

[[Intro]]

You're stuck in traffic.
All at once, several drivers exit their cars,
and make their way towards you.
Their eyes turn black as their jaws unhinge.

You need my help.

[[AVFD music fades in]]

This is a Voice From Darkness

[[AVFD music fades out]]

Hello all, this is Dr. Malcolm Ryder, parapsychologist. Here as always to answer your questions and help you with issues involving the supernatural, paranormal, and otherworldly. Later in the show, we'll open up the phone lines, but first we have a few national alerts. Before we even start with those, I have—not an alert—but perhaps a reminder: it's that time of year where high school and college seniors graduate. You're all entering that next phase of your life, and I congratulate you all. But I also implore you - do not hold your graduation parties in haunted houses or places of known malevolent paranormal activity. I recently had to take a trip downstate to free a few dozen high school graduates who'd become trapped in a haunted farmhouse, after they'd broken in to throw a party. The dead don't care about your future. If anything, they're envious of it. So please, celebrate elsewhere.

All right, that brief note out of the way, let's get into our national alerts.

[[National Alerts]]

Our first national alert is for Fairfield, Nebraska. There's a gas station along Route 275. Over the past few weeks, several patrons of the station have noted the same three people are always there, regardless of time of day. And they're always having the same conversation. One witness claims to have seen a script behind the counter. One containing the exact words the three repeat day after day.

I'll remind listeners a while back we had a similar case at a diner in Montana. I'm afraid to report The Script has yet to be contained. And has spread. Be careful on your travels, and try your best to stay out of The Script yourself.

Our second national alert is for the neighborhood of Greenwich Village, in New York City. A fire is raging throughout a single three story greystone, though the flames are not spreading to nearby homes. The New York Fire Department has spent hours attempting to quell the inferno,

but it persists. Interestingly the house is unaffected by the flames. It is not charred, nor turning to ash. But we warn those in the area to avoid the burning greystone. A few firefighters and passersby who went in too closely to the flames, claimed to hear whispers coming from them. All who heard the whispers felt a compulsion to walk into the fire, where they then burned to death. Once again, for those in Greenwich Village, stay clear of the greystone that's currently on fire.

And our third National Alert is for Preston, Idaho. Three children are trick-or-treating though it's nowhere near All Hallows' Eve. One is dressed as a ghost, one the devil, and the third, The Traveling Salesman. If they come to your door, give them whatever candy you have, or an offering of some kind. The more sugar, the more likely they'll be sated. If you provide them nothing they want, they will get their candy one way or another. There have been several deaths and hospitalizations of those who have not given the children anything. In each case, victims were disemboweled. Their intestines, stomachs, and other inner organs transformed into candy and taken by the children.

And that's it for national alerts.

[[Call]]

All right, let's open the phone lines. If you're experiencing anything supernatural, paranormal—and we have a caller.

Hello, you're on the air with Dr. Malcolm Ry—

(interrupted)

CALLER: RYDER! At long last, vengeance is mine! I call on the power of the Severed Shadow of the Seraphim to curse thee! With all the darkness spread by his black flight, with the abyss cast by his unseen sight - I curse thee!

(Caller laughs triumphantly)

(A beat)

Ryder: Are you done? It's been awhile since I've had to explain this, but you can't curse me over the air.

CALLER: But I—

Ryder: This isn't amateur hour. Do you know how many circles of warding are woven around my studio? How many spells of protection, dampening, and reflection are in place? Making appeals to greater beings and shouting... Curse Thees at me will do you no good. If anything,

you'll likely have the spell bounced back at yourself. So I hope you're prepared for whatever wrath the *Severed Shadow of the Seraphim* has in store, because it's coming for you, not me.

SFX: dial tone.

Ryder: They hung up. That's rude. "...*abyss cast by his unseen sight*" That has to sound better in Latin.

Note: Ryder sees that though the caller's spell did not impact him, it broke the phone board.

Ryder: Oh, and he broke the board! If you were calling into the show just now, I apologize, Mr. Curse Thee broke our phone board. I'm afraid we won't be taking any more calls tonight as a result.

(To self): What can we do for the rest of the show?

(to audience): I've got an idea. We've had many listeners write in over on our Patreon. Since I can't answer your calls tonight, how about we answer questions that some of you have written into the show? If you'd like to write your own questions, you can do so over at patreon.com/vfdarkness.

[[Questions]]

Our first question comes from Amber, who writes:

Are there any monsters in the great lakes?

Interpreting your question in the broadest possible way, yes, there are quite a few cryptids, strange beings, and the ruins of a lost civilization that was likely inhabited by non-human entities. All found within the Great Lakes. I'll highlight something from each lake to give you a sense of what's out there, though this list is nowhere near exhaustive. Starting from the east and moving west, we have Lake Ontario.

There's a patch of mist that clings to this lake. Though its location is constantly moving. And that's because it acts as a shroud for a being called The Walker on the Water. Little is known about him, as he's mostly been encountered at a distance. He appears to be a broad shouldered man with long hair. His exact features are unknown as no one has ever gotten close enough to see him. But he's walked Lake Ontario for nearly five decades now. At times, boats have attempted to meet him. When they did, the mist around him grew denser, and he disappeared. It'd then usually be weeks if not months before anyone sighted him again.

In Lake Erie, there's a creature called the Drowning Girl and she's been the death of many. What happens is a boat will hear a girl crying out for help and splashing somewhere far out in the middle of the lake. Of course the boat will go toward the sound to help. As they get closer they'll see exactly what they heard, a young girl in the water, drowning. But as they get closer still, close enough to throw a life preserver or jump in and rescue her, she'll change.

If the rescuers are close enough to see her pupils, they'd see that they're rectangular. Akin to the eye of an octopus. And like said creature, tentacles, a myriad of them, will burst out of the water, grab the would-be-rescuers, and pull them under. Attempts have been made to hunt and rid the lake of this creature - or possibly species of creature - but so far they've outwitted every hunter. And in many cases, have killed their pursuers.

The Ruins of Huron can be found at the bottom of the lake of that name. Though all one would see today is a caved-in ziggurat made of limestone and quartz. The most accepted theory on The Ruins states that they were built over 200,000 years ago. Keep in mind, the earliest humans only crossed over into the Americas 15,000 years ago. Recovered from the ziggurat are a number of stone reliefs - elaborate carvings - that once adorned its walls. The subjects of which are not human. The carvings feature beings who are tall, though always cloaked in robes and hoods. Their silhouettes suggest they have multiple sets of arms, and growths of some kind coming out their backs, but as they are cloaked, it's impossible to say what these growths are. Most of their art features imagery of these strange beings worshiping - kneeling - before an empty throne that sits high up on a dias.

It's unclear what happened to this civilization, but the Great Lakes only formed approximately 20,000 years ago. So the ziggurat, and the civilization that made it, predates them by a substantial amount. The land the ziggurat was built on sank into what became Lake Huron, and the ziggurat builders seemingly disappeared from the face of the earth.

Next, in Lake Michigan, as all Chicagoians know, we have the Angel of the Mermen. Covered from head to toe in scales, though vaguely humanoid in appearance, he continuously swims the lake, never staying in one spot. With several giant fins that resemble wings, he often leaps out of the water and glides through the air. It's unknown how old he is. Several centuries at least, as indigenous tribes tell stories of him going back for as far as they've inhabited the Great Lakes region. Overall, he seems indifferent to mankind. Though there are many stories of him rescuing capsized boats and drowning sailors.

Lastly, that brings us to Lake Superior, which has the Blight. A patch of darkness, of decay, that clings near the eastern part of the lake. The Blight hovers a few feet above the water. Whatever touches it decays and dies within moments. There's several buoy's positioned around it to prevent ships and boats from going straight through. In the past, when this has happened, it rusted ship hulls instantly. Their crews, if they didn't decay within moments themselves, drowned.

I hope that answers your question, Amber.

Our next comes from Eric, who writes:

I heard you once fought Dracula, is that true?

No, Eric, that is not true. You're confusing me for my grandfather Duncan. And he didn't fight Dracula. He fought *Dracula's Reflection*, which the vampire had cunningly hidden in a mirror in his castle, in case he was ever vanquished—that way a version of him could continue on with his dark plans of domination. While we're on the topic: vampires, collectively, have reflections. Dracula in particular did not because he trapped his in a singular mirror. Which was then destroyed, as I said, by my grandfather.

But I myself have had some tangles with legendary monsters. Perhaps you've heard of the Goose Island Gargoyles? Not the hockey team. But the actual gargoyles they're named after. During the day, they'd pretend to be stone statues, and hide out on Goose Island, here in Chicago. But at night, they'd shed their stone skin, take on more ghastly forms, and then fly over the city—swooping down to grab their human prey off the streets.

They terrorized the city for months. It was in all the local papers—go back and look at just about any front page of the Tribune from May 2008 to September of that year. Perhaps that isn't Dracula level fame, but to be front page news for that many months? I mean, that's something.

And defeating them was no trivial matter. There's an ancient book called the Stone Vulgate, and as you might have guessed, it is a book carved into stone tablets. Few pages have persisted into modern day, but luckily an almost complete copy is on display at the Art Institute. It took weeks to get the translations right, but luckily I was able to in time.

The Stone Vulgate details a ritual. One that must be performed on the autumn equinox - and only when the moon is in crescent form - waxing or waning. It can only be done at the highest point of the affected area. In Chicago, that is of course, The Sears Tower. And so on the night of the Autumn Equinox, I stood up there, looking over all the city.

I set a small fire and threw two stones in: Dolomite, as it's common in the area. And diamond, because it's precious.

After I did, monstrous screams echoed across the sky. Heavy leather wings flapped towards me.

Over a dozen gargoyles circled the Sears Tower, as I stood there, next to my small fire, with stone tablets before me.

And I whispered to those creatures, before they could grab me, and devour me: "My fire is the sun, and so you are stone."

With those words, what I said became true. The small fire turned into a brilliant shining light. And the gargoyles turned to stone.

From the air, they fell, and shattered on the streets beneath the tower.

And that's how I defeated the Goose Island Gargoyles.

I hope that's a satisfying answer to your question, Eric, though it doesn't involve me fighting Dracula.

And that's the last question I'll answer tonight. I need to make a few calls to get our phone board fixed, so I can take calls on our next show. Until then, I'm Dr. Malcolm Ryder, and if you're experiencing anything supernatural, paranormal, or otherworldly, feel free to call in—but not to curse me—next time on A Voice From Darkness.