

I have had the water shut off to my house for a year now and I still don't feel safe. I survive drinking bottled water and using a water cooler. Although lately I've been drinking more beer than water. I haven't showered in a week, although I did manage to wash my hair in a recent rain storm. I do laundry at the river like a peasant in the middle ages. I bought one of those fancy compost toilets and stuck it in a shed in the back yard. The neighbours haven't complained yet.

I asked the city to shut off my water and they wouldn't do it for more than a month unless I had a construction permit. Something about it being a public health rule. I tried to do it the right way but they kept turning it back on. So I just stopped paying the bill, that was the only way they would turn it off. You would do the same thing if you knew what I know.

I work at the water treatment plant, at least I used to, I had to quit. After what I saw, and none of them would believe me. They thought I was crazy, but then they started dying.

The treatment pools need to be manned at all times, monitored twenty-four hours a day. Small adjustments made here and there, we also had to check the cameras and make sure everything was flowing well, stop any issues before they arose. I had the late shift, and it was going like any other. I was struggling to stay awake, hating the job wondering why I went to four years of college for this when I saw them.

On the camera, a group of guys looking like they were from some paramilitary were rolling a barrel into the treatment room. The leader was urging them to move faster. I had no idea how they got past security. I was in shock at what I was seeing, it was some kind of terrorist attack, it had to be. Something we briefly touched on in training but one of those things you assumed would never happen. Not like this at least.

Security was nowhere to be seen, I was alone, and I had no idea what to do next. Part of me was screaming to press the alarm button but another part was wondering if they had killed everyone. If maybe I was only still alive because they didn't know I was here.

When they opened the barrel though my self preservation instinct went away, they were going to poison the water supply. I had to at least try. I hit the emergency button waiting for the alarms to start blaring, preparing for those guys to barge in and shoot me. Nothing happened though, the alarm had been deactivated somehow.

They dumped the barrel, I couldn't make out the label, I had to stop them. I ran to the security office expecting to see a bloodbath, but there was Tim the night guard sitting at his post. I flagged him down and unable to make full sentences in my excited state got him to follow me. I remember saying something like "terrorist attack, poison, hurry, bring weapon".

He looked at me like I had gone insane but got up to follow anyway. I pointed to the main pump room where the tanks were and he went in ahead of me. I huddled on the other side of the door waiting for gunshots, hoping that Tim had called back up or something. I will admit I was in full panic mode, not really thinking clearly.

I was an engineer not a soldier, I had never expected to be in a situation remotely close to this one. After a few minutes Tim emerged from the pump room and looked at me with a mix of concern and confusion. There was no one in there.

I convinced him to review the security tapes. He agreed reluctantly and we made our way back to the office. He went over the last hour of footage, there was nothing. Just an empty pump room. Even the other cameras had nothing. No group of military guys rushing down the halls of the plant. No barrel, no dumping nothing.

Tim asked me if I was feeling okay. I lied, told him I must have dozed off and dreamt the whole thing. I know what I saw though. I needed to check the water. Needed to prove I was not losing it. I calmed Tim's fear for my sanity with a laugh and shrug. A lame joke about needing more coffee and sleep then made my way back to the pump room.

I walked around the tank looking for a sign that what I had seen was real. Looking for a trace, for anything. Standing where they had been standing as they dumped the barrel I saw movement in the water. Impossible, these were the clean tanks, ready to be pumped to the city.

I was so convinced that they had dumped a poison that when I knelt closer to the water to see what could be moving in there I didn't even make the connection between the dumping and what I saw. Tiny white worms squirmed in the water. It looked like a murky cloud moving through the tank. Only it was made of these pale flat worms.

I ran back to the office, I needed to shut off the pumps. They had contaminated the water with tape worms or something. Only, that made no real sense. Why would a terrorist organization try to give a city tape worm? That was far from a lethal attack, gross but not lethal.

When I got back to the office Dan was there. It was time for shift change and I hadn't even realized it. Without thinking I told him what I had seen. He looked worried and agreed that shutting down the pumps would be a good idea. But that meant cutting off a good portion of the cities water supply, it was not something to be done lightly.

That was why he checked the tapes first. That was why I was sent home. The next few months of me trying to convince everyone from my boss, to the media to the doctors they kept sending me to of what I had seen is what got me put on long term disability. They gave me medication for the hallucinations and wanted to lock me up but I was smart enough to play along at that point, I couldn't get locked up I needed to find proof of what I had seen.

This was some kind of advanced operation, a cover up. They had disabled the alarm button, so they had probably hacked the cameras. Lives depended on me getting the word out. Lives depended on me convincing them I was sane.

So I pretended the meds were working as I dumped the bottles of pills in the trash. Thankfully my doctors never contacted the city, I'm sure my having the water shut off to my house would have been all they needed to commit me. I spent my days researching tape worms, looking at water samples under a microscope, checking in with friends and family about any weird symptoms they might be having.

I was too absorbed in my quest to notice when people started dying. The first deaths happened at the treatment plant itself. Staff were found with no signs of external trauma, upon autopsy though it was found their brains were gone. Skulls completely empty. I only learned this later after I broke into the hospital's records room.

The doctors told the family that they had contracted a parasite that migrated to the brain, but I had never heard of a parasite that consumes the whole brain in a few days leaving no trace.

That was the oddest thing to me, that was what got me digging even deeper into what this could be, how it attacked people. The worms I had seen at the plant looked like tape worms but the bodies had no sign of tapeworm or any other parasite. The only reason the doctors thought it was a parasite was the marks left on the inside of the skulls. Like worm trails in blood and bone.

It wasn't the first few deaths that caught my attention though, I didn't even look into those ones until the children started dying at the school. It made the news, and that was what made me realize this was more than an act of mass tapeworm infection.

In the space of a week ten children died. All showing no outward signs of trauma. It had to be connected to what I saw at the plant, so I started going through the obituaries. The children were just the last in a long line of sudden deaths. My later escapade in the hospital record room revealed that all these people died the same way.

What the records didn't tell was how sudden the deaths were and that all the victims were found near a city water source of some sort. Most in the bathroom but some by water fountains or in their laundry rooms. The records didn't indicate how sudden the deaths were. People were going from one hundred percent healthy to being found dead in the bathroom a few minutes later.

If I was smarter I would have seen the connection sooner. I kept testing the city water, gathering samples from public fountains, bathrooms and friends houses. There was nothing in it, no microbe, no parasite, no toxin I could see.

I still had the water on at my house at this point, I just drank bottled water and was careful not to get water in my mouth when I showered. I don't know if it was because I was so hyper aware of the water or if I was just lucky but I saw one. I saw it before it could get me.

I had just gotten out of the shower and was staring at the tap when I saw a flat white tendril slide out of it. I can't describe the disgust, the horror, the fear I felt in that moment. I backed into the tub as this flat worm kept sliding out of my tap. Sliding toward me, reaching for me like an alien tentacle. Like it could sense where I was even with no eyes or other sense receptors I could see.

The panic of a cornered animal overtook me and I bolted for the door, dodging the tentacle before tearing the door open. It followed me, stretching out from the tap chasing me through the house. I ran out the back door and into the shed in the yard, that near transparent tentacle following me through the door.

I closed the shed door as tight as I could, not feeling the cold of the spring morning on my towel wrapped body. Only aware of my fear and the monster chasing me. I saw it, before I entered the shed, I saw that it was like a long hose or wire leading back to what I can only assume was my bathroom.

This was not just a small worm, it was either impossibly long or the arm of a much larger monster. That is something I haven't found out yet. Hopefully when I convince people this is real and we manage to kill or capture one of these things we can figure it out.

The one that chased me gave up on the hunt pretty soon after emerging into the outside world. I don't know if it was the cold, or maybe it drying out, but it had to retreat to the moist and warm pipes. I didn't realize I was safe for a while though, I was too terrified to look outside.

It was the intense shivering from the cold that finally brought me back enough to peak through a small crack in the shed and realize that I was safe. I walked back into the house cautiously and slammed the doors shut on any room with a sink, giving the rooms I couldn't close a wide berth.

I dressed as fast I could trembling and shivering as I was and then ran outside to the main water shut off valve to the house. As I worked at turning off the water, digging up the right size socket and torque wrench, my mind started to calm enough that I could make sense of what had happened.

It was so obvious now. People were not being infected by this parasite, it was feeding on them then disappearing back into the pipes. Like a mosquito flying off into night, leaving only an empty skull as evidence it had been there.

I didn't know, and still don't know how many there are. I don't know if there is one or two large monsters down there or if these are just exceptionally long worms and there are millions of them. Based on what I saw in the water tank I think that is more likely the case. I can't be sure though. There is a lot I still don't know.

I don't know how they manage to infiltrate the skull without leaving any sign of outward trauma. I don't know why they only consume the brain, I don't know why or who infected our city with this and I don't know how wide spread they are.

I also have no concrete evidence that they exist. People dismiss me as a schizophrenic, as someone who needs to take more meds, not as the engineer I am. I am not crazy I know what I saw. The tapes and security systems being bypassed at the water plant makes me think this might be some kind of inside job, and somehow that is worse than a terrorist attack.

No one believes me though. More people are dying every day and I am still seen as the insane person. I am going to try to show them again though. These worms are so long they must be easy enough to find. I am going to bait one out and capture it. They live in the freshwater system so it's not as simple as going into the sewer and pulling one out. I am going to film it and bring them a carcass to show them I am not crazy, that we are in fact under attack.

That is why I write this, as a warning and a memoir in case I get killed by one of those things. In case they still push against believing me. This is a warning. If I fail to get them to step in and fight this try to remember that the creaking in your pipes is not what you think it is. Stay away from the taps. The infection is spreading.