

“Window of the Mind” © 1991, 2001

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Call of Cthulhu

Occam's Razor tells us not to multiply entities beyond necessity. The flip side of Occam's Razor tells us that if our theory requires an entity to work, then we can postulate that entity. The physics the old doctor had worked out required the existence of dimensions adjacent to our own and accessible to it. It was up to my research team to test his claim empirically, using what our detractors called a mix of super science and witchcraft.

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Introduction

In this adventure an attempt to prove the existence of other dimensions goes horribly awry and frees an evil that threatens the entire city of Columbus, Ohio and the surrounding area.

Getting the Investigators Involved

If the investigators have good reputations and useful skills, they can be hired to assist on the project in varying capacities. Investigators who are skilled in electronics, computers, physics and so on will easily be hired by the project director. Alternatively, the investigators might be brought in because they are friends or associates of people involved in the project-in this case their involvement will be more a matter of accident than intent.

Players' Background Information

This information can be easily acquired by the investigators, either by a little research or through conversations. Some of it might already be known to them. For example, Dr. DeLang's "fall from grace" would be known to a person connected to academic circles.

A once famous physicist, Dr. Charles DeLang, completed a radical work on multi-dimensional physics. In his work, *Many Worlds*, he argues for the existence of dimensions that are accessible to our own world. This in itself was not too radical, but DR. DeLang went on to argue that these other dimensions were often inhabited and the inhabitants of these dimensions had visited our dimension. These last claims destroyed the last vestiges of DeLangs already weakened credibility in the scientific community. He died in mysterious circumstances three weeks after being removed from his position at M.I.T on the grounds of mental instability.

One of DeLang's students was convinced that not only was DeLang perfectly sane but that he was right. This student was able to convince a colleague at the Ohio State University to allow him to use their special projects workshop to test the doctor's theory. Unfortunately, the student

did not have the funds to do the work on his own. Amazingly, a noted psychic, Sarah Swanson, who had read Dr. DeLang's work contacted him. She provided him with the funds he needed and his work got underway. It is generally believed that the project is intended to contact the spirits of the dead, at least according to a *National Inquisitor* article.

The following information will be more difficult to obtain and would require talking with someone who knows about the project.

The project is not intended to contact the dead at all. According to Dr. DeLang's equations, there are numerous dimensions bordering our own. The project is intended to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis that these other dimensions exist. Various computer and electronics experts have been brought in to work on it as have several people who are reputed to be experts in parapsychology and psychic research. Rumor has it that a machine is being built that will enable a person to "see" into these other dimensions.

Keeper's Information

Dr. DeLang's equations are correct. There are, in fact, other dimensions that are accessible to our own dimension. Naturally, those who serve the beings who dwell in such places would prefer it if this was not generally known. They were especially worried that Dr. DeLang would work out enough of the mathematics to enable humans to construct machines enabling them to enter these other dimensions. Because of these factors, cultists with strong academic connections undertook a campaign to discredit him and finally murdered him.

The student is building a machine with the capacity to augment human empathetic abilities in such a way that a human will be able to sense the presence of these other dimensions and even be able to gain some perceptions of them.

It is up to the Keeper as to what motivated Sarah Swanson to donate the money. The Keeper may wish to make her simply part of the background or the Keeper might elect to put her in a more active role at some point. For example, Swanson might be working in opposition to the Mythos and might be an aid to the investigators later on. Then again, she might be working in the service of the Mythos and might figure in later adventures.

Special Projects Workshop

The Special Projects Workshop is located near the campus of the Ohio State University. It derives some of its funds from OSU, but most of the money needed to run it comes from several private investors. OSU students, professors and independent researchers use it. It was originally developed and funded by an anonymous donor to provide a place for more eccentric projects to be worked on. While there have been some impressive failures, there have been several spectacular successes (including a revolutionary new processing chip and a more effective laser system). The building is frequented by a wide variety of very odd people, ranging from absent-minded professors to ex-bikers working on more efficient engine designs.

The building itself is a reinforced concrete structure (to contain those nasty explosions) with solid metal doors. The outside of the structure was painted by the workshop director's daughter and her art friends. It was done in a variety of styles, from Grateful Dead style, to Neon Madness, to Cubist. The entire effect is actually quite attractive from an aesthetic standpoint (well, from some aesthetic standpoints).

1. Power Plant/Main Frame: The SPW's independent power supply and its own computer system (a Beowulf style system made of linked PCs) are located here. Both were built at the

SPW and look a bit odd but work very well. The computer system is known as “Buckeye Dude”, for obscure reasons.

2. **Storage/Work Area:** This area is used primarily as storage, but large projects are often worked on in here

3. **Work Area #1:** This area is equipped for mechanical work. There is a constant buzz of power tools and bright flashes from welders and cutting torches illuminate the room. Virtually any standard mechanical tool can be found here and if it can't be found, someone can build it.

4. **Work Area #2:** This area is equipped for electrical work. Various beeping and flashing machines line the walls and the smell of solder fills the air at all times. Virtually any standard and many non-standard pieces of electrical equipment are in the work area and anything that is needed can be quickly built.

5. **Work Area #3:** This area contains the computer workstations. The room is filled with a variety of SPW built computers as well as some off the shelf models. There are always people taking apart terminals (often while others are trying to work on them) and modifying the equipment. There are numerous running jokes about the whole system will spontaneously come to life someday.

6. **Work Area #4:** This area is set aside for special projects. The only project currently using the room is the project to test DeLang's theories. The room contains all sorts of equipment as well as the Dimensional Scanner (see below). There is always at least one person in the room or near the door (when work is not being done, someone is assigned to discretely guard the room).

7. **Rest Room:** Typical rest room.

8. **Rest Room:** Typical rest room.

Events

Pre-Action

While the Dimensional Scanner is being constructed (the actual building will take two months, the theory and design took years to develop) what occurs is left to the referee. If the investigators are working on the project, they can use it as a source of income and it can serve as background for the adventure. If the Keeper wishes to make the investigators' involvement an "accident", then the investigators can show up just before the trouble begins.

First Use

Once the Dimensional Scanner is complete, it will be tested. The first person to test it should be Ralph Digg. Digg will get into the device and the various connections will be made. The machine will be powered up and Digg will report that he can see the room around him and will be able to describe what is occurring. He will then say he will try to scan for another dimension. The machine will hum and emit a faint aura. Digg will report that he can see something and that he is increasing the power. He will suddenly scream, go into convulsions and lose consciousness. He will remain in a coma for 1d6 weeks and afterwards will have no memory of what happened to him after he went to turn up the power.

Second Use

Despite the failure of the first attempt, the team will not be discouraged. The device will be carefully rechecked and a week after the first attempt a second NPC, Carlos Sands, will volunteer to try the device. He will climb into it and the device will be activated. He will

immediately report being able to see the room and will say that he is going to increase power. He will then report that he can dimly sense something like an open space. He will turn up the power again and report that he can now make out a large, open area that looks like the area around the SPW, but without any structures present. He will describe the area as dark and shadowy. He will turn up the power again and report that he can sense a presence nearby. He will turn up the power again and report that he can make out a shape that is vaguely man-like in appearance. He will then report he is turning up the power again. He will suddenly cry out, convulse and struggle, and then lose consciousness. He will be out for 1-6 hours.

A Visitor from Beyond

Unbeknownst to everyone on the team, Carlos' body has been taken over by a denizen of the dimension that the Dimensional Scanner was tuned to. The disturbances created by the device attracted one of the inhabitants of the dimension and as Carlos increased the power, the being was able to contact Carlos and pass through the machine into his body. At the same time, Carlos' "spirit" was sent into the denizen's dimension and is trapped there. The brain activity recording devices will record this occurrence as follows: at first, Carlos' brain will be highly active, then all activity will cease (as if brain death had occurred). A recording of brain activity that is radically different from any ever before recorded of Carlos will follow this momentary cessation of brain activity. If the investigators' examine these records, this may tip them off to the fact that something is wrong. If confronted, "Carlos" will say that the machine may have permanently altered his brain. He will pretend to be horrified by what the records show.

The entity in Carlos's body has access to some of Carlos's memories and skills (those "embedded" in the brain), enough to enable it to speak English and act as being a human. It is also familiar with earth's dimension. Its knowledge is a bit out of date since it was forced out of this dimension and back to its own over 200 years ago.

Once it regains consciousness, it will feign amnesia and ask lots of questions. It will insist that the machine not be used and will have persuasive arguments to back up its position. It does not want anyone else using the machine because it is afraid that contact would be made with Carlos. It will sabotage the machine if necessary, but will only destroy it as a last resort.

The investigators will probably have a difficult time figuring out that Carlos' body is possessed. It will account for any odd behavior by appealing to its feigned amnesia or by making reference to possible nerve damage. The exact details of the investigators' penetrating the deception is left to the Keeper.

A Dark Gate Opens

The thing possessing Carlos' body will use the workshop to construct a device to locate a dimensional portal built by its kind centuries ago on earth. It will take it a day to construct the device. It will kill a homeless person and remove part of his nervous system to get some essential parts for the device. When completed, the device will be a black, rectangular box with a liquid crystal screen that indicates the direction of the nearest dimensional portal site. The device has a range of 10 kilometers. The interior is an odd mixture of electronic parts, computer circuits, and nervous tissue preserved in a slimy gel. The device is powered by standard batteries, but the organic parts require bathing in the slimy gel that is rich in glucose. It has a three-week supply made. Humans can make the gel, once it has been analyzed chemically.

It will take the thing in Carlos' body ten days to find the gateway. The gateway is located in a wooded and abandoned section of West Virginia (about a two to three hour drive from

Columbus). The long, unexplained trips it will make searching for the gate may make the PCs suspicious. It will take the thing three days to re-activate this gate. During this time, it will have to kill six people for “parts” and will steal electronic equipment. During this time, it will tent out in the woods and not return to the SPW. There will be news reports of the six killings. The tabloid papers will have headlines like “Brainy killer steals minds” , “Ghost of a Neurosurgeon has Returned to Kill, says Psychic” and so forth. The more reputable papers and news services will report the killings and note the fact that parts of victims’ nervous systems’ were removed prior to their deaths. According to the autopsy reports, the removal work was done by someone with a great deal of surgical skill.

The Cubes

The gateway consists of four "stones". See the map below for the arrangement. The stones are black and seem to absorb the light. They are nearly perfect cubes. The interior of each cube contains an array of bizarre circuits, many of which look like living things. The parts from the victims have also been incorporated into the cubes to replace damaged circuits. An individual with a high (15+) POW will be able to vaguely feel the presence of the cubes (it feels like an odd mental "itching"). The exterior material of each cube is very damage resistant (20 points of armor).

The Stones feature prominently in some obscure local legends. According to these legends, evil spirits came from a land of darkness and built the stones as a doorway to their land. These evil spirits stole away people and brought them into the land of darkness. When they returned, they were not the same. The evil spirits plagued the land for a year until the local tribes banded together and made war on them, driving them back into their dark land and a great shaman closed the doorway.

What occurred was that a human with a very high POW who had the ability to “see” into other dimensions contacted the thing’s dimension and was taken over like Carlos was centuries later. The thing controlling that person used the body to construct a gateway and lured people through it, where they were taken over by others of its kind. Eventually, the tribes got together and killed the possessed people and their shaman, who had great empathetic abilities, was able to shut the gate off. The entities outside of the gate died with their stolen bodies, since they could not exist without them in this dimension. Those few that escaped back home were disembodied as their stolen bodies died of thirst.

Hounds in the Night

The thing’s first attempt to open a gateway to its home dimension will fail. Instead, the gate will open to another dimension and six Shadow Hounds (see bellow) will be released. They will go on a killing spree until they are destroyed. The attacks of the Shadow Hounds will (obviously) make the news. Survivors will report horrible shapes that seemed vaguely like large hounds tearing people apart before their eyes. The tabloid media will have a field day while the main stream media will attempt to put forth a rational explanation.

The Hounds will hunt each night, each hound will hunt in its own area. During the day, they will hole up in abandoned buildings. Naturally, the investigators will want to get involved. If the reports of the attacks are checked, it will be found that they are occurring in an expanding circle. Naturally, the gateway is at the center of the circle. The opening of the gate will give people in the area bad dreams.

Body Snatching

The second time the thing opens the gate, it will locate its dimension. It will contact its fellows and inform them of its plans. It will then set out to capture humans alive and bring them through the gateway to provide bodies for its fellows. It will continue this until all twelve of its fellows have bodies and then it will close down the gate, leaving the helpless spirit of Carlos trapped there. The disappearances will be noted in the local news. The details of the snatchings and any investigations are left to the Keeper. The entity will act in an intelligent manner and will do its best to avoid being caught or leaving evidence. However, it is not very familiar with earth's dimension and will be ignorant about many things (like how advanced human forensic technology is), which may lead it into trouble.

If the entities are unchecked, they will begin a campaign of subtle evil. Their style is to take control over areas by gaining control of key people. Control may be gained of the person through conventional means (bribes, blackmail and so forth) or by stealing the person's body. These entities live to do evil and gain extreme pleasure and satisfaction by doing evil for evil's sake. Like some Mythos entities, they can actually draw some sustenance from the pain, suffering, and horror of others. They are also big on revenge.

Finish

If the thirteen entities have been killed (by destroying their stolen bodies while they are outside of their home dimension) then the investigators have won a major victory and should be rewarded with at least a 1D8 award. If some of them escape, but their gate is destroyed, they will begin building a new one (this will take years to do) and will be looking for a chance for revenge. If some of them escape, but their gateway is undestroyed, they will move the gate to a secure location. They will then seek revenge on the investigators. If the investigators are killed, it is time to roll up new characters.

Unfortunately, any human who had their body stolen will be trapped in the entities' dimension. They will be unable to take over another body or their own, unless they have the ability to do so (which most humans don't have). Of course, the next research project at SPW might be to find a way to get the people back, but that is something left for the future.

NPCS

Ralph Digg

STR: 12 CON: 13 SIZ: 13 INT: 14 POW: 12 DEX: 13
APP: 11 EDU: 14 SAN: 60 HP: 14 DB: +1D4

Important Skills: Computer Use 47%, Electrical Repair 35%, Electronics 36%, Library Use 49%

Weapons: Fist 50% Damage 1D3+db

Skills: Psychology 2, Willpower 1, Computer Operation 4, Human Empathy 3

Physical Description: Riggs is a tall, thin man who favors oxford shirts and worn out jeans. He wears very thick glasses. His hair is long and is generally worn in a pony tail.

Personality: Riggs is a likable young man who is studying computer science at Ohio State. He is heavily into mysticism and occult studies, but more because he is curious than because he takes it seriously. He is rather brave and borders on being foolhardy. He is always willing to try something new for a thrill.

Carlos Sand

STR: 12 CON: 11 SIZ: 12 INT: 15 POW: 13 DEX: 13

APP: 13 EDU: 15 SAN: 65 HP: 12 DB: None

Important Skills: Climb 65%, Biology 47%, Library Use 51%, Medicine 8%, Natural History 37%

Weapons: Fist 50% Damage 1D3+db

Skills: Climbing 3, Vehicle use (wheeled) 3, Willpower 1, Biology 2, Foreboding 2, Human Empathy 5

Physical Description: Carlos is of average height and medium build. His hair is dark brown and he has brown eyes. He favors t-shirts with ecology slogans on them. He is currently studying biology at Ohio State.

Personality: Carlos is a very outgoing individual and is well liked by nearly everyone. He is a hard worker in school and always fulfills his promises. He is somewhat cautious by nature, but is extremely curious.

Joe Sincilli

STR: 14 CON: 15 SIZ: 15 INT: 14 POW: 14 DEX: 14

APP: 12 EDU: 16 SAN: 70 HP: 15 DB:+1D4

Important Skills: Climb 48%, Dodge 47%, Fast Talk 35%, First Aid 37%, Hide 27%, Jump 32%, Law 14%, Library Use 42%, Listen 38%, Locksmith 13%, Physics 61%

Weapons: Fist 65% Damage 1D3+db, .45 Automatic 55% 1D10+2, Combat Knife 53% 1D4+2+db

Physical Description: Joe is slightly taller than average and has short black hair. He works out regularly and is in good physical condition. He favors a jacket and tie while teaching and wears athletic clothing while working on the project.

Personality: Joe is the student of Dr. DeLang who is running the project. He is obsessed with testing his mentor's theory and will let almost nothing stand in his way. However, he is a very religious man and will not engage in what he considers to be immoral activity for any end. His dedication to DeLang is primarily a result of the fact that DeLang sponsored him for a college education. Prior to college, Joe was a member of a gang. He still has a combat knife and Colt M1911A1 from his gang days and still knows how to use them.

Monsters

Body Stealers

Char	Rolls	Averages
STR	*	*
CON	*	*
SIZ	*	*
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+8	15
DEX	*	*

* As per the occupied body.

Move As per body. HP As per body.

Weapons: As per the occupied body.

Armor: None

Spells: None

Skills: Acting 60%, Fast Talk 50%, Persuade 40%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 to realize the body is possessed. The body itself might cause a Sanity loss.

There are thirteen of these entities in existence in their portion of their home dimension. Their dimension was originally much larger and inhabited by many types of beings but a terrible war fragmented the dimension and left many of the inhabitants trapped in these fragments. Most of them died, but many with special powers continued to exist. These body stealers can exist without a physical body in their home dimension and can attack other intelligent living things to steal their bodies. The body that a body stealer tries to possess must be within the body stealer's dimension or in direct contact with it (say via the dimensional scanner). The possession attack works as follows: The entity matches POW with the target on the Resistance Table. If the entity wins, the victim loses 1D6 Magic Points. If the victim wins, the Body Stealer loses 1D6 Magic Points. If the Body Stealer is reduced to 0 or fewer Magic Points, it is destroyed. Body Stealers will break off their attacks if they run low on Magic Points. If the victim runs out of Magic Points, the Body Stealer is able to drive out the victim's spirit and assume control of the body. The victim becomes disembodied and trapped in the body stealer dimension. The body stealer has limited access to the victim's memories, but cannot use the victim's skills. A body stealer that is killed outside of its dimension while in a stolen body is permanently destroyed, while one that has a body destroyed within its dimension will be able to try again. Body stealers see humanity solely as a source for bodies and are utterly inimical to humans, seeing them as means to ends only.

Shadow Hounds

Char	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2	2
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11

Move 10 HP 15

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Bite 55% Damage 1D, 10 Kick 60% 1D6+db

Armor: 3-point hide.

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 60%, Listen 55%, Sneak 55%, Track 60%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D3

Shadow Hounds are tiger sized predators from a dimension accessible to our own. In terms of appearance, Shadow Hounds have a thick, convoluted hide with various growths on it. Their heads are elongated and have very large nostrils. Their eyes see into the infrared and ultraviolet parts of the spectrum, giving them excellent vision under nearly all conditions. They have two rows of teeth in their maws. They have four legs, each of which terminates in a bony, hoof like structure. Shadow Hounds are fair swimmers, but are nearly incapable of climbing. They are voracious animals and hunt in packs. They will attack virtually anything they think they can eat and seem to devoid of any fear. They seem to be capable of digesting nearly any terran organic material (although they are very fond of human flesh). This indicates that they may have originated on earth. They can be trained by those with adequate skills (if trained from birth) and are occasionally used as guard and hunting animals by some Mythos beings.

Summon/Bind Shadow Hound

This spell brings forth one Shadow Hound. The magic point cost varies; for each magic point sacrificed, increase the chance of success by 10 percentiles. A roll of 96-00 always results in failure. Casting this spell costs 1D3 Sanity points. The spell requires a living creature which is bleeding and must be cast near a place where Shadow Hounds can reach the caster. If the spell succeeds, a Shadow Hound will come running up to finish off the sacrificial meal.

Equipment

Dimensional Scanner

The dimensional scanner is a very large device that looks almost like a vehicle. The operator climbs inside, sits in the chair and the top section of the device is lowered over her. The device is also linked to several equipment banks and has its own computer and backup computer.

The device acts as an augmentation device for certain empathetic capacities. Specifically, it enables the operator to perceive other dimensions as if she were actually present. The device does actually open up a pathway to the dimension from the operator's mind. This means that mental attacks can be sent along the pathway (in either direction). However, physical travel through the pathway is not possible (this is beyond current human technology).

The device is used by the character making a roll of POWX5. If the roll is successful, the device is activated. The power level is equal to the character's POW. The operator has the option of boosting the power of the device. The level of boosting is added to the Power Level. It can be boosted up to 6. Each boost requires that the investigator match her CON against the Power Level on the Resistance Table. A failed roll results in unconsciousness for a number of hours equal to the Power Level.

Power Level	Result
1-5	Operator can view the dimension the device is in, and can sense the presence of other dimensions. Gates within 10 meters x power level can be detected.
6-11	Operator can view another dimension vaguely. Gates within 20 meters x power rating can be detected. Operator
12-17	Operator can view another dimension clearly, beings within sight range can be seen (resulting in possible Sanity loss). Gates within 40 meters x the power level can be detected.
18-23	As above, plus the operator can communicate with beings in the dimension. Gates within 80 meters x the power level can be detected.
24-29	As above. Gates within 160 meters x the power level can be detected.
30-32	As above. Gates within 320 meters times the power level be detected.

The operator can shift her area of view up to the power level x 100 meters away from the point where the machine is located. Viewing range is the normal sensory range for the operator. The range for detecting gates is measured from the area of view. Dimensional Scanners are very rare (as of the adventure only one exists).

