

The Reflective Surface of the Mirror is a Tin Mercury Alloy

[The following is a documented email conversation between two staff at the facility. View of this document requires Top Secret Research clearance.]

Dr. Grange,

I am contacting you regarding an object currently in our collection. Designation J0-37-C6 stored in basement 5 section G86-I. I think you know the one. I have new evidence which brings into question the true nature of the mirror's unnatural properties. It seems that previous tests failed to completely uncover what this object is truly capable of, resulting in the death of one of your team's primary researchers. Please review the following document and advise.

Carry Ann, Associate Director of Workplace Safety

[The following logs were found on a Sony M-560V Micro-Cassette Voice recorder located on the body of a researcher: Dr. Ryan Atkins. Who was found hanging dead in his residence on the night of July 20th. It is unknown how the recordings came to be on the tape but Dr. Atkins was noted by colleagues to use it frequently for recording data during experimentation.]

[The tape clicks on. Dr. Atkins begins to speak. His voice sounds frantic and his breathing is labored.]

Dr. Atkins. Log Date: ...07/13... I think. Subject... uh... Me.

It's nighttime. I'm in the dark. Somewhere.

...

I'm sleeping in the other room next to my wife. He is. I mean. Sleeping... I'm glad we never put up that mirror we planned in the bedroom.

...

We are going to have to update the file.

[There is a long pause. Heavy breathing can be heard]

Uhh... What the fuck...

What the fuck...

...

Get it together Atkins.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on again.]

This is Dr. Atkins. Log Date: 07/13. Subject: The situation current...

[Dr. Atkins coughs into the microphone.]

Please excuse the unprofessionalism. After the events of today I needed a second to clear my head.

...

I don't know if anyone is ever going to hear this tape. But on the chance that I make it out of here. Or that the tape does. Maybe this log can be used to help someone else.

I think I am inside the mirror. I have seen some strange things working here before. I've heard even stranger things. But... they've never happened to me...

...

My name is Dr. Ryan Atkins. I work for Dr. Gordon Grange as part of the chemical analysis unit. When the facility finds a new object with... unnatural properties... I'm the guy who pokes around to see what it is made of. Natural or otherwise.

On July 10th, three days ago, object uh... Object... Designation J0-37-C6... came into the facility for testing. I'm not sure of its origin. That's not my department.

It looks like an ordinary mirror. Two and a half meters lengthwise and one meter tall. I'm no expert but I think the correct word for the style is "Venetian". At least it looks antique, old and way too fancy looking with little flower designs carved into the surface around the rim.

It's so innocent and unassuming.

My point is it looks like a normal mirror. Unless, you look at the people in it. See, unlike a regular mirror it doesn't seem to reflect people's faces. Everyone just appears with a shadow. As if their face has been censored somehow. Its unnatural. And real unsettling.

It was kept covered while they moved it into a room for testing. When I first pulled the sheet off to look I nearly jumped out of my skin. It's not right to look into a mirror and see everyone around you reflected without faces.

...

I was assigned to help researcher Dr. Song test the chemical composition of the reflective coating. To see if it was the source of the... issue. It was just the two of us in the room. She dropped one of the test tubes and left to grab a new one.

I think it all happened because I was alone in the room. At least that's my hypothesis. Any time we have studied it, there have been at least two of us around or its been covered. We are encouraged to work in pairs. Especially around the abnormal. Just in case.

...

It all happened so... quickly. When I turned to look at the mirror, the shadow over my reflection was gone. I could see myself. Him. My reflection. Smiling.

But I wasn't smiling.

...

I could feel myself walking to the mirror and raising my hand to touch his. Everything in me was screaming that I should just... run or do something. But for some reason I couldn't.

I didn't think anything happened at first, but I heard Dr. Song open the door behind me and I saw her in the mirror. Also without a shadow... And when I turned around her real face had the shadow over it. She started talking but I wasn't really listening to what she said. She seemed angry. Instead I could only feel panic rising inside me. My lips seemed to move on their own as I responded to her. And my body moving as if conducted by someone else...

[Dr. Atkins pauses for a total of 10 and a half seconds. During this he is breathing heavily.]

It seems that whatever actions my mirror double does I am forced to mimic. And it isn't just in this specific mirror. It's any reflective surface I... I mean he... Passes. My reality seems to shift to reflect whatever environment he is in.

This is another notable observation. The place that I am in, which I believe to be the mirror, only contains what my double can see in any reflection. The rest is just black.

I think the only thing that exists outside of the reflections are the people.

At least I can see other shadow faces on the edges of the dark looking at me sometimes. And when there is no reflective surface near my double I am in complete darkness able to move freely. As I am now.

Further investigation is needed.

That concludes my first log.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on again.]

This is Dr. Atkins, Log Date: 07/14, Subject: This Place

I've been pacing. Just walking around in circles whenever I'm free.

This place that I'm in, seems to exist outside of any concept of space. I'm not sure how far it stretches.

There's just one large flat wall that shows whatever my counterpart is doing if he is near a surface that can make a reflection. The bathroom mirror, sometimes the screen of my computer when it goes to sleep. Even windows too.

All these places that I recognize. Little places that are part of my usual routine. It's like acting in a play which is based off my life.

Even my clothes shift to reflect whatever he is wearing at the time. Somehow, I always have the tape recorder in my pocket. It's probably because I carry it everywhere.

There's no source of light that I can see, but everything stays lit somehow, even in the dark.

...

[There is a sigh]

I'll update later.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape recorder starts up again but instead of Dr. Atkins's voice there is only the voice of a woman singing softly in German. The voice is quieter than Dr. Atkins's leading us to believe that it was recorded from a distance. Dr. Atkins interrupts the song several times.]

She just started singing like this. Out of the darkness. Mary, my wife...

I really don't know what to do without you...

[The song continues for 33 seconds]

Do you remember when you used to sing this song to me?

We laid on the hood of your car and looked up at the night sky.

Everything felt so simple then.

[The song continues for another minute and 10 seconds]

Sometime in the mix of it all we forgot how to talk to each other and you forgot how to sing.

I wish I could talk to you now but I don't know how.

I don't even know if that really *is* you singing...

[There is 3 and a half more minutes of singing before the song ends and the tape is cut off.]

[The tape clicks on and there are 5 seconds of silence before Dr. Atkins begins to talk.]

This is Dr. Atkins, Log Date 07/14, Subject: What kind of life is this?

Mom called. Mom called again.

Mary left in the morning before I woke. I see her back every night but where did her face go?

I didn't know what to say to Mom. Dad said good morning.

Dad said nothing really. Like always.

Work gave me some samples. Some blue goo that melts people's faces.

I still have to test the mirror.

What kind of life is this that you gave me?

[The tape clicks off.]

[When the tape clicks on again Dr. Atkins starts it with a heavy sigh.]

Dr. Atkins, Log Date: 07/15, Subject: The Void

It's night time, about 11:34, and he just went to bed. Everything in the mirror is dark. I can't tell the nature of the floor's surface in here. If it's in the reflection it just mimics whatever the floor is there, carpet, wood, tile. Otherwise it's almost like it isn't really anything at all. When I place my hand against it to feel, my hand just stops but it doesn't really "feel" like anything. Like I can't move past it or fall through it but there isn't really anything there...

I'm not sure what to make of it but I have an idea.

I don't think I need to sleep here. I don't feel tired or hungry...

The last two nights I've just sat here awake. But tonight...

I want to know how big this void is, so I'm going to choose a direction and walk. Just walk and see what happens. That's the plan.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape starts up again. Dr. Atkin's voice sounds labored]

Dr. Atkins, Log Date: 07/15, Subject: The Void Exploration

There's nothing. It's almost dawn. He'll wake up soon. I've been walking for seven hours. I've seen people in the distance with their shadow faces. Some I think I recognize and some I don't.

Sometimes they try to talk to me. Sometimes they run...

I...

Oh shit...

[A second unknown male voice speaks]

Ryan? So, what, you're some chemist for some research facility in the middle of nowhere. Good for you. What do you want? A medal?

At least clocks are useful for something. You could have helped me with that.

Your Mom is worried.

[There is a loud clattering noise before Dr. Atkin's voice speaks again. It is slightly softer than usual. Possibly heard from a distance.]

Fuck...

[There is the sound of footsteps quickly getting closer. The tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on again. A tapping sound can be heard. Like nails against wood. Dr. Atkins's voice is light.]

This is Dr. Atkins. Log Date: 07/15. Subject: They are inside the mirror.

Dr. Grange asked me if anything was wrong.

Nothing is wrong.

They are inside the mirror. He is inside the mirror.

The reflective surface of the mirror is a tin mercury alloy, I told him.

It has no special properties, I said.

But they are inside the mirror. I did not tell him that.

I've seen parts of him he wouldn't want freed. I don't trust him.

[Dr. Atkins's voice is somber.]

I didn't tell him that either.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on again. Dr. Atkins's voice is quieter than usual.]

This is Dr. Atkins. Log Date: 07/16. Subject: My wife.

I tried to talk to Mary today.

...

I really wish I could see your face. I-I mean her face.

It was dark just like everyone's here.

She approached me from behind.

Why won't you talk to me? She said.

I can see something's wrong. Some days you look like death then the next you seem almost happy. Whatever it is, it's growing, Ryan. And you just push me away.

I asked what she meant. She asked if I remembered breaking the mirror. The one we put up in the bedroom.

I said I didn't. We never had a mirror in the bedroom.

...

At least I don't think we did.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on again. 12 seconds of dead air is recorded before it automatically clicks off.

An unknown amount of time passes before the recorder clicks on a second time and Dr. Atkins speaks. His voice is calm but lacks its usual emotion.]

I saw someone die today.

...

She was standing in the darkness. I don't remember her name. Something like McLain?? Or McNeal?? It had a Mc in it. I've seen her in the hall before but only in passing. She always seemed so nice but stoic. It was Dr. Grange who did it... Killed her. We work together almost every day and I watched him stab this woman to death. All outside of the reflection, at the edge of the darkness, but I could see it. He could see me too.

His shadow face held my eyes and he just raised a bloody intestine at me like "cheers."

What the fuck.

...

Then the real Dr. Grange walked into the room and I had to listen to his reflection from the computer screen on my desk tell me all about some dumb maintenance request I submitted weeks ago. And I had to nod and listen to myself talk about broken microscopes. The blood was gone from his hands but it may as well have been there.

[The tape records another 12 seconds of dead air before clicking off automatically again. After another undetermined period of time the tape clicks back on. Dr. Atkins does not start a new log so presumably it comes shortly after the last. His voice is mildly panicked.]

Why don't I care. I've never seen anyone die before. I think. I mean I know the kind of things that can go on in this facility but I've never been part of that. Just paperwork and chemical compounds.

They give me a sample and I test it.

There's no death in that.

...

But watching this woman get stabbed was like watching a tape play back in my mind.

...

Am I doing the right thing? Is there something wrong here, in this lab? In the work I've been doing? All we want to do is explain the unnatural things we find. We keep dangers away from people who don't understand them. Imagine being trapped here but not knowing what any of this is. Not knowing that reality isn't as simple as it seems.

Hell. I don't even know what any of this is and I'm a fucking scientist.

Would there be more deaths if we just let the world be?

...

All I know is I'm only here now because I chose not to.

I'm here because I'm supposed to care.

...

[There are 12 seconds of dead air before the tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on again.]

This is Dr. Atkins. Log Date: 07/18. Subject: McLain?? McNeal??

I saw her today. I thought she was dead. But she walked past me in the darkness and told me she didn't like my new haircut.

I told her I thought she was dead.

She laughed and said I was thinking about it the wrong way. I can't find her anymore.

...

I don't think I've ever seen her smile.

[The tape clicks off.]

[The tape clicks on to the sound of Dr. Atkins laughing. He pauses before he starts to talk.]

This is not Dr. Atkins. Log Date: irrelevant. Subject: Fuck you Atkins.

You don't remember do you. All those things you did. What you left inside me. Buried and forgot.

You don't even remember forgetting.

Those pills were so convenient weren't they. Your coworker dies? Take a pill. Blood under your nails. Under your feet? Take a pill.

Take a pill.

Take a pill.

[The laughter continues.]

So much of the mundane hidden inside a little white capsule.

You can only remember the good you did for the world.

Not the chaos you caused trying to find the answers.

Atkins I remember. I remember everything.

Atkins how many tapes do you have?

[The sound of plastic clicking together can be heard.]

12 years of work and you have nine? 60 minutes a tape. 12 years of work and you have nine hours to show for it. How many hours do you think were stolen?

Would you do it again?

If I set you free would you choose to forget the things you saw?

Would you even be given that choice?

I know everything, Atkins. I know the things you hide. Even from yourself.

[The sounds of a plastic breaking can be heard nine times then the sound of several smaller pieces hitting something hard can be heard in the distance. There is the sound of footsteps]

getting fainter and the closing of a door. 12 seconds of silence are recorded before the tape automatically shuts off.]

[The tape clicks back on. Dr. Atkins's voice is shaky. He has difficulty speaking in several parts.]

This is Dr. Atkins. Log Date: ... I don't remember. Subject: ...I think this is goodbye.

I know this will be my last log. I can't stop any of this. I-I-I just hope Mary doesn't blame me. I know she blames me for a lot. But if I could choose, I'd choose her. I'd choose to run away. I'd choose to leave this all behind.

...

I went to the store today.

I listened to myself talk.

I was afraid.

Though I disguised it well. I could feel the rope in my hands as if it were real. Before that too disappeared.

I don't feel pain here. I don't feel anything. Will I even know what it's like to die? Or will that just be empty too.

...

I-I've been thinking about this for far too long. Thinking I wanted this to just end when I only wanted it to change. And now he is going to do it instead. And there is nothing I can do but watch.

I should have told you Mary. I-I wish I could tell you now.

I know what this is. This reflection I'm in. The man I follow like a puppet.

If anyone is listening to this, destroy the mirror.

[The tape clicks off for the last time.]

Ann,

I have reviewed the document you sent. Object, designation J0-37-C6 has been requested for release from storage and revisions to the original case file are pending review. It was a lapse in my judgement to assume the effects of the object were purely optical. As you know, in our kind of work deaths like these are inevitable. If we wish to protect the world sacrifices will have to happen. I have recommended that my staff forget the existence of Dr. Atkins, his position be filled by another qualified professional and the document you send be censored before being added to the original file. I look forward to your safety recommendations on handling the object for further experimentation.

Dr. Grange, Head of experimentation and Testing Procedures