



The Manor Dead are Legion

There are numerous legends surrounding Leroy Darkwood and his wife Raven. The one that I'm about to impart to you is one of the most phantasmagorical of the lot.

Most folklorist and historians agree that the couple met in 1877, and married shortly after their meeting. There are no official records of their activities until they turn up in Virginia in 1880. This leaves a little over two years where their movements and actions are unaccounted for.

As a genealogist, folklorist, and amateur occultist, these missing years from the Darkwood legend have been of particular interest to me. I have spent the better part of my life researching what the couple were doing before they built Darkwood Manor. What I'm about to tell you is based on partial records, whispered stories, and a fair amount of conjecture on my part. However, I believe what lies ahead is the truth, and it is a dark truth to be sure.

Leroy was a killer. He took pleasure in it, but it was unfocused rage that drove him. It wasn't until he met Raven that his taste for blood was set to a purpose.

I believe that the building of Darkwood Manor was the central part of Raven's unholy arcane plans, and that Leroy was a means to those plans being fulfilled. Before she could have Leroy build her temple of the damned she needed money and a way to sanctify her new home. She achieved this by focusing Leroy's talent for murder.

Over the two and half years preceding their wedding they traveled the world killing people, and relieving them of their money. However, the individuals they killed were not ordinary, nor were the ways in which they were dispatched.

I have traced their movements during those missing years via a series of bizarre murders that occurred

in different parts of the world. Each of the victims of these murders share two traits: they were all well off, and they were all evil. Perhaps not as evil as the two that executed them, but they were sick souls none the less.

It took me many years to discover their horrendous deeds over those missing years, and it took me many more to piece together why they did it.

It is at this point in my story I could go into detail about the transmundane abilities and practices of Raven, and of the two mystical traditions that influenced her powers. I could also go on in some length about how some of those powers became manifest in Leroy, but most of that is well documented elsewhere. So for the sake of brevity I will just tell you the details and reasons of this ritualistic killing spree.

The first and most apparent reason for these killings was to relieve these fellow human fiends of their money. The second reason was not to inflict some form of justice on these vile people, but rather to harvest them. It is my most sincere belief that they collected the very souls of these people to create a collection of Wights, manifested phantoms, to consecrate and protect their new home of Darkwood Manor.

A Wight is a ghost. A vengeful phantom that can, unlike an ordinary ghost, manifest in its decaying human form. These spirits are mutated by their past deeds, and by the means they met their demise. For example, a person who died in a fire can control flame if they become a Wight. This makes Wights the most dangerous of all the phantoms. No living being would ever want to lay their eyes upon a Wight.

I know this sounds like some a fanciful tale of necromancy, but it is the only conclusion I could draw based on the evidence I unearthed. I won't bore you by trying to piece together before you all the fragments of information I have collected over a lifetime. The key piece of the puzzle came in the form of evidence collected at the scenes of the grizzly murders. Evidence that I gathered from historical archives and old police reports from the time period. The key evidence was the arcane symbols and cabalistic markings left at the scene of the crimes.

As I mentioned earlier, I am also a student of the occult. Those esoteric scrawlings would have had no meaning to the law enforcement of the time period, but to me they rang a very chilling bell. When put together those markings form a ritual of necromancy that can only be found in the most ancient accursed tomes of dark occult practices. It was a spell for the creation of Wights.

I can not fully say why Leroy and Raven would summon forth such ghastly entities. What their ultimate goal was remains a mystery to me. I do know that after the numerous murders, that I can account for, they returned to Leroy's home land in Virginia and built Darkwood Manor.

My reasoning for why I believe the Wights had something to do with the formation of the manor itself is a long and complicated one. However at the heart of my reasoning is the property on which they chose to build their home. The land itself had been in the possession of Leroy's family for several generations. Before that it had been held by a Native American tribe that believed the land to be cursed. Legends, passed down acroamaticly, tell a story of a rogue band of Vikings that killed a native girl and tossed her body into a deep cave. When braves from the tribe caught up with the Vikings and killed them they cursed the land on which they left their slain bodies so that their spirits could never return home. The curse was said to have been so great that if anyone who died on the land that the Vikings where slain upon that their spirits too would be trapped there. The native tribes would avoid crossing the property that would become Darkwood Manor in fear that their spirits would be forever trapped upon it.

I surmised that the Darkwoods chose this particular parcel to build their manor for this reason. It is a spirit trap, and it was the perfect place to corral their newly formed legion of Wight.

THE WIGHT LEGION (The Darkwood Victims)

The following are the victims that I can attribute to Leroy and Raven between 1877-1880. There may be many more, but they have escaped my search.

Red Eye Rose.

The first killing in the couple's wave of murder was Rose Turner, a legendary female gunslinger, also known as Red Eye Rose. Leroy killed her outside of Santa Fe. She had been dispatched with one gunshot to the head. When the body was found, her chronic bloodshot left eye had been carved out and the empty socket filled with a red powder. Her face had also had the ritualistic markings carved into it that would later turn up in different forms at the other murder scenes.

The Twin Doctor.

Doctors Jacob and Samuel Gemin were the most grizzly practitioners of the medical arts as the world has ever known. They ran a small hospital outside Chicago. They alone, with a small select group of nurses, ran the hospital. They catered to the indigent of the city, for they were the type patients that were not sought after when they went missing. In 1877 their twisted experiments and bizarre treatments were just starting to come to light. The local law enforcement raided their hospital on the morning of November 3rd of that year. What they found was indeed horrific and unexpected. The hospital was empty of patients. The twin doctors and the nurses were all found gruesomely murdered. The nurses were bound in strange ways with their throats having been slit. The two doctors' fate was extreme. They had been cut into parts then sewn together into one hideous form. The two had been made into one.

Police assumed their patients had turned on them and committed the heinous murders. With little explainable evidence they sealed the case records to keep it out of the newspapers.

The Clock Maker

Professor Victor Kronov was dismissed from the Saint Petersburg State University in 1855 for unknown reasons. Until then he had been a highly regarded mechanical engineer. After his dismissal he set up a small watch shop in the slums of Saint Petersburg. He labored there in obscurity until his body was discovered on May 13th 1879. The condition of the body was in such a state that no one was willing to put a detailed description of it down on paper, but the markings found near by were copied by a skilled police artist. In my investigations I was able to recover Professor Kronov's journals and diagrams that told of the experiments he had been conducting. It became apparent why the professor was dismissed from the university, and that he was demented beyond human understanding. He had been attempting to replace human brains with clock like mechanical devises. Apart from his journals I could find no other evidence of his work.

The Seamstress

Marie Fantoccini, a dress-maker by trade, was a black widow. Her insatiable greed was matched only by her vanity, for she was by all accounts a very attractive woman. She had numerous rich husbands that died of various causes, leaving behind them a wealthy widow. By the late 1800's she had established a high-end clothing store in New York. The store was something to behold, with grand displays of fashion manikins. Rumors spread that the manikins were made from the remains of her

former husbands, but the stories only made Marie's business even more attractive to her wealthy clients. Due to the demand for her fashions she set up a small sweat shop behind her store where she forced indigent children to sew her clothing.

On the night of April 6th 1878, Fantoccini's store caught fire. Even though the store did not burn to the ground, Marie was found dead inside. Her body was found in the back of the store, where the flames had not reached. Investigators summarized that suffocation and heat had been the means of her death. What was less explainable is how her body



became fused with one of her manikins and of the arcane markings they found made in blood near her mutated corpse. The children that worked for her feared her so much, even after her passing, that an urban legend formed around her. I believe that the "Bloody Mary" legend started with Marie, and that once upon a time it was the name "Fantoccini" if said three times while looking into a mirror would cause her to materialize. Time altered this until it became the "Bloody Mary" legend known today. Little did any one suspect that Marie was just another victim of the Darkwoods.

The Hanging Judge

Cattle rustlers, bank robbers, and even prostitutes feared Judge Isaiah Schlinge. He was appointed a U.S. District Judge in 1870 and quickly gained the nickname "The Hanging Judge". During his career he sent more people to the gallows than any other judge. It was also rumored that the good judge was corrupt. It is said that the only offenders to escape his death sentencing were ones that could afford to pay him a steep bribe.

During the winter of 1877 the judge was found hanging from his own gallows. His death was attributed to revenge. A bailiff in his employ recorded marking carved into the gallows that led me to believe other wise.

Momma Sweet Tooth

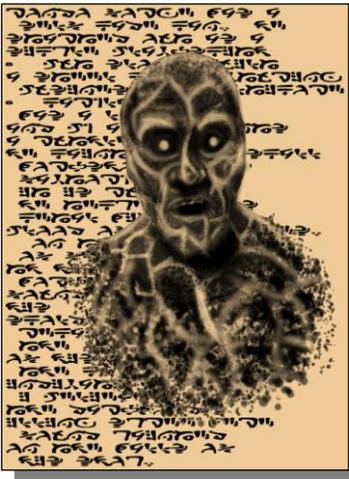
Belle Cotton ran a candy store, The Sweet Tooth, out of her home in London. The store was very popular with the children of the Cotton's neighborhood of Mayfair. She moved to London after the death of her husband and children from the flu and set up her shop with the insurance money.

In March of 1879 local children found The Sweet Tooth closed. After the upset children caused an uproar, the police went to investigate. They found Belle dead in her kitchen. After an investigation and the discovery of Belle's journal and cookbooks, the police were horrified. What they found led them to seal the case and release to the public that Mrs. Cotton died of natural causes.

Through my contacts in Scotland Yard I was able to look at the file on the investigation. I found that Belle Cotton was a true monster. She had killed her family, and developed a grizzly recipe for making confections out of the fat from their bodies. She took this recipe to London where she used it to make candy for unsuspecting children. She preyed upon the poorest of her patrons to acquire new source material for her treats.

The police determined that Belle had been killed by being force-fed her own candies. Once they realized what she had been doing in her kitchen they had no motivation to find her killer. From other items I found in the file led me to believe it was the work of the Darkwoods.

The Blacksmith



Rondo Forge was a self made man. He started out as a simple blacksmith, but slowly built a steel manufacturing business in Baltimore, Maryland. He was a large, and by all accounts a ruthless man. He maintained a small workshop in his factory where it is rumored he tempered his metal with the blood of his enemies. On the morning of February 13th his workers found his smoldering remains in the furnace of his workshop. The marks indicative of what I believe to be the Darkwood's killing spree were found painted on the walls of his shop.

The General

General Alfred Taur was one of the most blood soaked military officers of the old west. He rose to the rank of general in the Union army during the civil war. Afterward he became an Indian fighter based

out of Fort Davidson in Missouri. His method for dealing with indigenous populations of the west was to slaughter men, women and children. He had formed a special force of hand-picked men he called The Scarecrows, to perform slash and burn operations. They decimated entire tribes with their horrific raids.



In 1877 General Taur and his Scarecrows never returned from one of their

vicious raids. Weeks later their bodies were found in a corn field. Fitting with their name, they were all strung up on poles like scarecrows. The general had been decapitated and his missing head was replaced with , what was described as, a deformed buffalo skull. The closed military report recorded the signs indicative of the Darkwood's murder spree.

The Treasure Hunter

Augustus Fathom had struck it rich as one of the first great treasure hunters.

It is claimed that he and his crew had found the shipwreck of The Flor de la Mar. However, Augustus was the only member of his crew to have returned from the Straits of Malacca. He claimed that they were set upon by pirates and that he alone escaped with his life.



While testing out new diving equipment off a dock near his home in

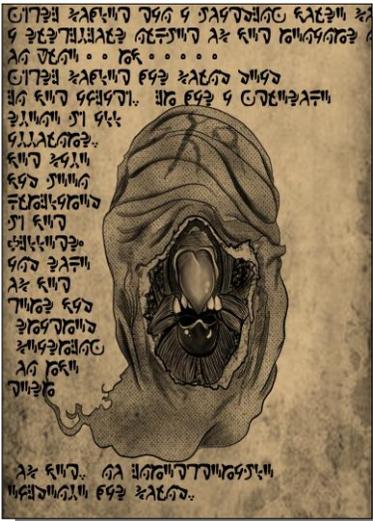
Savannah Georgia somebody pumped a strange poison gas into his breathing

hose killing Augustus on sea floor below.

The Vulture

Gypsi Fowler ran a boarding house for out-of-town travelers to Arkham, Massachusetts. She was dubbed The Bird Lady by locals because she maintained a sizable aviary in her home.

A suspicious number of her tenants never returned to their places of origin. Even though she was never formally accused of their murders she was under a weary eye of some law enforcement officials. Some believed that Ms. Fowler killed her boarders and fed their remains to some of her carrion eating feathered pets.



On June 17th 1878, Gypsi Fowler was found dead in her aviary. It was a gruesome scene by all accounts. Her face had been mutilated by her killers, and some of her pets had started feasting on the rest of her. No interpretable evidence was found.

The Voodoo Queen

Madame Mercy Solis moved to New Orleans in 1867 with her husband Joseph Solis. Being of Jewish descent they quickly became active members of the small Jewish community in the city at the time.

However, It was not long before Madame Solis became transfixed by the local Voodoo practices.

In 1870 her husband drowned on what was assumed to be his own blood, but coroners could not find any medical reason why this occurred. Madame Solis disavowed her faith shortly after and became a full time practitioner of Voodoo. Locals quickly came to fear her for she delved into the darkest side of Voodoo magic. It is said that her specialty was curses and zombification, and for a price she would inflict anyone with her dark arts.

Her life came to a brutal end on a fiercely stormy night in 1877. Her body was found lashed to her

Voodoo queen throne. She had been bled to death by a thousand small cuts. Madame Mercy Solis had fallen victim of the Darkwood's curse.

The Gentleman Grave Robbers

Of all the murders that I believe the DarkWoods committed during this period, these are the ones I find most horrific. The evidence of these particular murders of the Darkwoods did not come to light until 1996. Up until that year the bodies of the victims had not been found.

Lord Patrick Malone, Dr. Alan Brown, and Sir Gehrig Mitchell were highly regarded members of the English elite in the late 19th century. They were also amateur archeologist. They had gone on many notable expeditions to foreign lands to blunder ancient burial sites in the name of queen and country. They were often referred to as the Gentlemen Grave Robbers. However, some of their more secreted expeditions were far less than gentlemanly.

Their pursuit of arcane objects from the past often led them on quiet expeditions to ancient grave sites in Britain and other parts of Europe. Such activities would not have been as well received by the British government or the gentry as their looting of tombs in Egypt or the Far East.

In 1879 they had mounted one of their clandestine trips to explore some ancient Celtic tombs that they believed existed in France. Unfortunately, for them, they were never heard from again. Rumors of what had happened to them were numerous, but after a few decades they became a forgotten mystery.

In 1996 a group of professional archeologists uncovered a tomb in France. To their surprise they found the bodies of three men who did not fit the description of 1000 year old Celtic remains. They were the bodies of Malone, Brown, and Mitchell. They had been sealed inside a six-foot by six-foot cell in the heart of the tomb. All indications led the archeologist to believe they had been sealed in without supplies, any source of light, and while they were still alive. Wounds on the bodies suggested that they may have fought amongst each other before they perished, and that there may have been attempts of cannibalism within the small group.

Of all the DarkWood crime scenes this is the only one I ever saw with my own eyes unaltered by time. Fortunately I have friends within the archeology community that know of my investigations, and they provided me access to the site. What I saw in that stone tomb was shocking and still haunts me to this day. The markings that I found on the door to the cell were the ones I knew all too well. The bodies of these once gentlemen grave robbers were ghastly beyond description. Even though decay had occurred to some degree, they had remained unnaturally intact for being over a century old. The site further hardened my determination to continue my investigation of the murderous Darkwood couple.

The Evangelist

Biddy Palmer was one of the first female evangelist to travel America's frontier preaching her message

of fire and brimstone. At a glance Biddy seemed like a true messenger of the

word of god, but if one digs deeper into accounts of her travels and practices there

are some very dark skeletons secrets to be found. A large number of her converted

flock where were the children of rich land owners over whom she held a very

hypnotic-like control. It is said that her wealth was far greater than that of a

humble traveling preacher. Those who crossed her had a way of meeting her god

a lot sooner than I'm sure they wanted to.

One night in Texas, after preaching to a large crowd, Biddy disappeared. Her traveling flock assumed she had gone into the wilderness to speak with the lord, so they did not start to worry about her until the 3rd day. They organized search parties, and after a week they found her body. It had been drained of blood. She had become quite withered beneath the Texas sun, and one of the symbols that I attribute to the DarkWoods was carved into her forehead.



The Proteus Circus Players

Even though these murders occurred 18 years after the wight related murders, I still believe they are connected to those killings.

The Proteus Circus was a small group of traveling avant-garde performers primarily made up of mimes, jugglers, magicians, and clowns. They arrived in Luray in 1898 and gave several performances to local audiences. They were invited to stay at the DarkWood estate by Raven, but forced by Leroy to bed down in a barn on the estate ~~by Leroy~~. For some unknown reason he did not want them there, but obviously did not have the power to completely overrule his wife's invitation so they were forced to sleep outside the manor.

On the night of October 5th 1998, the barn in which they were staying caught fire. Every single member of the troupe were killed in the blaze.

At first glance this would seem like just another of the strange deaths that occurred in and around the DarkWood estate, except for one clue I found in a journal. The journal belonged to Fanny Buracker a tutor of the Darkwood's daughter. Miss Buracker had recorded that while observing the ruins of the once barn she had noticed markings on the remaining walls. The markings she described in her journal bear a distinct resemblance to the ones found at the other murders I described. Why the DarkWoods once again turned to the ritual they used to create their unhallowed legion of wights 18 years earlier is yet another mystery to me and one I hope to solve.

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THE SEANCE

I'm a very old man now, and my days of combing through dusty volumes of forgotten history and occult grimoires are all but at an end. I fear I may never know all of what I have sought for all these

years. This is why I'm going to make one last bold and unconventional attempt to learn the secrets of Darkwood.

This October, on the 135th anniversary of the building of the manor, I'm going to hold a seance within the walls of the manor. Through my contacts in the hermetic and occultic circles in which I have traveled all my life, I have discovered a very gifted medium, Madame Endor. I have contracted with her to conduct the seance.

I believe I have knowledge of one benevolent spirit that has been trapped within Darkwood Manor. I shall not name her here, but I believe that if I can contact her I will find answers to my questions.

I'm sure by this point you wonder why my obsession is so great when it comes to knowing the secrets of Darkwood Manor. I'm not just a madly obsessed antiquarian, but I'm a man looking into his own past. I'm Malachi Wood, the great great grandnephew of Leroy Darkwood.

-Malachi Wood