



# THE SHANDLER CHRONICLES

New Cthulhu fiction! Supernatural skullduggery runs amok in this continuing series of writings culled from the archives of occult investigator Phillip Shandler, as transcribed by Call of Cthulhu author Monte Cook.

**SHANDLER INVESTIGATIONS**

Phillip Shandler

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Dear Thomas,

March 12, 1931

The events in Chillicost, Maine are behind me now. Even with all the terrible things that I experienced out in the woods, the most difficult part was speaking with Dr. Borchert's wife and sister before I left. Should I tell them that Borchert had fallen victim to his own studies, becoming a madman cultist committing unspeakable acts reshaping flesh out in the woods? That he consorts with the hideous spawn of Shub-Niggurath? I couldn't do it.

I lied to them, Thomas. I told them that I couldn't find Dr. Borchert, but that I felt that it was likely that he had died in the winter-choked woods. Mrs. Borchert tried to get me to accept a partial payment of my fees, but I refused.

Borchert's sister then told me something profoundly disturbing. Apparently, an older man had been in town the day previous asking about both Borchert and I. No one knew the old gent, where he came from, or where he went off to, but he gave his name when asked.

Simon Carlisle.

Obviously, hearing her mention that name chilled me to the bone. Could it be a coincidence? It seems not. What would that old man want with Borchert? Are they connected, or is it just because of me? The thought that I might be leading him to others is quite sobering, to say the least.

In any event, after that, I packed up my things to go. The whole case was an utter failure and I'm worse off – in both money and spirits – than I was when I first arrived.

Sincerely,

Dear Thomas,

March 29, 1931

I owe you thanks, of course. Today I met with Professor Gunter Schultheiss who contacted me a few days ago. I appreciate you referring him to me. My finances are, as you know, in arrears. My debts are piling up and I haven't really had any income in months.

Despite this, I don't think that I can work with Professor Schultheiss. What do I know about ancient Mexico and jungle pyramids? I'm still not



sure why he was so interested in contacting me. He mentioned my knowledge of "the Black Book," but there was nothing in the Necronomicon about Mayans or Aztecs or anything like that. I hope I didn't let you down. A trip down to the Yucatan just isn't my line.

Thank you again, my friend, for your efforts. I'm sure I'll get back on my financial feet soon, though.

Sincerely,

Dear Thomas,

April 3, 1931

All right, I'm convinced! Schultheiss is offering still more money, some in advance, and I'm about to be kicked out of my offices here.

In your recent letter, you mentioned that Schultheiss was looking for someone with knowledge about some of the more obscure religions of antiquity, worshippers of beings often referred to as the Great Old Ones. What you didn't explain was how he knew to come to you in the first place. Does he know about your time with the Silver Moon



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Society or has he just read something you've written? You once mentioned something about publishing some of the things we've discovered on this front, but you've not spoken of it since.

Since you've vouched for the Schultheiss, and since he's clearly got more money than good sense, I guess I'm going to Mexico.

Schultheiss has a fairly large expedition organized. Most of them, like himself, German. We're traveling down to Progreso by ship. From there we head to Merida and then off to the site, apparently. We leave on the first of May.

I have no idea of what use I will be, but for what he's paying me, I'll tote around his luggage through the jungle if that's what he wants me to do.

Sincerely,

Dear Thomas,

May 2, 1931

Ahoy! Well, I'm on board the USS Advantage and on my way to Mexico. The ship is a fine vessel, filled with the expedition's gear and all the personnel. Other than some other miscellaneous cargo she's hauling, the ship is entirely ours. Honestly, I have no idea where Schultheiss gets the financial backing for all of this. He refers to some intellectuals in Europe from time to time. I think they are investors.

In the past few weeks, besides paying off some of my debts with Schultheiss' money, I've done some reading about the Yucatan and the Mayans. Honestly, I couldn't have told you where the Yucatan was a month ago. About all I knew of Mexico was what I'd read in the papers about the revolution a few years ago.

Most of what I've read has to do with the recent Carnegie Institute expeditions and excavations in Copan, Chinchen Itza and elsewhere. I've learned a lot about the wondrous discoveries of temples and palaces, the jade jewelry and stone sculptures, and other finds they have made. I must admit I find it all intriguing. Apparently, what Schultheiss is interested in is deeper in the jungle, a place he calls Uaxichal. This is a small site, and apparently entirely ceremonial.

Our group, as I think I mentioned, is made up almost entirely of German archeologists and their crew, although there is a French woman by the name of Adele le Dor that is also going with us. She is a Mayanist who claims to have been able to crack the code, as it were, of the Mayan hieroglyphics. Despite the fact that I've read that the writing only conveys numbers of astrological notations, she seems to think that they are much more than that. She is distant, though, and while she appears to speak English fluently, I haven't had much opportunity to talk with her.

Schultheiss, a thick-bodied bald man with little round glasses, seems to be the expert in organization. He keeps the large crew together and makes sure that everything runs smoothly. I suspect that those skills will be useful in the jungle. As we got everything on board yesterday morning, however, his controlling nature seemed a bit needlessly authoritarian to me. But who am I to question how he runs things?

Already the others on the expedition have begun referring to me as the American, as I am the only member from the US. Most of them don't speak English, and I don't speak German, of course, so that leaves me with only a handful of people I can talk to. I expect that to get worse, not better, once we get to Mexico, because I do not speak Spanish, either. A number of the sailors are yanks, of course, but they aren't really a part of the team. Apparently, the Advantage will not be waiting for us in Progreso. Schultheiss has assured me, though, that my stay in Mexico will not be longer than four weeks unless I sign on for longer after that period. I'll be returning to America by plane, flying out of an airstrip in British Honduras.

Uaxichal is apparently not in the state of Yucatan, but in a place with the charming name of Quinana Roo. Not much settlement there, of course. I'm expecting it to be quite rough. The team has brought an impressive amount of gear, which, I am told, we will load onto mules. Schultheiss mentioned some local guides we shall be meeting up with in Merida.

Sincerely,

PS Thomas, before I seal up this letter, I thought I would add this. I just had dinner with Schultheiss and as we ate, he admitted that there are two reasons he wanted me to come along. First and foremost, he said, he wanted me to help ascertain if the Uaxichal site has any connection to the cults mentioned in the Necronomicon. (I tried to explain that I was pretty sure that worship of the Great Old Ones had originated in either Arabia or the Far East and spread to Europe and eventually even America, so there was little chance that the Mayans would have any connection, but I had tried to explain them to him a month ago and he just nodded and ignored my point then, too.) Secondly, however, he said that he wanted someone along who had actual experience with the supernatural—or the "ubernaturlich," as he called it. He wouldn't elaborate further, however. What exactly did you tell him? And moreover, what exactly is he expecting to find in Uaxichal?