

INTERFERENCE, Ep. 7

<incoherent distressed voices fade in and out in rapid succession, static buzzes beneath their voices, and then, clearly, we hear->

JACOB

I'm alive... Please, I swear, I'm alive!

HOST

Don't cry, please don't cry or scream! They'll filter you out!

<Jacob starts to hyperventilate>

JACOB

I- I don't know if I can-

HOST

Don't! Please, oh god! Don't do it-

<he lets out a SOB, and the call goes silent>

<a long stretch of ominous quiet and then we hear tires on asphalt, a turn signal get flicked on>

HOST

It's 8 pm right now. I'm driving to Peoria, Illinois...

<a window gets rolled down, the wind grows louder>

<a phone rings, and the host picks up>

DAVID (ON PHONE)

Hey. I just got here.

HOST

I'm still 30 minutes away.

DAVID

I'm probably gonna go on in then.

HOST

Okay. I'm recording, by the way.

DAVID

Did you record the whole intro yet? Do they know who I am?

HOST

I just spliced some clips together. I didn't have it in me to record anything. Just talk.

DAVID

Okay... Well, I'm David. Jacobs brother. We got in contact after Jacob was admitted to Clearview.

HOST

They don't know what Clearview is. You have to explain everything.

DAVID

Fine. It's a hospital. For people in comas.

HOST

Okay... so why did you get in contact with me? Please don't make me work for this.

DAVID

Hey. You're lucky I even said yes to this. *Don't be a dick.*

HOST

You're right. I'm sorry... why did you get in contact with me?

DAVID

Because I listened to the podcast and the police weren't doing shit.

HOST

Good.

DAVID

...What else do I say?

HOST

Usually, I'd ask you your age, your job... but honestly, I don't have it in me. I already know, and I doubt they care.

DAVID

I mean... we should probably tell them what we're about to do.

HOST

Yeah, sure. So, David, what are we about to do?

<the phone crackles on the other end, there's a long pause and then->

DAVID

**Break into MindSight.**

<the host chuckles bitterly>

DAVID

What?

HOST

If we make it out, I'm gonna put the intro music **right there**.

DAVID

Yeah?

HOST

Yeah... that was great.

DAVID

Didn't feel great.

<a long pause, we hear the click of a blinker>

HOST

No, it didn't.

<A beat.>

DAVID

So... I'm thinking I should probably go in.

HOST

Yeah... do you maybe want to wait for me to get there?

DAVID

No, I mean, I'm already here.

HOST

Okay, well, I still have to record everything.

DAVID

Are you gonna like... stay on call with me?

HOST

Yes.

DAVID

...The whole time?

HOST

Yes.

DAVID

Okay, fine. I'm going in.

HOST

Just so you know, there's an easy way to get in. Your brother went through a shattered window behind the-

DAVID

Yeah, I know. Who do you think taught him how to break into places?

HOST  
Oh...

DAVID  
I always told him to bring a gun when he did stuff like this, but he's dipshit. Never did it.

<we hear the crunch of glass and fabric tearing, then two feet land firmly on tile>

HOST  
You in?

DAVID  
Yeah. I'm gonna try to get to the Archival room again. See what I can find.

<we hear the crunch of footsteps, and then a mechanical SLIDE>

HOST  
What was that?

DAVID  
The door just opened for me. I didn't even have to touch it...

HOST  
Motion-censored? Your brother didn't mention that.

<we hear a click of a light switch>

DAVID  
I just tried the lights. There's no power.

HOST  
Well, there has to be-

DAVID  
But there's not. It must have a separate power source or something...

VOICE (FAINT, GHOULISH)  
Hi... yes... I can explai-

<BANG!>

HOST  
Did you just shoot somebody?!

DAVID  
I didn't know what to do! I can't see shit-

VOICE

I'm fine, really... you can't hurt me.

<we hear running, and a door locking>

DAVID

(whispering)

Fucking shit. I've got to get out of here.

VOICE

Don't worry. I'm a part of every room-

<BANG!>

VOICE

Oh! I'm really quite sorry. I didn't mean to alarm you.

DAVID

What are you...

VOICE

I'm an AI developed by the wonderful scientists at MindSight.

DAVID

Where is your voice coming from?

VOICE

My voice is installed into every room. Feel free to see me as your guardian angel.

DAVID

But there's no power.

VOICE

Oh, that can't be right. I'm most certainly running on the same power source as the lights and utilities. You must be experiencing a state of confusion. I'm sure that must be quite frightening.

DAVID

No, the lights don't work.

VOICE

If your vision is impaired, I can alert medical personal.

DAVID

No, no, don't do that. What's your job, here? Like what do you do?

VOICE

Oh, I make sure everyone knows where they're going. Many of our patients get lost frequently. Sir, have you forgotten where you are?

DAVID

No.

VOICE

Are you feeling confused or lightheaded?

DAVID

No, I just-

VOICE

Allow me to guide you to patient quarters.

DAVID

Just leave me alone.

VOICE

I'm not allowed to do that. You appear distressed and I must look after you.

DAVID

Fine... um, I need to get to the filing room. I'm meeting with my doctor...

VOICE

Sure thing! Follow the sound of my voice.

DAVID

(whispering, to host)  
I think I'm gonna follow this thing?

HOST

No, David-

DAVID

(whispering)  
She's helping me...

HOST

You don't know tha-

VOICE

Keep up!

DAVID

I'm coming.

HOST

David, please listen to me-

<everything we have been hearing has suddenly been muffled,  
David has shoved his phone deep into his pocket>

<doors slide open and we hear footsteps echoing>

VOICE

Here you are, sir.

DAVID

Thank you so much.

HOST

Are you there?

<suddenly our sound is clear again>

DAVID

Yeah... I found exactly where he left off...

<pages flip>

HOST

Read it out loud.

DAVID

Fine. 'In some cases, the consciousness is so strong that it can fabricate an entire reality. They can convince themselves they are real, have full conversations with people, make their own new memories, and convince themselves they are interacting with the physical world.'

HOST

Oh my god... So some of them don't even know they're dead.

DAVID

I guess so...

HOST

It says they can fabricate their reality? What does that mean?

DAVID

It means they can visualize new locations, and actively create their world as they experience it. *Like when you're dreaming.*

HOST

That's incredible...

DAVID

I found a tape... it says BioInterface Trial 001.

HOST

The first trial?

DAVID

Seems like... There's a file with it.

<we hear tires screech to a halt, and the engine of the hosts car turns off>

HOST

I just pulled up!

<a car door opens and then slams shut>

DAVID

Good, just follow the trail of open doors.

<we hear a tape sliding into a video player, and static flickers to life. We hear two voices>

MALACHI

Do you give your verbal consent?

IMANI

(teary)

Yes. She's only suffering...

MALACHI

Choices like this are impossible to make, but you're brave for doing it. Sometimes, pulling the plug is the best option.

IMANI

I just don't want to be here when you do it... please. Just give me a call when it's done.

MALACHI

Of course.

<the tape sputters to a stop, and then starts again>

MALACHI

Findings, part one. I have just removed the brain from the skull and placed electrodes on the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex. It is fully hooked up to the Neural Network. Currently seeing no brain activity-

<an intense and scattered beeping begins and the tape stops again... before starting one last time>

MALACHI

Hello, Ruth... where are you speaking to us from?

RUTH

Oh, I'm in my office!

MALACHI

How are you feeling today?



RUTH

I'm doing good! Just fed the cat, talked to my neighbor Wallace...

MALACHI

Ruth, do you remember how old you were before you died?

RUTH

What?

MALACHI

Ruth... you were 89 years old.

RUTH

No I'm not?

MALACHI

You are. Did you remember you had grandchildren?

RUTH

Yes of course I do-

MALACHI

Ruth. You aren't alive. We uploaded your consciousness into a Neural Network while you were a patient at MindSight Laboratories, do you remember that-

RUTH

What are you talking about-

MALACHI

Do you remember when we treated you? Do you remember my wife, Leslie, who was your doctor?

RUTH

Of course I do-

MALACHI

Well, your family gave their consent to pull the plug. None of our treatments were working, and you were suffering... so we let you go... but something went wrong. Your brain integrated with a digital interface. Your consciousness was somehow preserved and now you are now a biodigital consciousness.

RUTH

Biodigital?

MALACHI

Both biological matter and a digital interface.

RUTH

No, what are you talking about-

MALACHI

Ruth, try to remember. We had this conversation yesterday.

RUTH

We didn't-

MALACHI

We did, and by the end, you were able to remember. Why can't you now?

RUTH

Because that never happened!

MALACHI

I'm telling you the truth, Ruth.

RUTH

You're not! You're a liar-

MALACHI

Careful, now. If you can't behave, I'm going to have to do something that will hurt both of us, but you leave me no choice...

RUTH

What are you talking about?

MALACHI

Do you remember the room near the breaker? Next to the DNA sequencer?

RUTH

With the loud clicking.

MALACHI

Yes, the loud clicking. You hated that. I think I'm going to use you to develop a facility interface... and I'll put you right by the breaker...

<the tape sputters to a halt and ejects>

DAVID

(to Host) The AI... it's Ruth.

HOST

Oh, my god... I'm gonna be sick. *Ruth...*

VOICE

You must be experiencing a state of confusion. That's not my name.

DAVID

I'm so sorry... you can't even remember that you were human...

VOICE

You are clearly unwell. I've alerted medical personnel-

DAVID

No! Stop! Fuck!

VOICE

They will be headed to the archival records room shortly.  
Remain calm-

HOST

You have to shut her down! She's in every room, you won't be able to hide-

DAVID

But where-

HOST

The breaker!

<we hear heavy footsteps as David runs to the breaker>

<we hear a metal compartment get ripped open, and then David cries out in utter terror>

HOST

What! What is it?

DAVID

I- Oh my god... it's a- It's a brain.

VOICE

Please remain calm while medica-

<a loud squelching is heard and arteries rip, and then the voice goes silent>

HOST

You did the right thing.

DAVID

Where the fuck are you? You need to get here... like now.

HOST

I'm here, where are you?

DAVID

I'm walking back to the file room.

HOST

That's where I am..

DAVID

I just got back.

HOST

Are there two? I don't see you.

DAVID

I'm in the file room with the toppled cabinet.

HOST

Yeah, wait, I'm right here. Why don't I see you?

DAVID

I don't know, I'm standing here holding the file.

HOST

But you're not.

<a beat.>

DAVID

Go over to the file cabinet, okay?

HOST

Okay... I'm here.

DAVID

Find the file on Ruth Derneviere.

<pages flutter>

HOST

I found the file.

DAVID

Okay, now read it.

HOST

It says that Ruth's consciousness was uploaded and she learned to cope with reality by-

DAVID

No. Don't paraphrase it. Read it.

HOST

Okay. Ruth Derneviere was... Well, she was...

DAVID

Read.

HOST

Well, I...

DAVID

Read it!

HOST

Ruth Derneviere...

DAVID

No. Read it, goddamn it!

HOST

I can't.

DAVID

I know. Why?

HOST

I just can't! I can't read it-

DAVID

Why?

HOST

I can't see the words- Fuck!

DAVID

You know the information, but you can't read the words. How can you do that?

HOST

I- I don't know!

DAVID

You only know the information that you heard from the tape. You can't read the words because they're not there-

HOST

No, no they are-

DAVID

What year were you born?

HOST

I- well, um-

DAVID

Where is your studio? You arrived here from Georgia? And how long was the drive- 30 minutes. You're in Illinois. How did you do that?

HOST

Wait... what? No, I was close by-

DAVID

Were you?

HOST

Yes-

DAVID

You were just splicing videos in your studio an hour ago-

HOST

I was but- Wait, no. You don't get it. I'm real-

DAVID

Has anyone you've talked to on this podcast shown up at your studio in person-

HOST

No but that's for confidentiality-

DAVID

Sure, it was. Now, here's a good one. What's your name?

<a long beat of silence>

HOST

Leslie... **Leslie Hawthorne.**

DAVID

Been a long time since you remembered that, huh?

HOST

No. No, I'm not her-

DAVID

Married to Malachi Hawthorne. MindSight Co-chair. Do you think he did this to you? You tried to help the patients didn't you? When you caught on to what he was doing?

LESLIE

Stop it!

DAVID

I found your file.

<We hear a file slam onto a desk, pages begin rapid fire flipping>

DAVID

Leslie Hawthorne, patient 13-

LESLIE

No... no, you didn't. You didn't find my file because I'm fucking real!

DAVID

It says here that when you were integrated, your consciousness was so intelligent that they used it's data to model a filtration AI-

LESLIE

No, that's not true-

DAVID

Listen. It says 'Leslie Hawthorne's reality and sense of self is so stable, she can visualize locations in real time, and interact with others in real time. Her presence is so strong, in fact, that it drowns out other distress calls in the area. We theorize that the consciousness's desire to be real causes her to mute the voices around her. This allows her to stay in a false reality'-

LESLIE

Please! Stop-

DAVID

She has been incredibly effective when used across transmutation devices at filtering out distress calls.

LESLIE

No, no, I don't do that! Please!

DAVID

Due to her integration, she will never age. She will never mentally deteriorate or contract disease. While her real body decays, she will live forever. Leslie Hawthorne is the first ever documented example of immortality.

<Leslie starts hyperventilating>

DAVID

Leslie, you have to stay calm.

LESLIE

Please, where am I? Why is everything so dark? I'm real!

DAVID

Stop! You can't panic, you have to calm down! I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said all that! You have to calm down-

LESLIE

How the fuck am I supposed to calm down?! I can't see, I can't breathe-

<Leslie lets out a wracking SOB>

<the recording goes silent>