

The following document is an excerpt from a report by the FBI regarding the disappearance of one Salvador Doležal. It is a timeline of events leading up to his disappearance as recounted by his then-college-roommate Basil Sorgen.

Due to the unreliable nature of the narrative, this evidence has been dismissed, and the case has been filed under "Unsolvable."

I.

The Roommate

My name is Basil Sorgen, and I'm a twenty-year-old, male, black cat.

It was my second year at University, and I had moved from living in the dorms to the on-campus apartments. They were alright. It was a four-story structure, and all the front doors opened onto a courtyard, which was a nice change from doors that opened onto dingy dorm hallways. Tall trees grew up from the middle of the yard and rose between the upper walkways, shading all but the uppermost floor with their leaves. I was on the second floor, and I liked it that way.

I had moved in on the first day the university allowed; I wanted my pick of the bedrooms. Now, the apartment wasn't much. It was a small place with two bedrooms, a living room, a connected kitchen, and one bathroom set between the bedrooms. I grabbed the bedroom closest to the kitchen. The other room was just a few paces farther away, down a short but dark hallway past the bathroom.

My room was furnished like you would expect of a college student. A bed that sat on an old frame and was draped in cheap sheets. A tall wooden dresser I had brought from home that all my clean clothes were stuffed into. I had a desk that doubled as a place to do homework and a home for the desktop computer I had built. There was a little window in the middle of one wall at the head of my bed, and old blinds hung over it to help keep the light out or let it in. It being about midday, light was shining in through the slats, making a warm ladder of light across my carpeted floor.

It was two days before the start of the term. An email popped up in my inbox. It had been CC'd to a lot of people, but I recognized the original sender as a friend of my parents. The subject line was jarring. "Death in the Family." I opened it and started to read it.

"I'm not sure how to break this to you all..." the message began. "My son, Jason, passed away two days ago. He was stricken with a sudden illness just before returning to college, and none of the doctors that we visited could offer any help with his deteriorating condition. He was ill for a week, and was bedridden with terrible fatigue the last couple days of his life. There was nothing anyone could do... I'm sorry. I'd like to personally invite all of you to his funeral next week on Saturday. Thank you all for your support in this trying time. God Bless. ~Jessica Astor."

I frowned at the screen and sat back in my chair. I hardly knew Jason. I knew he was attending college in the next city over, about an hour drive away. We had met at some big family parties every now and then, but despite being my age we never really talked beyond pleasantries. That aside, I found the news of his passing to be unsettling. I mostly felt bad for my mom and her friend Jessica, who would be mourning and grief stricken together. I shot back a reply expressing my sympathies because it felt like the right thing to do. I hoped it would bring at least some small comfort to Mrs. Astor and her family.

The doorbell rang just moments after I had hit the send button. I closed out of my browser and went to the door. As I pulled it open, a stranger pulled back the hood of the jacket he was wearing. The treetop-filtered sunlight fell gracefully across his face, making his pelt shine like silken robes. Most of his body was covered up by long pants and a thick hoodie, but the fur pattern on his face, and the fluffy sort of mane that puffed out from the back of his jacket were the unmistakable characteristics of a striped hyena.

The corners of his mouth turned up into a languid smile, and he gazed at me through half-lidded eyes. He was slouched forward a bit, as though the weight of the jacket was too much for his body. He drew in a breath and opened his mouth as though to speak, but before he could get out a word he wobbled on his legs, and a flash of worry crossed his face as his eyes rolled back into his skull, and he fainted right into my arms. Panicked, I pulled his lightweight body through the door and dragged him onto the couch in the living room, making sure to prop his head up with pillows.

My phone was out of my pocket and unlocked in one well-practiced gesture, and I was two presses away from dialing 911 when I was interrupted by a weak groan of "Please don't."

My gaze met that of the now-conscious stranger, and I gave him a worried look. "You sure?" I asked. "You just fainted."

"Yeah, I'm sure, happens all the time," he said as he sat up and looked around. His voice was soft, and every word trembled as though the slightest breeze might sweep them away. In this fragility there was a strange calm, and a certainness behind his words that his frail state could not fully support. I locked my phone and dropped it back in my pocket, against my better judgement.

"That sounds unpleasant," I mentioned as I stood over him.

He drew his knees up to his chest and hugged his legs. "Chronic fatigue, hah... Usually not a problem, but moving day was too much I guess." He seemed anxious, so I stepped back to give him some space.

"Moving day huh? You wouldn't happen to be-"

"Oh." He cut me off and his ears perked up. "Yeah, I'm Salvador. Salvador Doležal. Please tell me you're Basil."

"I am," I reassured him. "Nice to... meet you. Let me get you some water." I made a hasty retreat to the kitchen to take a moment to catch my breath while I filled a glass with tap water; it was all I had at the time. As the glass filled, I decided I would ask to see his ID, just to be sure that he was who he claimed to be. I walked back to him, glass in hand. "Here." I handed him the glass which he took with a wavering smile. Gratitude shone from his eyes. I smiled back and waited until he was finished. "You wouldn't mind if I asked to see your ID, would you?" I asked as I took the empty glass back from him.

"Not at all." He pulled out his wallet from handed the entire thing to me. I flipped it open and tugged his ID out from the transparent pouch it was housed in. I looked at it for a little longer than is polite, but everything checked out. I tucked his ID away and handed his wallet back.

"Sorry, just wanted to be sure."

"Don't worry about it. If I had been the first one here I'd have asked the same of you." Salvador managed a smile. "Thanks for not just leaving me at the door, by the way," he said as he unzipped his hooded jacket. I turned back to the kitchen to put the used glass in the sink.

"Hey, stranger or no, I wasn't gonna just leave you passed out in my front door. How fucked up would that be?"

"Pretty fucked up, I guess!"

It was only a short length of wall that provided any separation between the kitchen and living room, but in the few moments he was out of my sight he had stood up and finished taking

his jacket off. He looked taller now that he wasn't hunched over, and for the first time since I saw him at my door, I felt like I really noticed him. The fur on his arms was striped in perfectly symmetrical patterns. His proportions were something out of an illustration; unnaturally perfect and ideal. I could tell even through his loose shirt and baggy pants that he was slim, right on the border of too-skinny and toned fitness, which I imagined was the result of his perpetual fatigue.

"Basil? You okay?" he caught me staring.

"Yeah! Yeah I'm fine!" I replied, not entirely lying. "Just uh, you sure *you're* okay?" I wanted to take a seat on my couch, but something about him standing beside it kept me from getting close enough, so I continued to stand across from him.

"I'm sure, don't worry. I've got the uh..." he stopped mid-sentence and scrunched his face in thought. "The papers with me, in my bag, that the movers have. They'll be here soonish, I think? I got here before they did."

I nodded at him. "I'll let them in when they get here. You good to walk? I can show you to your room, it's just down the hall."

He gave me a nod. I beckoned him to follow, and took him past my room and the bathroom, making sure to point those out to him. I stood to one side, against the wall, and let him open the door. His room was the same as mine, except cool and empty. The blinds over his window had been left closed over the break, and there was dust on the windowsill and across the carpet.

"Not bad. Needs a vacuuming," Salvador said as he stepped inside and caused a cloud of dust to rise up about his shoes.

"This whole place does, I've basically been pushing dust around for five days." I found myself staring at his backside now, in spite of my best efforts not to. His mane made the back of his shirt look puffy, and it stuck out under the hem and joined up with his tail. His fur there looked like it had been combed down to be more smooth and conventionally attractive, but it might have just been that way naturally. I never asked.

"Well, it looks fine. I hope you don't mind if I just relax on the couch until my stuff gets here? The movers will carry it all in for me, since I can't." He shut the bedroom door and moved back down the hallway, practically gliding past me.

"No, go right ahead." I followed behind him, back to the living room, where he sat down on the couch and curled up again like he had been before. He seemed smaller, and I was able to take a seat beside him this time.

I flipped on the television that was opposite the couch. It was an old thirty inch flatscreen I had brought from the garage at home, and was set on top of a low, wooden coffee table to keep it off the floor. The HD cable we got was nice, but I mostly used the television for Netflix. I got that started up and handed the remote to Salvador. "I'll be in my room if you need anything alright? Let me know when the movers arrive."

"Sure thing," he said with a little wave good-bye as I got up. "Oh, and Basil? It's really nice to meet you."