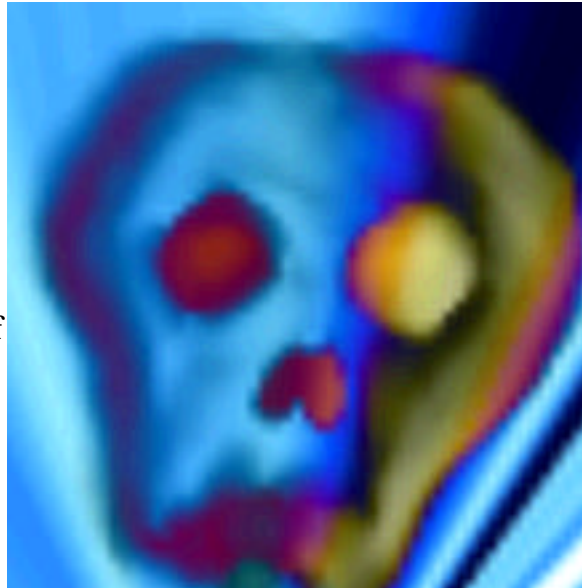


**"Swamp Bones" ©1996**  
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Call of Cthulhu

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### **Introduction**

Populated with alligators and poisonous snakes, the swamps of Florida are filled with danger. Occasionally, people die in those swamps. However, no one expected a university research team to vanish while cataloging swamp plants. The local authorities are baffled, so it is up to the investigators to find out why five people vanished in the swamp and a sixth person was found deathly ill and half insane.

This adventure is designed for a small group of moderately experienced investigators. It is set in the 1990s, but can be modified for a different time period.

### **Keeper's Background**

The America Civil War was waged from 1861-1865. During this time many terrible events took place. Most of these events were mundane in nature, such as bloody battles and sieges, but some were both terrible and decidedly beyond the mundane realm of human violence.

In 1865, shortly before the war ended, a small band of Confederate deserters turned to banditry and began stealing from the civilian population. The bandits were driven into a Florida swamp by troops, some of whom had been their comrades at arms during the war. The local troops, well aware of local legends concerning the swamp, refused to enter the swamp. Their officer waded out into the swamp about two feet, saw an alligator, and decided to return with his men.

The bandits fled into the swamp until they came to a small island. On this island was a house which was surrounded with poles. The bandits saw that each pole was decorated with a human skull, which disturbed them greatly. But they also saw that each skull was decorated with a symbol of gold, which aroused their greed and overcame their fear. Approaching the hut carefully, they found that no one was present. Summoning up their courage and greed, the bandits set out to pry the gold from the skulls. They were terrified when the skulls began to scream and terrible spirits arose from the empty eye sockets. Those who survived the attack, fled into the swamp only to come face to face with what they thought were Confederate troops. The former soldiers were horrified when they saw that the things in the grey uniforms were walking corpses and leading them was something even more horrible than them. Surrounded by horrors on all sides, some of the men went insane on the spot while others put up a last, desperate struggle. In the end, all of the bandits were slaughtered, except for the leader. All of them met truly awful fates.

The owner of the hut, a terrible wizard named Papa Swamp, prepared the dead bodies of the bandits and took them to a cursed section of the swamp and sunk the bodies. After a week, the corpses pulled themselves out of the muck and staggered back to their new master. The leader met a fate even more horrible. His limbs and abdomen were cut off, while he was still living, and his torso was placed upon a pole. The wizard prepared the head and upper torso with powerful magics, preserving the remains in half living state, a guardian torso. Leaving the leader's remains as a watchman, the wizard returned to his rest in the swamp.

The wizard's minions remained undisturbed, sleeping the sleep of the damned, for over a century. Then, two people (Daniel Ricker and Marilyn Frie) from a group of university researchers blundered across Papa Swamp's house. The two researchers assumed that they had stumbled across an abandoned structure and went to investigate. They expected to find some interesting relics but instead they found terrible deaths. Awakened by his guardian torso, Papa Swamp arose from his slumbers to investigate. Papa Swamp took the bodies of the researchers to his cursed area of swamp and began the process to transform them into swamp zombies. After leaving the bodies in the swamp, he wandered the swamp with his swamp zombies until he found the research team's camp. Papa Swamp was able to kill two of the researchers (Fred Draker and Wilbur Brown) while two escaped into the swamp. One of the survivors (Brian Aspin) was killed by an alligator while the other (Janet Sloane) fled through the swamp for two days until she was found by fishermen. Papa Swamp brought the two new corpses back to his cursed swamp to be transformed into swamp zombies.

### **Getting the Investigators Involved**

There are a variety of ways to get the investigators involved. One way is to make Janet Sloane one of the investigator's friends or relatives. In this case the investigator will be contacted by the authorities. They will tell the investigator that Sloane was in some sort of accident and that she has been asking for him. In this situation the investigators will be able to talk to Sloane freely.

A second way to get the investigators involved is to have a family member, friend, or colleague of one of the victims contact them and ask them to investigate. In this situation the investigators will have access to information about the research team.

A third way to have the investigators get involved is to have the authorities contact them and ask them to help out. If the investigators have contacts in law enforcement or have built a reputation for handling "unusual" situations, this is a plausible way to get them involved. In this case the investigators will have access to all the available information about the situation.

A fourth way to get the investigators involved is to have them learn of the situation from the news or witnesses and go in on their own. In this case they will probably have to work to get information about the situation.

Of course, the Keeper can come up with another way of getting the investigators involved that can be tailored to her specific campaign.

## **Players' Background/Investigation**

### **Initial Investigation**

The investigators should have little trouble learning the names of the missing people if they have the necessary contacts. The police know who is missing, as do the university staff and faculty who were involved with the research. Of course, Janet Sloane also knows the names of those who are missing but getting coherent statements from her might be difficult. The names of the missing researchers are Daniel Ricker, Marilyn Frie, Fred Draker, Wilbur Brown, and Brian Aspin.

If the investigators check into the research team, they will learn that the team consisted of six people from various universities. The team was doing research on swamp plants and the Florida swamp was one of several that the team visited. If the investigators check into the team members backgrounds they will find (assuming they have the resources to conduct an effective investigation) that none of the team members had any criminal record or any history of mental illness. All of them were respected academics and were considered reasonably friendly and stable by their colleagues and friends.

If the investigators talk to the people who found Janet Sloane (Dan Johnson, Ted Grunder, and Bill Goldstein), they will tell the investigators that they found Janet staggering through the water, covered with insect bites, leeches and scratches. They will say that she was incoherent and babbling about "the dead men." They will say that they drove her to a hospital. They will be willing to show the investigators where they found her, which is a relatively open area of the swamp with decent fishing.

### **Cthulhu Mythos**

Investigators with Cthulhu Mythos skill can attempt skill rolls to determine if they have ever heard anything about the things encountered in the adventure. If an investigator succeeds in her skill roll, she will have some vague information about the re-animation of the dead via magical means. Unless the Keeper wishes it to be

otherwise, there are no clear references to the sort of beings in this adventure in any Mythos texts.

### **Occult**

Investigators who have Occult skill can attempt skill rolls to determine if they have any information that might prove useful. At the Keeper's discretion, occult skill rolls will yield myths and legends about wraiths, zombies and other related horrors. The exact content of such myths and legends is left to the Keeper's discretion. Naturally, Occult skill will not reveal any specific information about the Mythos beings in this adventure.

### **Library Research**

The investigators are likely to do some research. The following relevant information can be found by successful use of Library Use in any well equipped library by doing an internet search, and so forth.

The book *Obscure Legends of the Old South* can be found in many well stocked libraries, especially those in the South. The book is not considered to be a scholarly work, but is considered to be fairly accurate amateur work.

From *Obscure Legends of the Old South*, 1918 by Reginald Peirce-

One particularly unusual legend tells the tale of a beast known as "Papa Swamp." This being is supposed to have once been a man. Transformed by terrible and dark magic, "Papa Swamp" is supposed to be a terrifying mixture of human, alligator, serpent, and swamp water. This being is reputed to have slaughtered many people in 1730. To this day, it is said that some of those who vanish in the swamps of Florida were victims of "Papa Swamp."

The book *Unsolved Murders Of Old America* can be found in many libraries and is still available in some large book stores. Despite the fact that it was written by a former radio talk show personality, it is surprisingly accurate and well written.

From *Unsolved Murders Of Old America* , 1994 by Daniel Barker-

A particularly gruesome series of killings were reputed to have occurred in what is now Florida. In 1730 a madman known as "Papa Swamp" is said to have emerged from the swamp and killed several people. According to some stories passed down over the years, the victims were literally ripped apart. In some cases, it is said, their hearts were pulled from their chests and their skulls crushed. Unfortunately, this story cannot be adequately verified since there is no record of the location where the victims were buried. However, if the story is correct it is one of the earliest mass murders by a madman in North America. According to some of the stories, "Papa Swamp" was a man

named "Aleister Smythe."

If the investigators have access to fairly obscure documents, have academic connections, or are very persistent they will be able to find *Collected Diaries Volume III* with successful use of Library Use. This volume is from a series of collected American diaries. Most libraries do not have all of the volumes and many libraries do not have any of the volumes. The work is mostly intended for historians doing research on American history.

From *Collected Diaries Volume III*, 1973 edited by Carmen Dion, Andre Porter and Pat Reaves-

Entries from the diary of Eric Cornwall, Virginian plantation owner.

Entry for July 21, 1708

...I purchased several fine slaves today, including a healthy and surprisingly intelligent slave boy named "John." The intelligent ones are always a mixed blessing. Smart slaves are easier to teach, but they often get ideas that lead to whippings. As my field bosses say, a whipped slave just don't work as well for a while, so I would rather spare the lash whenever possible...

Entry for August 12, 1713

...One of the overseers caught some of the slaves conducting some sort of pagan ritual. He caned them good and made sure that they would think twice before practicing that sort of devil worship in God's country. I am worried about the influence of these unChristian ideas on the younger slaves. The slaves can be saved, but some of them, especially John, are showing too much interest in these matters...

Entry for April 14, 1714

...A new neighbor has moved into the old Hempstead place. Karl Hempstead and his whole family fell victim to some sort of pox or other bad sickness just a short month before. The new fellow seems friendly enough, but I am not sure just how he came to take possession of the Hempstead lands. The local officials seem satisfied with his story about being a close relative of Mrs. Hempstead, but something about him seems amiss...

Entry for October 21, 1715

...One of my overseers caught some of the slaves engaged in another one of those vile pagan rituals. This time, he caught several of the young slaves involved. I have decided to sell off these troublesome slaves...

### Entry for October 24, 1715

...Mr. Smythe came by the house today to make an offer on John. I tried to talk him into taking some of the other slaves as well, but he was only interested in John. Smythe still worries me, although he seems affable enough. Although my wife says it was just a trick of the light, I could have sworn I saw him sneering and leering in church during the service...

### Entry for May 3, 1723

...Two of my slaves have gone missing. The other slaves say that the "black man" came in the night for them. They seem to be very afraid of this "black man." When I asked who this black man was and why they were so afraid of one of their kind, one of the older men said he had many names and that he was not one of any man's kind, be he a black man or a white man. For some reason I think that the slaves were sincere, so I held their punishment to a merciful four lashes apiece. One of the cotton buyers told me that Smythe was selling no cotton this year and that when he rode up to his place, he saw that Smythe had just let the fields go. Apparently he has also sold off most of his slaves. I grow more and more suspicious of him...

### Entry for March 4, 1724

...Tom Tremaine from down the road stopped buy today. He said that two of his cows and one of his best slaves had gone missing. He told me that his dogs commenced to howling last night around midnight, but he had paid them no head since he thought they had been riled up by a raccoon. Some of the folk are whispering that a witch might be in the area, but that is just superstitious nonsense, or so I hope...

### Entry for February 12, 1715

...David came to me today and said that he and some of the younger men had been keeping an eye on Mr. Smythe and that they had seem him in the woods carrying on yelling "yogatoth" and "gnarlsteps" and doing other strange deeds. He said that he and the boys were going to put the question to Mr. Smythe and see what ill deeds he was perpetrating. I urged caution, but the young can be so hot headed at times...

### Entry for February 14, 1715

...I found out this morning that David and his fellows had gone to Smythe's house last night and demanded answers. David still isn't sure what happened, but he has some nasty burn marks on his chest from something. He says that Smythe put a hex on him, but I am not sure what to think. David said that he and his fellows caught

Smythe and John prancing around in the woods conducting some sort of pagan ritual. He said that he missing slaves were there, too, but they were standing blank-eyed. David said that when he and his boys rushed into the circle, Smythe set the slaves on them. David told me that they shot the slaves after giving fair warning, but the slaves just kept on coming. He said that they smelled like they were dead so they all ran away.

#### Entry for February 15, 1715

...Myself and some of the other men and boys rode out to Smythe's house with loaded muskets. We confronted him at the door of his house and asked about the slaves, When he could give us no answer to our satisfaction, we forced our way in. I cannot fully recount the horrors we saw that day, but suffice it to say that I shall never forget those dead men who were still walking. We fired on Smythe and wounded him as he ran from us. Though we gave fast pursuit he was able to escape us. Thwarted, we returned to the house and set fire to it, burning the dead inside it. We never did find John, so I can only assume that he escaped along with his master...

#### Talking to Janet Sloane

If the investigators are able to talk to Janet Sloane, they will see that she is still recovering from her ordeal. She has scratches and cuts all over her skin, swellings from insect bites and her eyes have a terrible haunted look to them. If the investigators are able to talk to her, they will only be allowed to speak to her once she has recovered enough to be coherent. This will be about a week after she is brought in.

Janet will tell the following story:

We had been surveying this swamp for several days with no problem, aside from the usual dangers of snakes and alligators. On the last day we were set up on a fairly dry island. We were cataloging our finding for the day when Daniel (Ricker) said that he thought he saw some sort of structure on a nearby island. I really couldn't make out much of anything through the mist and trees, but Daniel insisted it was a house or something. He managed to talk Marilyn (Frie) into taking the dingy and rowing over to the island with him. Brian (Aspin) had tried to talk them out of doing it. He almost had Brian convinced to stay and help with the cataloging when Marilyn decided to play the spoiled brat. I just wish that for once she could have just gone along with what Brian said, but of course she wouldn't. If she had, she might still be alive. All of them might still be alive. I have no idea what they found over there, but an hour passed and they did not return. Brian was getting one of the boats ready to go look for them when these people...these things that were once people...came up out of the swamp. I don't really remember what happened next...just screams and blood and running. The next thing I remember clearly is waking up in the hospital. I wish it was all just a

nightmare...I wish it would all just go away.

If asked for more information, Janet will be able to give rough descriptions of the swamp zombies. She will say that they looked like human beings, except they were bloated and discolored like people who had drowned and floated for days. She will also say that there was one figure who she did not see very well, but it scared her the most.

She will be able to provide the investigators with enough information about the location of the expedition island so that the investigators will be able to find it. She will be reluctant to tell the police where the island is since she believes, correctly, that whatever it was that killed her friends is not exactly afraid of the law and that the police would just be new victims for the horrors of the swamp.

## Maps

### Swamp Area Map

This map shows the area of the swamp in which the action will take place. The swamp has a healthy population of alligators and snakes, many of which are dangerous. If the Keeper wants to introduce an element of natural violence, he can prepare some encounters with the local fauna. However, it is likely that the investigators will have more than enough to deal with without menacing them with alligators and serpents.

The swamp is fairly hostile terrain. Travelling through the swamp is extremely difficult. It is possible to travel through it by swimming in places and wading in others. However, this will be extremely slow, because of the terrain, and dangerous, because of the possibility of drowning and the presence of dangerous animals. The swamp can also be travelled using small boats. This is safer than traveling by swimming but can be dangerous since there are plenty of sunken tree stumps which could easily punch a hole through a boat hull. If the investigators are cautious and go slowly, they will be able to avoid accidents. If they travel quickly, using outboard motors, they are likely to hit some obstacle and have an accident. The Keeper will have to judge the likelihood of the investigators getting into an accident and the consequences of such an accident.

**Expedition Base Island:** This island is where the university team had set up its base of operations for the day. Unless the investigators are able to talk to Janet Sloane, they will have an extremely difficult time finding the island. The general area in which the team was conducting its survey is known to the people at the universities, but it is a fairly large area of swamp and the odds of the investigators simply coming across the island are fairly low. A search could take a couple of days, depending on how the investigators conduct the search. If the investigators talk to Janet Sloane, she will be able to tell them roughly where the island is located. With this information the investigators will be able to find the island after a couple hours of searching. The island is about three miles from solid land. Three miles through



swamp is a very long three miles indeed. The island is detailed on its own map, below.

**Papa Swamp's Island:**This island is where Papa Swamp's house is located. This island is not known to any living people and will be rather difficult to find. It is about 300 yards from the expedition base island. It can be seen from the expedition base island and the silhouette of the house can be seen. From the expedition base island it looks very much like part of the natural landscape. If the investigators use binoculars to check out the island, they will be able to see recognize the house for what it is. They will also be able to see that there are round objects (skulls) on poles around the house. These skulls are difficult to recognize since they are covered with muck. The house and surrounding area are detailed in their own maps.

**Cursed Swamp:**This is the area Papa Swamp cursed using the Curse Swamp spell. Unless the investigators have some means of detecting magical areas, they will never realize the true nature of this area. The skull used in the spell is in the area, but is located under about two feet of mud and three feet of water.

**Papa Swamp's Resting Place:**This is the area where Papa Swamp rests when he is inactive. He rests between three tree stumps under six feet of water. He has chains attached to the stumps to hold himself in place while he "sleeps."

### **Expedition Island Map**

The features of the expedition island map are as follows.

**Boats:** The two boats used by the expedition are located here. They are aluminum hulled boats with new outboard motors. Both of the boats have holes through their hulls and are partially sunk in the swamp (the air in the seat sections keeps them from sinking completely). One of the boats has about a dozen holes in it from a bayonet but the other only has two. With some effort they could be patched and the boats bailed out. There is plenty of fuel for the engines and they will still work. The ground near the boats still is still badly torn up from the violent struggle that took place there.

**Tent:** This is the expedition's tent. It consists of a large awning style tent with mosquito netting covering every side. Inside are some small folding tables, folding chairs and pieces of scientific equipment-mostly specimen collection and storage gear. There is also a two way radio on one of the tables. There are three notebook computers in the tent, one lying smashed on the ground where it was walked over by a swamp zombie. One of the surviving notebooks is a PowerBook 5300, the other is an IBM model. The one smashed on the ground is an IBM notebook. The two intact notebooks still work although their batteries have little life left in them. If the investigators check the computers, they will only find material on plants and

information about the survey. The real prize for the investigators is an Apple QuickTake 150 (an electronic camera which stores its images on a RAM card and not on film). This device lies half buried in the mud near a section of netting that has been torn through. The casing is cracked but it is still functional. If the investigators hitch up the QuickTake to the PowerBook, they will be able to view the images stored in the RAM. Most of the images are plants, but the last two will be very interesting. One is a shot through the netting of what looks like men in tattered and rotted clothing marching up out of the swamp. The shot is not very clear, but the investigators will feel something "wrong" about the images. The second shot shows what appears to be a badly bloated, swamp stained corpse in the tatters of a confederate uniform lumbering through the netting with a rusted bayonet in its hand. Behind it a shadowy figure (Papa Swamp) can be seen standing in the swamp by the boats along with two other figures (swamp zombies).

**Puddle:** Assuming that at least a week has passed since Papa Swamp killed most of the expedition team members, there will be four swamp zombies lying in the puddle waiting for people to arrive. Papa Swamp knows it is likely that people will come to look for the expedition so he has left his newest swamp zombies as a welcoming committee. The zombies have been told to try to terrify and then kill those who come to the island. To this end it is likely that at least two of them will play dead in the tent while the other two wait in ambush. A particularly vicious Keeper may chose to have one conceal itself behind some netting and equipment in the tent and call to the investigators, pretending to be seriously injured and sick, but still alive. The zombie will say that the team was attacked by horrible monsters and that she needs help. The zombie will keep up the act as long as possible, trying to lure the investigators into the tent which will make it easier for the others to try wreck their boats. The zombie in the tent will use its supposed injury and illness to explain its appearance and its slurred speech and lower intelligence. The zombie actually does not look worse than people who have actually suffered serious injuries and a severe illness. Of course, the zombie does not have a pulse and is significantly colder than a living human. This encounter should not, unless the investigators are particularly weak or inept, end in defeat for the investigators.

### **Island Map**

The island map details the area around Papa Swamp's House. For some reason, the area around the house is always shrouded in fog, even on hot, sunny days. The area around the house also feels slightly cooler than other areas.

**Skull:** Each mark on the map indicates a normal skull on a pole. The skulls and poles have been treated to prevent rot and decay. These skulls look virtually identical to the skull wraith skulls, except they do not have the gold symbols on them.

**Skull Wraith:** Each mark on the map indicates a skull wraith skull on a pole. These

skulls and poles are preserved by the magic of the spells used to create them. The skull wraiths will be somewhat alert, having been disturbed about a week ago. However, they will not become fully aware of the investigators unless the investigators disturb them or spend more than five minutes near a skull. In that case, the wraiths will emerge, screaming, and attack the investigators. The skull wraiths can only travel 100 yards from their skulls. They can reach every area shown on the map.

**Torso:** This mark indicates the location of the guardian torso. It is covered with moss, fungus and mold and has vines growing over it, so it will not be readily recognizable as a human torso unless the investigators approach it closely or make a Spot Hidden roll. The torso has been ordered to not draw attention to itself, so it will remain quite and still while observing. If someone approaches it and recognizes it, it will start speaking. Its "conversation" will be one of madness, but it might say some things that make sense, such as a request for death.

**House:** This is Papa Swamp's house. It is made of native stone and is fairly well constructed. The structure shows its age and is covered with moss and swamp creepers. The house appears to be in surprisingly good shape, considering its age and the fact that it is located in a swamp.

### House Map

**Hall:** The outside door to the house is in rather bad condition as the wood has largely rotted away from the moisture. The hinges are badly rusted and the door is stuck half open. The hall contains a variety of debris that has fallen from the decaying ceiling as well as a various types of fungus.

**Kitchen:** The kitchen contains a rusted out stove, rusted utensils and plenty of mold and fungus.

**Master Bedroom:** This room was once used by Smythe. It contains a badly rotted bed, other pieces of badly rotted furniture and some tatters of rotted clothing in the closet. Located under a loose stone (which can be spotted by the fact that a small trickle of water runs into the small space around it) is a hole containing twelve Spanish, twenty English and fourteen French gold coins. These coins would be worth a considerable amount of money to a collector or museum.

**Bedroom:** this room was used by Papa Swamp, back when he was still human. The room is sparsely furnished with rotted furniture and contains nothing of value.

**Laboratory:** The laboratory is the best kept room in the house, although it has not been cleaned or tended to in over a century. There is a variety of 19th century scientific apparatus in the room, all of which are rusty and decayed. There are jars

and bottles of mysterious and not so mysterious substances in the room. If the investigators decide to foolishly sample the contents of any containers, they will end up becoming ill and may be poisoned. Located in a carefully sealed iron trunk which has been draped in thick, oily cloths are two books. One is *Obscuridad Libro* and the other is *Notes on the Principles of Violent Magicks*. The books are quite old and are in somewhat poor condition, but can still be read.

### **Action**

The action gets underway when the investigators enter the swamp and begin their search for the expedition island. Janet Sloane will attempt to accompany them and will argue that the investigators stand a much better chance of finding the island with her along, which is correct. Sloane will turn out to be a useful asset if the investigators bring her along.

If the investigators are participating in the official investigation, they will be accompanied by Jones and two police officers. They will be equipped with enough boats to carry the whole group safely. If the investigators are not part of the official investigation, they will be on their own in getting equipment.

If the police are accompanying the investigators, the Keeper should use the two officers to show just how awful the Mythos beings are. Jones and Sloane should not be used in the manner gratuitously, unless it would be particularly effective to have them butchered.

If the investigators are going it alone, they can always encounter the police either just before the action takes place (thus allowing the NPCs to demonstrate the nastiness of the creatures) or the investigators can come across the police after they have had a run in with Papa Swamp's minions. In that case, the investigators might find an empty police boat drifting in the water with shell casings and puddles of blood littering its deck. If the Keeper wishes, one or more of the cops can escape to be found by the investigators. Of course, exactly what role the NPC cops play in the adventures is left to the Keeper's discretion and the actions of the investigators.

**First Encounter:** The first encounter between the investigators and the minions of Papa Swamp will probably occur on the Expedition Base Island. As noted above, there will be swamp zombies lying in wait for the investigators. The zombies will primarily attempt to destroy the investigators's means of transportation in order to trap them in the swamp. After this encounter, the investigators should be shaken up, slightly injured and without reliable transportation. The Keeper should try to find a plausible way to avoid killing off investigators in the first encounter. It is also suggested that the investigators' transportation be damaged in such a way that they can eventually repair it enough to allow them to eventually return to civilization without having to walk and swim through the swamp.

**On Papa Swamp's Island:** The investigators will almost certainly go to Papa Swamp's island. As long as they do not molest the skulls or spend too much time near them, they will be able to enter the house without being attacked. Unless the investigators

are masters of stealth, the guardian torso will be aware of their presence and will inform Papa Swamp. Papa Swamp will gather his swamp zombies and trudge through the swamp to the island. He will have his zombies spread out so as to lower the chances of the investigators being able to slip away. Of course, the fact that they are spread out will enable a determined group of investigators to break free without having to face all the zombies at once. Papa Swamp will have his zombies try to keep the investigators near the skull wraiths so that they will join the fray. Papa Swamp will remain a safe distance away from the action so that he can observe the investigators in action. If they seem weak, he will have his swamp zombies force them away from the skull wraiths so that he can have the pleasure of killing some of them. If the investigators prove too strong, he will flee from the battle along with any surviving swamp zombies. If the investigators manage to break away and escape, then the swamp warfare begins.

If the investigators kill Papa Swamp, then the adventure will be over. The zombies will wander aimlessly and stop fighting, the skull wraiths will be freed and the guardian torso will die. The Keeper should take plausible steps to avoid letting the investigators kill Papa Swamp at this stage of the adventure.

If Papa Swamp defeats the investigators, then any investigators taken alive by Papa Swamp will be subject to terrifying magical experiments that will make them wish they had perished. Dead investigators will be reanimated as swamp zombies. Merciful Keepers might wish to allow captured investigators a chance to escape, while truly generous Keepers might wish to allow the police to rescue surviving investigators.

**Swamp Warfare:** If the first two encounters do not result in a decisive victory for either side, then the battle will continue. If the investigators clearly have the upper hand over Papa Swamp, then he will attempt to escape from them. Since he can stay under water indefinitely, it will be very difficult to find him in the swamp. If the investigators are somehow able to capture him, he will say anything in order to get them to spare him. For example, he might make up a story about how he was put under a wizard's curse, that he is forced by the curse to attack people, and that there is a way to transform him back into a human being. Naturally, he will use every means in his power to escape from the investigators, preferably killing as many of them as possible.

If Papa Swamp sees his forces as being closely matched by the investigators, he will attempt a war of attrition in which he uses his minions and the dangers of the swamps to wear down the investigators. He is extremely clever and dangerous and will plot all sorts of deadly traps and ambushes. For example, he will use his zombies to lure investigators into areas of the swamp that are favored by alligators or snakes. If the investigators try to escape the swamp, they will have to run the gauntlet of swamp zombies. They are fairly slow, but they cannot drown and the local wildlife flees from them. Hence, they will probably have an easy time keeping up with the investigators, unless they have motorized transport.

If Papa Swamp sees that he has a clear advantage, he will attempt to capture as

many investigators alive as possible so he can conduct experiments on them. He will go into combat himself since he enjoys hurting things that are weaker than him. The investigators will, if they have any sense, be fleeing the swamp in the face of a terrible enemy. Papa Swamp will do his best to keep them from escaping and will make good use of his resources in doing so.

The Keeper should do his best to make the "swamp warfare" interesting. Encounters should be calculated to terrify the investigators and Papa Swamp should be played as a wily and intelligent opponent. If the investigators survive and triumph, they should feel that they have won a particularly hard earned victory.

### **Conclusion**

The adventure concludes when the investigators defeat Papa Swamp and his minions or the investigators themselves are defeated.

Naturally, if the investigators triumph, they will still have a rather difficult time explaining what actually happened to the authorities. If Jones is involved and survives, he will find some way to explain things to the satisfaction of his superiors, even if he has to make up a fairly elaborate story with the investigators help. If the investigators have to deal with the authorities without Jones, they will find that a story involving a centuries old wizard and undead monsters will not go over well. The investigators may find that just keeping quiet is an effective option. All of the old bodies involved will be found to have been dead for an "indeterminate" length of time and the bodies of the researchers will be found to have been dead for over a week. A forensic examination of the guardian torso will reveal that it should have been dead when its limbs and abdomen were removed. Hence, unless the investigators kill any cops or Janet Sloane, the police will have to release them.

Depending on how things turn out, Janet Sloane and Jones might turn into useful contacts for the investigators.

If the investigators flee or are killed, Papa Swamp will decide to journey out of the swamp to see more of this strange new world. Needless to say, his exploration will result in many deaths. If the investigators survive their defeat and escape, they might end up having to face Papa Swamp again, perhaps with some additional mythos allies. Keepers should remember that Papa Swamp and his swamp zombies will need access to swamp water each hour in order to survive, so they will not be able to stray to far from a source of swamp water. Any swamp water will do. Papa Swamp is extremely intelligent and is likely to come up with a way to travel further inland while avoiding drying out, should the need arise. For example, he might fill a tub or even a small boat with swamp water and have it transported by his swamp zombies or by using a vehicle, if he is able to capture one.

**Sanity Points:** If the investigators decide to flee the area, they should each suffer a 1D3 Sanity point loss for knowing that horrible things dwell on in the swamp. If the investigators destroy all the Skull Wraiths, they should receive a 1D8 point Sanity point award. Destroying all the swamp zombies nets a Sanity point award of 1D8. Putting the Guardian Torso out of its misery results in a 1D6 Sanity point award and

defeating Papa Swamp results in a 1D8 Sanity point award. The Keeper might wish to modify the award die rolls based on the performance of the investigators. For example, if the investigators are exceptionally brave, heroic, and inventive in defeating Papa Swamp and his minions, they should receive a decent reward even if the dice rolls come up poorly.

### **NPCS**

**Janet Sloane, University Researcher Age 39**

**STR: 12 Con: 16 SIZ: 10 INT: 15 POW: 12 DEX: 12 APP: 13 EDU: 19 SAN: 54 HP: 13**  
**Chemistry 20%, Biology 45%, Botany 75%, Drive Automobile 30%, Handgun 30%,**  
**Library Use 60%, Latin 25%, Natural History 35%, Swim 55%.**

**Weapons: 9mm Semiautomatic Damage: 1D10 Range: 20 Shots: 10**

**Description:** Sloane is 5 feet, six inches tall and has light skin and brown hair. Sloane is in very good condition and swims on a regular basis, which probably saved her life during her escape. She is an expert on swamp plants and has a research position at Florida State University. She has suffered the loss of some of her Sanity Points due to her exposure to the Swamp Zombies and Papa Swamp. She is fairly tough minded and will want to accompany the investigators into the swamp. She has a 9mm pistol she bought after a woman was raped in her neighborhood and she has practiced with it. She does not have a concealed weapons permit, but will bring the gun with her if the investigators bring her along. A week after her ordeal she will still be down 1 hit point due to her condition, but she will heal the point back normally if given time.

**Gordon Jones, Detective Age 34**

**STR: 12 Con: 12 SIZ: 12 INT: 12 POW: 11 DEX: 13 APP: 11 EDU: 14 SAN: 55 HP: 12**  
**Drive Automobile 45%, Fast Talk 20%, First Aid 35%, Hand Gun 55%, Law 30%,**  
**Listen 35%, Persuade 25%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Shot Gun 45%**

**Weapons: 9mm Semiautomatic Damage: 1D10 Range: 20 Shots: 15**

**Other Equipment:** Radio, two 9mm clips, handcuffs.

**Description:** Jones is thin, has brown hair and brown eyes. He smokes and drinks a lot of coffee, but department regulations force him to keep in decent shape. He thinks that the expedition ran into some drug dealers who are growing pot on an island in the swamp and that they were killed by the dealers. He thinks he got assigned this case because he annoyed one of his superiors. Jones does not believe in the supernatural and he just wants to get the case over and done with so he can get away from the "nasty swamp and the damn bugs." He will complain a bit if the investigators get involved with his investigation, but he is shrewd enough to realize that having extra bodies along lowers his chances of taking a bullet.

**Typical Cop**

**STR: 13 Con: 13 SIZ: 13 INT: 11 POW: 11 DEX: 12 APP: 12 EDU: 14 SAN: 55 HP: 13**  
**Fast Talk 20%, First Aid 30%, Hand Gun 45%, Night Stick 40%, Law 15%, Listen 25%,**  
**Drive Automobile 40%, Spot Hidden 20%, Shot Gun 40%**

**Weapons:** 12 Gauge Shotgun Damage: 4D6/2D6/1D6 Range: 10/20/50 Shots: 8,  
9mm Semiautomatic Damage: 1D10 Range: 20 Shots: 15

**Night Stick:** 1D8

**Other Equipment:** Radio, 2 9mm clips, handcuffs, Patrol Car.

**Description:** The cops are typical officers. They do not believe in the supernatural and are just as unhappy about being assigned to the case as the detective is. They do take their job seriously and will do their best to find the killers. They are a bit worried about the possibility of going up against drug dealers. There will be two officers assigned to the case (Ted Arnold and Kevin Baker).

## **Mythos Beings**

### **Papa Swamp**

**History:** The man who became Papa Swamp was born into a slave family in 1700 on a plantation in Virginia. He was named "John" by his mother and sold to another slave owner in 1708. In 1715 John was sold to a European named Aleister Smythe who recognized John's intelligence and potential.. Smythe was a powerful magician and trained John in the ways of magic. In 1725 John and Smythe were driven from Virginia when their nefarious activities were discovered by the locals and they burned down Smythe's house. The two of them fled to Florida to avoid being lynched. Having learned from the events in Virginia, Smythe built a house in a Florida swamp in order to avoid interruption from the locals. In 1730 Smythe conducted a terrible ritual which transformed John from a human being into a fully conscious dead thing.

Driven completely mad by the ordeal of his transformation, John turned on a surprised Smythe and tore him apart. John wandered from the swamp, slaughtered all he encountered and then wandered back into the swamp. Stories of the horrible murders spread giving rise to the legend of Papa Swamp, a terrible man who dwelled in the swamp and murdered all those he encountered.

John wandered the swamps for a year until he recovered enough to act intelligently again. He returned to Smythe's house and returned to his studies of the dark arts. Over the next century he refined his magic and conducted terrible experiments on those unfortunate enough to fall into his grasp. During this time he used Smythe's research to develop the spells needed to create swamp zombies.

In 1864 he got the chance to try out his newly created magic on a group of Confederate soldiers. These soldiers had entered the swamp to find two runaway slaves. These soldiers never found the slaves. Instead they were slaughtered by Papa Swamp and transformed into swamp zombies. A year later a band of former Confederate soldiers fled into the swamp and encountered Papa Swamp. These men met the horrible fate described in the Keeper's History. After finishing his terrible deeds Papa Swamp went back to his slumbers in the cursed swamp. He was awakened over a century later when a new set of victims arrived.

**Description:** Papa Swamp was once a human being and still retains a vaguely human appearance. His body is bloated from the swamp water it has soaked in over



the centuries and is coated with mold, moss and fungus. Despite its age, the body is still full mobile, extremely strong and difficult to destroy. Papa Swamp is extremely intelligent, powerful and a master of magic.

Because of the horror of his creation and his years of spell casting, Papa Swamp is completely insane by human standards. He is ruthlessly evil and greatly enjoys bringing others into his tormented and terrible world by transforming them. His two main interests are magical research and applying the results of this research to helpless victims. These activities help take the edge of the terrible boredom of his existence. Because of the dullness inherent in living so long, Papa Swamp has taken to slumbering in the swamp to pass the time between the arrival of new victims. So that he will never miss a victim, he has his guardian torso watching from its pole. When people come within its sensory range it awakens Papa Swamp so he can greet his "guests."

Despite the boredom of his existence Papa Swamp has no desire to have it come to an end. Hence, he will be particularly vicious and clever in combat. If people wander into his area he will observe them from a hiding place. If the people seem weak, he will take them prisoner, experiment on them and transform them into swamp zombies or skull wraiths. If the people seem to be potential threats he will act against them using his swamp zombies and skull wraiths. While his servants are keeping his opponents busy he will use his spells to attack his enemies and to protect himself from them. He will use Shriveling and Dread Curse of Azathoth as his offensive spells and Deflect Harm to protect himself from attacks. Once his Magic Points are exhausted, he will enter into physical combat. If he believes that his existence is threatened, he will try to escape. If he cannot escape, he will attempt to bargain for his continued existence.

He is almost completely immune to impaling weapons, taking only 1 point per hit from such weapons. He also takes only half damage from other weapons.

He must spend most of his time in swamp water or begin to dry up. He will lose 1 point of CON permanently for each hour he spends out of swamp water. If his CON reaches 0, he ceases to exist. Unless he dries out or is destroyed, he will continue to exist indefinitely.

### **Papa Swamp, Wizard**

STR	19	DEX	10	INT	17
CON	22	APP	N/A	POW	20
SIZ	14	SAN	0	EDU	18

Move: 6

HP: 18

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 for seeing Papa Swamp.

Armor: None, but impaling weapons do 1 point of damage and all others do half

damage.

**Weapon:** Fist 65%, 1D3+1D6, Knife 60% 1D4+2+1D6, Staff 56% 1D8+1D6

**Skills:** Bargain 65%, Fast Talk 25%, Hide 45%, History 45%, Listen 45%, Natural History 55%, Navigate 30%, Occult 80%, Persuade 25%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 55%, Track 25%, Speak English 95%, Speak Spanish 75%, Latin 30%

**Spells:** Create Swamp Zombie, Create Guardian Torso, Create Skull Wraith, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Shriveling, Elder Sign, Deflect Harm.

### **Swamp Zombies**

**Description:** The swamp zombie is the product of particularly vile magic. They are like normal zombies in most respects, however they are considerably more intelligent. Like normal zombies, they are almost completely immune to impaling weapons, taking only 1 point per hit from such weapons. They also take only half damage from other weapons.

The magic used to create a swamp zombie gives it the point of POW needed to animate it. While the zombie has little in the way of will, they do have near human intelligence. Thus, they are able to engage in intelligent action, such as using weapons and avoiding obvious dangers. This intelligence does not include any of the skills possessed by the victim from whom the zombie was created, since the victim's spirit has been replaced by the point of POW from the creating wizard. The swamp zombie does retain some faint memories as well as the victim's basic motor skills ("muscle memory") and these remnants enable the zombie to carry out commands and fight. The memory traces sometimes cause odd behavior. For example, a swamp zombie who was created from a writer might "write" on leaves with his fingers. The spell used to create a swamp zombie provides it with the ability to communicate, albeit in a limited manner. A swamp zombie speaks in the native language of the victim it was created from at 5% X INT. Even if the swamp zombie does not speak the same language as its creator, the creator will be able to make his commands known.

In combat a swamp zombie can fight with weapons, including firearms. These weapons are generally used at the base percentages for humans. A swamp zombie, like a normal zombie, is extremely difficult to destroy. Unlike a normal zombie, a swamp zombie must spend most of its time in swamp water or they begin to dry up. A swamp zombie loses 1 point of CON permanently for each hour it spends out of swamp water. If a swamp zombie's CON reaches 0, it ceases to exist. Unless a swamp zombie dries out or is destroyed, it will continue to exist indefinitely. If its creator dies, it will lose all motivation and simply wander aimlessly. Such zombies will not resist being attacked.

Swamp zombies 1-9 were once Confederate soldiers who went into the swamps looking for runaway slaves. Instead they found "Papa Swamp" and terrifying deaths. Swamp zombies 10-15 were the soldiers who turned to banditry. Swamp zombies 16-19 were members of the university team. These zombies were Daniel Ricker, Marilyn Frie, Fred Draker, and Wilbur Brown.

**Swamp Zombies, Malign Spawn of Cursed Swamp**

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
STR	3D6X1.5	15-17	10	24	18	14	17	20	9	14	18
CON	3D6X1.5	15-17	17	15	16	14	18	23	9	12	17
SIZ	3D6	10-11	12	14	17	13	9	8	11	11	10
INT	2D6	7	9	6	6	6	7	8	5	5	7
POW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DEX	2D6	7	5	11	10	6	6	12	8	2	4
HP		13-14	15	15	17	14	14	16	10	12	14
Weapon			S	R	R	B	B	R	B	R	B
Damage Bonus		+1D4		+1D6	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	0	+1D4	+1D4

Characteristics	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	#16	#17	#18	#19
STR	11	18	20	20	18	20	11	12	18	13
CON	18	20	24	21	15	11	11	20	15	11
SIZ	12	7	11	13	10	13	11	7	10	12
INT	5	5	2	7	2	5	9	7	10	7
POW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DEX	7	11	10	10	6	7	5	8	9	6
HP	15	14	18	17	13	12	11	14	13	12

Weapon	B	R	R	R	B	R	N	N	N	N
Damage Bonus	0	+1 D4	+1 D4	+1 D6	+1 D6	+1 D6	0	0	+1 D4	+1 D4

Move: 6

Weapon: All can punch at 50% 1D3+damage bonus, some are armed with weapons.

B=Bayonet 25%, 1D4+2+damage bonus.

S=Sabre 15%, 1D8+1+damage bonus.

C=Rifle (club)25% 1D8+damage bonus.

N=None

Armor: None, but impaling weapons do 1 point of damage and all others do half damage.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see a swamp zombie.

### Skull Wraith

Description: Skull Wraiths are created by the use of the Create Skull Wraith spell described below. The skull wraith is "based" in the skull of the victim and when disturbed the skull wraith seems to flow out of the eye sockets like a foul vapor. Once the skull wraith forms it looks like a horribly distorted ghostly skull. They fly about with great speed but must remain within 50 meters of its skull.

Skull wraiths are not always completely under control of their creator. Because of the horror of their condition and the hatred they almost certainly feel towards their creator, they are often inclined to rebel. In order to cause a skull wraith to obey a command the creator must match his POW against half of the skull wraith's POW on the resistance table. If the roll fails, the skull wraith will do as it wills until control can be reasserted. If the roll succeeds the skull wraith will carry out the order. If the creator of the skull wraith rolls a 00, the skull wraith will break free of the spell and attack the creator attempting to destroy him.

Because of the horror of their creation and existence, skull wraiths are prone to acts of terrible violence against the living. Because of this they will tend to attack people who have the misfortune of encountering them.

Skull wraiths can be destroyed by defeating them in combat or by destroying their skull. The skulls are surprisingly difficult to destroy and have a number of Hit Points equal to their POW. Skull wraiths only have INT and POW, both of which are rolled on 3D6.

A skull wraith can journey up to 100 yards from its skull. They are somewhat aware of what goes on around their skulls and will be drawn to investigate. In all likelihood they will attack what they encounter.



**Combat:** Skull wraiths are not solid, corporeal entities and are not vulnerable to physical weapons. A skull wraith attacks by matching its POW against the victim's CON. If the skull wraith succeeds, the victim loses 1D6-1 points of CON. The attack looks like the skull is biting and ramming at the victim and it causes visible wounds. The victim will regain 1 point of CON each week if he survives. If the skull wraith loses the contest it loses 1 point of its POW. If it runs out of POW it dissipates and goes on to its ultimate fate. Skull wraiths can also be harmed by magical attacks that affect POW. Skull wraiths do not regain lost POW points. When the creator of a skull wraith dies, the skull wraith will be free to go on to its fate.

### Skulls Wraiths, the Restless Dead

Characteristic	Roll	Average	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
INT	3D6	10-11	12	11	12	13	10	9
POW	3D6	10-11	13	14	12	10	9	7

Sanity Loss: Seeing a skull wraith costs 1/1D8 Sanity points.

### Guardian Torso

**Description:** A guardian torso is the product of particularly cruel magic. A guardian torso is created from a specially prepared human torso which is kept horribly alive through the magic used to create it. A guardian torso consists of a human torso and head. The body has no limbs. The guardian torso is not particularly dangerous (except for its potential to cause insanity) since it lacks any means of using weapons.

A Guardian torsos serves its creator by watching an area and informing its creator via magical means when events take place in its domain. This ability enables the torso to communicate with its creator from up to 1,000 meters away. This communication is very basic and conveys fairly limited information, such as the bare fact that the torso hears or sees something that has alerted it. Because of their lack of limbs, they can never leave their posts (literally) and the magic used to create them enhances their senses. Hence they make ideal sentries.

A guardian torso is an efficient guardian but is typically created as a particularly vile means of torturing someone who has earned the creator's hatred. Guardian torsos retain their full intelligence and memory so they are aware of their terrible condition but unable to do anything about it.

Because of the magic used in the spell a guardian torso will not die of natural causes. The only way a guardian torso can perish is by violence or by the death of its creator. Needless to say, a guardian torso will crave death like nothing else.

Unfortunately for the guardian torso, the spell used to create it prevents it from disobeying its master and seeking its own death.

### Guardian Torso, Awful Half Beings

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages	Statistics
CON	3D6	10-11	11
SIZ	1D6	3	4
INT	3D6	5-6	7
POW	3D6	10-11	11
HP		7	8

Move: 0

Average Damage Bonus: n/a.

Weapons: None.

Armor: None.

Skills: Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 65%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a guardian torso.

## New Spells

### Curse Swamp

This spell is cast upon a small area of swamp (about 20 yards by 20 yards) and transforms it into a cursed area. Before the spell can be cast, two human bodies must be hacked apart and thrown into the swamp. These remains must be left to rot for a week. After this week, the caster must pour at least 10 liters of human blood into the swamp while chanting. This part of the casting requires 12 Magic points and 1D6 Sanity points. Once this part of the casting is complete, the caster must take a human skull and engrave it with the required arcane symbols and put 3 points of POW into it. This skull must be cast into the swamp while the final part of the ritual is finished. After the skull is cast into the swamp, the swamp area is effectively cursed and ready to begin producing Swamp Zombies. If the skull is removed from the area of the spell, the spell will be broken and the area will no longer be cursed. Since the skull is in a swamp, it will be fairly difficult to find.

### Create Swamp Zombie

This spell requires a prepared area of cursed swamp, as per the Curse Swamp spell, as well as one or more human bodies. The bodies must be freshly dead (still warm) and intact enough to allow them to move once they have been re-animated. The bodies must be splashed with warm human blood and then submerged in the cursed swamp. After the bodies are submerged, the spell must be cast. The spell costs 1D10 Sanity Points to cast and must be cast over a period of 7 days. Each day the caster must spend at least an hour conducting the ritual by the side of the swamp. Each ritual takes 3 Magic Points per corpse being re-animated. After 21 Magic Points are invested into each corpse, they will return to a semblance of life and claw their

way out of the swamp to do their master's bidding.

### **Create Guardian Torso**

This spell requires a living human body. While the spell is being cast, the caster must remove the victim's limbs without killing him. This process will cost the victim 1/1D10 Sanity Points. The caster expends 6 magic points and then must remove the abdomen of the victim. The magic keeps the victim alive through the process which costs him an additional 1/1D10 Sanity Points. The caster must then mount the torso on a sturdy pole and invest 1 point of POW into the torso. This casting costs the caster 1D10 Sanity Points. When the spell is completed, the victim is kept horribly alive. The victim loses 1/1D10 per day spent as a Guardian Torso until he goes completely mad. At that point the victim becomes the loyal guardian torso of its creator.

### **Create Skull Wraith**

In order to cast this spell, the caster must have a living victim and a pot of molten gold. This gold must be prepared before the spell is cast and imbued with 6 Magic Points from the caster. The spell also requires 1 point of POW and 1D10 Sanity Points. As the spell is cast, the caster must cut off the head of the victim and then carefully remove the skin and muscle from the skull. The skull is then carefully cleaned of blood and gore. After the skull is cleaned, the caster must apply the molten gold to the skull and form the required arcane symbols. At this point, the caster must match his POW against the victim. If he succeeds, the victim will be transformed into a skull wraith who is doomed to serve the caster. If the victim wins, the spell fails, the caster still loses the point of POW and the victim passes on to true death.

### **Mythos Texts**

**Obscuridad Libro (Dark Book)**-in Spanish, written by Ferdinand Sanchez, 1641. Only six copies of this book exist. There were originally twelve copies made between 1641 and 1702, but six of them were destroyed over the years. One copy is known to be in the Vatican Library and another is owned by a private museum in California. This book contains extended, surprisingly coherent discussions of some aspects of the Mythos. *Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; spell multiplier X1. The book contains the spell to create an Elder Sign.*

**Notes on the Principles of Violent Magicks**-in Latin, written by Aleister Smythe, 1727. Only one copy of this book exists. This book contains an extensive series of notes on magic involving violence as well as brief discussions of the Mythos. The book is a handwritten volume on high quality parchment and bound with fine leather. *Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; spell multiplier X3. The book contains the Dread Curse of Azathoth, Shriveling, and Deflect Harm.*

## **Players' Handouts**

### **Handout #1**

From *Obscure Legends of the Old South, 1918* by Reginald Peirce-

One particularly unusual legend tells the tale of a beast known as "Papa Swamp." This being is supposed to have once been a man. Transformed by terrible and dark magic, "Papa Swamp" is supposed to be a terrifying mixture of human, alligator, serpent, and swamp water. This being is reputed to have slaughtered many people in 1730. To this day, it is said that some of those who vanish in the swamps of Florida were victims of "Papa Swamp."

The book *Unsolved Murders Of Old America* can be found in many libraries and is still available in some large book stores. Despite the fact that it was written by a former radio talk show personality, it is surprisingly accurate and well written.



**Handout #2**

From *Unsolved Murders Of Old America* , 1994 by Daniel Barker-

A particularly gruesome series of killings were reputed to have occurred in what is now Florida. In 1730 a madman known as "Papa Swamp" is said to have emerged from the swamp and killed several people. According to some stories passed down over the years, the victims were literally ripped apart. In some cases, it is said, their hearts were pulled from their chests and their skulls crushed. Unfortunately, this story cannot be adequately verified since there is no record of the location where the victims were buried. However, if the story is correct it is one of the earliest mass murders by a madman in North America. According to some of the stories, "Papa Swamp" was a man named "Aleister Smythe." Smythe, so the stories go, came to Florida from Virginia and had a house built in the swamp...

### **Handout #3**

From *Collected Diaries Volume III, 1973* edited by Carmen Dion, Andre Porter and Pat Reaves-

Entries from the diary of Eric Cornwall, Virginian plantation owner.

Entry for July 21, 1708

...I purchased several fine slaves today, including a healthy and surprisingly intelligent slave boy named "John." The intelligent ones are always a mixed blessing. Smart slaves are easier to teach, but they often get ideas that lead to whippings. As my field bosses say, a whipped slave just don't work as well for a while, so I would rather spare the lash whenever possible...

Entry for August 12, 1713

...One of the overseers caught some of the slaves conducting some sort of pagan ritual. He caned them good and made sure that they would think twice before practicing that sort of devil worship in God's country. I am worried about the influence of these unChristian ideas on the younger slaves. The slaves can be saved, but some of them, especially John, are showing too much interest in these matters...

Entry for April 14, 1714

...A new neighbor has moved into the old Hempstead place. His name is Aleister Smythe. Karl Hempstead and his whole family fell victim to some sort of pox or other bad sickness just a short month before. The new fellow seems friendly enough, but I am not sure just how he came to take possession of the Hempstead lands. The local officials seem satisfied with his story about being a close relative of Mrs. Hempstead, but something about him seems amiss...

Entry for October 21, 1715

...One of my overseers caught some of the slaves engaged in another one of those vile pagan rituals. This time, he caught several of the young slaves involved. I have decided to sell off these troublesome slaves...

Entry for October 24, 1715

...Mr. Smythe came by the house today to make an offer on John. I tried to talk him into taking some of the other slaves as well, but he was only interested in John. Smythe still worries me, although he seems affable enough. Although my wife says

it was just a trick of the light, I could have sworn I saw him sneering and leering in church during the service...

Entry for May 3, 1723

...Two of my slaves have gone missing. The other slaves say that the "black man" came in the night for them. They seem to be very afraid of this "black man." When I asked who this black man was and why they were so afraid of one of their kind, one of the older men said he had many names and that he was not one of any man's kind, be he a black man or a white man. For some reason I think that the slaves were sincere, so I held their punishment to a merciful four lashes apiece. One of the cotton buyers told me that Smythe was selling no cotton this year and that when he rode up to his place, he saw that Smythe had just let the fields go. Apparently he has also sold off most of his slaves. I grow more and more suspicious of him...

Entry for March 4, 1724

...Tom Tremaine from down the road stopped buy today. He said that two of his cows and one of his best slaves had gone missing. He told me that his dogs commenced to howling last night around midnight, but he had paid them no head since he thought they had been riled up by a raccoon. Some of the folk are whispering that a witch might be in the area, but that is just superstitious nonsense, or so I hope...

Entry for February 12, 1715

...David came to me today and said that he and some of the younger men had been keeping an eye on Mr. Smythe and that they had seem him in the woods carrying on yelling "yogath" and "gnarlsteps" and doing other strange deeds. He said that he and the boys were going to put the question to Mr. Smythe and see what ill deeds he was perpetrating. I urged caution, but the young can be so hot headed at times...

Entry for February 14, 1715

...I found out this morning that David and his fellows had gone to Smythe's house last night and demanded answers. David still isn't sure what happened, but he has some nasty burn marks on his chest from something. He says that Smythe put a hex on him, but I am not sure what to think. David said that he and his fellows caught Smythe and John prancing around in the woods conducting some sort of pagan ritual. He said that he missing slaves were there, too, but they were standing blank-eyed. David said that when he and his boys rushed into the circle, Smythe set the slaves on them. David told me that they shot the slaves after giving fair warning, but the slaves just kept on coming. He said that they smelled like they were dead so they all ran away.

**Entry for February 15, 1715**

...Myself and some of the other men and boys rode out to Smythe's house with loaded muskets. We confronted him at the door of his house and asked about the slaves, When he could give us no answer to our satisfaction, we forced our way in. I cannot fully recount the horrors we saw that day, but suffice it to say that I shall never forget those dead men who were still walking. We fired on Smythe and wounded him as he ran from us. Though we gave fast pursuit he was able to escape us. Thwarted, we returned to the house and set fire to it, burning the dead inside it. We never did find John, so I can only assume that he escaped along with his master...

