

The Camera That Blinkered

POV: Jasper Quinn

Timeline: Shortly before Evelyn's investigation

Jasper Quinn doesn't believe cameras lie.

People lie.

Witnesses misremember.

Technology fails.

But digital footage always fails for a reason. So when Shiftline Investigations receives an anonymous copy of security footage from Hawthorne Apartments, Jasper assumes he'll find corrupted files. Instead, he finds something stranger.

At **11:47:03 p.m.**, Daniel Ross walks toward Apartment 9.

At **11:47:08**, the image flickers.

Five seconds disappear.

Not static.

Not corruption.

Five seconds have been replaced with footage of the same hallway completely empty. Jasper checks the metadata. The supposedly missing frames were recorded normally.

Then overwritten.

Automatically.

He digs deeper. The same five-second anomaly appears in older archived recordings.

Different dates.

Different tenants.

Same hallway.

Same apartment.

Same missing seconds.

Then Jasper discovers one recording from twenty years earlier. The building didn't have digital cameras then. But someone converted an old VHS security tape.

Jasper watches.

A woman walks toward Apartment 9.

The picture rolls.

Static.

Then—

empty hallway.

Jasper freezes the frame immediately before the interference. Something is standing behind her.

Too large to be a dog.

Too low to be human.

He enhances the image.

Two pale eyes stare directly into the camera. His computer monitor goes black.

A message appears.

STOP LOOKING.

Jasper reaches for his phone.

The message changes.

WE CAN SEE YOU TOO.