

Fausty: Hello, fellow zoos, and welcome to a very important new moon episode of Zooier Than Thou. I'm Fausty.

Toggle: And I'm Toggle, Doug Spink's faithful lackey slash peon.

Fausty: And we'll be your steadfast guides for this episode.

Toggle: We got a lot of positive comments on our last episode, but one of the funniest for us was, "Please stop doing comedy!" Well, the good news is, we really don't have a lot of funny things to say tonight. Suffice it to say, the past two weeks since the last episode have been intense.

Fausty: We're going to attempt to lay everything out and make sense of it for you, tell you how we got to where we are now, and tell you what happens going forward. There's a lot to unpack, and a lot of it's unpleasant, but we feel like it's very important to talk about.

Toggle: It started with the first e-mail we received, from someone called Shadowwoof who claimed to have insider knowledge of what happened with regards to Kero and the first leaks. He said, "I deal with this stuff. If you're really in doubt, talk to me personally." And of course, he sent a link to a giant telegram archive which we specifically said we didn't want. So I told him to contact Fausty, and he did.

Fausty: This guy came out of the door swinging. "I've been watching you for some time," just boasting and intimidating from the start. He said he had solid proof on Kero. Ok, so prove it. He couldn't. Eventually, he conceded that there was no hard proof

that Kero actually did anything, that everything was circumstantial. He then proceeded to tell me that he knew where I lived. Did you know I lived in Chicago, Toggle?

Toggle: Wow, that's news to me! I could have sworn you explicitly said you lived in Harmony, Pennsylvania on one of our episodes for everyone to hear. Such savvy misdirection on your part!

Fausty: This is one of those conversations that's really difficult to gloss or summarise. Early on, he threatens me with some sort of dire consequences – not sure what I was or was not supposed to do to avoid this, but oh well. My immediate reaction, as is my usual policy, was to tell him to go ahead and do it – whatever “it” is. Best way to deal with threats is to jump right to the money shot and get it over with. Then you can loop back and continue doing what you were doing. Next I'm told I am dealing with the Leader of Online Zoos. Literally, that's the title. This runs in circles, never leaving surreal along the way. I'm banned from a Telegram group I don't belong to, accused of trying to out someone along the way (no idea who), reminded of dire consequences... basically we're going nowhere and I need a second set of eyes because I can't make sense of any of this.

Toggle: At some point, Fausty pulled me into a group chat with this guy, and I'm already like, I want nothing to do with him. So we're in this chat, with three different versions of Shadow, and he messages me on one of them like, “why are you in this chat?” And I'm like, “I was added to the chat.” And he says, “Leave.” So obviously, I didn't leave, even though I wanted to. He called me a peon and a lackey, which was incredibly insulting, by the way, the whole time thrashing about and making demands. It became

clear this guy was used to throwing his weight around and getting what he wanted out of people, and I wasn't interested in being bullied around. So he kept harping about how we didn't have any leverage on him, we couldn't prove anything, you know, the types of things people don't usually say when they're innocent.

Fausty: That concept of "leverage" and who does or does not have it has been put to me more in the past two weeks than in all the rest of my life. I've been told I don't have leverage over people I don't even know, apropos of nothing, more than once. Leverage? In this case, it's someone who contacted us promising to correct errors in our last episode – we got from there to leverage in no time whatsoever. And remember: this guy comes to us claiming to have info on Kero, and he doesn't. Strike one. He threatens me, and tries to intimidate Toggle. Strike two. Then he claims credit for nailing the guy in Cuba, and that's strike out, buddy. Also there's more strikes – correcting errors that he never even points out let alone corrects, threatening me with who-knows-what for no idea reason, creepy insinuations of being "local" to me by repeatedly sending me pictures of hot dogs... yes, hot dogs – but really who's counting by now? I'm ready to write off this guy as harmless but crazy, just a bunch of 2-legger politics and weird zoo power dynamics... unfortunate, but unfortunately not uncommon. But then, something kind of clicked. Nobody legitimate uses zoosadism as background music for their Telegram shenanigans, do they? It's at first just a hunch, a sense that there's no possible way a discussion like this happens with someone living in what I now think of as the non-torture world. So I kept pressing him, by now so flagrantly that it risks tipping over into satire. This is completely not-fun, but I had a sense it might just pay off. It did.

Toggle: I was like, "I don't know why you're still goading him. But then fausty's like, "This is why," and sends me a forwarded message Shadow sent from Akela accusing him of being a zoosadist. "After all," Akela writes, "the best way to hide as something is to pretend to be against the exact same thing."

Fausty: Shadow sent me that to prove that he was friends with Akela? I have no real idea what he thought he was doing, but he went right into defensive mode after that. "Show me literally anything you have on me that links me stronger to zoosadism than Kero. Prove it. You can't." That's not how someone not tied up in this shit acts when confronted with such an accusation. This is something else we've seen way too much of the past two weeks: ask someone if they are a torturing sadist, and their reply is "you can't prove that, there's no proof." Well ok... I mean an answer like that probably wouldn't convince a 12-person jury beyond a reasonable doubt of guilt, buuuuut... I can count how many times I've ever had that reply from anyone in my entire life, before this past 2 weeks, on one paw with toes to spare. Given that I've spent about six years of my life in various federal prisons, that's kind of an interesting statistic.

Toggle: The conversation just got weirder and exponentially darker from there. Shadow started throwing everyone he could under the bus. He accused Akela of a profoundly destructive prediliction, after harping on what good friends they were. Brags that he's untraceable, that he's deleted all the evidence... deleted all the evidence! – even though of course fausty's been screencapping everything in real time, says that he'll just claim that the conversations are faked. Then the unthinkable happens.

Fausty: Well I'd been trying to make a Telegram voice connection for a while at the end of the chat – mostly just to show that we're still in reality-land here, and that we're still just two male humans exchanging language. Bring things back to stable ground, as it were – text chat can get pretty weird if left to its own devices. And he's not answering, and I'm not surprised. But then, after I tell him I've heard all I need to know and I've got things to do, he calls me back. I take the call, tell him I'm recording it so I can share it with others if necessary, and confirm he's ok with being recorded. He says yes. And I step through how I feel like our chat just went, what I feel like he's tacitly admitted to being and doing, and how I feel it's necessary to respond to such admissions. And by now he's going backwards, denying having admitted anything, claiming to be the scourge of torturing sadists, and so on. I tell him he can't even fucking figure out where I live from the hints such as me saying where I live in the last podcast episode he claims he's calling in to correct errors in, so I'm not sure I can imagine him being the scourge of anything. Eventually I simply told him I'd heard what I needed, and that anyone else working with us could listen to the call, read the chat, and come to their own conclusions. My work, I told him, was done in this and he'd have to answer to folks with a lot more power and authority than I in all this. By then, about six hours into this interaction, I admit that I'm fed up and angry. This is about god-damned torture of animals, and somehow this asshole has run in circles all the time without showing any signs he gives a shit about that. Like so much else we'll soon experience, he seems much more focussed on the politics and appearance and power dynamics at play between different people and groups... and the rounding error is torture. Well I'm sorry, but fuck that – backwards priorities for me. Basically, I've concluded this guy is deep in the entire swirl of

sadists and violent monsters we're zeroing in on, and in his own words he's functionally labelled himself as one already. So I'm done, call's over. Oh and one more thing: in those hours of talking, he's not once brought up nonhumans, concern for nonhumans, or frankly anything even vaguely zooish in any way. This was 100% 2-legger power politics... from the ersatz Leader of Online Zoos. Fucking whatever, man.

Toggle: We felt the next best move was to talk to Akela, let him know what Shadow was saying, and find out his side of the story. We're told that, immediately after fausty finished his call, Shadow went totally ape shit in the zooadmin telegram chat, threatening to go public with some logs that were under federal investigation in retaliation against Akela, whom he thought we'd already contacted but hadn't. We're getting pinged from every direction, asking us what the hell just happened, and we're kind of not sure how to answer.

Fausty: Yep. From total strangers and old contact alike, I'm getting asked: "Man, what the fuck did you guys do? Shadow's going apeshit!" Since then, we've been slowly filling in the bigger picture piece by disgusting piece. It's been a really unpleasant process.

Toggle: Oh, and keep in mind, in the background, Shadowwoof is spinning up fake accounts to message saying, "Hi, Fausty, Shadow's not such a bad guy! Be nice to him!" It's like some bad parody of sockpuppeting, really only worth pity.

Fausty: There's a lot of unpleasantness that followed in these conversations. Details of a consensual blackmail fetish group tied

into these zoosadists, details of acts committed by different torturers, details of who was involved and how they were involved. Things were starting to make sense, how Akela was involved, how Kero was involved, how SnakeThing was involved... and the fact that there were torturers that weren't released in the first leaks in September, ringleaders that had been scrubbed from the leaks. Now, I have to pause and say that at this point, a lot of information we were receiving was misdirection. But in receiving it from multiple directions, we were able to begin piecing together what was real and what wasn't. That's a slow, frustrating process – made necessary because so many of the people we're now talking to are absolutely unapologetic and occasionally pathological liars. Someone tells you the sky is blue, you stick your head out the window to double-check. That bad. Over and over and over. Despite that, we can winnow down some baseline facts, some reliably-imputed structure, some well-defined areas where we're still lacking reliable knowledge, and a whole bunch of mostly-reliable, internally-consistent, best-estimate-from-known-facts inferences and deductions. There's a picture: some areas sharp, some blurry. But it's a picture. An ugly fucking picture.

Toggle: Two things that were becoming consistent: one, Kero was being groomed by SnakeThing, likely since before he was a legal adult. Kero did participate in the sharing and consumption of torture videos, but he'd have moments of clarity where he'd be disgusted with himself and try to walk away, but he'd be back again the next day. Being groomed into this stuff is a soul-crushing process, and Kero was steeped in it for years. That he never ended up participating himself is noteworthy, given that information.

Fausty: As an aside, reading back through years of Kero's logs and DMs, I can only say that we failed this young man as a community, first and foremost. He was so young when he showed up at BeastForum – which, by the way, having 13 year olds in a porn forum maybe not such a fucking responsible decision, Beaker – and nearly all the peer pressure he's getting is to relax his ethics, not be so worried about a little violence, admit he likes the "hard stuff." What the fucking fuck. Seeing how that happened at BeastForum, I can only say that our worst suspicions of how noxious that forum had become don't even come close to matching reality. Irrespective, the failure here is collective: this young man drifted deeper and deeper into a world of pure shit, and really nowhere along the way did anyone reach out and actually try to show a better path. Maybe everyone's just too busy screaming about bullshit on twitter or whatever, but we all bear responsibility for an environment in which the most obvious place for a youngster to learn about our world is a noxious scamware site run by a drooling idiot hiding out in the UK. Back to number two: everyone we talked to was afraid of someone — of Akela, of Shadowwoof, of each other, of "them," sometimes of Toggle and I. They all seemed to have leverage over each other. They all sought leverage over us, or claimed to have it already. Fucking leverage. Right now, I'd like to leverage this whole shitpile of broken souls into the ocean and pretend it never existed. Honestly. Fucking leverage.

Toggle: One thing to note is that when we approached this, we went very directly. It wasn't about gaining leverage over people to blackmail them – which, we realised, was a huge surprise to almost everyone in this. It was about saying, "Hey. Tell us what's going on, or get the hell out of our way." And that seemed like a

foreign language to these folks. No matter how much we'd simply say we're looking to learn what happened and what's happening now, most we talked to could not imagine any such thing. It was just a ruse, to try to get them to give us leverage. We're trying to correct any errors in our little podcast, and like that we're down a dark rabbit hole of blackmail, violence, lies, underage grooming, threats, and... leverage, of course.

Fausty: So one particular person who's been giving me a lot of information, he's been acting a little suspicious. Just little things. I noticed at one point he stopped using periods when typing. "Oh, that's weird," I said. "All your periods disappeared." "Stop being so paranoid!" he said. Which was weird. I didn't accuse him of anything. I just noticed his writing had changed a bit. Another, I answered his snarky question with "ok." Just "ok." He replies that I need to stop accusing everyone of being spies or sadists, if I want to have anyone talk to me. Huh? You got all that from "ok?" These gruesome jumps were everywhere we turned, and you never know when you'll ask a straightforward question and end up off in some parallel universe of lies and accusations as a direct result.

Toggle: Just to jump in: another unsettling theme was that it seemed every time we stumbled upon something legitimate, the person we were talking to would be like, "Stop being paranoid." Fausty is a paranoid motherfucker. Clinically paranoid. It's fair to call him paranoid. But when every single time you say it, what he's paranoid about ends up being true, it's alarming confirmation of that paranoia. You can't excuse a fact by insisting that fausty is paranoid and that's why he uncovered the fact. That's just not how reality works. He may be paranoid... heck as he'll tell you himself, he is paranoid – and for good reason, if you ask me – but that

doesn't change whether water is wet or gravity works even in a vacuum. They're totally unrelated issues. I have seen fausty called paranoid right after he told someone he's paranoid – and more than once! Times like that, you really do have to laugh despite the ugliness of all this.

Fausty: Mostly I just tell people upfront: I'm normally suspicious and after what I've seen lately, I'm right up in full paranoid mode right now, so please don't act surprised when I act suspicious. But it never works. We get into a talk, something doesn't like up, I point that out, and "fuck you fausty, you paranoid fuck!" Well sure ok... but that still doesn't line up. I dunno... I wish I was imagining all this stuff, I really do. That'd be a much better world. With one guy, he's lecturing me about how I don't "get it" and never will, and I'm asking him to explain "it," and he's sort of dancing around and suggesting he can help... but he doesn't. And I'm sort of watching the clock, thinking "I could be doing literally anything but this right now... why the hell and I talking to this tragically damaged human being I've never met and never will? And then he used the term "puppy splitter" to describe one of the acts. Just out of the blue, like you might say "pipe cleaner" or "estate planner." Puppy splitter. Horrific, just fucking horrific. And worse: it kind of sounded familiar. Where did I hear that before? So this guy seems particularly preoccupied with Rainstirs, asking for everything I know about him. That's fine. I sent him an audio clip with details about it, only, out of paranoid habit, I changed a couple of details. Basically I said that I had helped hunt down Rainstirs and stop him (at least temporarily, unfortunately) from "cutting dogs open and fucking their entrails while they were still alive and screaming in pain." You know, the usual stuff – just with "puppy" changed to dog and one more change I prefer to keep private for future use.

Stepping back, he started out by saying that he and Akela had been stalled for the past six months on their work, but later in the conversation, he said, "Well, you know, we've actually got this all under control, so don't worry about it." Well, of course I'm worried about it. Animals are being tortured to death, and you've been sitting on your ass for six months, and now you're trying to tell me it's all under control? Bullshit. Also nobody has said a word about Rainstirs in all this yet. Nothing. I told the story only to demonstrate the absurdly awful things I've seen before, which yes Rainstirs, and suddenly someone's echoing back details of Rainstirs' evisceration techniques to me in perfect detail. Woah woah woah... just fucking back this shit up a minute...

Toggle: Inserting another theme here. When we realized we were being misdirected, a common theme in that misdirection was, "Everything is under control. Just don't do anything rash, or you could fuck everything up. We've got this."

Fausty: Yes. Whenever things got awkward to the point of surreal, we'd fall into the "it's all being handled, the details are secret, nothing to see here folks, move right along, these are not the torturers you are looking for" black hole. So, in this convo, I tell him I have no intention of letting this go, and he starts demanding that I send him everything I have on Rainstirs. Rainstirs? Why Rainstirs. That was a decade ago. So I say, "OK, I'll send you everything." And he's like, "Good, good." "No, of course I'm not going to send you everything, you idiot." "Well, don't you agree that he should be stopped?" And then he proceeds to describe, in detail, the exact acts that Rainstirs committed, echoing back a puppy-based evisceration scenario... and he also flips another little tidbit to the the way Rainstirs actually did things

in his videos. So, right there, either you have watched all of Rainstirs videos amazingly closely (a disgusting job I've actually done but I hope few others have), or you are Rainstirs and you know how you did things in the videos. Neither of which lined up with who I was supposed to be talking to. Which, of course I'm paranoid, but I'm thinking the average person doesn't just randomly switch "dog" to "puppy" in that wonderful little scene, when they repeat the unimaginably evil thing I've just told them in my voice message. Which... I guess I'm paranoid for noticing that? When I pointed it out, he was like, "Oh, you know, I meant what you said before." "No, but you don't understand. What you described by accident is exactly what Rainstirs did. Which means you're either very familiar with Rainstirs' videos, or you're Rainstirs." And there was a pause. And he replied, "So what happens now?" Well, I told him I had a PET scan that day, and it wasn't good news. "How long you got," he asked. "Hard to say," I said. "I'm guessing maybe six months until I'm in the hospital. You think that's enough time?" "I don't know," he said. "I do." He tells me that, oddly, he respects me – I'm an ass, but he respects me. I tell him I can't say the same about him, and he says he can certainly understand why. That happened, it really did. Now, this was in theory a chat with some furry kid who owns that account... which yeah I guess maybe he just went haywire and said those things. I may be paranoid, but you're gonna have to be one hell of a conspiracy theorist to explain how a random furry suddenly starts answering questions as Rainstirs. Because that's what he was doing – call it what you will, but that's what it looks like.

Toggle: So Rainstirs, aka Tim Amaroso, reached out to us using a false account to find out what we knew about him. That's what I'm seeing here. This was in a plaintext Telegram chat. Multiple folks

can log into the same account in such chats and participate simultaneously in the same chat as the same account...

Fausty: Right, and later on when I pointed this out to Akela, he at first told me it couldn't be done, then admitted maybe it could be done... then told me that, go figure, he was logged into someone else's Telegram account at the same time as them right then, as he was typing. So yes, I'm paranoid – but you tell me if that's the kind of thing you have happen on a daily basis. What are the chances, eh?

Toggle: Earlier in that conversation, someone said that he'd been a part of every zoosadism investigation squad from last September, which means he had access to all the information they had and was able to sabotage the work they were doing. Theoretically. If you're paranoid.

Fausty: Furthermore, there were two people talking through that fake account – I pointed this out, and was told that he was “sometimes walking outside and typed differently on his phone.” Ok, maybe... but then later it was “I have carpal tunnel,” which makes no sense whatsoever as an explanation. Tim – assuming one of the two was Tim, talking at the end – didn't use the same grammar as the first person. Does that “prove” anything? Well, add in the otherwise-inexplicable inclusion of Tim-specific evisceration details, and the later admission that yes these folks do login concurrently to each others' Telegram accounts... and you tell me: what's your conclusion, eh? Proof? No. But Occam says it walks and talks and quacks like a fucking puppy torturer, maybe don't trust it around puppies.

Toggle: So at this point, we're coming to these conclusions: First, the logs that Akela released in September were only meant to ruin SnakeThing — and ruin is in quotes here. Some other people got leaked in the meantime, and they were super pissed and have been sweeping themselves under the rug since. Second, Kero was brought in and being groomed by Nel — SnakeThing, that is. But they didn't trust him; he wasn't a monster, but he had a lot of potentially damaging information. So they took him down and marked him as a zoosadist and neutralized him as a threat. Which worked brilliantly by the way. Who would listen to Kero now if he pointed out nearly-unimaginable horrors or whatever else he knows but can't really make stick after this horrible lynching he suffered.

Fausty: Third, these zoosadists joined all three investigation groups to misdirect and generate infighting within. All three groups melted down. Not entirely an accident. Fourth, the podcast picking this investigation back up and examining it was incredibly frustrating to the torturers left unpunished, who had apparently been breathing easy and felt their efforts had basically worked, which is why they started targeting us with misdirection and misinformation. Infiltrate, inject false "disclosures" to us, create infighting, if possible. Misdirect our attention. We have seen exactly this pattern, in neon bright clarity. And the groups investigating this last year saw the exact same thing – and fell apart thereafter.

Toggle: I'm sad to say that there was some infighting in our group. One thing that breaks down in this dark world is trust. Trust is so important for normal, healthy people, but it's a liability when everyone you're talking to is saying, "Trust me, it's all OK,"

and lying through their teeth. Who can you trust? No one. Not even your friendly rat cohost, or other people involved I won't name. No one can be trusted.

Fausty: Yep, I did pull Toggle up one afternoon. Things were lining up in some uncomfortable coincidences. Too many to simply ignore. So I confronted him. Know what he didn't do? He didn't talk about leverage. He didn't threaten me. He didn't say "you can't prove it." What did he do? He told me he was devastated by what I was saying, that he had no idea what to say, that he thought we were friends, and that this "suck so fucking much." All of that was absolutely true – and all if it was painful, and damaging, and sad. And all if that was necessary because we're dealing with a world where lies are absolutely the coin of the realm. I fucking hated doing that with Toggle. Disgusting. And I'm disgusted that I know how to do that, and that I can make myself do it. But I did – because tortured puppies. And I told Toggle I hoped he'd forgive me someday, because tortured puppies. I told him I'd burn his friendship to protect myself from being sent off on a dead-end tangent, if necessary. I'd pay that price – I'd pay just about any price. And I will. And that's tragic. To get out of those deep, dark corners once the ugly testing is done, you have to kind of rely on a deeper kind of trust. No, I can't trust that you're not lying to me. I want to – but I know you might be getting "leveraged" right now and I can't pretend that's even unlikely in this shit-stained mess of a slice of humanity. But I trust that things will generally turn better, I trust that you, even if you're lying to me, even if you're involved in terrible things, can eventually make changes to be better. We've been in a very dark place for the past two weeks, and it does take a toll on relationships, even really close ones. We have one goal: we will

stop these people from torturing animals at all costs. All costs. And that's a destructive path to go down. Entirely necessary, but certainly unhealthy for any sort of relationship.

Toggle: Now, don't worry, folks, we're fine. We mention this as part of being open and honest, and because it's important in understanding where this shitty rabbit hole of animal torture can take you. It's weird, and it's foreign, and it's dangerous. You walk that dark path because you have to, but you walk off it by retaining your honesty and dignity and integrity – even when it's dark all around. We're talking about our own hard parts, here, because they happened and because that's how we make sure we're not going rotten at the core.

Fausty: At this point, we knew he had to talk to Kero, so we reached out to Akela to see if he had contact information.

Toggle: Akela said something along the lines of, "I don't know what you could possibly ask him that I couldn't answer myself." "His perspective, mostly," I replied. Later that night, our DMs lit up with reports that Akela was instructing people not to talk to us, that he was pretty pissed about some logs that Shadowwoof sent us. And true, Shadowwoof just kept sending file after file after file.

Fausty: People allegedly affiliated with Akela started asking, "Hey, did someone send you a cache of logs?" "I don't know how to answer that question," I said. "Why do you ask?" "Oh, you could potentially be hurting lots of innocent zoos with those logs!" Rest assured, we're not in the business of hurting innocent zoos, here. But there was another thing that kept coming up — that the logs were being edited, that Akela had spent the last six months

editing these logs. We're pretty sure now that was disinformation, but it struck us as odd. Why the hell were people editing these logs so damn much? And what were they editing out? No way to tell. We know now they seemed to have scrubbed out any mention of Tim in the original leaks. How the hell would you know that, though? And you know what innocent zoo they didn't edit out before? Kero. So spare me the bullshit about how we're going to harm innocent zoos. Akela was becoming incredibly suspect, when previously we'd been happy to assume he was clean.

Toggle: Obviously, the immediate course of action is to contact Akela and find out for ourselves if any of this was true or not.

Fausty: Meanwhile, in the background, Zooier Than Thou was being DDOS'd, specifically the second episode which is on a different server. Wasn't actually very effective, but noteworthy. I mean... there's been this sort of low-level background noise of pathetic skiddie stuff poking at our stuff since a few days after the podcast aired. You know what pisses me off about it? It's the kindergarten-level competence it exhibits. That's fucking insulting. I'm insulted by that.

Toggle: Fausty gets insulted by... unexpected things, sometimes. Call him a paranoid, obnoxious, clueless piece of shit and he's likely to cheerfully agree. Point a twitter botnet at the CSA account to create fake traffic stats (which I have no idea the idea behind that), and he's livid. A TWITTER BOTNET?

Fausty: My favourite dynamic in this has been people contacting me to scream that I'm ignorant, incompetent, and I'm doing this all wrong. I agree, basically – doing the best I can, but could be

wrong and hell I don't remember taking a class at MBA school on how to take down animal torture cults, sorry. And I ask what I should be doing to be less ignorant, more effective, less incompetent. And it's either "nothing, it's all being taken care of, these aren't the torturers you're looking for" which sure Obi-Wan, nobody wants your cheesy rehash of Joseph Campbell's mythological ethnography, or it's "fuck you Fausty." Which I don't think is a promise for future sex, so unfortunately mostly it seems to mean toys have been taken and someone's going home. Not once – not once – has someone said "here's how to stop being a dumb fuck and make this really work." Not. Fucking Once.

Toggle: Ease down, big fella... maybe they'll just hurl ugly insults at you next, and you can relax. Anyway, next I messaged Akela at length, saying, "Hey, why are you telling people not to talk to us? Here's what we think is going on, and we're trying to just be perfectly honest in our approach in this. Everyone who we've talked to so far puts you right in the middle of this, so just talk to us yourself and help us figure out what's really going on." And the first thing he says in reply: "So you figured out Tim is Rainstirs. I thought Fausty had taken care of him. Not so easy, is it?" Which... wow, OK. "And then he says, "Look, I've been watching you guys from the beginning. So you contact me now, why, because you think you have leverage? You don't."

Fausty: Leverage!

Toggle: Akela goes on to tell us he's got the dox on Shadow, and that he's gonna have a hard time for leaking documents tied to a federal investigation. He mentions something in describing what's been going on that puts Fausty on notice. He says that Homeland

Security is involved due to cross state lines pedophilia and child trafficking.

Fausty: (please look at this section and clean up) Now, I've spent about six years of my life in federal prison, and there's not much to do in prison except for read and talk to people. I met a number of pedophiles behind bars, and I studied a good bit of law. I've looked into a lot of cases involving pedophilia, and all that studying suggests that Homeland Security has nothing to do with this stuff. Moreover, though, that's exactly what the second person I was talking to said when I was talking to Tim. Given the exact phrasing, it seemed evident that Akela was the second person I was talking to. Paranoia? Maybe, but it lined up.

Toggle: Akela basically said we didn't know what the hell was going on, he's been working on it for the past six months and we just didn't know what work he'd been doing, we were being stupid and reckless, sure. These things mostly checked out. We wouldn't have contacted him in the first place if these things weren't true. He also made sure to tell us he wasn't afraid of us, though we weren't really coming from a place of intimidation, just of trying to figure out what the hell was going on. We were hoping we could get a hold of what exactly was misinformation and what was legit. Pretty much everyone we talked to said they were buddy-buddy with Akela, but also afraid of Akela. It was kind of hard for us to believe he was clean in all this, especially with Fausty being pretty certain he was that second person in the chat with Tim. Akela also dropped another interesting piece of information here: that Fausty's friend EQ was somehow involved, that he was a ring leader in the whole thing.

Fausty: We'd seen EQ's name before mentioned. EQ? Equinas? No, not the Equinas we know. Gotta be Equibooru. That makes more sense. I'd asked some other folks, even. "EQ, you know EQ? You think he's wrapped up in this?" "No, not Equinas. You've gotta be thinking of Equibooru." But no, Akela was pointing at someone I know personally. Now, granted, I hadn't talked to EQ since maybe 2012. But it does tie into a conversation that one of our listeners had with Akela with regards to me last year. He mentioned me to Akela in the context of the book, and Akela told him that my inner friends circle included zoosadists. News to me, I'll tell you that! But interestingly, Akela didn't say which of my friends was a zoosadist. If he were just trying to spread rumors about EQ, why wouldn't he have mentioned it back then?

Toggle: There were a few details that stood out as troubling in our conversation with Akela. Unfortunately, because these things always happen concurrently, one of my family members ended up in the hospital, and I had to drop out at such a critical time. Akela was not thrilled when I pointed Akela to Doug and signed off for a little while.

Fausty: So the ball was in my court, with regards to Akela, so I called him, and we talked for six hours. (fill in the blanks)

Toggle: By the time I came back, we had our hands on the unedited logs, and we had to kind of decide what the hell to do with them. Akela was a little difficult to press for more information, and several other people we were talking to were acting a little strange, like there was some kind of gag order with regards to some of the questions we were asking. Here, unfortunately, there are details we really need to leave out, even

though it's super critical into why we chose to release the logs, but what we eventually came to realize is that pretty much everyone we talked to were under duress, and there was something they were trying to get us to do but they couldn't tell us. Because their accounts were all being watched. We knew for a fact Akela was logged in and watching other people's accounts. And we knew that he had leverage on other people. And we suspected someone had leverage on him, too. We were also certain that people who contacted us and tried to misdirect us were very adamant that we not release the logs for one reason or another. We decided that the expedient release of the logs may help relieve some of the pressure.

Fausty: But this was not before looking over the logs and making sure what we had was as viable as possible. The logs had been formatted, so they weren't the original telegram format. Not ideal. And they were organized by Akela, who ultimately decided how the information should be presented. Not ideal. There was one folder I decided to redact, helpfully labelled Kero, because of the stuff we knew — and didn't know — about Kero. The other folder I worried over for a long time was Equinas. Akela had included it, but apart from a couple of notable things, there wasn't really a lot in them that was damning. I spent several hours grilling our contacts about him. How was he connected? Every one of them said, "Oh, yeah, he's definitely into hardzoo." But there wasn't a lot more most of them could say. Akela was the most insistent, and had the most information, but couldn't provide proof, and said there would never be any proof. "I can't use any of this," I told him. "Give me something I can use." Any time I tried to pressure him into saying more, he'd say, "I've told you all that I can tell you." Meaning, there's more, but he wasn't at liberty to tell.

Wonder why, eh? One big strike against EQ was his confirmed association with Tim — Rainstirs — and his unblinking interaction with zoosadism in the logs. There was also the matter of Derby. I trusted EQ enough to give him a dog named Derby. Two weeks later, I get a call from EQ like, “Hey, I’m sorry to tell you this, but Derby’s dead. Hit by a car.” “Oh, my god, did you take her to the vet?” “What? No, she’s dead.” “Wow, well, how are you holding up?” “Me? I’m fine. What do you mean?” I chocked it up to shock at the time, but there was something that never quite sat right about that conversation with me, and now, with these accusations, and knowing EQ was friends with Tim at this time, Derby’s death seemed a lot less like an accident. In the end, I decided to leave the folder alone, and that wasn’t a decision I made lightly. I also looked over the logs and thought, “You know, this could all be fake, or it could be heavily edited. There’s really no way to know.” Well, we were able to confirm the authenticity of at least some of the logs — including EQ’s, after contacting him directly. There were a lot of non-ideal things happening here, including the pressure to release these logs as soon as possible. But we didn’t release them without careful consideration.

Toggle: And then there they were. We created several redundancies, pulled in contacts from the intelligence community, pulled in Anons — not the 4chan turds playing sociopath online, real Anons — and got law enforcement officers on the case. After they were released, informants came forward to help us identify people in the logs, and we’re actively tying user names to identities. Also, Fausty is on twitter acting like an absolute, Grade-A asshole.

Fausty: True. If you’ve only been watching this unfold on twitter, I

can understand how you'd look at this and say, "Wow, that reckless motherfucker is grandstanding and trying to ride on the back of this to..." I don't actually know how doing this helps my popularity in any way. Doesn't matter. That's not actually the point. I want these torturers to know that we have their number. I want them to be scared. I want them to scrub their chat logs and put their severed puppy ears through the shredder and clean the blood from the bedroom floor. Because every second they're running scared, looking behind their backs, trying to clean up the evidence, they're not torturing and killing animals. Maybe that's a shitty tactic, but it buys us time where we know Tim isn't splitting puppies open because he's too busy hiding. And with EQ, always careful, never leaving behind a trace, confident that he can't get caught, we want to send a message to those who think they're too smart to get in trouble that we've got their number, too. The heat is on, and we want you to feel it. As long as these scumbags feel safe, they're going to keep torturing animals, and fuck letting them feel so complacent. You think you can actually hide? You think these guys won't start talking the second law enforcement puts the screws to them? Hope you haven't been hanging out with Tim, because I guarantee he's gonna squeal.

Toggle: And if you're thinking, "Oh, maybe I'll just make sure Tim can't talk for good," well, now you're getting sloppy. Turns out the law is a bit more stringent when it comes to murdering humans. Maybe you think you can get away with it. Is that worth that calculated risk? They're gonna catch you eventually, and then you've got first degree murder on your rap sheet. No matter how you play this, you're fucked. So tighten up your opsec, go underground, cancel your meet-ups and take down your torture porn servers. Feel free to delay the inevitable, but you'd better not

fuck up. One slip up, one stray puppy limb unchecked, and you're gonna get what you deserve. Every time you get the urge, I want you to think to yourself, "Is someone watching me right now? Did Fausty send a drone over to my barn and set up surveillance cameras?"

Fausty: I've actually priced this out. If you're not legitimately afraid of that possibility, you're crazy.

Toggle: Rest assured, it's not just a rat and a dog poking at this anymore. And it's not just the zoo community. And it's not furies, fuck no. This is so much bigger. This is US intelligence, this is US law enforcement, this is the full brunt of the internet's top hackers, and they're about to all drop on your head.

Fausty: A side note for those of you worrying right now because you were being groomed into this monstrous shit: we're not after you. You're victims in this. If you haven't actually hurt an animal, you're a bit too small fry for our investigation. But god help you if you ever do hurt an animal. We said this to so many people throughout this process: This is not a game. This is life and death. We're risking our lives to save the lives of our four-legged friends.

Toggle: And let me also add one more thing: we truly love you for listening to our podcast. But this isn't about scoring brownie points and clout. We don't give a shit about whether this makes us look good or bad, or whether we have more followers or subscribers — except for how that effects the reach of this information. All of that stuff is trivial. I'll say it again. This isn't a game. This is life and death. This is the right thing to do, no matter the personal consequences are. And hey, if we're doing

this all wrong, we're happy to hear suggestions on how to do this right, as long as those suggestions don't include, "Don't do anything. Just leave this alone and let someone else take care of it." Sure, you didn't know this, but that's essentially what every disinformant that contacted us to misdirect us told us to do, including Rainstirs himself. It's not an option. Help us do this work better, not pawn it off on someone else.

Fausty: Let me also address another false concern, that releasing this information somehow hinders law enforcement in nailing these guys. Listen, we're actively talking with law enforcement officials right now, and not one, not one of them has told us, "Hey, guys, you really need to take this stuff down because it's going to ruin our investigation." Zero. So don't give us that bullshit.

Toggle: Another thing you don't know is how much outside, non-zoo help we were able to get by releasing these logs. People care about protecting animals, and you can't really imagine this kind of stuff exists without reading these logs for yourself. Everyone I've showed these logs to in my non-zoo life has said, "Holy shit, how the fuck can I help?" The natural reaction is to help take these guys down. We would love for our listeners to help in any way that they can.

Fausty: This is still ongoing, but this is hopefully the last time we have to talk at length about it on the podcast.

Toggle: Our next episode will return to our more whimsical format, because being serious zoo all the damn time is fucking exhausting. Sorry to those who asked us not to do comedy anymore. We've already written out the sketches.

Fausty: Thanks for sticking with us through this trying time. Be nice to each other. It's the sexiest, zooiest thing you can do.

Toggle: Never forget to stay defiant, fellow zoos! We'll see you next time you feel like howling at the moon!