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Even Death Has a Half-Life

Two days ago, a newspaper delivery driver found retired geneticist Tibalt Grieves dead outside his suburban home. Police found Grieves' girlfriend dead in the house. A detective discovered a hidden lab, outfitted with bio-hazard scrubbers. A CDC specialist found unidentifiable samples—samples that indicated that something had gotten loose. When the sun rose, Grieves' body began to smolder and disintegrate.

It was another five hours before Delta Green got involved.

In *Viscid*, the Agents must keep a lid on a story that threatens to spin out into the public in all its unnatural detail. They must delve into the secrets of strange and lethal forces acting in secrecy all around them. They must follow a trail of carnage to a horrifying communion.

As far as Delta Green is concerned, staying alive is the last of their priorities.

Viscid is playable with the quickstart rulebook, *Delta Green: Need to Know*, or with the core rulebooks of *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*: the *Agent's Handbook* and the *Handler's Guide*. All are available from Arc Dream Publishing.



DELTA GREEN: VISCID

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This is a work of fiction.

Viscid

A Scenario for *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*
Written and Illustrated by Dennis Detweller

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Updated 10 DEC 2017.

Introduction

For decades after the recovery of alien remains and technology in New Mexico in 1947, the secret program code-named MAJESTIC operated at the highest levels of the American government. It adapted and deployed alien science and intelligence to remain free of outside interference. After a lethal power struggle brought about the group's dissolution in 2001, survivors took what they could and scattered across the country, building new identities and organizations.

Many were scientists who exploited MAJESTIC's alien knowledge for personal gain.



One of MAJESTIC's last leaders, Gavin Ross, has been in hiding for years under a series of false identities. Well over 70, he looks a vibrant and lively 60 because of MAJESTIC project ARC DREAM, research bent on unlocking the secrets of human DNA as understood by alien intelligences. Since a 2012 screening revealed aggressive colon cancer, Ross has been taking ARD15: tiny, blue pills created by ARC DREAM to arrest cellular degeneration and forestall death. These pills are almost gone. And once you take ARD15, you cannot stop.

Ross, who had a long history of licensing benign alien technology to small front companies, hired a private contractor to recreate ARD15 from his dwindling supply.

That's when the deaths began.

Viscid is likely to require two or three game sessions: one to investigate the deaths of researcher Tibalt Grieves and his girlfriend Amber Griffin, and to learn about Grieves' research; and a second (and perhaps a third) to investigate the dangerous organizations that sponsored Grieves, identify and track down Gavin Ross, and confront the horrors animated by Grieves' work.

Background

Through paper fronts and intermediaries, Ross strong-armed a former ARC DREAM researcher, Dr. Tibalt Grieves, to recreate ARD15 from unprocessed samples of the "culture" from which the substance was originally extracted. Where this culture came from, Ross and Grieves have no knowledge.

Unknown to Ross or Grieves, this culture—an odd, milky blue substance referred to as "Blue Blood"—is actually the remains of a MAJESTIC operative on whom the original substance was tested: U.S. Air Force First Lt. Daniel Ulee. That substance consumed Ulee from the inside out and rendered him down to undifferentiated cellular material, later refined and made safe by ARC DREAM into ARD15. But Ulee did not precisely die. His consciousness is trapped in every cell of the original Blue Blood sample, aware, alive, and quite mad.

Working in a secret biohazard lab in his home in Mill Creek, Washington, Grieves accidentally woke the Ulee-thing. It killed Grieves and his girlfriend, consumed portions of their biomass, and escaped. Now, the local police,

CDC, and FBI are involved, and other bodies marked by the Blue Blood infection have turned up. A contact in the CDC alerted Delta Green. But reports of the deaths are all over the local news and will likely go national.

Worse yet, every sample of Blue Blood over a certain size is a Ulee-thing in the making. Each shares a single, insane desire—to return to Ulee's wife and child in Montana and enact a horrific reunion.

Things One, Two, and Three

When the Ulee-thing, nothing more than a few ounces of undifferentiated biological material, insinuated itself into Grieves' body in the early hours of the morning of October 1, a biological chain reaction began.

The substance quickly hijacked portions of Grieves' anatomy, enough to form a rudimentary structure for mobility. Then part of it ripped itself back out, taking much of Grieves' tongue, esophagus, and trachea with it, and dropped to the kitchen floor. Grieves stumbled from the house and collapsed in the driveway at 3:55 A.M.

Grieves' live-in girlfriend, Amanda "Amber" Griffin, woke to the commotion, and stumbled into the kitchen to find something grotesque and spiderlike, composed of assimilated muscle, cartilage, bone, and blue fatty tissue, waiting for her. The Ulee-thing leapt on her and fed again, growing strong enough to move greater distances under its own power. Now the size of a large dog, the Ulee-thing was a mess of biology—small, childlike limbs freshly grown, tinted blue, along with rudimentary sensory organs.

Sunlight quickly destroys Blue Blood. When the sun rose, the Blue Blood lingering in Grieves' corpse disintegrated, taking the structure of the corpse with it.

Ulee One, as we will call it, has found refuge in a rotted, abandoned trailer near the Mill Creek home. It lies in a torpor during daylight and hunts at night, growing. By October 5, it assimilates enough biological material to reconstitute itself in a vaguely human size, nearly 100 kg in mass. Then it will make a beeline towards 19099 Pulaski Street, Billings, Montana, the last address Lt. Daniel Ulee knew for his wife, Isabella. Ulee One will leave a chain of corpses (many eaten) in its path as it stows away in vehicles, and later steals and drives vehicles itself. It seeks Ulee's widow, who has thought of him as dead for more

than 20 years. It arrives in Billings, Montana, on October 10, and begins to hunt her.

It gets worse. On October 2, the day before the Delta Green Agents arrive, the CDC ordered samples of the "UNKNOWN BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE 1" discovered at the Grieves house flown to Atlanta for study. The samples were flown in a sealed sample box on CDC Flight 191 Secure, a small plane with a crew of two. It was in this box that Ulee Two awakened. Ulee Two, like Ulee One, believes itself to be "Ulee." It broke out and overwhelmed the crew. Two hours after takeoff, Flight 191 went down in Clearwater National Forest, Idaho, under unknown circumstances.

Ulee Two easily survived the impact. It consumed the crew, gaining enough mass to make it a formidable predator roughly the size of a small bear (over 200 kg). It began to move towards Montana to find "its" family. It will arrive on October 12, searching for Ulee's wife.

Rescue flights overhead saw find a burned-out, broken-up aircraft. The CDC ordered them to stay away. The Agents may find an aluminum sample-case blown out from the inside, and plenty of blood but no bodies.

Again, it gets worse. The remains of Amanda "Amber" Griffin will reconstitute in the Snohomish County Medical Examiner's office on October 5 as Ulee Three, and attempt escape. It goes on its own murder/assimilation spree. By October 15, Ulee Three, a full ton in mass, will arrive in Billings, searching for Isabella Ulee.

Each Ulee-thing believes it alone is Daniel Ulee. After 22 years trapped in disembodied semi-consciousness, the Ulee-things revel in motion, violence, and death. Ulee's mind disintegrated long ago. What remains of him longs only for his wife and child—a reunion which means consumption.

See the **TIMELINE** on page 27 for likely events.

Behind the Scenes

All of this was set in motion by Gavin Ross, once the second-in-command of MAJESTIC. Ross gained access to many old MAJESTIC files and projects through Robert Justin Ortega, the illegitimate son of the former director of the MAJESTIC project, Justin Kroft. Kroft, who oversaw the child's welfare remotely through legal entities, supplied the young man with many secrets on his 21st

birthday, long after Kroft's death. These secrets included cherry-picked projects from secret MAJESTIC files, held at a self-contained, heavily guarded storage facility. This information, if properly used, is worth tens of billions of dollars. Ross, who had made a career of outmaneuvering Kroft, knew all about Ortega, and Kroft's plans. When the time came, he was there, posing as Michael Bellek, a loving and supportive uncle, the colleague and best friend of Ortega's dead father.

Bellek helped Ortega make sense of the secrets that Kroft left behind. Ortega sees Bellek as a consigliere and takes his advice. Meanwhile, Bellek has been plundering old MAJESTIC files and samples. With Ortega's permission, he has sifted and sorted valuable but harmless patents and fed them to Ortega's company, Ancile, Inc. Ancile is an up-and-comer in the defense industry, due in no small part to compelling patents secretly gleaned from MAJESTIC'S alien science.

Bellek recovered the Blue Blood samples from Ortega's stash and sent them to Grieves, along with money and files, through a private investigator. With Grieves' death, Bellek has scrambled a team led by a covert operator to "clean house" so the buck stops nowhere near him.

First, Bellek needs to insulate himself from the private investigators who conveyed everything to Grieves: Dinot, Belton, and Wells, in Mill Creek. At 2:45 A.M. on October 3, Bellek's mercenaries firebomb the detective agency. This fire is so serious, the whole mini-mall around it is reduced to slag. Fire officials are certain it was arson. Nothing survives the fire.

The day after the fire, on October 4, one of Bellek's operatives tracks down Evelyn Wells of the detective agency. While eating lunch in a Qdoba restaurant, she is shot with a high-powered rifle. Miraculously, she survives and even gets a glimpse of the shooter before he flees and she passes out. After four hours of surgery, Wells is placed in a medically-induced coma. When she wakes on October 12, she gives police the shooter's description and the make and license plate number of his car, along with the oddities of the deliveries and surveillance she handled for and over Grieves. It will not take police long to realize she was delivering money and supplies to Grieves, including the biological samples.

Unless the Agents interfere.

Briefing

The Agents are hastily summoned by their Delta Green contact—their case officer in the Program or their A-cell liaison in the Outlaws—to a briefing in Seattle, Washington, the morning of October 3. They have been assigned to Operation MALTA. Their mission is to identify and contain unnatural threats, prevent further unnatural threats from developing, and prevent public awareness of the unnatural.

The Agents are being sent as FBI or CDC consultants; or, if they are already federal law-enforcement officers, they have been peremptorily assigned to an ad-hoc, Top Secret task force organized by the FBI. Their usual employers are given to understand that it is a situation of national security. If anyone digs, they might find that it's organized by the FBI's National Security Branch, Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate, Investigations and Operations Section, in an office that answers no questions whatsoever.

Give the players the Agents' briefing, found on page 5.

Investigating Grievess

Investigating Grievess through IRS records and other government documents reveals surprisingly little. A retired geneticist born in Ithaca, New York, he was about 60 years old at the time of his death. Grievess earned doctorates in molecular biology, genetics, and biochemistry at Northwestern University while in his mid-twenties. He was recruited out of a teaching and research position in Northwestern's genetics program in 1985 by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

People who knew him before this recruitment remember that he underwent a complete personality change at that time. He had been socially awkward but outgoing. He became an introvert, utterly closed off, who disappeared from the lives of his friends and family.

Grievess worked for DARPA from 1985 to 2001. His listed location of operation was Mt. Weather, Virginia, a well-known continuity-of-government site with extensive FEMA facilities and research laboratories. Grievess' home address and details of his employment in that period have been, suspiciously, erased from all government records.

In 2001, Tibalt resigned from DARPA and moved to the outskirts of Seattle. He filed a patent for a fast, cheap blood-typing process called AntiABD, and executed lucrative licensing agreements with several large biomedical firms. This patent generated approximately \$10 million in five years. He sold it to Merck in 2005 for a lump-sum payment of \$18.8 million. Tibalt invested his own money. At his death, he had a net worth of nearly \$21 million and no debt. Quite unusually, he meticulously did his own taxes. They are honest and up to date.

After 2001, Grievess apparently did little beyond managing his money and buying the affection of strippers, porn stars, and prostitutes. In this time, he began to see Amanda Griffin, a stripper at Rose's Gentleman's Club. By 2010, she was his exclusive girlfriend and lived in his house. They were together until they died.

Grievess' Lost Years

Agents can pursue details of Grievess' "lost" years, from 1985 to 2001, if they seek contacts in DARPA and in the world of secret defense research projects. The details of that pursuit depend entirely on the Agents' backgrounds, the players' approach, and the Handler's interests.

Agents in the Program could simply ask their case officer look into Grievess. After about one hour, the case officer informs them tersely that Grievess and his employment are not a matter they are to look into. Find, contain, eliminate. The rest is under control.

If the Agents pursue Grievess' background on their own, they might eventually make contact with a colleague in DARPA or the Department of Defense who finds something to share. A FedEx package arrives, containing 36 sheets, photocopies of photocopies. They appear to date from the mid-1980s to early 1990s. Most are heavily marked with deep black redactions, including the classification marks. On one sheet, the classification mark escaped redaction: TOP SECRET / SPECIAL ACCESS REQUIRED / MAJIC. No one has heard of that classification.

A washed-out photo shows a much younger Grievess with the job title: GENETICIST, PROJECT CORE, DIRECTOR OF NONHUMAN PATHOLOGY. REPORTS TO KROFT, J., DIRECTOR.

Another page gives an address for Grievess in Upper-ville, Virginia.

Operation MALTA Briefing Summary

Compiled from reports and photographs by police officers, the medical examiner, FBI agents, and CDC specialists.

October 1

- » **5:45 A.M.:** *Seattle Times* delivery driver Ernesto Torres finds the body of retired geneticist Tibalt Grieves in the driveway of Grieves' home. Torres calls the police.
- » **6:01 A.M.:** Police officers Michael Grant and Jeffrey Daly arrive. They detain Torres but do not arrest him. Their reports say that Grieves had suffered grievous wounds to his mouth, neck, and face, and that crows had gathered to pick at the body.
- » **6:05 A.M.:** Finding Tibalt's front door open, officers Grant and Daly enter the house. They find another body, later identified as Grieves' live-in girlfriend, Amanda Griffin. The officers report that Griffin's mouth is covered in blood, which had congealed to a blue-black pile, and her skin has a distinct blue tinge.
- » **6:09 A.M.:** The officers cordon off the house and call for detectives and the medical examiner.
- » **6:32 A.M.:** Snohomish County Medical Examiner Louisa Stubbs arrives with medical investigators. Detective Emily Dunser arrives a few minutes later.
- » **6:45 A.M.:** Dunser and Stubbs enter the house. An evidence technician takes photos.
- » **7:09 A.M.:** Sunrise. Officers outside call Stubbs to look at something strange happening to Grieves' body. Over eight minutes, it collapses into a blue-black "goo" that solidifies to the consistency of hard candy and smells of chlorine and honey. The process leaves only Grieves' left hand and feet intact. Time-stamped photographs cover most of this disintegration. Stubbs and his assistant bag and seal the remains.
- » **7:21 A.M.:** Detective Dunser and the evidence technician photograph what look like small, bloody footprints in the kitchen, near Griffin's body. These prints, smaller than a toddler's, seem deformed and misplaced. A clear toe mark indicates at least one of the tracks is human.
- » **7:25 A.M.:** Dunser follows the strange tracks to the closet that holds the furnace. Behind the furnace, Dunser finds a wall standing on a hinge, swinging freely. Behind is a room built in what had been the garage.
- » **7:29 A.M.:** In the hidden room, Stubbs recognizes an expensive biohazard lab complete with air scrubbers and an air conditioner that maintains negative air pressure. Stubbs orders everyone out and alerts the CDC and the FBI. Mill Creek Police Chief Bob Cranell orders that no one be allowed to leave the scene. Police set up a cordon around the block.
- » **8:40 A.M.:** A CDC team led by Roberta Kane arrives from Seattle. FBI agents and the first of many reporters soon follow. A biohazard tent is built around the house. Everyone who has been exposed to the house and to Grieves' body is removed to Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, Washington. The CDC tests them for infectious diseases. All are cleared.
- » **9:21 A.M.:** Elizabeth McReady and Marty Posthewaite, Grieves' next-door neighbors, are evacuated from their homes. They return home in the evening.
- » **10:21 A.M.:** Kane examines Grieves' lab. She collects unusual samples from a small, silver sample case with biohazard markings and a stamp which reads, "BOUNCE." Inside are twelve vacuum-sealed packages containing a substance that Kane designates "Unknown Biological Sample 1." One package is open. Kane describes its contents as "undifferentiated cellular material with human characteristics."
- » **11:50 A.M.:** Kane, a Delta Green contact, alerts a case officer to the strange things found in Grieves' house. Operation MALTA is set in motion.
- » **2:40 P.M.:** The CDC orders the samples collected from the Grieves lab flown to Atlanta for study.

October 2

- » **8:01 A.M.:** The CDC loads Unknown Biological Sample 1 onto CDC Flight 191 Secure, a small plane with a crew of two. It departs for Atlanta.
- » **9:46 A.M.:** Butte, Montana, air control loses contact with Flight 191 after a moment of garbled radio. There was no report of malfunction. The transponder places Flight 191 in Clearwater National Forest, Idaho.
- » **11:22 A.M.:** Search-and-rescue flights spot smoke and locate the wreckage of Flight 191. The CDC instructs rescuers to stay away from the wreckage.

October 3

- » **8:00 A.M.:** Operation MALTA begins.