**Sir,**

**The team arrived at the Glenn Heights apartment this morning. Entry was not inordinately difficult: installed door bolts could be removed with a modicum of effort. Passersby were deterred by field operative posing as police. The target ‘Michael Rafferty’, however, could not be apprehended as we found no trace of him. Personal effects include laptop as well as a single cell phone found on the floor in the kitchen. Most stored data seems mundane, save for several hundred recorded phone messages. Apparently, the target preferred to use the cell phone as a dictaphone connected to some sort of uploading service. Of particular note are the last few days of messages, which I have taken the liberty of transcribing here.**

*September 24, 09:15*

It’s weird, the sort of things people ignore. Packs of wild dogs roaming the streets. Homeless people who hang around the same corner for months then suddenly disappear. Spatters of blood on walls. Sometimes I despair of humanity: we seem, as a species, not just oblivious but actively in denial of so many things. I suppose it’s comfortable. I wouldn’t know.

Carl did not come home today. I heard his parents argue when I passed their apartment. Spent a brief time eavesdropping. Apparently he’s been doing drugs, and they’re afraid something might have happened to him. It wouldn’t surprise me: kid’s been an idiot for as long as I can remember. From what I hear he and his little asshole friends have graduated from truancy and petty vandalism to actual crimes, now. They tried to extort money from me last week. When I grabbed him, the little fuck keyed my car the next day. Also, as a personal aside, his taste is as awful as it is clichéd, and whoever did the tribal arm sleeve tattoo on his arm was drunk, high, or both.

Still, it’s odd, and I shouldn’t let my distaste guide my actions. I’ll keep this in mind when I make my rounds this evening.

*September 24, 22:11*

Rounds are done. Night was quieter than usual. Earlier traces of blood on walls are gone, and I noticed an unmarked white van on Willow Street. Didn’t see any trace of Carl, but I did meet up with Tom[[1]](#footnote-0) just before I went home. He told me that Carl’s not the only one who’s missing. Apparently Melissa’s disappeared as well. A pity: she always seemed like a smart girl. Apparently she never made it home from school. I guess it confirms my previous suspicion, but it also means that something serious might be going on. I’ll take a look at it tomorrow.

*September 25, 15:26*

I found some of Carl’s friends sitting on a park bench today. Approached them. Could you believe that one of the little fucks actually pulled a knife on me? Assholes. I threw the kid to the ground and took the knife, but he did nick the skin. This neighborhood just gets worse and worse as time goes on.

I did get some answers from the kids, though. Apparently, Carl and Melissa had been an item for some time: they met during a rare period of school attendance. Melissa was spending time with Carl’s little pack of would-be gangers for some time, now. Apparently, they went to the old public school by the riverside for some time alone. That place has been abandoned ever since the Council cut its budget. There were rumors of some sort of scandal, but nothing concrete. I’ll check it out this evening: hopefully, they’re all right - or at least, just being stupid.

*September 26, 17:46*

All right, I just completed my checkup. Brought my flashlight, backpack with bolt cutter and crowbar. I also decided to bring my gun, just in case there’s worse than idiot kids in the building. I’m not sure if I’m overreacting or not, but I guess it never hurts to be cautious.

The school’s name, from what I can get from news sites, was Riverside High. Again, there’s very little known about the scandal, but there may have been something about some kid dying, having fallen into the river and being exposed to pollution. Apparently, the school was failing already, and the Council used the excuse to shut the whole place down and ship the kids elsewhere.

*September 26, 18:24*

Arrived at the building. The place is about as bad as you can expect from an abandoned urban building. Much of the outside stinks of piss and vomit, and I doubt there’s a single square inch that isn’t covered in graffiti. The windows are boarded up, but there’s at least a few that seem loose. Time to enter.

*September 26, 18:27*

I’m in. The place is dark. No lights in sight. I wish I could do this during the day, but I don’t want to get the neighbors talking more than they already do. Suspicious loners who walk around the city at night are bad enough; if they thought I was actually burgling places, they might well call the police.

*[Here, Rafferty pauses briefly. There is the faint creak of a door opening.]*

Then again, maybe not.

*September 26, 18:30*

This appears to be a break room. There’s an old couch that nobody bothered to remove, and a few drawers, but nothing particularly interesting. I’m moving on. I don’t really want to scream and startle anyone, but the place seems quiet. In fact...it’s almost odd how silent it is in here. I’d have expected there to be more...things. Homeless people, perhaps, or even just kids exploring the place. But there’s no graffiti here, and all I can smell is stone and...I think something else. It’s familiar and...a bit rank, really. Like fish, perhaps. But no signs of people. If Carl and Melissa really went here, they must have gone somewhere else. I’ll start searching the building. I’ll keep the phone off...I don’t want to startle anyone or anything that might be here.

*September 26, 18:54*

All right. I’ve checked the ground floor as far as I’m able. A few of the doors are locked or bolted, and I haven’t tried to break them open yet. Again, no sign of either Carl or Melissa. The hallways are still quiet as the grave. I haven’t even seen any rats, which you’d expect in a place this big and abandoned. If they’re here, they are keeping very, very quiet. I’ll check out the basement next...just to get the worst out of the way.

*September 26, 19:03*

All right, scratch that plan. I tried to go down the stairs to the basement, but the place is flooded. I mean, actually *flooded*. The water’s up to at least my knees, and I have no idea why. I mean, the place is close to the river, sure, but it’s not like there would be any direct connection between them. The water looked murky and kind of oily as well, so I’m not going in there unless I absolutely have to.

Instead, up I go.

*September 26, 19:16*

I just found two sleeping bags in one of the upper classrooms. Sink in the corner suggests it was probably a chemistry lab. I think they belong to Carl and Melissa. It’s not too cold here by night, but I suppose they needed the comfort. There’s a few other items, as well. A bottle of cheap wine and junk food. Weirdly enough, the items are scattered about different corners of the room. There’s still no trace of either kid.

Still, though, this is the first trace I’ve seen of either of them, and it confirms they were actually present here. And that means that whatever caused them to disappear probably happened *here*, in this building. The scattered items suddenly seem omino-

*What was that?[[2]](#footnote-1)*

All right, I just heard something in the sink. I’m...going to go check it out.

**AAAAAAAAAAAAAAH! WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT THING?! SHIT JESUS WHAT THE FUCK?![[3]](#footnote-2)**

*September 26, 19:26*

Right, is this thing still working? Oh, good, it is. The screen is cracked but I guess that’s the least of my problems right now.

So, uhm, the sink...it contained...well, fuck it. I don’t really know *what* it was. It looked kind of like some sort of foot-long scale-less fish, like an eel or something. It had giant eyes and, for a moment, I could swear they were looking at me, even blinking. Then, it reared its head and opened its mouth and all I saw were teeth. Like, a concentric fucking buzzsaw of the things, opening and closing like they were grinding. It moved like some sort of snake...the sink was only partially filled, but it managed to reach down with that awful mouth and somehow *flip* itself outside. I stumbled backwards, almost fell. It was still trying to worm its way towards me, and I panicked. Bolted out of the room. When it flopped out, I stepped on it. I could hear the vertebrae snap, and there was an awful screeching noise when I did. My shoe feels slimy and sticky now, and I can still smell fish guts. I heard another plopping noise in the sink moments later, and the fish thing was still squirming, even though I just crushed...most of it, I suppose. I bolted.

I’m heading home, now. Whatever those things are, I need to find out more before I head back.

*September 27, 23:45*

I tried to sleep, but I couldn’t bring myself to it. I’ll have to take a sick day at work tomorrow...oh well, it’s not like it wasn’t going to happen anyway. Right now, those kids come first.

So, it turns out the creature I saw is called a lamprey. They can get up to three feet long, and they use those horrific fucking teeth they have to latch on to a prey, basically attach themselves, and then dissolve the skin until they can suck up bodily fluids. I wish I was kidding. Nature is horrible. As well, there are [some horrific pictures](http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/odfwnfi/files/2014/01/Pacific-lamprey-jaws.jpg)[[4]](#footnote-3) out there on the internet.

Oh, and guess what else I found out? The name means ‘stone sucker’. These horrific little monsters apparently aren’t content to stay in the water. They can use their teeth to latch onto things, and then actually flip across the land, surviving out of water for several minutes at least. That...just makes things a whole lot worse.

None of those, however, explain why there are apparently lampreys *inside a school building*. Some cryptozoologist site suggests that there’s some sort of urban migration. Things like lampreys moving into sewage systems, getting hardier to survive pollution. Just no. Even the thought of those squirming, toothed *things* underneath me disgusts me.

Either way, I’m going to have to go back. And, much as I dislike it...I’m going to have to go into the basement. I’ve got waders and boots, and I guess I’ll just have to bite the bullet. If there’s lampreys down there...well, I still have a gun and a crowbar.

*September 28, 00:34*

Alright, I’m back at the school entrance. Odd: the window’s been boarded up again, like someone didn’t want anyone back in. I’ll have to be careful.

*[Another creaking noise, followed by echoing footsteps]*

I’m in. No issue so far, except...yes. One of them is here.

*[A metallic clang intermingled with a squelching hiss]*

Jesus, did you get that? I...didn’t know those things could make sounds like that.

*September 28, 00:43*

I’m at the basement now. Shining my flashlight down...it doesn’t help. I think I can see...things moving in there. Fucking hell...I hope this isn’t as bad as it seems.

*September 28, 00:59[[5]](#footnote-4)*

The water is brackish and filthy. Still no sight of anything. I think I felt something move past my legs, once...but then again, perhaps I’m just imagining things. It’s not like me to want this to be unreal...but I suppose that given the alternative, I ought to be happy.

*September 28, 01:03*

I found the reason for the water. Apparently, the main water line was never shut down...and someone turned it over here and left it running. They closed the drainage as well, so the basement rooms kept filling up. The boiler’s been shut off, and the radiators are open to water. I suppose that means these things could be going *anywhere* in the building. The ones in the sink must have actually slithered through the pipes.

I closed the tap and opened the drainage. The water level is dropping steadily. Still no sign of Carl and Melissa.

*September 28, 01:07*

Water levels are still lowering, but I can see through it. Lampreys, perhaps a dozen or more, all slithering through the water, finding a place out. I climbed on top of a stowed desk.

*September 28, 01:12*

Water’s mostly gone. I could wait for the lampreys to air-drown, but...no. I’m almost at the end of this. There’s only a few more rooms left. If Carl and Melissa are here somewhere, they *have* to be there.

*September 28, 01:19*

Oh God. Just…no. Not this.

*September 28, 02:39*

I’m back home now. I’ve spent the past hour hanging over the toilet, puking my guts out. Moved away now, back to bed. This will be my last message on this topic.

I...found something. Something down there in the basement. I thought...I really thought all that was there were the lampreys. They’re horrific, but they were just animals, right?

I didn’t know. Dear God, I didn’t know.

Carl and Melissa...they must have stumbled into something. Drank the water, or gotten bitten, or something. When I got to the back of the basement, I saw…

*It* was there. Naked and pale and bloated, like a drowned corpse, eyes half-open. From its body, I saw half a dozen dark and squirming worms, suckling on pale flesh, blood dripping from his sides even though he did not seem to notice. It hissed when he saw me, and his teeth were sharp and concentric, opening and closing with a cartilaginous crackle. There were hard ridges where flesh used to be. It wasn’t human...but that tattoo. I remember that stupid tribal tattoo.

But...Melissa. I could still recognize her, even though she was lying on her back. She...seemed almost normal, but her belly was swollen, and I could see her fingers, bending awfully wrong. The ground was scratched, clawed deeply, so hard it had broken her fingers. There was *something*, pulsating beneath her skin, and her legs opened when I saw her...something came out. A tangle of lampreys, squirming like a ball of hissing worms, hitting the floor with a wet splash, flopping about out of sight.

I...I almost ran. In the end, I couldn’t do it. Couldn’t feel anything. Drawing my gun was like dreaming. Pulling the trigger was a haze. All I know is that I shot and kept shooting, until the *thing* that was Carl was a bleeding mess on the floor. Then, I closed in and hit it with my crowbar until it couldn’t move anymore.

Then, Melissa. I...had no bullets left. I’m so sorry for what I did...but I couldn’t leave her. Not like that. Not lying there, delirious, in the middle of squirming lampreys that were already attaching to her skin. I...I just couldn’t. I lifted my crowbar...I hope she was mostly gone. I hope she didn’t suffer.

I hope I can forget about this.

When it was over, though...I could swear I heard a hissing. Like steam, running from every wall and pipe in the building. When I turned around, I saw the lampreys had all turned towards me...and they were *hissing*. It seemed...angry

I ran. Fuck that. I *bolted*. I all but flew up the stairs. Beneath me, I could hear something drip from the boiler with a wet splash. Down the hallway, the radiator shattered, filling the ground with angry lampreys. I jumped them. When I saw water seeping from the bathroom, I did not even look. I ran, and I didn’t stop until I was far, far away from the building.

I’m home, now. Away from this nightmare. Away from the lampreys, somewhere they’ll never find me. I want to sleep, but my mind is filled with memories of wet things slithering beneath someone’s skin. And, above all, I wonder…

Did those lampreys try chase me because I killed their *mother*?

*September 28, 01:09*

Something just splashed into my kitchen sink.

**This concludes the messages found on the phone. The kitchen area itself was still damp, as though a great deal of water had been spilled there, and the tap has shattered. Similar aftereffects of dampness and burst damage were found in the shower and even the toilet. In all cases, spray patterns are consistent with something bursting out from within. Of the target, there is still no trace, though as noted the door was still bolted shut upon our arrival.**

**The team remains on standby and awaits your instructions.**

1. [*Editor’s note: Earlier voice notes suggests this to be one Thomas Dean, who lives in the same apartment complex].* [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Background noise analysis indicates a splashing noise just before this. Presumably, this is what originally drew Rafferty’s attention. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Emphasis added for what was, in truth, quite a loud and high-pitched yell followed by a clattering noise and a sudden end to the call. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. We scraped the image from the laptop history on that date. Others exist, but this is a representative sample. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. At this point, Rafferty’s voice drops to a whisper. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)