

The Anti-Christ Is Here…

An Abandoned Asylum, A Horrifying Discovery and The Thing That Followed Us Home.

Oakwood Hospital

Barming Heath

Maidstone, Kent

United Kingdom

Summer Time

2007…

There was a static vibrating its way around our vehicle, which was hurtling along the motorway at speeds in excess of 100mph. The kind of velocity that tells you the driver is either lacking in experience or is a complete pro…

Being teenagers, it was pretty obvious which one we were dealing with…

The hour was late, with only one vehicle encountered every seventy minutes or so. We were no risk to anyone but ourselves, although I suppose our parents might have disagreed, had they received the call informing them that our carcasses had been burned down to lifeless husks in some ditch beyond the hard shoulder…

When you're seventeen and investigating the paranormal, you tend to start seeing death differently. You goad it. Chastise it. Mock its inevitability with indifference, because you believe there's every possibility you can transcend such a thing. After the hauntings we had each experienced, we believed something came after us – or at least believed strongly enough that we might very well be able to will an afterlife into existence if there wasn't one.

How little we knew… and how little we still do…

The static, although riveting, was also making us erratic…

This investigation could very well be the big one. Something life (or death) affirming…

An encounter that, we felt, would change us forever.

I suppose we were right…

Our destination was an abandoned hospital, one that had been used during both world wars. Its original name, upon opening, was the *Kent County Lunatic Asylum*.

We had been researching all kinds of reports from our usual sources. Many described a dark and heavy aura hanging about the place. The kind that most people only experience through the safety of the silver screen.

Teenagers chock-full of grit and gusto, we feared nothing. We had this idea in our heads that if anything demonic was ever present, well, shit, we'd prove ourselves the hellraisers we were. We'd show whatever sought to destroy us that we were more formidable, sending the bastards screaming back through whichever Ouija path had brought them to us – back to any of the hells they hailed from.

We believed we could muster an evil that no devil would wish to contend with…

We were a hate the living love the dead kind of crew. Untouchable by the undead, for we were full of a blackness that even light would pitifully attempt to escape. With tough upbringings, brutal bullying and rejection from much of society, we knew our place among the demons was already more comfortable than your average "normal" life.

We revelled in it, relished it, like maggots chewing on the dead and decaying flesh of society.

That said, as much as we investigated and had adventures within the paranormal, we maintained equal parts scepticism and curiosity. The notion of the unknown that comes after we draw our last breath was always fiendishly delightful to bat around. Yet we also accepted that experience is dictated by our senses – which, when you consider the possibility of beings with intelligence far superior to our own existing across the gulf of space, means we may simply be incapable of interpreting the full workings of the cosmos. Our readings could be potential misfires or misinterpretations of a much wider make-up of the universe and its mystical space-time continuum…

"FUCK MAN!" I heard a voice scream over the blasting beats of Pendulum's *Tarantula.*

Callum frantically jostled about in the back seat as sparks danced across his dark jacket.

"Fucking hot rocks, mannnnnn…" he shrieked in a nasal whistle.

"I told you not to fucking smoke hash in my car, you prick…" my brother, who was driving, scolded him. "If that shit burns any more holes in my seats, I'll set the damn leeches on you!"

"Alright, alright… I wouldn't be shaking as much as I am, man, if you weren't switching lanes at these goddamn speeds. SLOW THE FUCK DOWN! Where we're going ain't going anyplace… shit…"

"Will you two shut the fuck up… I am trying to concentrate."

I said, as I studied my chicken-scratch notes on tonight's destination. The letters jittered and wiggled like worms across the page in the red glow of my headlamp.

"He's right, though, brother… you should slow down. We want to investigate the dead, laugh at death himself and all that, not join them…"

His face contorted in disapproval as he applied the brakes heavily, slowing us for only a few seconds to make a point, before accelerating again to at least 5mph above the speed he'd originally held us hostage at.

“You’re a dick… you know that?” I shook my head, feeling the warmth of his devilish grin against my cheek.

Ben sat quietly behind me, chin nestled atop the back of my chair, just behind my left shoulder, as he tried to decipher my doctor’s handwriting.

“This place sounds insane…” he muttered.

“I know,” I replied. “It’s almost too good to be true that a place like this exists so close to where we live… just an hour and a half away from seeing some serious shit…”

“Fucking Amen to that!” screamed my brother.

“Yeah, we’re talking some real horror movie shit!” Callum droned, half-awake, from the back.

“We’re talking about a location that’s over a mile in length… Opened in 1833… Imagine all the footsteps that wandered through there…”

“And died there…” added Ben.

Some tragically and painfully, too, I thought to myself…

My stomach turning with each passing mile…

“You aren’t starting to quit on this, are you, Ben?!” cried my brother, who must have noticed the change in Ben’s expression judging the way he analysed the rearview mirror…

“No… just, you know, this place is like the creepiest we’ve been to… Didn’t we find out they buried thousands of patients there in unmarked graves? Or something…”

Ben’s skin had begun to turn ghostly. It was hard to tell what had brought it on. The thought of all the dead bodies we might inadvertently walk over during our adventure, or perhaps the long toke of hash he’d just taken, could have been enough to make him white out…

“Correct,” I assured him. “Estimates put the number of psychiatric patients buried there in mass graves at around 7,000… It’s been dubbed The Forgotten Cemetery… There are only around 21 tombstones on site – but those were reserved for staff members…”

“Shit, man… I tell you what, if I were one of those poor fuckers in a mass grave, with someone’s arse pressed up against my face for all eternity, whilst some dick lies above

me with a nice casket to rest in and a fancy tombstone, I'd be walking around looking for someone to pay the price…" said my brother.

"Fucking right!" shouted Callum as he took one final drag on what remained of the roach before slinging the expired joint out the window.

It sparked briefly in the gust as it disappeared into the night, bouncing off the asphalt before fading into nothingness behind us…

Tyres screeched as we came to a halt. We exited the Peugeot 206, grabbed our gear from the boot and began the walk towards the hospital perimeter.

A chain-link fence had been erected some distance from the area we were hoping to explore…

SHINK!

SHINK!

SHINK!

WUNK…

Callum made short work of it with his trusty bolt cutters, the red light illuminating his Cheshire grin as he looked rather pleased with himself.

"Shall we go then?" he smirked, using his best Vincent Price voice, ushering us forward with a wave of his hands.

"Deep breath…" I said as I pushed myself through the large slit he'd made.

"Argh…" A jagged piece of fencing scratched my arm. Warm blood met the cool summer air – I could almost feel steam rising from it as I pulled a cloth from my pocket and wiped the wound clean.

"Great… well, that's me done. Dead from fucking tetanus…"

Giggles in the moonlight.

We made our approach silently, skulking through the shrubs on delicate toes. The smell was that of a world long forgotten by the natural order.

Then, a hulking shadow emerged, bearing down on us. The moonlight made its bulk seem to shift and contort, as though the hospital had titan-sized lungs.

“Come on…” my brother called as my pace slowed behind him. “Keep up!”

We were all lagging, but why? In the car, it was evident that we were nervous – the hash probably not helping – but you could almost certainly observe the technicoloured aura of excitement swirling around us. Now that we were here, that vibration had dissipated into a whimpering hum.

Looking back now as I recant the tale, I can best describe what we felt with one word: grief. The collective kind that envelops a family when news comes that a loved one has passed away. It came rapidly and brutally.

“You feeling that?” I asked Ben…

“The collective emotional weight of all those who fucking died tragically here… wrapping its way around us like some sort of fucking boa constrictor? Yeah… I feel it…”

We all fell silent for a moment, pondering whether the weight of the feeling was imagined or existed for a purpose. One that intended to push us into the ground, to join those who had been abandoned there…

“Fuck…” began Callum. “I hate to say it, boys, but I fucking hate this…”

“Don’t be a pussy…” snapped my brother.

“I’m not being a pussy! Come on, man… something feels off… I know you’re feeling it too…”

“Sure… I feel it. Doesn’t mean I am going to be ruled by it…”

Ben stepped forwards a few paces away from Callum and I, picking up the lead next to my brother.

The windows and doors were heavily boarded up – in some places, multiple layers of panelling formed a mosaic of frustration from a caretaker who must have been getting rather tired of constantly replacing the damn things. There had once been care in how these were placed, but now the wood sat at odd angles, with nails protruding in every direction.

Now the chain-link fence perimeter made sense… They were desperately trying to keep us all out.

Or, worse, keep something from escaping this wretched place…

History repeating itself.

My brother gripped a corner and yanked at it viciously with a grunt…

"Fuck… these are really on here…"

"Knew I should've grabbed my crowbar…" Callum said, sounding disappointed in himself.

I had one in my backpack, but I'll admit now that my nerves had already started getting the better of me, rendering my memory incapable of recalling it… Perhaps I knew what was coming?

"Let's just keep going… there's bound to be a panel loose enough somewhere…" said Ben.

We continued walking for another 100 metres or so until we found a panel sitting at an awkward angle, held in place by a single nail at the corner. Its edges were gnarled and splintered, evidence of whoever had previously freed it from its original resting place.

One by one, we clambered clumsily through…

.....

The cut on my arm was wet with blood again. I could almost taste the iron at the back of my throat as it failed its attempts to clot.

I wiped it away again with the cloth.

"Hahhhhh" I hissed.

“You good?” asked my brother…

“Yeah, it’s just a scratch. Fucking stinging more now though…”

Callum leaned over and took a look.

“It’s pretty deep… just don’t fucking spill any… we don’t wanna be leaving any fucking DNA here, man…” he elbowed me gently and chuckled as he pressed on into the darkness…

We navigated rooms swiftly. The smell was so harsh that we had all pulled our T-shirts up around our noses, looking like a misfit bunch of ragtag burglars. The decay in the air was almost chewable. A rot we feared might get inside us, reducing everything within to a boiling pulp for the flies to feast on.

The rooms were mostly barren. Broken pieces of furniture lay scattered about, with leaves littering the floor.

Then we came to the famous corridor. Allegedly the longest in Europe. Its full length was impossible to make out. Our torches reached into the darkness but barely penetrated the void. We began walking, past overturned beds and dirty mattresses.

Clink!

We paused…

“Sorry… my depth perception is dog shit,” I whispered, lifting my knee from the discarded chair. Callum slipped on a Budweiser bottle.

“Well… at least some people here have had a good time. That brings some comfort…” he said.

“Or,” began Ben, “a homeless person trying to survive a night here has no choice but to get blackout drunk… This is horrible…”

People had been coming to the hospital from all across the paranormal community. I suppose it brought us some comfort knowing that many had come before us and lived to tell the tale. But we still couldn’t shake that feeling of impending doom…

“FUCK!” cried my brother…

We froze.

“Stop being so fucking loud…” I whispered, trying to sound assertive…

“Something just ran in front of me…”

The hairs on my forearms stood up defiantly. Blood continued to seep from my wound… The temperature plummeted. A chill slithered its way through my bone marrow.

The EMF metre I had in my hand began registering sharp readings in the space around my brother…

“Stop it man…” said Ben, “You didn’t see shit, it’s just dark and you’re stoned…”

He stuttered, choosing blissful ignorance over the metre readings. Ben had always disputed the usefulness of electromagnetic frequencies as a paranormal investigative tool.

SWISH!

The sound of a foot brushing across the floor…

“What was that?!”

He fixed his flashlight on the floor of the doorway to our right.

“Uh, guys… what the fuck is that?” The words jittered off the tip of his tongue.

I looked at the splatters of crusted brown dashed across the cracked and ageing tiles…

Paused.

Took a deep breath.

And exhaled an answer…

“Blood…”

The glow began to illuminate it. As our torches searched across the scene, we began to cough and splutter at the very sight of it. Its dead, cold eyes were obsidian black – lifeless and unfeeling. Black pebbles embedded in mottled

flesh, peppered with small, coarse hairs. Eyes that knew nothing but emptiness and torment. They were utterly evil and repellent.

Between them jutted what appeared to be a nine-inch nail, hammered clumsily into place at an angle, its shaft bending slightly towards the head. Crooked.

The snout, albeit dry, still had the appearance of a wet tongue. Bloodstains ran like snot from the nostrils.

Ears scabbed and split.

The lower jaw hung slack, its mouth eternally open, desperate for one last sweet breath.

Perhaps the expression remained from its last scream, before its head was removed and nailed to the cross-joint of the crucifix standing erect before us…

Inverted.

Blood trails led across the floor to a pentagram painted in thick red. Within its centre, the ground was blackened and charred. The remains of what we could only assume had once been the body of the beast lay there, part ash, part burned bone and flesh…

Bones and other body parts – perhaps organs – had been delicately placed with intent at each point of the star. Candles melted down to mere nubs.

The walls appeared to be dashed and flecked with entrails and viscera. A horrific piece of modern satanic art.

Occult symbols had been haphazardly sprayed in black and red paint around the room in oppressive scale.

“Holy… Fuck…” a disturbed whisper. My hands were trembling.

“Animal sacrifice… Occultists… Blood magic…” Callum stuttered.

“I don’t fucking like this, man…” said Ben.

My brother said nothing, his eyes fixed on the torso in the middle of the room.

“Please tell me that’s all just pig…” Callum pleaded, the whites of his eyes growing increasingly visible…

“Humpf… Humpf… BLEH!”

My brother vomited.

“Jesus, man… careful… the last thing we want is your fluids mixing with this vile scene!” I lambasted him, feeling my scepticism draining away, replaced by the superstitions of humans long gone. The kind who panicked and hanged children for being witches…

“We need to fucking leave… NOW!” I demanded.

The nods of agreement were swift and unimpeded. No one had any desire to continue this venture. We were done. It was time to get the fuck out.

The EMF metre began beeping continuously, louder than it had ever seemed capable of before…

My brother looked back silently towards the door…

“This is fucked… let’s get the fuck out of here!”

The EMF Metre began emitting a high-pitched wail.

“Okay, it’s never made that noise before…”

“Stop…”

SKITTER. SKITTER. SKITTER.

The sound of leather shoes moving nimbly around us.

**SCREEEE

“I am fucking warning you!” my brother bellowed from the depths of his gut, lowering his voice in an attempt to demonstrate that he was more monstrous than whatever was taunting us.

Then…

Silence.

The EMF metre stopped.

We waited, looking around frantically, torchlight splashing the surroundings with desperation.

HOWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWLLLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!!!!!!!

A mighty scream echoed down the length of the corridor, enveloping us in terror. Multiple cupboards slammed at once. A bed upended, levitating briefly before crashing down in front of us.

**BEEE

The near-hour trek through this old place dissolved into what felt like seconds as we made our exit. Time seemed to move differently in that place now.

We returned to our car and loaded the equipment into the boot without a word being spoken.

The silence remained for the entire hour-and-a-half drive home.

My brother drove slowly, his neck fixed in position, making only minor movements to check his blind spots. He crawled up to each home as our crew disembarked one by one. Only brief eye contact served as a goodbye.

The kettle rumbled as the water reached boiling point. My anxiety peaked as I hoped it wouldn't wake anyone. Now was a time to be alone, I thought.

I wiped the blood from my arm, opened the drawer containing our first aid kit and applied a fresh bandage.

My mind began to dissect the evening, slicing every detail into layers to be examined beneath a microscope.

Ideas raced through head.

Rationalisations presented themselves, only to be batted away by the unknown I was now wrestling with. The anatomy of the ordeal was too stark and undeniable. Skin, flesh, bone… the event had it all.

What is it about being human?

Why are we so desperate to make contact with that which we cannot understand? Why do we meddle in things we can only ever hope to become acquainted with?

Closing my eyes felt like a punishment now. Each time I did, the innocent, bloodied pig's head flashed across the backs of

my eyelids. My imagination coupling with my empathy to supply its final squeals… or was it?

Could it be I was actually hearing its death song?

That inverted crucifix…

Blasphemous.

I wasn't religious. At least, not anymore. I still felt offended.

The unholiness of its display disturbed something deep within me.

The charred lump in the pentagram…

I stirred milk into my tea, watching the colour change as the bubbles were helplessly caught in the whirlpool I had created.

We're like these bubbles. Unaware of how we find ourselves in such positions, caught up in forces we'll never truly see, yet somehow believe in all the same…

Perhaps we spend our entire lives mistaking the movement around us for the direction we have chosen.

I sank into my favourite armchair, picked up the television remote and put on the news. A hard dose of reality, I thought. Just what I needed while my imagination was running rampant.

Squeak…

I look over at the sofa across from me…

Did that cushion just move?

"Hello?"

I stare.

My greeting is met with silence…

I turn my attention to the radiant glowing screen.

WAR.

Soldiers dying in the Middle East. Graphic images reminding me that we're well past the watershed.

Missing limbs. Sand doused in blood. Screaming.

Click.

In the gap between channels, I wondered: what were they trying to summon? Was that the purpose of the sacrifice?

What the hell had we experienced tonight? What was that scream… the footsteps… the cupboards… the furniture?

FAMINE.

Distended bellies. Bloated bodies covered with black, unrelenting flies. Dry eyes within sunken sockets. Toddlers with the appearance of eighty-year-olds.

Click.

What if they were successful? What if they did summon something? But what?

RAPE.

A young girl robbed of her innocence. Her life changed forever by the lustful, hedonistic and uncontrollable urges of a deviant creature. Someone's daughter. Someone's everything. Treated like meat…

Reprehensible.

Cut the bastard's cock off and feed it to him.

Or, at the very least, do that and then kill him.

Click.

Feeling sick now.

Sip the tea… that’ll fix it.

The tea tastes sour…

MURDER.

Another mass shooting has taken place in the States. Children arriving for an education but leaving in body bags. The perpetrator took their own life before the police had the pleasure of doing so.

Click.

The back of my throat begins to well up.

My eyes close, wet with tears. The decapitated pig’s head. Squealing…

The inverted cross…

A dark figure…

The sofa squeaks…

My head turns…

Nothing there. Just dead space.

“Fuck you…”

DISEASE.

Outbreaks happening globally. Humans not understanding what they’re tampering with. Man-made? Natural? The bodies pile up

CLICK!

Blood runs slowly down my arm as it does on the cross…

Anti-Christ?

“Who’s there?”

Whispers now…

Click!

WAR.

Click!

FAMINE.

Click!

RAPE.

Click!

DISEASE.

The charred carcass rises…

A politician steps up to the podium and begins to speak. His eyes stare directly into mine… no, the camera… no… *mine*…

His mouth moved, but I couldn't make out a word. The expression never changed. He just kept looking.

SLAM!

"Fuck!" I bolted upright, staring towards the now closed lounge door.

I switched off the television. Silence followed, broken only by the sound of my own heartbeat.

A thought began to take root. Yes, I could hear it clearly. An epiphany… a truth.

They hadn't summoned anything at the hospital. That wasn't the beginning. It was simply a continuation of the same evil… an ancient one they were trying to appease, make peace with… or perhaps inspire to spread.

Yes… I'd been looking at this all wrong…

I had been searching for a monster in the darkness, while the evidence had been sitting in front of me, broadcast into our living rooms every evening.

You cannot summon that which is already here…

The signs were always there, but I had been choosing to ignore them. We all had. This is an evil we've somehow grown comfortable with. An unchanging constant.

There is no singular monstrous entity or false prophet.

No…

It's a collective. It's in everything – even our televisions… a portal of some kind… no, a *window*!

A public appetite for cruelty, so long as it's directed at the right person.

Leaders exploiting fear to accumulate power. Dominion.

Children bombed and killed because of the actions of their fathers.

Bastard extremists on all fronts.

Atrocities excused through moral disfigurement.

The suffering of strangers consumed as entertainment, then forgotten before the next programme begins.

The hospital now felt irrelevant. A pale insignificance.

The Anti-Christ is already here.

The hospital was merely a grotesque taunt, a reminder that it is hard at work and winning. That the horrors we had witnessed within those walls were nothing compared to the horrors being committed beyond them, in broad daylight, by people who would never consider themselves evil.

We had spent the evening searching for monsters in the darkness, oblivious to the fact that they had been walking amongst us all along.

Humanity and him are one and the same…

Doc

EDITORS NOTE:

Nineteen years have passed.

Memories have faded. The pig's head is still there, but it's lost some focus. Blurred edges obscure the dried blood. I can no longer fully recall every sound, every movement, or every detail of that room with the certainty I once could – but it felt important to try… at the very least for this field note.

New wars have started.

New murders committed.

Atrocities upon atrocities.

The world burned in hellfire this summer.

Files exposed the evil of an island and its elites, and the sick, twisted acts inflicted upon the children of others.

No revolution yet. Everyone is still comfortable with the fact that he's winning.

We're still subdued.

Humanity remains in denial of his presence, and perhaps of the Church's power to stop him… or maybe not…

I don't know what to believe anymore.

But you don't need to believe in much to see that we're all sleepwalking towards an eternal darkness.

We scroll past the suffering. We argue over the wording. We find reasons to look away.

Tomorrow, there's always something else to watch – and ignore.

Keep on changing the channel.

I caught up with one of the friends from that investigation. We hadn't realised that we hadn't spoken since that night… which felt odd, as though something had been trying to stop us from speaking about it again…

His mum freaked out when he told her what had happened. She told him to stop playing with things he didn't understand and

demanded that he return to Sunday Mass with the family. He obeyed – or perhaps, I'd argue, he went willingly.

Strange occurrences continued in their house after, he said. The family was taunted by something unseen.

A priest came to bless the house at the request of his mother. He fell gravely ill immediately after.

Died mere days later…

They moved home shortly afterwards and never spoke of it again.

I pried, but he didn't want to talk about it…

"You going to church these days?" he asked.

"No," I replied. "You?"

"Yeah…" he answered sheepishly.

"Any good?"

"Yeah, it's alright. It helps… It's also nice to be reminded of which way round a crucifix should be…"

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