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One of the aswang's terrible gifts, as it were, to the Filipino people has been a lingering distrust of strangers, of people seemingly eager to enter into their community even under the best of pretenses. And yet, this weariness is not even the best possible defense. It has its gaps because the aswang can also don an appearance so frightening that it can simply charge in and seize whatever it wants. This type of aswang called the weredog. Not werewolf, mind you. That may be the term you are more familiar with, but wolves are not native to the Philippines. Not in a form outsiders from Europe or the United States would be able to recognize.

The concept of a were-animal is actually a fairly frequent one. By another name, the concept is known as therianthropy: the mythological ability to metamorphose into other animals by means of shapeshifting. By day, the were-animal can be any ole man or woman--though usually conceptualized as man--but by night or on a whim, the were-animal can transform into a more ferocious and fierce version of the animal we know.

But like I said, this is not a werewolf, though you might be inclined to think it is. What it is a more fierce version of a dog than it is a wolf. But I will say that you're right in spirit but not in a technical sense.

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Record for the events on [Beep.] In the [Beep] Neighborhood. Recorded by Officer [Beep. Beep.]

Female, 22, went into labor early in the evening. Due to scheduling, most of the family--believing that the hour of birth was not to come for some time--were not in the

area. They were attending a family event in another province. The victim's husband had stayed behind with her.

Neighbors confirm seeing an older individual with long, unkempt hair and longer nails walking around the neighborhood. The individual in question was unknown to them and had not been seen in the area prior to the incident. However, down the way, there is a spot frequented by tricycle drivers. It was assumed that said individual was looking for a ride. But when asked, individual did not answer questions or respond to directions. Once again, an assumption was made. At that approximate age of the individual, hearing problems could be expected. Because the individual kept to themselves and did not ask about any individual in particular, neighbors were not concerned.

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The Filipino word for dog is 'aso,' and Maximo D. Ramos proposes that this is where the term 'aswang' originally came from in some form and through some steps. Hence the needed emphasis on dog. But the shapeshifting aswang can also be a cat or a boar. It has options.

It transforms and then stalks the neighborhood, looking for prey. And sometimes, this type of aswang can even enter homes. Not bursting in, so much. Not a typical breaking and entering. It would be good to remember that some communities in the Philippines are more open, in a literal sense. Buildings can be open or easily broken into in an area where resources are scarce and therefore locks are not priorities and all the people around you are people you know and trust anyway.

Once again, this aswang is an invader of sorts. It just happens to be one that can strike quickly and violently.

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Predictably, the victim went into labor in the night. This being their first child, the husband says this was a bit of a surprise and shock. Unsure what else to do, though the labor pains were still some time apart, he left his wife's side to go fetch the midwife a few huts over. On his way out, he recalls passing the older individual but did not get a better look at the person through the long, unkempt hair. He was not able to confirm anything about the individual. And we do not know the presented gender of the individual. There is also no trace available for testing.

But the man was concerned about his wife. He did not like the presence of this other person, and he was on edge, but--because the midwife was close by--he believed the best solution was simply to retrieve her and let the older individual be.

It is believed that the older individual saw the man leave his home and either heard the cries of the first time mother or could deduce what the man was doing giving the direction he was travelling in. The midwife, after all, is a while known figure in that community.

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Being a weredog is not a natural state. It isn't an innate trait. In fact, as Ramos describes it, it can be viewed as a terrible affliction. A weredog begins their life as an ordinary individual and is turned through the saliva of another weredog, usually by consuming the food a weredog has licked or spat on. Or that's one way of going about it.

Instead of eating tainted food, a weredog might have swallowed the black chick that once dwelt in and then escaped from the body of a dying weredog. This black chick

acts like a parasite, a parasite the weredog knowingly consumed for whatever reason they might have had. That chick then sits in the stomach and shares in the food eaten by the host. Its preferences for human flesh are also voiced, as it were.

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Given the proximity between the couple's home and the midwife's, it took no time at all for the young husband to retrieve her. They returned to the home just as the young woman screamed in terror. They both recall seeing the front door of the home open. The young husband could not recall any other detail, and the midwife knew no better. Nothing else in the area was out of place. No shoes were added or disturbed. And once again, there was no trace of the individual left behind.

The young husband and the midwife raced inside, believing the scream to be related to the process of childbirth and the door a clumsy mishap on the father's part. But what they found was a large dog, looming over the young woman from the edge of the bed and growling.

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Once again, belief in this type of aswang has made Filipino communities more insular. This type of aswang only needs to stage a momentary invasion, enough time to survey the land for potential victims--either to eat or to convert--and then to do so, without the expectation of a pretense, all strangers can be regarded with a great deal of suspicion. There is no need to wonder or consider if they have a valid reason for their arrival or what evidence might be there to that end. They have arrived for whatever purposes they may have. But it cannot be good, it is often assumed. In fact, Ramos points out that there are areas in the Philippines that are believed to have a higher

concentration of aswangs, which can lead to profiling but--from what I can piece together--no outright attacks only social isolation especially when it comes to the topic of food. Food being the method through which to convert a weredog. Understandable but not great. Not bad but could have been worse.

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According to all three--wife, husband, and midwife--the large dog had sharp eyes, sharp teeth, and sharp claws reminiscent of the stranger seen walking around in the area earlier that day. The color of the dog's fur also matched the individual's unkempt hair. These details are presented without comment. Further evaluation needs to be done to determine if this is a genuine connection or a perceived one made in a stressful situation.

Other details of the like that need to be noted: the dog was about the size of the midwife who--as the identification included in this file will show--is of an average height relative to the entire population but is slightly taller than the average woman in the area.

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The weredog's fears are that of the other types, but a sting ray's tail poses a particular type of threat. If a weredog is struck with a sting ray's tail, the wounds remain after the transformation. And nothing can be done about that. And so, the weredog that narrowly avoided capture would have a branding that can be used to locate them in their human disguise.

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With the home being so small, the man was able to reach out and grab the bolo knife hung on the wall by the kitchen. He grabbed it, raised it above his head, and the

dog took off from there. Escape route unclear and unspecified, but the man chased the dog down the way only to watch it become... from what he tells me, a boar. Yes, suddenly he was chasing a pig. This is the information presented to me. Once again, I withhold comment.

The young mother was safely delivered of her first child by the midwife who had the sense to stay with her and not chase after a dog or boar or anything of the sort. No injuries. Minimal property damage. No suspects. The unknown individual remains unknown, and I am unclear whether or not I should consider that person a person of interest in any sort of crime.

At the tail end of this investigation, I would hope that Supervisor [Beep] can provide me with clear instructions on how to move forward. Thank you.

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Searching for the Aswang is a production of Hugot Podcasting, which itself is a division of Miscellany Media Studios. This show is researched, written, hosted, and produced by MJ Bailey with music from the Sounds like an Earful music supply. See you in two weeks.

Sources:

Ramos, M. D. (1994). *The Aswang complex in Philippine folklore*. Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House.