

## **Delta Green Protocols:**

# **The Unripened Fruit**

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So you've killed someone—or in any event someone has died—and you need to make the body go away. This is easier said than done. Disposing of human remains is dangerous and mentally trying.

If the corpse is known to authorities and if you've interacted with the victim in any public place for any period of time, identification of said corpse will likely lead to you being questioned, at the very least, or arrested if you're unlucky and you leave evidence behind.

When you need to remove a body from the equation, you must do your best to assure it won't be identified.

It pays to be thorough when dealing with such things. Bones and other evidence (hair and even invisible remnants of blood) last a long, long, time, and there is no statute of limitations when dealing with murder.

## **The State of the Body, Progression and Decomposition**

How long a body remains undetectable depends mostly on the temperature, humidity, and ecosystem of the area. Like any meat, bodies can be frozen, but this leads to its own problems. (Have you ever tried to move a 210-pound block of ice shaped like

a man?) Moving a frozen body requires STR×5 and DEX×5 rolls every 10 feet or the “cadavercycle” is dropped and might...crack (SAN loss: 0/1).

Outside a climate-controlled area, a body generally goes through several states of decomposition within the first 72 hours. The stench begins shortly after death and grows in intensity as the meat is broken down.

Putrefaction becomes pronounced within 36 hours. The neck, shoulders and abdomen become discolored (green or purple), followed by gaseous bloating throughout the corpse (SAN loss: 0/1). Blood pools at the lowest points of the corpse, discoloring and rotting in those areas.

By now the stench of putrefaction is easily detected, especially in an enclosed area. Identifying it may require an INT×5 roll, but experienced law enforcement need not roll. They’ve smelled it before. It is pungent and sickly sweet and is quite overpowering. If the stench is strong and you are not used to it, you must roll CON×5 to resist uncontrolled vomiting. Some killers use air fresheners and industrial cleaning products like pure bleach to mask the stench of death, but even those will only conceal it for so long. It permeates walls and floors, and many crime scenes have been discovered by neighbors complaining of the smell.

Shortly after death, insects begin to infest the corpse. Flies and their maggot offspring begin to feed on it. Soon the population of insects on the body becomes uncontrollable. If a corpse is left alone, the presence of flies combined with the rising smell will quickly lead to detection.

After the first couple of days the corpse’s skin begins to blister and expel liquids. The skin contracts around the extremities as the liquid leaves the corpse. (SAN loss: 0/1D4.)

Finally the corpse splits and expels what are known as “purge fluids,” noxious bacterial runoff from digested flesh. (SAN loss: 0/1D4+1.)

At this point, after a long enough period of time dependent on the environment, the corpse either begins to dry out (desiccate) or completely fall away to bones.

## **Profession and Reaction to Death**

Physicians, veteran police officers, homicide detectives, and crime-scene cleanup professionals deal with corpses all the time. To them a body is just another piece of meat to be processed, and they don't have the problems of vomiting and most of the SAN losses. They see a body as a task to be completed, nothing more. The SAN losses stand if the professional *knew* the individual, or if the crime scene, body, or other elements are particularly ghastly.

This rule can best be summed up as: *If you deal with dead bodies frequently, you don't roll SAN or CON checks when you deal with a new one—unless you knew the victim or the body is in heinous condition.*

## **Disposing of a Corpse**

Now that we know a corpse has its own "life cycle", let's examine how one removes it from public inspection.

### **Dismemberment**

Not everyone is capable of this. The work is intensive and takes many, many hours. It also costs those participating 1/1D6 SAN for Violence (1/1D8 if you knew the victim well).

The body must be drained of fluids and cut into manageable chunks. It is usually then wrapped in plastic and disposed of in multiple, uninhabited areas. It's smartest to remove teeth and fingers (or heads and hands) and destroy them or dispose of them separately to prevent identification.

Dismemberment also requires an area to preform it, tools to enact it, and materials to clean up. It is quite messy.

Dismembering a corpse takes 1D10+2 hours, after which you must make a Forensics roll. If it fails, the Handler makes a hidden Luck roll. If that fails, you leave evidence behind to be discovered by future investigations.

## Acid

Acid disposal is one of those movie affectations which, though it does occur in real life, is actually quite dangerous and difficult to pull off. It is also horrific.

First, there is the problem of getting the proper chemicals. These can run into the thousands of dollars (an Unusual expense in *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*) and are often only available to accredited facilities. Worse, ID is often required for purchase of such items, which can be a vital clue in uncovering a murderer. Theft of these chemicals is possible from hospitals, universities and other places which use them. The risks of such a heist are up to the Handler.

The chemicals themselves are extraordinarily dangerous. A large polypropylene container is the only safe container for acid reduction of a corpse. Most acids eat through a bathtub easily, not to mention the floor beneath. And due to the fumes and danger of chemicals the crime scene will most likely need to be abandoned.

Even if you use a polypropylene container, the main problems are *inhalation*, *splash damage*, and the horror of the flesh-and-blood slurry created by the chemical reaction.

The process takes 1D8+2 hours, and you must roll DEX×5 or Chemistry, three times. Each failure causes either inhalation damage or splash damage.

**INHALATION DAMAGE:** You lose 1D4 HP from accidentally inhaling fumes from the chemicals being used, scorching the inside of your throat with chemical burns. You must also make a Luck roll. If it fails, the you collapse from the pain. If it fumbles, the you stumble *into* the acid bath and suffer an additional 1D6+2 damage from chemical burns.

**SPLASH DAMAGE:** You lose 1D4 HP from acid splashing up from the container and hitting exposed skin. You must also make a Luck. If it fails, you collapse and drop the chemicals. If it fumbles, you spill it on yourself and suffer an additional 1D6 damage.

**THE REMAINS:** A successful acid disposal leaves you with a disgusting chemical soup of destroyed body, the consistency of oatmeal. (SAN loss: 1/1D6+1, even for professions that frequently deal with bodies). Flushing this down a drain is dangerous because it can lead to clogs or, due to inconsistent mixing, melted pipes which then leak bodily fluids. Removing the material entirely, perhaps by transferring the polypropylene container into a lined, steel drum for transport, works best.

## Animals

Scavengers might seem like a good way to dispose of a body, but they often cause more problems than they solve. Body parts can be dragged *miles* by animal action and left for prying eyes to discover.

There are isolated wilderness areas where it is highly likely no one will find the victim, and where animals congregate; many areas in Washington, California and the northern states contain miles upon miles of untrodden land under tree cover. Still,

there is always the possibility of random discovery of a skull or bone fragments, even in remote areas.

Bodies carefully buried in distant locations will likely be dug up by scavengers and dragged about as well.

There are certain animals kept by man which can very effectively remove a human body from "circulation," such as hogs, large wild cats, and stranger animals (such as hyenas and hippopotami). Pablo Escobar was known to remove the dead by feeding them to his hippo. But then again, he did not need to worry about cleaning up.

Preparation is important for such disposals. These animals often cannot handle more than a small portion of a body at one time, and a careful cleanup of the area must be made afterwards to ensure nothing remains behind.

Dismembering a corpse for animal consumption takes 1D10+2 hours. The pieces are fed to the animal, after which you must make a Forensics roll and spend 1D6+1 hours working to clean the animal and area of evidence. If the roll fails, the Handler makes a hidden Luck roll. If that fails, you have not done the job thoroughly and evidence is left behind to be discovered by future investigations (usually a bone splinter, or teeth in animal spoor).

## **Incineration**

Burning a body to ash can be difficult for those not familiar with it. Even when successful, evidence in the form of bone fragments or teeth can be accidentally left behind.

**BUILDING INCINERATOR:** These incinerators are often small, which limits the size of burnable material to a package about the size of a forearm. They burn hot enough (in

excess of 1,500° Fahrenheit), but often don't sustain such temperatures without careful monitoring.

First the body must be dismembered (see above). Then make a Forensics roll to remove all evidence from the incinerator upon completion, which takes an additional 1D10+2 hours. If it fails, the Handler makes a secret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered (usually a scorched piece of bone or teeth).

**INDUSTRIAL INCINERATOR:** These incinerators are large and maintain careful heat measurements. They burn hot enough to completely destroy a body (1,500° to 2,000° Fahrenheit).

A body can be put in an industrial incinerator whole. Make a Forensics roll to remove all evidence from the incinerator upon completion, which takes another 1D6 hours. If it fails, the Handler makes a secret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered (usually a scorched piece of bone or teeth).

**RETORT:** Used in crematoriums, retorts are special ovens built to destroy bodies. They maintain a much higher heat for longer periods (1,800° to 2,200° Fahrenheit) and so can complete the job much faster.

Often, the hardest part of using a retort is gaining access. A Persuade roll can gain help from a professional at a crematorium for a large fee, usually 2D10×\$1,000 dollars (typically a Major Expense in *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*). The crooked crematorium operator can "lose" a body in an "unclaimed urn" and stack it amidst the various urns that no one has picked up. Of course, there is always the chance the operator will agree to help and then just turn you in the next time the crematorium comes under investigation.

A body can be loaded into a retort whole. Make a Forensics roll to remove all evidence from the incinerator upon completion, which takes 1D3 hours. If it fails, the Handler makes a secret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered (usually a scorched piece of bone or teeth).

## **Quicklime**

Quicklime—calcium oxide—reacts strongly with water. It is legendary as a way to deal with a corpse, but its legend outstrips its actual usefulness.

Though it does burn away flesh and bone when inundated with water, quicklime desiccates flesh as well, and unless the body is very carefully coated with the caustic material it leads to inconsistent results. Bodies left in quicklime are eaten away in parts, but other parts gain a leathery, shriveled (but quite identifiable) look.

The body is usually dropped into a hole, covered in quicklime, and then water is poured on it unless the dirt is wet enough to activate it upon burial. This takes 1D4+2 hours, after which you must make a Forensics roll. If it fails, the Handler makes a secret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered.

## **Compacting**

An industrial compactor such as a car press or a large garbage removal processor can readily destroy a body. It helps if the body is already cut up and carefully wrapped to assure it remains sealed. This means three to five industrial bags wrapped around each portion.

Crushing an intact body is a great way to be discovered. Most compactors are designed to allow liquid flow-through, so bodily fluids may spill out. Make a Luck roll. If that fails, you must spend 2D20+4 hours disassembling and cleaning the machine,



and make a Forensics roll. If it fails, the Handler makes a secret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered.

If liquids don't spill out, make a Forensics roll to remove all evidence from the compactor upon completion. This takes 1D3 hours. If it fails, the Handler makes a secret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered (usually bodily fluids or shattered bone fragments).

## **Dumping in Water**

Dumping a body in water is not as foolproof as it might sound. Even bodies weighted down rot and often break away in parts which can rise to the surface or wash ashore. Given enough time and biological action, nearly any body will fall apart and break up into pieces.

Still-water locations work best. Isolated lakes and deep, unused quarry waters allow bodies to settle and not be swept by strong currents. Bodies are often tied, chained and hooked to weights such as cinder blocks, wrapped in plastic, and then thrown overboard to sink. To prevent bloating and floating, the body must be perforated through the chest, midsection, and head. (SAN loss: 1/1D4.)

The ocean is a machine which pushes items up on the shore. Bodies dropped as far as 12 miles from shore have a strange tendency to wash up on the beach, even those weighted down.

The best solution for ocean disposal is a very heavily weighted industrial metal canister with the body inside, sealed with an acetylene torch. This is dumped more than 20 miles offshore in the deep ocean. The entire process takes 3D20+4 hours and requires access to proper materials and vehicles. Make a Forensics roll to remove all evidence upon completion, taking 1D2+1 hours. If it fails, the Handler makes a se-

cret Luck roll. If that fails, you leave behind evidence to be discovered (usually bloodstains on the boat, or a freak accident causes body parts to wash up on shore).

## **Crucible**

Metals like steel, chrome and aluminum are processed in huge industrial buckets called crucibles, melted into liquid at temperatures sometimes in excess of 2,750° Fahrenheit.

A body can be quickly and efficiently disposed of in this liquid metal. The only remaining evidence of disposal of a corpse in a crucible will be heightened phosphorous content in the resulting metal. Beyond that, nothing will remain.

Dumping a corpse in liquid metal is dangerous. If you lack any skills in dealing with such things (such as Craft [Metalworking] or Drive Heavy Machine) you must make a DEX×5 roll at -20%. If it fails, drops of white-hot liquid metal splash you for 1D6+2 damage and portions of the body drop out and must be dealt with again.

The hardest part of using a metal crucible to dispose of a body is gaining access to one during operational hours and not being observed. When these machines are in use, they are surrounded by professional smelters, individuals trained in their operation. Unless you can divert them, they will surely report your criminal interference with their work to the police.

## **The Switch**

Clever criminals have left bodies at medical facilities such as hospitals, doctor's offices and morgues. The goal here is to leave the body in an area where dealing with misplaced corpses is not unusual but will lead to a bureaucratic mess when the organization tries to account for it. At best, this is a fast stop-gap to give you a few hours to

skip town. It is not a long-term solution. A body left in this manner *will* be identified in time.

Make a Stealth roll to carry the body clandestinely into a facility. If it fails, you're confronted by an employee and questioned. A Persuade or CHA roll may allow you to cover your actions. If that fails, it may be time for more violence.

Of course, such facilities usually have cameras and key-carded doors, making such stealth much more difficult.