

# O'Donnell's

Description: a single story (plus basement) brick and wood restaurant located somewhere suitably semi-rural, in the epicenter of a blighted circle one half-acre in diameter. And 'blighted' is no exaggeration; the circle is sterile, in the sense that nothing is capable of reproducing inside of it. That not just includes plant life; not even bacteria can successfully reproduce there. That includes the intestinal bacteria typically found within an investigator's body -- or, for that matter, an investigator's various internal cells. Staying much longer than a day inside the O'Donnell's 'blasted zone' is contraindicated, and pregnant women should avoid the place entirely.

The site itself is almost anticlimactic. It's what appears to be a restaurant, circa 1890 AD; O'Donnell's looks like it catered to upper-class diners. Or perhaps it was a somewhat rustic country club? There are the remains of a stables, and the parking lot outside could accommodate at least a score of carriages and pony traps. One pony trap still remains, in fact: it was parked across the edge of the blasted zone, and everything outside the area of effect more or less rotted away. The only sign of horses still remaining is the occasional dried piece of manure.

Inside? Well. There are thirty three corpses. Mummies, really: no putrefaction has taken place and predators haven't gotten at the remains, but one hundred years of exposure has thoroughly dessicated the corpses. Most of the corpses are dressed in upper class dining clothes (male and female); ten of them wear clothes more suitable for cooking or serving, presumably meaning that they were the staff.

The cause of death for the corpses is obvious: most were killed by multiple stone-tipped arrows to the face and body, although several were run through with spears. One mummy (dressed in fine clothes) was held against the wall and transfixes with several spears (again, stone-tipped); there are faint markings on the wall around the corpse, written in long-dried human blood. The markings are regular, but cryptic.

The kitchen is somehow worse, despite the fact that there are no actual mummies located inside: there's dried blood **everywhere** and all of the fixtures seem to have been the subject of a ferocious savagery. The stoves and butcher's block in particular were smashed at, burned with fire, splattered with acid, and in the end somehow ripped in two. From the look of the floor, walls, and occasional

fingernail at least one person was pulled out from the kitchen while still alive, and presumably flailing.

Nobody wants to go into the basement at this point. When they do, they'll discover a room for cold storage, a room for dry storage, and a room full of iron cages that are thankfully simply too small for humans. The entire room stinks of rust, though: the humidity is much higher here and there's a **lot** of iron and silver, ranging from the cages themselves to the miniature medieval wall restraints to the ugly flails and goads (all of which are tipped with both metals). One oddity of the cages is that each one has an inset iron bell that could be rung via cords; another is the way that every square inch of every cage is scratched and gnawed. A third is how every cage door has been half-ripped, half-melted, from its sockets.

In the center of the room is a closed hook, or thimble, that descends from the ceiling and is located right over a drain; surrounding the drain is a piled heap of chains designed to be pulled through the thimble. These chains all end on one end with a shackle, which is again thankfully too small to fit on even a child's limb. Finally, in one corner is a vaguely human-shaped pile of goo, ripped cloth, and bone fragments; the wall above it is cracked, *precisely* as if a

human-sized object was propelled into it at a sizeable fraction of the speed of sound.

Attempts to investigate the site officially will generally fail. Public records involving the site have been removed, and were indeed removed long before the records were digitized. Personal interviews will go nowhere: the current crop of public officials legitimately know nothing of the O'Donnell's site. When they find out about it they will report it up the chain, where at some point the matter will be quietly and permanently dropped. The same thing will happen with non-governmental entities, only more quickly. Private inquiries among the people living near the area will get no farther than "Oh, yeah, there was some kind of club there? You should stay away, though: I think that they dumped chemicals there, back in the fifties." That last rumor is false, but ubiquitous because it easily explains why the half-acre is blighted.

Note that in marked contrast to the usual strange locations with grisly *tableaux*, this official disinterest in the site will **not** be paired with cryptic warnings to back off, or even any attempts to scare away investigators. The most that will happen will be that the investigators will be anonymously sent a public health brochure on how to detect early signs of a malfunctioning colon, which will

probably become highly relevant if someone spends more than a few days continuously on site.

On the other hand, investigators figuring out what happened here (default explanation: a raid of fae who were *profoundly* unhappy that a bunch of humans were grilling their species for dinner) on their own will attract notice. The kind that can result in job offers; or at least, some freelance work. Because this isn't the weirdest thing that's out there, and there's no sense in discouraging those who like to properly poke at things.

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