

File T-23 647617435 23:1812

Transcript: Debriefing session 2942

Re: Assault of research center 13, event codenamed "Manticore"

Presiding Judges: Codenames Gold, Steel, Lead, Copper, Mercury

Judge Gold: This inquest is called to order. Senior Judge Gold speaking. Judges, report for the record.

Judge Copper: This is Copper speaking.

Judge Lead: Judge Lead here.

Judge Mercury: Mercury.

Judge Steel: Judge Steel, ready and waiting.

JG: The first witness is called to testify. State your identity for the record.

Timothy Mann: Tim Mann, Agent #43501.

JG: For the record, Agent Mann, your position?

TM: I was one of the five third-shift security agents assigned to the front entrance of the Gillespie Research and Development Center.

JG: In your own words, tell us what transpired last evening.

TM: The others and I had been on duty for about two hours--

JC: Making this about 2 a.m., correct?

TM: Right. So, we've been on for about two hours when the proximity alarms went off. Terry (Agent Terrence Day, #52139) called in the initial report.

JG: And what was the report?

TM: Just the standard. Two signals approaching the front entrance at a walking pace.

JM: "Just the standard?" Do you not think anything of an alarm being sounded, Agent Mann?

TM: Huh? No! I mean, of course we do, but this sort of thing happens a lot.

JL: I was not under the impression that RC #13 was frequently assaulted.

TM: No, not like that, I mean the alarm goes off a lot. The techies keep the damn thing turned up so high that sometimes big trucks going by on the highway down the road set it off, but we still have to call it in. Also, packages get delivered, stupid kids try to get in the door on dares, stuff like that. We even once had a lost pizza guy come in to ask for directions. He came in the door, saw five guys pointing guns at him and almost shit himself.

JM: You will refrain from profanity in this chamber.

TM: (Quietly) Sorry.

JC: After the call was made, what did you do?

TM: Well, nothing. Like I said, these things happen. We've never once had anything serious happen during our shift.

JL: You mean until last night.

TM: (Quietly) Yes.

JG: So, you waited, patient and alert, so you could diligently record the nature of the two interlopers?

TM: (Nervous laugh) Right, that's it. We waited. Pretty soon we saw these two guys coming, just walking toward the doors.

JC: Did anything about them strike you as odd?

TM: Just that they were both huge, like six-foot-eight or something. They were all wrapped up in heavy clothes, too, but it was cold out so we didn't think anything about it.

JS: What happened next?

TM: We just watched these guys. I think Lou (Louis Cartwright, Agent #39711) made a wisecrack about they must be lost from the circus or something. (Uneasy laughter) Then they came through the first doors and we got scared.

JC: You saw something that upset you when they opened the doors?

TM: No, they didn't open the doors, they came *through* them. Just walked straight into the glass

like it wasn't there. Right through the first doors and then the second ones.

JM: You stood there and watched this? Clearly, we've been paying you too well.

TM: What? No, it's just it happened so fast by the time we realized we weren't imagining things they were already in the check point area.

JM: "Imagining things?" Do you have cause to believe you are seeing things on a regular basis? Does your squad partake of opiates while you stand around not protecting the company's interests?

JG: That's enough, Judge. What happened next, Agent Mann?

TM: Ok, um. (Clears throat) They got through the doors and somebody, I'm not sure who, shouted "Stop right there!" The two big guys ignored him and kept going right for the elevators. That's when we opened fire.

JL: And?

TM: It didn't even phase them! Between the five of us we must have put over a hundred bullets in those guys at close range, but they didn't even slow down! I remember hearing lots of ricochets and thinking they must be wearing body armor, but they don't make armor that can take that kind of abuse. Even guys that big should have been on the ground in seconds.

JL: You shot the intruders, but they didn't respond?

TM: No, not at first, but pretty soon they turned and came right at us.

JG: How did you respond?

TM: I know Jimmy (James Mickey, #23193) pulled his knife and tried to stab one of them. (Pause) He tried to stab him, but the knife didn't do anything.

JC: What do you mean, the knife didn't do anything?

TM: I mean that. Jimmy stabbed the guy in the chest and it just sort of skidded off of him. Then the guy grabbed Jimmy and picked him up off the floor like a little kid. I-I remember there was (Sobbing sounds, clearing throat)

JC: Agent Mann, are you all right?

TM: (Clearing throat) Yes, sir, I'm sorry, sir. The big man picked up Jimmy and there was this...this cooking smell, Jimmy was screaming...

JS: What were the others doing?

TM: Um...there was a lot of shooting still going on. I meant to, I mean I wanted to help, but Jimmy's screaming was (sobbing sounds), then something hit me in the head.

JL: That is when you were knocked unconscious?

TM: Yes, sir.

JM: You are aware that all the other members of your team are dead?

TM: (Very quietly) Yes, sir.

JG: Do you have anything else to report?

TM: No, sir.

JG: Very well. You are to report to your CO directly from here. Your return to duty will be approved pending the evaluation of this inquest of your performance, as well as a psychological evaluation by company doctors. Do you understand?

TM: Yes, sir.

JG: Dismissed. (Click of intercom) Send the next witness, please. (Pause) State your identity for the record.

Brian Potts: I am Doctor Brian Potts, Chief Researcher of facility #13 and head of the Russell Foundation's Uncategorized Acquisitions division.

JM: Speak only in coded terms in this chamber!

JG: Dr. Potts, tell us what you experienced last evening.

BP: Prior to the event you all are dancing around with your crass euphemisms, I was in Lab Three of Facility #13. Or do I need a code to say these things?

JM: (Unidentified, muffled speech)

JG: What were you doing in Lab Three at the time of the intrusion?

BP: Intrusion. To the point, if unimaginative.

JC: Doctor, please.

BP: (Sighs) Very well. I had spent the bulk of the day with my team in the lab. We were analyzing an item.

JG: Doctor.

BP: (Chuckles) In all fairness, we really didn't know what it was. That's why we were analyzing it to begin with.

JL: How would you describe it?

BP: The specimen was a roughly ovoid stone of irregular surface, being roughly nineteen inches long, seven inches wide and six inches high, weighing thirty-six pounds. It's only outstanding feature was its color, a hue similar to turquoise but slightly greener.

JL: If it was an ordinary rock, why was your team examining it?

BP: Am I allowed to talk about this? (Pause) No, I'm serious.

JC: Dr. Potts, you survived the event we are dancing around, as you put it. I'm sure you understand that piecing together what happened is more important than any of the pet projects that may have been dropped in your lap by some board member.

BP: Yes, of course, you're right. The stone was brought to us two days before the attack. We were told to analyze it because it supposedly had some remarkable properties. After a full day of running batteries of tests we had learned nothing other than that it could be the centerpiece of a gay man's rock garden.

JL: Did you take samples?

BP: None. After spending a day on tests and learning nothing, I called my contact and requested permission to take physical samples from the core specimen. I was flatly refused and, in fact, threatened with severe consequences if the stone was in any way damaged while in my care.

JC: You were required to learn about the object without being able to take samples from it?

BP: Welcome to the Russell Foundation. Oh, I'm sorry, to Codename: Dirtbag.

JM: Sarcasm and glibness have no place in this chamber.

BP: Then what are you still doing here?

JG: Enough! Doctor, please continue. You were examining your specimen, and...?

BP: First, the proximity alarm went off, as it does roughly every ten minutes all day and night. We generally regard it as an annoyance.

JC: So we're told.

BP: The first indication anything was wrong was when the first intrusion alarm was sounded. I'd never actually heard it before. It took me a few moments to realize what it was.

JL: What did the alarm mean to you at the time?

BP: Only that someone was stupid enough to attempt to break into a huge, fortified building full of armed men. As I said, nothing out of the ordinary has ever happened to us before. I actually wondered if it was a drill of some kind. Regardless, I followed protocol and had the lab begin putting away its samples.

JG: What happened next?

BP: Next? We waited. I expected to get a call at any moment giving the all-clear. One of the chemists, Koons (Roderick Koons, ID # 19191) said something about hearing gunfire upstairs. My staff started to become uneasy and then the next alarm went off.

JS: What alarm was that? What did it mean to you?

BP: (Huffs) As with everything around here, we are only told what the boneheads in charge think we need to know. My understanding was that the first two alarms were general, global alerts, but the third one that we heard meant an unauthorized approach to the lab.

JM: And when you heard this alarm, you began fortifying the lab?

BP: What? Of course not.

JM: You claim to be dedicated to protocol, yet you made no effort to protect the lab?

BP: Now you listen to me, you pompous ass. I'm a scientist, not a man-at-arms. When I see indications that a force capable of penetrating a professional security force is approaching me, my first impulse is not to wield outlandishly large firearms and spout trite one-liners.

JS: Meaning?

BP: I hid. We all did. (Pause) What did you expect?

JM: Security incursions and firearms training are part of all personnel's training, are they not?

BP: How many lab technicians have you seen carry machineguns in their breast pockets?

JG: Enough! Judges, sidebar.

(Transcript of sidebar removed by Senior Judge Gold, authorization AA-23)

JG: This inquest is reconvened. Doctor Potts, please continue. You say your staff sought cover when the lab alarm went off?

BP: Basically.

JG: And?

BP: The intruders showed up.

JG: They came down the elevators, is that correct?

BP: Correct. They came out of one car and went right for the back wall.

JS: That wall is where your samples are stored, correct?

BP: That's right. They're stored in a series of safes along the wall. The two men, or whatever they were, went to opposite ends of the rear wall and began tearing safes open methodically.

JM: That's a rather incredible observation.

BP: I thought so.

JC: Did you see any indication of the natures of the attackers?

BP: Frankly, no. I was scared enough to begin with. When they started tearing the safes open with their bare hands I began wondering if I was hallucinating. About then I ran for the stairs. I think I heard the signal that more security was coming at some point, but...I just ran.

JS: You exited the building directly and did not see anything else of note?

BP: That is correct.

JG: Thank you, doctor. If necessary you may be called upon for further testimony. Dismissed.

(Pause)

JG: Next witness, please. (Pause) State your identity for the record.

Matthew Wayne: Agent Matthew Wayne, team commander, special projects division.

JG: Agent Wayne, last evening your team was involved in an incident at research facility #13. Describe what happened.

MW: What happened is that we were called into a war zone and my men got slaughtered.

JC: Could you be a little more specific and less caustic?

MW: At a time you already know, an alarm you already know about called my team from a place marked on your maps to a lab that officially doesn't exist.

JM: Agent, your cooperation is required--

MW: Don't start with me. I'm not stupid. I know you've heard this story before. You've also got video footage from about fifty different angles of what really happened. We both know that you're pretending to be in control because you really have no idea what the attack was about, so don't act like I need you more than you need me. It's insulting.

JM: (unidentified noise)

JC: Breathe, Mercury.

JG: Very well, Agent Wayne. Is there anything you would care to tell us about what happened in the lab?

MW: Other than my men being killed right in front of me? Let me see.

JL: Of the nine man team you lead into the lab, six were killed, is that right?

MW: Yes. We came out of the 'vators weapons at the ready. The targets were on the opposite side of the room, breaching lockboxes. I scanned the room to assess the situation, then I called for the targets to stand down.

JS: They ignored you.

MW: Damn right they did. I gave the order to open fire. They stopped ignoring us.

JC: One of them fired some sort of projectile at you then, is that correct?

MW: Yeah. Some kind of ball of electricity. Damnedest thing I ever saw. It hit one man and exploded into lightning. Got the two men closest to him, too. Damn fools never learned not to bunch up. They were still screaming while the rest of us dove for cover. It went downhill from there.

JL: Your gunfire had no effect?

MW: Some, not enough. They turned and came right at us. We emptied whole clips into them but they kept coming. The one of them was surrounded by little lightning bolts. The other one had a bigass mace.

JC: One of the intruders was a walking generator, capable of directing electrical blasts capable of seriously injuring a man, and the other one carried a club?

MW: You figure it out. It worked fine for them. They came right through our fire and started killing my men.

JG: Nothing you did availed you?

MW: I'm sure you've seen the videos. I saw a man I've known for two years, a man with three daughters, get his skull crushed like an egg by one of those things. Another man tried to hit the generator with the butt of his rifle. It fried him like an electric fence.

JC: Your weapons were completely useless?

MW: No. We could see bullets hitting them, some even lodging in them, but whatever metal they were made of made them very tough.

JC: So, we come to what we really want to know about.

MW: The other intruders?

JG: Quite. You said in your report that you had encountered these individuals before.

MW: Yes, while pursuing the escaped Harlison Beta last year.

JL: What were they doing while you were pursuing the Beta?

MW: The same thing.

JS: They have some interest in Russell Foundation projects?

MW: Not so much. They were tracking Harley--I mean, the Beta--because of the homeless she had killed.

JG: Then what were they doing breaching the perimeter of one of our labs at the exact same time it was already under attack by an unknown force?

MW: You're asking me?

JL: What exactly happened?

MW: They came out of the 'vator, like it says in my report. There were five of them: the cyberpunk guy, the skinhead, the other big guy, the armored one and the redheaded model. They were missing the two blacks and the Yd.

JS: Your report indicates that the one individual's armor had been noticeably changed.

MW: Yes.

JS: How so?

MW: It had some upgrades.

JS: Such as?

MW: Rockets. He came out of the 'vator first and fired a couple of them at the electric chump. That did some real damage to him. Left two big holes in his chest, set his clothes on fire.

JC: You saw something then, but you didn't clarify it in your report. You say you had expected to see a wounded man beneath the metal, but instead you saw...?

MW: More metal.

JS: How's that?

MW: Just what I said. There wasn't anything under armor. It was just solid metal, all the way through.

JM: Agent Wayne, you are aware that lying to this court is a serious offense?

MW: You say one more word to me and I'm coming up there and tearing your head off.

JC: Easy, Agent. You're suggesting that the intruders were machines of some kind?

MW: No, I'm saying they were metal, plain and simple. No parts, no gears, just one solid piece.

JL: How is that possible?

MW: You tell me.

JC: What were the others doing?

MW: The two men went to town with what they were carrying. That got the chumps off of what was left of my team. Then the big guy shouted at me.

JC: The big guy? That's the one you mentioned in your report as being extraordinarily strong?

MW: Right. He shouted at me to get my people to safety. I ordered everyone out of the building. The lab techs came out of nowhere like rats and ran for the door.

JL: You ordered everyone out of the lab on the instructions of an outsider?

MW: Have you been paying attention? People were dropping like flies in there. I was more than happy to let the outsiders take some of the heat for us.

JG: Your report states that you were the last employee to evacuate the lab.

MW: That's right. I got everyone out of the building, then hit the signal for reinforcements. I went back in leading three full squads with the intention of forcibly detaining everyone and everything in the building.

JC: What did you find upon returning to the lab?

MW: A mess. The two metal intruders were completely destroyed. All that was left was a pair of statues that were half-melted. Bodies were everywhere.

JS: But none of them were of this mysterious team of interlopers?

MW: None.

JG: In your report you mention one other detail you noticed upon inspecting the lab.

MW: The safes on the back walls were all torn open. Stuff from them was scattered all over the floor.

JC: You never found any sign of the other intruders?

MW: None. We combed the whole building. They didn't go out the front and there's no other way out.

JL: (Scoffs) What are you suggesting? That they flew away?

MW: (Chuckles) I'm not suggesting anything.

JG: Thank you, Agent Wayne. Pending our review of this data, you may be called upon for additional testimony. Dismissed.

End Transcript

Additional notes: The second group of interlopers disabled the lab's cameras using firearms immediately after Agent Wayne evacuated the company employees.

Safe #43, the safe containing the specimen in BP's experiments, was forced open. The specimen, codenamed Landheart, was listed as the sole contents of safe #43, and was found in the form of shattered remains scattered amongst the debris of the rear of the lab. When lab techs finished the arduous task of reconstructing it, they discovered that it had apparently been shattered by a blow from a heavy blunt object. It was also missing a substantial portion of its original mass, roughly 15%.

Investigation into this case is ongoing.