:

The Gaunt is an extremely dangerous opponent and it will be difficult for the investigators to defeat it. If they do succeed in imprisoning it, each investigator involved will receive 1D3 SAN as a reward. If the investigators actually destroy it, each involved investigator should receive 1D6 SAN as a reward. The investigators defeat the Gaunt, they will earn the good will of the movie company as well as that of the people of the town. The movie company will offer the investigators rolls in the film (which will turn out to be the year's surprise box office smash) and the towns people will be willing to aid the investigators in the future. If the investigators flee without imprisoning or destroying the Gaunt, they will each lose 1D3 SAN. In such a situation, the Gaunt will continue to terrorize the town and it will soon kill Parker and the entire film crew. Eventually it will undergo its metamorphous (it is left up to the Keeper as to how much power the Gaunt has consumed) and its reign of terror will end until its offspring start theirs.

NPCs

William Gardner

Gardner is a famous horror writer who earned his fame with his novel, *Days of Hell*, which became a successful movie. Like many horror writers, William believes little about the supernatural or occult, and it will be difficult for him to fully accept the actual existence of a real supernatural horror. However, he cannot escape the facts of the situation. William will aid the investigators to the best of his ability and will not shy from any tough situations.

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 14 POW 14
DEX 12 APP 11 EDU 15 SAN 64 HP 12

Weapons: ..22 Long Pistol 30% 1D6

Skills: Computer Use 25%, Credit Rating 85%, Drive Auto 30%, Library Use 75%, Occult 75%, Handgun 30%

Bill Newsmith

Bill is currently a wino. During the Korean War he was shot down and captured by Chinese troops. He later escaped, but never recovered from their mistreatment of him. Bill saw the Gaunt take one of his buddies and he is eager for revenge. Despite his run down appearance, Bill is still in good shape (he walks around all day) and still remembers a lot of his training. If the investigators ask for his help, he will clean up, shave, and ask for a gun. The

investigators may well find him a useful ally, if they can put up with his odd behavior (he sometimes gets flashbacks).

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 15
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 13 SAN 45 HP 14

Weapons: .45 Service Automatic 60% 1D10+2

Knife 45% 1D6+1D4

Skills: Climb 35%, Conceal 40%, First Aid 45%, Hide 55%, Listen 40%, Navigate 50%, Korean 15%, Pilot (Sabre jet fighter): 66%, Handgun 60%, Rifle 30%

David Parker

Parker is a fairly talented actor, but he is obsessed with his own fame. He values fame more than anything, including money and power. He will do just about anything to acquire fame, which he sees as his ticket to immortality (his greatest fear is dying an unknown). When he found the gold he used it to fund the movie on the condition that he be given the starring roll. When the Gaunt took him, he pleaded for his life and the Gaunt recognized a person it could use. He will serve the Gaunt loyally as long as doing so serves his own end and he has plans to use the Gaunt in his rise to fame. Parker has six ounces of gold hidden in cut out books on his bookshelf in the trailer.

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 13 POW 15
DEX 13 APP 16 EDU 14 SAN 41 HP 14

Skills: Acting 65%, Fast Talk 45%, Listen 40%, Persuade 45%

Book of the Underlands

The content of the book is given in the text of the adventure. The book is a Mythos text. The English version contains Contact Ghast and Contact Ghoul and the Greek version contains both those spells plus Contact Chthonian.

Title	Language	+ to Knowledge	Spell Multiplier	Effect on SAN
<u>Book of the Underlands</u>	English	+9%	X2	-1D6
<u>Book of the Underlands</u>	Greek	+12%	X3	-2D6

Gaunt (Lesser Independent Race)

Description: A Gaunt in the second stage of life looks like a desiccated corpse of a person who died of starvation. The skin of the Gaunt is coated with a thick slime that is grayish-green in color and there are thin tendrils coiled all over the surface of the body, which writhe and move in a most disturbing manner. A Gaunt in the third stage looks very much like an adult Chthonian, but their tentacles are longer and they are not accompanied by a chanting noise.

Notes: Gaunts have a three-stage life cycle. The first stage is an egg stage in which the Gaunt is encased in a thick globule of slimy resin that gradually hardens into a shell like material. The Gaunt then enters its second stage in which it assumes a human like form by using the body of the human that it was provided with by its "mother." During this stage the Gaunt feeds on the flesh and

power of living creatures at the rate of one per night (it can kill many more, however, but cannot use their power). When it has consumed 500 power points of sentient beings, it will undergo a metamorphous into its third stage. This takes one night to occur. The third stage Gaunt emerges the next night and captures as many humans as it can, up to six. It then inserts an egg into each human and digs a hole for each egg, puts a slimy globule of resin in the bottom of the hole and then pushes the human into it. After laying six eggs, the mature Gaunt dies, having expended its life energy producing the eggs and globules.

Gaunts at Stage One or Two communicate via telepathy and can communicate with humans that way. They can communicate with one another up to a distance of 100 miles, and can communicate with (and detect) humans at a distance of 1 mile.

Armor/Vulnerabilities: Because of their nature (which is largely non-physical), Gaunts at all stages take minimal damage from all physical weapons (even impaling weapons). Gaunts at Stage One must be attacked through the globule (it is meters thick), but they have no armor of their own and are easily killed. Gaunts at Stage One have 4 points of armor and regenerate 6 points a round, while Gaunts at Stage Three have 8 points of armor and regenerate 12 points a round. Gaunts take normal damage from magical weapons or weapons made of gold or magical gold weapons.

Fortunately, Gaunts have vulnerabilities. First, they are extremely vulnerable to solar radiation and take 1D10 a round they are exposed to direct sunlight or its equivalent. Second, they must sleep at least six hours a day in their "egg". For each day they go without such sleep, they take 1D10 points of damage and lose one point of power permanently. Third, they can only consume power within their "egg". If a Gaunt cannot bring its kill into its "egg" within six hours of the kill, it will not be able to gain the power of the victim. Destroying the "egg" is one obvious way to destroy a Gaunt. Doing so would require explosives, lots of acid, or any other means of large-scale destruction. The egg is vulnerable to conventional weaponry. Fourth, Gaunts are vulnerable to gold. The intrinsic properties of gold act in such a way as to repel Gaunts. Each ounce of gold will create a "repulsion zone" one meter from the center of the gold mass that a Gaunt cannot enter. If it is trapped within a repulsion zone, it will be paralyzed for as long as the gold is present, although it can still communicate telepathically.

Spells: None

SAN: Those who encounter a Gaunt egg lose 1 SAN if their rolls fail, none if they succeed. Seeing a Stage Two Gaunt cost 1D8 if the roll fails, only 1 if the roll succeeds. Seeing a Stage Three Gaunt costs 2D6 if the roll fails, only 1 if the roll succeeds.

Gaunt Life Cycle

	Stage Two		Stage Three	
	Statistics	Average	Statistics	Average
STR	4D6	14	4D6X3	42
CON	4D6	14	4D6X2	28
SIZ	3D6	10-11	3D6X3	30-33
INT	3D6	10-11	3D6	10-11
POW	4D6	14	4D6	14
DEX	3D6	10-11	2D6	7
Hit Points		12-13		29-31
Move		8		7/1 Burrowing
Regenerate		6 pts/rd		12 pt/rd
Armor		4 pts		8 pts
Weapon		Claw 60% 1D6+1D4		Tentacle 40% 2D6
Weapon		Bite 40% 1D6+1D4		Crush 3D6



