

A short excursion into psychosis for Delta Green.

Pick an Agent PC; the one with the lowest SAN, or the one with the most recent bout of temporary insanity, or the one who has done the most morally questionable things, or just the one who deserves it most. As a Night at the Opera is wrapping up, remind them of the existence of their day job (FBI, CIA, whatever) and that they have received a memo reminding them that their biennial Psychological Evaluation will take place on the next Monday (or at some more distant future point if you want it to hang over them).

Doubtless they will have questions - remind them that Psychological Evaluations, like performance evaluations and fitness evaluations, are a standard part of the job (especially if they carry a weapon in the course of duty).

The Evaluation consists of a written test, followed by an interview with a panel consisting of a high-ranking officer unconnected to the Agent, a Psychologist or Psychiatrist, and a representative from the Police Services Union/Association (or other relevant employee representative body) (These can be played by your other players for the session, or used as a way to introduce new characters).

The Evaluation

1) Written

There are lots of multiple choice and written tests available on the internet. Pick one that is used for diagnosing personality disorders, alcoholism, stress, or some other condition that the character is vulnerable to. Remind the player to fill it out in character, and have them do it in front of you (and the other players). Take careful note of what the player SAYS while filling it out, any references to their DG experiences, things they wouldn't tell the panel, dialogue with other PCs as if they were there, etc.

2) The Panel Interview.

Panel members will open with some general questions about work, stress levels, family life, intended to relax the Agent and get them used to the format. Once the Agent has settled a bit, one of the panel members gives the others a significant glance. Leaning forward he says, "So, [character name]. What can you tell us about A Cell?"

Doubtless, the Agent will deny, stonewall, or attempt to look blank.

At which point, the panel member will say (adjust the dialogue to suit your campaign, of course): "Well, that's odd. Because your co-workers tell us that you mutter about "A Cell" constantly. You say things like "I didn't want to kill him. A Cell told me to." or "When is A Cell going to call?" or "If A Cell had sent me backup, that thing wouldn't have eaten [deceased cell member]'s brain". And then there's this" [holding up the written test] "What exactly is a 'shoggoth' and why don't you want to tell us about it?".

Written around the edge of the test, in the spiralling pattern characteristic of schizophrenia and in the character's handwriting, is anything that the *player* said during the written exercise that is

incriminating or mythos-related. Being confronted with this evidence of mental and security breakdown causes a 0/1d3 SAN test.

Panel members will follow up on these revelations with questions about stress, dreams, hearing voices, talking to God, magical powers, occult conspiracies, and so on. It should gradually become obvious that the panel thinks that the Agent has become schizophrenic, and has invented an elaborate conspiracy theory and a supernatural authority figure (A Cell) which justifies taking the law into his/her own hands.

However, the panel will also remind the Agent that they are not there to "get" him/her but to help him/her realise he/she has a problem. If the Agent will agree to therapy (including drug therapy), mandatory counseling, etc, he/she can have sick leave with full pay due to work related stress (records of fatal or traumatic incidents the Agent has legitimately been involved in will be referred to) until a subsequent assessment determines that he/she is fit for active duty. If the Agent has undertaken any unauthorised or criminal activities that they would like to tell the panel about, the psychological evaluation can also be cited in their defense in an inquiry or trial.

Attempting to phone A Cell at any time during this period results in the call connecting to A Cell Battery Recharging and Recycling Services, a small firm run by a thickly-accented Vietnamese immigrant in New Jersey.

What's going on?

This is up to the Keeper. Here are some options:

1. It's exactly what it seems to be. The Agent has lost more SAN than is good for him and has started subvocalising about his situation, without realising it. His phone is being rerouted to prevent a security breach.
2. It's a setup by DG internal security, who are concerned that the Agent's mental instability is a security risk. The testimony about subvocalisation and the altered written test may be real or fake, depending on the Agent's SAN. The phone rerouting is part of the setup.
3. It's a stress test by Majestic's Project Outlook, designed to see if they can eliminate DG by convincing its members that it doesn't exist. The phone has been hacked as part of the stress test. The Agent has been drugged to experience symptoms of schizophrenia.
4. DG really doesn't exist; the whole conspiracy is a folie a tres, a shared hallucination by the cell to cope with the Cthulhoid horrors they face with a pathetic pretence that there are people who know what they face and will back them up [the End of Campaign option].
5. Not only does DG not exist, but the Mythos doesn't exist either; the Agents are totally psychotic and have been on a killing rampage for the last X months, without any justification (break out the rules for "[Power Kill](#)", here) [the I Hate My Players option].
6. Due to influence by Hastur, the Agent's reality is literally breaking down, starting with the bits that are most tainted, and rendered unstable, by Cthulhu Mythos knowledge. Delta Green is gradually transforming into the Secret Police of the King In Yellow's Imperial America. Police badges are seen with yellow signs set in them, etc [a good follow up to Night Floors].

Depending on which option you choose, this could be just a short interlude, or an opening (or closing) to a whole campaign. If the Agent admits to (say) nightmares, or marital breakdown, but not to (say) machine gunning cultists, then they could escape with some counseling and a few weeks leave; they might even regain some SAN. If they crack and start babbling about horrors from beyond the rim of Yuggoth, or just open fire, the panel might take more drastic action.

SAN costs and rewards:

These are stated as SAN rolls, which vary according to which option is chosen by the Keeper, and whether the character realises the truth of what is going on or remains wrapped in their delusion. The SAN roll then determines how they cope with this. This can lead to some odd results - it may cost more SAN to realise the truth.

1) It's exactly what it seems to be.

If the PC realises the truth and accepts that he needs help, gain 1d6/1d3 SAN.

If he denies this, lose 1d3/1d6.

2) It's a setup by DG internal security.

Realising it's a test; gain 1d3/1 and get pissed off at A Cell.

Think you really are mad: lose 1d3/1d6.

3) It's a stress test by Majestic's Project Outlook.

Realising it's a trap; gain 1d3/1 and get pissed off at Outlook.

Think you really are mad: lose 1d6/1d10 (heavier drugs).

4) DG really doesn't exist.

Realise DG doesn't exist: lose 1d4/1d10 SAN.

Remain convinced that it does: lose 1/1d4 SAN.

5) Not only does DG not exist, but the Mythos doesn't exist either.

Realise that you are a sociopathic serial killer: Lose 1d10/1d100 SAN.

Remain delusional: Lose 1d6/1d10 SAN

6) Due to influence by Hastur, the PC's reality is literally breaking down.

Awake to Carcosa: Lose 1/1d6 SAN.

Remain asleep: lose 1/1d3 SAN.

A comment:

This is one of the better suggestions I've seen on the mailing list for handling insanity. I don't use standard sanity mechanics and take a lot of suggestions from the Gumshoe books on how to handle insanity and this technique fits really well with how I usually do things. If you want players to really roleplay insanity, you have to really twist their expectations and experiences in the game. This is pretty fantastic and I think I'll actually use it.

A note for the Keeper

Players may become upset if the reality of "their" character is warped by the Keeper in this manner. Keepers should not be autocratic, but should remind players afterwards that Call of Cthulhu is a game of psychological horror and insanity - and if they feel this bad about a change in how they perceive their character, imagine how their character feels when their universe is changed by the horrors of the Mythos. This scenario is meant to give them some insight into the existential dread that would beset any actual agent of Delta Green (if it exists).