

INTERFERENCE: Ep. 6, Upload

INT. YOUTUBE CLIP - BLACKWELL SANATORIUM

JACOB

Alright, guys, we're at the infamous Blackwell Sanatorium. I've read a couple articles on this place, and it's supposed to be crawling with ghosts. Apparently, a lot of psychological experiments happened here....

<the sound of creaking floorboards and rustling leaves, the wind howls outside>

JACOB (CONT'D)

I don't really believe in ghosts, but I'm getting the serious creeps right now.

<we hear the crunch of glass>

JACOB (CONT'D)

Aw yuck! A bloody needle? That's not cool. Serious health code violation right here.

INT. YOUTUBE CLIP - WILLOWBROOK MALL

JACOB

What's up explorers? It's me, Jacob here, live from the abandoned Willowbrook Mall. It's supposed to be cursed, but you know me. I ain't scared of no ghosts... or asbestos.

<we hear the sound of Jacobs footsteps echoing through the empty mall>

JACOB (CONT'D)

I found the old food court. Looks like someone left in a hurry, cause I found lo mien.... Wonder if it's still good?

<we hear a sniff and then coughing>

JACOB (CONT'D)

Nah, I'm not that brave.

<a large crash is heard in the background>

JACOB (CONT'D)

That's my cue to split!

INT. HOSTS STUDIO

HOST

Good evening listeners. You're tuning into Interference, where we explore the strange and unexplained phenomena of the January 17th intercepted distress calls. Tonight, we're going to be covering the information gained in an unprompted call in this week... from an unlikely source.

<a clip of Jacob's youtube intro starts to play>

JACOB

Look, exploration is in our DNA. Our ancestors roamed the earth, discovering new lands and pushing boundaries. But now we're glued to our screens. We're meant to be out there, exploring the world, not letting it pass us by. I'm Jacob Gill, but you can call me UrbanQuester. I'm here to show you the hidden corners of the world, *and uncover the places that time forgot.*

<the clip audio ends>

HOST

Meet Jacob Gill, better known online as UrbanQuester, an urban explorer with a knack for finding trouble and a YouTube channel full of hair-raising escapades. He reached out to me last night claiming to have valuable information, but what followed was... well, let's just say it was a wild ride.

INT. HOST'S STUDIO - CALL IN RECORDING

HOST

Hello?

JACOB

Hey, is this the interference podcast?

HOST

Yes, and who do I have the pleasure of speaking with?

JACOB

I'm Jacob, but you might know me as UrbanQuester.

HOST

I don't actually, what is it that you do?

JACOB

I explore abandoned buildings. Sometimes haunted ones. You should check me out on youtube-

HOST

That's interesting, Jacob. But would you mind holding off on social media promotion?

JACOB

Why? This is a podcast, right? We're doing the same thing.

HOST

Well this is an independent journalistic endeavor. It's taking the form of a podcast, but it is a serious investigation into very disturbing subject matter.

JACOB

Well, I consider what I do a journalistic endeavor. I explore real places, sometimes even crime scenes.

HOST

I understand that, but given the nature of the case, and my role as host, I don't want to come off as insensitive.

JACOB

Alright, no self promotion. Got it. So what should I say?

HOST

You can start with your connection to MindSight.

JACOB

Well, I wouldn't really call it a connection. I just live near the lab. It's shut down, but I thought I'd explore it soon, maybe tell you what I find.

HOST

That's a very bad idea, you should not go there. Please just tell me what you already know about it.

JACOB

Well, all the employees left a while ago. It was pretty silent for a bit, but after your podcast started, people starting coming down to check out the fuss, or like, protest the company.

HOST

If they were protesting, does that mean there were still people at the lab?

JACOB

Nah, I don't think so. The place's pretty empty.

HOST

So they were just... protesting an empty building?

JACOB

I guess.

HOST

Does a lot of foot traffic pass by the lab?

JACOB

Not unless people want to see the lab specifically. It's on the edge of town.

HOST

That's strange. If people were moved to action I'd imagine there would be better spots to protest, where people would actually see them.

JACOB

It wasn't meant to be an 'in person' protest. It was meant to look good online, go viral, you know?

HOST

Why not do both? Protest in front of a city hall and take photos for social media-

JACOB

That's not visually appealing, or easy to explain. Pictures go farther than articles-

HOST

It sounds like you were a part of these protests.

JACOB

I wasn't. I just heard about them.

HOST

Why am I only hearing about these protests now if they've been going on for weeks?

JACOB

I don't know. Either the content is being screened or the algorithm just isn't picking it up. Not everything you post goes viral.

HOST

I suppose. But we should get back on track. What else do you know about the lab?

JACOB

It's basically all patient quarters.

HOST

What do you mean? Do you have a copy of the floor plan?

JACOB

Kinda. Seems like most of the rooms are just living spaces... the staff areas aren't marked very well.

HOST

What do you mean 'kinda'? How can you 'kinda' have a floor plan?

JACOB

It's really cleared out-

HOST

Jacob. Answer my question.

JACOB

Like I said 'I kinda have a floor plan'.

HOST

Are you in the lab?

<silence unfolds on the other end of the line>

JACOB

(sheepish)

Yeah. I thought if I tell you what I find you'd agree to plug my youtube, *as like... a journalistic source.*

HOST

Jacob, listen to me, you need to get out of there as fast as possible.

JACOB

No way. This stuff's way too cool to pass up.

HOST

No, it absolutely is not. I will call the police on you for trespassing if that means keeping you safe.

JACOB

Look, I do this every day. The place is abandoned. The worst thing that could happen to me here is I get Asbestos.

HOST

You don't know if they've fully shut down. I talked to Malachi, and he was incredibly evasive. You don't know what you might be getting yourself into.

JACOB

I'm here either way. You can either help me get the evidence you need, or you can sit on the sidelines while I do this alone. I'm going to find the proof either way.

HOST

No, finding proof is *my* job. Yours is to stay safe and stay out of danger.

JACOB

That's bullshit, I'm an investigator too, in my own way. I am here to help, and you're not responsible for me. *Are you really gonna get a better chance than this?*

HOST

...Alright. But if we're going to do this, you need to listen to me. If I give you advice, you need to take it. If I say run you get out of there as fast as possible and don't look back. Do you understand?

JACOB

Yes ma'am. Got it.

HOST

Good. What do you see right now?

JACOB

There are a lot of papers strewn about in the room I'm in.

HOST

Have you read any?

JACOB

Yeah. I've checked a few out. But they're kind of weird.

HOST

How?

JACOB

They don't seem like actually useful or worthwhile.

HOST

Can you give some examples?

JACOB

Sure.

<Jacob picks up a sheet of paper>

JACOB (CONT'D)

Like, this one seems to be compiling data on a new version of the flu vaccine. There's some mumbo jumbo about how the current formula puts people at higher risk of developing Alzheimer's for every sequential year you get it.

HOST

That's just incorrect. Vaccines make the risk of Alzheimer's go down, not up. A lab dedicated to researching this sort of thing should know that.

JACOB

Yeah, I also found a file saying all the patients should be given a good supply of Melatonin, because exhaustion might complicate the symptoms and make it harder to tell if someone's condition has worsened or they've just been unable to get enough sleep.

HOST

I mean, there's a nugget of truth there, but it's mostly just not something MindSight would have much investment in... Jacob, can you send me pictures of some of those papers.

JACOB

Sure, which ones?

HOST

As many as you can.

<We hear the clicking of a phone, and the notification being sent to the Hosts phone>

HOST (CONT'D)

From what you've sent me, it all seems like gibberish. Nothing here is real or useful. At most there's a few papers that aren't wrong but are completely irrelevant to Mindsight's work.

JACOB

Maybe this isn't a MindSight lab at all.

HOST

I mean, that is possible. This could be a decoy they've set up. But at the same time, setting up an entire fake lab, filling it with fake equipment and research, and staffing it with fake scientists would be incredibly costly.

JACOB

So what's option 2?

HOST

Option 2 is that they weren't working on Alzheimer's treatment at all. These papers are there to create the impression that they were to anyone not looking too closely, or without the proper education.

JACOB

So they left the decoy info behind and got away with the real stuff. That's interesting, but seems kinda hardcore...

HOST

I do have one other theory.

JACOB

Lay it on me.

HOST

The lab is still operational.

JACOB

Really?

HOST

It's possible they emptied out the most easily accessible part of the lab and left a bunch of nonsense behind. When Malachi was on my show, he claimed it was an immediate shutdown as soon as they realized the issues their treatment was causing, and that the shutdown was only temporary. This could be an attempt to sell the illusion.

JACOB

They leave fake documents behind so people think that they were in a rush *and* planning on coming back for their research.

HOST

Exactly, but if that's correct, then it means they didn't really abandon that lab.

JACOB

That's awesome.

HOST

No Jacob, it isn't. I need you to get out now.

JACOB

No way, I need to figure out which theory's right.

HOST

We had a deal. You listen to me and get out. I can call the police to do follow up.

JACOB

Yeah, but we don't know for sure that the Lab's abandoned. Besides, didn't the police blow you off last time. I can be your guy on the inside.

HOST

Too many people have already gotten hurt for this. I don't want you to be another one.

JACOB

I promise I'll be careful. Look, I'm gonna go deeper into the lab to see if I can confirm any of your theories.

HOST

Jacob, please listen to me-

JACOB

I am, but just give me a couple minutes here.

<Jacob walks deeper into the lab. As he gets deeper, a slight electric buzzing becomes audible in the background.>

JACOB (CONT'D)
Hey, do you hear that?

HOST
No, I... wait, yes I do, that's-

JACOB
Yep, electrical buzzing. The power's still running in this place.

HOST
Good job. You've proved my theory right. Now get out of there, now.

JACOB
No, wait. I'm gonna check the breaker first.

HOST
Absolutely not.

JACOB
You don't get it, in explorations like this there's always something that seems like a smoking gun, but people always dismiss it. There might be a problem with the breaker, or a device they couldn't turn off. I'm going down to the basement to see if I can find anything.

HOST
No, you don't understand, you are not safe! You know the distress call broadcasts? We think they're coming from this building!

JACOB
Metal.

HOST
Jacob, please just get out of there, I don't want your blood on my hands.

JACOB
You... holy shit.

HOST
What is it?

JACOB
(whispering)
There are people down here. There's a couple people in lab coats and a kid in a wheelchair. They've got him hooked up to something.

HOST

Are there electrical nodes on his head?

JACOB

Yeah.

HOST

It's the NNI. Look, kid you've got a lot of good info, but-

JACOB

Shh, I think I can hear what they're talking about.

SCIENTIST 1

Well, he's sure as hell not going to talk now.

SCIENTIST 2

No... you're wrong. From now on, talking is all he'll be able to do. What do you think it's like?

SCIENTIST 1

What?

SCIENTIST 2

One day, waking up, and your body is just gone, all that's left is your voice... in your own head.

SCIENTIST 1

It's probably hell.

SCIENTIST 2

Do you ever feel guilty for doing this??

SCIENTIST 1

It wasn't our choice. Do you?

SCIENTIST 2

I mean, I think I do. At first, it was an accident. We had no way to know that it would hurt people, that wasn't our fault. But now, we're doing it on purpose, to cover our tracks. Like maybe we deserve a sentence for this-

SCIENTIST 1

No, Malachi deserves a sentence. He was the one keeping this from us. None of us knew what this actually was.

SCIENTIST 2

But we could've done something, like Leslie. When she found out, she actually tried to do something, she tried to help people-

SCIENTIST 1

And look where that got her. Malachi turned her into a fucking vegetable! His own wife!

SCIENTIST 2

What do you think we're doing?! Sure we're not technically killing anyone, no one's technically missing. We can just send their bodies back home to their families, and say "sorry we failed", chalk it all up to dementia or fucking Alzheimer's, but it's murder, Elias! We're just as bad as Malachi.

SCIENTIST 1

They're not dead, they're just trapped somewhere else, mentally. They're fine. In their own way.

SCIENTIST 2

Don't they haunt you? They're scared, most of them don't know where they are... and even worse, some of them still think they're alive, just walking around, going throughout their day.

SCIENTIST 1

Isn't that better? That they don't know? That their subconscious mind has found a way to cope?

SCIENTIST 2

Maybe, but...

<the voices get quieter, they can no longer be understood>

HOST

Are you leaving?

JACOB

No, they're walking away. But they left some files behind, I wanna check them out.

HOST

...Jacob. I really don't think that's a good idea.

<Jacob sneaks over to the files>

JACOB

Holy shit...

HOST

What?

JACOB

The hostages... These are their records. They were all patients.

HOST

Are you sure?

JACOB

Yeah, I... I even found the original tapes for the distress calls.

HOST

Oh my god. Take the files. You have to get out of there, now.

JACOB

No no, listen, holy fucking shit. It wasn't an accident. None of this was an accident. They were trying to create digital - consciousness. They targeted neurodegenerative patients because their minds were already declining...no one would notice if one day they just... **went blank.**

HOST

How do you know-

JACOB

I'm reading about it right now... Oh... Oh my god.

HOST

What?

JACOB

It says 'When a consciousness is uploaded, the mind gets spread thin over the airwaves, and it becomes incoherent... universal. An individual's perception is completely altered and they lose their sense of self. This distorted and stretched perception is why the voices are in distress. They have lost sight of reality... but in some cases, the consciousness is so strong, that it can fabricate an entire reality.

HOST

That's-

JACOB

Oh no...

<Jacob quiets down>

JACOB (CONT'D)

I think they're coming for me.

HOST

Oh my god, Jacob! Run!

<silence>

HOST (CONT'D)

What's going on?

<silence>

HOST (CONT'D)
Please talk to me!

<clip recording ends>

INT. HOST'S STUDIO

HOST
At this point, Jacob went radio silent for about 35 minutes. I couldn't hear anything on the other end. I kept trying to get in contact with him, but he was unreachable. I was a bout to call the police when-

<recording starts again>

JACOB
Lady? Is that you?

HOST
Yes, it's me Jacob! Are you ok?

JACOB
I feel weird. Like my body's gone. It's like there's something else there...

HOST
Oh god, Jacob. Did they find you?

JACOB
I can't remember...

HOST
Did they knock you out? Where are you? What can you see?

JACOB
I can see... Well I feel something. There's a hole. I see light...

JACOB (CONT'D)
Wait, Lady, I think I see something. It feels. It feels like a hole in whatever's holding me.

HOST
Oh my god.

<the Host takes a moment to pull herself together>

HOST (CONT'D)
Jacob, I'm going to do everything in my power to get you out, but I need you to work with me. Can you do that?

JACOB
Yeah. Yeah I think so.

HOST

Ok good. The first thing I need you to do is stay calm. I know this must be overwhelming but if you start breaking down, they will filter you out and we won't be able to talk to each other anymore.

JACOB

Got it, no screaming or crying?

HOST

Exactly. Can you move?

JACOB

I think so.

HOST

I'm going to need you to move towards that hole you felt, and find what it is.

JACOB

All right. I... oh my god, I know what it is.

HOST

What is it?

JACOB

I think it's a way back to my body.

HOST

There's a way back?

JACOB

Yeah, but I don't think I can do it on my own. I need you to do something for me.

HOST

Anything, what do you need me to do?!

JACOB

I- I need you to tell the audience...

HOST

Tell the audience what? Focus, Jacob. Focus on the sound of my voice.

JACOB

I need you to tell the audience... to subscribe to UrbanQuester on youtube and go to patreon.com/UrbanQ to see more awesome stuff like this!

<silence>

JACOB (CONT'D)

Hey, Lady? You good.

HOST

What is wrong with you?

JACOB

What do you mean?

HOST

I mean, WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU?! This is a serious situation, people are going missing, neurodegenerative patients are being exploited as resources for some insane man's idea of progress. You could have died and you're treating this all like one big joke! Do you have any empathy for the things that people are suffering through right now?!

JACOB

Yeah, I read the files.

HOST

Oh, so those were real? They weren't just some other thing you made up for your youtube video?

JACOB

Of course they were. I know this is serious, I just thought a bit would lighten the mood.

HOST

This is the most ridiculous example of Journalistic Malpractice I've ever heard of. If you tried this with an actual news outlet you'd be blacklisted for life because you're not a real investigator. You're just some kid trying to get famous off of fake tragedies, and when that didn't work you tried to use a real one.

JACOB

I'm sorry, I just thought-

HOST

No you didn't. You didn't think at all before you did any of this-

JACOB

I'll send you copies of the files I found, I promise I didn't mean anything. I just-

<the sound of a door slamming open. Something crashes to the floor. Jacob screams>

HOST

Do you honestly think this is a good time for another bit?

<silence>

HOST (CONT'D)

Jacob, I know you're there.

<the line goes dead>

HOST (CONT'D)

He hung up. Well that was an unusually frustrating episode of Interference. I apologize profusely for any mental harm Jacob's stunt caused you, and for any disrespect he has shown to the families of people impacted by these events. If he sends any files or attempts to get back in contact with me, I might add that back in as an addendum, but otherwise, we may have to throw out much of what we learned in this episode. I'd like to thank you for your investment in this ongoing story and apologize for these complications.

INT. HOSTS HOME

JACOB

Lady? Are you there?

HOST

I am. Just give me a moment. For anyone listening, this is an addendum I will be editing in. It has been 30 minutes since Jacob originally hung up. So Jacob, do you have anything relevant to say?

JACOB

Yeah, sorry, I just... I am sorry about the bit, I just. Lady, do you know where I am?

HOST

I would hope back home.

JACOB

I- I don't think I am.

HOST

Kid, don't apologize for something if you aren't actually sorry, and especially don't apologize while doing the thing you're apologizing for.

JACOB

Do it again? No I'm not... I'm still alive! I know I am.

HOST

That's right Jacob. You're alive and a lot of other people aren't. You have a chance to make this better and you didn't.

JACOB

Please, lady, please help me! I promise I'll stop! I don't know where I am-

HOST

If you're not going to take this seriously, I'm ending the interview.

JACOB

I'm sorry, I never wanted to hurt anyone. I just wanted to be someone, I wanted to prove that I existed, that I mattered. I just- **I just wanted people to like me.**

<Jacob begins sobbing. The line goes dead>