

## **The Last Communiqué of Captain Chuck Dyer : The KILLCROP VIRUS**

I'm no scientist. All of those are dead, or worse. However, I can tell you what I have seen. I can try to relate to you what happened to my VAPs team. I won't be able to explain any of it...like I said, I'm no scientist. I'm just a grunt with a gun. They tell me where to go and what monster to shoot at. I've taken on a lot of strange things working for the paranormal head honchos at the university. Demons, zombies, and ghouls...if people only knew the extent of the ghoul problem they would all want to be cremated after they die.  
No, what happened to us at DarkWood Manor in the last 48 hours was worse.

Twelve years ago a VAPs team led by a Dr. Carter discovered 6 iron coffins inside DarkWood Manor. The coffins were part of a legend that told of creatures, of an unknown origin, being sealed inside of seven such coffins back in 1935. It was said that Abigail DarkWood herself had sealed the creatures inside the iron coffins in order to protect some locals from a dire fate they had brought upon themselves.

Of course, like all legends involving DarkWood, there seemed to be some truth to it, because in 2007 Dr. Carter discovered six of the alleged seven coffins. Instead of transporting them back to the university where they could safely be examined, he and his team opened them on location. Official reports from the university claim the six coffins were empty, but that doesn't explain what happened to Carter's team. Half of them went missing, and the other half were confined to rubber rooms somewhere. The six empty iron coffins were vaulted away for safe keeping at the university. The seventh iron coffin was not found.

I'd heard the stories about Carter's team. Those kinds of things are just the nature of this business. I just figured they had run into some nasty poltergeist or accidentally awakened some demon that showed them a little glimpse of hellfire and it drove them off the deep end. It's a risk we all take.

Flash forward to a week ago, and we find another paranormal egghead at the manor looking for that last iron coffin. And she found it.

Dr. Sarah Blackwell, Miskatonic Universities newest star researcher, had done what none of her colleagues thought possible. She had unearthed the fabled seventh iron coffin.

I thought I was being a little paranoid at the time for thinking that this iron coffin was found way too easy. This Blackwell may have been a genius, but she had only been working on the unsolved case for a week. It seemed to me like this thing wanted to be found. As if it was done cooking and was ready to hatch. On the bright side, I guess I don't suffer from paranoia...that's good.

Given what happened to the team of scientist that found the original six coffins, the university didn't want to take chances with this one. Before they let the zealous young doctor open the seventh coffin they called in my team.

48 hours ago my special ops VAPS unit arrived at the manor. There were fifteen of us. We all had our special talents, but the majority of us were just seasoned paranormal exterminators. We know how to contain and kill the boogymen.

We knew we had trouble as soon as we hit the ground. The EMF and Ecto-spectrogram readings were high. When readings are at those levels there isn't just a possibility of encountering an entity, it was a given.

Within two hours of our arrival we had the place quarantined and locked down. Nothing biological or

para-biological was getting out from behind the walls of Darkwood. We even had our resident shaman, Lieutenant Charlene Ward, put up one of her patented voodoo force field hexes that can block anything of the supernatural variety.

We had arrived at 0700 hours that morning, and by 1300 hours Dr. Blackwell was ready to pry open her iron prize. I, and two tech specialist were stationed in our makeshift control room near the front of the manor. Four more of my team were in the coffin chamber with Dr Blackwell and three of her assistants. Three wet behind the ears graduate students that were shaking in their hazmat suits. The rest of my team were spread out through the house to monitor the situation from various vantage points and to keep any entity contained if it got past the first line of defense.

Then...she did it. Dr. Blackwell removed the locking key on the iron coffin and lifted the cover. From our monitors in the control room we could see that the coffin had a secondary cover with a glass viewing window. The interior was dark, and the light from the outside was not penetrating it. The doctor and her team started scanning the contents of the iron coffin with all their high-tech gizmos. The rest of us waited patiently to see what we were dealing with, if anything at all. After the initial scanning was complete, one of the grad students started working on the locking mechanism on the secondary cover. And that is when things went to hell.

The interior of the coffin lit up revealing the remains of a hideous creature behind the glass. The hapless grad student jumped back just as the alarms on Blackwell's gizmos sounded. The contents of the iron container turned from being dormant to being active. As both teams scrambled to make sense of what was happening, tendrils of glowing fog rose up around the chamber.

The grad student who had worked on the secondary lock was the first one to show signs of the infection. He screamed, "Something is happening to me!". Strange lesions appeared on his face as he started going crazy. Blackwell and the other students rushed to help him, and the whole room fell into chaos.

It was a horror to watch on the monitor. People were screaming, and I couldn't make sense out of most of what was coming across the audio.

Then the rest of my team started calling in from around the manor. The containment of the coffin chamber hadn't held. Some of them reported feeling sick before they fell silent. Others were reporting strange paranormal activity. The whole thing went to hell in the blink of an eye.

What followed over the next 24 hours I can't tell you. I can't tell you because it makes no kind of sense. I've experienced a lot of bad shit in the service of VAPS and the university, but this was hell.

Dr. Blackwell called it the Killcrop Virus.

Yeah, Blackwell made it out of the coffin chamber. One of my men was able to save her and himself. Unfortunately the saving didn't stick for either of them in the long run.

In a matter of hours after that cursed iron coffin was opened half my team had been infected by the Killcrop virus. What that virus mutated those people into is beyond my ability to describe. Based on what the doctor was able to observe before she got carried off by one of her deformed graduate students, is that the virus acted as a super mutagen. Once a victim was infected, and brought to near death, the virus sought out nearby biological and inert material to fuse with the victims DNA. At least this is how the doctor described it to me. The results of this Killcrop Virus on my men is just beyond horrific! Calling them mutants would be an understatement.

Blackwell deduced that it was also a supernatural virus that couldn't be restrained by physical barriers. The only thing keeping it trapped inside DarkWood Manor is the hex my specialist, Lieutenant Ward, had put on the house to keep any paranormal nastiest trapped within.

On the upside, Blackwell seemed to think that she and I were immune to the virus being we didn't get infected within the first few hours. I guess she was right, or I wouldn't be able to be relating this story to anyone. However the doc's immunity didn't help her in the end.

I think DarkWood is going to be my last stand. I can hear something slithering its way toward my position now, and I'm just about out of ammo. I just hope this message makes it to the outside, and someone gets it to the university. The Killcrop virus must be prevented from ever escaping DarkWood. The hex may not hold it forever. Lieutenant Ward theorized that the a spell could shut down the iron coffin and reseal whatever evil that is seeping out of it.

I'm going to make an attempt to shut that damned coffin down, before those infected things that use to be my team can take me out. I doubt I will succeed, those hellish mutants seem to be guarding it pretty ferociously. I got to take the chance. Better than waiting to die locked in this damned house.

Captain Dyer 9/9/19

(Last message received from the VAPS Spec. Ops team at Darkwood Manor)