

“I Want You to Kill the Ice Cream Man”©1998

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Call of Cthulhu

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Adapted for the ORE using the rules in *Cthulhulike* (Available at <http://www.arcdream.com/pdf/cthulhulike.pdf>) by Kevin “The Unshaven” Veale.

Introduction

This adventure must take place in the summer in a place where there are ice cream trucks. Virtually any American town or city will do. The adventure is set in the 1990s, but could be modified to fit in other time periods.

While most ice cream trucks bring joy to thousands of children, one brings horrible death to them and grief to their parents. It is up to the investigators to find and kill a hideous creature. A creature that dresses in the flesh of dead ice cream men. A creature that feeds on children. A creature that must be stopped.

This adventure is fairly short, but might be a bit disturbing to some people.

Getting the Investigator’s Involved

On a pleasant summer evening, some of the investigators will be enjoying a meal at a small restaurant. They will be seated in the outdoors section. One of the investigators will notice that a man keeps going past the restaurant and returning, all the while casting furtive glances at the investigators. The man is dressed in a suit that was once obviously very nice and expensive, but is now tattered, worn and stained. The same is true of his shoes and brief case. Finally, the man will appear to steel himself and will go up to the investigators and sit down.

He will say the following: “Most of what I say will seem mad. But I am not mad. Please listen to me. If you don’t believe me, I’ll just get up and leave. I won’t try to hurt you or anyone else.”

If the investigators tell him to leave, he will do so. A few minutes later, the investigators will see two police officers chase after him and take him away. They will later learn he has been charged with shooting an ice cream man. He will admit his guilt, rant about the monster and be institutionalized. Eventually, he will commit suicide.

If the investigators are willing to listen, he will tell the following story: Four years ago I was a successful researcher for a law firm. I was divorced, but I had joint custody of my son and he was spending the summer with me.

That summer seemed so great...I bought him ice cream...I bought him ice cream from the truck...One night, something woke me up and, for some reason, I felt the need to check on David. He was gone, so I went looking for him. I happened to look out the window and I saw him walking down the sidewalk towards the ice cream truck...I ran out of the house, yelling to him. He seemed to be in some sort of trance and just kept on walking towards the truck. I saw the ice cream man get out of the truck. He looked like a young man, blonde and smiling...but there was something wrong...a smell...or something. I ran to grab David...when I reached him, I felt the ice cream man's hands fall on my shoulders, pulling me up...I looked straight into his dead black eyes...then nothing. I woke up the next morning, laying on my bedroom floor, wondering what had happened. I almost forgot...I didn't remember what happened that night, not until after the therapy. I went to check on my son, but he was gone. My wife thought I had taken him somewhere and the police got involved. That's when I had the therapy...that's when I remembered.

If the investigators still seem willing to listen, he will continue:

I don't have much time, so here are the important things. After I remembered, I went looking for the ice cream man. He was gone without a trace. So I went looking for him and his truck. I searched and searched, finding traces. All my research is here, in this brief case. I don't have much time...they'll be here soon...but I learned that he goes to a town and sells his truck. Then he steals the buyer's body and starts selling ice cream. Then he starts taking children. Not many...just one or two a month...not enough to attract attention. I researched everything carefully...I was in research you know...I have photos from the towns, missing child reports, eyewitness reports and statistics. I showed it all to the police but they couldn't see it. They were polite and were interested, but I made the mistake of saying that it was one person in every case...then I said something about a monster...sometimes I say things I shouldn't...

He will look around and see two police officers walking across the street. He will look nervous and slide his brief case under the table. He will then say:

Here they come...it is time to pay for my mistake. I tracked it to this town but I acted too soon. I went up to the ice cream man and shot him. He just dropped to his knees, blood staining the white...a look of dumb shock on his face...not the monster at all...you have to stop him. I want you to kill the Ice Cream Man...

The man, Larry Helmsworth, will get up and run toward the police, yelling "Here I am!" The police will grab him and take him away. What the players do next is up to them.

Keeper's Background

The creature Helmsworth is talking about really does exist. Four years ago it came to his town and took his son, along with some other children. It has been preying on children, in one guise or another, for untold centuries.

While the creature has used many disguises in the past, it currently is posing as an ice cream man. To disguise its true appearance, the creature steals the skin of a person and wears it like a suit. The creature has been operating in the following manner: it will drive the truck to a town and put it up for sale. After it sells the truck to a suitable person, it will wait for the new owner to get all the licenses and such for the truck to operate. After the person establishes a route, the creature will kill him, skin him and then wear the skin as a disguise. The creature will then select a few suitable victims and sell them some "special" treats. After the creature has fed on at least two victims, it will decide to move on (also, its disguise will be getting a bit

decayed by that point). It will drive to another town and start the process all over again.

Helmsworth managed to find the creature and track it to the current town. Three days ago he shot the person driving the truck. Unfortunately, the person driving the truck was not the creature, but the person intended to be the creature's next victim. Horrified, but knowing only he knew the truth, Helmsworth fled the scene and went looking for help. Because of his skill in research and his obsession with the creature, he was able to learn a great deal about the unusual aspects of the world, including the identity of at least one of the investigators. Thinking he might be able to convince the investigator, Helmsworth found out where he was and went there with his evidence. Helmsworth knew the police were after him, but he figured he would have just enough time to talk to the investigators.

While Helmsworth is talking to the investigators, the creature will be waiting to get its truck back. It will tell the police that it had not been fully paid for yet (which is true). Three days after the shooting, the creature will have its truck back and be back in business.

Investigation

There is a variety of information the investigators might be able to acquire.

Helmsworth's Brief Case

Most of the investigation has been done for the investigators by Helmsworth. His briefcase contains many photos of the truck, different drivers, as well as children buying ice cream from the truck. For many of the photos of the children, he has a corresponding "missing child" picture. He also has a list of children who went missing in each town when the ice cream truck was there. Finally, he has a list of ice cream truck owners/operators who went missing in the same towns.

If the investigators check the information themselves, it will all check out. All the people who are listed as missing are really missing. If the investigators know about missing person statistics (or talk to someone who does) and checks the information, they will learn that the places listed in Helmsworth's data do not have missing rates that differ significantly from those of similar places. If the investigators take the time to do some research on the matter or hire or ask an expert, they will learn that all of Helmsworth's data could be explained entirely in terms of chance. In other words, if a person just went around taking photos and making lists of missing people in various places, the results could be similar. Because of this and the fact that Helmsworth seemed a bit unstable caused the police to not accept his story.

If the investigators decide to try to dig deeper, they will not be able to turn up any new information. No one else suspects that some creature is involved and people with missing children will become outraged if someone comes to them talking about monsters. If the investigators are too persistent in investigating the matter, the police might connect them with Helmsworth and bring them in for questioning.

The Victim

If the investigators check on the person who was killed, they will be able to learn that he was Jeffrey Kelly. According to the newspapers, Kelly had no immediate

family in the area (which is why the creature picked him) and it was his first day selling ice cream. Part of the story is as follows:

Senseless Killing

The merry bells of a ice cream truck bring joy to the hearts of the children, but today one set of bells fell silent. Jeffrey Kelly set out this morning in his ice cream truck to begin what he hoped would be a fun and profitable career. Sadly, tragedy struck. As Jeffrey was handing out frozen treats to the eager children, an unidentified man leaped out of a car and ran up to Mr. Kelly. According to eyewitnesses, the man calmly fired three shots from a small pistol into Mr. Kelly, then said “I got it wrong” and fled the scene on foot. Police are still looking for the gunman.

If the investigators decide to dig deeper and get access to some official sources of information, they might be able to learn that Kelly bought his truck from a Mr. Hugh Jones. If they check up on Mr. Jones, they will find the address given for Jones actually is the residence of an older couple, who have nothing to do with the creature. They might also learn that Hugh Jones reclaimed his truck after he was able to prove that Kelly had only made one payment on the vehicle.

Helmsworth

If the investigators try to contact Helmsworth, they will learn that he is in police custody and will be undergoing psychiatric evaluation. An investigator with legal or psychiatric credentials might be able to talk to him. Helmsworth will, unfortunately, have little else to add. He is consumed with guilt and is just waiting to die so he can “Join his son in heaven...”

The Ice Cream Truck

The investigators will probably want to investigate the truck. As mentioned above, the truck was turned over to a Hugh Jones. After getting his truck back, the creature had to take another victim to replace its decaying skin. It then sold the truck to another person. The person will take only a few days to get the truck going, since he already owns a small ice cream truck business. If the investigators ask about the truck, he will say it was sold to him by a Mr. Morton Downer and will have the paperwork to prove it. The address given by “Downer” is, of course, someone else’s address. The driver of the truck will be a new hire, a young man named Martin Ray. Ray is a high school graduate who likes kids and is trying to earn some money for school.

A few days after Ray gets his route established, the creature will ambush him, kill him and take his skin. Unlike his other victims, Ray has family in the area. Naturally, the creature will avoid the family and Ray’s friends. If the investigators contact Ray’s family, they might be able to learn when Ray has been replaced by the change in “his” behavior.

If the investigators check out the truck itself, they will find it is fairly normal, except that it has a very large freezer with padding on the bottom (large enough to hold an adult human) and it has an odd device. The device looks like a large metal vat with a mixer and cooling tubes around it. The padded freezer is where the creature normally sleeps and cools its skin during the day. The vat is used to completely grind and liquify its victims for eating. The new owner will assume that the padded freezer

is to keep delicate treats from being damaged and that the mixer is for making ice cream (it works fine as an ice cream maker).

Action

The action begins when the investigators go after the creature. Since so many different things could happen, only a general set of guidelines and hints can be provided.

If the investigators talk to the creature while it is working, it will seem to be a normal person (the creature has lots of experience). If it becomes suspicious of the investigators, it will take action against them. It will offer them some of its “special” treats (treats it has infected with parasites and chemicals) and plan to attack them at night. If they seem too dangerous, it will either plan a subtle attack or leave the area and take a new identity.

If the investigators follow the truck during the day, nothing unusual will happen. They will just see “Ray” driving around selling ice cream. If they follow Ray home, they will see him go into his apartment for the night, at least until it decides to take a victim.

If the investigators check out Ray’s apartment, they will see that there is dust everywhere and there is food rotting in the fridge. There is a large freezer in the middle of the main room. “Ray” sleeps in the freezer at night to help keep its skin from decaying as quickly. If the investigators bring this to the attention of the police, the police will point out that having a freezer is not a crime.

If the investigators try to attack the creature during the day or when it is in Ray’s apartment, it will call for the police and try to act like a normal person, hoping the police will deal with the situation. If the investigators are able to expose it, it will try to escape.

If the investigators follow “Ray” long enough, they will see it leave the apartment at night and go get the truck from the business. “Ray” will then drive to one of the neighbourhoods along “his” route and park the truck. A few minutes later, a child will come out of the house, looking pale and dazed. If the investigators do not intervene, the creature will take the child into the truck, put him into the vat, “vomit” into the vat and drive away to someplace quite and isolated. It will then wait for the parasites and chemicals to start dissolving the body of the victim. Then it will turn on the mixer and feed. If the investigators attack it, its main goal will be to try to escape.

Conclusion

The adventure comes to an end when the investigators defeat the creature, are themselves defeated, or they give up.

If the investigators defeat the creature, they should receive a 6 pip award for making the world a safer place. If they are able to provide the police with enough evidence, they might be able to help Helmsworth. Knowing the creature has been destroyed might help Helmsworth recover. If the investigators actually save a child from the creature, the parents and the community will be grateful. The body of the creature would create quite a stir in the medical and scientific communities. Naturally, they will regard it as a mutant of some kind.

If the investigators are not able to stop the creature or they give up, it will take 2-3 victims and then move on to a new place. If the investigators know that the

creature exists and that it has escaped, they should face an Intensity 4 Unnatural or Helplessness check.

The Ice Cream Man

The creature is a one of a kind thing that was born to a woman centuries ago. At first, it grew up like a normal child, then its outer layer of skin began sloughing off, its eyes turned dull black, its teeth fell out, its lips enlarged until its mouth became like a sucker and it underwent other changes. Among these changes was the loss of its gender and the alteration of its digestive system. It found it could only feed on human flesh that had been treated with its own hideous vomit. Over the years, it learned that its vomit contained parasites and chemicals that would weaken the will of a victim, enabling it to call the victim to it. The creature found that children were least resistant to its call and it decided to prey on them. It also learned that its skinless body could support, briefly, the stolen skin of another. It used this ability to disguise its true nature so it could more easily find victims.

Its latest disguise is that of an ice cream man. For the creature, this is an ideal disguise. It can select its victims without creating any suspicion. The freezer in the ice cream truck keeps its stolen skin from rotting so quickly. Finally, it can use the ice cream to introduce certain parasites and chemicals into its chosen victim. As mentioned above, the creature can wear the skin of a human being, provided the person is within two points of the creature's Body score. The skin will last up to a month, provided it is kept cold to retard the process of decay. The skin will give off an odor of decay, which the creature disguises with deodorants and cologne.

The creature can also produce parasites and chemicals. When the creature selects a victim, it introduces the parasites and chemicals into the treat. Over the course of the day, the parasites reproduce and infect the victim's brain. The creature can then send a mental call to the victim. If the call succeeds, the victim will come to the creature and be unable to offer any resistance. In game terms, the parasites lower the victim's Empathy by 1 point per application for the purposes of resisting the creature. The chemicals and the parasites also make the victim weaker, inflicting 1 Shock to all hit locations, and reducing their Body score by 1. If the creature wins a Command + Seduction roll against the victim's Empathy + Resist, the victim comes to the creature and is unable to resist. The victim can try to resist every fifteen minutes, forcing a new contested roll. The parasites are not known to modern science, but can be treated with antibiotics if the victim survives.

In addition to its ability to call victims, the creature can also attempt to mentally dominate others and erase their memories. The attempt to dominate others requires that it succeed a contested Command roll against the victim's Empathy + Resist. If the creature is successful, the victim will be unable to move for five minutes, unless attacked or otherwise forcefully accosted. The creature can order the person to go to sleep and forget everything that has happened. The creature can erase an hour of memory for every point of Width it achieved over the victim in the contested roll.

In combat, the creature can strike with its fists and use human weapons. It generally does not go armed, though. If it is not worried about revealing its true nature, it can also shoot forth its vomit up to ten feet. The vomit it expels is acidic and inflicts Width in Shock and Killing, then 1 Killing and then 1 Shock on the hit-location struck before losing potency (if it is not diluted or washed off first). The creature can make six such attacks in one day.

The creature prefers to avoid combat. If confronted, its main goal will be to escape rather than fight. It is an intelligent, experienced and subtle creature, so it will act accordingly. Its main weakness is that it can only feed on human flesh. It needs to consume a number of victims every thirty days whose combined Body scores at least equal its Body. Otherwise its Body score is permanently lowered to the new level. As long as it is fed, it has amazing healing abilities, healing one point of Shock each round. When all Shock is gone, one point of Killing is broken into two Shock per round, and that is healed. The process continues until no damage remains. The creature is also effectively immortal: as long as it can feed it will not die of “natural” causes.

BODY: 3

Athletics: 2

Brawl: 2

COORDINATION: 4

Acrobatics: 2

Drive: 2

Lockpick: 1

Stealth: 3

SENSE: 3

Hearing: 4

Search: 2

MIND: 3

History: 3 (Mind)

COMMAND: 4

EMPATHY: 3

Lie: 4

Persuasion: 3

Seduction: 4

Intensity 5 Unnatural check to see the creature in its natural form.

Supernatural Attacks:

Vomit Spray: 5 (Damage: Width Shock + Killing, then 1 Killing, then 1 Shock.)

Handouts

Hand Out #1

Senseless Killing

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