

Delta Green Scenario Guide – The Mist

A CTHULHU NOW! Adventure framework, by Don Juneau

"Impulse Item" is more of a framework than a fully fleshed out and complete adventure. This is partially so it can be hacked, chopped, channelled, primed, painted and wedged into your game or campaign a bit more easily; it is also admittedly easier to write up this article as a framework, rather than to complete it, as well as trying to avoid possible copyright litigation. (See below.)

This scenario is designed for the modern era, and specifically for use as a DELTA GREEN adventure; "regular" CTHULHU NOW! Investigators may be used instead of DG operatives with little-to-no modification. Setting the adventure earlier than the 1950s, or in vastly different locations, may require quite a bit of work to make it usable.

(DELTA GREEN is detailed in THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH #7 and The Chaosium Digest v5.12. There is also an upcoming sourcebook from Pagan Publishing.)

QUICK SYNOPSIS (for those too eager to wait): THE MIST, by Stephen King.

Now that we've got *that* out of the way, let me explain. At a recent convention, I managed to snag an audio production of said S. King story, produced by the ZBS Foundation. On a recent listening, I thought "Gee, what would Mulder and Scully of THE X-FILES do?" And then, "Who cares? What would a bunch of paranoid DELTA GREEN types do?" And so I lay back half-listening to the tape, and thought of explanations, suspicions, and what I could possibly get away with.

The basic story synopsis: a nice little New England town, rather isolated, has a strange mist roll in. In the mist are *things*, mostly deadly and *hungry*. A small group of people are trapped in the local supermarket, and some eventually escape into the mist, to find... well, that's where the tape ends, and I suppose the story also. Blame Stephen or ZBS.

Since I'd like to dodge any litigation-hungry lawyers, rather than excerpt and detail the entire story, I'll recommend you read or listen yourself; reading may have more details, and the printed page is likely to be more accessible, but the audio has such *wonderful* sound and production - it'll make you want to set up your stereo for CoC sound effects...

(THE MIST, by Stephen King - available in DARK FORCES, ed. Kirby McCauley, and SKELETON CREW, by Stephen King. "Stephen King's THE MIST" audio production was available from The ZBS Foundation, RR1 Box 1201, Fort Edward NY 12828, according to the cassette liner; however, I can't find their web page, and they may be gone. I got my copy from a dealer at a science-fiction convention.)

So, go borrow or buy the story/tape, and read/listen. I'll wait.

Back already? Okay. Let's go to work.

The story can be used as-is for a short CoC adventure. Just Add Investigators. However, that's a little too easy, especially if any of the players have been exposed to the story. I wanted something that would work as a DELTA GREEN scenario; I also wanted the option of a "mundane" explanation, whether true or not, of the events that unfold. Last but not least, I wanted to be able to patch this in as a quick scenario, to take up a session or two during a campaign, or even to use it for beginners or as a convention run.

So, to make it portable, let's distill it down to the very basics:

1. Isolated location, with small population and limited communications.
2. The mist itself, with all attendant effects.

This is really all that's needed. Well, all that's *really* needed is the mist; it could be set in the middle of Tokyo, or 1890's Paris. However, the idea is to make *less* work for Keepers, not more.

So, let's add a couple more items:

3. Small town supermarket.

4. The Arrowhead Project reservation.

It can still be set virtually anywhere, in any era. It just takes work. Changing #4 into a private or corporate site, or even a different government location, will work just fine. However, the government aspect gives a reason for the DG operatives to be on the scene in the first place. Let's break it down some more:

5. The thunderstorm the night before, and the power failure.

6. The radio blackout.

Now, we're getting locked in. The storm gives a feeling of anticipation, as well as killing the power and phones, and restricting movement. The radio and TV blackout, for whatever reason, isolates the characters even more. To continue:

7. The characters of the Expiator, Parent and Child, Disbeliever, and They Knew Too Much .

8. Local legends and lore.

Specific characters, and their actions, are well suited to keep the feel of the original story. The above characterizations make it easy to change specific details, but keep the events stable. The local stories, which fit closely with the Expiator, may or may not provide clues as to what's happening.

Let's stop the list here, and get into the meat. The timeline is a good place to start. This timeline will fix basic events, and set the only requirements for DG operatives. After the PCs arrive at the store, it's Game Time.

(All time approximate; stated as time on tape, or my best guess.)

The previous night: Thunderstorm, beginnings of the radio blackout, power and phone lines down.

Aprox. 10 AM: Stores are open, people are moving around and cleaning up after the storm. Radio blackout more prevalent. DG operatives arrive in area, or finish business at Arrowhead Project.

Aprox. 11 AM: Main NPCs are present at store. DG operatives arrive in town and stop at store.

Aprox. 11:15 AM: Emergency sirens go off. Some people leave the store. Expiator attempts to stop others. Mist moves up street. Darkness falls. Sirens stop. Explosion/quake. Person leaves store, clothing seems to "dissolve" in mist. Full radio blackout assumed.

Aprox. 11:30 AM: Generator stops. Store employees open rear door, tentacle enters. One dead, tentacle severed by door.

Aprox. 11:40 AM: The word gets out. *Things* are out there.

Aprox. 4:30 PM: Expiator begins speaking of sacrifice. Barricades.

Aprox. 5:00 PM: Disbeliever's group exits. *Nasty* sounds. No survivors. Expiator starts to gain converts. Watches start.

Aprox. 7:00 PM: Movement seen in mist.

Aprox. 8:00 PM: Insect intruders, battle. More deaths.

Aprox. 1:35 AM: Some overdose deaths have occurred. Those Who Knew Too Much found dead in back room.

Aprox. 4:00 AM: Last insectoid activity seen.

Aprox. 12:00 AM: Expedition to drugstore. Web attack. Casualties.

Aprox. 4:00 PM: Expiator has gotten more converts. Human sacrifice discussed. More suicides. Escapers begin to prepare.

Aprox. 4:30 PM: "Blood expiation." Expiator and followers versus escapers. Child claimed for sacrifice. Expiator killed. Escapers get to car, leave.

Aprox. 4:45 PM: Earth collapse evidenced.

Aprox. 5:30 PM: Turned back by fallen tree. Giant walker seen.

Aprox. 7:00 PM: End of story...

Now, I'd keep the timeline in mind for when certain events may occur, especially early on. However, any and all may have to be changed on the spur of the moment; who *knows* what players can come up with?

However, there's still more to be done, in my opinion. Unless you manage to obliterate everyone, something has to happen at the end! (Well, you could run it as a one-shot, or final game, leaving the players to wonder at the eventual outcome...) Using it for DELTA GREEN, even if there are no survivors, eventually someone will have to investigate; that's DG's job.

The three main paths that can be used to explain this are mundane, occult, and Mythos. Mundane covers such possibilities as a nerve gas leak, or naturally-occurring mushroom spores that are particularly dense and hallucinogenic. Occult, if you use it, can be a massive haunting gone awry, or the Almighty smiting this evil world. (Remember the Expiator?) And if I have to define Mythos for you... just suppose those mushroom spores are from the superfungus in Steve Hatherly's "Tale Of Terror" (TUO #13) FUNGUS? You can even mix and match: DG operatives who were there know something weird and bad and Mythos went down. Some survivors (if any) will speak of the coming of the Tribulations and Armageddon. The government will release reports blaming illegal chemical dumping. Hey, maybe you can come up with stuff that *I* haven't! Would non-Mythos aliens ("Greys") really be termed "mundane"?

With explanations, there's a number of things to explain. The off-stage effects of the "Black Spring", the storm the night before, the radio blackout, the mist and attendant effects, the explosion/quake, and whatever aftermath has (or will) come about. Project Arrowhead is in a class all its own; I daresay it's secret, and what *really* goes on there may never come to light. What the government will tell is to be suspect at best, and out-and-out falsity is much more likely. (Another thing to keep in mind is Those Who Knew Too Much. They were in town, attempting to communicate with someone, and suicided later that night. Did they know, just suspect, or out and out panic? Could they actually have been murdered? Were they Project personnel, or could they have been investigative reporters, terrorists, even survivalists? It's Up To You...)

I decided, when I originally worked up this idea, that for my purposes it really was a mundane accident, or rather a combination. Ergot of rye (grain fungus containing a natural psychedelic), which was combined with DMSO ("skin-carrier" chemical, when mixed with virtually anything, will absorb right to the bloodstream), and an accidentally-created long-lasting mist (via liquid oxygen and carbon dioxide, and some broken water mains), all the result of a truck/train collision upwind of town. "Black Spring" doesn't even come into my version, unless someone decides to investigate it later (heheheh). The storm was natural, while the radio

blackout was a malfunction during testing of at the Project. The big blast was liquid propane tanks going off after the accident. Simple! (Not really. "Shovel" is more like it, to force what I knew to fit the effects described.)

Before I conclude this article, I'd better bring up a major point: the supermarket. If there's **anything** needing to be carefully planned, mapped, and noted, it's the store. It's a good bet that you have a store nearby that can be used for research. Go there. Use notebooks, tape recorders, even cameras (video or otherwise) if you have them. When the players ask if there's propane cannisters, or where the pharmacy is, you'd better know. If you can, find out about the back rooms: deli/bakery, meat-locker and cutting room, storage, and management offices. Occasionally, some of the local stores (Great Falls, Montana) have printed up maps/reference guides, to help the customers to find their items - this is a **great** item to use, as it's free, and you can grab multiple copies for later markup and handouts. Also, know what selections and amounts are available; seasonal items can change the difficulty. Driveway salt and candy canes aren't as potentially useful as charcoal lighter and barbecue forks.

Anyway, this seems to be fairly complete now. I'm sure there are things I've ignored, or decided to discard, from the story; there's a huge list of things that could be **added**, from more/different NPCs, to additional events, to a complete campaign framework starting before "Black Spring" and ending who knows when, after untold yet horrifying incidents... it could end up DELTA GREEN: The Project Arrowhead Campaign. Who knows?