

Interference, Episode 5: The Saint

HOST

After our previous segment, I realized that the information I had learned was beyond the scope of a podcast host. I reached out to the authorities and informed them that Jeremy Davis, believed to be the Radio Killer, was imitating murders he had encountered during his time as a homicide detective. I also informed them that MindSight labs was directly linked to the original distress calls. My claims were completely dismissed. Left with no other option, I'm choosing to continue pursuing this matter independently. It's tragic that the authorities don't seem to be listening to the evidence in this case. But we have received a stroke of good fortune. I've found a source who might have a chance of blowing this case wide open.

<a recording from a science expo begins>

MALACHI HAWTHORNE

This here is Quinn Dailey. She's one of our youngest patients here at MindSight. She was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis at just 24. Before that, she wanted to be a high school teacher. Now, at 31, after 9 years of treatment, she's decided to get her teaching degree.

<voices grow to an overwhelming crescendo as a tense electronic theme starts!>

HOST

You're tuning into Interference, where we explore the strange and unexplained phenomena of the January 17th intercepted distress calls. Today, we're going to be speaking with someone who was mentioned in a previous episode, Quinn Dailey.

QUINN

Yep, that's me.

HOST

I want to thank you for agreeing to come on. I understand how hard this is-

QUINN

I mean, that's nice, but you don't.

HOST

I'm sorry?

QUINN

You don't understand how hard this is. You aren't even willing to say your name on air and you're expecting me to recount the hardest shit I ever endured for public consumption.

HOST

I'm sorry. You're right. I don't understand. I was just trying to empathize. I hope I didn't offend you.

QUINN

It's fine.

HOST

Are you still ok with continuing the interview?

QUINN

I knew what I was getting into when I agreed to come on.

HOST

All right. I just want to make sure you're comfortable with all of this.

QUINN

...have we met before this?

HOST

What?

QUINN

Have we met?

HOST

I don't believe so.

QUINN

You just sound familiar.

HOST

Maybe I remind you of someone.

QUINN

Maybe.

HOST

If you're comfortable, do you mind if I ask what it was like, being Mind Sight's star patient?

QUINN

Horrible.

HOST

Because of the neural network interface?

QUINN

Because of Malachi.

HOST

We had him on the show a few weeks ago, and I didn't know what to make of him. What was he like to you, if you don't mind me asking?

QUINN

He was a sociopath. The type of guy who became a doctor because he liked being around sick people, yeah... *I mean **he liked it.***

HOST

That's a really uncomfortable way to describe that.

QUINN

He's really uncomfortable to describe.

HOST

What gave you the impression he liked being around sick people?

QUINN

Because he didn't like when patients started getting better.

HOST

What do you mean?

QUINN

I was a patient that would go with him to expos, right? So I was special. When I started making a recovery, he got really intense, scary. He would restrict my diet, so I looked sicker than I was...

HOST

That's unbelievable.

QUINN

I'd tell you to ask the other patients, but most of them are dead... and if they're not, they're either senile or brain fried.

HOST

That must be hard, seeing people you once knew, reduced to that.

QUINN

Yeah. It is. Especially when you know a lot of it was intentional. Do you remember how he told you about that one patient who he pressured into shaving her head?

HOST

Yes.

QUINN

That was me. He didn't pressure me into shaving my head because of muscle atrophy. He pressured me into it, the night before an expo, *because he wanted me to look sicker.*

HOST

That's disturbing.

QUINN

Yeah.

HOST

Do you mind my asking-

QUINN

I did try to take my own life, and he did bust down the door to get to me.

HOST

But you believe he had bad motivations for saving you?

QUINN

He didn't save me. After that, he made my life a living hell.

HOST

Quinn, I'm so sorry. Do you think, knowing the way he was, that he was aware of the Neural Networks affect on patients?

QUINN

Oh, he was aware, alright. But he couldn't admit that, or he'd lose his position and his power...

HOST

If this is all true, Malachi sounds like pure evil.

QUINN

Mindsight was hell and Malachi was the devil.

<a long silence unfolds between them before the host chooses to continue>

HOST

Earlier you said that the patients were subjected to the Neural Network Interface. Does that mean that you weren't?

QUINN

I *was* subjected to the neural interface, if that's what you're asking.

HOST

Then why don't you show the symptoms?

QUINN

I did, but then people started noticing I was incoherent during the expos. He took me off of the treatment. People must think I'm lucky for that. I guess I am, technically.

HOST

Because you and your case were publicly shown?

QUINN

Yeah. I was his big success story. People knew me and they knew my story, and if started declining, people noticed.

HOST

But you don't consider yourself lucky?

QUINN

I do and I don't.

HOST

Why is that?

QUINN

Malachi took not being able to harm me as a personal insult. He took any opportunity he had to punish me... You know, he once told me he wanted me dead.

HOST

It sounds like he thought you threatened his personal image of control. Like trying to push you down was his way of telling himself he was on top.

QUINN

Yeah. The man is a high-functioning sociopath. The funny thing is, he's so charming. I mean like, talking to him, when you first meet him, is soothing. He looks at you like you're the future, like you're special. I'm sure when you talked to him the other day, he felt so genuine, and he does that, but it's all an act.

HOST

And you were the only person who saw under that act. I imagine that must've been incredibly isolating.

QUINN

That's one hell of an understatement.

HOST

Did you ever try to reach out for help?

QUINN

Yes. I wrote a statement, after my suicide attempt. I outlined everything Malachi did: restricting my diet, shaving head, not allowing me to speak to other patients-

HOST

Why didn't he let you speak to other patients?

QUINN

Because he only showed them a curated version of himself. No one believed me. He was afraid that if I talked, they might listen, so he had staff watching me at all times-

HOST

You didn't get any time alone?

QUINN

At first I was allowed to go to the bathroom alone. But one day I took a few minutes longer than he'd said and he was convinced I was on my phone, contacting someone about him, calling the police. He was paranoid.

HOST

That's horrible. I'm sorry you had to go through that.

QUINN

Don't be. It won't change anything. What might change something is this, telling people the truth. Just keep going.

HOST

All right. You've mentioned Malachi quite a lot, but you haven't brought up his wife, who, if I remember correctly, was the inventor of the neural network interface. If there a reason for that?

QUINN

Cause she isn't the monster here.

HOST

She invented the interface.

QUINN

Sure, but the second she realized it was hurting people, she wanted it shut down. She was a good person.

HOST

What role did she play in the experiments?

QUINN

Look, she still did testing, but trust me, it was different. She was trying to help. She truly wanted to cure us, and honestly, she was one of the only people in the fucking facility who bothered to treat me kindly-

HOST

But she still did still conduct experiments on you.

QUINN

She didn't know what she was doing.

HOST

How can you be so sure? She was Mindsight's co-chair, wasn't she?

QUINN

Yes, but-

HOST

She was also married to Malachi. If even half of what you told me about him is true, I have to imagine anyone willing to settle down with him can't be much better.

QUINN

ALL of what I told you about him is true.

HOST

Alright, but that just emphasizes my point. I can't imagine she wasn't aware of how cruel a man he was.

QUINN

Maybe she was. They fought a lot over how me and the rest of the patients were treated. She wanted to make things better.

HOST

Are you sure her opposition was ethical? Maybe she was trying to avoid a scandal, or make the experiments run smoother by appeasing you. She and Malachi could have even been on the same page and trying to manipulate the rest of you, good cop bad cop style.

QUINN

Absolutely not. She tried to shut down the experiments when she realized what they were doing to us.

HOST

But Malachi stopped her?

QUINN

Yes.

HOST

And the other patients, did they have as high an opinion of Malachi's wife as you do?

QUINN

Yes. We called her the saint.

HOST

Quinn... I'm not saying I don't believe you, but this all seems a little convenient for Mindsight.

QUINN

She wasn't on Malachi's side. When shutting the project down failed, she helped people escape.

HOST

How did she help you escape?

QUINN

She forged my paperwork, said I was getting better and transferred me to a recovery clinic. She did that for other patients too-

HOST

But you were getting better. Why did she have to forge that paperwork?

QUINN

Because Malachi had altered the records. Some patients were too far gone, but for the ones who knew what was happening, and wanted out, she helped them plan their escape routes. She was a saint, and you don't know what it was like at MindSight, how scary it was to stand up to him-

HOST

Understood. I'm sorry again for hurting you.

QUINN

You didn't hurt me.

HOST

Right, sorry, offend is the word I was looking for. I'm sorry for offending you.

QUINN

It's fine. Just move on.

HOST

Alright. Why were you talking about her in past tense.

QUINN

Sometimes when people were too difficult for Malachi, they'd get called in for some "treatment" and when they came back out, their condition would be significantly worse. A friend of mine once told him off in front a lot of patients. The next day she couldn't remember my name.

HOST

He was using the neural network interface as a punishment?

QUINN

It wasn't for punishment. Well, it wasn't just for punishment. Those people would forget what Malachi did to them. They'd lose touch with reality and need to rely on him more and more. I think it was his way of keeping control over unruly patients.

HOST

Are you saying that he did this to his wife?

QUINN

I think he did... No, actually, I know he did.

HOST

If you don't mind me asking, how long did her... degradation take.

QUINN

I don't know.

HOST

You can't remember?

QUINN

No, I just don't know, there's nothing to remember. The last time I saw her, she was still in pretty good shape. I think it happened after I left, maybe it happened because I left.

HOST

So this is an assumption? You think Malachi punished her for your escape?

QUINN

No, it's not just that. It's your show. I listened to the episode that Malachi was on for, and I heard her in the background.

HOST

I remember, but I didn't hear enough to come to any solid conclusions on her. How are you sure that this wasn't just standard Alzheimer's progression?

QUINN

She sounded distressed. Incoherent. Like those who suffered from the Neural Network.

HOST

What are the signs?

QUINN

The weird mumbling. Most of the time I couldn't get a straight conversation out them. They just mumbled.

HOST

That's... a bit weak, as far as direct evidence goes.

QUINN

Yeah, I guess it is, but sometimes hunches are all we have to go off of... I need to take my meds. Give me a second.

<we hear a pill bottle opening and a quiet swallow>

QUINN

Sorry, where were we?

HOST

I was just about to ask what having the neural network interface used on you was like. If that's not too hard for you to talk about.

QUINN

No, it's alright. I knew what I was getting into when I agreed to come on.

HOST

Excuse me?

QUINN

I'll be fine.

HOST

You said that earlier.

QUINN

Did I? Sorry.

HOST

Alright, so what was NNI treatment like?

QUINN

Horrible. It felt like it was cutting into my brain and pulling out pieces of it.

HOST

Was there a mechanical component to the procedure?

QUINN

No just electrical.

HOST

Were you on any anesthetics?

QUINN

I think so. I don't know what specifically they used, but they always injected me before the procedure.

HOST

Were you conscious during the treatments?

QUINN

Kind of but not completely. Sometimes my... What's the word for it, I was sentient; I mean, I could see. The problem was that it felt like my brain was working in slow motion. Like there was a layer of water slowing my thoughts down. But other times I could've sworn I was dreaming. But whatever I dreamed about was just gone by the end of the treatment.

HOST

That sounds confusing.

QUINN

Yeah. It was incredibly disorienting. Sometimes, I didn't know where I was, it was like being in-between worlds.

HOST

Did you ever try explaining that to anyone there?

QUINN

Yeah, but they didn't care. Mindsight was hell and Malachi was the devil.

HOST

Quinn?

QUINN

What is it? Did I say something weird?

HOST

I mean, you just said that earlier.

QUINN

I did? Sorry for repeating myself. Where were we again?

HOST

We were talking about-

QUINN

The saint, right?

HOST

No, we were talking about the neural network interface treatment.

QUINN

Right, Malachi was lying when he was on your show, he was the one who wanted to continue treating patients with it.

HOST

I know, we've been over this.

QUINN

We have? Sorry, I don't feel great.

HOST

Is this a side effect of your medication?

QUINN

I don't think so. Generally I just fall asleep pretty soon after taking them.

HOST

Where did you get your medication?

QUINN

They're prescription.

HOST

I understand, but who prescribed them to you?

QUINN

She did.

HOST

The saint? You're still taking Mindsight drugs?

QUINN

Only sometimes. To help with stress.

HOST

That's a bad idea, Quinn. Listen to me, I need you to focus, tell me anything you haven't yet about the treatment you underwent at Mindsight.

QUINN

They used the NNI a lot. I didn't have a lot of experience with it though. Malachi couldn't risk hurting me. I was his trophy.

HOST

What was it like when you did use it? What about the drugs?

QUINN

A lot of people had the drugs. The saint used them too.

HOST

For her illness?

QUINN

Yes. She had early onset Alzheimer's-

HOST

I understand that. Please tell me if the drugs were also a Mindsight product.

QUINN

I don't know.

HOST

I see. Let's talk about the NNI. What do you think they were using it for?

QUINN

What's that?

HOST

The machine they used to treat you and the other patients at Mindsight.

(MORE)

HOST (CONT'D)

It was worsening the mental wellbeing of the people it was used on. It's partially responsible for what's happening to you right now.

QUINN

Oh the capture machine, it was....

HOST

It was what? Please Quinn, try to articulate what you're saying.

QUINN

Is something happening to me?

HOST

Yes, now please, you called the NNI the capture machine. Was that what Malachi called it?

QUINN

No. Everyone called it that.

HOST

Everyone called it the capturing machine?

QUINN

No, they called it the thing you said, the NNI.

HOST

I understand, but why did you call it the capturing machine?

QUINN

I called it that.

HOST

Yes, you called it that, why.

QUINN

No I mean, that's what I called it, in my head. I know it sounds weird. You probably won't believe me.

HOST

I promise I will listen to anything you can tell me.

QUINN

Look... sometimes when your memory isn't great, you rely on your instincts. It's like when you lose your eyesight and your hearing gets better... I have an instinct about it... I know it sounds crazy... but I think somehow... the machine captured parts of the patients? And they don't realize it... Like their subconscious is still trying to understand what's happening to them...

HOST

Alright, can you explain further. Why do you think that?

QUINN

I remember what it felt like when Malachi hooked me up to that thing. I couldn't feel my body. It was like there was a layer of water pushing against my thoughts, making them work in slow motion. I could hear voices. Sometimes I thought they were just my dreams, seeping into my waking mind, but after a while they started to feel familiar. Like I knew the people they belonged to. Sometimes I wonder what would've happened...

HOST

What would've happened if what?

<a moment passes, Quinn sighs>

QUINN

If I never left that place.

HOST

But you did, Quinn. You did.

QUINN

Maybe...

<silence unfolds for a long time>

HOST

Hello? Quinn?

<we hear a door creak open>

FLYNN

Oh shit... Hey, I'm Quinn's brother. Quinn took her meds earlier. She kinda conks out after a little bit. I hope you got everything you needed, cause she's not waking up for a bit.

HOST

Yeah. She was great. Thanks for your time.

FLYNN

Yeah sure.

<Flynn hangs up>