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**ARCHIVIST:**

Statement of Abner Ernest, regarding a door. Original statement given 8th of June, 2014. Audio recording by Jonathan Sims, Head Archivist of the Magnus Institute, London.

Statement begins.

**ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT):**

The funeral of course is not what I am here to talk to you about. This... institution does not seem like the type to give grief counseling. That was where I first saw *it* though, so it seems like an apt enough place to begin.

The flowers on the coffin were fitting. Hydrangeas, I believe. She used to love hydrangeas in her garden back home, and she used to love the sea, so it was a very fitting ceremony, and a very fitting place to be laid to rest. I remember there being a few too many seagulls for my liking congregating by the walls of the stone pier within walking distance– why they were not to my liking at the time I cannot recall, but I have thought to myself since it was because of how quiet they were. Not a screech nor chirp disturbed the black-clad people crowding around the coffin, and I right then thought that was fitting too, but now I suppose those birds knew something we could not.

Isn't that funny? The things the human mind can assume in the harsh light of hindsight are often so illogical, and yet, if something awful or happy enough is beside them, you accept that they are absolutely correct. I don't even know if what I saw was real. I don't even know if I decided to take a walk after the service, over to that damned pier, or if I sat down on a bollard in the shade of the wall intending to watch the sun soaked sea. I don't *know* if I turned around to see a wooden door, yellow paint peeling, on the worn stone wall behind me. But if any of my memories are correct, you have to understand that that door could not have been there. It would have opened to a sheer drop, straight onto the sharp seaweed-covered rocks that preceded the sea. When it did open, what it opened to is not as clear as the utter dread that I felt viewing that horrible door that could not be there, or the backwards steps I took almost without thinking. It was not a sheer drop.

Behind me, however, was still the edge of the pier. A few friends of hers fished me out of the bay about two minutes later. I don't remember much of that except for

the cold and the worried voices of the mutual acquaintances that found me incomprehensible and soaking wet. They never said what they thought I was trying to do, but I could see it in the way there was always one of our friends with me for the rest of the trip. I didn't mind it at the time. It felt safer than being alone with the thought of that door.

I tried to convince myself that what I saw wasn't real. Very adamantly, I might add. I forced myself to go back to that pier, past the leftover flower petals, and saw that there was nothing there. There never had been. Of course there never had been, because a door does not just appear out of nowhere in a place where it shouldn't be and then subsequently disappear. That is a preposterous notion and an even more preposterous event to have witnessed. But the dread, that primal, animal fear— it wouldn't leave me. I could *feel* it, beneath all the grief of what I had been there to attend in the first place. It hadn't stopped. I knew it wasn't over then, like a child knows that the monster under the bed is going to reach out and grab their ankle at any second.

It waited until I had suffered through the hour long flight and 3 hour delay to try to drag me under with it again. I really shouldn't have been as tired as I was for that short flight, but a combination of my typical terrible rest patterns, grief, and a solemn vow to my sluggish brain that I would sleep in the car had left me running on about 2 hours of sleep to the 4 hours I had already spent in that godforsaken airport.

I had flown into London Heathrow from Dublin Airport— trading one immeasurably crowded airport for another as it were— and I was fixing my appearance in the bathroom mirror halfheartedly. Have you been in an airport bathroom before? It sounds like something so mundane, so unassuming, but in practice it's always a little unnerving. The mirror on one side of the room often faces directly into the mirror on the other, creating what seems to be an endless hole, filled with endless visions of yourself. There is no end to it as far as you can see, but you simply fix your hair, your clothes, while pretending that you don't think you saw one of those endless yous move in a way you certainly did not.

There was no one else in the bathroom, and I don't remember thinking that was strange at the time.

I finished my various straightenings of clothes and hair fairly quickly and made to get out of the bathroom and out to where I was being picked up outside the airport. I walked across the grimy tile floors to the open hallway exit, only to find that the exit was no longer an open hallway. The exit was a simple, unassuming door, incongruent with the tiles that surrounded it. Its peeling yellow paint taunted me as

I frantically looked around, hoping that I had just missed the exit in my sleepless haze. I had not. The exit was no longer there, or perhaps it was; but either way, all that I could see was that godforsaken door. I am not ashamed to admit that I began to cry. With all of the effort that I put into hurling this door out of my mind, it followed me here, and now I did not see a way I could escape it. I braced myself against the bathroom counter and dragged myself to my feet, catching a glimpse of the mirror in the process.

What I saw in that mirror cannot be described. Even if my eyes could focus on it, even if it existed at all, it cannot be translated through the conventions of silly human speech. If I could try my best to though... where the door should be reflected in the mirror, there was a person. No. Not a person. Personlike?

There was a thing where the door should be. No... that's not right either.

There was a person that was completely un-person-like where the door was. It was limp and thin, but its hands— it didn't have hands. But its hands were distended, full of bones and muscles and nothing that became something and then unbecame within the second of becoming. It moved, once, twice, a thousand times, and it was like watching a horror movie of something that should not be through rippling water. Its straw coloured hair was present in every facet of the infinite mirrors created by the doubled reflection, but it was different in each one; in one way or another, in all ways, constantly changing and cut off by the demarcation of each mirror except where it wasn't. It bled into itself, each bled into another, and they were all fully separate in their saturated and horrifying glory. I looked into the mouth of the sea and the city and humanity and all that was not humanity and all that lies and all that tells the awful truths of the world and all that is not of the world, and for a moment that tasted like screeching, bending steel, it looked back at me. I screamed, or perhaps it did, or perhaps it was shattering metal, and it was gone.

My mind was about as held together as oil on the top of a lake. The first sign that it was over for now was the very concerned man who came into the bathroom for a quick pee and found my shaking body on the floor. He apparently asked me if I was alright. I have no memory of him speaking, but I do recall being propped up against the wall as I hyperventilated and murmured disorganized anecdotes I'm sure were extremely concerning. Eventually, my breathing slowed enough that I could convince him I was okay to walk and I stumbled an hour late out of the grubby airport bathroom to my ride.

I'm pretty sure I was still in shock when I got home later that night. You have to understand— it couldn't be real. None of this could be real. I came to that

conclusion while I was sobbing in the fetal position on my bedroom floor, my sleep-deprived brain trying in vain to process what I saw. I still had a few days off work after I got back, and I spent most of that time in my home, trying to pick up the scraps of torn paper that this whole awful thing has transformed my mind into. I tried to sleep; I was intermittently woken by nightmares, but I tried. At the end of those few days I was in a place where I felt I could go back to work, despite all that had happened. I think I desired some sort of normalcy after, a string of logic I could cling to so I could just– go back. I woke up a little before my normal alarm time because of the nightmares, got dressed, and made my way to the door to start my day.

The paint on the wooden door was yellow, peeling in places, and covered all the windows too.

By my count, it trapped me in there for forty-six hours. I screamed at the door, I clawed at the windows that seemed to only be covered in paint from the inside, and I didn't make a chip. The door never opened for me. It wanted to open so badly before, but now that I was willing to suffer whatever was inside instead of this terrified isolation it decided that it would not give me the relief. It could have had me whenever it wanted to, but it does not want to. Toying with me, letting me have the slightest moment of hope before tearing me down? That is what it wants. It wants me to suffer, and it is going to make that happen.

When I finally, finally got outside, my phone was almost immediately in my hand. After a second thought, I realized; who was I going to call? My friends wouldn't believe me; they had enough reason to doubt my clarity of mind given the recent death of my sister. The police couldn't do anything; how could they? You can't exactly arrest a door, even if it stayed real long enough for them to see it. At best they'd fine me for wasting their time. At worst, they'd encourage me to be committed. Maybe I should be spending time in a psychiatric hospital. But– I can't shake it, I can't rationalize it– I know what I saw was real, and I know that it wants me, now. It has all but finished toying with its food.

I heard of this institute through a friend a few years ago. I scoffed at it then; I am an academic, and while these ghost stories were entertaining, I did not believe then that it could be real. Either I am crazy, or this is real. It's not like I'll last much longer either way, so here I am to plead for whatever help you can give. Please get this thing away from me.

**ARCHIVIST:**

Statement ends.

The remains of Abner Ernest were discovered in the Thames on the 19th of June. His body was presumed to have been in the water for two or so days, though it was difficult to tell due to the advanced decomposition and the.. damage to his body. The autopsy report I acquired from Tim revealed severe blunt force trauma consistent with a fall from a great distance, but the area of Greenwich where his body was recovered did not contain tall enough buildings to be consistent with the damage.

Technicians performing the autopsy noted that they were puzzled by the apparent inconsistencies in the body. Although the cause of death was noted to be blunt force trauma, there was damage to the victim's lungs consistent with cases of sand or glass inhalation. Friends of Ernest confirmed that although he had been rather out of touch since he returned from Ireland, he had definitely not been in a sandstorm at any point within the months of June or May, and he was not a glass crafter or hobbyist.

The official ruling was suicide, though there are many friends and family of his who wholeheartedly dispute this claim. A few run a small organization dedicated to reopening his case, and I had Martin get in touch with them last week. In response to being asked why they did not believe that this was a suicide, they said; "The damage dealt to Abner was much too severe to be self inflicted, and we have talked to several investigators who believe this despite the official opinion. Though he was going through a rough patch at that time and may very well have had reason to kill himself, believing that he found a way to jump off a building in London proper and somehow end up in the Thames near Greenwich is preposterous."

Though I am hesitant to believe the more supernatural elements of this case, I do share the opinion that the ruling of suicide on this case is ludicrous. While he may have had severe depression or schizophrenia, the circumstances of his death are definitively unnatural. Perhaps not supernatural, but unnatural all the same.

Sasha reached out to the family once more yesterday, but they declined to comment. Apparently they feel they have said all that can be said.

End recording.

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