The trans-national MURKOFF CORPORATION tirelessly pushes the frontier of scientific research and development. Partnering with the greatest minds of tomorrow, Murkoff expands the reach of every branch of scientific inquiry, including gene therapy, behavioral psychology, information technology, and medicine.

In the event of mistake or oversight, the MURKOFF INSURANCE MITIGATION DEPARTMENT comes in to minimize economic fallout. Mitigation Officers are damage control. They are not here to save lives or help people, they are here to make sure it doesn’t cost the company any more than it has to.

PAUL MARION & PAULINE GLICK,
MURKOFF INSURANCE MITIGATION OFFICERS

THE MURKOFF ACCOUNT Part 1
Story by JT PETTY & Art by THE BLACK FROG
OH MY GOD! IS THAT BLOOD?

LOOK AT ALL THAT MONEY!

LET ME SEE YOUR HANDS!

PUT YOUR F*CKING HANDS UP!

I NEED TO KEEP THIS HAND ON MY FACE.

OKAY...
MR. PAUL MARION, BORN IN CINCINNATI, PASSED THE OHIO STATE BAR EXAM, 1992. NO CURRENT ADDRESS.
YOU'RE CLAIMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE COUNT OF ARSON, ONE KIDNAPPING, AND FOURTEEN MURDERS.

I NEED ...

... YOU TO ARREST ME.

HOLY CRAP, I CAN STILL SEE OUT OF THAT EYE.

AT LEAST FOURTEEN. THERE MIGHT BE MORE.

YET THERE'S NO EVIDENCE FOR ANY OF THIS.

OF COURSE NOT...

THAT'S MY JOB.
MURKOFF REHABILITATION CENTER

I'm going to need a little help here.

Happy to lend a hand.

I hope, Mr. Click, you won't mind talking while you eat?

The matter is urgent.

Call me Pauline, please, and of course, we can talk while I eat.

Where do you want to start?

No, I meant ....

With the steak, please.

I know what you meant.
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND PAUL MARION, BEFORE HE DOES ANY MORE HARM, YES.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE NEED TO MINIMIZE THE FALLOUT FROM WHAT HE'S ALREADY DONE.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR, MORE MEAT, PLEASE.

WE DON'T KNOW HOW EARLY HIS SABOTAGE OF THE MURKOFF CORPORATION BEGAN.

SO START AT THE BEGINNING.


OF COURSE, WHAT'S HIS NAME, THE EGYPTIAN GUY, KILLED ALL THOSE VETERANS...

OMAR, AN AMERICAN, HIS GRANDPARENTS WERE EGYPTIAN, HE WAS BORN IN NEWARK.
They had just found the third body, one Martin Bellmont, took them a day to piece him back together.

Just like the others, the head was gone. He was a veteran of Iraq, and like the first two victims, a patient at the Spindletop Psychotherapy Clinic in Hattin, Texas.

Murkoff bought Spindletop two years earlier as part of Blair’s “Research through Charity” initiative. They had a government contract to help our returning veterans cope with PTSD.

The chief psychotherapist wasn’t directly under Murkoff management, so we had to give him “The Speech.”
WE'RE NOT HERE TO SAVE ANYBODY, THE COMPANY YOU WORK FOR BELONGS TO A COMPANY THAT BELONGS TO A COMPANY THAT BELONGS TO THE MURKOFF CORPORATION. ACCIDENTS AND LAWSUITS RAISE MURKOFF'S INSURANCE PREMIUMS, AND UNNECESSARY EXPENSE MAKES US BAD.

WE'RE DAMAGE CONTROL, WE'LL HELP AS MUCH AS WE CAN...

BUT OUR BOTTOM LINE IS THE BOTTOM LINE.

WE'RE LEGAL MITIGATION.

SO YOUR CARD SAYS.

THE MURDERED MEN WERE ALL PATIENTS OF YOURS.

WE'LL NEED TO SEE ANY NOTES YOU HAVE ON THEIR THERAPY SESSIONS.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, DOCTOR-PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY.

UNLESS OF COURSE YOU CAN PROVIDE A WARRANT, LIKE THOSE FBI MEN, DID.

WE'LL NEED ANY INFORMATION YOU GAVE TO THE FBI; WE MAY NEED TO SHAPE YOUR TESTIMONY.

NOW HOLD ON A SECOND...

ARE THERE SUMERIAN?
That’s right, Mr. Marion. My patients were damaged while working in the Middle East. Does good to include some Arabic culture, to show it’s not all war.

The apkallu, demi-gods given to man to establish civilization and guard against its destruction.

Who are they?

Like the nephilim, Genesis 6, “The sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, their children the mighty men of renown.

With animal heads, let’s get back on track.

Your reports describe experiential therapy, re-living and digesting the event until it stops hurting.

Some scholars think so. I like to think it helps our soldiers to see Christian and Islamic mythos coming from the same place.

That’s where it started, but we began to see negative effects in the therapeutic spiral. Psychological wounds would close, then re-open wider as the therapy continued.

Our current method is dream therapy, guided by hypnosis. They can re-experience and release the traumatic events subconsciously, without a burden to their waking mind.

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The mind knows what it needs. The therapy was remarkably effective. Rates of substance abuse plummeted, self-harm and suicidal thoughts were all but eliminated.

That’s impossible. Get a warrant or talk to the FBI.

Sounds great, except for those three homicides. We’re going to need to see those consultation transcripts.

That seems dangerously close to leading the witness. How do you know you’re not shaping the patient’s memory?

He stonewalled us, go fuck him and fuck the FBI. We go to a more reliable source.
VIDEO SURVEILLANCE? SURE, THE WHOLE PLACE IS WIRETAPED. IT'S USUALLY STRONGFAT WHO MONITORS THE FEEDS.

"STRONGFAT?"

...I WISH THOSE GUYS WOULDN'T CALL ME THAT.

DO THE THERAPISTS KNOW THEY'RE BEING RECORDED?

OF COURSE NOT! WE'RE WATCHING THEM, TOO.

AND YOU WATCHED EVERY THERAPY SESSION?

CAN YOU SHOW ME THE VICTIM?

YES MA'AM. MAKE SURE NOBODY GETS HURT.

THIS IS MARTIN BELLMONT. THE GUY WHO JUST GOT YOU KNOW, KILLED, HE WAS IN AFGHANISTAN, I THINK.

...FLINT IN THE DESERT, AND THE INSECTS EATING ITS EYES ARE EMBERS. BUT THE FISH IS ALIVE, AND I'M GOING TO PUT IT IN THE WATER I'M CARRYING, BUT WHEN I PICK IT UP IT BURNS ME...
That’s Priscilla Clarke, the second victim. And this was the first victim, John Bowers. He was really sad, I think he killed a lot of people over there.

Yeah, she was nice.

...they had killed the children, too. But the children aren’t really children, they’ve got animal heads, and if we don’t watch them they’ll come in the house and kill all the...

...because they followed us back, they don’t want us. They want our children. The crane, with blood on his beak from... from our heads. He dips his beak and we move like puppets...

Yeah, it don’t happen often, but, like, this guy—

...Omar something. He’s an okay guy. Just got a lot of stuff to work out.

...I can’t tell them those things are coming in. They move in blood, something that sucks light out. It comes through the walls.

Can you describe the thing?

No.

I want you to try, Omar.
OMAR! WAKE UP! WHEN YOU HEAR ME CLAP YOU WILL WAKE, AGGH!

GAAAAMAGH!

THERE'S ME.

YOU'RE GOOD AT VIOLENCE.

YUP, THEY TAUGHT US SOME JUDO.

WE'LL NEED COPIES OF ALL THOSE SESSIONS, CAN I GET THEM AS AUDIO FILES?

SURE.

YOU'VE GOT A MUCH HIGHER TOLERANCE FOR CRAZY THAN I EVER WILL. IT'S ALMOST DINNER TIME, LET'S GO SEE IF WE CAN CATCH SOME HIPPOS EATING DINNER.

YEAH, I ALWAYS BEEN BIG, AND I WAS M.P. WHEN I WAS ARMY.

M.P. LIKE MILITARY POLICE?

...AN EGG! IT'S AN EGG! BIRTHED IN BLOOD, EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU MOTHERFUCKERS!
...Ten thousand dollars, but it's cash, which you can file as a reimbursement...

Meaning you won't be taxed on it.

Lord knows we need the money. But I wouldn't bet a split nickel that lawn jockey taking the White House don't take half of it.

Yes, ma'am, our so-called government certainly is in a sorry state. Though if they're going to be evil, we can at least thank God they're idiots.

Amen to that.

The retroactive arbitration agreement was always Glick's bag. She coulda sold dog shit perfume if she wanted to.

For ten thousand bucks this woman gives up the chance at a lawsuit worth a couple million at least.

The contract was a brilliant piece oflegalsex, protected Murkoff entirely, without mentioning the company once.
The Apkallu are in their heads. We need to go back to Dr. Claymore's.

That was the thing about Paul Marion; he walked around with his head in the clouds, but then he'd make these intuitive leaps even he couldn't explain. It was infuriating, but useful.

At least until those "intuitive leaps" took him down a... dangerous path. But I'm getting ahead of myself. We went back to Spindletop, where of course we found--

I... don't think Dr. Claymore is going to be much use any more.

This whole place is on video, we've got the killer.

I'm gonna stay here,
WELL, SHIT.

NO VIDEO. THE WHOLE SYSTEM GOT SMASHED TO HELL.

Yeah, that makes sense. The killer's motivation was the culmination of all the separate sessions, and there was only two people who heard everything every patient said. Dr. Claymore. And...
He's not home.

Luckily, a well-dressed white woman has a key to every house in the world.

Four missing heads. Four coolers.

Four directions of the compass. Strongman was in security. He was setting up a perimeter.
I got Priscilla here.

Bowers,

Bellmont.

And a place he's keeping cool for Claymore.

Meaning he'll be here soon.

I'll call a security team.

Strongfat still sleeps with his childhood stuffed animal. Why are the killers always angry toddlers?

We might as well start using his real name. Shit's about to go on record.

Fine, then...
CHRIS WALKER.

LITTLE PIG?

HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

YOU'RE ...

RRRRAARGH!

WACK!!
BLAM
ROW
SPLUNCH

?!?
FHAHA

KERAAASH

BLAM BLAM

WACK AHH!
LITTLE PIG...

Huh?

THANKS.

HE’S A MURKOFF EMPLOYEE.

I THINK HE JUST RETIRED.

Yup. Still means we gotta get him out of here and cover up before the cops get here. You strong enough to put those coolers in the truck?
WE PUT DR. CLAYMORE'S HEAD IN THE LAST COOLER AND PUT ALL FOUR OF THEM IN OMAR ABDUL MALIK'S APARTMENT.

PRETTY FLIMSY, EVIDENCE-LISET, BUT HIS NAME AND SKIN COLOR DID THE HEAVY LIFTING.

OMAR ABDUL MALIK WAS INNOCENT?

WELL...

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT INNOCENT, BUT HE DIDN'T DO THE HATBOX MURDERS.

APARTMENT OF ABDUL MALIK

YOU SEEM ASHAMED.

I WAS.

I AM.

SO, WHY DID YOU DO THE WORK? WAS THE MONEY THAT GOOD?

NO, I MEAN, THE MONEY WAS GREAT, BUT THE REASON I KEPT DOING IT...
A big part of Murkoff's business in the modern world is pharmaceuticals and gene therapies. My daughter has the same blood disease that killed my wife, extraordinarily rare, and uncurable.

But Murkoff had an experimental treatment, commercially unavailable. As a Murkoff employee, I had privileged access.

So long as I kept my job, they would keep Alice alive.
SO OMAR ABDULMALIK GETS CHARGED WITH FOUR MURDERS, GOES TO SUPER MAX FOR LIFE. CHRIS WALKER'S NOT SO LUCKY. MURKOFF USES ITS EMPLOYEES LIKE INDIANS USE A BUFFALO CARCASS...

NOTHING WASTED.

I'M SURE THEY TOOK GOOD CARE OF HIM.
That was just the thread that unravelled everything. Chris Walker led to Mount Massive, and from there...

Then the real opportunities presented themselves.

Marion never found out about the technologies we were using at Spindletop. How much further we had gone at Mount Massive.

It was almost sad, Marion still thought he was my partner, not my target.

End Book 1
To be continued in Outlast:

The Murkoff Account Part 2