

Signs Following

*Now it's darker than a dungeon
And it's deeper than a well
So sometimes, I imagine that I'm getting pretty close to Hell
- Tyler Childers, "Coal"*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Chthonian egg lies underground where it has incubated for eons. Over the years, shifting tectonic plates have left the egg inaccessible to the rest of its kind. A trio of adult Chthonians psychically compel an Alabama coal mine manager to dig deep and fast. This has not escaped the attention of a local Serpentfolk who sees an opening in the eons-old war: an opportunity to steal or destroy a Chthonian Egg.

Over the last century, the Serpentfolk has maintained a small following in the form of a cult, the Underborn, led by the Serpentfolk's human persona, The Preacher. The Underborn triggered the Sand Mountain Mine collapse that killed 6 miners, prompting the rest of the miners to strike after its reopening. Realizing his mistake, the Serpentfolk strive to end the strike and get the Underborn back in the mine.

Preacher was arrested by a D/G friendly, Deputy Jerome Davies for assaulting a prisoner-scab, a performative act to rile up the miners. Preacher is arrested as a John Doe for refusing to identify himself. Davies can be seen on video surveillance escorting Preacher into a cell. The cell itself is not on camera. While in the cell, the Serpentfolk consumed Davies before assuming his identity and walking right out and joining the Underborn on the picket line again.

BRIEFING

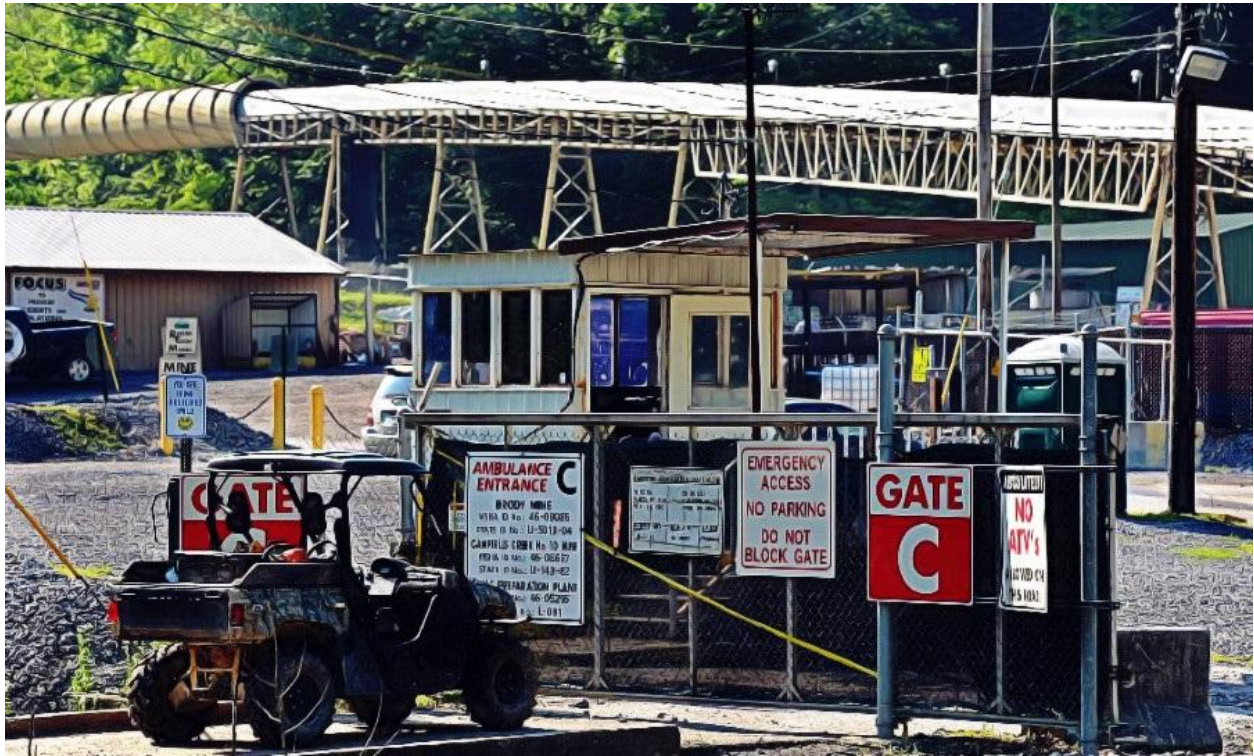
Delta Green sends Agents to the town of Waxahachie, in Jackson County, Alabama to investigate Davies' disappearance. The deputy that was last seen leaving the jail before heading to monitor a miner's strike. He was captured on video at the strike, and processing an arrestee from the strike, and this was the last that he was seen.

NOW

Chthonian psychic sendings compel Adam Quail, the mine owner, to make a deal with the county sheriff, Larry Blankenship, for inmates to serve as scabs to dig their egg out. The strikers are growing frustrated.

The Underborn want back into the mine to destroy or capture the egg. They know that an explosion of significant enough size to completely collapse and destroy the mine might also trigger a faultline to split that enables the Cthtonians to reach their young and doubtless enact vengeance on them and their families, so are avoiding that.

Both Underborn and Chthonians want the same thing, but for different reasons: to dig in the mine for the egg.



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DEPUTY JEROME DAVIES

Deceased, consumed by Serpentfolk.

Retired New Orleans PD, started a second retirement job with Limestone County.

DG Friendly from Operation LEECH DUTY.

Completely oblivious to the plot underground.

PREACHER

Serpentfolk.

Can masquerade as Jerome Davies or Preacher with Changeling Feast.

Knows a bare minimum about Delta Green from Davies' memories.

Cult leader of The Underborn.

Responsible for the mine collapse, a failed effort to destroy a buried Chthonian egg as the latest ploy in their eons-old war.

Communicates with his cult followers, the Underborn, in his human persona. Holds a faux-Pentacostal sermon at the decrepit schoolhouse every Sunday morning, full of [glossolalia](#) and [snake-handling](#)

Previously arrested in 1932 for Public Intoxication while masquerading about Waxahachie, and has kept a low profile since.

Leads the Underborn to escalate criminal acts against scabs and their families as the strike goes on.

SHERIFF LARRY BLANKENSHIP

Has entered a lucrative contract with the mine manager to provide "emergency" labor in the form of prisoners as scabs. If the mining goes well, he will receive a monetary bonus from surplus county sheriff's department funds.

He has his hands full between the missing deputy and the strike. Most of the department is engaged in the search for Davies and the John Doe, leaving the strike to potentially get out of hand. If enough scabs are injured, mining operations will cease.

ADAM QUAIL

Corporate mine manager, corrupted by the Chthonian, desires to dig at all costs. Outwardly motivated by money, inwardly serves his masters.

Contracted Sheriff Blankenship to have untrained prisoners work as scabs

PRISONER-SCABS

Poorly trained, prone to accidents and injuries.

Some are plotting escape.

MINERS

50 miners and their families are striking outside of the mine holding picket signs.

Prepared: Bring enough food for days

Family: take care of each other

Reserved: Hesitant to give interviews

Reasons for striking:

- Original mine owner declared bankruptcy and sold the mine to a conglomerate. When ownership changed hands, workers were forced to accept steep cuts on health care and retirement benefits, including for workers who had already retired.
- The union is fighting to restore the cuts in a new contract, as well as implementing additional safety and health standards
- Take issue with decisions that kept the company alive yet stripped miners of pay and benefits while shareholders made millions



UNDERBORN

Followers of Preacher, a twisted version of Pentecostal Christianity. Not all miners are Underborn, but some are. They want the strike to end, but still picket with signs bearing Bible verses (Matthew 5:1, Proverbs 14:23, Matthew 19:4)

Meet at the Old Waxahachie Schoolhouse.

Jody Philmore - Stutters

Lucas Went - Bad back

Dale Hofele - Young, bad knees

Mack Williams - Arthritis, opioid use



CHTHONIANS

Massive burrowing psychic wormlike creatures the size of skyscrapers that have inhabited the earth for time untold.

CHTHONIAN INACCESSIBLE AREAS

Chthonians have tremendous difficulty digging through certain kinds of rock and fear water.

Sand Mountain Mine (cannot break through the sub-strata)

Most of Waxahachie, including The Sheriff's Department

The Old Waxahachie Schoolhouse.



HANDLER'S TOOLS

CLOCKS

Each [clock](#) segment filled triggers an effect noticed by the Agents. (e.g. tremors or rituals)

EGG DIG

A 4-count Tug-of-War Clock

Anyone can dig using **Craft (Mining) & Heavy Machinery**, taking 4d4 hours and filling one segment of both the EGG DIG and CHTHONIAN EMERGENCE CLOCK.

Progress digging the mine fills one segment.

Minor sabotage/setbacks subtract 1 segment.

Major sabotage/setbacks/fumbles subtract 2 segments.

Whoever **controls** the mine when filled captures the egg.

CHTHONIAN EMERGENCE

8-count Danger Clock.

Progress digging the mine fills one segment.

Destroying the egg fills 4 segments.

When filled, Chthonians rampage all across the county.

The egg is the size of a horse. The BABY CHTHONIAN may hatch.

FACTIONS' ACTIONS

CHTHONIANS

use Exchange Personalities to possess scab prisoners to dig the egg out

- Like zombies, devoid of usual noticeable characteristics
- Lack speech functions
- Victims only recall feeling like they are in hell after being released: hot, claustrophobic, dark

Create sinkholes to isolate travelers.

Use tremors causing buildings to collapse.

Generate a psychic profile of Agents for targeted SAN attacks (4 count Danger Clock, at the end of which an Agent is attacked with Infallible Suggestion).

Rampage if egg is destroyed, targeting responsible parties.

UNDERBORN

Endanger scab families

Convince others to act for them.

Host an unholy church service in which the Preacher throws off his moniker to reveal his true visage of a Serpentfolk.

Last-ditch effort, overblowing up the mine excessive explosives - causes innocent casualties.



BIBLE CIPHER

Underborn communicate using the Bible as a [book cipher](#), either spoken aloud or over text, with messages to be taken literally from the verse. (See Appendix).

INVESTIGATIONS

JAILHOUSE

A John Doe damn near killed a prisoner-scab with his bare hands. After being arrested by Davies, Doe was fingerprinted at the station with ink (fingerprint card is still there, if ran will come back for a John Doe fingerprinted in 1932 that mysteriously disappeared).

If the cell is forensically searched, Davies's blood can be found.

Davies' patrol SUV is present. Car cage camera shows a slim, slender man wearing button-down shirt, slacks, and snakeskin boots. In the cargo area there is evidence: a bloody picket sign bearing the message, "Isaiah 57:21"

Striking miners won't reveal any information; if infiltrated under the guise of solidarity, Agents can hear the psychic whispers of The Preacher.

DAVIES' HOUSE

Davies' house has no evidence, but while Agents are investigating it is a good time for EARTHQUAKES

SAND MOUNTAIN MINE

[A retreat mine](#). A dangerous place worsened by the State of Alabama's abysmal safety standards.

Underborn and Agents may attempt sabotages (require appropriate skill tests):

- Suffocation and Gas Poisoning- turning off the machines that regulate fresh air underground (difficult)
- Roof Collapse - sabotaging support beams triggering mine collapse (more difficult)
- Gas Explosion - sneaking underground to firedamp (gas) or coal dust pockets and triggering explosion (most difficult)

OLD WAXAHACHIE SCHOOLHOUSE

Appearing on the outside as a decrepit one-room schoolhouse, the inside is well-kept (if aged). The schoolhouse sits in the forested hills on the opposite side of Sand Mountain from the mine. The Underborn and worshippers hold Sunday service and other gatherings here.

Rattlesnakes roam freely. The congregation's members can be revealed through pictures, documents, and other clues.

Inconspicuous Agents attending a Sunday sermon will hear Preacher give a faux-Pentecostals sermon with snake-handling and speaking in tongues. The message is about the meek inheriting the earth through force.



RESOLUTION

If the Chthonians are reunited with their kin, they retreat beneath the earth.

Appeasing Chthonians: -1 SAN

Minimizing innocent casualties: +1d4 SAN

Eradication of the Underborn: +1 SAN

Destroying the Chthonians: +1d10+1 SAN

APPENDIX

[DONATE TO THE UMWA STRIKE FUND HERE](#)

BIBLE CIPHER EXAMPLES

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/> - search by topics and keywords

STAT BLOCKS

ADULT CHTHONIANS

Worms of the Earth (Thank you, Aqualung)

STR 52 CON 72 DEX 7 INT 18 POW 18

HP 62 WP 18

ARMOR: 5 points of slimy blubber (see RESILIENT)

SKILLS: Alertness 60%, Unnatural 40%.

RITUALS: Infallible Suggestion, Exchange Personalities

ATTACKS: Flailing Tentacles (50, 6D6)

Grapple (60%, See FLING and FLUID DRAIN)

Squash (40%, Lethality 30%)

EARTHQUAKE: By tunneling through the earth in a particularly violent manner, Chthonians are capable of causing localized earthquakes. Those stuck in or near a building when this happens must make a DEX×5 test every other round or suffer D6 damage from falling debris, knocking them prone on a fumble. This ability has no effect in open areas with nothing that could collapse or otherwise cause harm. (Needs a range)

FLAILING TENTACLES: With a successful attack roll, the Chthonian may divide its damage dice among up to six victims within reach.

FLING: Chthonians can easily throw targets they have grappled in their tentacles, inflicting D8 damage to the thrown victim and whoever they make impact with. The thrown victim is automatically knocked prone, while the target they struck must make a STR×5 test to remain on their feet.

FLUID DRAIN: The turn after grappling, a Chthonian may suck blood from a pinned target with several of its tentacles for 3D6 damage, adding the same amount to either its own HP or WP.

MENTAL ASSAULT: At a cost of 3 WP, Chthonians are capable of telepathically commanding a human to remain in one spot for a day, ranging in diameter from a mile to a single meter. The target must make a SAN roll. On a success, the victim loses 1 SAN and only experiences a brief feeling of restriction. However, on a fail, the victim loses D6 SAN and is rendered completely unwilling to leave the area of effect. If forced out of the area, they will lose D4 SAN and do anything within their power to re-enter its radius, filled with intense yet completely indescribable terror.

SQUASH: A Chthonian may attempt to crush or smash into an opponent with its immense bulk with a Lethality rating of 30%. Attempts to Dodge this attack are at +20%.

RESILIENT: A successful Lethality roll does not destroy a Chthonian, but inflicts HP damage equal to the Lethality rating.

SUBTERRANEAN: A Chthonian can tunnel unimpeded through dirt, stone, and concrete slightly faster than a human being at a full sprint.

WATER AVERSION: Chthonians are deeply hydrophobic, and will avoid contact with water at all costs. Splashing them with water does D8 damage for each gallon, while total immersion subjects them to 20% Lethality damage every round.

SAN Loss: D4/D12

BABY CHTHONIAN

STR 30 CON 40 DEX 7 INT 12 POW 12

HP 50 WP 18

Armor: 3 points of slimy blubber

ATTACKS: Flailing Tentacles (40%, 3D6)

Grapple (50%, See FLING and FLUID DRAIN)

Squash (40%, 2d12)

BABY TENTACLES: With a successful attack roll, the Chthonian may divide its damage dice among up to two victims within reach.

FLING: Chthonians can easily throw targets they have grappled in their tentacles, inflicting D6 damage to the thrown victim and whoever they make an impact with. The thrown victim is automatically knocked prone, while the target they struck must make an STR×5 test to remain on their feet.

FLUID DRAIN: The turn after grappling, a Chthonian may suck blood from a pinned target with several of its tentacles for 3D6 damage, adding the same amount to either its own HP or WP.

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WATER AVERSION: Chthonians are deeply hydrophobic, and will avoid contact with water at all costs. Splashing them with water does D8 damage for each gallon, while total immersion subjects them to 20% Lethality damage every round.

SAN LOSS: 1D4/1D6

UNDERBORN

STR 14 CON 12 DEX 10 INT 10 POW 13 CHA 12

HP 13 WP 13

SKILLS: Craft (Mining) 70%, Firearms 40%, Heavy Machinery 60%

Attacks: Heirloom Weapons: Bolt Action Rifles (40%, 1d12), Shotguns (60%, 2d10*), Pistols (40%, 1d10)

MINERS

STR 13 CON 13 DEX 11 INT 10 POW 11 CHA 10

HP 13 WP 11

SKILLS: Craft (Mining 50%), Firearms 30%, Heavy Machinery 50%

Attacks: Heirloom Weapons: Bolt Action Rifles (30%, 1d12), Shotguns (50%, 2d10*), Pistols (30%, 1d10)

SCABS

STR 14 CON 13 DEX 12 INT 10 POW 10 CHA 10

HP 14 WP 10

SKILLS

Craft (Mining) 10%, Criminology 40%, Heavy Machinery 20%

Attacks: Fists (30%, d4)

SERPENTFOLK

STR 19 CON 21 DEX 18 INT 20 POW 16

HP 20 WP 16

ARMOR: 3 points of thick, scaly skin.

RITUALS: Changeling Feast, Fascination, Infallible Suggestion, Obscure Memory, Speech of Bird and Beast, and Withering

SKILLS: Alertness 80%, Anthropology (Human) 35%, Disguise 40%, Dodge 60%, Medicine 99%, Science (Geology) 99%, Sciences (Serpent-Men) 90%, Search 90%, Survival 70%, Unnatural 65%.

ATTACKS: Bite 55%, damage 1D6, Armor Piercing 3

(see VENOM).

Grapple 45%, damage special (see BLOOD FRENZY).

Sign of Power, damage 2D6 (see SIGN OF POWER).

CHARNEL VISAGE: The serpent-folk have no CHA stat as humans would understand it. A serpent that uses an unnatural ritual such as Changeling Feast to disguise itself as human gains a CHA stat, usually with a score equal to half its INT. Many serpent-folk have consumed multiple victims, allowing one to instantly switch its appearance to any of a dozen human forms.

IMMORTALITY: A member of the serpent-folk never grows old, starves to death, or perishes of natural causes. If it fails to feed on fresh meat or blood, after a period of time, it enters a torporous state which can sometimes last hundreds, perhaps millions, of years.

INHUMAN DODGE: Serpent-folk have preternatural senses and reaction speed, allowing them to Dodge even firearm attacks. This includes Lethality attacks from machine guns, but not from explosives or hypergeometry.

VENOM: If a serpent-folk bite inflicts damage (in other words, if it's not stopped by armor), then the victim also suffers poisoning. The venom has a Speed of 1D6 turns and Lethality 15%. An antidote that treats snake venom is effective if the victim makes a Luck roll.

SIGN OF POWER: With a gesture, one of the serpent-folk can cause a single person to be flung backwards with extreme force, inflicting 2D6 damage. It is unknown whether this ability is a ritual or an inherent ability.

UNNATURAL BIOLOGY: Serpent-folk physiology would baffle any biologist. Making a called shot for "vitals" or another apparently vulnerable area inflicts normal damage, with no special game effect.

SAN LOSS: 1/1D6.