

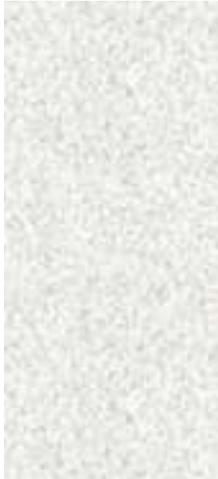
Song of the Starwalkers

an introductory adventure for Call of Cthulhu

Aaron M. Sturgill, © 2012



Table of Contents



<i>Introduction</i>	02
<i>Keeper Information</i>	03
<i>The Story</i>	12
<i>Source Material.</i>	22



Introduction

“Song of the Starwalkers” is an adventure designed for a small group of present-day investigators. Set in the fictional town of Armitage, Massachusetts, it is intended as a first introduction to the Cthulhu Mythos.

The story is primarily concerned with the machinations of a pair of small-time sorcerers in a rural New England town, and the horrors which they have visited upon the community. Despite obvious similarities, this scenario was not originally inspired by “A Victim of the Art”, by Dennis Detwiller. (This author did not purchase *Delta Green: Countdown* until after most of the scenario had already been written.) That being said, *Countdown* is a phenomenal book, and “Song of the Starwalkers” was originally intended to kick off a *Delta Green* campaign centered around the Hastur Mythos.

Keeper Information

Introduction

Joshua White, an upstanding representative of the deadbeat drug addict community of Armitage, has successfully summoned a Byakhee with the help of his friend Zachary Grissom, himself an amateur occult adept.

Kept in one of several abandoned barns on the White farm, the Byakhee has spent several months in service to Joshua and his petty whims – not to mention feeding on the residents of Armitage.

Josh and Zach have accrued a modicum of esoteric power since their first success, and also carry significant influence with certain curious (and/or rebellious) youth around town. This influence has caused the formation of a kind of loose cult, centered around the two friends' esoteric machinations.

In conjunction with these events, the Phantom of Truth (*Delta Green: Countdown*, p. 202) has made several appearances to the residents of Armitage.



Background – Armitage

Being a small rural community (population approximately 1000), the residents of Armitage often consider it to be a safe haven against a (perceived?) metropolitan evil – distanced from the Big City, they are distrusting of new ways and modern influences. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that many of the young people raised here choose to abandon the nest, in search of more exciting and advanced environment – rarely to return.

When someone does come back, it is often for one of two reasons:

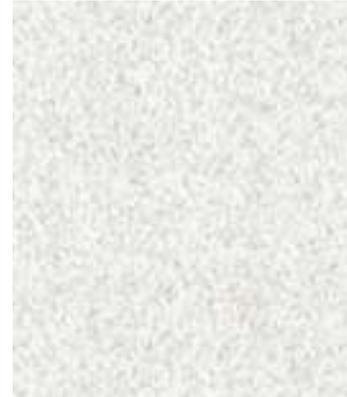
- △ To honor their family and community roots – possibly by putting down roots of their own and helping to strengthen the community by their involvement.
- △ To retreat and detoxify from a life of selfish excess.

This leaves Armitage with a sizable community of ruffians, malcontents, and drug addicts – including Tamara Green, and Joshua White.

Joshua White

White left home at the age of twenty to pursue a career in music in Boston. Falling in with the worst crowd that would have him, it wasn't long before he found himself broke, alone, and without foundation or direction. Moving home to his family's farm seemed to him the only course of action. He was twenty-two when he returned home.

Of course, he treated his homecoming as an opportunity to continue his hedonism with the financial net provided by his mother. Most of his 'worldly' habits remained – drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity – and no small interest in the occult.



Zachary Grissom

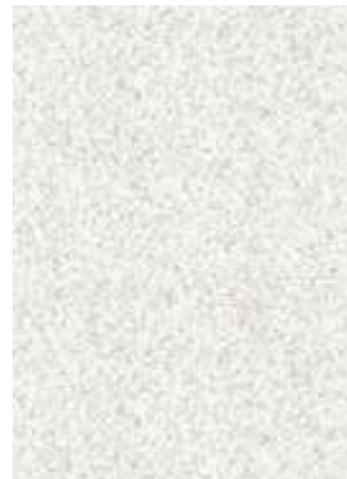
Always at Joshua's side was his childhood friend, a young man named Zachary Grissom, whose propensity for esoteric experimentation nicely complemented Joshua's high interest in occult research. The two were constantly experimenting with rites and rituals either derived from Josh's researches, or concocted through Zach's fevered imagination and psycho-spiritual sensitivity.

Zach attended Miskatonic University for two years, majoring in art history, before dropping out. During his brief tenure, he made the acquaintance of several students in the science department, whose hobby it was (and is) to concoct new and improved drugs, for recreational and esoteric use.

Ketamine

It is worth noting that the substance of choice for Josh and Zach is a dissociative anesthetic called ketamine. (See related article under Source Material, p. XX.) Also known as K, Vitamin-K, or Special K (among a plethora of street slang), this drug is commonly known to give hallucinatory effects similar to PCP, DXM, and LSD, but is slightly more user-friendly (less debilitating and addictive, and fewer long-term side effects).

While under the effects of K, Josh and Zach have experienced certain telling visions – images of night terrors descending from a star-filled sky. (See pp. 4 – 5 for the fruition of these visions.) In the past year or so, K has also become the favorite pastime of the local ruffians, most of whom are under Josh's and Zach's influence.





The Cult

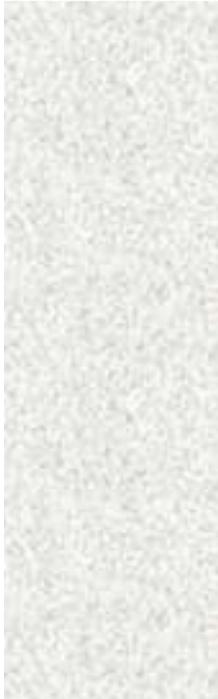
Finding that Armitage supported a sizable community of restless and rebellious youth, Josh and Zach quickly gained favor with the misfits, establishing themselves as quasi-leaders and figures of respect. Making use of their Big City contacts, they have been able to distribute rare hallucinogens and other illicit substances to the children of Armitage – often under the auspices of expanding their horizons, and always with ulterior motives, knowing that they can easily influence the impressionable youth.

The Misfits (or, The Artistic Underground)

Armitage is home to a surprising underground music scene – the first sign of which will be all the goth/punk/emo/indie kids walking around the seemingly quiet burg. By day, they mostly shuffle between Jimmy’s Gas Stop and the Public Library, as well as numerous secluded spots, such as the cemetery and bike path. But, since Kresge’s opened, they have a place to congregate after eight o’clock. (Kresge’s will let anyone in, although the owners strictly regulate the alcohol they serve.)

Surprisingly, a total of three rock bands call Armitage home. Mostly made up of students from North Fork High School, there are also several adult performers – including Zach Grissom, who has played jazz guitar since his days in middle school.

To the listeners’ ears, the music of these groups has taken a noticeably weird turn – dissonant, atonal, and arrhythmic, much of it drifts into the dubious territory of ‘noise rock’. Interestingly, many of the musicians are in Josh’s circle (cult) – and nearly all of them are supplied with various drugs by him and Zach.



Local Bands

A handful of notable bands that regularly perform in the vicinity (tri-county area) of Armitage.

△ Stability is Relative
△ Twilight Grey

△ A Mask That Is Not a Mask
△ The Entering King

△ The Burning Wheel
△ The Dream in Yellow

Granduncle's Whistle

Shortly after Joshua returned home to live with his family, his granduncle's health declined sharply, leading him to bequeath certain items to his kin – among them a small, enchanted whistle.

An occult aficionado and Freemason of advanced degree, Joshua's granduncle came into possession of an enchanted whistle that, when blown within the context of an appropriate ceremony, would call down a creature known as a Byakhee. This was only one of many artifacts (in addition to several potent tomes) that Joshua inherited from his elder relative.



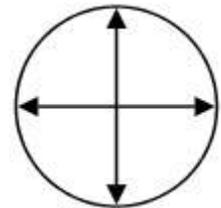
The Ritual



[Summon/Bind Byakhee – Call of Cthulhu, p. 244.]

Naturally, Josh showed the whistle to his friend Zach, who somehow sensed it to be powerful. After some weeks of browsing his grandfather's small library, Josh was able to dig up a ritual that uses it.

Among the tomes passed on to Joshua was *Cultes des Goules*, a French text dating from 1702. (*Call of Cthulhu*, p. 95 – also see description on p. XX of this document.) The book describes a significant French cult which practiced necromancy, necrophagy and necrophilia. "Song of the Starwalkers" is only one of several powerful spells it contains – the investigators may come to consider it a blessing that Josh and Zach only even experimented with this one. (Or did they...?)



The ritual itself is a fairly traditional Hermetic process, requiring the drawing of a magic circle, various cleansings and banishings, and no small amount of chanting. At the climax, the enchanted whistle is incorporated – the sound of which the Byakhee find nearly impossible to ignore.

Josh and Zach succeeded in summoning a Byakhee on their first attempt, just over three months before the investigators arrive.



The Monster

[Byakhee – Call of Cthulhu, p. 150.]

Byakhee are most often summoned by experienced sorcerers (or much more terrible entities) to be used as minions. Fairly base creatures with animalistic impulses and behaviors, they are vicious and cunning, possessed of a horrible visage, and capable of traversing the cold vacuum of space unaided. This, in fact, might be their most valuable use as minions – with the use of spells or artifacts, humans can shield themselves from the effects of space travel and literally ride a bound Byakhee like an intergalactic steed.

It is notably fortunate that Josh and Zach aren't aware of the extent of their minion's abilities. When the creature descended from the night sky, they were surprised and frightened, as if they had not even expected a result from their work.



Night Terror

Cultes des Goules doesn't go into much detail on the Byakhee's origin or usage, outside of the French death-cult. So, not really knowing what to do with the creature, Josh and Zach have kept it hidden in an abandoned barn on the White Farm. Of course, crafty as the creature is, it hasn't always stayed hidden when not under direct supervision. On several occasions (always at night), the monster has escaped from its shabby cage, to prowl the town of Armitage and its surroundings. Also, on more than one occasion, it has left a trail of carnage in its wake.

The Byakhee's primary attack is with its claws – so most of the victims have large slashes across their bodies, with large portions of skin literally ripped from musculature and bone. But sometimes, when enraged (or hungry), it will bite its victims with several rows of serrated teeth that protrude from its crow-like beak, and drain the person's blood.



Of course, a Byakhee beak is almost as big as a human head – which has led detectives and coroners to conclude that a wild animal (such as a tiger or small crocodile) escaped from a nearby zoo and has been terrorizing the community. However, the forensic data doesn't support this. Truthfully, those who have investigated the murders are ultimately perplexed as to the nature of the attacker – especially considering the victims' nearly total blood loss.

Josh and Zach: Motives and Reactions

When the Byakhee first flapped its wings down from the night sky, Josh went a bit mad. Since then, his sole motive has been to cover up the Byakhee and its atrocities.

Zach, on the other hand, realizing the advantages of having such a creature bound to him, now thirsts for more esoteric power. Whereas Josh busies himself with damage control, Zach has redoubled his research and experimentation.



Grary's Investigation

As the owner of a private security firm, John Grary (see below – **Victim #3**) was naturally inclined to pick up where the police left off. He began by questioning a zoologist about the likelihood of bestial perpetrators – which proved to be negligible, given known wildlife in the area, as well as the severe brutality of the killings.

He then began questioning the victim's families and friends, in an attempt to discover if they had any enemies who may have had motive. This, too, proved fruitless. However, Grary was disturbed by the youths' lack of enthusiasm in answering his questions, and continued to pursue this line of inquiry. (His suspicions were exacerbated by the adult family members' general distrust of the older youth in Armitage, such as Josh and Zach.)

Eventually, Grary became directly suspicious of Josh White, whom he knew to be something of a leader among the local misfits. His first direct investigation of White was a perfectly legal requisition of his checkout records at the local library, which indicated Josh's high interest in occult matters. His second approach – a direct search of the White property – wasn't so above-board. This search took place on the night of Monday, April 2nd – only one night before Grary was killed.

Mrs. Grary doesn't know what her husband found that night – but their fight was apparently over John's plan to somehow accuse Josh White of some wrongdoing. (In all of this, Mrs. Grary is remarkably vague; either she was kept out of the loop, or is still trying to cover for her husband, or Josh, or both.)

Although the circumstances would seem to suggest premeditation on the part of the perpetrator(s), the police are still sticking with their escaped animal hypothesis, despite the lack of direct evidence.

Timeline of Events

- △ **August 3rd, 2006:** Joshua White moves back to Armitage to live with his mother, Katherine. Very soon thereafter, he begins his esoteric experiments with the help of his childhood friend, Zachary Grissom.
- △ **December 22nd, 2006:** Josh and Zach succeed in summoning a Byakhee, with the help of Josh's granduncle's enchanted whistle and the text, *Cultes des Goules*.
- △ **December 28th, 2006:** The Byakhee claims its first victim – a source of sustenance, in fact – although some would say it procured a sacrifice when none was provided.
- △ **February 17th, 2007:** The second victim is taken. Several days later, John Grary begins a private investigation into the pair of murders.
- △ **Wednesday, April 4th, 2007:** John Grary becomes the Byakhee's third victim – this time, the result of Zach Grissom's direct intent to protect himself and Josh.
- △ **Friday, April 6th, 2007:** Agent XX arrives in Armitage to commence an investigation into supposed serial killings.

Keepers' Recap

Josh and Zach, our youthful would-be sorcerers, 'accidentally' summoned a Byakhee. However, failing to provide it with a sacrifice, it had little choice but to take one from the community.

It has since remained bound to both Josh and Zach, who have kept it secreted within an abandoned barn on the White Farm. Both Josh and Zach went a bit crazy over the creature's sudden appearance – however, they each have had differing responses to the situation (see previous page – **Josh and Zach: Motives and Reactions.**)

The Phantom of Truth

[*The Phantom of Truth* – Delta Green: Countdown, p. 202.]

This being, who judges a city's value to Hastur and gauges its proximity to Carcosa, has appeared to several people related to the victims. None of these individuals will readily admit to the visions, as they believe themselves to have been hallucinating. (Persuade rolls, etc. would apply during questioning.)

- △ To Gareth and Maureen Peller (see p. XX), the masked, grey-robed figure stood alone, apart from the crowd at their son's funeral.
- △ Mrs. Grary saw him in her bathroom mirror, in a moment of unprecedented despair. Of course, when she turned around, there was no one there.

The Victims

Initially finding no obvious link between the victims, the investigators may believe the killings to be random. Which they are, to a point... but then there's the following:

- △ Each victim was taken while walking alone, at night, in or around Armitage.
- △ The third victim, John Grary, had begun an investigation of his own into the two previous killings – the implications of which will be obvious.

Victim No. 1

Name: Wade Humes

Date of Birth: February 26th, 1988

Killed: December 28th, 2006

Found: December 28th, 2006

Cause of Death: Massive blood loss.

Victim Profile and Events Leading to the Murder:

Senior at North Fork High School; artist (sketching and painting). Employed as a clerk at the Armitage Public Library for less than a year. Dating Tamara Stephens. Known as a sensitive and caring son, brother, and boyfriend (if a bit flaky when it came to his job).

Recently, Wade had begun experimenting with various psychedelics – ostensibly, to enhance his artistic expression. (Tamara Stephens will grudgingly admit to this, and to being a partial impetus for his behavior – although she will also point a finger at Josh and Zach.)

The Humes' house is on Church Street, just behind the APL. It was Wade's habit to walk all over town late at night – to which the police can attest, since they questioned him on several occasions. (Until his death, however, they had no reason to suspect any illegal activity.) His body was found on Beachwood Drive – a dark, secluded street with only a handful of houses spread rather far apart.

The brutal nature of the crime sent shockwaves throughout the surrounding towns. Humes' head and spine were found hundreds of feet from the rest of his body, which bore curious bite marks on the shoulder and leg, and was nearly completely drained of blood. The skull had been smashed (or torn) open, and much of the brain matter was missing.

The police came to suspect some kind of wild animal attack, but nothing more specific was ever established. The case remains open.



Victim No. 2

Name: Andrew Peller

Date of Birth: March 15th, 1983

Killed: February 16th, 2007

Found: February 17th, 2007

Cause of Death: Massive blood loss.

Victim Profile and Events Leading to the Murder:

Twenty-four years old; college dropout; musician (guitarist in the group The Burning Wheel). Known drug user and multiple offender, although well-liked by those that knew him. Local music teacher.

An only child, he is survived by his parents, Gareth and Maureen, who are utterly devastated by his death. He was found on the Armitage Memorial Bicycle Trail (a bicycle path running across most of Middlesex County, and part of Worcester), about a thirty minute walk from his house on West Main Street. The corpse was in pretty much the same condition as that of Victim No. 1 (see previous page).

Victim No. 3

Name: John Grary

Date of Birth: July 9th, 1971

Killed: April 4th, 2007 (early morning)

Found: April 4th, 2007 (late morning)

Cause of Death: Massive blood loss.

Victim Profile and Events Leading to the Murder:

Middle-age family man; self-employed owner of Grary Security. (See p. XX, **Grary's Investigation**, for more background on this character.) As related by Mrs. Grary, John stormed out of the house around 11:15 Tuesday evening (April 3rd). His body was discovered around 10:30 on Wednesday morning, by a lumberjack almost two miles outside of town, in a logging area. Although Mr. Grary's head was never found, his mutilated body was caught in a Douglas Fir tree, about forty feet off the ground. Considering the extreme difficulty of dragging a body that high, the current hypothesis is that he was dropped from a helicopter – although this is clearly a significant stretch.

The couple's disagreement was over John's ongoing investigation of the recent killings. A few others know of Grary's investigation, but only his wife is aware of his suspicions: that certain of Armitage's youth may have been responsible for the atrocities.



The Story

A Reunion and a Mystery

On Wednesday April 4th, 2007, the Byakhee claimed its third victim, which prompted the FBI to finally get involved (at the request of the local Sheriff, Dane Cooper). An FBI Special Agent has been dispatched by the Bureau to look into the killings. He (or she) will arrive on Friday April 6th.

On the same day, a reporter from a prominent metropolitan newspaper will arrive to cover the story of the three killings.

Also on that day, Armitage will be hosting a sizable family reunion, at Sportsman's Park, just off of Main Street.



The J. Edgar Hoover Building – FBI Headquarters

Getting the Investigators Involved

In the playtest sessions, the investigators were:

- △ An FBI Special Agent.
- △ A reporter from a Boston newspaper.
- △ A reclusive religious zealot living on the outskirts of Armitage.
- △ An author on a fact-finding expedition, also attending the family reunion (above).

The FBI investigation allows one (or more) of the investigators to be (a) Federal law enforcement agent(s) – as opposed to local law enforcement, since the rest of the campaign isn't set exclusively in Armitage.

The family reunion is simply an excuse to get one or more of the characters back to Armitage. It fits well with the conception of the town as a sort of home away from home – a place of respite for anyone who's become tired of Big City life. The investigator attending the reunion is also related to Tamara Stephens (see pg. XX). (Niece? Sister? Cousin?)

Hopefully, this is sufficient inspiration to give you ideas for getting your investigators involved.

A Town Meeting

As is sometimes necessary in cases where a federal investigation affects a small community, Agent XX has called for a town meeting in Armitage Hall – a small, one-story brick building that serves as a town hall, community meeting room, and police station.

In this meeting (which is probably, but not necessarily, attended by all player characters), we become acquainted with the major characters, both PC and NPC alike.

- △ **Mayor Nancy Clark.** A widow of sixty-three, Mayor Clark is nearing the end of her term as figurehead and town-meeting-organizer. She is genial, but somewhat shallow (and, perhaps, quite ignorant of modern custom and decorum).
- △ **Sheriff Dane Cooper.** Up to now, he has headed up the murder investigations. As of today, he will be assisting Special Agent XX. *[See p. XX for stats.]*
- △ **Mary White.** Single mother of Joshua White, who is otherwise engaged. Her husband died shortly before Joshua moved to Boston, leaving her to manage the family farm. She considers herself an upstanding member of the community, but is very concerned about her son's activities.
- △ **Michael and Deirdre Wallace.** Michael is a nationally published freelance writer; Deirdre is the Director of the Armitage Public Library (p XX). The Wallace family moved to Armitage only four years ago, attracted by its seclusion and atmosphere. They are widely regarded as a meddling, liberal influence within the community.
- △ Like the Wallaces (above), **Sam** and **Melinda Kresge** are often frowned upon for opening the first bar in Armitage (Kresge's – p. XX).
- △ **Tamara Stephens.** Single mother, filling station attendant. Recently moved back in with her parents after a failed 'long-term' relationship, which left her with a one-year-old son, Marcus. She is sweet, kind, and easy to love – but a bit simple. She was dating Wade Humes at the time of his death, and has recently come into contact with Josh White. *[See p. XX for stats.]*

Naturally, in addition to these individuals, the investigators will meet anyone who is anyone in Armitage: pastors, teachers, business owners, and city council members.

Meanwhile...

During (and after) the meeting, Josh and Zach are busy at the White Farm, doing what they do best. They have caught wind of the arrival of a federal agent – and, in their self-righteous arrogance, they believe the best course of action is to summon another Starwalker (Byakhee). They plan to keep the second creature in the same abandoned barn, and hope, if anyone comes looking for it (or them), that the vicious beasts will be more than capable of silencing them.



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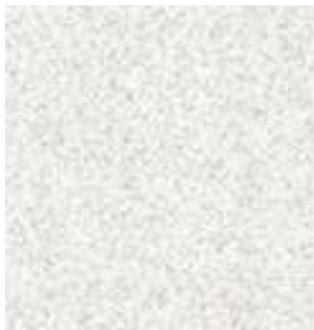
The Investigation Begins

Presumably, the investigators will have reason to gather in order to share information, discuss ideas, and interview members of the community. Technically, this can begin on Friday night – or, they can wait until Saturday morning.

Either way, here are a few of the more important locations in and around Armitage.

Armitage Public Library

The de facto community center of Armitage. Surprising in size and comprehensiveness, considering the population of the town. It is effectively divided into three departments: Juvenile, Young Adult, and Adult, with an extensive media collection and wireless network.



Regularly scheduled events include...

- △ A movie for elementary students, and one for junior high and high school students.
- △ Numerous book discussion groups for various age groups.
- △ A senior citizen exercise class.
- △ Recently, a 'Teen Café', organized by the Young Adult Coordinator, in an effort to keep kids off the streets. Its effectiveness is questionable, since the library (and the Café) are only open until 8:00p.



In the Library, one can find a broad cross-section of Armitage's residents – from the white trash who only make use of the new DVD releases, to the isolated intellectuals (such as XX [Chad's character]) holed up in the reference section, to the teenagers who check their MySpace accounts on the internet terminals after school each day.

Aside from the patrons, the Library staff can provide a telling picture of the town's general attitudes and perspectives.

- △ **Deirdre Wallace** (Director). As mentioned on p. XX, Wallace and her husband, Michael, are often seen as an unhealthy progressive element – newcomers who don't understand the 'old ways', or the needs of a community which prides itself on ethical isolation. In response, the Wallaces (among others) have taken the responsibility of enlightening the community at large with their modern wisdom.
- △ **Hannah Barbary** (Juvenile Coordinator). Proud to be of the 'old guard' – past retirement age, she considers it her duty to stay on until she is no longer able to work, in order to protect the community from people like Deirdre Wallace.
- △ **Rachel Hopkins** (Young Adult Coordinator). A lifelong resident of Armitage (aside from a four-year stint at a university in Boston), Rachel sees her position at the Library as an opportunity to improve the lives of the many disenfranchised youth who inhabit the town. Her numerous teen programs, including the minimally-attended Teen Café, are an attempt to give the youth something positive to do, other than exploring drugs, alcohol, and other dangerous activities.

Jimmy's Gas Stop

James Frederick, Jr. inherited the Gas Stop from his father almost a decade ago. He employs seven or so people from around the community (including Tamara Stephens). A full service automotive shop (two garages) is attached to the convenience store.

Frederick is the quintessential working man. His bottom line is to turn a profit, at the same time as being an upstanding figure in the community. He is particularly concerned with the older youth who fuel the drug traffic in Armitage, and is not unaware of the influence of Josh White and Zach Grissom.



Armitage Baptist Church, Armitage United Methodist

These represent the mainline denominations in Armitage. The ABC has been enjoying a steady rise in attendance, fueled by a committed and vibrant new pastor – Reverend Tony Ericson. Their community involvement is unmatched among the various religious organizations and social clubs.

Meanwhile, the UMC is attended by fewer than thirty people, nearly all of whom are over the age of sixty. Many people attribute this to the church’s wishy-washy leadership, both nationally and locally. The pastor is Mary Harris.



Armitage United Methodist



Armitage Church of Christ, Faith Bible Fellowship

Yes, there are a lot of churches in Armitage. These two represent smaller or independent denominations – and although neither claims the membership of the ABC, many consider the believers in these churches to be significantly more passionate and sincere than those affiliated with the mainline denominations. Those in Faith Fellowship are particularly vibrant – they practice faith healing, among the other gifts of the spirit (in the tradition of the early church, according to the book of Acts).

The Church of Christ is a small building (a renovated one-room schoolhouse) on Depot Street. Faith Fellowship, as a result of its firm conviction against owning property, meets in the elementary school cafeteria (on College Street, behind the library).

Kresge’s

The first establishment to (legally) serve liquor in Armitage, this restaurant and bar opened less than a year ago. Owned by a young couple new to the area, it has been the target of constant protest from various conservative and religious organizations.

The Kresges are close friends with the Wallaces. Although neither would admit to it, the two couples (along with their children) conspire to shine the light of progress and the modern world into the backward recesses of Armitage. It certainly doesn’t hurt the Kresges that there are plenty of folks who are more than eager to patronize their establishment.





Armitage Hall

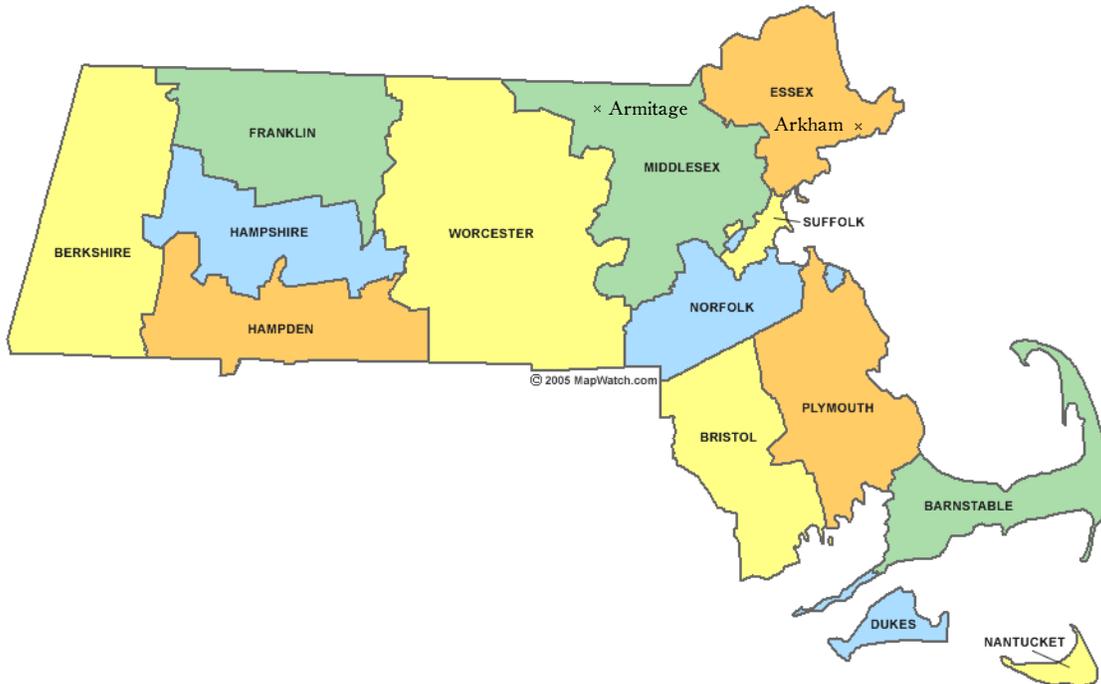
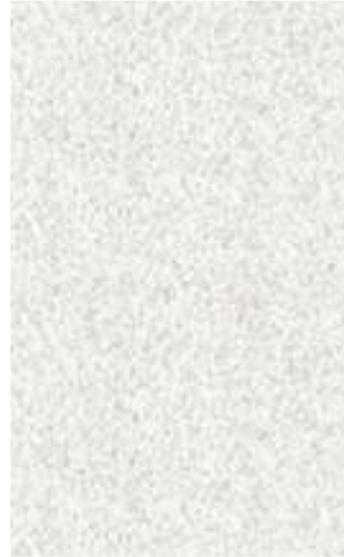
As stated previously, Armitage Hall is a simple, one-story brick affair that serves as town hall, community meeting room, and police station. The few offices attached to the main council chamber are for the Mayor, city council members, and Sheriff Cooper.

Local Law Enforcement

There are six police officers assigned to Armitage (including Sheriff Cooper) – not all of whom live within the city limits. These officers share only two patrol cars.

Armitage is infamous in Middlesex County as a speed trap – and it’s not far from true to say that the police of Armitage have little better to do than generate revenue by ticketing careless motorists. One or both of the town’s patrol cars can almost always be found camped out in one of three locations: at Jimmy’s Gas Stop (on the north side), at Tharp Bridge (on the south side), or on Depot Street (on the east side).

This is not to say that law enforcement is disinterested in protecting the community – but for the most part, they are ignorant of (or powerless to stop) the true threats (such as Josh White and Zach Grissom).



The Crime Scenes

Given the elapsed time since the first two murders, the first two crime scenes are picked clean. They are little more than what they appear to be: secluded spots that a number of people found inviting for midnight strolls.

The site of John Grary's murder is of particular interest because of its location and disposition. It is unique because:

- △ Grary was found nearly two miles outside of Armitage, in a densely wooded area, unsuited for long walks in the dark.
- △ And, obviously... he was up a tree. Dangling, as if dropped – not as if carried up the tree and placed there (which would have been all but impossible without the use of a crane or cherry picker – both unsuitable for work in the dark or in dense woods).

Of course, Grary's body is currently in the County Morgue (minus the head and spine). A cursory observation will reveal the following (or the investigators could just listen to the coroner):

- △ The torso bears two deep puncture wounds, as if two large scythes or sharpened winches had been thrust from opposing angles and forced or pulled upward. Like most of the other elements of this case, the police and the coroner have no viable explanation for these wounds.
- △ The third victim, like the previous two, had nearly all of his blood drained – presumably by a set of serrated teeth marks, from a mouth about the size of a crocodile. However, the bite marks are far from a match.



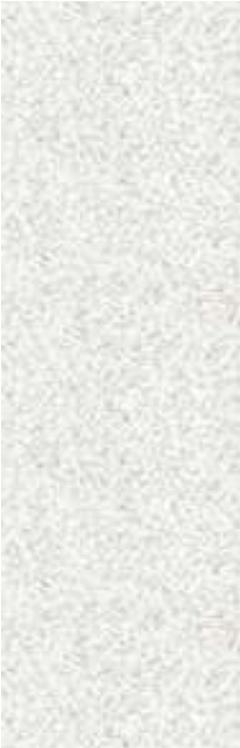
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Forwarding the Plot

After talking to various people in the town, it will be clear to the investigators that, although each person knows (or thinks they know) something different, nearly everyone falls into one of two categories: the conservative 'old guard', who wish to preserve traditional moral values – or the liberal 'new blood', who think it's time for a change (whatever form that might take).

Several individuals can provide useful information – much of which points (directly or indirectly) to Josh and Zach. (The following list is not meant to be exhaustive – merely inspirational.)

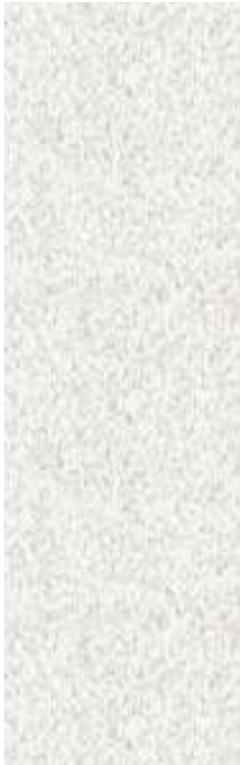




Townspeople

- △ **Jimmy Frederick**, owner of Jimmy’s Gas Stop, is concerned about the kids who buy energy beverages late at night. He makes suggestive but unsubstantiated comments about their nocturnal activities. (“Damned potheads...”)
- △ At the Library, the **Juvenile** and **Young Adult Coordinators** are vocal about their concern for the children, and about their specific distrust of certain young men (such as Josh and Zach) – while the **Director, Deirdre Wallace** (see p. XX), seems blissfully (and, perhaps, intentionally) ignorant of any potential problem.
- △ In the religious community, two of the **Pastors** are helpful: **Tony Ericson**, of the Baptist Church, prides himself on his involvement with the youth, and has observed several disturbing trends in the several years since his installation. In addition, **Phillip Bryden** of Faith Fellowship strongly believes that a ‘day of reckoning’ has arrived. He and his flock have held numerous prayer vigils especially for the youth of Armitage, whom he sees as teetering on the brink, able to either take hold of their destiny and create a better world – or else to sink further into wanton ignorance and excess.

Families

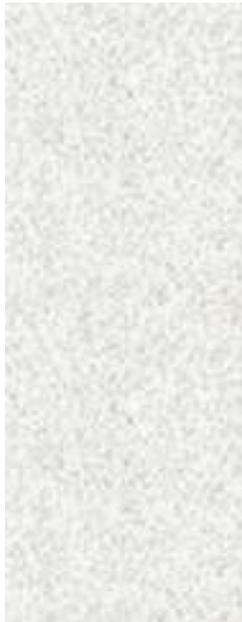
- △ The families of the victims are of particular interest, of course – with the exception of the **Humes** family, which comes across as a tad shallow, even to the point of not missing their departed son. **Gareth** and **Maureen Peller**, although utterly and sincerely destroyed by their son’s death, will be the most willing to speak with the investigators. If the investigators gain their trust (or forcibly manipulate them, etc.), they may even mention the strange figure in grey robes who appeared briefly at the funeral (The Phantom of Truth – see p. XX). **Mrs. Samantha Grary** will grudgingly speak with the Federal Agent, but probably not to anyone else. She has not yet begun to come to grips with the emotional upheaval she has felt in the past few days. (See p. XX for more about Mrs. Grary.)
 - △ **Katherine White** is deeply concerned about her son, Joshua. If the investigators get on her good side (which John Grary did not), she will do two things: **(a)** offhandedly mention Joshua’s granduncle’s recent death, and the strange inheritance that he left; and **(b)** invite them to take a look at Josh’s things, as well as the farm proper.
- 

Covering Old Ground

At some point (especially after speaking with Samantha Grary), the investigators will discover that their investigation is following closely in John Grary's footsteps. Here are some conclusions that they will find inescapable.

- △ No animal – wild, or escaped from any zoo or preserve, could have killed these people with such purpose and precision. This they will know without consulting any veterinarian or zoologist.
- △ After speaking to a small handful of townspeople, it will be obvious that most do not trust anyone between the ages of nineteen and twenty-six. They consider the older youth of Armitage to be uniformly degenerate ingrates, who pursue their own lusts with self-destructive abandon.

It won't be difficult for the investigators to see the conclusions that Grary drew.



Something New

John Grary was unable to gain access to the White Farm before his untimely demise. If he had, he would have uncovered some very interesting data on Josh. (This information is, of course, available to the investigators, should they avail themselves of it – honestly or otherwise.)

- △ **The Granduncle's Inheritance:** Josh and Zach have extensively perused the various ancient texts and artifacts left by his elder relative. Among these, *Cultes des Goules* and the enchanted whistle are certainly the most curious – as is the fact that they are found together, secreted away in Josh's bedroom, away from the rest of the library (which is in a small storage shed adjacent to the house).
- △ **Josh's Journal:** Not long ago (shortly before he summoned the Byakhee), Josh began keeping a secret journal, chronicling his researches, experiments, and activities with Zach. (See p. XX for player handouts from Josh's journal.) Interestingly, it seems that Zach was unaware of this log, because in addition to recording the ritual that summoned the Byakhee, Josh repeatedly admits to a growing distrust of Zach and his motives.

Closing Advice

The preceding details are meant to give the keeper a general direction in answering the investigators' questions. However, it's no secret that players will always come up with something obscure to do or say – in which case, the keeper should refer to the precedent of the preceding details, and convey the information he believes to be appropriate.



The Climax

A logical conclusion will probably be reached in one of two ways:

A Search

The Federal Agent will establish enough probable cause to search the White Farm, at which point the investigators will uncover the Byakhee.

A number of people in Armitage are aware of Josh and Zach's negative influence and questionable background... but word of mouth doesn't equal probable cause. However, if the investigators can confiscate any illicit substances, these could very likely lead directly to White and Grissom (although, this link may only be inferred, based on their criminal records).

Even a cursory search of the several barns on the White Farm will reveal a sordid array of artifacts, both esoteric and drug-related. One barn in particular contains two full-size Byakhee, ready to maim and feast upon anyone who happens upon their lair.

An Attack

Zachary Grissom will grow nervous and impatient, and will instruct one of his minions to attack the investigators. (Probably at night.)

The timing of such an attack would be purely up to the keeper. The author believes the previous option (probable cause leading to a search) to be preferable, since it will be based strictly upon the observations and actions of the investigators. This option should be reserved for a time when the investigators seem to be out of options – probable cause seems out of reach, Josh and Zach are nowhere to be found, etc.

The attack will occur at night, possibly even after the investigators have gone to bed. A Byakhee is more than capable of breaking into a mortal abode – however, such a bold (not to mention noisy) endeavor is likely to wake everyone within a couple of blocks. Therefore, a more likely scenario would be when the investigators are together, but in an isolated area, late at night.

In any case, whether the investigators are up to the challenge of defeating the Byakhee is really up to them. If the troupe is unarmed, it would seem cruel for both Byakhee to assault them at once. However, if they end up searching the farm with an arsenal at the ready, they may well be able to take on two of the loathsome creatures.

Source Material

Cast of Characters

Joshua White

Drug-addled bookkeeper and cult leader; age 23.

STR 11 **CON** 12 **SIZ** 14 **INT** 18 **POW** 13
DEX 14 **APP** 10 **EDU** 13 **SAN** 30 **HP** 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons:

Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3+db
Hatchet 65%, damage 1D6+1+db

Spells:

Summon/Bind Byakhee

Skills:

Computer Use 60%, Conceal 65%, Fast Talk 75%, History 45%, Library Use 55%, Listen 60%, Occult 35%, Other Language – French 29%, Persuade 72%, Play Guitar 82%

Zachary Grissom

Drug-addled sorcerer and cult leader; age 26.

STR 13 **CON** 16 **SIZ** 12 **INT** 16 **POW** 19
DEX 17 **APP** 13 **EDU** 13 **SAN** 46 **HP** 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons:

Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+db
Fighting knife 60%, damage 1D6+db
Enchanted scepter 55%, damage 1D8+stun (touch), 2D6+stun (bolt – costs 2 Magic Points per bolt)

Spells:

Dominate, Summon/Bind Byakhee

Skills:

Anthropology 30%, Bargain 72%, Disguise 80%, Hide 75%, Occult 50%, Other Language – Latin 23%, Persuade 85%, Ride 45%, Sneak 75%

Tamara Stephens

Single mother and wage slave; age 26.

STR 07 **CON** 09 **SIZ** 10 **INT** 11 **POW** 12
DEX 15 **APP** 14 **EDU** 08 **SAN** 54 **HP** 10

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons:

Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+db

Spells:

None

Skills:

Accounting 35%, Art – Painting 25%, Conceal 65%, Credit Rating 02%,
Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 60%, Persuade 80%, Sneak 35%

Sheriff Dane Cooper

Local law enforcement; age 37.

STR 13 **CON** 17 **SIZ** 13 **INT** 10 **POW** 09
DEX 15 **APP** 14 **EDU** 13 **SAN** 45 **HP** 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons:

Fist/Punch 75%, damage 1D3+db (*All other hand-to-hand attacks at +25%*)
Glock 9mm 55%, damage 1D10

Spells:

None

Skills:

Bargain 65%, Climb 60%, Computer Use 45%, Dodge 55%, Drive Auto
70%, Fast Talk 35%, First Aid 50%, Hide 40%, Jump 50%, Law 50%,
Library Use 40%, Locksmith 65%, Navigate 40%, Persuade 75%, Pharmacy
20%, Photography 20%, Psychoanalysis 25%, Sneak 45%, Spot Hidden
45%, Track 70%

Mythos Entities

The First Byakhee

Summoned on December 22nd, 2006. Not particularly strong, but big, brutal, and vicious nonetheless. Kept in one of the White's abandoned barns... except when it comes out at night, to feed.

STR 13 **CON** 09 **SIZ** 18 **INT** 09 **POW** 15 **DEX** 11 **HP** 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons:

Claw 40%, damage 1D6+db

Bite 45%, damage 1D6+blood drain

Armor: 2

Spells:

None

Skills:

Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 65%

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

The Second Byakhee

Summoned on April 6th, 2007. The bruiser.

STR 19 **CON** 12 **SIZ** 20 **INT** 06 **POW** 05 **DEX** 18 **HP** 16

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons:

Claw 50%, damage 1D6+db

Bite 45%, damage 1D6+blood drain

Armor: 2

Spells:

None

Skills:

Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 35%

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6

Mythos Tomes and Artifacts

Cultes des Goules

[See Call of Cthulhu, p. 150, for description.]



- △ **Author:** Francois-Honore Balfour, Comte d'Erlette
- △ **Edition:** One of fourteen known surviving copies from the 1703 printing.
- △ **Cthulhu Mythos Modifier:** +12
- △ **Sanity Points to Skim:** 1/1D6
- △ **Sanity Points to Read:** 1D4/1D10
- △ **Spells:** Black Binding, Call/Dismiss Nyogtha, Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Contact Ghoul, Resurrection, Shriveling, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Voorish Sign.
- △ **Physical Description:** XX

Enchanted Scepter

Apparently, Zach picked up this item from among Uncle Bill's collection, which Josh had overlooked.

Player Handouts

Article – A Brief History of Ketamine

[Copied from Wikipedia article: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketamine.]

Ketamine was first reported in 1962 as part of an effort to find a safer anesthetic alternative to Phencyclidine (PCP), which was more likely to cause hallucinations and seizures. The drug was first given to American soldiers during the Vietnam War, but today in the developed world its use on humans has been dramatically reduced because of concern about its potential to cause **emergence phenomena** (see next article) because of the drug's possible psychotomimetic effects. However, it is still used widely in veterinary medicine, or as a battlefield anesthetic in developing nations.

Ketamine's side effects eventually made it a popular psychedelic in 1965. The drug was used in psychiatric and other academic research through the 1970s, culminating in 1978 with the publishing of John Lilly's *The Scientist*, a book documenting the author's ketamine, LSD, and isolation tank experiments. The incidence of recreational ketamine use increased through the end of the century, especially in the context of raves and other parties. The increase in illicit use prompted ketamine's placement in Schedule III of the United States Controlled Substance Act in August 1999. In the United Kingdom, it became outlawed and labeled a Class C drug on January 1, 2006. In Canada ketamine is classified as a Schedule I narcotic. In Hong Kong, as of year 2000, Ketamine is regulated under Schedule 1 of Hong Kong Chapter 134 Dangerous Drugs Ordinance. It can only be used legally by health professionals, for university research purposes, or with a physician's prescription.

Article – Emergence Phenomenon

[Based on an incomplete Wikipedia article: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emergence_phenomenon.]

Psychological effects related to "emergence reactions":

- △ Waking up during a medical surgery/operation.
- △ Drug-induced phenomenon that occurs mid-operation.
- △ **Vivid dreaming.**
- △ **Extracorporeal** (floating "**out-of-body**") **experience.**
- △ **Misperceptions, misinterpretations, illusions.**
- △ May be associated with euphoria, excitement, **confusion, fear.**
- △ Occur from 1 to several hours post-op.
- △ Occurs in 10-30% of adults.
- △ Occurs in more adults than children.
- △ Occurs in more women than men.
- △ Increased symptoms related to increased dosage.
- △ Increased susceptibility to **psychosis.**
- △ Best attenuated or eliminated with benzodiazepines and, probably, propofol.
- △ May be ameliorated by prior "preemptive" positive suggestion.

Joshua White's Journal

A single plaintext file on Josh's laptop, the entries begin on October 9th, 2006, and end on XX. They are primarily concerned with his various esoteric endeavors – textual research (conducted at the APL and among his granduncle's collection), ritualistic experimentation, and, ultimately, the summoning of the Byakhee.

Following are several of the more pertinent entries.

Friday, September 15th, 2006 (Entry #1)

Zach got back from Miskatonic yesterday. He says the pictures he got are from some of his friends in the chemistry department. Truthfully, I've never seen pictures like these. Last night we took a walk, and we both saw the most incredible thing... some kind of space dragon, coming down out of the night sky to meet us. Really makes me wonder how they developed these pictures.

Monday, October 9th, 2006 (Entry #2)

My mother's uncle, William Harrowdown, is dead. To my surprise, he's left me a substantial number of strange and interesting books, which I have been perusing over the last several weeks, with Zach's help.

Apparently, this Uncle Bill (who I never met) had quite an interest in the occult. It seems that he practiced various arcane arts for much of his life, given the size of his library. And, although he left nothing specifically addressed to me, like a note or letter, he apparently felt (for whatever reason) that I would be the next-of-kin most likely to pick up where he left off. Needless to say, I am intrigued.

Tuesday, October 24th, 2006 (Entry #3)

I never imagined that anyone in my family had such a strange background. It seems that this Uncle Bill had enough disposable wealth to accrue quite a collection of rare texts, in addition to numerous odd artifacts.

I'm convinced that he's trying to tell me something with all of this... but whatever it is, I've really only just scratched the surface.

One thing has especially attracted my (and Zach's) attention: a carved wooden whistle, about four inches long, that emits the most alarming shriek. I have yet to discover its significance.

Something else of note: among Uncle Bill's files are numerous letters - some of which seem to indicate that he was corresponding with a 'death-cult' in Boston. I've heard of these before, but the thought of people in the modern age practicing necrophagy and other death-related occultism is... alarming.

Wednesday, November 22, 2006 (Entry #4)

I think I've found it. The wooden whistle is mentioned in passing - among other items of interest - in a book called *Cultes des Goules*. I had heard of this text before, but only in a French edition; Uncle Bill somehow got a hold of a decent English translation.

Most of it details a really perverse 'death-cult' based in France, around the beginning of the eighteenth century. This, I already knew from its reputation. What I didn't know was that it was so esoterically potent. It describes certain 'deities' - very powerful entities, of some sort - the likes of which I've never heard, with names I can't begin to pronounce, like Nyogtha, Shub-Niggurath, and Byakhee.

These beings are usually described in the context of some arcane ritual. Apparently meant to contact or even control the creatures, these rituals are of the traditional Western Hermetic tradition. Consequently, I doubt I'll ever get the opportunity to experiment with them directly.

Thursday, December 21, 2006 (Entry #5)

Tomorrow night, Zach and I are going to try one of the rituals. Translated as "Song of the Starwalkers", it seems to be intended to contact, or summon, these winged space-dragons, called Byakhee. We chose this ritual because it seems that Uncle Bill's whistle was somehow intended for it.

I can't believe what I'm reading... is this supposed to be serious? Although, even more unsettling is Zach. I mean, I've been interested in the occult for years, but... he really seems to get off on it.

Saturday, December 23, 2006 (Entry #6)

I never thought it would actually happen. The Starwalker spell worked like a... charm.

Like I said, the whole thing was a plodding, old-school affair. A sacred circle, cleansings, banishings, chanting... but mere seconds after I blew Uncle Bill's whistle, this... thing came down out of the sky. I guess it must be a Byakhee. It's huge, and vicious-looking - however, it seems complacent enough, and it responds to verbal commands (at least, from me and Zach).

The question becomes... what the hell do we do with it? For now, we're going to keep it in one of our storage sheds... but I have to imagine it'll get hungry... and with teeth and claws like that, I'm betting it's no herbivore. Of course, Zach doesn't seem particularly concerned....

Of course, the most disturbing part of this whole mess is that the creature we summoned is the same one Zach and I saw in the pictures last September. I have to talk to the chemists at Miskatonic.