

INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS
MT SAN ANTONIO, CA

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TO: The Herald, Church of Alienism
FROM: Howard Stonecipher, Director
SUBJECT: PROSPECTIVE HERALD SUBMISSION - Field Observation Briefing No. 3

FIELD OBSERVATION BRIEFING NO. 3
THE DEAD TELEPHONE LINE

During relocation work associated with the Mount Baldy Complex, Institute personnel were asked to determine whether an obsolete copper telephone circuit running through an abandoned utility corridor could be removed. The line appeared ordinary: two insulated conductors in an aging sheath, once tied into a small local exchange and later bypassed when fiber service reached the area. Both ends had been disconnected for years. One termination had been physically cut back and capped inside an empty cabinet. The other ended in a collapsed equipment room where the original terminal block had already been removed.

The first unusual observation was made because a technician, before authorizing demolition, clipped a high-impedance instrument across the pair. The line was not dead. It carried a weak, irregular signal concentrated in the voice-frequency range. There was no useful DC supply, no obvious ringing voltage, and no continuous carrier. What appeared instead was a low-level pattern of rises, pauses, and clustered energy that looked enough like speech to invite attention and not enough like speech to permit transcription.

The obvious explanations were tested first. Nearby power circuits were isolated. Portable radios were removed. The pair was checked for continuity to ground and to adjacent conductors. A temporary replacement cable laid beside the route remained quiet. The old line was then cut at a third point roughly midway along its run. The two new halves continued to exhibit the phenomenon independently. Whatever was being measured did not require an intact electrical path from one end of the original circuit to the other.

This was interesting, but not yet especially mysterious. Long conductors make competent antennas. Corroded junctions can rectify radio signals. Buried copper can acquire induced voltages from nearby electrical systems. Old telephone plant is an excellent place to manufacture ghosts from perfectly ordinary physics. The field team therefore spent several days trying to make the signal become boring.

It refused.

The strongest anomaly emerged accidentally. Two technicians were standing near an exposed section of the cable while the instrument was recording. They began discussing whether the source was a broadcast station. During their conversation, the unexplained voice-band energy on the line fell sharply. When they stopped speaking, it returned. The effect was not immediate enough to resemble acoustic pickup and was not explained by vibration of the cable. Repeated trials produced the same broad result: ordinary human conversation near the line tended to suppress the signal. Silence permitted it to recover.

The effect was spatially limited. Conversation at twenty or thirty meters produced little change. Conversation within several meters of the exposed line produced the strongest attenuation. Recorded speech played from a loudspeaker had a smaller and inconsistent effect. Mechanical noise did almost nothing. Two people speaking naturally to one another produced the most repeatable suppression. No one has yet offered an explanation that survives more than a few hours of review.

The signal itself remains frustratingly close to intelligibility. Spectral analysis shows structures resembling formants, pauses, and syllabic timing, but no stable language has been identified. On several recordings, separate bursts appear to overlap in a way that would be unusual for a single conventional source. Attempts to reconstruct words have produced different answers depending on the listener. For that reason the Institute has prohibited transcription by impression. If the line is carrying speech, we do not yet know what it says. If it is not carrying speech, the resemblance is unusually persistent.

The Church's teachings on the Veil of Cognition are difficult to avoid here, though I do not offer them as an electrical explanation. Alienist doctrine treats ordinary perception as an act of selection: the observer experiences one coherent world because incompatible or excessive information is screened, ordered, or rendered inaccessible. At Nodal locations, the Veil is said to labor more heavily because more than one history, path, or state may be present where a person expects only one.

An old telephone circuit is an unexpectedly good metaphor for this. Its entire purpose was once to reduce distance into one intelligible voice. It carried a human conversation by excluding everything except the narrow band required to make another person present at the far end. The dead line now appears to do something stranger. It produces its strongest unexplained signal when nobody nearby is speaking and weakens when an ordinary conversation begins in the same physical space.

One reading would be theological and therefore premature: that the presence of one coherent conversation suppresses another, just as the Veil permits one experienced history to dominate competing possibilities. A less dramatic reading is that human bodies, movement, local electric

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fields, or some unrecognized coupling mechanism alter a sensitive length of old copper. The Institute presently prefers the second explanation because it is testable and because the first is far too interesting to be trusted quickly.

Nevertheless, the coincidence with a recurring line from the Fragmented Tome deserves preservation: the world is not necessarily silent where we have ceased to listen. Elsewhere, Church teaching warns the Pilgrim not to mistake the absence of an intelligible message for the absence of a speaker. Those propositions were written as theology. The cable is only copper. But for several weeks now, a severed telephone pair beneath the mountain has behaved as though silence is not an empty condition.

We have not removed it.

The utility corridor has been left accessible, the cable has been marked against disturbance, and continuous recording is underway. The Institute will attempt environmental correlation, controlled acoustic trials, conductor substitution, shielding, and longer baseline measurements before assigning the phenomenon any significance beyond its present description. We are also examining whether the original circuit served any facility or occupant of interest before abandonment.

For now the observation is simple enough to state without theory: a telephone line disconnected at both ends carries a weak signal resembling human speech. The signal diminishes when nearby people converse. When they stop, it returns.

There are easier mysteries to ignore. This one is already wired into the building.

Respectfully,
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