

The following is an excerpt from the personal journal of Derek Thompson.

SFX: Ominous music

November 12, 1956

THOMPSON: (SOLEMNLY) It has been nearly four months since my dear friend Wilson Stewarts died, and I was forced into an early retirement by my superiors. I write this now to insure that I do not forget what happened, and with the hope that perhaps later the truth concerning Wilson's death is finally realized. I know myself not to be insane, and I can only pray that those reading this will not think me a madman. I must write these words, for Wilson's sake.

Contrary to the official report, Wilson Stewarts did not die of a heart attack. (MUSIC GETS TENSER) The case files state that the shock of an armed officer breaking down his front door was too much for him in his weakened condition, and his heart stopped from fear, much like a rabbit's. And while it is true that his health was deteriorating, heart failure was the least of Stewarts' worries. Something far more horrifying was afflicting my poor friend, of which I dare not speak yet. It would be far more prudent to start from the beginning, and make my case from there. (MUSIC FADES OUT)

I first noticed something was wrong when I was responding to a report of missing livestock. As sheriff, I made it a point to try to respond to all calls personally, taking any opportunity I could to get out of the station. I knew everyone in Arlington. My family's roots were deep there, with me being the last in a long line of town sheriffs. When I was younger, my father would take me around in the squad car, and I got to know all the families real well. No one ever really leaves or comes to Arlington, (pause) everybody ends up knowing everybody.

Our town was probably the safest town in Texas, not having a serious crime in all my life, so I assumed a fence had broken somewhere and some cattle had roamed off the property. So I was quite surprised when I was led to what appeared to be pools of blood in the middle of Chase Brookson's pasture. (BRIEF DRAMATIC MUSIC)

CHASE: "I just don't understand it...the whole herd was here last night and this morning half of them are just gone and this is what I see!"

THOMPSON: I was just as stumped as Chase, and called up my deputy to take photos of the scene and interview the neighbors to see if they had any clues to what had happened. My best theory at the time was that some crazed, desperate predator had roamed into town, although what could take out half a herd and leave no trace, I'd no idea. I advised Chase to be on the lookout for any strange animals, and keep his herd in the barn at night for a few days, and to report to me if he had any more troubles.

As I pulled out of Chase's driveway, I decided to visit my poor friend Wilson, who lived nearby and had just returned from a long trip overseas. Wilson was a bit of a strange fellow, very interested in secret cults and the "dark arts" as they are called, and often took trips to foreign destinations to learn about these heresies firsthand. Typically, I would do my best to avoid people with that kind of focus, but I grew up with the man, so I tolerated his...eccentric tastes. Besides, he swore he never actively participated in the..."activities", and he still went to church every Sunday, giving more than anyone to the collection plate.

His latest trip was to Egypt, and he'd been gone for a couple months. He seemed very excited to leave for this one, speaking about some great opportunity and the biggest gathering of some sort. Whatever it was, I was admittedly curious as to how it turned out.

However once I arrived, something was obviously wrong...

(SFX: Knock on door) (SFX: Slight wind throughout scene)

THOMPSON: Hey, Wilson! Open up!

(SFX: Door creaks open)

Wilson did not look well. What I saw was not the smiling, energetic man who waved goodbye to me months before. His face was gaunt, and his skin was like tallow. His genial, calm eyes had been replaced with wild, bloodshot ones, and with him traveled a very offending scent. Either the jetlag hit him especially hard this time, or something in Egypt had gone amiss.

WILSON: (EXHASPERATED) Whose there?? Go away, leave me alone!

THOMPSON: (TAKEN ABACK) Wilson, it's me, Bradley!

WILSON: I don't know any Bradley, and I don't know you! Please, leave or I will call the police!

THOMPSON: I *am* the police!

WILSON: What?? You!?

THOMPSON: Wilson what's going on here? It's me, Bradley Thompson! We grew up together!

WILSON: (CONFUSED) What...? I... Bradley? Yes...yes, of course...I'm sorry I don't know what has come over me...

THOMPSON: Is everything alright Wilson...?

WILSON: (OBVIOUSLY TROUBLED) Oh...yes, yes... I'm just tired, tired. I'm sorry Bradley. Everything's fine.

THOMPSON: Well, do you mind if I come in...

(SFX: Footsteps forward)

WILSON: (HARD) I'd rather you didn't.

THOMPSON: What?

WILSON: I'm...quite tired Bradley. I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

THOMPSON: But Wilson...

WILSON: (YELLING) Leave Bradley! Now! Please!

THOMPSON: Hey now...don't you start order-

WILSON: Sheriff, unless you have a warrant or something you'd better be getting off my property!

(Brief Break)

THOMPSON: I didn't know what was going on, but I knew I'd have to keep my eye on Wilson. His behavior was just too strange, and it was painfully obvious he was hiding something. What he was hiding was a mystery, but I had a strong suspicion that it had something to do with his trip in Egypt.

(SFX: Phones ringing) Over the next few weeks, there were more and more reports of missing livestock, with the same unexplainable conditions. The photographs revealed strange, three pronged tracks around every scene, the likes I had never encountered before. And though these tracks were new to me, I felt a queer pull in the back of my mind every time I looked at them, as if I had seen them elsewhere. I was staring at these photos late one night when Doctor Lenkman called. (SFX Phone being picked up)

THOMPSON: (BORED) Yeah, missing livestock, I know, what's your address? I'll be th-

LENKMAN: (ANXIOUS) No livestock this time Sheriff, sorry. This is Doctor Lenkman, and I desperately need to speak with you. It's very urgent.

THOMPSON: (CONCERNED) What's the problem, doc?

LENKMAN: It's Wilson.. (*Dramatic Music*)

THOMPSON: What happened??

LENKMAN: I'd rather not discuss this over the phone. Can you meet me at my office in 10 minutes?

THOMPSON: I'll be there in five.

(SFX: Phone clicks off)

THOMPSON: Wilson. That's where I had seen those tracks before. They were all around his house the day I went to visit him. I didn't pay them much mind because I was too busy with him. They were there though, I remembered. But *why* were they there? Wilson never owned any livestock. It was at that moment I knew that Wilson had something to do with the missing livestock cases, and I'd have to go back down to his house real soon. And judging from the doctor's tone, I had a feeling it'd be tonight.

(SFX Knocking, door opening)

LENKMAN: Hello Sheriff, please, come in.

THOMPSON: *Gasps*. Doc! What happened to you?? You look as though you were beat to death!

(Ominous music)

LENKMAN: Yes, well, that's partly why I called you here. You see, I've just returned from a house call. Wilson Stewarts'. He called me and requested I visit him right away, saying it was

an emergency. I, of course, responded right away, and drove up there less than 20 minutes later. I exited my car and was met with a positively atrocious scent, like that of rotten eggs and bile. And then I saw Wilson, sitting on his porch, staring off into the distance. As I made my way closer, I could see he was not exaggerating when he said it was an emergency.

Sheriff...his skin was covered in deep sores, and it seemed to be sagging off his very bones. He was extremely pale, and I could tell his hair was falling out. My first thought was leprosy, judging from the smell, or perhaps some vile disease he contracted while in Egypt. I never got a chance to examine him, though, because the minute I got within 5 feet of the man he spun his head around and told me to leave! I was shocked of course, seeing as he called me in the first place, and tried to explain to him that he was indeed very ill and needed medical examination. He sat there silently for a moment, and then lept out of his seat and proceeded to attack me! All the while he was hollering for me to "leave, leave, get away from him"!

I barely escaped by knocking him over the head with my bag, giving me time to get back into my car. He was still chasing and screaming at me as I sped away!

THOMPSON: Good God...

LENKMAN: I figured I should tell you this personally, seeing as you are the sheriff and Wilson's close friend. Quite honestly, I'm terrified, sir. I have no idea what could be causing this, it's unlike anything I've ever dealt with. Memory lapses, violent behavior, bodily decay...Something strange is definitely going on here.

THOMPSON: Yes, your right. Something quite strange indeed.... Thanks for coming to me, doc. I'm going to check this out right away. Are you going to be alright?

LENKMAN: Oh yes, yes, of course. I am a doctor after all...but Sheriff, I do not advise you going down there. I believe Wilson should be quarantined until we find out what's happening. It could be contagious, whatever it is...

THOMPSON: I left the Doc's with a sick feeling in my stomach. At the time, the irony was lost on me. I knew what I had to do. I was going to Wilson's, even if it meant catching whatever he had. I needed to get to the bottom of this. My oldest friend was either dying, going insane, or both, and was terrorizing the town, spreading fear and potentially a lethal disease. There wasn't time to call the higher ups and wait for them to make a decision. I knew what I had to do.

(SFX car door opening and closing)

(Tense music)

It was near 11 at night when I pulled into Wilson's drive. The doc wasn't lying about the smell. As I surveyed my surroundings, I noticed there were even more of those tracks than last time. Much more. I walked slowly up to his door, and unholstered my gun, just in case. (SFX gun cocking) The lights were out in the house. I knocked on the door, and called out to him (SFX Pounding on door, Yelling of name). There was no answer, so I started my way around the back. On my way there I the beam of my flashlight fell on a definite trail of the prints, going straight to an old, broken tool shed.

(Music gets tenser)

I altered my course and started towards the shed. The smell grew stronger as I came closer to the rickety structure, and by the time I reached the door my eyes were watering and I

was fighting the instinct to gag. I reached my arm forward, and swung the door all the way open.

(SFX door creaking)

(VERY INTENSE MUSIC)

What I saw sent me reeling. In front of me lay dozens of decapitated cattle heads, along with a plethora of other dismembered limbs and pieces of meat, glistening in pools of blood by the light of the moon. I had finally discovered where all that missing livestock had gone to.

It was then that I heard it.

(SFX LOUD SCREAM)

(Frantic music)

It came from inside the house. I ran to the back door, and pounded on it again and again, shouting for Wilson to let me in. There was still no answer, so I did what any worried friend would do. I broke down the door. (SFX of wood splintering, and a crash). Once inside, I could hear strange clicking noises, and what sounded like grunting. I made my way into the kitchen, gun drawn, and flipped the lights on.

(SFX grunting and clicking)

I will go to my grave and never forget what I saw before me. Wilson lay on the ground, writhing in pain, grunting and groaning, face contorted. What was causing this pain is still hard for me to believe, but I swear it to be true. Out of his back a monster was emerging. It was humanoid in figure, but had too many limbs, which sprouted from all over its body like tentacles, each ending with three claws, matching the mysterious tracks. Its skin was glistening with some sort of maroon liquid, and the clicking I heard was emanating from what I assume was a head, which displayed multiple mouths lined with razor blade teeth, and no obvious eyes.

I stood there, horrified, eyes locked on the monster. Whatever it was seemed to pay no mind to me, and continued to struggle in the opposite direction of Wilson. For how long I stood there I know not, but my petrified trance was broken by a loud, unintelligible rasp from Wilson. I looked down at him, and his eyes locked with mine. I see those eyes when every night when I fall asleep. Those eyes, that were asking me to kill him. I raised my gun, but fired at the monster instead of Wilson, unable to shoot my old friend.

(SFX, three gunshots)

(More frantic music)

(SFX shrieking and crashing)

The creature let out a terrible shriek, and flailed around wildly. It began pulling with greater effort away from Wilson, and with an audible slurping noise, it broke free of the man, and turned towards me...

I don't recall what happened after that, for the next thing I know it's morning, and I'm pulling myself off the floor of Wilson's kitchen. His body next to me, with his back devoid of any evidence that would imply a creature had just torn itself from him. I checked his pulse, and discovered him to be dead.

Grief and horror stricken, I scrambled off the floor. On my way out, I stumbled over an overturned chair in my rush, and knocked a book off of an end table. There was a piece of paper attached to its cover, with my name in giant letters on it. I grabbed the book and detached the paper once in the squad car. On the side opposite my name, it simply said "page 334" in hasty handwriting similar to Wilson's. There seemed to be more, but the writing became completely unintelligible scribbles almost immediately.

As I stated previously, those above me disregarded my report and had me resign, issuing their own analysis of what happened. I also suspect they raided Wilson's house in order to remove any evidence supporting my claims, for when I returned to the scene a few days later to pay proper respects, I found the home picked clean of all books, diaries, and papers; his entire library empty.

I kept the book and the note a secret, keeping them in a safe at my house for weeks. It was only after many nights of deliberation that I finally opened the book, and flipped to page 334, cold sweat gripping my entire body. What I was afraid of I do not know, for I had seen what could only have been the worst of it, but I suppose plunging deeper into the hellish domain that took my friend was what held me back so long.

When I reached page 334, I was unprepared for what I saw. The page contained a detailed illustration of the creature that I encountered that night at Wilson's house. I fear I have not seen the last of this monster, for lower on the page was a paragraph detailing the creature. The information I garnered is quite ominous, for myself and anyone else in the town. The passage read as follows:

Ushlanda Kri-Tsthoth: Worshiped throughout Mesopotamia, an Ushlanda Kri-Tsthoth was referred to as the "Bringer of Internal Light". Heavily persecuted by the pharaohs, the cult of the Kri-Tsthoth was driven underground, and it is unknown whether any remnants are still present today. The Kri-Tsthoth cultist was devoted to someday "merging" with a Kri-Tsthoth, in order to attain "internal light". Descriptions of a merged follower strongly align to those of a leper, and sometimes indicate symptoms of violent psychosis. One theory on the cult is that

it was created as a coping mechanism by the lowest uncivilized castes of the time, who's living conditions were definitely less than ideal. A typical offering of livestock of some form was given to appease the Kri-Tsthoth. The Kri-Tsthoth was said "leap" from host to host when threatened, leaving no trace in the previous body. An incubation period of a few months in the new host would be expected before merging would become apparent.