

## INTERFERENCE, Ep. 1

<a series of news reports and intercepted distress calls>

<between each snippet of audio, we hear a click and static, as if someone is changing the channel>

VICTIM

I can't see, they took my eyes-

VICTIM 2

Where is everyone? I can still hear them...

REPORTER 1

This appears to be a massive hostage situation. Hundreds of distress calls are intercepting the radio stations-

REPORTER 3

I'm here with Jamie Ford, who claims she heard her daughter's voice on 93.5.

REPORTER 4

The US government has just deployed a task force to find the hostages. As of right now, the transmissions can't be traced to any location-

HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR

As a Hostage Negotiator, the one thing I can't understand is why the perpetrator would be broadcasting the voices without stating any demands-

<the reporters voices start rapidly speeding up, overlapping each other, growing to a crescendo as a suspenseful electronic theme starts>

HOST

Welcome, and thank you for joining us for the very first episode of "Interference", a podcast where we explore the strange and unexpected phenomenon of the January 17th distress calls.

<static buzzes in and out as various news reports blare over each other>

REPORTER 1

Reports continue to flood in from Tokyo...

REPORTER 2

Authorities are urging calm as they investigate the origins of these mysterious signals...

REPORTER 3

Families anxiously await news of their loved ones as rumors of hostages and kidnappings spread like wildfire...

HOST

From New York to Tokyo, from London to Sydney, people listened in horror as voices cried out from the airwaves, pleading for salvation, for rescue, for deliverance from some unseen terror. Governments mobilized task forces, deployed special units, and launched international investigations in a desperate bid to locate the source of the distress calls.

<static intensifies>

HOST

But as days turned into weeks, and the search efforts yielded no results, a chilling realization began to dawn: **the voices on the radio were coming from nowhere.**

<increasingly ominous music that suddenly cuts to silence>

HOST

After months of chaos, with individuals demanding answers and the public growing more paranoid by the day, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) led the charge to get the transmissions under control. Initially, it was treated as a potential breach of national security. The Department of Homeland Security, and Federal Emergency Management Agency launched investigations, suspecting everything from a terrorist attack to mass cyber-hacking.

<furious typing on a computer>

HOST

International agencies, like Interpol and Japan's National Police Agency, were also pulled into the mix, each pursuing their own theories about the origins of the distress calls. Eventually, the National Security Agency (NSA) was brought in to analyze the intercepted signals for any signs of foreign tampering or espionage.. According to leaked reports, the NSA detected no signs of encryption, signal interference, or spoofing—just voices, seemingly broadcast from nowhere.

HOST

At this point, government officials had to make a decision: keep funding a case with no leads, or cut their losses and reframe the narrative. With no solid evidence of a threat, the FCC issued an official statement in April, downplaying the situation as a sophisticated scheme orchestrated by hackers. The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) helped develop an AI-driven filter system, designed to block the rogue transmissions before they could reach public airwaves. **In essence, they hit "mute."**

<static from a recording>

HOST

Here's an official statement from Adam Harrison, Director of Communications at the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), explaining the governments stance on the January 17th transmissions.

ADAM HARRISON

Good evening, I'd like to take this opportunity to address the recent concerns regarding the unexplained transmissions that have disrupted radio and communication systems worldwide. After thorough investigation, we have found no evidence to suggest that these broadcasts are linked to any credible threat. To safeguard the public from further disruption and minimize unwarranted alarm, we have implemented an advanced AI-based filtration system. This system ensures that future unauthorized transmissions will be intercepted before they reach public airwaves.

<a voice calls out in the crowd, protesting, but they are quickly drowned out>

ADAM HARRISON

I want to emphasize that while we take any interference in our communications infrastructure seriously, we currently have no reason to believe these broadcasts constitute a threat to national security. Thank you for your time.

HOST

Despite the government's official statements, many believe the transmissions are part of a deliberate cover-up. In the weeks following the initial broadcasts, concerned individuals began recording and sharing the intercepted signals, determined to preserve what they saw as evidence. These recordings are now part of a growing collection known as the **Interference Archive** – a decentralized online repository where citizens compile, analyze, and share audio related to the January 17th event. All clips you are about to hear are credited to the archive:

OLD MAN

Oh no... please, no...

YOUNG GIRL

I can't see... why can't I see. I just wanna go home...

WOMAN (WHISPERING)

I can hear you...why can't I see you?

WOMAN 2

What is this place? Can anyone hear me?

OLD MAN

I can't breathe! Please, just get me out of here!

YOUNG MAN

Shut up! Everyone just fucking shut up!

<the calls crackle away into a low thrum>

HOST

These are just some of the inter-

AUTOTUNE VOICE

(whisper)

**Don't be a sick fuck.**

HOST

(terrified)

What?

<clip background static ends, fading into silence>

HOST

Oh... autopay was on...

<host breathes heavily, she takes a minute to compose herself>

HOST

Anyways, many people have taken this investigation into their own hands. A number of theories have surfaced on the internet, but before we get into those, we are going to examine the theory that the government is currently standing behind: the Hoax Theory. This theory postulates that these distress calls are nothing more than an elaborate ruse orchestrated by an individual or group, possibly from the comfort of their own basement, to gain publicity. While it may sound far-fetched, there are some curious breadcrumbs that seem to point in that direction. Here are some of the distress calls that may serve as evidence...

CALL 1

I just wanna die...

CALL 2

I can't see anything... where are the lights?

CALL 3

My body burns, I don't know what happened to my skin...

HOST

Now, lets listen to those same distress calls, but repitched...

CALL 1

I just wanna die...

CALL 2

I can't see anything... where are the lights?

CALL 3

My body burns, I don't know what happened to my skin...

HOST

See? It's the same voice. Another breadcrumb that raises suspicions about the credence of the distress calls are the background noises. Let's listen to a few examples...

CALL 1

They did this to us... and they won't admit it...

<faint clicking and distant sirens>

CALL 2

Why is everyone so fucking loud?

<faint clicking and footsteps>

CALL 3

I need water...

<faint clicking and running water>

HOST

The faint clicking sound can be heard in at least seven recorded distress calls, which lends credence to the hoax theory. Now, to shed some light onto the subject, I've invited Melanie Swarts, a Forensic Audio Examiner, to join us and offer her expertise. Hello Melanie, could you please explain to our listeners what you do for a living?

MELANIE

Certainly. I specialize in using scientific techniques to analyze audio recordings for legal and investigative purposes. This involves tasks such as identifying tampering or determining the authenticity of recordings.

HOST

With your expertise in audio examination, what's your take on the Hoax theory that the Government is currently standing by?

MELANIE

I think it's politically motivated. From what I've observed, I don't believe these clips have been digitally manipulated.

HOST

What evidence led you to that conclusion?

MELANIE

The slight pitch variations suggest issues with transmission rather than deliberate tampering. It's not outlandish to assume that one hostage recorded multiple distress calls. Additionally, the recurring background noises could indeed indicate that the hostages are in the same location, lending credence to the authenticity of their distress calls.

HOST

With that assessment, do you believe that this is part of a massive hostage situation?

MELANIE

It's difficult to say. While there's evidence supporting that hypothesis, the distress calls themselves present a unique and unsettling picture that I hesitate to draw any conclusions on.

HOST

Would you elaborate on what is particularly unsettling about the distress calls?

MELANIE

Well, the victims seem to be heavily affected, with slurred speech and nonsensical notions indicating possible drug influence. Some claim they can't feel their bodies or their skin. I haven't seen anything like it before, and because of this, I can't in good conscience make any kind of conclusion without serious doubt.

HOST

Well, Melanie, your insights have been invaluable. Thank you so much for taking the time to join us today and share your expertise with our listeners.

MELANIE

It's been my pleasure. Thank you for having me on the podcast.

<end of call beep>

HOST

Now, Melanie isn't the only expert we're going to be talking to tonight. I'd like to introduce Owen Clarke, a Hostage Negotiator. Owen, thank you for coming onto the podcast.

OWEN

Of course, I'm grateful to be here.

HOST

Would you mind telling the listeners a bit about what you do for a living?

OWEN

Of course. I'm a hostage negotiator, which means I communicate with individuals in crisis situations in order to de-escalate and bring about a peaceful resolution.

HOST

How long have you been a hostage negotiator?

OWEN

In June, it will be seven years.

HOST

Wow, seven years, that's impressive. When you're first given a case, how do you begin breaking it down?

OWEN

Typically, I start by gathering as much information as possible about the situation. This might involve reviewing case files, speaking with witnesses or family members, or consulting with other members of law enforcement.

HOST

What are the next steps?

OWEN

Well, once I have a clear understanding of the situation, I'll begin the negotiation process, which often involves establishing a line of communication with the individual in crisis and trying to establish rapport and build trust. Then I see if the perpetrator has any demands, and if we can plausibly meet them to get hostages to safety.

HOST

Now, you just spoke about demands. If I can remember correctly, you had something interesting to say regarding the January 17th hostage situation. Would you mind if I played that clip for the listeners?

OWEN

Of course.

<background static starts as an audio clip of Owen begins>

REPORTER 1

So you've made it very clear that this situation is abnormal for a hostage situation, why is that?

OWEN

Typically, when hostages are taken, it's in exchange for something: a ransom, political demands, or some other form of leverage. But in this case, we're not seeing any demands being made.

<the audio clip ends>

HOST

What could that mean?

OWEN

The situation presents two possibilities: either it's an elaborate publicity stunt, or it's a hostage situation that doesn't follow any of the typical patterns. If anything, the transmissions seem unscripted, almost accidental.

HOST

I've heard reports suggesting that the hostages' mental faculties don't seem to be intact. Can you elaborate on that?

OWEN

Yes, that's correct. It's one of the most troubling aspects of this case. While we initially suspected that drugs might be involved, our investigations haven't uncovered any evidence to support that theory. Instead, what we're seeing is a deterioration in the hostages' cognitive abilities.

HOST

That's certainly concerning. Do you have any theories as to what might be causing this decline?

OWEN

At this point, we're considering all possibilities. It's possible that they've been exposed to some harmful substance or gas that's affecting their mental state. Another theory is that they may be suffering from an underlying illness or condition that's exacerbating their symptoms. Whatever the cause, it's clear that something is seriously amiss here.

HOST

I'm sure that makes your job all the more difficult, as usually, the hostages are lucid enough to provide clues and insights into their location.

OWEN

Absolutely. Usually, we can glean valuable information from discreet hints the hostages provide us with, but none of the hostages seem to be aware of where they are, or even who they are. It makes it much more difficult to establish a line of communication and negotiate effectively.

HOST

Have you been able to make contact with any of the hostages?



OWEN

Only once, and we're still unsure if it was a prank transmission.

HOST

Given all these developments, do you believe in the hoax theory that the government is currently standing by?

OWEN

As of right now, it's the most plausible option. I can't think of any reasonable motive for a group to cause such widespread panic, but it makes a lot more sense than this being a legitimate hostage situation.

HOST

Well, thank you so much, Owen. Your insights have been invaluable. I hope to have you back again sometime.

OWEN

Yeah, I'd love to come back. Have a great night!

<call ends with a beep>

<gentle electronic music begins>

HOST

So, where does this leave us? The government maintains its position, filtering out the signals to avoid public disturbance, but the authenticity of the distress calls seem clear. Are we soon going to discover that we have been filtering out genuine distress calls? Turning a blind eye to those in need?

<in the background, indecipherable calls for help grow to a crescendo>

HOST

This is the end of today's segment, but the search for truth continues. Thank you for tuning in to Interference, where we unravel the mysteries that others overlook. Until next time, stay critical, stay curious, and stay tuned.

<suspenseful electronic outro music grows to a crescendo before suddenly being interrupted>

HOST

I'm recording this in post because there have been two interesting developments. Just moments ago, Melanie called me wishing to retract her statement. She believes the audio has been tampered with.

MELANIE

So, I listened to the distress calls again, and I wanted to apologize. I've made a mistake...

<breathing in the background, and a subtle clicking>

MELANIE

I reanalyzed the voices, and the vocal pitching is a result of editing, not transmission. These are fake distress calls.

HOST

The second development is a bit more interesting, and directly contradicts what Melanie is claiming. I received a phone call from an anonymous caller, claiming to have valuable information...

CALLER

I recognize that clicking sound... It's the first prototype of a DNA sequencer, they still have it on display.

HOST

She then sent me a video clip from a Science Expo and MindSight Laboratories. In the clip, Malachi Hawthorne, Neuroscience Department Chair, gives a touching speech about their goal of improving the longevity of those with neurodegenerative diseases: Alzheimer's, Dementia, Huntington's Disease, MS etc.

<clip audio begins, static purrs in the background>

DR. MALACHI

I am deeply honored to share with you our profound commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and compassion in the field of neuroscience.

<we hear chatter and clapping>

DR. MALACHI

At MindSight, our mission is guided by a simple yet profound aspiration: to bring healing to those affected by neurodegenerative diseases. With every discovery, we strive to illuminate the path towards a future where dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's are but distant memories, replaced by moments of clarity, connection, and joy.

<in the background, we hear a faint high-pitched clicking, whoever is holding the camera moves closer to the stage and the clicking gets more pronounced, almost deafening>

DR. MALACHI

Our approach is rooted in a deep reverence for the human spirit and a profound respect for the resilience of the human mind.

(MORE)

DR. MALACHI (CONT'D)

Through the lens of science, we seek not only to understand the intricacies of neurodegeneration but also to honor the inherent dignity and worth of every individual affected by these conditions.

HOST

The caller and I discussed the clips content and she agreed that her statements could be released.

<an audio recording of their call begins>

HOST

Can you tell us more about this DNA sequencer and why it's significant?

CALLER

Yes, one of the early prototypes of a DNA sequencer is displayed in the lobby of MindSight Labs, where they hold their Expos.

HOST

Was MindSight known for developing the first DNA sequencer?

CALLER

Interestingly enough, no. MindSight didn't develop this DNA sequencer.

HOST

Who did?

CALLER

They acquired it from a competitor. The facility itself is... quite the spectacle. It feels more like a high-tech museum than a treatment center.

HOST

What do you mean by that?

CALLER

There's a feeling of showmanship to the place. It's hard to describe exactly, but when I walked in, I was immediately surrounded by interactive displays of all their latest breakthroughs.

HOST

That's a lot.

CALLER

Yeah, the whole setup just felt intense. You got the sense that every employee genuinely believed that they were working at some medical haven.

HOST

At this point, I was starting to wonder if she was leading me down a dead end. I had heard the faint clicking in the background in the expo clip, and it was similar to the distress calls, but it didn't seem conclusive. I still wasn't sure this was a legitimate lead. I sent the clip over to my editor friend, Zachary, and he layered the two clips over each other. Here is the final result:

<we hear both clips, the DNA sequencer layered over the clicking in the distress calls: **they are identical.**>