

Seeing Double

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Seeing Double

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[MUMBO]

Oh- ugh, goodness, haven't had to do this for a while. (*Papers being moved aside.*) Where has he left-

Oh, it's already on. (*Quieter*) Of course it is. Don't know why I didn't expect that.

Statement of B. Statz, regarding something that was causing mysterious injuries among his friend group. Original statement given May 30th, 2016. Statement begins.

Notes

i would recommend reading [camera obscura](#) before this statement for context! [red light](#), [green light](#) is also relevant.

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

Statement:

[Click]

[MUMBO]

Oh- ugh, goodness, haven't had to do this for a while. (*Papers being moved aside.*) Where has he left-

Oh, it's already on. (*Quieter*) Of course it is. Don't know why I didn't expect that.

(*Louder*) Um, hello. Again. Mumbo Jumbo, archival assistant.

Grian's... out of the office, right now. He'll... well. Hopefully he'll be back soon.

(*Pause*)

I *knew* it was a bad idea to go wandering out into the wilderness, and I *told* him it was stupid and I wanted nothing to do with it, and *he* said I was overreacting, but *now* look who's been missing for a week. Again. That's right, it's not me this time.

(*Coughs*) Anyways.

I'm sure he'll be back soon. And in the meantime, we do need to keep doing some work around here, so. Here I am. Again.

Um. Well. (*Papers shuffle*)

Statement of B. Statz, regarding something that was causing mysterious injuries among his friend group. Original statement given May 30th, 2016. Statement begins.

[MUMBO (STATEMENT)]

I figured it was nothing, at first. That might sound silly once I start explaining what happened, but- listen, do you really catalogue every scrape and bruise you get?

It's just how it goes, right? You bump against stuff here and there, and if you can't place exactly where a bruise came from, that's normal. You don't lose sleep over it, is all I'm saying.

It started the Friday night before finals week. Exam week, here, I guess. Warning you now, I've never been able to break the habit of using the American terms.

I have a little group of friends who've been pretty close through most of college. We all met first year because of a couple shared classes- mostly evolutionary biology, it was a requirement for everybody- and we formed a sort of informal study group. You could basically always find at least one or two of us in the fourth-floor study room at the library, that year.

And we stuck together since, pretty much.

Though at the time, when everything happened...

Things were weird.

We'd all just been starting to get ready for the end of the semester, making plans for summer and everything, when a- really good friend dropped out of school right around the end of April. He didn't really say where he was going or if he'd be back, and basically none of us heard from him

after, so... the mood was just different, after that. Everyone was a little on edge.

But we still had tests to take, so on the Friday before finals we got together for a last minute get-together to study and just take it easy for a bit. It was, uh, me, my friends Martyn, Jimmy, and Pearl, and Jimmy's friend Joel also came over. It was nice- not very productive, we gave up on the studying pretty fast, but we ordered pizza and put a movie on, played truth or dare and some other games. Like I said, we were all stressed out, so it was nice to just relax before going into the next week.

At one point, Martyn suggested we all take a picture. He was in film, and I think specifically in the last few months he'd gotten more into photography, cinematography, that sort of thing. He actually used to have a nicer camera, but it broke, so he had a different one on loan from the school at the time.

I thought he was gonna set it up on a timer and join us, but he got sort of weird about it when I asked where we should set it up- he said he just wanted to take the picture and not be in it. Jimmy argued with him about it, because it didn't really feel right for anybody to get left out- especially because we were already missing somebody, you know- and eventually he gave in.

Joel said something that made Jimmy try to tackle him, Pearl gave Martyn bunny ears right before the timer went- it was a fun picture from a fun night, but there wasn't anything actually *special* about it. At least, I can't remember anything standing out at the time. But...

The really strange stuff started when I woke up on Monday. I slept in a little on accident, so I was in the middle of getting ready for the day in a hurry when I glanced in the mirror and realized I had a black eye.

It really looked like I'd been hit. Swollen and everything. It wasn't until I saw it that I realized it *hurt*, too, just like it would have if I really had been hit. I hadn't even noticed when I first woke up. But the day before had been completely uneventful. I'd spent almost the whole time working on a final paper. I had no clue when I *could've* gotten hurt. And I didn't live with any roommates at the time, so it wasn't like it could be a weird prank while I'd been sleeping.

As soon as I left my apartment, people were asking me what happened to my eye, and I honestly had no idea what to say. I think I mostly just sort of laughed it off and said something about being clumsy when people asked. If I'd thought it through more, I probably could've asked a friend who was better at makeup to cover it up, but I just didn't think of it at the time.

I had my first test of the week, one I wasn't as worried about, that morning, bright and early. After I was done, I went to the library to see if I could find any of my friends.

Pearl was there, and she was looking more stressed than I'd ever seen her. I asked her what was wrong, and she told me she'd found out she had a term paper due in astronomy she hadn't been told about *and* all her finals were piled up together on the last two days. And she'd already been sort of stressed ever since our other friend dropped out- she'd known him for a really long time, they were online friends back when she still lived in Australia. I left her to it- she obviously wasn't really in a position to try and solve my black eye mystery.

I did text my- uh, he wasn't exactly my boyfriend, but we'd been on a couple dates? And we usually traded funny stories about things that happened to us, so I texted him about it. I wasn't expecting a prompt response, since he was usually a little all over the place, but he actually texted me back right away.

He said it was a really funny coincidence, because he'd actually happened to get hit in the face by

accident the night before when a friend turned around too fast in a busy backstage without realizing how close he was standing and backhanded him, and now he also had a crazy black eye. Which was- well, weird timing, right? It didn't necessarily mean anything, but it was weird timing.

I set it aside for the moment, and figured maybe I'd just hit my head on something, like my bedside table or something, in my sleep. It didn't make that much sense, but it made more sense than nothing.

The next day, Tuesday, none of us had any finals scheduled, so we met up at the library to study. And- we were just sitting there around a table, all working on our own, when all of a sudden-

The only way I can describe it is that Jimmy's arm just *broke*.

On its own. He didn't do anything. I mean, he's the type of guy who can trip over nothing, but he was just sitting there reading, and then his arm snapped loud enough that I could *hear* it. It sounded horrible. I looked over at him to see what it was and he was just sitting there staring at his own arm, broken at an angle, all the blood drained out of his face. He just looked shocked.

I mean, I would be too! It wasn't like- if you get hurt in a car accident, or fall down the stairs, or even in a fight or something, you can understand *why* that happens, right? It's unexpected, but you understand how it's *possible*. This, though... none of us had *any* idea what to do with this.

We took him to the hospital, after he tried to move it and almost passed out. Piled into Martyn's car and drove straight to emergency intake. When they asked him how it had happened he had no idea what to say- eventually Martyn jumped in and said he'd fallen out of a tree.

They took him away to set the bone and put it in a cast, and the three of us- Martyn, Pearl and I- put our heads together in the waiting room. I was thinking about my black eye again. I'd been able to dismiss it as a one-off thing the day before, but now it seemed a lot scarier. Jimmy broke his arm. What if it had been his neck? Something else a lot harder to fix?

Pearl had been pretty quiet so far, mostly because I think she'd been nodding off in her chair, but she spoke up, too, finally. Said something weird had happened to her, the night before.

She'd stayed up all night working on her paper, and at around four or five in the morning when she made herself a fresh pot of coffee, she said, the whole side of her skull had started hurting all at once. It felt like someone was banging her head into a wall, she said. She parted her hair so we could see- there was a big bump there, so it definitely happened.

It was- all we had were these different facts, right, and no idea what to *do* with any of them or what they really meant. But we were all scared. We were all definitely scared.

We decided to start keeping track. Any injuries or anything that happened what we couldn't explain, we put in a groupchat to keep track of. And honestly, that felt weird too. It felt weird to be cataloguing everything that happened to me for *anyone*, even friends I trusted. But we had to at least *try* and figure out what was going on.

Martyn drove really carefully, when we left.

It's weird how people react to risk. When Martyn dropped me off at home, too, the first thing I wanted to do was go lock myself in my room and not touch anything until I knew I was safe again. Which I knew didn't make sense, because Jimmy hadn't been doing anything that logically could have gotten him hurt either- I was probably just as safe hiding under my blankets as I would have been on a rollercoaster. But everything just *felt* more dangerous.

You don't really think that much about how easily you can get hurt out of nowhere until it happens, right? It makes the world into a different place.

I stayed pretty lucky, for the next day or so. I had a couple more bruises show up, and when I woke up the next morning my ankle sort of hurt, like it had gotten twisted, but I iced it and tried to walk a little slower than usual and it felt better pretty quickly.

I had two more tests on Wednesday. I don't think I did as well as I would have liked on them. In my defense, I had a good reason to be distracted. I went to our study room in the library afterward, to check in on everyone else- Jimmy wasn't there, he'd taken a day, I think, understandably.

When I walked in, for a moment, I didn't know who I was looking at.

It was Pearl, but it wasn't. I looked at her, and I was seeing somebody else. Somebody-superimposed over her, sitting there and working on her paper in her place, who looked nothing like her. A man, I guess? I couldn't really see what he looked like, but I remember thinking he looked just as tired as Pearl, like he was wearing her exhaustion on his face.

And then I blinked, and Pearl was looking at me like *I* was the crazy one, and asking what I was staring at. I had no idea what to say. I just sat down and tried to finish up my last essay.

It was the day after that when we finally figured it out. Or part of it, at least. There's a lot I still feel like I'll never get about what happened and why- but we finally figured out where it had started, and how to stop it.

What happened was, after Jimmy got out of the hospital, obviously, people started asking him what happened to his arm, and mostly he used Martyn's fell-out-of-a-tree story because the truth was just so *weird*, but he told the truth to a few friends, and one of those friends was Joel, who was at the party on Friday.

And according to Jimmy, when he told Joel, Joel got all quiet for a bit, and then admitted he'd also been getting mystery injuries. He'd gotten a bunch of papercuts from nowhere on his hands, he said, and more recently something that felt almost like a burn on his shoulder when he'd been nowhere near any fire.

Jimmy didn't know what to make of it, what it meant that somebody who wasn't really in our friend group was also being affected, but Martyn got it right away.

He said he needed to go back home to find the picture from the party. And burn it, he said. He asked if I would come with- for backup, he said, since Jimmy was still supposed to take it easy and Pearl was almost done with her monster paper.

I asked him what he could need backup for, and he didn't really answer. He just said it was just in case.

He seemed on guard the whole way back to his place. I don't really know what he was expecting to happen, but nothing did- no monsters jumped out at us or anything.

He couldn't find the photo, though. He said he'd printed it off and left it in a drawer in his desk with some other pictures, but it wasn't there. We went through his whole bedroom, but we couldn't find it anywhere. Martyn was getting more and more stressed, and it was rubbing off on me.

We were getting ready to search the whole place, top to bottom, when I happened to glance into the bathroom.

The photo was taped to the mirror, right at eye level.

I still don't know how it got there. I only really looked at it for a second before the mirror itself caught my attention, because even though the photo was blocking their face, I could tell whoever was reflected in the mirror wasn't *me*. Their skin was a lot lighter than mine, the build was wrong- I looked down at myself, and so far as I could see I still *looked* like me, but suddenly I felt like I couldn't trust my eyes. The person in the mirror was too blurry to really make out- I just knew they weren't supposed to be there. *I* was.

I called for Martyn, and told him to bring a lighter. I didn't want to look away from the mirror, and I didn't want to touch the photo.

He lit it on fire as soon as he saw it, and we both watched it burn. The reflection was normal again when it was gone. It didn't leave any ashes. You almost could've thought nothing ever happened.

And... so far as we can tell, that did fix it. It feels almost anticlimactic, saying it out loud. Things have been normal since then, more or less. Pearl finished her paper and her tests and then immediately fell asleep, like, on the ground right outside. Jimmy just got the cast off a couple days ago. It doesn't seem like there's been any lasting damage.

I did ask Martyn, before we left his house, whether he knew something he wasn't telling the rest of us. He said no, and the way he said it I believed him, but he said he had- experienced something, earlier that semester. He'd seen something that was watching him through cameras.

That was still watching him, maybe.

[Click]

[Click]

[PEARL]

Hey! You said you wanted to ask me about a statement?

[MUMBO]

Yes! Um, you're- well. You're in this one? I mean, I'm assuming it's you, unless there's multiple Australian Pearls in England, which, I guess I don't know there aren't-

[PEARL]

Oooh, who's it from?

[MUMBO]

A B. Statz? In 2016.

[PEARL]

Oh! Big B!

[MUMBO]

Oh, so *this* is Big B.

[PEARL]

(Giggles) Yeah, I'm sure Grian's talked him up, right? He's the sweetest guy, really. Handsome, too.

[MUMBO]

And- so, then, he writes about a friend of yours who went missing around the end of April of that year. If I'm remembering right, that would've been...

[PEARL]

Grian. Yeah.

(Pause)

Making a bad habit of this, isn't he?

[MUMBO]

(Laughs weakly) Just a bit, yeah.

(Pause)

Um, but, so, I did want to also ask you about this statement- well, like I said, you're in it. The statement is about, um- final exams week, that year, some weird things that might've happened-

[PEARL]

Oh, wait, you said 2016? In spring?

[MUMBO]

Right.

[PEARL]

That was the week I didn't sleep, yeah?

[MUMBO]

That... is consistent with the statement.

[PEARL]

Yeah, can't help with anything there. I barely remember anything from the end of term that spring except for drenching my head in freezing water a few times to stay awake.

[MUMBO]

...Right.

(Paper shuffling)

Well-

[PEARL]

Hey, what's that?

[MUMBO]

What?

[PEARL]

There's a sticky note on the back of the- here, flip it over. *(Paper rustling)*

[MUMBO]

Oh!

I'm... guessing this must be from Etho? Grian hasn't seen this statement yet, I don't think, and this isn't his handwriting anyways... here, look. Oh, um, for the tape, I should say- it's got a bunch of question marks? And then under that it says 'The timing lines up, but what are the odds?'

[PEARL]

Huh. What's *that* mean?

[MUMBO]

Haven't the faintest. Suppose Grian can tear his hair out about it when he gets back.

[PEARL]

...Right. Yeah.

[Click]

Supplemental:

[Click]

(Muffled ringing)

[PEARL]

Oh, don't tell me-

(Paper shuffles. Ringing gets clearer, then stops.)

[PEARL]

He *did* leave his phone. Grian, you- *(Frustrated noise)* *(Pause)* What was his password again?

(Pause)

There we are. Let's see...

Spam, spam, he doesn't even have a car- ooh, voicemail from Jim?

[JIMMY]

(Voicemail, played over speakerphone) Hey, uh, Grian? You missed our call again. Should I be worried? I mean, considering last time-

You better have a good excuse ready when you call me back, is what I'm saying. Scar told me all *sorts* of embarrassing things about you, and now I'm being denied the chance to properly make fun of you!

(Pause)

...And, um. Hope you're doing alright, mate.

(Beep)

(Clattering)

[PEARL]

(Shaky sigh) Grian.

Week and a half with no word to *anyone*. If he doesn't turn up in the next twenty-four hours, I'm going to kill him myself.

[Click]

End Notes

HEYY WOO DOUBLE LIFE TIME. i actually originally wasn't going to do a double life statement but like. i had to. too many good possibilities.

you know how in red light green light all the non-named characters are specifically Not

canon characters because it would cause too many paradoxes because they all have different roles already? the opposite is true here solely because its SO funny and technically contradicts nothing. tango scott and cleo are all having, individually, very weird weeks. tango broke his arm trying to sneak into a construction site to do eldritch architectural nonsense. scott remembers this as the week he got inexplicable insomnia so bad he nearly gave himself a concussion so he could sleep.

grian is actually very lucky he almost got turned into a murder avatar and dropped out of school when he did because if he'd been present for this he literally wouldn't have survived scar would have died and taken grian with him

jimmy already knew joel because he and lizzie were dating but started hanging out with him a lot more after grian went missing because he needs to meet a quota of people in his orbit who bully him all the time

finally, big b is one of the several people i've written in this series who i haven't watched much of! hopefully i did alright

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!