

*Trigger warnings: Mentions of suicide and graphic death.*

Jericho

It began as a whisper.

The file was named Jericho. It started showing up on all sorts of social media- the forums first, and then onto the more mainstream sites like Twitter at the beginning of October.

It made its way into the news cycle early on. A sophomore at a high school a few states away supposedly listened to it and killed her dog and then herself. The file was mentioned in her suicide note. That's when other instances began being reported more seriously. Cases where people died with earbuds or headphones covering their bloodied ears were re-opened.

One of the worst parts was when several accounts, most of whom had substantial followings, were hacked and the audio was uploaded to them. To which, of course, multiple people died, and more were substantially injured-- many lost their hearing partially or entirely (it depended on how loud the audio played when they listened to it, and if they were wearing headphones or not). It caused a moral panic, as these types of situations usually do. It only made the audio more sought after. It became a trend to make reaction videos listening to the audio. School administrations were panicking and enforced zero-tolerance policies for the audio. If a student mentioned Jericho at school, they were given out of school suspension for at least three days. One kid, who was expelled, plotted to play the audio over the school's intercoms.

No one is able to pin down what exactly the audio is of. Those who have listened to it, before their deaths and in their suicide notes, claim it's a never-ending sound of an emergency siren, or an echoing scream. Others, who have survived and weren't afflicted in any way, claim it's nothing more than white noise. Some have even claimed it's just the sound of someone breathing. There were theories that there were multiple versions of Jericho.

Regardless, it plays in your head endlessly after you listen to it.