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LOATHSOME SECRETS AWAKEN

An apocalyptic ice storm has crippled Lafontaine, Missouri. The Agents must brave the elements to find a missing "Friendly" and secure a forgotten storage facility packed with artifacts of past operations. They soon confront an appalling horror that invades and mutilates its victims in the most gruesomely intimate ways. What is preying on the citizens of Lafontaine? Can the Agents overcome the threat with decisive investigation and action? Or will they doom everyone in the horror's path—including themselves?

Recommended only for the most resilient players and Agents, "Lover in the Ice" is a scenario for *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*, available from Arc Dream Publishing.



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This is a work of fiction.

Lover in the Ice

A Delta Green operation by Caleb Stokes, © 2020

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Introduction

It's January in the year of your choosing. An apocalyptic ice storm struck Lafontaine, Missouri on Jan. 2. An extreme cold front caused ground temperature to drop by 17° Celsius in a matter of hours. Simultaneously, humidity reached 100% and a thunderstorm blanketed the region. The rain coated everything in layer upon layer of ice. Roofs collapsed under

four-inch sheets. Trees exploded as sap flash-froze in the trunks. Transformers shorted out and fell flaming from their posts. Cars not crushed by falling debris skidded off impassible roads or froze up. Flights in and out of the area were cancelled. The governor declared the city a disaster area but the ice and continuing winter weather prevented dispatch of services.

Inside Lafontaine, a mothballed Green Box—a storage facility rented by the conspiracy in the old days—sent a silent alarm to Delta Green on the night of the storm. The contents of the box were never inventoried after the organizational restructuring in 2001. The Friendly caretaker on site is not responding. Delta Green doesn't know what caused the breach or what potential threats might now be in the field. They need eyes on the ground.

The nearest available operatives—the players' Agents—each get a call from a known Delta Green case officer on the afternoon of Jan. 5. Whether the Agents are part of the Program or the Outlaws is up to the Handler. The call comes in the usual way, from one of half a dozen numbers arranged ahead of time

TOP SECRET



but which frequently change. The caller sounds like he is confirming an ordinary dinner or business meeting. He gives a time and place: a private TSA conference room at Lambert Airport, St. Louis, Missouri, 11:45 P.M. tonight.

It is up to each Agent to make personal arrangements and get a last-minute flight to Lambert. The Handler decides whether they have funds provided earlier by Delta Green or have to use their own money.

As always, traveling by plane in the U.S. restricts the kind of gear they can carry. Federal law enforcement officers are allowed their duty sidearms. No one can carry personally-owned weapons aboard. Delta Green Agents are usually expected to equip themselves to suit the mission after they arrive.

Briefing

TSA agents at Lambert allow the Agents into the conference room. Inside is a balding man in his early fifties. He has a heavy paunch and deep circles under his eyes. He does not offer his name here but the Agents know him as DHS Special Agent Patrick Hill. They have met him before. He's a Delta Green case officer. He arranges missions. He is the go-between and cut-out between the Agents on the ground and the rest of Delta Green. The mission is the Agents' job; the Agents are his job. He never refers to Delta Green by name, calling it only "the Group." He insists the Agents take the same precaution.

If the Agents worry about eavesdropping, he waves off their concerns. Maybe he already handled it. The following is all he has to say by way of briefing.

- » The Group has had a storage unit in Lafontaine, Missouri, since the 1990s.
- » The unit is at Earl's Rent-A-Space, Unit 0171
- » The Group designates it GB224.
- » It's watched by a Friendly who works for Lafontaine City Utilities.
- » A Friendly is a contact who can be counted on for help but is not an agent
- » The Friendly thinks it's long-term storage of CIA documents and knows nothing of the Group.

- » It has a silent alarm to warn the Group of intrusions.
- » The night of January 2nd, the alarm indicated a breach.
- » Phone lines and cell towers are down across the city due to the storm.
- » The door to GB224 has been open for nearly a week and we don't know what was inside.
- » The case officer arranged cover for the team as a FEMA oversight group riding in with a National Guard relief convoy. The cover is thin. Anyone investigating it is likely to pull it apart right away. Don't test it.
- » The case officer arranged office space at the City Utilities company.

The Agents are to find the Friendly, Skip Mills, and learn what he knows. Then they are to go to GB224 and inventory its contents. If they determine that anything has been stolen, they must recover it.

They can contact the case officer by texts from a burner phone that he gives them now to a burner phone that he carries. The communications will not be secure. They are not to text anything that might draw outside attention or interest.

The Dead Author's Secrets

Author Ryan Whitehead didn't live in Lafontaine, nor even in Missouri. He made his home on a decaying ancestral plantation house in Alabama. He achieved some literary fame in the 1960s for his first novel, *Man Jesus With the Golden Arm*, a biblical allegory retold as the story of messianic minor-league pitcher amidst the tumultuous American cultural revolution. Stylistically, he was regarded as the "upper-crust Hunter Thompson," fusing an unflinching and contemporary voice with a penchant for Modernist allusion and Southern Gothic themes.

Riding high off his critical success, Whitehead was commissioned by the San Francisco magazine *Blammo!* to write the gonzo journalism so popular with its readers. After being paid a significant advance he went to Brazil to report on the Trans-Amazonian

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Highway, a massive public works project promised by the new military government. Rumors said the road's work crew was trailed by a movable city called "Little Altamira" that served all the workers' base needs: drugs, dance, and sex. In 1967, Whitehead traveled to Brazil to write the article, accompanied by his childhood friend Albert Capchka and Gabriella Larentinos, an editor from *Blammo!* The group was reported to have checked in with their military escort before heading downriver.

Then...nothing.

In 1968, nearly five months after he left, Whitehead was spotted back in his hometown. He was gaunt, having lost over 20 kg, and now shook uncontrollably with tremors. All attempts to learn the whereabouts of the rest of his party were met with silence. Whitehead insisted everything would be clear once he finished his "next novel."

Whitehead's troubles grew exponentially upon his return. He remained under investigation by police for the disappearances of Gabriella Larentinos and Albert Capchka. Uncharacteristic reluctance and secrecy by the typically pro-Western Brazilian dictatorship complicated inquiries to the point where charges could

never be brought. The stain of suspicion stuck to Whitehead's reputation.

The author's alcohol and drug abuse, significant even before the trip, became rampant after his return. His drunken ravings about monsters lurking in the jungle became something of a legend in his Alabama town. Police reports said Whitehead's longtime neglect of his young wife devolved into full-blown domestic abuse. His wife obtained a divorce in 1970, citing screaming fits, physical abuse, and lack of intimacy.

Eventually, *Blammo!* won a massive lawsuit against Whitehead for damages incurred from the undelivered article's advance and for his "failure to account for the whereabouts of vital staff members." Whitehead's only defense in the case was the assertion that the article "demanded a novel" and that all would be made clear soon. The court costs and damages resulted in the loss of much of his family fortune.

Whitehead's need to feed his various addictions finished the job and wiped him out financially. He declared bankruptcy and drew government disability checks starting in the late Seventies. Whitehead spent

the rest of his life locked up in a tiny government-assistance apartment. He grew increasingly reclusive and obsessed with finishing his novel. His once-bright literary star dimmed and was forgotten.

In 1981, a cash-strapped Whitehead attempted to sell some of his supplies and books to a few collectors still interested in his career. Though the details of the meeting are unclear, it ended in a bizarre double-homicide at Whitehead's apartment complex. The peculiar nature of the wounds and the supernatural proclivities of the deceased collectors drew the attention of Delta Green, at that time an underground conspiracy. By the time the investigation indicated Whitehead as the primary suspect in the killings, agents found the author dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. A note (see **HANDOUT A** on page 25) was pinned to his chest.

That note now can be found in Green Box 224.

Whitehead's suicide note mentioned a Brazilian army ammo box found near his body. The agents on the scene, guided by experience and by other documents found in the apartment, heeded the dead man's advice and refrained from investigating further. Whitehead's personal effects and the ammo box were eventually secured in a Green Box (see **HANDOUT B** on page 26).

The records of the Whitehead investigation and its inconclusive results are available to Delta Green today, but they lost all track of the evidence after decades of illegal activity and subterfuge. Through the vicissitudes of Delta Green's operations in the Eighties and Nineties, Whitehead's possessions eventually landed in Green Box 224 in Lafontaine, Missouri. There they stayed until the ice storm of Jan. 2 released what the dead author never wanted released.

The Threat

Skip Mills, a Delta Green Friendly, is the unwitting caretaker of the Green Box. He has been infected by the contents of Whitehead's Brazilian ammo box, a horror called a Seeder. It turned him into a reproductive organ for the Amantè, the hellish Amazonian creature that ruined Whitehead's life. Mills has gone

completely mad and birthed a new Amantè into the world, and it has spawned others. The creatures and their thralls are now picking their way through the frozen city, eating and corrupting anyone they find. If their existence continues after the weather breaks, there's no telling how many will die before the infection can be contained.

Seeder

A Seeder originates with the foot-long nightmare phallus that the Amantè leaves implanted in its victim. The phallus ends in four serrated needles made of bone, ringed around a black gill that operates like a stand-in esophagus, piping air and food to the host. Each bone needle is attached to a vein that runs down the length of the wriggling, grayish tube. Two veins suck blood from the victim while the other two inject an orange recombinant fluid. An alien biological process housed in the bulbous pustule at the base of the phallus rearranges human blood into the orange fluid on a cellular level. This bulb also contains nerve tendrils that integrate with the host's limbic system.

Seeder organs are relatively useless until placed in a host, though they can move and implant autonomously with the element of surprise. Once lodged in the throat, the Seeder organ takes control of, rewrites, and supercharges the host's hormonal production. Serotonin update alteration causes a deep depression (in addition to the negative psychological effects of being assaulted by the Amantè in the first place). Meanwhile, the parasitic organ chemically corrupts the brain's stress hormones into endorphins analogous to those found in human sexual arousal, though many times more potent. Within minutes of infection, victims are rendered neurologically incapable of all joy and sensation beyond an animal reproductive instinct—an instinct chemically reconditioned to trigger only in instances of violence and pain.

Host Behavior

Those infected quickly begin to sexualize nearly every encounter with other human beings, regardless of relationship, context, or taboo. The host literally begins to lose his or her mind trying to resist perpetrating

perversely violent acts. As infection continues, psychic driving conflates the victim's every stress response with arousal, anatomically incentivizing risk-taking behavior.

The host's brain struggles to grasp its corrupted neurological chemistry. Sexual fantasies become intensely distracting, and as the Seeder acclimates to its new host the waking dreams grow ever more depraved. All skills are at a -20% penalty unless the skill serves the Seeder organ's ends.

Nothing about the Amantè's lifecycle remotely resembles sex or love. No matter how perverse, the infected are left emotionally catatonic to all thoughts

save violence. Imagining people naked quickly evolves into imagining them flayed alive. Disgust loses ground to insane lust. A Seeder unlucky enough to actually witness a violent act while caught in this fugue state is in danger of having his or her very mind shatter with desire to join in. Suffering this inexplicable urge costs 1 SAN from the unnatural. Resisting it costs 1D4 SAN from the unnatural. Giving in and perpetrating it has the usual SAN cost for violence, probably 1/1D8 or 1/1D10 depending on the severity.

Two major behavioral patterns manifest after infection, surrender and withdrawal.

RED CARD

THREAT MATRIX

SEEDER

A Seeder host retains its human stats and skills but gains the "Seeder stab" attack. The Seeder stab uses the host's Unarmed Combat skill and inflicts 1D4 damage.

INCUBUS

An Incubus is a human corpse repurposed into an Amantè womb. The Amantè do not reproduce so much as clone. Genetic material in human blood is broken down and reassembled into a series of different DNA strands through the remarkable action of the Seeder organ. It is then injected into the host. The bloated corpse that remains becomes the Incubus.

The orange fluid is the microbiological stew that makes up an Amantè. Within the flesh of the victim, the invasive microbiome reassembles itself into tissues, organs, and systems. Over time something like a fetus is created, built from the same biological blueprint every time. The infant Amantè begins to feed on the remaining tissues of the host until breaking free.

From the outside, anyone unlucky enough to see this "conception" witnesses a bloated corpse with something gurgling and shifting inside of it. The dead flesh writhes until a hungry monster comes bursting forth in an eruption of rotten flesh.

"Birth" occurs one to two days after a victim's death. Witnessing an Incubus at rest costs 0/1D4 SAN from violence. Seeing the young Amantè tear free costs 1/1D4 SAN from the unnatural.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE