

The Growing of Alex Wilson. Content warnings for death, body horror, and implied animal harm.

[WILSON stumbles into the elevator, breathing hard and badly injured]

WILSON

Red alert! This is Security Chief Wilson! Subject Alpha-9 has breached containment! I repeat, A-9 has breached containment - the christing thing *bit* me! I'm heading up to Med Bay, and I'm very badly injured. You need to seal off the lab, *now*. Do you copy? [Beat] Bergeron, *do you copy*? This is Wilson, please respond. Repeat: This is -- this -- aw hell, this is Steinberg's stupid voice memo box. God *damnit*. Son of a *bitch*. [Long beat] I wonder if the Good Doctor down there is trying to take notes on my communicator. I bet *that's* good radio. Hey! François, salaud de Quebe [Pronounced: sal-ou de kweeb; meaning: Québecau prick]! You watchin' me on the closed circuit? Yeah, I bet you are. Guess we finally *did* move on to human trials, right buddy?

Given the state of Alpha Nine, there is a very real chance that I die in this elevator. [Long beat] I guess this thing will go on living though. Damn.

[WILSON starts to laugh, and then cough]

Well, I guess I should've seen this coming. 600 lightyears from the nearest medical ethics committee and we're still getting shut down. Call it irony. Or maybe poetic justice, I guess. Pick your poison, right? [Beat] You know, maybe Doc was onto something with this thing. It feels good to talk to someone. Or maybe no one? Doesn't matter. Nothing to do now but wait.

[WILSON begins coughing again, then hawks up a glob of... flesh?]

Jesus. Looks like the contagion *does* affect humans. Feels like the change is coming on fast. Alright, Doctor: let's gather some data, shall we? You'll have to excuse the small sample size. And for the record, I never gave informed consent.

[WILSON is in increasing amounts of pain]

Your hypothesis that the change was essentially painless was bunk, Doctor. It turns out that accelerated bone and tissue growth hurt like hell. I'll bet you knew that, though. Deep down. Especially after the bonobo trials, all apologies to maintenance. Hold on, I --

[WILSON stretches to accommodate his new skeletal additions]

[Relieved but still in pain] The... extra bones are starting to fall into place. I feel like I'm being drawn and quartered but instead of coming apart I just keep *stretching* out. Oh dear Jesus. What in the bleeding Christ have you been working on down there? [Moans] I wonder how much of this you picked up on your little voice memos. Can mice scream, doc? Did you get that on tape along with your -- [Pain] -- clinical observations?

[More sounds of exertion, then some laughter]

You want to know what's funny? The expanding effect you were researching. The growth, you called it. Well, you were right about one thing: it is affecting the brain. I can... I can remember things I haven't remembered in years. My mom used to wear lilac perfume. I can remember its strange, cloying sweetness. She died when I was two, Doc. But I guess the memories were still in me, somewhere. Or maybe they grew back. Every secret I ever forgot, Steinberg. Every inside joke. Every time I made a damned fool of myself in front of someone I respected. It's all *here*. It's all *here* at the same *time*. It's crowding in like smoke in a burning building, you've set me on fire, Steinberg. You *monster*.

[WILSON laughs, unhinged, maybe cries]

Do you want to know what this feels like, Steinberg? It feels like puberty! How's that for a joke! Do you remember puberty, Doc? I do. This is the next best thing. Once I made it all the way to 7th period before realizing that I wasn't wearing deodorant. I reeked like some kind of animal in heat, and I could tell the teacher could smell me because of that stupid pitying look he gave me. That powerlessness, that powerlessness and that reek. That awful, sweaty musk. They're back, Doctor. And not just in my mind. This metal box you've entombed me in, it smells like a locker room from hell.

And *Christ*, I'm hungry. How big is this elevator? 8 by 10? I've filled it. I'm like a kid playing rocketship in a cardboard box. I guess we all are. Looks like Francois has sealed me in, which really pisses me off, because I'm so goddamn hungry and the cafeteria is right next to med bay and *what* does a guy gotta do for decent service around here? Right, Bergeron? Steinberg? Anyone? Geez, tough crowd. [Beat] You know, it's getting downright cramped in here. How many calories did I burn just growing? I feel - light headed. Upside down

on a roller coaster. Maybe I'll just... take a little nap. If I wake back up, there better be breakfast in bed. Doc, if you end up retrieving this voice box? I solved your problem. Growing kids need food. That's *really* why the ape trials went wrong. It's not rage. It's hunger. It's always been hunger. Here's hoping someone survives to take that note.

[Fading] Here's hoping... someone survives...

[Muffled thunk]

CREDITS

This microisode was written by Stephen Indrisano. It was performed and produced by Tal Minear. Stephen is the owner of Indrisano Audio, LLC - a podcasting company! It can be found at www.indrisanoaudio.com