

Interference Episode 2

<a series of news reports>

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

REPORTER 1

As authorities investigate the distress signals, speculation of **psychological warfare** has begun to spread-

POLITICAL ANALYST

You see, this is how it's done. You say, hey, look over here, keep looking over here, and all the while, you don't notice what they're doing right under your nose-

REPORTER 2

We like to think that psychological operations ended with the cold war, but the reality is they are very much alive in today's geopolitical landsc-

CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

While we're frantically searching for these hostages, the truth is that all of our resources are being diverted-

REPORTER 3

60% of Americans feel uncertain about news from outlets, attributing their concerns to foreign interference-

CIVILIAN

No one knows if the media is lying to us anymore-

REPORTER 2

It could very well be a false lead, covering up foreign operations-

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

HOST

Good evening listeners, you're tuning into "*Interference*" where we explore the strange and unexplained phenomenon of the January 17th distress calls. Today, we turn our theories to the complex and often murky realm of foreign affairs, where power plays, strategic manipulation, and psychological warfare intertwine. Later in the episode, we'll also be speaking with our anonymous caller from the last episode to gain further insights into this unfolding mystery.

<Sound of static crackling>

HOST

Tonight, we're pleased to welcome Dr. Lila Sinclair, an expert in international relations. Thank you for being here, Dr. Sinclair.

DR. SINCLAIR

Thank you for having me.

HOST

So you've been in your current role for six years, is that correct?

DR. SINCLAIR

It'll be seven in two months.

HOST

Wow, that's impressive. What does a typical day look like for you in your role?

DR. SINCLAIR

A day in my job can vary widely, but it often starts with reviewing intelligence reports and analyzing data related to current geopolitical events. I spend a lot of my time assessing the impact of psychological operations on public perception, which includes monitoring media narratives and social media trends.

HOST

I can only imagine that monitoring for psychological warfare has become significantly more challenging in today's digital landscape.

DR. SINCLAIR

It has. With the prevalence of evolving technology, it's become more crucial than ever to stay ahead of emerging tactics.

HOST

Many listeners are curious about the recent distress calls and the theories surrounding them. Do you think Psychological Warfare could play a role in these distress calls?

DR. SINCLAIR

At first glance, yes. The sheer volume of misinformation surrounding these calls suggests a potential foreign distraction motive.

HOST

How does that theory stand up against further research?

DR. SINCLAIR

Initially, the theory seemed compelling, but upon further research, these distress calls do not appear to be politically motivated, at least by a foreign body.

HOST

What brought you to that conclusion?

DR. SINCLAIR

Well, whenever I'm trying to identify foreign influence in media, I typically start by comparing the evidence with known historical examples.

HOST

What historical examples have proven most helpful in this analysis?

DR. SINCLAIR

The Operation Mockingbird initiative during the cold war. In this operation, the CIA infiltrated and influenced major news organizations to disseminate propaganda that aligned with U.S. interest. These operations were highly coordinated, and **highly motivated**. Neither of which appear to be the case with the distress calls. If these calls were intended to manipulate or sway public opinion, they would exhibit a high level of organization and convey a clear narrative. Instead, the public is left in a state of confusion. Uncertainty is not the goal of psychological warfare.

HOST

Do you think this confusion could be due to the use of new techniques that have not been previously utilized? Maybe they are taking a subtler approach to avoid detection?

DR. SINCLAIR

My team has explored the evolving nature of influence techniques, and we see that, even in recent times, these methods are highly motivated. A prime example is the modern cyber warfare campaigns, such as Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. The use of social media bots to spread disinformation was deliberate and followed a clear strategy aimed at influencing voter sentiment. These operations involved sophisticated planning and execution, targeting specific demographics with tailored messages.

HOST

You said earlier that the distress calls didn't appear to be politically motivated, *at least by a foreign body*. Do you think then that this could be a domestic influence then?

DR. SINCLAIR

If it is politically motivated at all, I think it would have to be, but my assertion is that this was orchestrated by a small disorganized group.

HOST

What insights can you provide regarding the nature of this group?

DR. SINCLAIR

I would say this is a private organization, internally motivated. Likely not directly politically motivated, but rather driven by their own self-interests.

HOST

What kinds of motivations might they have?

DR. SINCLAIR

Unfortunately, that is where my expertise ends. Financial gain is a common one? Perhaps distraction from a scandal? But that's all I've got.

HOST

Well, thank you so much, Lila. Your expertise has been invaluable.

DR. SINCLAIR

Absolutely, thank you for having me. I look forward to listening to the rest of the podcast and hearing what you uncover.

HOST

Thank you, have a great night.

<call ends>

HOST

Now, we're introducing Natalie Reynolds, a seasoned nurse and a victim of MindSight Laboratories, currently engaged in a legal battle with the organization following the tragic loss of a loved one due to medical malpractice. In our last episode, we briefly discussed the similarities between the DNA sequencer's clicking sound and the noises present in the distress calls. This time, we'll dive deeper into Natalie's experiences at MindSight, as well as the stories of other patients affected by the facility's practices.

<the static of a call flickers to life>

HOST

Hi, Natalie. We appreciate you joining us today.

NATALIE

Thank you for having me. I'm glad to be here and share my story.

HOST

So Natalie, last episode, you seemed to know a lot about MindSight Labs. What's your personal experience with them?

NATALIE

When my father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, my brother, who lived nearby, chose MindSight as his treatment facility. Without consulting me, mind you.

HOST

As a nurse, I'm sure that must've bothered you.

NATALIE

It did. He didn't have the expertise to choose a reputable facility, and I think he was blinded by all the showmanship.

HOST

You mentioned the showmanship last episode, particularly that all the employees seemed to think they were working at some kind of medical haven, what gave you that impression?

NATALIE

Well, the employees lived on site. They weren't allowed to have their own apartments.

HOST

Really? That is strange. Did the patients live there too?

NATALIE

Yes, it was mandatory.

HOST

Why?

NATALIE

They said the environment needed to be strictly controlled for the patients to achieve a full recovery.

HOST

That's quite a commitment.

NATALIE

It is. On the one hand, they clearly had a commitment to building a sense of community, which in theory, is great.

HOST

What do you mean exactly? How did they build a sense of community?

NATALIE

They held daily group activities, meditation sessions, art therapy, and the doctors joined them in all these activities. It was designed to make everyone feel connected and supported.

HOST

That sounds... almost nice?

NATALIE

Yeah, like I said, in theory great. But it was also strange. The patients were encouraged to open up emotionally with the doctors and there was a focus on holistic and alternative treatments.

HOST

Interesting, what kinds of roles did the doctors take on with the patients?

NATALIE

The doctors were almost like life coaches. They'd sit in on therapy sessions, sit with the patients during meditation.

HOST

Do you believe MindSight lacked genuine medical treatment, or do you think they just offered holistic solutions alongside conventional medicine?

NATALIE

Oh, they definitely offered gene therapy and other legitimate treatments; it wasn't all unconventional. I think that's what made it particularly tricky, it was hard to tell what was quackery and what wasn't.

HOST

Do you think MindSight made it easy for someone with no medical knowledge to be swayed?

NATALIE

I do, yeah. My brother has never been particularly good at practical decision-making, but he wasn't the only one to buy into it.

HOST

Who else bought into it?

NATALIE

My father. He truly thought they would be able to save him.

HOST

I imagine that would be compelling, given such a difficult diagnosis.

NATALIE

Yeah, it was. I saw my father as a very logical man, but when you're faced with something like that, it's easy to just believe what you want to believe.

HOST

He wanted to believe that they could cure him, but there is no cure for neurodegenerative diseases, right?

NATALIE

That's correct. There are treatments that slow down the mental decline, and there are medicines that make the symptoms easier to live with, but there is no cure.

HOST

We talked a lot about this last episode, but I'm more curious about the employees. Were there any you knew personally? Any I could get in contact with?

NATALIE

Well, the Head Psychologist, for one.

HOST

What was his name?

NATALIE

Her name.

HOST

I'm sorry. My bad.

NATALIE

Her name was Sarah Harper. I actually already reached out to her, for your sake.

HOST

You already reached out to her?

NATALIE

Sarah was one of the witnesses who testified against MindSight during my hearing.

HOST

But she was also an employee at the time, right?

NATALIE

No, she had actually left the organization some time before that.

HOST

Do you know why she decided to leave?

NATALIE

It was due to patient mistreatment. But she really is the best person to explain that.

HOST (V.O.)

Natalie and I had a heartfelt conversation, and while her experiences are incredibly valuable, I could sense how much this has affected her, and I wanted to be mindful of that. With that in mind, I decided to move forward to my conversation with Sarah Harper.

(MORE)

HOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As another key witness who testified against MindSight, Sarah has deep insights into the organization, and I was eager to hear her perspective. Here are some clips from our call:

<we start in the middle of the call>

SARAH

Just letting you know now, I have a client in about 15 minutes.

HOST

That's perfectly fine. We can make use of the time we have. So you were hired on at MindSight as Head Psychologist, is that correct?

SARAH

Yes, that's correct. Malachi hired me as their "Head Psychologist," despite only ever being a life coach.

HOST

That's quite a leap. How did that happen?

SARAH

I initially came in hoping to be hired as a therapist, but during our conversation, he recognized my ability to connect with people. He believed I had the potential for a higher role, and I ended up leaving with a promotion and a pay raise. I thought he saw something in me.

HOST

Was there anyone under you who was underqualified?

SARAH

Yes. Almost all my subordinates, meant to be child psychologists, therapists, mental health professionals, were yoga teachers, biking instructors, school teachers. I think he knew he was giving us positions and titles we wouldn't have anywhere else...

HOST

To keep you from leaving.

SARAH

Yes.

HOST

In 2021, you quit, correct?

SARAH

Yes.

HOST

What made you quit?

SARAH

I found out why he hired me.

HOST

Why did he hire you?

SARAH

After an incident, Malachi had to be supervised around all his patients.

HOST

You were hired to supervise him?

SARAH

Yes, and look after the psychological health of all the patients. I was meant to be looking for signs of sexual abuse, but I was a life coach. I didn't know how to spot that, and he knew it. I was underqualified and I couldn't protect them, so I quit.

HOST

What incident happened to make Malachi have to be supervised?

SARAH

All of the women patients started shaving their heads. Supposedly to get Malachi to leave them alone...

HOST

That's awful, I'm so sorry. Were they scared of him?

SARAH

I think they were. He was weird to me, and I'm fully capable and mentally well. People like that are different around sickness...

HOST

What do you mean by "people like that"?

SARAH

I mean some people go into the medical field to help people, and some people go into the field because they get to be around weak people...

HOST

That's deeply disturbing...

SARAH

It was. Also, about the DNA sequencer—it's definitely the sound you hear in the background of those distress calls.

HOST

Are you certain?

SARAH

I'm certain. I was around it every day for three years.

HOST

If the distress calls are in fact being broadcast from MindSight, then what does that mean for their patients? Are they being harmed?

SARAH

I can't say for certain. My focus was solely on mental health, not physical health. While I was aware of some of the patients' experiences, I wasn't involved in their medical care. I do, however, trust Natalie.

HOST

From what you know of MindSight, do you think they *could have* caused harm to their patients?

SARAH

I think Malachi could have.

<in the background of Sarah's audio, we hear a **knock, knock, knock**>

SARAH

My client is here, can I finish this another time?

HOST

Yes, of course. Thank you for your time.

<call ends>

HOST

After my conversation with Sarah, I wanted to make a statement about the direction of the podcast. Originally, I intended for this podcast to be a deep dive into seven different theories regarding the January 17th distress calls... but as you've probably noticed, MindSight keeps coming up in all of my interviews and investigations. I keep receiving calls and tips, and stories of mistreatment, and I cannot in good conscience let it go uninvestigated. I'm choosing to further pursue this lead...

<Suspenseful theme begins and transitions into another audio clip>

HOST

(under her breath)

I'm recording from my car...

<tires roll slowly, kicking up asphalt>

HOST

I just drove home from the studio... and there's a man in my driveway... I'm parked around the corner.

<a car door slams, an engine revs>

HOST

(whispering)

He's gone now...

<footsteps, the grating sound of gravel>

<a box cutter SLICING. A box being *RIPPED* open. And then a SCREAM. There's yelling, but it's so loud that it's all MUFFLED and DISTORTED.>