

Freezing Point

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Freezing Point

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[GRIAN]

Hey, respect the mess! There's a method to my madness.

Um, anyways. Statement of Scott S. Major, regarding a problem with his house's heat.
Recorded direct from subject today, July 12th, 2022. Statement begins.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Statement:



[Click]

[SCOTT]

-on *earth* happened to your *arms*?

[GRIAN]

(*Fabric rustling*) Nothing, nothing. Um. *Hey*, Scott, how's it going?

[SCOTT]

Fine, lie to me then, I don't care. As for how it's going- would I really be here again if everything was going *well*?

[GRIAN]

...Fair point. Have a seat?

(Chair slides out)

[SCOTT]

I wasn't expecting an interview, honestly. The last guy- I don't remember his name. With the white hair? Last time I was here, he just had me write it down. Guess it made less work for him.

[GRIAN]

Yeah, I've been reading through a lot of his old transcripts. I think he went back and forth? I like the live interviews better, though. I think they add something, if that makes any sense at all.

[SCOTT]

...Sure. You know, I was surprised when I learned you'd got this job. Weren't you studying architecture? How'd you end up here?

[GRIAN]

Ah- it's a long story. Can we do your statement first?

[SCOTT]

(Sighs)

You know, I never wanted to be back here again. Twice was plenty. Yeah, we can go ahead. I don't remember, do you ask questions, or...?

[GRIAN]

No, I just say-

Sorry, twice?

[SCOTT]

Yeah?

[GRIAN]

I've only found one statement from you, the- um, with Joel. Is there another one? Or-

[SCOTT]

Oh. Yeah, it would've been a long time ago. I'm not surprised you haven't dug it out of this mess yet.

[GRIAN]

Hey, respect the mess! There's a method to my madness.

Um, anyways. Statement of Scott S. Major, regarding a problem with his house's heat. Recorded direct from subject today, July 12th, 2022. Statement begins.

[SCOTT]

I'm... not a huge fan of winter.

Snow and fairy lights are pretty and all, don't get me wrong, but I just don't like the cold. I've never liked it. In a perfect world, I think winter would last just long enough for a month's worth of snowmen and hot chocolate, and then be done. This is all relevant, I promise.

This happened a few months ago, in... I guess it was around the start of March. You know, the time of year where you're sick of the cold and you'd really like spring to just get on with it already?

Something happened to the heating in my house. It just went out, all at once, even though from what I could see the furnace looked fine. It wasn't the end of the world; my house is sort of a mess, I inherited it from my parents and it feels like things are always going wrong, so I just piled a space heater and a bunch of blankets into a room and dialed the company to come take a look.

A repairman came by the next day, but he couldn't make heads or tails of it. Said the furnace should've been working fine. It just... wasn't. He spent a good few hours down in the basement trying everything he could think of, but in the end all he could tell me was that he couldn't fix it because it wasn't *broken*. His best guess was that the problem was somewhere else in the heating system, so he gave me a few other numbers to call, but there wasn't anything else he could do.

Well, obviously it wasn't a *perfect* situation, but I figured I'd just survive until somebody was able to fix it, even if it meant having to replace the whole furnace. If it came to it, I could stay at a friend's house for a few weeks without too much trouble while repairs got done.

It didn't come to that, though. The next morning, as I was making breakfast in the freezing kitchen with a pile of blankets around my shoulders, trying to rub warmth back into my hands, the cold just sort of... faded away. Once I noticed, I figured the heating must have finally just kicked back on without me realizing.

I was relieved, obviously. I'd already been adding up how much it might cost to have to get everything torn out and replaced if that turned out to be what needed to happen, so I was more than ready to brush it off as a weird little one-day malfunction and forget about it. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth, you know? And... life went on as normal, for a few more days.

The only thing I noticed that was weird was- it's going to sound funny. My fingernails? They'd started going a little purple, like they do when you're out in the cold for too long. But my hands weren't *cold*, is the thing. My house was back to being perfectly cozy- a little drafty, maybe, but that's normal for an old house. I just figured I was having blood flow problems.

Then- that Friday, I had been planning on having some friends over for dinner and maybe a movie night after. We do it every couple weeks; it's just a fun chance to unwind a bit, and I've got the most space so we normally do it at mine.

Jimmy was the first one to arrive. As soon as he stepped inside, he stopped in the act of taking his coat off, tucked his hands under his arms, and asked me what was wrong with my heating.

I said I didn't know what he meant, and he said, 'Scott, it's *freezing* in here. ...Haven't you noticed?'

Honestly, my first thought was that he was messing with me, but... his teeth were chattering. He looked worried about me, too, when I didn't answer. He touched my forehead to check my temperature, I guess in case I was sick or something, and then yanked his hand away and said, 'You're *really* cold. You've just been *living* in here?'

His fingers were red, like- almost like he'd just touched cold metal or something, even though he'd

barely brushed me. And that scared me, more than anything else. Just looking at him, even with his jacket on, I could tell he was getting really cold just *standing* there. I wasn't- looking back on it now I know I wasn't really in the most rational frame of mind, but I could tell I was sort of panicking and I didn't want him to just keep standing there and getting even colder with every passing second. And you know him, he doesn't- I can't *ever* trust him to do the smart thing.

So I told him I was fine and the heating was broken but I'd get it fixed, and all but shoved him out the door before he could argue with me. Once I was sure he was gone, I called everybody else to let them know they couldn't come over after all, too. I didn't tell them exactly why, I just- I didn't know what was happening, and I didn't want any of them to get pulled into it, especially Lizzie or... they already have their own problems to deal with. I didn't want any of them to get hurt by whatever this was.

I locked the door, and the metal of the doorknob stuck to my hand. That was the first time I really, properly *felt* it- the cold.

You know that thing they say about frogs? How you can put one in a pot of water, and it'll be content to just stay in there, and you can slowly turn the heat up and up and up until it's boiling, and the frog won't jump out because it doesn't realize anything is even wrong until it's already boiled to death? That was how I felt, standing in the hallway and realizing I could see my breath in front of my face. There was frost on the insides of my windows.

It was cold. It was *so* cold. And it had *been* cold for days and days and I hadn't even noticed. It was like it had... gotten under my skin or something. Gotten into my brain.

I was standing there, and thinking about the repairman telling me there wasn't anything wrong with my furnace, and I had this really horrible sinking sort of thought that maybe the problem had never been with my house. Maybe the problem was with me. Maybe there had always been a problem with me, and that's why...

[GRIAN]

Why what?

[SCOTT]

Why I'm *living alone in my parents' empty house*, Grian.

[GRIAN]

...Sorry.

[SCOTT]

It doesn't- it's fine. I didn't mean to say that. Just forget about it.

I was just... scared. I was scared that there was something wrong with me and it was going to hurt people I cared about. I mean- Jimmy was standing in my doorway for like *two minutes* and he was shivering! It was colder inside my house than it was outside. I didn't know what was going on, but I knew it wasn't *safe*. I wasn't safe.

And I was scared for myself, too, once I started paying attention to... everything. My fingernails were going from purple to black. They looked like they might just *fall off*, if this... *whatever* was happening kept on. I still didn't- it didn't *hurt*, but I started wondering if maybe that was just because I was too cold, like everything inside of me had gone numb without me realizing. I worried- maybe I would just start falling apart, and I wouldn't even notice it.

I tried running hot water, but I couldn't even tell if it *was* hot. Everything just felt sort of...

lukewarm at most, no matter which way I turned the faucet, even though I *knew* it must have been freezing.

I think the thing that scared me more than anything was that I might get too cold to be able to feel anything at all.

That night, I piled every blanket I could find in the house onto my bed. I still didn't feel warm. It took me a long time to fall asleep, but I did, eventually, and I had... a dream. I think it was a dream. I'm still not really sure. But in it, my house was full of snow.

There were drifts of it up against the walls almost to the ceiling, waist-deep across the floor. It was burying my bed, so I had to get up, but it was so cold and so *heavy*. It was so hard to drag myself through it. Like it didn't want me to move. It was hard to walk. I knew I *wanted* to get out of there, I *wanted* to get out of the house and go find something to let me warm up, but I was so *tired*, and all the windows were frosted over and the doors frozen shut. It felt like it would be a lot easier to lie back down in the snow and just... go to sleep.

I was tempted to. The only reason I didn't was because there was something keeping me awake- a banging sound, like somebody hammering on my door, or- trying to break it down, even. And I could hear somebody calling my name. I wanted to tell them to go away- I tried to tell them to go away, because it wasn't safe, but I couldn't get anything out above a whisper.

I don't remember that well- I couldn't keep my eyes open. I was only barely staying on my feet.

But I remember hearing glass shatter, and then I remember feeling hands on my shoulders. They were warm, and they didn't let go.

When I woke up, I was in the hospital.

Jimmy got frostbite on his hands, dragging me out of the house. Mostly treatable, thank god- he lost the tip of one finger, but nothing worse than that. I found out later he'd gotten worried after I told him to leave and circled back a few hours later. He wound up having to wake up one of my neighbors at some horrible hour of the morning to get us both a ride to the hospital- him for frostbite, me for hypothermia.

I still don't know what caused it- I still don't even know if the problem was with me or with the house. I'm moving, though, as soon as I can find a buyer. It's a nice old house, should fetch a good price. I just can't stomach living in it anymore, after... not just this, but this was the last straw.

I don't know what would've happened if he didn't come back. I don't really want to think about it.

I'd sort of just started putting the whole thing behind me when you called to ask about my old statement about Joel, and- I figured I should probably come in and tell you about this, too, just to close the book on it. So now you know! And *I* don't have to ever come back here again.

[Click]

[Click]

[GRIAN]

Well, first of all, I do believe Scott's version of events. Like I've said before, I trust him, and even if I didn't- I know he likes dyeing his hair, but I don't think he'd go for the white streaks. Those are new. I still did call Timmy to follow up, and he basically verified everything here- even offered

to send me proof of their hospital visit. Everything about this statement adds up as real.

What I'm really curious about is that other statement Scott mentioned giving a long time ago. I tried to ask him about it again before he left, but he really didn't seem eager to talk about it. It's got to be in here somewhere. *Why* did Etho leave this place so out of order? Honestly, it almost feels like he did it just to spite me.

I *did* look up the house, just to see if there was any history of any strange events taking place there before his family moved in, but I wasn't able to find much. If anything did happen, it's not in the papers.

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Supplemental:

[Click]

[GRIAN]

Yes, I *know* I'm late. Scar managed to track cat hair in here again; I was dusting the refrigerator!

(Indistinct phone chatter.)

You could wait fifteen minutes for your phone call. My nostrils, on the other hand, could *not*.

(Indistinct phone chatter.)

(He softens.) Oh, alright. How's it going, Timmy? *(Pause.)* I mean, in general. You keep turning up in other people's stories, you know. You're almost as bad as Joe Hills! At least I can call *you* on the phone and, like, *know where you live*.

(Indistinct phone chatter, questioning.)

Oh, he's this guy. Has a library full of cursed books. Mostly he's at the top of my list of people I want to *talk to* and can't *find*. If you hear anything about him...? Yeah, let me know. I mean, I doubt you *will* hear anything, but if you keep turning up in my statements... Come on by the Institute sometime, actually. Promise I won't try to kill you this time.

(Sounds of disbelief. Then more indistinct chatter.)

(Offended.) I *won't!* Anyway, I was calling you for a *reason*. Scott came by the other day- Oh, he told you? Well, that's faster, then. I also found an old statement from *Martyn*, believe it or not. Remember Martyn Littlewood? Yeah. Anyway, about Scott-

[Click]

End Notes

yo i finally wrote another empires statement!! there are a few more coming down the line as well. i know i promised to do a fwhip one awhile back, and i plan on eventually circling back to shubble, too. for those of you who dont watch empires, this is once again empires season 1 propaganda, [scott's series is so fun](#).

as in canon, supernaturally-imposed loneliness and isolation is weak to gay people. sorry its just the facts. who am i to argue with canon facts!!

this particular sort of statement is one i have a bit more trouble with than most of the others, but i hope you enjoyed regardless!! if you want a little non-canon bonus snack to tide you over until the next one, you could also go read [interlude from another reality: taxidermy](#), which my cowriter and i wrote for fun in a different version of this au with characters in different roles.

also!! this statement means this series is now over 50k words!! which is *insane*. the amount

of views and comments on these, and the amount of *fantastic* art people have been drawing, especially lately, has been a surprise in the best way and i'm so glad you all are having so much fun as i am. there's a lot of exciting stuff coming down the line, too! i can't say too much right now, but stick around :)

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