

# Metamorphosis

## Introduction

Despite the conspiracy's best efforts to keep things 'compartmentalised', Delta Green agents will occasionally encounter other agents on 'active duty'. If they are really unlucky, they will have to deal with the fall-out from another Cell's 'opera' that has gone horribly wrong...

This scenario can take place at any Green Box, provided that it is a suitably unfrequented 'structure' - a garage, rented storage cabin, basement, lodge or apartment would suit; a parked vehicle or buried cache would not. The player Cell should have a reason to visit this Green Box. Typically this would be at the start or end of an 'op' with the Cell either 'stocking up' or 'dropping off' surplus equipment / incriminating items. Keepers will want to think carefully about using this at the start of an Opera; if things go badly, the Cell might not be in fit shape to complete the main assignment. I'd therefore suggest using this to surprise your player Cell where the 'main' op has gone relatively 'smoothly'.

## Background - the recent history of 'O' Cell

'O' Cell's most recent 'opera' ended badly. Having fled a bloodbath, two agents are incapacitated and all of them are operating 'on the edge'. Unknown to the others, one of their number is both doomed and deadly dangerous. And it is in this state they'll meet the player Cell.

'O' Cell have been investigating mysterious deaths in their local state. In each case the male victim had succumbed to excessive quantities of spider bites and the venom induced thereby. The Cell eventually focused on a refuge for women subjected to domestic violence; all victims had been violent, abusive men - their ex-partners were now all living at the refuge.

'O' Cell were on the right track; the staff worshipped 'Atlach-Nacha', and the abused women (and children) sent there were converted to the cult by a combination of drugs, psychological manipulation, physical coercion and the welcome 'removal' of abusive partners.

Cell leader Agent OSCAR, ignorant of the refuge's secrets, decided on a covert approach and arranged for Agent OPHELIA to infiltrate, posing as an abused woman. Unfortunately she was detected, caught and 'tested' by the cult; 'successful', she was earmarked for a 'special gift'. When she failed to report, the Cell confronted her captors. An agent was stabbed and things got seriously FUBAR. As mayhem ensued, OSCAR found OPHELIA in the heavily cobwebbed basement of the refuge, beside a dark fathomless well. Her unconscious, apparently pregnant, body was bloated with poison; her skin darkening sickeningly by every minute. Worse, right before he'd executed the spider-tattooed cult 'matron', she had hinted darkly that OPHELIA would not die, but would instead be 'reborn' as 'something glorious'.

The refuge itself was left as a flaming inferno - the bodies of the cultists (both women and children) left to burn. Given the situation, OSCAR decided that going to the 'authorities' for help was out of the question. And so was contacting 'A' Cell. OSCAR knew what their orders would mean for OPHELIA. Instead, to placate the rest of his team, he has been faking contact with 'A' Cell via his DG cell-phone, pretending to follow instructions. OSCAR thus bought himself some time, and the best plan he came up with was to head for a Green Box he once used - remembering it as being 'suitable' and having a stock of medical supplies.

## **'O' Cell at the Green Box**

'O' Cell have been 'on the run' for some 14 hours, and broke into the Green Box less than twenty minutes before the arrival of the player Cell.

(Note: It is for the Keeper to flesh out 'O' Cell's members in detail; what follows is the minimum information needed for the scenario).

### AGENT OSCAR

OSCAR is the leader of Cell 'O'. Thanks to a call from OLIVER, OSCAR will probably know about the arrival of the player Cell. He will be searching for medical supplies (Keeper's discretion whether there is anything to help – or even to make things worse!) and he should initially appear non-threatening. This façade will be difficult for him to maintain, because he is in a near panic. Against his professional instincts, and the unwritten codes of Delta Green, he and OPHELIA have secretly been lovers for over a year. Now she lies poisoned – or worse.

OSCAR's priorities:

To establish if the player 'Cell' are really 'DG', and win their trust long enough to allow OLIVER to disarm them – rendering them 'manageable'.

To find out if they have been sent after them by 'Cell A' (unlikely, but a possibility in his opinion).

To keep them away from OPHELIA – unless one of them has medical 'expertise' – in which case he will pressure that character (away from the others) for ideas on how to 'cure her'.

To prevent contact with 'Cell A' / other Cells. He'll lie first but employ force if needed – which may alienate his colleagues.

To find a 'cure' for OPHELIA, and to prevent any harm occurring to her. He simply cannot contemplate anything bad happening to her, and is in denial about what she is going through.

OSCAR has a DG cell-phone, and a 9mm pistol which he will use if necessary.

### AGENT OSWALD

OSWALD is the second most senior member of the Cell. Unfortunately he was stabbed badly in the stomach. He is lucid, but weak, and will be lying against a wall near OSCAR.

OSWALD's priorities:

To live. He trusts OSCAR, but is worried that, untreated, his wound will kill him. He has suspicions about OSCAR and OPHELIA's relationship, and is concerned that OSCAR is prioritising her welfare over his own. These doubts will crystallise if it becomes obvious that OSCAR has been lying about contacting 'Cell A' and he may therefore become an ally of the player Cell.

To avoid contact with the 'authorities'. He wants to avoid arrest – but not though, at the expense of his life.

OSWALD has a DG cell-phone, and a 9mm pistol which he can fire, but (at the Keeper's discretion) with substantial penalties due to his weakened condition. A Medicine roll will determine he needs immediate hospitalization.

### AGENT OLIVER

OLIVER is the junior member of the Cell. OSWALD prudently had him park their vehicle out of sight and 'cover' the Green Box location from a distance (Keeper's discretion whether he can be 'spotted').

Once the player Cell is focussed on OSCAR, OLIVER will sneak up, announce himself, and assist OSCAR in disarming them.

OLIVER's priorities:

Helping his buddies. OLIVER trusts OSWALD and will follow most orders, but will hesitate to harm fellow DG agents; the carnage at the refuge shook him badly. Mentally fragile, further stress is likely to break him, though it for the Keeper to determine just how (this should be done with an eye to maximising player involvement in events).

OLIVER has a DG cell-phone, the keys to their vehicle and an automatic shotgun.

### AGENT OPHELIA

This poor unfortunate has been 'favoured' by the cult and is on her way to becoming a Daughter of Atlach-Nacha (see Malleus Monstrorum pgs. 19-20). The speed of her horrifying transformation is down to the Keeper; each numbered 'stage' of her metamorphosis should be introduced for maximum dramatic effect:

Initial state: OPHELIA will be lying naked under blankets to the 'rear' of the Green Box moaning fitfully; examined, she has deeply 'bruised' skin all over, and a swollen abdomen. She will occasionally start spouting gibberish about 'silken strands', 'bounteous limbs' and 'sacred poison'.

Stage 1: After a time, a violent vomiting fit will produce huge quantities of putrid bile. For a few moments, she will be lucid and will call pitifully for 'Dan' (OSCAR's real name).

Stage 2: She passes out again, her breathing rapid and shallow. Sweating profusely, her skin turns alabaster white. A successful Medicine or First Aid determines that she is undergoing something like severe anaphylaxis.

Stage 3: Next, her body swells massively (visible beneath the blankets) with the audible popping of bones and agonised screaming. She thrashes the ground, breaking digits and tearing nails. (0/1D3 SAN).

Stage 4: Finally, still screaming, she 'leaps' to the ceiling landing upside down - scuttling to the walls, then the floor and back again (1/1D3 SAN). Then, dropping to the floor, the full bloody transformation will occur (1/1D8 SAN to witness the transformation, a further 1/1D8 to see the Daughter). Crawling from her discarded gooey skin 'shell', she will aim to paralyse all foes before feeding at leisure - starting with OSCAR.

### **Summary**

The initial challenge for the Agents here is to deal with the members of Cell 'O'; employing persuasion, guile or force as they deem fit. Eventually though, they will have to confront a Daughter of Atlach-Nacha. Their 'readiness' for this may depend on what has gone before.....

### **SAN Rewards / Penalties**

For killing members of Cell 'O' refer to 'DG: Eyes Only' page 138. OPHELIA should be considered human up to and including Stage 3.

Gain 1D3 SAN for killing OPHELIA at stage 4.

Performing an autopsy on OPHELIA: Lose 0/2 SAN stages 1-2, 1/1D6 SAN if her body is examined from Stage 3 onwards.

Killing the Daughter = 1D10 SAN gain

### **The Daughter of Atlach-Nacha**

STR: 23

CON: 18

SIZ: 18

INT: 14

POW: 13

DEX: 14

Move: 5

Hit Points: 18

Damage Bonus: 2D6

Appearance: A Daughter resembles an enormous venomous spider, almost completely black except for the swollen, pulsing abdomen which is streaked with green and gold.

Attacks: Bite 75%. Damage: 1D10 + paralysing venom (POT 20 vs CON. Success equals paralysis for 1D6 hours). A paralysed victim's flesh is chewed from their skull and then their brain is devoured through the empty eye sockets. This feast takes 1 minute per point of the victim's INT with a point lost for each minute that passes; at INT 0 the victim dies. If the feast is 'interrupted' the victim is still forever blind, suffers 2D4 APP loss and whatever INT has been lost is gone permanently.

Armour: 5 point hard shell.

Spells: Contact Atlach-Nacha, Call Atlach-Nacha.

Skills: Sneak 35%

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 SAN. Seeing a human 'molt' into a Daughter costs an additional 1/1D8.

Refer to 'Malleus Monstrorum' pages 19-20 for full information.

### **Author Comments**

Ideas wise, I think I had maybe 3 areas that didn't get touched on when I realised that they would take up too much room:

1) Expanding on the 'cult'. The 'Daughter of Atlach Nacha' was a creation (irrc) of Keith Herber in 'Spawn of Azathoth'. I would have liked to acknowledge that, and have the cult matron have an Andaman Islands or Tcho-tcho connection. However there was probably little way of 'Cell O' knowing that, much less the players characters, so that got dropped due to the word limit imposed under the 'Shotgun Scenario' competition rules.

2) Foreshadowing the mayhem at the women's refuge. The carnage out at the refuge would probably have attracted some media coverage which the player agents may have heard/seen (with an ex-partner of a refuge resident probably being the prime suspect). However, since I saw this as a post-op 'event' I reckoned I could assume that the PCs had their minds elsewhere and that this could be dropped too.

3) I had a vague notion that somebody in 'Cell O' might have recovered a tome which may have had a clue (or even remedy) re OPHELIA's situation. Again this was dropped due to word limit constraints and because I saw the scenario as a 'short sharp shock' rather than something in which bookish research would win the day..... But if they recover said tome from Cell O and discover there was a cure after they have already offed a fellow agent the emotional fallout should be pretty traumatic for all concerned.

### **Suggestions / Comments from Delta Green Mailing List Members**

*Suggestion/Idea 1:* Atlach Nacha and her web bridge has always been one of my favorite mythos bits. I've actually written up (but not yet used) some background information on an Atlach Nacha cult among the movers and shakers of the fashion scene. The main front of the cult is a fashion design company whose spokesperson (thanks to a suggestion from DGML) is Natasha Atlas, the international singer with all the right real-world background to tie her in perfectly and a perfect name to boot. She's got a background that mixes North Africa, Belgium, Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, and Jerusalem along with some Arabic, Judaism, Islam and Muslim. She uses Arabic, Spanish, French and English in her music. She even had a track in Grand Theft Auto. With a spread like that, she serves to recruit people from just about ANYwhere. The one thing I've never had was a way to get the players introduced to the cult. With this scenario, now I do! (W00t!).

*Suggestion/Idea 2:* The GM can write up some material so he can foreshadow the scenario to a certain extent. Establish the green box early on, so the players know what is inside when the shit goes down. Also, they might know or figure out some of Cell O's secrets, such as the mass killing in the womens' shelter. You don't have to giftwrap them the clues, but exceptionally paranoid and clever players should be rewarded.

*Suggestion/Idea 3:* There's the tome "Alach Nar Ulm" which cell F stored in a green box somewhere after fighting a "brood of Alach Nach", according to a Pyramid article by Dennis Detwiler in 2002...

*Suggestion/Idea 4:* What happens if a quick thinking or medically minded cell injects Ophelia with massive amounts of spider antivenom (Black Widow would seem appropriate), atropine (anti-neurotoxin), adrenaline (to prevent anaphylaxis) or some similar radical treatment for spider bite? All these drugs could reasonably be found in a summoned ambulance, so it's not implausible that the Cell would be able to do this.

4.1: It wouldn't work if I was running it, mostly because I don't consider Atlach Nacha and her brood to be in the same order of life as terrestrial spiders, physical resemblance notwithstanding. Though it's a pretty good idea.

4.2: The metamorphosis of OPHELIA shouldn't, imo, really be something that can be prevented by mundane medicine. It looks as if she has suffered a severe case of poisoning - but that's only because she is actually becoming something poisonous herself.....However, I'd leave it up to individual Keepers to decide whether:

1. it kills OPHELIA outright (something which may tip OSCAR over the edge)
2. it delays the process.
3. it accelerates the process.

If I'm a betting man I'd say most of you would plump for c). I know it's my preferred choice :)

4.3: Well it might 'kind of' work, in as much as a large enough dose of atropine 'might' kill her thus perhaps removing the problem of what to do when she turns into something not of this world. I'd view this as a mythos problem requiring a mythos solution rather than a mundane medical one. If I was generous I suppose I might have it slowing the onset of change.