

Call of Cthulhu - Game 1 - Part 5

16 September 2015

Summary of Session

(summarized by Liz with editing by Jack)

We return to the basement of Roland Cumming. In the shock of reading Jarrett's file, Henry's mind wanders away, and he thinks he distantly hears a young girl call out to him. At first, he thinks the voice might be his daughter, Emily, but as he continues to listen the voice sounds different, as if she isn't a native English speaker. Henry feels a sense of dread. Frank bumps into him and brings him back to the present.

Frank and Henry watch Jarrett calmly sketch a dead, nearly decapitated woman hastily stashed in a freezer. The rest of Jarrett's file is written by Roland and states that Jarrett hangs around the police and crime scenes, where he's gone so far as stealing the victim's tooth. Roland speculates he won't need to convince Jarrett to join his cause like the other three, as his curiosity will motivate him. He also says that while he thinks Jarrett is "innocent at heart", he also would hesitate to trust him.

Jarrett overhears them quietly reading his file aloud, and gets upset as he remembers the traumatic events of that night.

Noticing this, Henry asks if Jarrett is a coward. Jarrett is confused and offended by the implication. Angry, Henry explains he wants to understand why Jarrett, who has managed to be brave the last few days, failed to help this woman. He implies that Jarrett might have killed Roland's wife, and Jarrett gets so flustered he cannot speak. Henry then asks if Jarrett had waited for the woman in the file to die just so he could draw her afterward, and Jarrett claims that he didn't have his drawing supplies with him that night. That only angers Henry more.

Henry gets so upset he withdraws from the conversation to sit in the corner to regain his composure.

Jarrett regains some of his composure and points out he's not the only person with a file, even though it was him that got picked first. The other files are on Frank, Edward, and a third file labeled "leverage".

Realizing that they wanted to look into Edward, they decide to read his file. Edward's file is sparse. Roland hadn't been able to dig much up on him. He knows that he showed up in Arkham the previous year, and that his apartment had "less personality than a soda cracker". He notes that Edward can pack a punch and that, while fighting, Edward gives the impression of being cold and calculating—even though he otherwise seems to be "as bright as a dead matchstick". Roland thinks he doesn't need leverage to recruit him. He'll join just for the joy of a fight and he intended to speak to him after his fight at a place called Marco's Gym.

Henry points out that Roland didn't know Edward was going to try to murder them all. Frank takes note of Marco's Gym being a place to look for more information on Edward.

Before they leave, Jarrett asks if they'd be willing to share their files, so they don't have to worry about everyone keeping horrible secrets like Edward. Henry is quick to say yes, even though he doesn't have a file to share. Frank doesn't want to share whatever is in his file. Eventually, though, he agrees to read his own file and share its contents, because he wants to make sure it's accurate, and he hates the idea of his private life being shared without his permission.

While Frank reads, Henry confirms that Jarrett didn't draw this other woman by looking through his sketchpad, which only has the things he's drawn while on this adventure. Jarrett explains that he draws to cope with the fear and the horrible things he's encountered in his life. Henry also asks about the journal that Jarrett carries with him, and where it came from. Jarrett explains that he inherited it from his grandfather.

Frank finishes reading and interrupts, pointing out that he's been scared this whole time too. This whole situation forces them to try to be heroes, and they're in too deep to back out. He admits he can't do this alone and wants to trust them. For them to trust him, he allows them to read his file.

Roland writes that he initially thought Frank's wife had been cheating on him, due to some tension that he observed. Instead, he discovered that Frank was cheating on his wife with a woman from his office. Roland believes the affair has already stopped but the marriage is still on the rocks. Ellen had discovered the affair and might be getting ready to leave Frank. Roland thinks that Frank truly loves his wife, despite cheating on her, and that he'd do anything for her.

Roland breaks off here and says "I may need to interject here... my daughter's life is at stake." And he does not elaborate on how he intends to use this information to leverage Frank's aid.

Jarrett chooses not to read it, despite Frank giving it to him first. He instead silently passes it to Henry, and goes upstairs—content to let Frank tell him in his own time. Frank tells Jarrett to stay and listen to the file. Henry hesitantly reads the file aloud, skipping over the first implication that Roland makes at Frank's wife cheating on him. Frank looks ashamed of what has been revealed.

They also read the leverage file, which states that whatever Roland has on Henry, he has him 100%. He thinks Frank will be motivated to help find his wife's killer. Edward already said yes and Jarrett is tailing him. He doesn't think it's enough for anyone other than Henry, and he wants to back them into a corner. He figures the best way to get them all on his side is to make them "commit some heinous act together". He figures it will keep them from running if he has something to wave over their heads. He laments "how far I've sunk" and justifies it to himself that whatever terrible things he's done, it'll be worth it to save his daughter. He notes that all that's left to do is find the little girl, that he's watching Savini's place, and waiting for Frank, Henry, Edward, and Jarrett to bring Savini to him.

Listening to the leverage file, Henry gets so nauseated he retches in the corner of the basement. When he's done, he asks if it was possible that Savini was innocent. Frank doesn't think that was likely.. Henry points out that Savini could have been set up by Roland, given how meticulous and calculating his files are revealing him to be. Frank also decides it doesn't matter anymore, now that Roland is dead.

Henry asks what Frank's leverage was, and Frank replies "revenge". Jarrett explains his curiosity about what's in his grandfather's diary, and the implication that not all horrific things are

the doings of humans, and that he'd started looking into murders in hopes of finding evidence of monsters. This curiosity was sufficient to motivate him.

Frank says this is as good as leverage. Henry does not volunteer what leverage Roland had on him. Instead, he draws the conversation back to finding a little girl. They look around the basement and find evidence that Roland may have had a dog. Jarrett reviews his etching of Roland's dead wife and confirms that aside from the wound that killed her, her body was not otherwise damaged—no body parts were missing. Jarrett realizes that Roland probably put his wife in the freezer to keep the corpse from rotting, since he couldn't otherwise dispose of it, for fear of attracting police.

They briefly pause long enough to find and take a picture of Roland's wife and daughter, labeled as "Sarah and Delphine". Noticing the label on the mailbox as "Roland and Delphine", they determine that the daughter's name is Sarah. They also find an envelope in the mailbox, which has the cult symbol on it. It is postmarked July 18th.

They take ammunition from the house and Henry refuels the lighter he found. They also decide to take flashlights from the house, and clean up after themselves to avoid leaving behind incriminating evidence of their presence there once the police eventually arrive.

They then decide to go to Marco's Gym to investigate Edward.

Jarrett and Frank decide to speak directly to the owner of Marco's Gym, while Henry looks around.

Frank lies and says he's interested in sponsoring a boxer and asks after Edward Mason on the pretense that a friend suggested that he had real potential—but that Frank would like to meet him, first. Frank's apparent wealth convinces Marco he's serious, and Marco tells Frank that Edward is staying at a diner nearby, where he rents a room in the basement. The diner is called Tony's Diner.

Meanwhile, Henry discovers Edward's cubbyhole. It doesn't have very much, just old sweaty boxing gloves and shoes, some empty water bottles and an old brown-stained coffee cup. The cup is from a place called Tony's Diner.

Henry also decides to speak with the other boxer that Marco recommended, in hopes that he might have some insight into Edward.

Jarrett meanwhile is fascinated by the boxers and a waterboy that helps the boxers practice. Jarrett is surprised that the kid is willing to get into the ring with these big guys, that they're not seriously hurting him, and begins sketching the boxers.

Unfortunately, Henry doesn't manage to be very convincing and Malcolm decides that Henry isn't the sort of guy he wants to gossip about his fellow boxers with.

Jarrett is upset to leave, as he's so fascinated by the concept of boxing and being able to defend himself, but Henry and Frank drag him away and they head to the diner.

At the diner, they order some coffees and some burgers. Determining that Henry is the best looking of them, and the smoothest talker, they hope that he can flirt with the waitress into telling them about Edward. The waitress, Sarah, tells them that if they want to talk about Eddie, they need to talk to Tony.

Sarah turns out to be Tony's daughter, and she calls him over. Henry introduces himself and asks about Eddie, explaining his interest as someone interested in making a bet. Tony doesn't have much to say about Eddie, because he was a quiet renter, either spending time at the gym or spending time quietly in his room. Henry tries to talk Tony into letting them see Eddie's room, which is such an odd request that Tony nearly refuses, but decides to allow after requesting that they make a competitor hot dog stand leave the area. When Henry begins to suggest threatening the man, Tony insists that they convince him to leave subtly, without waving around guns.

Henry, followed by Frank and Jarrett, crosses the street. Henry decides to offer to pay him three times as much as he would normally make to vacate the place for an hour. Despite offering to quadruple his earnings, he states that he can't leave. Henry jumps to the conclusion that he's an undercover cop, which turns out to be correct.

Jarrett name-drops the officer he is friends with and offers to help the undercover cop. The cop tells them that Tony has ties to the mafia, so he can't be seen leaving his post. Eventually, they come to an agreement. The cop will leave, if they manage to steal Tony's ledger from his office, and as an added bonus he'll tell them about Eddie's comings and goings. The cop demands one of their IDs as collateral and as a means of finding them if they screw him over, and they give him Roland's ID.

Realizing they're dealing with the mafia, Henry asks if Frank and Jarrett are armed. Both have pistols with them, and Henry requests that Jarrett give him the gun, given that Henry doubts Jarrett would actually manage to use it and he can't bring his shotgun. Jarrett is more than happy to hand over the weapon.

Once inside, they pause to have more food and plan. As they wait, Tony comes out and they overhear Sarah telling him that he drinks too much coffee because he's out getting a new cup every ten minutes.

They begin trying to think of the best way to get Tony out of his office and keep him out of his office for a long period of time. Eventually, they land on the concept of spiking his coffee with laxatives. (After exploring several different variations of making the bathroom overflow, occupying it for when he eventually needs to use it because of all the coffee, tricking him into the bathroom and locking it, etc.)

They also spend a fair amount of time trying to figure out how to spike the entire pot of coffee, also with little success, before finally spiking an individual cup of coffee.

Having successfully spiked the coffee, they head down to the basement and find Edward's room to be spartan. Tony heads for the bathroom in a rush as the laxatives kick in.

Jarrett hurries into his office and luckily manages to find the ledger, and rushes to collect Frank and Henry.

They quickly exit the diner, tipping Sarah generously on their way out, and head a street over to give the ledger to the cop. The cop makes a call and gets a listing of all of Edward Mason's comings and goings: for the most part uninteresting, except for one day on July 16th, when

Edward was tailed out into the suburbs and the police lost track of him in a subdivision. They then found him again out in the hills west of Arkham on the 19th.

They notice the dates align with the time period when Mrs. Cummings was killed and Sarah Cummings was kidnapped, and decide that this lead is worth following immediately. They immediately head out that way in Frank's car. They drive around in hopes of spotting something interesting, but quickly realize there's not much around. Frank spots an old gentleman out walking and decides to stop the car in hopes that he might have some insight on what is around, any landmarks and the like. The old man is quite happy to talk their ears off about anything and everything, but eventually he mentions an observatory nearby.

Escaping from Seymour Chapman, the lonely old man, they head to the observatory and notice old tire tracks that could have been from Edward's car. They break into the observatory and smell the faint odor of blood and rotting meat. As they enter, the scent becomes overwhelming, and combined with urine and feces and vomit, they discover a small figure beneath a blanket, presumably the source of the rotting smell. Henry apprehensively lifts the blanket to reveal the small maggot covered corpse... of Roland's pet dog.

They also discover, written on the walls of the observatory, in paint the color of blood, the words: 'The Three Soldiers' .

They look around and realize that this was all staged for them to find, and that Sarah had been held here for a few days before being taken elsewhere. They begin to wonder if Edward wasn't the only person behind the kidnapping and other strange goings on. Furthermore, the phrase 'The Three Soldiers' has appeared enough times that it no longer seems to be a coincidence but an important pattern.

Jarrett suggests that it might be worthwhile to find out more about whoever these 'Three Soldiers' were, and how they might be involved in whatever is going on, and suggests heading to the Miskatonic University Library.

Jarrett is well-known there and quickly finds Dr. Armitage, who looks uneasy and tired. He claims he's been up late working on a project, translating something. Jarrett brings up the name Nietish Walden, and asks if Dr. Armitage has ever encountered it before. He hasn't, but he

recognizes the Latin phrase which translates to 'The Three Soldiers' and points them to a recently published novel, which is about three young men in the World War.

He then continues on to say that the author wasn't entirely original and based the novel on an older work, an older legend:

"Some sort of legend about three soldiers that had gone to war and come back and he based each of the characters on them." He recalls he read the original legend, and recounts it as "You have three soldiers: one brave, one business-minded, one craving power. Very trifecta of good, evil and neutral of sorts."

He tries to recall what it was based on and where he read it. He finds what he's looking for, which is a single page of old paper in Latin.

Jarrett also shows Dr. Armitage the cult symbol and asks if he recognizes it. Dr. Armitage thinks he does, but he'd need time to look it up and he has meetings to attend to. Jarrett easily translates the page, which says:

"Erwin was a man of great religious understanding, deep and passive. A great military strategist and honorable man. He led a good life and met his death on the battlefield. Entie was a cunning man, clever and distinguished. He was well-read and often spent time with the scribes in order to fine-tune his skills. He was a brilliant mind at reading his opponent, and was often three steps ahead of them. Neitsh was bold in his pursuit of power, relentless and strong-willed. He often blurred the lines between right and wrong. He was also one of the first known persons with heterochromia. Each are buried in various cemeteries, which can be found in *The Last Breath: A Historic Guide to the Last Known Resting Places of the Greats*. VIN number 132451243."

They ask after the book, and discover that Anna Stanczyk had checked it out and never returned it some 30 years earlier. Realizing that this probably meant Anna had made it to Arkham after she left the mansion, they decide that they should look for Beatrice. Unfortunately, with no last name to go on, they hit a wall and decide to follow up on any records of Mrs. Stanczyk that might mention her maiden name. They head to the town hall. While there, they also ask after the Kolowscys.

The records office only has records of Konrad Stanczyk that owns land at 17 Miller Lane, with no mention of a wife or anyone else.

However, among the death certificates, they find out that the Kotowscys were murdered seven years earlier, and that their funeral was paid for by Beatrice Coldwell, who is presumably still alive and living in Arkham. They easily find her address in the town records, which is a beautiful mansion in the eastern part of Arkham. Unable to get into the estate due to a massive wrought iron fence, they take a look at her mail, and find an invitation to party for that evening. This specific invitation was returned with regrets from the invitee because he and his brother, Mark and Tom Argon, are unable to attend. The note also implies that Beatrice never met these men face-to-face, and Henry and Frank instantly realize that they might be able to impersonate the two men and enter the party to meet with Beatrice that way.

They are, however, noticed by an old man, possibly the butler, who wonders who they are and what they're doing there. They claim to be Tom and Mark, and say that they will be attending the party. The man seems to believe them, although he remarks that they should dress in nicer clothes at the party.