

C01123352

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF STANDARDS
WASHINGTON

EXEMPT from automatic declassification
per E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(E)(2)
Name: REDA Agency: CIA Date: 28 JAN 1978
Review on: 2020

PLACES, LIKE PEOPLE, GO WRONG

They turn off the path and head into the shadows, becoming something other than normal. Black places filled with blank rooms, closed doors, and empty hallways lined with dust. In these places your voice catches in your throat, the air seems to hum, and bad things happen. People get hurt. Objects vanish. Misery flows like the water from the loose faucet in the bathroom. Hate hangs in the air like old paint. It smells of time and circumstance, and something just a little beyond the world. It smells like surrender.

The house at 1206 Spooner Avenue is a place gone wrong. In the last 50 years, 18 people have died there, and you can feel it. Doors in 1206 Spooner Avenue stay shut, and no one ever hears a child's laughter at night. In the hours that stretch like taffy after two, no one ever hears music from a darkened room.

"Music From a Darkened Room" is a scenario playable with *Delta Green: Need to Know* or *Delta Green: Agent's Handbook*, available from Arc Dream Publishing. Good luck.



DELTA GREEN: MUSIC FROM A DARKENED ROOM
MSRP \$19.99
Stock code APU8112 • ISBN 978-1-940410-29-6
Published by Arc Dream Publishing
Sold by Studio 2 Publishing
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Music From a Darkened Room

A Scenario for *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*

Written and Illustrated by Dennis Detwiller

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Introduction

Places, like people, sometimes go wrong. They turn off the path and head into the shadows, becoming something other than normal. Black places filled with blank rooms, closed doors, and empty hallways lined with dust.

In these places your voice catches in your throat, the air seems to hum, and bad things happen. People get hurt. Objects vanish. Misery flows like the water from the loose

faucet in the bathroom. Hate hangs in the air like old paint. It smells of time and circumstance, and something just a little beyond the world.

It smells like surrender.

The house at 1206 Spooner Avenue is a place gone wrong. In the last 50 years, 18 people have died there, and you can feel it. You walk in and it's like dropping 30 fathoms under water. It's suddenly dark and cold and pressure-filled.

Doors in 1206 Spooner Avenue stay shut, and no one ever hears a child's laughter at night. In the hours that stretch like taffy after two, no one ever hears music from a darkened room. No one sees a woman walking behind the glass of the bathroom mirrors.

Still, pretenses remain. You shut your eyes and pretend the world is ordered, like a puzzle whose pieces are square and plain. You pretend a lot of things. You pretend you are pretending.

Until, in the dark, the hand falls on your shoulder.



The House on Spooner Avenue

Spooner Avenue is a quiet street that cuts a diagonal slash through suburban Meadowbrook, New Jersey. 1206 Spooner Avenue is a small house, built in 1907 and amended with additional construction in the 1940s. It is wholly unremarkable in appearance. Few notice anything past the vibrant growth of ivy that scales the north face of the house. But the neighbors are not fooled.

The neighbors are predominantly retirees who have long memories. Most were born in Meadowbrook and lived here all their lives. All have heard about the deaths at 1206 Spooner Avenue. It's a water-cooler topic across Meadowbrook.

The rumors began almost half a century ago.

Around 1960, with the murder/suicide of Douglas and Margaret Crease, the house began to gain a reputation. At first, it was simply the kind of nervous rumor that makes a horrible incident more palatable. Later, as the bodies slowly piled up, it became more certain. Today, it's simply a fact. The house is evil. Its neighbors know this in the way one knows the sky is blue or that water quenches thirst. It's a certainty.

After the Creases' deaths, 16 people have met their ends at 1206 Spooner Avenue. Only one of those deaths was due to neither accident nor violence. The rest have been an uncanny chain of suicides, accidents, and murder.

Somehow, the house has been continuously sold and re-sold. As far back as the Creases' deaths, no break in inhabitants lasted more than a month.

Neighbors believe the house has a draw to it; a pull. Doctor George Weaver, the last local drawn to it, bought the house on a whim in the summer of 1972. He died nine days later in an electrical accident. Since then, no locals ever go to the open houses, held by realty agents who explore the daylit halls of 1206 Spooner Avenue with unaccountable enthusiasm.

To those who live on Spooner Avenue, the house is to be avoided, a dead zone best rushed past—especially at night.

Its neighbors know the house is alive.

Briefing

This operation ostensibly takes place in late 2017. Adjust it as necessary to suit your campaign.

Delta Green—we'll use that term whether your Agents are in the Program or the Outlaws; again, adjust as needed—issues a directive to the nearest available team of Agents. This likely comes in a meeting with the team's usual Delta Green contact or case officer, perhaps in a secure room at a random government office building.

The Agents are assigned to Operation IAGO. The team's Delta Green contact has been given very little information to convey.

- » The Agents are to determine the cause of FBI Special Agent Arthur Donnelley's recent death. Donnelly was a veteran Delta Green agent.
- » They are to focus attention on the house at 1206 Spooner Avenue, Meadowbrook, New Jersey, and determine whether it represents an ongoing threat to the public.
- » Once those two protocols are complete, the Agents are to inform their contact and ask for further instructions.

Donnelley's Death

FBI Special Agent Arthur Donnelley killed himself in the house on Spooner Avenue. The Agents' Delta Green contact can summarize the circumstances.

Donnelley went to 1206 Spooner Avenue two weeks ago, without informing his Delta Green contacts or following the usual protocols. Nobody knows why.

Donnelley's ex-wife called the Trenton FBI office, where Donnelley worked, and reported him missing.

Two agents from the Trenton office checked his apartment the next day. They found that he had unaccountably left his cellphone behind.

The day after that, they worked with Donnelley's cellphone provider to track his phone's recent movements. They found a number of unexplained visits to 1206 Spooner Avenue.

The next day, the agents checked the Spooner Avenue house. They found Donnelley's body in the master bedroom. His throat had been cut cleanly, as if with a

straight razor. His blood had drenched the walls. One of the agents said it looked like someone had “set off a bomb full of blood.”

The FBI agents notified the Meadowbrook police, who called in the county coroner. The coroner half-heartedly ruled the death a suicide, though no suicide weapon was found.

More significant than the suicide itself was the fact that Donnelley had followed in the footsteps of Yamilla Isari, the house’s former owner. Her body had been found under the precisely same circumstances sixteen months before.

The Agents’ contact says Delta Green agents in the FBI worked around the clock to make sure the official investigation of Donnelley’s death ended there. Donnelley already had a reputation among his peers, backed up by an interview with his ex-wife, as depressive, obsessive, and often overwhelmed by stress. Judging by his movements and his web browser history, Donnelley had become pre-occupied with the house on Spooner Avenue. The house had an admittedly strange history, but which was not related in any way to his work in the FBI or any current criminal investigation. He went to the house, must have suffered an overwhelming emotional crisis, and killed himself.

The tragedy was reported in the local newspaper, the *Meadowbrook Sparrow*, and made the rounds on the Internet for a day: “Another Spooner Suicide.” The report quotes Donnelley’s supervisor in the Trenton FBI office as regretting that Agent Donnelley never talked about what must have been deep emotional distress. The supervisor says Donnelley’s friends at the Bureau wish they could have done more to help him.

Now, things have begun to calm down. The Agents’ Delta Green contact says that if they are careful, they can keep it that way. Nobody has any official interest in seeing the mystery deepen. The FBI does not want the public embarrassment of an agent going off the deep end. The local police do not want the notoriety of a haunted-house story going wide. Neighbors do not want the house’s weird history to depress the local housing market. If the Agents tread lightly, the latest death at Spooner Avenue will soon be forgotten.

The House

The Agents’ contact instructs them to employ extreme caution when investigating the house at 1206 Spooner Avenue. The house has been suspected in the past of somehow influencing people’s behavior. The contact has been given no details. Considering the death of Agent Donnelley, the Agents should take those suspicions very seriously.

Assets

Two nearby specialists may assist with research. The Agents should tell them as little as possible.

- » **ELIZABETH TUCKER:** an antiques dealer who lives in Meadowbrook. She is described on page 32.
- » **EMIL YARROW:** a parapsychologist, an associate professor of abnormal psychology at Fulton College (two towns over). He is described on page 33.

Finally, the Agents should inspect a “Green Box” in Meadowbrook—a storage unit used in past Delta Green operations. It can be found at Meadowbrook Store-It, 819 Dewlark Lane, Unit 2230.

The Phone

The Agents’ contact hands them a battered old cell phone for limited use during the operation. It comes from an early generation of phones. It can call internationally, but it does not send any caller metadata. The phone is preprogrammed with numbers and addresses for Emil Yarrow, Elizabeth Tucker, and Meadowbrook Store-It.

If the Agents reach out to their Delta Green contact using their usual channels, they may receive a return call on this phone. Employ it to move the Agents along if things bog down. Use the phone as a source of mystery and hints. Every call from their contact will be allusive and vague, never saying aloud anything potentially incriminating or that might inform later listeners about the unnatural or Delta Green.

What's Going On

The house on Spooner Avenue was built in 1907 by Michael Wheeler, a 32-year-old mason. He brought his invalid wife Isabelle Wheeler to die there.

Wheeler was a dashing young man who charmed his way into a lucrative position cutting gravestones for nearby communities. His business expanded to specialty stonework such as gargoyles, marble cuts, tiles and monuments. When Isabelle and Michael married in 1905, they were the darlings of the town. But in less than a year, their life fell under a shadow.

Overnight, it seemed, Isabelle was infected by an unknown ailment. It robbed her of use of her legs, and later wracked her body with spasms and convulsions. Even so, she outlived her husband by decades. Michael Wheeler was struck in the head and killed by a piece of marble at the County Seat worksite in 1910.

Michael Wheeler had become a wealthy man, and left a significant fortune behind. Isabelle never wanted for anything but peace. She remained in the Spooner Avenue house another 46 years.

In 1926, Isabelle had gotten her wish: her pain and ailments went away. But the neighborhood was far from happy. Isabelle took to living with a foreigner, an Italian woman of considerable age, named Adele DiVettelo. The neighbors called her "The Crone." DiVettelo had worked as a seamstress at a nearby sanitarium, but was fired for "practicing witchcraft." She was generally shunned by the town, and barely subsisted until she came to the house of Isabelle Wheeler.

Originally, DiVettelo was hired by the help to re-sew the drapes in all the rooms. But she soon was inseparable from Wheeler. In the summer of 1926, the talk of the town was the recovery of Isabelle from her mystery ailment. For the first time in 20 years, Wheeler could walk and conduct herself normally. But talk turned to the presence of the Crone at the house.

It became clear to the locals that strange things were going on. Animals turned up dead, and not just farm animals. Dogs and cats seemed to go missing with regularity. Odd men showed up, foreigners with thick, Italian accents. The Crone seemed to be gathering her own family into the Wheeler house with Isabelle's blessing.

After a 1937 confrontation with Antonio DiVettelo, a man the Crone claimed was her son, locals learned to leave them alone. Matthew Harrigan, the son of a wealthy local politician, wasted away from some mysterious disease two weeks after the incident. The disease was odd. The patient developed rashes that became what appeared to be burn marks, which suppurated and bled out. Only Harrigan, who had struck Antonio, died from it, but each man involved in the scuffle with Antonio suffered from this disease.

The hint was taken. People steered clear of the Wheeler house.

For once, the rumors were correct. DiVettelo was practicing witchcraft. By the time she disappeared in 1955, most thought she was in excess of 100 years old. They didn't know that she was far older than 100. She had signed her life away to L'Uomo Nero, the Dark Man, in the summer of 1800 at age 18. She placed her name in his book and promised him blood and souls. She had spent the first 50 years of her new life practicing her art in the Old Country, but came to America when the time seemed right.

Using Wheeler's ailment as leverage, DiVettelo wheeled her way into the Spooner Avenue house and gained complete control over Isabelle. The Crone first took Isabelle's pain, freeing Isabelle Wheeler from the disease that had left her bedridden for nearly a decade. Using dark magic, she put Wheeler's suffering behind the reflections at the Spooner Avenue house. This dark half of Wheeler was bound in each and every mirror of the Spooner house while her physical form was restored to complete health. At the time of her death, Isabelle had learned the price of such a trick. Her spirit persisted in a dark nether-world behind glass, watching the warmth of the modern world as it scrolled by.

For 30 years, the Crone lived in the Spooner Avenue house. Eventually, as things quieted down and the inhabitants at 1206 Spooner ceased interacting with the town, the town lost interest. The Depression and World War II proved quite distracting.

In 1940, the Crone consecrated the Spooner Avenue property to Ni-Ar-Lath-Otep, the secret name of the Dark Man, and had a room built for her nightly rituals. For 15 years, these rituals occupied the nights of the new moon.

This culminated in the summer of 1955, when L'Uomo Nero himself appeared. He opened his book to Isabelle Wheeler—who repented and refused to sign her name within it.

The next day, the Crone was gone and Isabelle was alone. Soon, she was ill once more, this time from old age. She wasted away over the period of a year, cared for by a private nurse hired from a local agency. She died in 1956 at age 69.

She still lingers in the reflections of the Spooner Avenue house, searching for prey to feed her need for warmth and life. After eighteen deaths in the house, she's not alone.

The Green Box

Meadowbrook Store-It is a small lot southwest of the house on Spooner Avenue. It includes about 50 large storage sheds, surrounded by a four-meter fence topped with razor wire. A single, two-room trailer stands at the entrance, serving as office. The facility has three full-time employees, usually one on duty at a time during business hours. They set up new accounts, divvy up old underpaid accounts, and collect on delinquent accounts, but most of the time they do little more than play on their phones.

Unit 2230 has slipped through the cracks of the Delta Green conspiracy, and the fee has gone unpaid for nine months. In another three months, the contents of the shed will become the property of Brian Miglia, owner of the Meadowbrook Store-It.

Miglia smells money in that shed. Its last visitor was Special Agent Donnelley, who committed suicide just hours after last visiting the shed. Miglia thinks the reason Donnelley killed himself may still be in still in the shed.

Since Donnelley's death, no one has visited the unit. The police never knew of his connection to it. Even better, he wasn't even the name on the lease. That was a Felix Greene, whose address and phone number haven't been valid in years—if they ever were.

The balance due and the renewal fee total \$1,200, an Unusual expense. Whoever wants to access the unit must pay that fee.

Entering the Green Box

If the Agents show badges and pay the fees, Miglia backs down and gives them unfettered access. But if they simply pull badges without paying the balance due, Miglia says that perhaps the Agent's superiors should be contacted, something he is more than willing to do. Miglia is of the mind that if something illegal is in the shed, and he's to get nothing from it, perhaps he can be a local hero for uncovering a crime.

If the Agents offer to pay the fee as civilians, without showing badges, Miglia does what he can to stall the process. He hopes they'll lose interest. If the Agents seem agitated by his stall tactics, Miglia takes this as confirmation something valuable is in the shed. He gets rash. He and his three workers break into the shed one evening, searching for the valuables. They find the coffin of Anton Turé. The police become involved. The scandalous contents of the Green Box will bloom into a public relations nightmare for the FBI. If the Agents are not careful, they will end up on the national news delivering a sound bite about the coffin.

Contents of the Green Box

- » Antique table
- » Sofa bed
- » Two plastic-wrapped twin mattresses
- » Three empty biohazard containers
- » Two bags of quik-lime
- » Two new shovels
- » Four pairs of work gloves
- » A hat-lamp
- » Fourteen empty quart-size metal containers for gasoline, with pour spouts
- » Two empty gallon-size plastic gasoline containers
- » Three newly minted keys taped together in a piece of cardboard (these are keys to 1206 Spooner)
- » 400 rounds shotgun ammunition (12-gauge buckshot)
- » Two new Mossberg shotguns with serial numbers ground off
- » Various fake identities made out for Special Agent Donnelley, including one as a Meadowbrook gas inspector and one as assistant county coroner
- » A Nikon F36 telephoto lens