Some Items To Account For

I am often asked during character creation or game play, what would anyone ever use the accounting skill for? Most people see accounting as something that would have no place in a fantastic world filled with eldritch horrors and lurking cultists. It makes one wonder why the creators of the Call of Cthulhu system would have the skill featured prominently on the character sheet for all to amaze and wonder. Well have no fear keepers and players alike, I am about to put forth some uses for this skill that will not only be handy but could provide the pivotal clue that will unlock the doors to terrible Mythos threat that lies beneath every good Call of Cthulhu scenario.

First of all what is accounting? Accounting or accountancy is the measurement, processing and communication of financial information about economic entities such as businesses and corporations. Well if you haven’t fallen asleep yet I applaud you, but what does this mean in the world of CoC. Well it means you can play a character that everyone underestimates and when the time is right unleash your unbridled accounting fury. Or you can spend the night digging into the books of that company, owned by the cult leader, that you just know is trafficking mythos items. Kidding aside your accounting skills can come in handy in many situations, it just takes a bit of creative thinking.

Let me just lay out some hypothetical instances where your mild mannered accountant can come in quite handy. Lets say your group is trying to find the house where a person of interest might be keeping their next victim. Well let’s take a look into the man’s finances for a bit and see where he’s been spending his money. Ah we found that he has made some purchases on the south side, and looking into the records of his parents we find that they owned a house in that neighborhood. It’s a good bet that is the house he is using to hide his victims. Now you can send in the gun-wielding folks to do the dirty work. See you may be lifted onto the shoulders of your teammates with the crowd going wild yet.

Looking for that mythos tome that has the incantation you need to send that pesky dark entity back into the void. You can go shake down cultist after cultist, but you know they can be pretty tight lipped and lets face it, the god they worship will do much worse to than you ever could. How about let the accountant take crack at it, a few hours with the bank account and voila, we see that the book was purchased at Stanford’s Rare Books and Curiosities. Now it’s a quick trip to Sanford’s to see if he remembers the person who bought it. Maybe he has an address on file or a phone number.

Or perchance that sea captain you have your eye on is suspicious but not overly so. Well let’s get the accountant on the shipping companies books and ship manifests. Oh, here we are, frequent trips to Innsmouth with large containers that are suspiciously named. In addition we have shipments to and from people with questionable names, Marsh, Wait, Elliot, Gillman ya know, freaking Deep Ones.

So you found a funeral parlor which you think might be the front for some Mi-go operation. Well you know the drill; your accountant is now getting a big head as he is now recognized as a key component to the investigative team. At the risk of hearing him gloat about how another case was cracked by the bean counter, you need to have him take a look at the funeral parlors books. Here we are, the place doesn’t seem to have purchased any embalming fluid in months, strange, and the cost of operating and maintaining a crematorium are not listed either. Looks like we could have a case of brain harvesting going on, send in the heavies to kick open the doors.

Weather its odd shipping practices that seem a little fishy, locations of nefarious purchases, tracking down property acquisitions or finding the cost of doing business just doesn’t add up, your accountant is on the case ready to fight the Mythos with a slide rule, calculator and pencil. Never count them out, get it, count; you see what I did there.

Lets also remember the various other skills that come along for the ride. If you have a heavy accounting skill you probably also have mathematics as well. You may also have some points in your appraise skill or history. Probably some good library use and quite honestly some persuade. The numbers don’t lie, and you can easily build a case for the police based on facts and figures. Being that math is the universal language, books in different languages do not necessarily stymie the accountant, if there are numbers to be worked, the language makes no difference.

Yeah, I know I still haven't convinced you to roll up a tweed clad, pocket protector wearing counter of the proverbial beans but maybe I have shed some light on the skill and brought to your attention some of its interesting uses. Its not all brawn that gets the job done, those muscle heads need to know where to go and what they are up against. If you do decide that a life of numbers is your thing, you now know that you can be useful in the party and you just might save the day.