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INNOCENCE FEEDS APPALLING APPETITES

"A minute before I was locked in the library, and then I was there where she had gone with my body—in the place of utter blasphemy, the unholy pit where the black realm begins and the watcher guards the gate.... I saw a shoggoth—it changed shape.... I can't stand it...."

Edward Derby Pickman, 1932

In an Internet video, already viral, a harried-looking woman stands on a park bench in a small-town park. She is crying and shouting at a handful of befuddled people. She says they live with a community that does awful things. They accept that community. They take its money. And it takes women and children. "It takes them and it—it—" Suddenly she vanishes, screaming in agony.

"Hourglass" is a horrifying scenario for *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*, available from Arc Dream Publishing. It reveals Hourglass, Oregon, and secrets that your Agents may wish they had never uncovered.

But if they don't seek the terrible truth, who will?



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This is a work of fiction.

DELTA GREEN ACCESS

Hourglass

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Briefing

In an Internet video, already viral, a middle-aged, dark-haired, harried-looking woman stands on a park bench in a small-town park. She is crying and shouting at a handful of befuddled people. She says they live with a place that does awful things. They accept that place into their community. They take its money. And it takes women and children. "It takes them and it—it—"

Suddenly she vanishes, screaming in agony. The handful of people in the crowd scream in fright and recoil. The young man holding the phone shouts, "Whoa!" He turns the camera toward himself, a white teenager, and says, "You see that shit? What the fuck!" The camera jostles and the video stops.

The Agents are in a secure meeting room in the FBI offices in Portland, Oregon. Their case officer turns off the video screen and gives the rest of their briefing. It is 10:00 A.M. on a Thursday.

If your campaign features the Outlaws rather than the Program, the Agents got the video and relevant details from their cell leader in a couriered envelope, on an encrypted thumb drive that's programmed to erase itself and the attached computer if the wrong password is used more than twice.

The Video

The video was recorded Sunday—four days ago—at 1:13 P.M. The case officer says experts cannot find signs that the video was produced with special effects. In a Program campaign, the Program's security section is already suppressing that fact, uploading doctored versions that show subtle signs of having been generated with special effects, establishing a narrative that it was produced by clever hoaxers, and backing up that narrative by posing as low-credibility viewers who insist it is genuine.

The video went online Sunday night, 86 hours ago. It began to go viral 37 hours ago. It came to Delta Green's attention 33 hours ago. It was posted by the boy who held the phone, a 17-year-old would-be

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Internet star using the pseudonym “Rawdog.” He is Hourglass high schooler Herbert Roderick Salsbury. The briefing includes Salsbury’s address. See **WITNESSES** on page 7 for details.

The Victim

The woman in the video is Terri Santos, née Terri Harding, then Terri Wilkins, a resident of a religious compound outside Hourglass, Oregon. She has worked off and on for 25 years as a retail clerk. Terri moved to Hourglass about ten years ago when her then-husband Edward Wilkins got a sawmill job. Five years ago, Edward Wilkins died in a bar fight. Four years ago, her son Lawrence Wilkins died of leukemia at age eight. Two years ago, Terri Wilkins moved to the property of a religious commune called the Church of the Twelve Martyrs. One year ago, she married another resident of the church compound, Robert Santos.

Terri Santos has had minimal presence on social media, and none whatsoever for the past two years.

The Agents receive a dossier with Terri Santos’ known relatives and associates. See **INVESTIGATING THE VICTIM** on page 5 for details.

Objectives

Find out what happened in the video. Stop the incursion. Save lives. Establish a mundane narrative to explain it all away. Protect Delta Green from exposure.

Background

Terri Santos died because of a sorcerous ritual cast by of a worshipper of the Great Old Ones, a survivor of centuries of unnatural life and reincarnation. The killer is Samuel Woodman, an ancient and evil cultist in the body of a 12-year-old boy named Jake Elliott. Woodman serves the Church of the Twelve Martyrs. The church is led by a more powerful cultist still, Gyles Root, in the body of Erol Salzo III.

Erol Salzo III is the 3rd-generation heir to leadership of the Church of the Twelve Martyrs. His followers call him The Host because he incarnates a returning spirit lifetime after lifetime, a part of the heavenly host, the Sabaoth, the uncountable army of Heaven that serves the throne of God. Erol Salzo III assumed the mantle 16 years ago, when the prior Host, Erol Salzo, Jr., died of a heart attack. Erol Salzo, Jr., had assumed the mantle 25 years before that when his father, Erol Salzo, died of a stroke.



Erol Salzo III had two younger brothers, Silas and David. Silas died in an apparent suicide 19 years ago. David died in a terrible car accident 17 years ago. In fact, Erol Salzo III had both murdered to prevent them from betraying the church. No evidence remains to link the deaths to the Host or his followers. Erol Salzo III never married and has no children on public records. His mother, Rhea Salzo, manages the business affairs of the church. His paternal grandmother, Ann Salzo, died six years ago of dementia. Ann's and Rhea's families have always been estranged from the Salzo line.

The Sons of Cerunnos

The Host is in fact Gyles Root, leader of an old band of sorcerers called the Sons of Cernunnos. Root has possessed the bodies of descendant after descendant for 200 years.

The Sons of Cernunnos began in 17th-century New England, a cult of warlocks dedicated to alchemy and sorcery. They hid among the Puritans but scattered when witch trials threatened. They met occasionally in rural Maine for hideous rituals in black caverns, joining a clutch of hidden shoggoths to worship Shub-Niggurath.

Their rites earned them long life and a postponement of the rigors of age, but not the perfect immortality they craved. That came only in the early 20th century. One of their allies, a scion of Innsmouth, found the secret in the *Necronomicon*: a way to transfer life and consciousness into the brain of another. But that ally was murdered, and word of their meetings spread to their enemies. The sorcerers wandered for nearly 20 years, seeking a new site to make contact with their grotesque gods.

They found it in 1948 near Hourglass, Oregon. Hills that rose wild with woods and rivers had once been home to the indigenous Takelma tribe, and to certain hills, groves, rock formations, and endlessly deep caves where a despised Takelma offshoot worshipped a spirit called the "Great Bat." The Takelma and their enemies were driven from the land in the 19th century, leaving only white settlers who knew nothing of the haunts of the Great Bat.

But among seekers of certain kinds of esoterica, the legend lingered.

Gyles Root went first. He went to work for landowner Erol Salzo, and took opportunities to explore the area and find the forgotten vaults where the old powers held sway. He gradually used his sorcery to suborn Salzo's mind and body, until he took possession permanently. Above the caverns sacred to the worshippers of the Great Bat, Salzo built a church, a home, and ultimately a compound where followers could live.

The other Sons of Cernunnos gathered. In the Vault of the Bat, they prayed to Shub-Niggurath. On a Hallowmass Sabbath, the last of their number, Gyles Root's half-shoggoth son Silence, joined them from the depths. The sorcerers used rituals to house their essences in magical candles, from which they could emerge to possess new victims as the fancy took them. The Martyrs sometimes took long-term hosts, and sometimes returned to their candles when they grew bored.

Gyles Root, in the body of Erol Salzo, founded the Church of the Twelve Martyrs with a perverse, private glee. Silence Root assumed a form that looks like a black meteorite. Gyles Root dubbed the black meteorite the Ark of Sabaoth and called it holy. Decades passed. The Church of the Twelve Martyrs thrived. Seekers came. Those with wisdom fled. The weak and biddable remained.

The Sorcerers Today

Today, Gyles Root reigns in the body of Erol Salzo's grandson, Erol Salzo III. Two other Sons of Cernunnos live permanently in the bodies of young men born to Salzo and the desperate women who worship him. Silence Root thinks his strange thoughts.

The sorcerers have grown complacent. The Host's followers recruited Terri Santos, a seeker of wisdom who had been broken down by loss and grief. But she saw too much, too soon, and some unbroken part of her recoiled. She spoke out. In their arrogance and folly, the Sons of Cerunnos silenced her in the one way sure to attract the attention of angry outsiders—this time, the attention of Delta Green.

Hourglass, Oregon

Hourglass, Oregon (population 31,253) is a rural, insular town among forests and hills, founded by trappers in the early 19th century. The origin of its name is forgotten. It expanded for 100 years with the growth of the lumber industry, but lumber declined in the 1970s and never fully recovered.

Every decade, the area's economy is driven more and more by services, mainly outdoors tourism: hiking, fishing, and rafting. With the legalization of cannabis, a handful of local investors have planned marijuana growth operations and related businesses, but they have been slow to develop.

Hourglass stands at the crossroads of an interstate and three state and county highways. It has half a dozen motels and small inns. Interstate 5 runs through Hourglass, north to Eugene, Portland, and Seattle,

and south to Redding and Sacramento. If the Agents ask about fire lookout towers for camping or spying, the nearest are 17 km north, 21 km west, and 25 km northeast of Hourglass.

Hourglass features a large number of non-player characters. See **FEATURED CHARACTERS** on page 26.

Community Leaders

Hourglass is governed by a mayor and an eight-seat city council, all elected for four-year terms. A city manager oversees day-to-day operations.

The mayor (Steven Polk, white male, 60 years old) considers the Church of the Twelve Martyrs eccentric but harmless and, importantly to his election, staunchly conservative. The video of Terri Santos disappearing is clearly some kind of hoax. The woman had a nervous breakdown in the town square and then ran off. Unless the Agents are quick and cautious, Polk soon wants a clear answer as to why they are looking into the church.





Other community leaders—members of the city council, leaders of other churches, business owners—offer variants of the same opinion. The more devout Catholic or evangelical Christians among them regard the Church of the Twelve Martyrs with greater suspicion, since it is so secretive and its representation of Christianity is at odds with theirs. But the Hourglass community has a substantial financial stake in the Church of the Twelve Martyrs, which brings significant revenues from donors around the world. And after all, the Church of the Twelve Martyrs are traditional, conservative, God-fearing folk in all the ways that matter most.

Many community leaders regard federal government investigators with wariness and suspicion, considering them interlopers who do not have the good of the Hourglass community at heart.

The Police

The Hourglass Police Department has 27 patrol officers and six detectives. Six to eight patrol officers are on duty at any given time. The detectives work regular business hours. Eight of the patrol officers and detectives are also part of the department's SWAT team, along with four tactical medics from the fire department.

Police Chief Colin Hughs (white male, 55 years old) shows deep skepticism about the Agents' presence and mission in Hourglass. He shares the mayor's opinion of the video being a ridiculous fake. If the Agents pose as private investigators or federal law enforcement, he asks them to tread lightly and avoid drawing attention. He will not allow this video hoax to disrupt the peace of the community.

Meanwhile, a few officers from the department keep unofficial watch on the witnesses to Santos' disappearance and on the Agents. See **BAD COPS** on page 21 for details.

Investigating the Victim

Terri Santos lived at the compound of the Church of the Twelve Martyrs for 23 months before the video went online. She married fellow resident Robert Santos 11 months ago.

Robert Santos

The Agents can find a phone number and address for Terri Santos' husband in government records. He has no social media presence. He has no cellphone. He has a landline in his small house in the Church of the Twelve Martyrs compound. He rarely leaves the compound, where he works as a volunteer in return for room and board. His income is negligible.

If the Agents are careful not to alienate Santos, they could get the most out of him by interviewing him in person at the compound. (See **THE COMPOUND** on page 12.) He has not seen his wife in a few days. He has almost total disinterest in her or her fate. He obviously cares nothing for Terri except as a servant of the church. She betrayed the church, which means she betrayed him. He says she could not tolerate her failures.

He does not easily expand on what he means by failure. If it's gotten out of him with a **Persuade** roll, he lets slip that he was not the true father of the child that Terri lost. The Host was. The Host is father to every child born in the compound. God wills it so, and it is the honor of the compound's men to obey the will of God. Women of the compound wed their husbands of record under the law of man, but they wed the Host in the flesh and the Martyrs in the spirit.

If the Agents only speak to Santos by phone, the **Persuade** roll reveals only that she conceived a child with him, but it was a girl, not a boy as the Host's scriptures demand. She miscarried. He says God took the girl back to make room in her for a boy child.

Friends and Family

Terri Santos' always-small circle of friends and family lost touch with her over the past few years. Those that remained in recent contact include Kenneth Collins of Redding, California, an uncle on her mother's side; Tiffany Fritch of Redding, California, a cousin; Stephanie Vanderhoof of Redding, California, a childhood friend who stayed in touch; and Alice Padilla of Hourglass, Oregon, a coworker from a few jobs back who became friends with her. None of them had heard from her in the last couple of months before the video went online or since then. Interviewing them can uncover these details.

COLLINS OR FRITCH: Terri's first husband, Ed Wilkins, was an abuser. He was never arrested for it, never on any record. But everyone close to Terri knew. Her friends were relieved when he died, but Terri felt lost.

VANDERHOOF: Terri was always desperate for some source of meaning and grounding. Always a seeker, she filled her bookshelves with one spiritualist fad after another. Then she lost her husband and her son. Friends worried she might not survive.

PADILLA: Not long after her son's death, Terri met Rhea Salzo, a woman who belonged to the Church of the Twelve Martyrs. They became friends. Rhea took Terri to the church for services. Padilla can reveal her suspicions about the church; see **SUSPICIONS AND FEARS**, below.

PADILLA OR VANDERHOOF: After Terri joined the Church of the Twelve Martyrs, things seemed to turn around. Terri at least found some reason to live. But what she described was disquieting. She told friends privately that, after worship services at the Church of the Twelve Martyrs, she felt close to the Martyrs, but it was like they pushed her away. They preferred to influence men and boys, guiding them to righteous leadership. That only convinced Terri that she needed guidance.

ANY OF THEM: A few months after joining the church, Terri stopped communicating with friends outside it. She moved to the church's compound. About a year later, friends heard from strangers that Terri had married a man belonging to the church. They did not hear his name.

Suspicions and Fears

Terri Santos' friend Alice Padilla has more detailed suspicions about the Church of the Twelve Martyrs. The sorcerers who protect the church neglected to obscure Padilla's memories of an interview with them. But talking about the church frightens her. Drawing her out requires a **Persuade** or **Psychotherapy** test. Failing that, an Agent could draw her out by meeting privately, one on one, two or more times to establish a rapport and build trust.

Padilla suspects the church of coercing and brainwashing its members with mind games and physical abuse. She tried to convince Terri Santos to leave. But after she

called too often and tried to visit the compound, other church members began visiting her at home and work.

The visitors said that everyone who lived at the compound was there by choice. They said that living at the compound fulfilled them and gave them peace. They said no loving friend of Terri's would try to stand in the way of that. They said the church community looked out for its own. They never came right out and made threats, but something in their tone and body language was frightening.

Worst of all, strangely, was a boy who accompanied two of the visits. He was only 10 or 11 years old and hardly ever said a word. But looking in his eyes felt like staring into a black abyss, a well with no bottom or light. It left Padilla terrified without being able to articulate why.

Padilla does not know the boy's name and has no photos of him. She can give a general description: a white male who would be about 12 years old now, with short brown hair, dressed like a grownup in khakis and a flannel shirt. A sketch-artist's rendition would look like half the boys in Oregon, except for the attire. Shown a photo, she identifies Jake Elliott with a chill of recognition.

Witnesses

If they have the right contacts to ask for help from the FBI, and make a **Bureaucracy** roll, the Agents can request facial recognition analysis on people in the video. That identifies ten of them. A few others are seen only in profile but can be recognized if the Agents meet them later. One of those is 12-year-old Jake Elliott. See **JAKE ELLIOTT/SAMUEL WOODMAN** on page 25 for details.

In the Background

Several people can be seen only in profile or with their backs turned, and cannot be identified.

Four people are identifiable in the footage and were near enough to hear Terri Santos shouting, but were not paying attention. Those include fast-food worker Theresa T. Babb; her husband, truck driver Robert H. Babb; hiking guide Craig D. Harmon; and Harmon's girlfriend, housecleaner Andra A. Kelly.

These individuals did not see what happened to Santos and assume she ran away.

Up Close

Seven people saw Terri vanish: retired photographer Thomas P. Braley; bookkeeper Margaret W. Brito; rafting tourists and Southwestern Oregon Community College students Ismael M. Hay and Robert K. Jensen; Hourglass City Hall secretary Tammy A. Perry; nurse Etta D. Warren; and Herbert Salsbury, who recorded the video.

Most have talked themselves into believing it was some kind of dumb magic trick, a stunt she coordinated with the kid who recorded the video.

Brito, Hay, and Perry cannot be budged from that story. They dig into it harder and harder, either because they can't let themselves remember the truth or because they are friendly with the church and cannot bear admitting they were wrong about it.

What They Really Saw

Braley, Jensen, and Warren—and Herbert "Rawdog" Salsbury, the videographer—can be talked into admitting what they really saw: weird sparks floated out of her and away into the air as she died screaming; and a horrible rising whistling or howling noise. Inexplicably, neither of those details can be seen on the video. Talking any of these three into sharing the truth may take simply asking, if the Agents are patient and say that the witnesses won't have to say any of this in public. Or it might call for a **Persuade** roll.

Rawdog

The youth who recorded the video is Herbert Roderick Salsbury, but he insists on going by "Rawdog." All his online usernames are some variant of that nickname. Until recently, Rawdog was active on his social media and video feeds multiple times a day. For the first two days after the Santos video went live, he can be seen responding to viewers: some say it's obviously a dumb fake, and he good-naturedly insults them back; others admire its production values and ask how he did it, and he says he might show them his tricks someday. The third day after he posted the video, Salsbury