

P R E D A T O R Y

A Deadworld of Biological Horror for the *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* RPG

By TexasZombie

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P R E D A T O R Y

You find them by accident.

It's too dark to see anything at first, and you're not sure you want to.

But you can hear the moans. You can hear the screams. You can hear the pathetic pleas for help from voices weakened by thirst and starvation. You can hear the buzzing of millions of flies. You can hear the soft thump of heads against cement.

You can smell vomit, blood, and worse.

Your eyes adjust to the dark. You wish they hadn't. You try to look away, but you can't.

There are hundreds of people here.

Hundreds of people who have been left immobile by a cruelty you can't begin to understand.

Hundreds of people that you can't save.

Hundreds of people that are food.

P R E D A T O R Y

"...According to a police spokesperson, Richards has not yet given a statement at this time. A source at the station, speaking on condition of anonymity, told us that this may be due, at least in part, to the extensive injuries Richards inflicted on himself just prior to the killings.

"Richards, with no previous criminal record, is being held for observation at County Memorial Hospital. No bond hearing has been set at this time..."

Local 8 News Live at Five, 15 February 2009

I N F E C T I O N

What do you call a disease that's more than a disease? What do you call the sick when they become something other than human? What do you do when it's so far gone there's no way to get back?

What do you call a disease that makes a person eat their own flesh? Their own tongue? Their lips? Their cheeks? Their fingers? What do you call a disease that makes people rip off their own ears and gouge out their own eyes?

What do you do when the disease makes them want to do it to you?

Where do you turn for help when everyone is infected?

What do you do when they come for you?

We found out last week.

"...The Department of Homeland Defense has offered no explanation for the lack of communication from anyone inside the city. Telephone calls on land lines and cellular nets indicate all services in the area have been discontinued until further notice.

Emails sent to addresses inside the city bounce. Attempts to contact internet websites get a "connection refused."

Someone has cut these people off completely..."

Global News Network, Guthrie & Holmes, 20 February 2009

QUARANTINE

The city is burning. The people are dying. A plague is spreading through the population, and there is no way to stop it.

Eventually, this disease will come to be known as Zhou-McKee Syndrome. It will be discovered that ZMS is caused by a series of engineered mycobacteria that work together to produce a discrete series of effects described as a single disease. It will be discovered that this disease is a biological weapon of incredible potential.

The origin of ZMS will not be discovered by the Cast Members in this scenario. Life is tough like that sometimes.

ZM Note: *The only hint might be the ranting of a former doctor as he stands atop a building screaming about 'Michael Bacterium' as he pulls out his own eyes before throwing himself to the street below. Let the Cast Members figure it out. Or not. Life is like that, sometimes.*

ZM Note: *It is recommended that this Deadworld's initial setting be a single city or relatively isolated area, such as an island or a peninsula that can be easily sealed off.*

To contain the disease, the US Military has, at the direction of the Executive Branch, implemented a complete quarantine around the area. No one gets out. Ever. A swath of land nearly five miles wide has been sterilized around the area. Every structure in this swath has been destroyed. All plant life has been destroyed by defoliating agents. Neurotoxic aerosols are routinely sprayed by low-flying aircraft to kill or incapacitate birds, bats and insects.

Try to fly out and they'll shoot you down. Try to run and you'll discover the land mines and snipers. Anything left is napalmed.

Nothing is getting out. It's the end of the world if it does.

But do you *really* think it's possible to quarantine an entire city? Really?

People have already gotten out. Many have already been located and incinerated. A very few unlucky ones are undergoing vivisection and observation at facilities operated by the Centers for Disease Control.

But do you really think they've found everyone? Do you really think they could?

The worst part is knowing that no one knows what's happening here. We're cut off. We're completely cut off. We've been written off.

They're going to let us die here.

But I know people escaped. I know they did. God help us. I know they did. I helped them.

ZM Note: *Cast members approaching the edge of the city will find several things:*

- *Numerous dead bodies and burning cars.*
- *Low-flying military jets and helicopter gunships. These will fire on anyone approaching the barricades.*
- *Barricades are rolls of razor wire and anti-personnel mines that have been dropped from aircraft or dispersed via artillery barrage. There is no way through.*
- *Attempting to cross the barricade results in damage from the razor wire, a mine detonation, a strafing attack from one or more aircraft, and/or sniper fire.*
- *Anything left will be hit with a canister round of napalm.*
- *Beyond the barricade is the Killing Zone. Beyond that, military vehicles can be seen in the distance. At night, thermal imaging and search lights are used to illuminate the area and maintain the quarantine.*
- *All telecommunications are being jammed by the equivalent of Wild Weasel aircraft. The only sort of communication possible is via light or waving flags. Either will result in a barrage of high-explosive tank rounds. The news crews are too far back to see anything, and the military crews are not being allowed to leave their posts. The city is cut off.*

I N F E C T I O N

ZMS was designed to do worse than kill. It was designed to completely disrupt a society. It was designed to completely disrupt attempts at control. And it is very effective.

To date, only mammals seem to be affected by ZMS. The effects are terminal within two weeks, most often resembling Spongiform Encephalopathy, otherwise known as Mad Cow Disease. Cattle simply batter themselves to death. Carnivores go berserk and rip themselves to shreds.

They have it easy. ZMS is designed for humans.

The city is filled with the bodies of dead animals. Dead birds and insects fall from the sky during daylight hours. At night, it rains bats.

Dogs and cats rip themselves apart, staggering down the street bleeding to death even as they continue to bite their own bodies.

I watched police horses smash their heads apart by ramming repeatedly into their stalls.

The local petting zoo is an abattoir. Nothing survives except a single paralyzed 30-year old orangutan, and she'll only last another few hours before dying of thirst.

The fields on the edge of town are covered in the smoldering hulks of cattle that were machine gunned before being incinerated...

ZM Note: *There are very few live animals left at the end of the first week. If a Cast Member had pets, they don't anymore. The city's beloved dogs and cats killed themselves. Livestock has been machine gunned and burned to maintain the quarantine. The sewers and landfill are choked with dead rats that have ripped out their own entrails.*

ZM Note: *The military is spraying the area with a low-level neurotoxin to try and prevent the spread of the disease by birds, insects, and/or bats. This has the following effect in game terms:*

ZM Note: *Any Cast Member who is caught directly in a neurotoxin spray takes D4(2) points of damage per minute for 1D6 minutes. They also suffer shortness of breath and blurred vision for D4(2) hours. This will only occur at the inner edge of the quarantine zone. It helps ensure anyone who manages to find a way over, under or around the barricades will be unable to navigate the Killing Zone beyond.*

I N C U B A T I O N

ZMS is a rapid-onset disease. How it was initially spread is unknown, but symptoms develop within twenty-four hours.

In 20% of infections, the only result is paralysis. The victim is left a shell, unable to move. This paralysis is irreversible, as the mycobacterium destroys the voluntary nervous system of the lower body. This is a terror weapon – these victims can communicate vocally. They are fully aware of what has happened to them.

ZM Note: *These are the real victims. They are scattered throughout the city. Some are home, some are in their cars, some are on the streets. Many are still at their place of business. They are laying in pools of their own waste, unable to move. They can call for help as long as they aren't suffering from dehydration. This only happens for the first day. After that they're too weak to call for help or do more than groan softly or whisper.*

ZM Note: *At least occasionally, the Cast Members should see someone have a seizure and just fall over. This shouldn't happen to the Cast Members. Use it to manipulate their behavior.*

ZM Note: *There are small groups of uninfected people trying to collect and treat paralyzed victims. They are too small in number and too short of supplies to have any significant impact. For every dozen victims that can be saved, hundreds more will fall prey to mobile victims, or just die of thirst or exposure. None will last long enough to starve to death.*

In the remaining cases, the organism spreads throughout the victim's body. It is transmissible at this point via any form of fluid contact: blood, saliva, urine, even sweat.

The first and most obvious symptoms are restlessness and irrationality, leading rapidly to violent and aggressive behavior. As with the paralytic cases, parts of the brain remain unaffected. You can be beaten to death by a victim who is begging for your forgiveness in between bouts of cursing and incoherent paranoid ranting. They spit, they throw feces, they claw and bite. The whole time they're in a state of panic. They have no idea why they're doing these things.

ZM Note: *The victim might as well be psychotic at this point. They can't help what they're doing. Most of them don't want to be doing it. Think of every bad stereotype from every movie ever made about patients in an insane asylum.*

Within two days, the central nervous system starts to break down. The slang term Smiley starts to become obvious due to a facial rictus that pulls the lips away from the teeth, resulting in a permanent smile. The limbs begin to spasm involuntarily. Control of the bowels is lost. IQ begins to drop.

Serotonin production is completely disrupted. Sleep becomes impossible. Psychosis follows in as little as three to four days. Victims become increasingly aggressive.

Kidney and liver functions are highly altered. Ureic acid crystals build up under the skin, resulting in lumps and ridges called typhi that gradually cover the body. A victim finds their clothes filling with an orange powder that seems to slough off of their skin. They suffer nosebleeds. They vomit blood. They pass blood in their feces and urine. Their abdomens swell due to hepatic and splenic hyperplasia.

They hurt themselves. A victim will repeatedly smash their head again and again into a wall until they are unconscious or dead. A victim will slam their body into barbed wire, or throw themselves into traffic. They'll rub their arms against cement walls until the skin is gone. They'll scratch their bellies until they're bleeding.

It is perhaps ironic in a horrible sense that at this stage, changes in a victim's nervous system start to render them less prone to harm from shock and blood loss. This is due to a foreign protein being produced by the mycobacterium that mimics drugs such as PCP and methamphetamines. This disease is not designed to let victims die easily.

The biting starts. An infected individual begins to suffer seizures. During these blackouts they will bite off their own tongues. Their own lips and cheeks. Their own fingers and ears. And they'll bite anyone else who gets close enough, infected or not.

The orange dust from the skin gets worse. It coats everything around a victim. Their skin becomes permanently orange-yellow. Their eyes change. The whites become yellow. They develop Kayser-Fleisher Rings, orange-rusty rings around their irises.

ZM Note: An early stage victim shows the following physical abnormalities:

- *Skin and eyes are orange to yellow in coloration. The orange powder is ureic acid working out of the skin. The typhi look like lumps of gravel just under the skin, and feel like rock salt. They hurt. Joints swell from gout.*
- *The belly is badly swollen. The liver and spleen are enlarged to the point that everyone looks like they have a beer gut or are pregnant. Belly buttons become "outies". Victims have a difficult time breathing when they bend down.*
- *The irises of a victim's eyes have a rusty-orange ring around them. This is caused by a build up of copper and ureic acid. Blood seeps from the tear ducts.*
- *There is a constant trickle of blood from the nose.*
- *The body is covered in bruises, cuts and scratches.*

C O N T A G I O N

Individuals at this stage of infection are barely human. Their faces are skeletal, missing lips and cheeks, sometimes noses, eyelids, and ears. Extreme cases are missing their own eyes. Their bodies are covered in blood and orange sludge. Their clothing is filled with dried blood and impacted feces. Clouds of flies swarm everywhere on them. Maggots begin infesting the wreckage of their bodies.

When not raging against someone else, victims at this stage of infection rant, pace, flail their limbs uncontrollably. Ideas get stuck in their heads or they will babble a single phrase for hours at a time. The phrase is usually unintelligible due to the self-inflicted mutilation.

“Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh! Guh uh uh rur uh uh guh!”

Mentally and emotionally, victims lose all inhibitions and moral codes. The constant pain of ZMS leads them to seek out others and inflict harm on them. This is the only relief possible, if one can call it that.

Only one thing offers relief from the self-mutilation caused by ZMS: inflicting pain on others. This isn't as complicated as why people lash out emotionally at their caregivers. This is more visceral. More animal. Inflicting emotional pain eases the symptoms. Inflicting physical damage alleviates the symptoms for a time.

ZM Note: *Inflicting physical damage on someone else stops ZMS symptoms for a number of hours equal to the damage points inflicted. Thus, a victim who bites someone else for 3 Life Points of damage can get a break from ZMS for 3 hours.*

ZM Note: *A second stage victim looks much like a first stage victim with the following additional characteristics:*

- *Most of the lips and tongue have been bitten off or chewed away. Sections of both cheeks may be missing. This means all the teeth are exposed and bloody.*
- *The mouth bleeds constantly, obviously.*
- *The victim may have ripped off his or her ears and or eyelids. If the eyes have been damaged, they will water and bleed constantly. Vision will obviously be impaired at this point.*
- *The victim may have ripped off the end of their nose.*
- *The orange sludge is a mixture of ureic acid crystals, sweat and blood.*
- *Maggots infest nooks and crannies of the body.*
- *The legs and buttocks are covered in dried feces.*
- *Everything the victim touches is smeared with orange sludge (see above).*
- *The victim may be attempting to treat their wounds if they retain the presence of mind to do so.*

P R E D A T I O N

Despite the severity of injuries inflicted on themselves, those infected with Zhou-McKee Syndrome don't die easily. The disease won't let them die. They're not supposed to die. Not yet.

New proteins are produced. Maggots have a harder time surviving on a victim's ravaged body. Wounds seal over with a mucus-like substance. White blood cell counts rise to near-leukemic levels.

Debased mentally and physically, a new symptom emerges. Eating. The only way to stop biting themselves is to bite others. To eat others. The more flesh a victim consumes, the better they feel. Their thoughts clear. They can focus better. But not on recovering. They focus on finding more flesh.

Perception becomes sharper for the remaining senses. Aberrant social groupings begin to develop. Victims begin to cooperate. Most eventually have to learn sign language – their mouths and faces are too mutilated to allow normal speech.

ZM Note: *A third stage victim looks like a second stage victim with the following additional characteristics:*

- *The lips, tongue and cheeks are ripped or bitten away.. The gums have receded to expose more of the teeth.*
- *The victim has ripped off their own finger- and toenails. They may have bitten off the ends of their fingers. Some victims will have bitten off their nipples if they can reach them.*
- *There are fewer live maggots. There are thousands of dead maggots glued to the skin by the sludge and mucous (see below).*
- *The skin appears shiny. This is because it's covered in a thick, gummy mucus.*
- *Many of the typhi have broken through the skin, resulting in large open sores.*
- *Skin and eyes are bright orange due to ureic acid and copper accumulations.*
- *Ears, eyes, nose, and mouth constantly trickle blood.*
- *The body is covered in more severe wounds, all of which are scabbed over with a strange material that looks like brown wax paper – this is highly altered skin.*
- *The victim has begun wrapping their wounds in strips of cloth or bandages. If they retain the presence of mind to do so, some may be using antibiotic creams on their injuries.*

So, to sum up, the following characteristics will be seen in individuals infected with ZMS. The ZM should focus on symptoms that are the easiest for the players to visualize.

1. *Covered in self-inflicted injuries, including facial, hand, and body mutilation.*
2. *Orange-yellow skin and eyes. Eyes may have rusty rings in the white part.*
3. *Teeth are showing because cheeks and lips are ripped away.*
4. *Cannot talk, as tongue has been bitten off.*
5. *May not be able to handle small tools, as tips of the fingers have been bitten off.*
6. *Skin is lumpy and covered in an orange material (powder first, then sludge). The skin may eventually rip away due to wounds and crystal lumps.*
7. *Joints are swollen from gout.*
8. *Skin may be covered in thick mucus.*

9. *Badly swollen belly. Internal organs can be seen pressing against skin. Belly button turns inside-out and may be bleeding.*
10. *Bleeding from the genitals and rectum. Legs and buttocks covered in feces.*
11. *Living and dead maggots in the wounds and feces.*
12. *Victim is ranting, screaming, and/or engaging in bizarre behavior.*
13. *Victim is highly aggressive and will seek to inflict bodily harm on anyone they can, infected or not.*
14. **Welcome to Hell.**

T E R M I N A L C O N D I T I O N

The city is burning. Mobs rule the streets. The sick and dying are everywhere. There are no emergency services. The markets are running out of food. Sometimes it's hard to tell whether the screams are louder, or the gunfire...I wish...I wish I'd told her goodbye. I wish...

The city is a war zone. The roar of fires, the roar of looting mobs, the screams of victims, and the crackle of gunfire are the dominant noises. Near the edge of town, low flying military aircraft scream overhead, bombing the few miserable wretches who have made it through the razor wire cordons into the killing zone.

Mobs of early-stage victims roam everywhere. They kill the uninfected. They kill each other. They will pound paralyzed victims to death, babbling or screaming along with them.

On the edges of the crowd, later stage victims lurk, attempting to hide their faces with bandages and scarves. It doesn't help. After meeting such individuals, most people with the presence of mind to use a weapon simply shoot first. There are no questions.

For the later stage victims, there are only two avenues left for survival:

Solos hide wherever they can and prey on whatever they can find. Lucky ones are able to drag paralyzed victims back to their lairs.

Packs cooperate to do the same thing on a larger scale. Some packs have earlier stage victims working with them. Everyone knows where they are headed, and it's better to build up a large larder for the inevitable decline.

Note that hurting, biting, and eating people doesn't stop the disease, stave off starvation, heal, or otherwise cure ZMS. The victims, in the disease-induced delusional stage, only think it does.

ZM Note: *Given enough time, almost everyone infected with ZMS dies. Paralytic victims are the first to do, dying within a few days without aid. Paradoxically, it is these victims that will live if someone can take care of them. They will remain contagious for the remainder of their lives, but they will retain their sanity. Maybe.*

ZM Note: *Later stage victims inevitably damage themselves too severely to survive more than a few months at best. Most will be dead inside of a month or two, depending on their nutritional requirements and intake. In some cases, a few may eat enough flesh from others to survive starvation.*

ZM Note: *In these cases, the disease inevitably leads to further deterioration of the mind and body. Kidney and liver failure, secondary infections, or leukemia will claim everyone within four to six months.*

E P I D E M I C

Everyone is infected. This may include one or more Cast Members depending on the ZM's preference (as described previously). There are two ways to handle this:

1. For Extras, use the Level 1 Infection "Psycho" template. Use successive templates for later stages of ZMS.
2. For Special Extras and Cast Members, the following procedure is recommended:

ZM Note: *Cast Members may start the game uninfected at the discretion of the ZM. In that case, ZMS can be described in the following AFMBE terms:*

Zhou-McKee Syndrome

Transmission: contaminated water or bodily fluid contact; incubation period is 1D3 days. Contagion Strength is 1D4+4, and the Severity is Terminal (as described above). There is no Survival Roll allowed.

ZM Note: *Alternatively, any or all Cast Members may begin the game infected with the non-paralytic version of ZMS at the discretion of the ZM. If so, roll on the following table to determine symptoms and stage, or start infect Cast Members at the earliest, mildest form, and proceed three to four steps per day afterwards.*

<i>D10</i>	<i>Result</i>
<i>1-4</i>	<i>Cast Member early Stage 1 (see above)</i>
<i>5-7</i>	<i>Cast Member at Stage 1 (see above)</i>
<i>8-9</i>	<i>Cast Member at early Stage 2 (see above)</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>Cast Member at late Stage 2 or early Stage 3 (see above)</i>

ZM Note: Roll on the table below for specific symptoms. Any new Drawbacks, Qualities, or Powers are in addition to those already possessed by the Cast Member. No additional points are gained from these rolls.

Early Stage 1		Stage 1		Stage 2 - 3	
D10	Result	D10	Result	D10	Result
1	Cruel 1	1	All Stage 1 plus Horrific Appearance 1	1	All Stage 1 plus Horrific Appearance 3
2	Cruel 2	2	As above	2	As above
3	Cruel 1, Paranoia	3	As above	3	As above
4	Cruel 2, Paranoia	4	As above	4	All Stage 1 plus Horrific Appearance 4
5	Cruel 1, Obsessive-Compulsive 2	5	As above	5	As above
6	Cruel 2, Obsessive-Compulsive, Paranoia	6	All Stage 1 plus Horrific Appearance 2	6	As above
7	As 6, plus Emotional Instability	7	As above	7	As above, plus Natural Armor (Bandages)
8	As above, plus Rage	8	As above	8	As above
9	As above, plus No Pain	9	As above	9	As above, plus Weak Constitution
10	As above, plus Damage Resistance	10	As above	10	As above, plus Weak Constitution

ZM Note: Cruel 1, Cruel 2, Obsessive-Compulsive 2, Paranoia, and Damage Resistance are described in the AFMBE corebook. Emotional Instability. Horrendous Appearance, Natural Armor (Bandages), Rage and Weak Constitution are described in the AFMBE Atlas of the Walking Dead

ZM Note: Specific effects of these changes are described below.

THE CITY

The city or area (pick one or make one up) resides on a peninsula or island, so it lends itself well to isolation and quarantine.

ZM Note: Possibilities include Galveston Island, Texas; the island of Aruba; the Florida Keys; Iceland; etc.

The population started out at nearly 100,000 people.

- 20,000 are paralyzed and dying. Many have found themselves in the living hell of a Larder.
- 30,000 are dead or dying, rotting in the streets or their homes.
- 50,000 are stark raving mad or running for their lives. The breakdown of this population is something like:
 - 35,000 at the first stage of infection (Psychos)
 - 7000 at the second stage of infection (Grinners)
 - 3000 at the third stage of infection (Mummies)
 - 5,000 uninfected at the start of the game.

Of a population of 100,000 or less, the ZM should routinely have the Cast Members come across people they know. A nice ZM might let Cast Members have at their old bosses. An evil ZM will have Cast Members run across their family members.

Virtually all avenues of travel into and out of the area have been blocked by a draconian military blockade.

Random Encounters (roll as often as required or applicable)

2D6	Result
2	1D100 uninfected citizens. They are likely to be heavily armed and not inclined to talk much. Unless the Cast Members are under attack by someone else, they are most likely to be shot at by this group.
3	1D4X100 Stage 1 and 2 infected individuals. The scene is somewhere between a riot, a mass murder, a looting spree, and a battlefield. Some of the mob are attacking each other, some are looting, some are babbling, some are running for their lives.
4	1D100 Stage 1 and 2 infected individuals. Otherwise, as above.
5	5D10 Stage 1 and 2 infected individuals. Otherwise, as above.
6	1D6 Stage 3 infected individuals looking for victims.
7	Larder (see below)
8	1D6X1D6 paralyzed victims. They will die in 3D10 hours without assistance.
9	1D10X1D10 paralyzed victims. Otherwise, as above.
10	1D20 Stage 2 infected individuals led by 1D10 Stage 3 individuals looking for victims. They already have 1D10 victims in shackles, mostly Stage 1 infected.
11	Cast Member significant other (see below)
12	Military aircraft flyover. If this encounter occurs near a barricade, the aircraft will circle once while climbing out of small arms range, then open fire. Use stats for .50 caliber machine gun (AFMBE corebook, p. 135).

Larder

A larder is a “cache” or “supply” of paralyzed victims, or maimed Stage 1 or uninfected victims being stockpiled by one or more Stage 3 infected victims. Roll on the following table for details.

Uninfected and Stage 1 victims have been savagely maimed in order to keep them in the larder. This is usually done by breaking both arms and legs, but also done by breaking the neck, severing the spine, or nailing the unfortunate to the floor. Small, elderly, or otherwise relatively helpless victims may have avoided this and simply been locked in a basement or thrown into a hole.

Mixing uninfected individuals and Stage 1 individuals in confined spaces results in a group of Stage 1 individuals in a matter of days. Stage 2 individuals are too violent and usually killed either by having their throat cut or their head bashed in with a hammer. The bodies are not typically removed in these cases.

In some extremes, a victim’s arms and/or legs will be crudely amputated and bandaged. These unfortunates seldom survive more than a few hours, though some last for days before dying from blood loss or secondary infection.

At some point, most Larder victims have been tortured and/or partially eaten by their Stage 3 captor due to the delusional nature of ZMS.

2D6	Result
2-3	1D6 individuals
4-7	1D10 individuals
8	2D12 individuals
9	1D100 individuals
10	2D100 individuals.

Cast Member Significant Other

Eventually, one or more Cast Members may run across someone that they know on more than a casual basis. This may be a close friend, a family member, an old flame, a coworker, etc. Roll on the following table for details. Roll 1D10 for their state of infection: 1 = uninfected, 2-6 = Stage 1, 7-9 = Stage 2, 10 = Stage 3.

1D6	Result
1	Immediate family member(s); 10% to be 1D6 members
2	Extended family member(s); 10% to be 1D6 members
3	Close friend
4	Coworker(s); 10% to be 1D3 members
5	Other; 10% to be 1D3 persons
6	Roll 1D3 times – it’s a Party!

Gone Crazy, Be Back Later

If the cast members decide to get involved in looting or rioting, there are tables for that sort of thing in the “...From These Cold Dead Hands” Deadworld elsewhere on this site.

B R E A K O U T

Eventually the explosions in the killing zone stop. No more aircraft fly overhead. No more birds or grasshoppers fall out of the sky. No more razor wire is dropped. No more land mines are spread.

O U T B R E A K

Eventually survivors can make their way through the mine fields to find the wreckage of abandoned military vehicles ringing the city. Eventually survivors will find the bodies of soldiers, some paralyzed, some dead, sprawled near their weapons.

Eventually survivors will find dead animals everywhere. Dead cattle lay in rows in their fields. Coyotes that have ripped open their own stomachs will stagger down dusty roads.

Only the birds seem immune now that the nerve gas is no longer being spread.

Eventually survivors may find a working radio or television and hear familiar voices from familiar broadcasting companies, their voices terrified, nearly incoherent.

“...They’re putting it in the water! My God! They’re deliberately infecting the rest of us!...”

Global News Network, Live Broadcast, audio only, silenced by a single gunshot followed by the drone of a carrier wave, 28 March 2009

Eventually survivors will hear the screams, shrieks, and babbling of raving lunatics missing most of their faces as they rush from the trees beside the road...

“guh uh uh ah ahhh ah!!!”

E N D G A M E S

This Deadworld has been left deliberately open-ended and somewhat vague. It is up to the ZM to decide what, if anything, they want to do with it.

Played as is, this Deadworld is good for a one-shot, or short series of games. To develop into a full-blown campaign, some alterations should be made.

Recommendations for this include:

1. Decrease the severity of Zhou-McKee’s Syndrome.
2. Decrease the level of contagion.
3. Decide how far the disease has spread, what medical preparations can be made, and whether or not the disease can be treated.

There are two scenarios described herein:

1. Cast Members are infected.
2. Cast Members are not infected.

If the Cast Members are not infected, they might be able to survive long enough to outlast the quarantine. If the Cast Members are infected, they may be able to find a cure, or at least a treatment for ZMS.

Alternate scenarios for this Deadworld include:

1. Cast Members are uninfected volunteers sent in to secure part of the city. Cast Members in this case are probably highly trained military specialists with appropriate protective gear, weaponry, ammunition and other supplies.
2. As above, but Cast Members are scientific personnel (including a military escort) who are entering the Quarantine Zone to research the disease or try to “collect” specimens.
3. Cast Members could be members of the media trying to find out what’s going on in the city. As such, they might actually be able to break in by hitching a ride on or hijacking a military helicopter. Good luck!

THE INFECTED LEVEL 1 INFECTION - INCUBATION

Duration – 1 to 3 days

Psychos, Nuts, Loonies

Power	Description
Weight	Life-Like (0)
Weak Spot	All (0)
Getting Around	Life-Like (3)*
Strength	Dead Joe Average, Damage Resistant (8)
Senses	Like the Living (1)
Sustenance	Occasionally, All Flesh Must Be Eaten (2)
Intelligence	Long Term Memory, Problem Solving (20)
Spreading the Love	One Bite and You're Hooked (2)
Special Powers	Emotional Instability (-1) No Pain (1) Obsessive-Compulsive (-2) – repetitive behaviors Rage (-2)
Power	Base 32 + 1/skill point (Language 5 is free)
Attributes Str 2 Int 2 Dex 2 Per 2 Con 2 Wil 2	Spd 8* - Speed is calculated normally instead of being set at 4. This stage of infection is more life-like than that of life-like Zombies Essence 12 Dead Points 26 (1/2 damage from most weapons)
Skills Language 5 (Local)	
Attack Bite D4X2 (4) slashing, or by weapon	

LEVEL 2 INFECTION - CONTAGION

Duration – 1 to 2 weeks

Smileys, Grinners, Ghouls

Power	Description
Weight	Life-Like (0)
Weak Spot	All (0)
Getting Around	Life-Like (3)*
Strength	Dead Joe Average, Damage Resistant (8)
Senses	Like the Living (1)
Sustenance	Occasionally, All Flesh Must Be Eaten (2)
Intelligence	Long Term Memory, Problem Solving (20)
Spreading the Love	One Bite and You're Hooked (2)
Special Powers	Emotional Instability (-1) Horrorific Appearance 2 (4) No Pain (1) Obsessive-Compulsive (-2) – repetitive behaviors Rage (-2)
Power	Base 36 + 1/skill point (Language 5 is free)
Attributes Str 2 Int 2 Dex 2 Per 2 Con 2 Wil 2	Spd 8* - Speed is calculated normally instead of being set at 4. This stage of infection is more life-like than that of life-like Zombies Essence 12 Dead Points 26 (1/2 damage from most weapons)
Skills Language 5 (Sign Language)	
Attack Bite D4X2 (4) slashing, or by weapon	

LEVEL 3 INFECTION - PREDATION

Duration – up to 6 months

Mummies, Monsters

Power	Description
Weight	Life-Like (0)
Weak Spot	All (0)
Getting Around	Life-Like, The Lunge (6)*
Strength	Ninety-Pound Weakling, Damage Resistant (2)
Senses	Like the Living (1)
Sustenance	Occasionally, All Flesh Must Be Eaten (2)
Intelligence	Long Term Memory, Problem Solving (20)
Spreading the Love	One Bite and You're Hooked (2)
Special Powers	Emotional Instability (-1) Horrorific Appearance 4 (8) Natural Armor – Bandages, D4-1 (1), Flammable No Pain (1) Obsessive-Compulsive (-2) – repetitive behaviors Rage (-2) Weak Constitution (-2)
Power	Base 36 1/skill point (Language 5 is free)
Attributes Str 1 Int 2 Dex 2 Per 2 Con 0 Wil 2	Spd 4* At this stage of infection, victims slow down, but desperation results in quick lunges Essence 9 Dead Points 14 (1/2 damage from most weapons)
Skills Language 5 (Sign Language)	
Attack Bite D4X2 (4) slashing, or by weapon; +2 initiative in close combat Natural Armor (Bandages), D4-1 (3), flammable	

eMail comments to: eviloverlord668@yahoo.com

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Author's Note: Some things are only fiction because they haven't happened...yet. Biotechnology offers the chance to change life for the better. It also offers the chance to end life just as easily. Probably easier. "Accidental" diseases have already been created in laboratories. Some of these are always fatal. And these were the accidental ones. What can be used to heal can be used to destroy. Could something like ZMS be created in a lab? Probably not yet. I hope not. I hope that by the time it can, we'll have better sense than to go ahead and create it.

You may have noted that there is no indication in this Deadworld of the origin of ZMS. That's because it doesn't matter. In the event of the release of a manufactured disease that kills billions, it wouldn't matter who had released it. All that would matter is making one's peace with one's self and one's significant others.

We must endeavor as a technological society not to let it come to that.

All of the symptoms of ZMS described in this Deadworld are real. The effects of four rare diseases have been combined in the horror known as ZMS.

And don't miss these groovy inspirational books and movies:

- The Cobra Event (Richard Preston, Ballantine Books, 1997)
- The Hot Zone (Richard Preston, Anchor, 1995)
- Biohazard: The Chilling True Story of the Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program in the World--Told from Inside by the Man Who Ran It (Ken Alibek, Delta, 2000)
- Plagues and Peoples (William McNeill, Anchor, 1998)
- Ravenous (20th Century Fox, 1999)
- In the Mouth of Madness (New Line Cinema, 1995)
- Among Madmen (Jim Starlin, Diana Graziunas, New American Library, 1990)
- Blood Crazy (Simon Clark, Leisure Books, 2001)
- Stranger (Simon Clark, Leisure Books, 2003)