

seriously **strange** magazine

Fear the **REAPER**

The Real
World Dangers
of Modern
Paranormal
Investigation



PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING

PROTECTED
BY LAW



PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING

Also inside your
32 page

spring/summer edition:

Lucy Barlow at
Castle Rock

Hans Holzer: The Supernatural
and Beyond

Conference Updates

Woodchester Mansion

Was Nikola Tesla a
UFO contactee?

Creating Apparitions

Contents

- 5 The President's Piece: Lucy Barlow at Castle Rock**
by Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe
- 6 ASSAP Seriously Strange 2017**
- 8 ASSAP Training Weekend**
- 9 Fear the Reaper: The real world dangers of modern paranormal investigations**
by Gavin Fox
- 14 Was inventor Nikola Tesler a UFO contactee**
by Sean Casteel
- 19 Hans Holzer: The supernatural and beyond**
by Alexandra Holzer
- 22 Is Woodchester Mansion haunted?**
by Chris Howley
- 26 Creating Apparitions**
- 28 Reader Experience: A birth experience**
by Norie Miles
- 29 Seriously Investigated Conference: A review**
by Trystan Swale
- 30 Book Review: Credible Witness - Paranormal Police Stories**

The Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena was formed in 1981 to research and educate about a wide range of anomalous phenomena.

These fall into the broad categories of psychic phenomena, earth mysteries, ufology and Fortean phenomena. ASSAP holds no corporate views and the views expressed by individual authors are their own. ASSAP is a registered charity (327422) and a company limited by guarantee (2075226).

Tel: 0845 652 1648 www.assap.ac.uk
Registered office: ASSAP, Unit 36, 88-90 Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8PN (Address not for general correspondence)

© Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

Contact us at news@assap.ac.uk

New Website Members Password:

Username 'assapmember' Password 'ectoplasm'

Are you on Email?

We like to keep in touch with members from time to time by email. If you haven't received an email from us please send your name and email address to chairman@assap.ac.uk so you can keep up to date!

ASSAP Committee

Acting Chairman: Dave Wood (chairman@assap.ac.uk)

Publications officer: Norie Miles (publications@assap.ac.uk)

Company Secretary: Robert Moore (secretary@assap.ac.uk)

Treasurer: Dr Becky Smith (treasurer@assap.ac.uk)

Conferences and Events Officers: Norie Miles with Jonathan Fost (events@assap.ac.uk)

Education Officer: Anne Radley (education@assap.ac.uk)

Non-executive members:

President: Lionel Fanthorpe, Vice President: Hugh Pincott

Membership Secretary: Ian Topham (membership@assap.ac.uk)

NRPI Administrator: Jennifer Bowden.

Archives Officer: Terry Porter.

Webmaster: Maurice Townsend. eNews Editor: Gary Fellman.

Media Representative: Sarah Spellman

Examinations officer: John Vallender.

Publications Designer Alison Topham. Artwork from Vector Open Stock, Creative Commons Licence and Mary Evans Library.

Affiliate Groups

Groups provide incidental support for ASSAP's charitable objects by acting as forums for research. Should you wish to affiliate or start a group please contact assap@assap.ac.uk

BRISTOL SOCIETY FOR PARANORMAL RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION (BSPRI)

Based in Bristol and the surrounding area, also operating further afield. Monthly meetings held in Bristol. Contact Stuart at [BSPRI live.com](http://BSPRI.live.com) or visit www.BSPRI.org.uk

COVENTRY PARANORMAL INVESTIGATORS (CPI) Covers most areas in the UK.

Visit www.cpiteam.co.uk, email contact@cpiteam.co.uk or phone 07516 621494

GHANON is a group primarily covering Wirral, Cheshire, North Wales & Merseyside. For more info please visit www.ghanon.org.uk

LEICESTERSHIRE PARANORMAL ASSOCIATION (LPA) Email Ian & Vanessa Walker at leicsparanormal@virginmedia.com

MELTON PARANORMAL RESEARCH SOCIETY (MPRS) Based in Leicestershire. Contact Christine Hankey on 07745 398 569 or email meltonparaclub@aol.com

MIDLAND PARANORMAL INVESTIGATIONS operates throughout the Midlands. Check out www.midlandparanormal.co.uk or email mark@midlandparanormal.co.uk or phone 0121 603 7356

OPEN MIND INVESTIGATIONS (OMI) Operates in the Kent and Hampshire areas. Contact Cara via the website - www.omi-uk.org

PLYMOUTH ASSAP Operates in Plymouth, South Devon and South East Cornwall. Contact Lee at eustacetuttle@yahoo.co.uk

SPIRIT TEAM UK Operates in the Midlands, with meetings at Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Coventry. Contact Alan at enquiries@spiritteamuk.com or visit www.spiritteamuk.com

STAFFORDSHIRE PARANORMAL STUDY GROUP (SPSG) Monthly meetings in Stoke on Trent. Contact Terri at thespsg@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.spsg.org.uk

SUPERNATURAL INVESTIGATIONS UK (SI) are based in Devon, Somerset and Cornwall but also operate further afield. Mainly focusing on haunting. Contact Stuart at stuart@supernaturalinvestigations.org.uk

Please note that ASSAP does not express corporate opinion, and publication does not equate to endorsement

Updates



It's time to volunteer for ASSAP

ASSAP is an extraordinary organisation and I'm proud to mark my 10th year on its committee.

Our voluminous website is a go-to resource for thousands; hundreds attend our educational conferences each year; hundreds more contact us for advice and help; dozens attend our training for paranormal investigators each year.

ASSAP is also growing at a pace. Our membership is more than twice what it was 6 years ago and is at its highest ever level in our 36-year history. More people receiving our magazines, journals and monthly emails.

But co-ordinating such a wide-ranging organisation is a big job. We have no paid staff and instead rely on dozens of talented and dedicated volunteers. ASSAP's strength comes from its continual renewal of volunteers over the decades: we have several volunteers with decades of continuous service, but most of are committee are much newer to the organisation.

Although dozens of people volunteer we still need a lot more help the keep improving and keep growing. Do you have any of the following skills? General organisation, customer service, web design, social media professionals, volunteer management, teaching, assessing and a great deal more.

We all work remotely – so you can be based anywhere - but we do stay in touch and meet at events where possible. If you can help us on a regular basis I'd like to hear from you. Do send me an email about yourself to chairman@assap.ac.uk

Dave Wood



Don't miss our monthly e-newsletter

The best way to get ASSAP updates throughout the year is to sign up to our e-newsletter if you're not already receiving it. Email publications@assap.ac.uk to subscribe.

£5 E-membership

Our most affordable option! In addition to standard membership, ASSAP now offers an e-membership choice at only £5 annually. Through e-membership you will receive the same publications, but in PDF instead of paper form. All other benefits remain the same, such as access to training and free entry to our lecture series. If you would like to switch, please email membership@assap.ac.uk.



paranormal UFOs vampires psychology
ghosts **seriously** earth mysteries
psychic EVP hauntings
anthropology **strange**
cryptids consciousness mediums

**Return of the UK's Biggest
Paranormal Conference!**

**Returning to
University of Bath
on 9th-10th
September 2017**

SeriouslyStrange.org.uk

Lucy Barlow at Castle Roch

President and First Lady's Piece by
Lionel and Patricia Fanthorpe

This raises the intriguing question of why a particular psychic entity such as Lucy's ghost should frequent one of its earthly habitats rather than another. The theory that such appearances are merely recordings in the fabric of some old buildings, visible and audible to appropriately sensitive observers, could offer one possible explanation. The idea that Lucy's restless and unhappy spirit actually returned to Roch seeking peace as though looking for solace after her many misadventures, is a further possibility.

Do sensitive psychic investigators who know her story well, visit Roch with Lucy in mind and somehow project their mental images of her on to the 1,000 year old walls as they explore the Castle?

Roch Castle would undoubtedly be a very interesting site for a future ASSAP investigation.

Adam de Rupe, a Norman Knight, built Roch Castle (known in Welsh as Castell y Garn) during the later days of the 12th Century. Before his arrival in the area near Haverfordwest, there had been an earlier wooden defensive structure on the site. Roch Castle was constructed at about the same time as Pili Priory near Milford Haven. The Castle was intended to be an integral part of the defences along the traditional border separating England and Wales.

The de Rupe family came to an end during the 15th Century and Roch Castle later became the property of the Walter family. Lucy Walter, as she was originally known, was born in Roch Castle, and it was during her subsequent colourful career as a courtesan, that she found it convenient to change her name to Mrs Barlow.

Charles II was one of her many conquests, and he fathered her son James, who later became the Duke of Monmouth.

Lucy died of venereal disease in September 1658 while still only in her twenties.

Despite her many travels in England and overseas during her adventurous life, there are numerous reports of her spirit being seen in her original home at Roch Castle.



S. Harding del.

H. Van der Vorste. sculp.

Pub. Oct. 1795. by E. & S. Harding. Pall Mall.

MISS LUCY WATERS.

*From an Original Drawing in the Possession of
the Right Honorable the Earl of Bute.*



paranormal UFOs vampires psychology
ghosts seriously earth mysteries
psychic EVP hauntings
anthropology
cryptids
consciousness mediums

seriously strange



**EARLY BIRD
TICKETS
AVAILABLE**

TWO DAY CONFERENCE £17
FULL PRICE £30

ONE DAY TICKET (SAT OR SUN) £10
FULL PRICE £20

AND DON'T FORGET THE
GALA DINNER - SAT NIGHT £25

SeriouslyStrange.org.uk

Seriously Strange is going to be a great, fun weekend. 25 of the top speakers in the field today have come together to discuss everything from ghosts to vampires, poltergeist to UFOs.

We have a great variety of academic speakers and lay researchers. A blend of accessible talks and more serious talks. We also have the Paranormal Olympics, a fun series of experiments to take part in or watch.

See the top experts debating anomalous phenomena. The audience will have a chance to get involved in these debates too. Give your opinion on the burning questions of the day, or just sit back and watch the debate unfold around you.

We wrap up the Saturday session with the Gala Dinner and guest speaker. Another highlight of Seriously Strange an exclusive opportunity to sign up to the National Register of Professional Investigators and exclusive booking to the ASSAP Training Weekend and upcoming conference: We're looking forward to seeing you on 9th or 10th September for a great weekend!

Speakers will be listed on our website and facebook pages soon!

ACCOMMODATION

You can stay at The University of Bath on the 8th and 9th September, it is £40 a night per single room including clean towels and Breakfast, its not on-suite, but the accommdation are small apartments. There are two toilets and two showers in the apartment. These rooms are very limited, so i advise if you require a room you book asap. This is the best priced accommodation you will find in Bath.
Best Western 1.9 miles from University £84.00 for a double

DATE AND TIME

Sat, 9 Sep 2017, 10:00 – 17:00 (subject to speaker times)
Sun, 10 Sep 2017 10:00 – 17:00 (subject to speaker times)

LOCATION

University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA2 7AY

Visit www.SeriouslyStrange.org.uk to book your tickets today

The ASSAP Training Weekend

Keep an eye out for the next one!

The ASSAP Training Weekend has, over the decades, prepared hundreds of paranormal investigators to take on and handle cases.

The weekend focuses on practicing the skills needed to handle a client from start to finish including assessing a case, science and ethics, interviewing skills, analysing evidence and report writing.

Important to note this is not a 'how to' guide for how to run a group vigil with vigil attached. There are many commercial events companies that offer such experiences. The ASSAP Training Weekend is a client focussed introduction to serious investigation.

The weekend is also very friendly with group work and social opportunities galore.

Your journey will include a pre-training phone conversation to make sure this is the right course for you, a pre-training learning book and assessment, NRPI e-learning assessment and a post-weekend report.

You also get the opportunity to become an ASSAP Approved Investigator (AAI*) and the weekend acts as a good foundation for undertaking ASSAP's accredited distance learning qualification.

Please note these events can sell out very quickly. Past Training Weekends have sold out in less than a week. Keep an eye out for future training course dates.





Fear the Reaper

The Real World Dangers of Modern Paranormal Investigation

by Gavin Fox

To the outside observer, ghost hunting can appear to be a dangerous pastime. While the majority of discussions in this regard seem to revolve around the possibility of something nasty following you home, it is actually the more mundane aspects of working in derelict and abandoned properties that can be the biggest problem for paranormal researchers. That, and the fact that the law is rarely on our side. While many variations exist, there does seem to be a general consensus regarding the three most basic rules involved in conducting a safe investigation. That such a thread can be found within the constitution of even the smallest group is unsurprising, as the price for ignoring the following common sense concepts can be deadly.

Rule one, ask permission of the landowner and do not under any circumstances trespass on private property. No matter how haunted a building is supposed to be, is that pretty little orb photograph worth doing jail time for? As anyone with a background in urban exploring knows, it can quickly reach the point that more time is spent dodging security guards than snapping photos. Big companies make their bread and butter from keeping people out after hours,

and judges always have time to sentence the unlucky few who are caught.

Two, get know the building before you turn off the lights, especially if it is derelict. Even with the press that Zak Bagans generated by wearing a respirator mask in later seasons of *Ghost Adventures*, most people still ignore the dangers that can be present in the fabric of older buildings. Asbestos for example, or respiratory disease causing moulds just minding their own business in the dark, waiting to ruin your life. For the really poorly prepared though, there is nothing like falling through a gaping hole in the floor and landing on a pile of rusty pipes in the basement to solve that afterlife question once and for all.

And three, while you should never investigate alone, you should also choose your companions well. So your friend Bob has a car with enough trunk space to get you and your equipment to the haunted location, but also spends most of his time more drunk than a secondary school teacher on the first day of term? John has the connections to get you and your group inside that spooky old hospital, but has a nasty habit of going crazy with his knife collection when he is up on

cocaine? Jess is an excellent medium, but also has suicidal tendencies and an irrational fear of the dark? Any of these sound like the best people to be hanging around a remote castle with at three in the morning?

The consequences that arise from ignoring the first rule are all to apparent to anyone who reads the news. Numerous states in America are now actioning a zero tolerance policy towards what they see as acts of vandalism against their heritage, and the police in the united kingdom have always taken a dim view of trespassing on private property.

Take the numerous people arrested in and around the derelict Lima Tuberculosis Hospital, Ohio, for example. All are facing a 30 day suspended jail sentence, with an additional \$250 dollar fine and court costs to boot. Allegedly haunted by the patients who

died there, the location now serves as extra storage for the Lima-Allen County Landfill. There have been numerous accusations levelled by disgruntled ghost hunters at Ben Hefner, the owner of the building, arguing that he has cut a deal with the county to keep the money from fines rolling in¹. With no plans in place to develop the site in the foreseeable future it is likely that many more investigators will be drawn to the building and it's grounds to face ambush by local deputies and a night in the cells.

Trespassing can be potentially deadly too. Rachel Barezinsky is one such legend tripper who nearly faced death when her friends decided to take a look around a creepy old house near their Ohio highschool in 2006. She was barely out of the car when the owner of the property, 40 year old Allen S. Davis, began firing on them from an upstairs window. In Davis' own words "I didn't know what their weaponry was, what their intentions were. In a situation like that, you assume the worst-case scenario if you're going to protect your family from a possible home invasion and murder."²

One .22 calibre hollow point round hit Rachel in the head, fragmenting in the right parietal region of the brain, transversing the right temporal lobe and the rear of the

right frontal lobe. It then crossed the midline, and finally embedded itself in her left frontal lobe. It remains there to this day. A second lodged itself in her right shoulder and has also proven impossible to remove³. She has undergone many surgeries and had a couple of close calls, but is said to be well on the road to a ninety percent recovery. Rachel beat the odds, and her family knows it, believing it to be some form of religious miracle.

Davis had been the victim of numerous teenage pranks before the shooting and claimed that he had acted only to defend his property. He was so incensed by the charges

brought against him that he was quoted from his cell by local journalists as stating that "It's really something how home-owners defend themselves and the way the laws are written, we're the ones brought up on charges while the perpetrators get little or nothing."

Unsurprisingly, Davis

would later be sentenced to a sixteen year jail term for his crime.

The risks involved when not bothering to take notice of the second rule, locational awareness, can be illustrated by the following tale revolving around the tragic death of 29 year old Leah Kubik. The incident in question occurred at the 130 plus year old Connaught medical research building owned by the University of Toronto. First dates have a tendency to be messy affairs in general, but few result in a seven storey fall to the cold, hard pavement below. This one did, however, costing the life of a prominent and well loved Canadian computer hacker and leaving her family and friends wondering what really happened. Indeed, her mother hotly disputed the fact that Leah was even ghost hunting at all⁴.

But the police at the time treated the whole situation as one sparked by a morbid curiosity for things unseen, placing the resulting accident firmly in ghost

hunting territory by association. Kubik and her unnamed date broke into the ivy clad building through an open window in 2009 to have a look around the site of a previous murder. This earlier crime involved a professor at the university who was found stabbed back in January 2001⁵. Climbing the stairs to the roof the couple began to cross it, but the wire that they were holding on to snapped and the rest, as



"At least one woman was sexually assaulted during 2015 in the UK while following up a lead on her own in a supposedly haunted location. Her attacker, Desire Nahimana, was working at the Guildhall in Birmingham city centre as a security guard when he enticed the young woman up to the empty forth floor with stories of a suspected poltergeist. Once they were alone, he attempted to force himself upon her."

they say, is local folklore in the making. She supposedly died in his arms, and it soon became yet another death by misadventure chalked up to chasing spooks by torch light.

Then there is the accident in the abandoned winery on Clovis Avenue, California, in late 2013 that saw one of a group of several self confessed ghost hunters travel thirty feet from a rickety old walkway to the ground floor the quickest way possible. Thankfully, while a short stay in hospital resulted from the accident, the unnamed woman was not seriously hurt. Officer Curt Fleming, who was called to the location of the accident said the following when interviewed by local press: "It's a spooky old building but I'm not sure what they were doing. Up to no good, goofing around that's for sure." ⁶

No further information on the case is available, so its safe to assume that the group were not charged with trespassing on private property, though the idea was certainly raised by police at the time. Based purely upon the above examples you would think that exploring outside would safer. No need to worry about crumbling walkways or long drops off of short buildings, and no lawsuits for being there after hours either. Unfortunately bad planning can cause even open air investigations to end in tragedy.

Such was the case with amateur ghost hunter Christopher Kaiser back in 2010. Kaiser and a dozen or so companions were waiting for the apparition of the Fast Mail, a train involved in one of the USA's earliest rail disasters. Mounting the bridge near Buffalo Shoals Road in North Carolina back in 1881 the Fast Mail slipped from the tracks into the creek below, killing twenty people and injuring many more.

As if to echo this previous tragedy, the small group of thrill seekers would face a similar fate when a very real train

came to meet them in the small hours of the night.

This modern locomotive rounded the bend without sounding its horn. Many of them had moved on to the trestle itself by this point, and were taken completely by surprise without anywhere to go. By some miracle all but Kaiser made it off the bridge alive, most sporting minor injuries from their hurried escape along 150 foot of track. Sadly, it later came to light that he had only been struck by the train because he had slowed down to push his girlfriend to safety. Kaiser had realised that she was falling behind the rest of the startled ghost hunters and made a snap decision to put her safety above his own⁷.

Of course, professional debunkers had a field day with this one, and as such it was featured in Skeptical Enquirer magazine and a slew of mainstream newspapers around the world. The story soon passed beyond simple journalism to become a short lived rallying cry for those who saw ghost hunting as something akin in danger level to wrestling a full grown Bengal tiger while wearing a bodysuit made of sirloin steak. Oddly, a second paranormal researcher would be killed by a train in early 2016 whilst looking for a legendary Kentucky Goatman on the Pope Lick Trestle, so it is obvious that the media campaign had little effect⁸.

Ghost hunters have also been known to find dead bodies. Such was the case for the small group illegally exploring the abandoned Kuhn hospital in Vicksburg Mississippi. Following a trail of blood from inside the building they soon stumbled upon the corpse of sixty-nine year old homicide victim Sharon Wilson, who had been reported missing earlier that day⁹. One suspect would later be charged for the crime and, in a bizarre twist, would later be shot dead by his own hostages after escaping from prison¹⁰. While such events are thankfully

**PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING**

**PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING**

TRESPASSING

**PROTECTED
BY LAW** ! **PROTECTED
BY LAW**

**PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING**

**PROTECTED
BY LAW** ! **PROTECTED
BY LAW**

rare they do indeed happen, and it is safe to assume that this was not the sort of interaction with the dead that the group originally had in mind.

Worse, at least one woman was sexually assaulted during 2015 in the UK while following up a lead on her own in a supposedly haunted location. Her attacker, Desire Nahimana, was working at the Guildhall in Birmingham city centre as a security guard when he enticed the young woman up to the empty forth floor with stories of a suspected poltergeist. Once they were alone, he attempted to force himself upon her¹¹. Desire was jailed for six months, and the victim has since been unable to return to work due to the trauma caused by the whole sorry mess.

That last case neatly bridges the gap between the second rule and the third. This, as previously mentioned, revolves around knowing your companions, and being able to trust them in an otherwise extraordinary situation. Ghost hunters do snap, be it due to underlying mental instability or a growing unease as their lives become increasingly filled with the politics of the weird. In that they are no different to the participants in any other mentally taxing hobby, though there are usually many more people waiting to point their fingers and shake their heads when the ectoplasm hits the fan.

Take, for example, the strange tale of Steven Laursen Junior of Rhinelander, Wisconsin. A self inflicted stab wound would go on to ruin the investigation that he was taking part in at the Villisca Axe Murder House, Iowa, back in late 2014. Details of the events still remain sketchy at best, especially as he has refused to comment further since his recovery.

What we do know, however, is that Laursen took up a solitary vigil within the Northwest bedroom of the property

“Who knows just how many of our fellow ghost hunters have been added to the missing persons list of their local town or city because they ventured out at night, all alone and ill prepared to trespass within the very grounds of the building that now houses their still undiscovered body?”

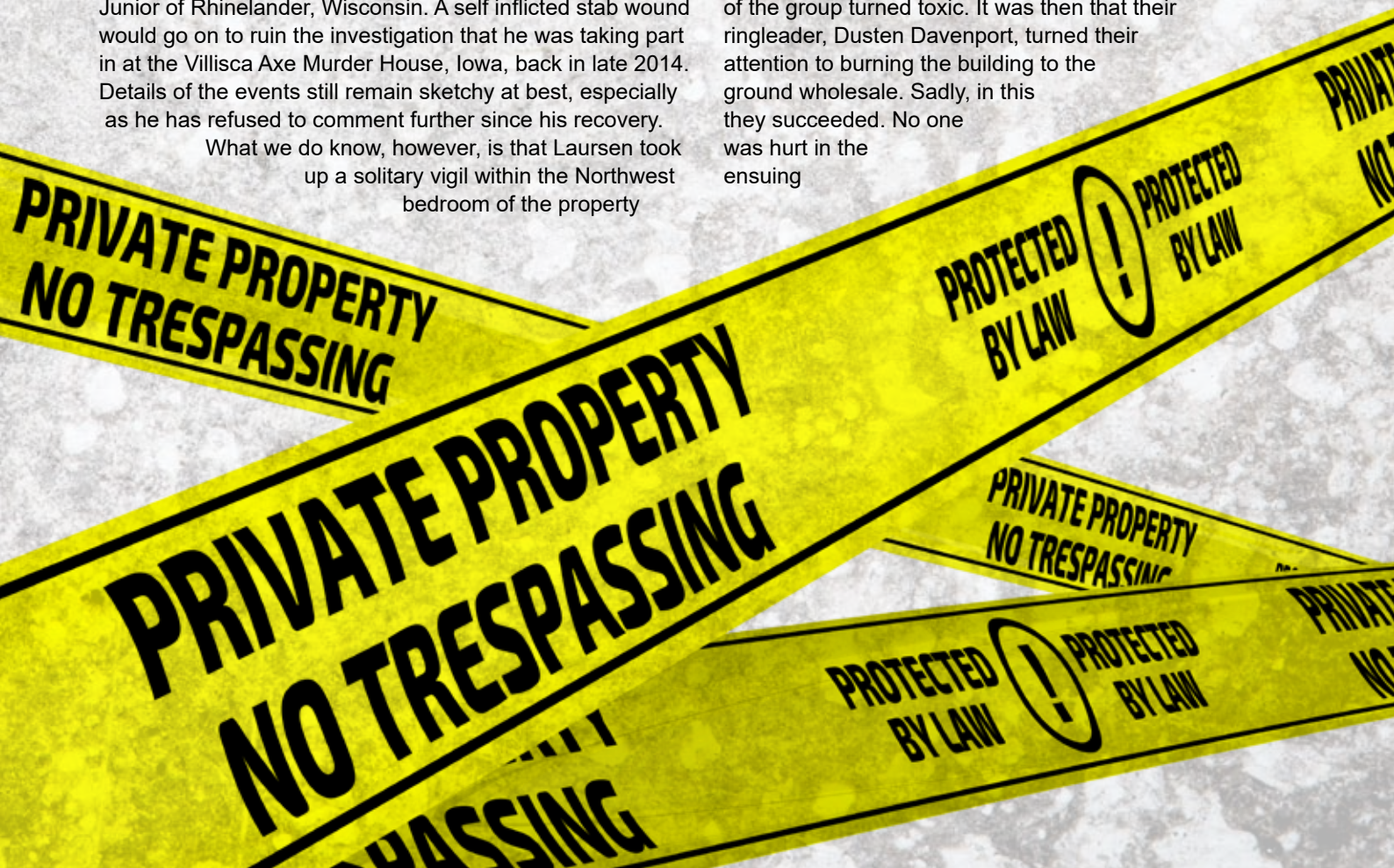
before thrusting a knife into his own chest in a manner that has left the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department baffled¹².

A frantic yell for help brought his companions, some of whom had paid anything up to \$428 for the privilege of spending the night inside what is generally considered to be one of the most paranormally active locations in the USA, to his aid. None of those subsequently questioned know why he did it, though some speculated spectral foul play of course.

The timing of this bizarre self mutilation coincided perfectly with that of the original murders in the house, a vicious crime from way back in 1912 that was never solved. Mental instability can not be ruled

out, however. Nor can the power of being caught up in the moment and egged on by the tales tied to a particular location. This is especially true of one as notorious as the Axe Murder House has recently become through the power of television spook shows and YouTube videos of varying historical accuracy.

Or the case of the seven men who faced lengthy jail terms for arson of the Historic LeBeau Mansion near New Orleans in 2013. Drunk, high and with their efforts to summon the shades of whatever was supposed to haunt the sadly derelict pre-Civil War edifice failing miserably, the mood of the group turned toxic. It was then that their ringleader, Dusten Davenport, turned their attention to burning the building to the ground wholesale. Sadly, in this they succeeded. No one was hurt in the ensuing



blaze that could be seen for miles around and had little chance of being brought under control by local emergency services.

This was a miracle in itself as the LeBeau had long been a regular hang out for troubled teens and the local homeless community, any one of which could have been hiding inside as the flames took hold. And these were not stupid kids either¹³. Those involved in the arson ranged in age from seventeen year old Jerry Hamblen, to the aforementioned Dusten who was thirty-one at the time of arrest, and as such should have known better. Just how involved the other six people were in the events at the LeBeau is debatable, but they have all paid the price for the near \$50,000 worth of damage done that night.

While Dusten and his circle of friends may not have been what we would consider an organised paranormal investigation group, they perhaps better represent the real grass roots of ghost hunting than shows like Ghost Adventures will ever do. Most of us started as bored teenagers looking for a thrill after sunset. While we would never burn a building to the ground due to lack of results,

many of us are guilty of trespassing, hunting alone and not doing a daylight walk around of the location before diving right in.

Who knows just how many of our fellow ghost hunters have been added to the missing persons list of their local town or city because they ventured out at night, all alone and ill prepared to trespass within the very grounds of the building that now houses their still undiscovered body? Even if they are found, the exact details of the freak accident or foul play that befell them will likely never be known to the public, their friends or family, or even the wider paranormal community. Closure will not be forthcoming, and those they leave behind will question just what possessed them to do such a stupid thing in the first place.

Yes, paranormal investigation can indeed be a dangerous hobby, but one that can be made all the safer by the application of some basic common sense. Unfortunately, if the numerous news reports mentioned within this article are anything to go by, common sense is harder to find than a free floating full torso vaporous apparition at the New York public library.

Bibliography

1. Albrecht, J. Jr. (2015). Ghost hunters that ignore 'No Trespassing' sign at Ohio TB hospital sent to jail. [online] <https://caravantomidnight.com/ghost-hunters-that-ignore-no-trespassing-sign-at-ohio-tb-hospital-sent-to-jail/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

2. Associated Press. (2006) Teen shot in head when looking for ghosts. [online] Available from: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2006/08/24/1156012653396.html> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

3. Rachel's Miracle. (2016). Rachel's Story. [online] Available at: <http://www.rachelsmiracle.com/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

4. schurz-southbendtribune. (2009). Osceola mother disputing details of her daughter's death. [online] Available at: http://articles.southbendtribune.com/2009-10-08/news/26743092_1_ghost-hunting-paranormal-experts-stories [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

5. Toronto Sun. (2009). Ghost hunt turns deadly. [online] Available at: <http://www.torontosun.com/news/torontoandgta/2009/09/11/10832816-sun.html> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

6. ABC30 Fresno. (2016). Apparent ghost hunter falls 30 feet in Clovis. [online] Available at: <http://abc30.com/archive/9361840/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

7. Edition.cnn.com. (2010). 'Ghost train' hunter killed by train in North Carolina. [online] Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/08/27/north.carolina.ghost.train/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

8. Gettys, T. (2016). Tourist killed by train while stalking legendary 'Goatman' monster on Kentucky railroad bridge. [online] Rawstory.com. Available at: <http://www.rawstory.com/2016/04/tourist-killed-by-train-while-stalking-legendary-goatman-monster-on-kentucky-railroad-bridge/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

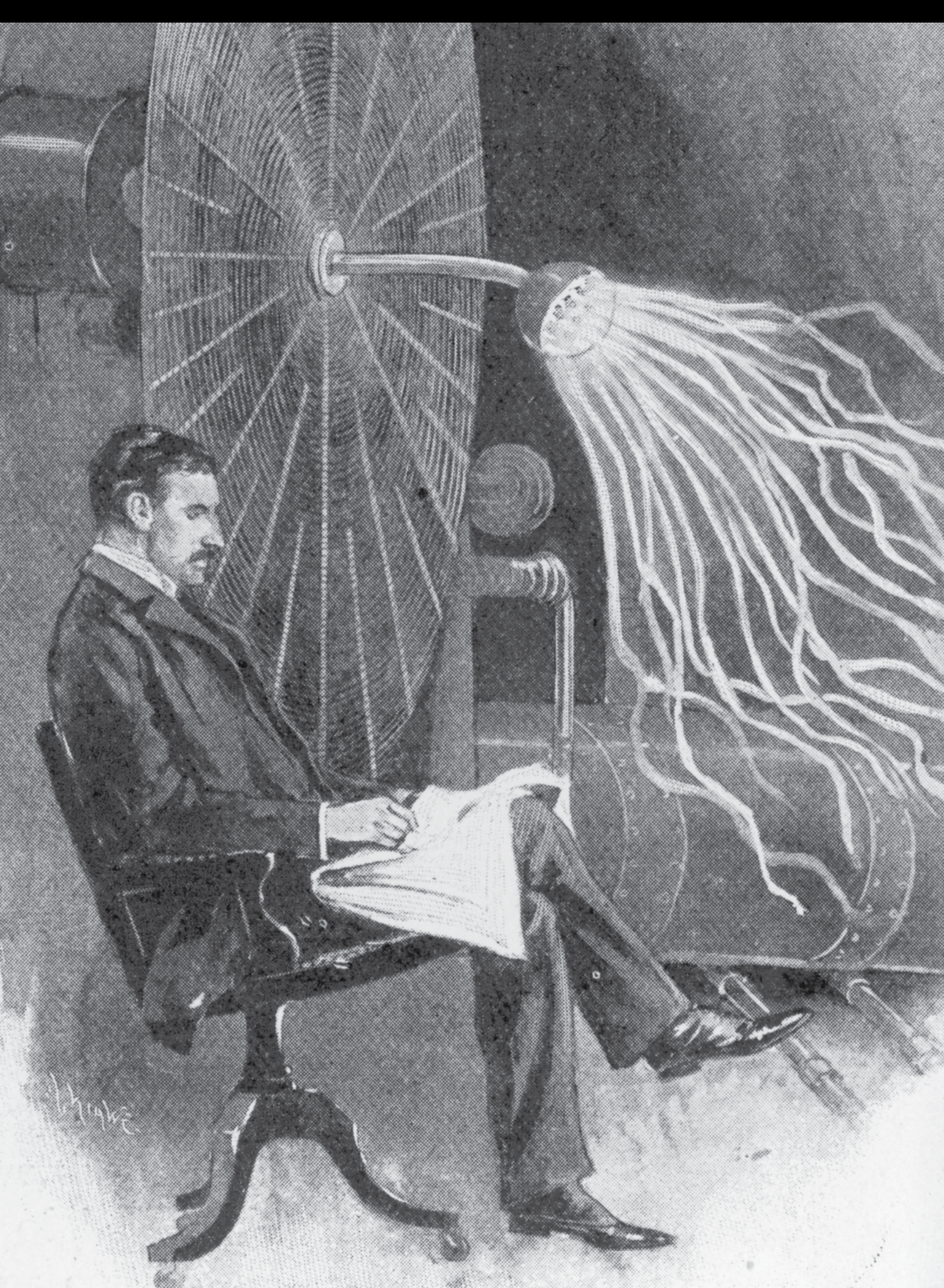
9. Cbsnews.com. (2015). Police identify body of Sharon Wilson, found by Mississippi ghost hunters at abandoned Kuhn Memorial State Hospital. [online] Available at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/police-identify-body-found-by-mississippi-ghost-hunters/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

10. Greg Botelho, C. (2016). Hostages kill murder suspect, jail escapee. [online] CNN. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/11/us/mississippi-escaped-murder-suspect-killed-hostages/> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

11. Mail Online. (2015). Security guard lured woman to 'haunted' office to sexually assault her. [online] Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3129526/Security-guard-lured-woman-deserted-office-promise-seeing-ghost-sexually-assaulted-jailed-six-months.html> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

12. VICE. (2014). Why Did a Ghost Hunter Stab Himself Inside a Famous Ax-Murder House? VICE United States. [online] Available at: <http://www.vice.com/read/why-did-a-ghost-hunter-stab-himself-inside-a-famous-axe-murder-house-1118> [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].

13. NOLA.com. (2014). 7 men plead guilty in LeBeau Plantation fire, apparently spurred by ghost stories. [online] Available at: http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2014/09/seven_men_who_apparently_were.html [Accessed 12 Dec. 2016].



Was Inventor Nikola Tesla a UFO Contactee?

by Sean Casteel

In the more than 70 years since his death, Nikola Tesla has never ceased to be a fascinating, mysterious figure dwelling somewhere outside the borders of history as it is understood by the unseeing masses. While we as a 21st century civilization continue to reap the benefits of his outsized genius, Tesla has yet to be given the recognition he deserves as a major architect of the relatively technologically comfortable age we live in. Still, there are those of us who do give Tesla his due, belatedly but sincerely. This article will deal with an aspect of Tesla's genius that has gotten short shrift even from those of us who revere his name: UFO contact.

And that theory is nowhere better espoused than in "The Lost Journals of Nikola Tesla" by Tim R. Swartz. Swartz's bestselling classic has recently been updated and reissued by Global Communications and is worth a new look whether you've read the first edition or not.

I interviewed Tim Swartz a few years ago for one of Tim Beckley's now defunct newsstand magazines, and Swartz laid out some historical background of Tesla's earliest beginnings.

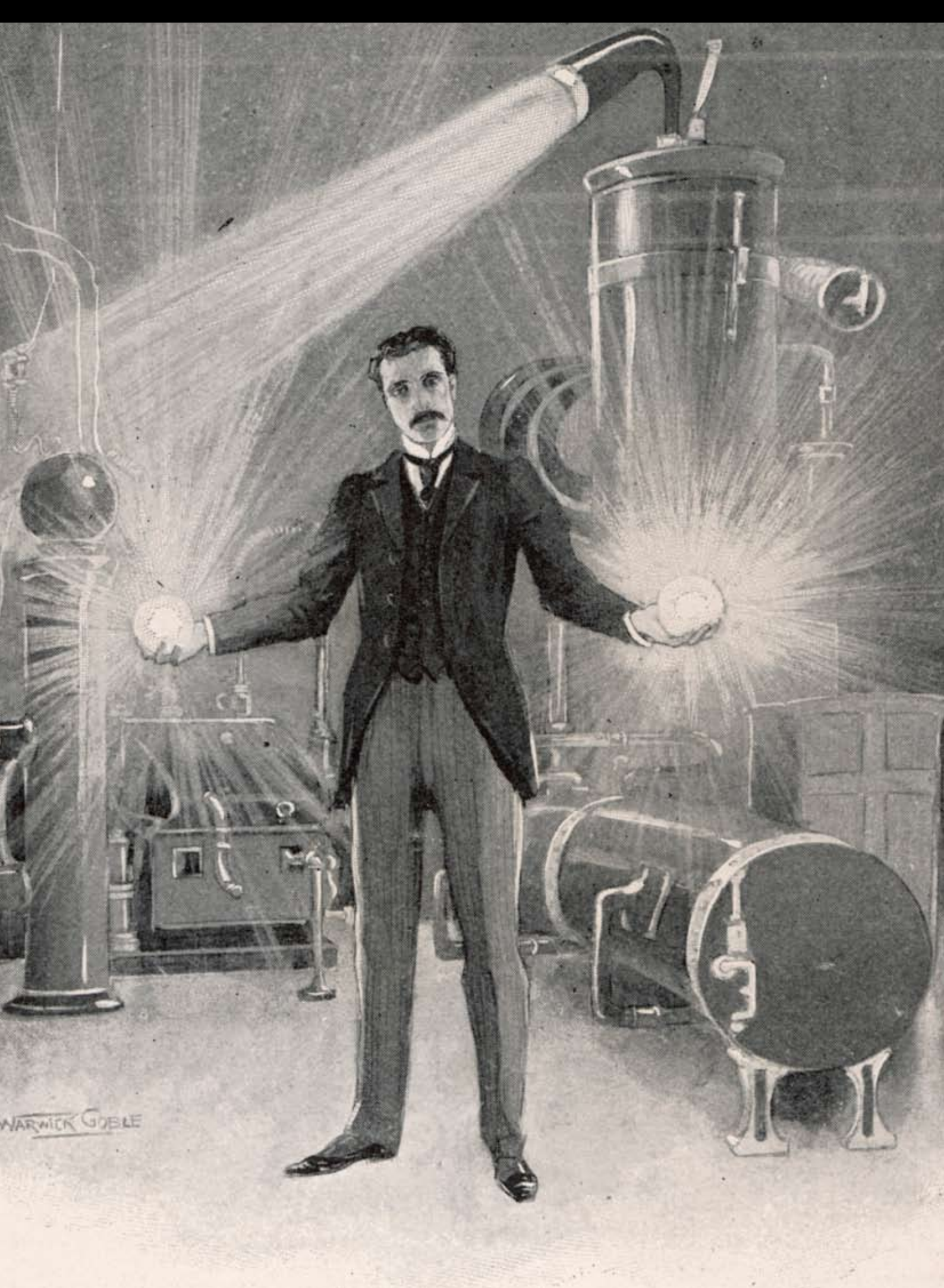
"Tesla was born in Yugoslavia," Swartz said, "in what is now Croatia, at midnight between July 9 and July 10 in 1856. He had that spark of genius right from the very beginning. There

are a couple of people, I think, throughout our history, that you could classify as a 'super genius.' That's the best word I can think of. Most people would agree that Einstein was one of our greatest geniuses. Maybe Leonardo da Vinci. And Nikola Tesla should fit right up there with those guys, because he just seemed to have this mind that was open to the universe.

"I suppose that's a rather esoteric way of looking at it," he continued, "but he had the ability to visualize his ideas to such a point that he could actually 'see' what he was visualizing in three dimensions. As he put it, 'It seemed to hang in the air right in front of my eyes.'"

Nowadays, Tesla is best known to the general public as the inventor of the AC motor.

"Our entire system of electricity," Swartz explained, "works with AC current. In Tesla's day, Thomas Edison had come up with a system to deliver electricity to houses and buildings based on the DC current, direct currents. DC current works fine, but it can't be sent over any great distance. Probably every half mile to a mile you would have to have a station that would step the power back up again and send it on for another half a mile or so. A very inefficient system, and really only good for close areas, like New York City. That's where Edison had initially done some wiring."



WARWICK GOBLE

Tesla, by contrast, created a motor based on alternating current, which can travel hundreds of miles before it has to be retransmitted. This was a revolution for its time. Tesla came up with a working version of an AC motor and was the first to build, at Niagara Falls, a massive power generating station that supplied electricity to New York City.

"It was cheap, clean, efficient, and it actually worked," Swartz said. "That's probably Tesla's greatest claim to fame."

Tesla followed up that achievement by inventing radio. Though popularly credit for radio is given to Marconi, the Supreme Court declared some years after Tesla had died that Tesla's patented radio devices had preceded Marconi's and that Tesla is officially the father of radio. Tesla also created the first remote control device, which he demonstrated by directing a small battery-powered toy boat through various maneuvers on a lake as newspaper reporters looked on. He also designed a torpedo for use in warfare that was remotely controlled.

It was while working on a radio receiver designed to monitor thunderstorms that Tesla stumbled onto something quite extraordinary.

"Tesla thought that possibly he had received a radio signal from outer space," Swartz said, "that could conceivably be from extraterrestrials. Which is a pretty amazing concept for his time. People in that era speculated that there could be life on Mars, but nobody suggested it too seriously. Tesla was conducting experiments in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1899, with a pretty good-sized radio receiver, because he was fascinated by the way lightning played in thunderstorms. He was trying to come up with a way to harness the power from thunderstorms.

"And one evening," Swartz continued, "he received what he called 'regular signals.' You know, like beep, beep, beep. Not the usual static you hear from thunderstorms and lightning. He wondered at the time if he wasn't listening to 'one planet greeting another,' as he put it. From that point on, it became somewhat of an obsession of his, to build better and better radio receivers to try to see if he could repeat what he heard. He got to the point where he claimed that he was actually receiving voice transmissions. He said it sounded just like people talking back and forth to each other. He made notes saying that he was actually hearing intelligent beings from another planet talking to each other, although he didn't know what language they were speaking. But he still felt he understood them."

An interesting point that should be made here is that at the time Tesla was hearing these alien voices through his primitive

radio equipment, 1899, the country had just experienced the great Airship Wave of the late 1800s. No less a UFO expert than researcher and historian Dr. David Jacobs believes that is when true UFO contact first began, in the skies over

America, when people familiar only with hot air balloons as real life flying devices began to see metal ships that flew over their homes and farmland, abducting the occasional cow and speaking to bewildered farmers in languages beyond their understanding. While one hesitates to abandon the more familiar Ancient Astronauts theory that says alien contact began with mankind's birth in prehistoric times, Jacobs' belief does tend to support what Tesla claims happened to him.

This also begs the question: Did aliens have some kind of part in leading Tesla to create what he did? It is argued in the controversial book "The Day After Roswell," by the late Colonel Philip Corso and his collaborator Bill Birnes, that recovered alien technology was reverse-engineered and

used to lay the groundwork for numerous inventions, including fiber optics and much else in the way of technology we take for granted today. One sometimes wonders if the aliens more likely are implanting the seeds for, or even directly "inspiring," through some process of implanted thoughts, some of the marvels of the current age.

In any case, there is likely some kind of overlap here between Tesla's voice contact and the inventions that came later, though it is of course impossible to prove. Tesla felt the voices were slowly preparing mankind for conquest and domination. In "The Lost Journals of Nikola Tesla," Swartz goes on to recount the spine-tingling chronology of Tesla's battle with these aliens he believed to be an enemy race, all set against a background of industrial espionage and governmental secrecy that would make for a crackerjack science fiction tale were it not for the fact that the events are alleged to be completely real.

Tesla later went public with his claim that he was receiving extraterrestrial voice transmissions and was subjected to the usual humiliating ridicule that greets UFO witnesses today when they try to speak openly of their experiences. But he remained firm in his conviction that the voices were genuine and posed a terrifying threat to life on Earth as we know it.

Global Communications publisher Tim Beckley provided more input on the connection between Tesla and UFOs.

"There are many who believe," Beckley said, "that Tesla was actually a 'star child' of sorts, that he was born on another planet and left on the doorstep of his adoptive parents. This speculative theory was first offered in a long out-of-print book

"Tesla thought that possibly he had received a radio signal from outer space," Swartz said, "that could conceivably be from extraterrestrials. Which is a pretty amazing concept for his time. People in that era speculated that there could be life on Mars, but nobody suggested it too seriously."

"Did aliens have some kind of part in leading Tesla to create what he did? It is argued in the controversial book "The Day After Roswell," by the late Colonel Philip Corso and his collaborator Bill Birnes, that recovered alien technology was reverse-engineered and used to lay the groundwork for numerous inventions."

by Margaret Storm and a later book by our own Commander X titled 'Nikola Tesla: Free Energy and the White Dove.'

"The idea that Tesla was born off-planet," Beckley continued, "seems to have originated with a gentleman named Otis T. Carr. A Baltimore MD and inventor, Carr claims that he worked side-by-side with Tesla for years and that he discovered bits and pieces of the great inventor's life that no one else knew about, including the fact that Tesla wasn't originally from 'here.'"

According to Beckley, Carr later went on to invent a saucer-shaped device that he said for a mere \$14 million would take us to Mars or somewhere else nearby in the solar system.

"Carr was a controversial figure in his own right," Beckley added, "but no one has been able to prove that he didn't work with Tesla in Manhattan, where Tesla was living in the New Yorker Hotel near Herald Square. We do know that Tesla was fascinated with the possibility of life on other planets."

Beckley reiterated Swartz's statements regarding Tesla's attempts to establish contact with the aliens via radio.

"And he might have been successful in reaching out to the stars," Beckley said. "Furthermore, Tesla is said to have even developed a 'Tesla Scope' that anyone could use to make contact with extraterrestrials. The device was on display in Canada for several years before its owner passed away."

Now a few words about the title of Swartz's book. Tesla died in 1943, in poverty and relative obscurity. As he moved from hotel to hotel, staying one step ahead of his debts, he often left behind whole suitcases full of notes and diagrams for unfinished inventions. Legend has it that after he died, the federal government stepped in and confiscated the material, believing it contained designs for new weapons devices and therefore was relevant to national security.

But apparently a few things slipped through the fingers of the government. At a 1976 auction in Newark, New Jersey, a collector named Dale Alfrey bought four boxes of papers for around \$25. Alfrey at first thought he had purchased the notes of a science fiction writer and had no idea of the importance of what the boxes contained. Twenty years would pass before Alfrey began to actually read the material and to try to preserve the badly mildewing papers by scanning them into his computer. While he was absorbed in this effort, he was visited by a trio of Men-In-Black who looked to him like "undertakers." They offered to buy the papers from Alfrey, who replied that they weren't for sale.

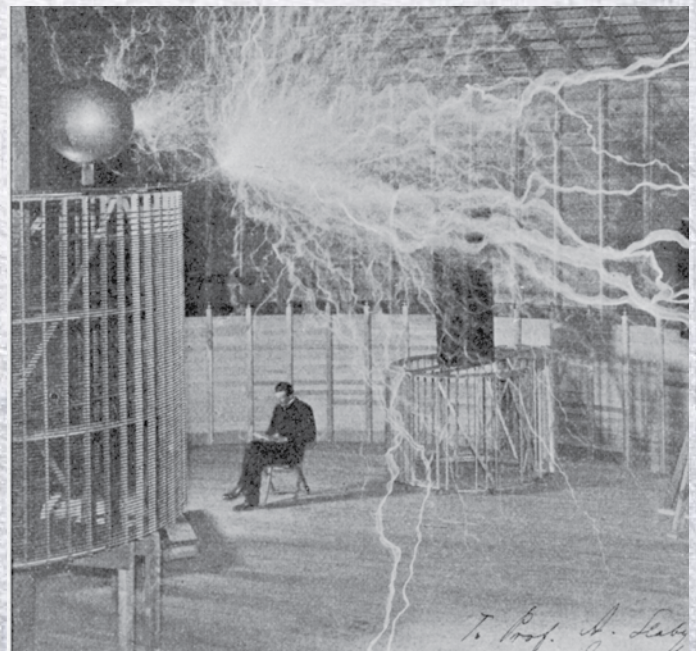
After further discussion, which included some disturbing threats from the MIBs, the three visitors turned in unison and walked away. Alfrey felt himself to be regaining consciousness after being in a kind of trance. When he rushed back inside, the papers were gone, and so was the hard drive to his computer. He never completely recovered from the experience with the

MIBs, but he did retain enough of what he had read of Tesla's lost journals to be sufficient for Swartz's book. Meanwhile, newspaper accounts from the time of Tesla's death related that a dozen large boxes of Tesla's notes may still be unaccounted for, perhaps waiting to be rediscovered and give up their secrets in our time.

This newly revised and expanded second edition of "The Lost Journals of Nikola Tesla" by Tim R. Swartz also contains new chapters on Time Travel, Alternative Energy, and Nazi flying discs, all of which help to expand the range and depth of the legacy Tesla has left to us to assist in our 21st century groping for technological mastery of our world. If we ever learn to travel in time or to take our energy directly from the forces animating the universe

or even to slip the surly bonds of Earth in a disc-shaped craft of human design, our debt to Nikola Tesla can only increase.

"Tesla later went public with his claim that he was receiving extraterrestrial voice transmissions and was subjected to the usual humiliating ridicule that greets UFO witnesses today when they try to speak openly of their experiences."



About the author:

Sean Casteel is a freelance journalist who has been writing about UFOs, alien abduction and many other paranormal subjects since 1989. Sean's writing appeared in many UFO- and paranormal-related magazines, including "UFO Magazine," Tim Beckley's "UFO Universe," "FATE Magazine," "Mysteries Magazine," and "Open Minds Magazine," most of which are now defunct but were a major part of a thriving UFO press in their heyday. Magazines in the UK, Italy, Romania and Australia have also published Sean's work.

Sean has written or contributed to over 30 books for Global Communications and Inner Light Publications, all of which are available from Amazon.com. Sean's books include "The Heretic's UFO Guidebook," which analyzes a selection of Gnostic Christian writings and their relationship to the UFO phenomenon, and "Signs and Symbols of the Second Coming," in which he interviews several religious and paranormal experts about how prophecies of the Second Coming of Christ may be fulfilled.



Hans Holzer

- The Supernatural and Beyond

by Alexandra Holzer

Growing up the daughter of renowned ghost hunter Hans Holzer was always interesting. However, one of the most vivid memories with my father occurred when I was eight years old. I came home from school, fixed a snack, and settled in to watch my favorite show, Scooby-Doo. My father was in his office, feverishly typing out his next bestseller on his powder-blue Smith Corona.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw what appeared to be a woman in a white gown glide into father's office. Moments later it was in the hallway leading toward the bedroom.

I ran into my father's office. He calmed me, replying, "Shura, it was most likely the next door neighbor, Mrs. Lerner, who recently passed alone without any family. She was probably looking for a cup of sugar."

That night was a restless one for me. I awoke in the dark feeling like someone was watching me. I tried to go back to sleep but my eyes kept popping open. Suddenly my legs felt as if someone sat down on them. I wanted to call out or run away but it was as if I was paralyzed. The ghostly feeling moved up my body and landed on my head, like someone

was patting my hair. At that I was able to jump out of bed and ran straight to my father, who was still typing away at 2:00 am. He just smiled, saying "It is normal. Go back to bed, it's a school night."

My father considered ghosts normal because he had studied them most of his life. Born in Vienna, Austria in 1920, my father developed an interest in the supernatural through his Uncle Henry's stories about ghosts and fairies. For him it was the beginning of what would become his calling. After earning a Master's Degree in comparative religion at Columbia and a doctorate in Parapsychology at the London College of Applied Science, he continued his quest for learning. He mastered other languages, wrote off-Broadway plays, and became a vegan, which was unusual at the time.

As an academic and parapsychologist, he took his calling extremely seriously. Three "dirty words" in his vocabulary were: belief, disbelief, and supernatural. "Belief is the uncritical acceptance of something you can't prove," he explained. "I work on evidence." He was firm in his belief in ghosts, or people who do not realize that they are dead and

are therefore “confused as to their real status.” Spirits were intelligent beings who could interact with the living; while “stay behinds” were those who found themselves earth-bound after death. According to him, these imprints left in the environment could be “picked up” by sensitive people, such as myself.

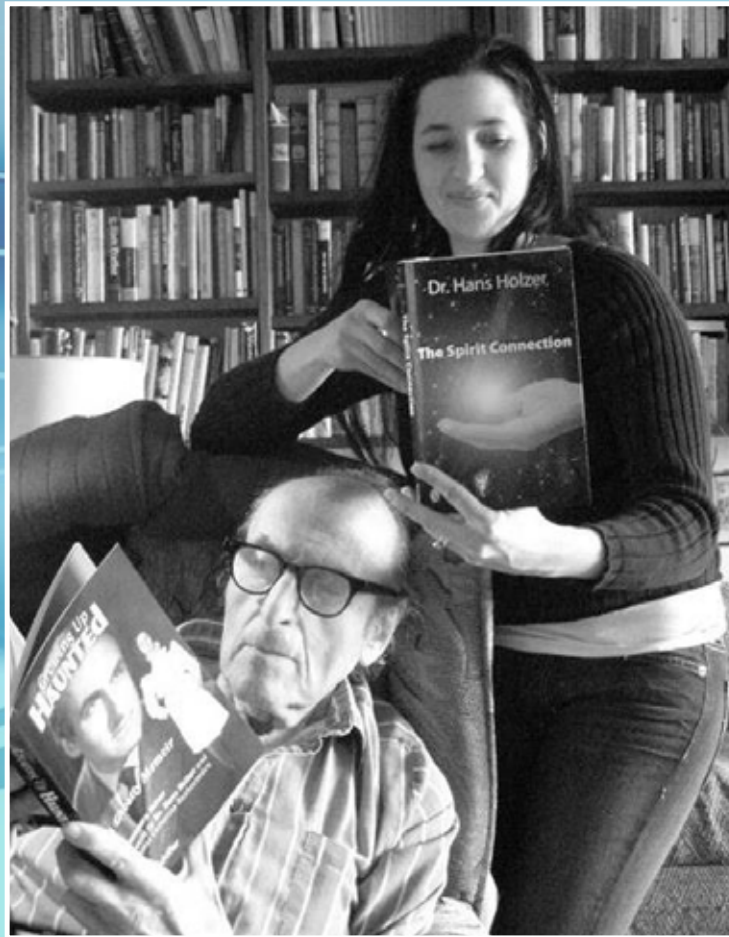
My father was comfortable in all worlds he explored. His unique expertise enabled him to appear on more than 250 hundred television and radio programs. He even hosted his own show, “Ghost Hunter.” He was pleased with new crop of television shows, movies, and websites, writing, “As a purveyor of genuine information regarding psychic phenomena, I welcome this resurgence of curiosity in worlds beyond the physical because contemplating these matters tends to make people think about themselves, their ultimate fate, and the nature of humankind itself.”

However, in understanding the spiritual world, he felt that there were three classes of people. He wrote, “There are those who ridicule the idea of anything beyond the grave. This category includes anybody from hard-line scientists to people who are only comfortable with the familiar, material world and really do not wish to examine any evidence that might change their minds. The will to disbelieve is far stronger than the will to believe—though neither leads to proof and hard evidence.

“Then there are those who have already accepted the evidence of a continued existence beyond physical death, including people who have arrived at this conclusion through an examination of hard evidence, either personal in nature or from scientifically valid sources. They are the group I respect the most, because they are not blind believers. They rightfully question the evidence, but they have no problem accepting it when it is valid. Included in this group are the religious-metaphysical folks, although they require no hard proof to validate their convictions, which emanate from a belief system that involves a world beyond this one.

“The third group is often thrown offtrack when trying to get at the truth by the folks in the metaphysical camp. This makes it more difficult for them to arrive at a proper conviction regarding the psychic. The thing for this third group is to stick to its principles and not become blind believers.

“The vast majority of people belong to the third group. They are aware of the existence of psychical phenomena and



the evidence for such phenomena, including case histories and scientific investigations by open-minded individuals. But they may be skeptical. They hesitate to join the second group only because of their own inner resistance to such fundamental changes in their philosophical attitudes toward life and death. For them, therefore, the need to be specific when presenting evidence or case histories, which must be fully verifiable, is paramount, as is an acceptable explanation for their occurrence.

It is hoped that those in the second group will embrace the position of the last group: that there are no boundaries around possibilities, provided that

the evidence bears it out.”

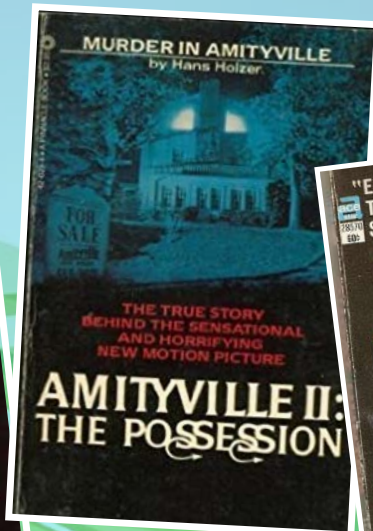
Born in Vienna, Austria in 1920, my father developed an interest in the supernatural when his uncle Henry told him stories about ghosts and fairies. For him it was the beginning of what would be his destiny and chosen path for his life span.

Just 40 plus years earlier, some researchers were on the way to forming this path father would soon travel upon. He studied such languages as Japanese at Columbia University, earning a Master’s Degree in comparative religion and a doctorate in Parapsychology at the London College of Applied Science which is no longer standing. He studied his predecessors before him doing early psychical research as the word parapsychology was born around 1889 by a

philosopher named Max Dessoir. J.B. Rhine in the 1930s made it known as psychical research. Parapsychologists utilize many approaches for the study of apparent paranormal phenomena. Father ran the gamut of his physical research who unlike many of his predecessors and those few after him... studied most paranormal phenomena.

According to the Parapsychological Association, parapsychologists do not nor are they concerned with astrology, UFOs, Bigfoot, paganism, vampires, alchemy, or witchcraft. Father was, which makes him a very unique, highly-intelligent character to be born into our world. For that reason and reason alone, he was a bit of everything to the world when it came to the supernatural. Sadly, he is more remembered for the Amityville Horror case than his bountiful case work at hand

“My father was comfortable in all worlds he explored. His unique expertise enabled him to appear on more than 250 hundred television and radio programs. He even hosted his own show, “Ghost Hunter.” He was pleased with new crop of television shows, movies, and websites, writing.”



dealing with thousands of stories with the wide range of topics.

His veganism spoke loudly to all and his passion to convert others into understanding why that lifestyle choice... was insurmountable and unrelenting. It took me a long time to grasp that natural concept and apply it into my daily life. As an academic parapsychologist, he took his calling extremely seriously. Hence where I think his jokes were a bit dry but he insisted he was indeed funny. Three "dirty words" in his vocabulary were: belief, disbelief and supernatural. "Belief is the uncritical acceptance of something you can't prove," he explained. "I work on evidence." He therefore dismissed the existence of angels and regarded the world's religions as corporations that make large profits out of scaring the "hell" out of their followers.

Moving on towards his inner creative-self, his love for the theater led him to become the New York Drama Critic for the London Times in the 1950s. He subsequently became a member of ASCAP, SAG, AFTRA and the Authors Guild. Who else out there could have such a resume and still be so in-touch with our universal codes and purpose?

Father was comfortable in all worlds he explored, having

"Three "dirty words" in his vocabulary were: belief, disbelief and supernatural. "Belief is the uncritical acceptance of something you can't prove," he explained. "I work on evidence." He therefore dismissed the existence of angels and regarded the world's religions as corporations that make large profits out of scaring the "hell" out of their followers.."

appeared on over 250 hundred national, local as well as foreign television and radio programs. He was a regular on television talk shows and even hosted his own show, Ghost Hunter. He has been credited with creating the term "The Other Side" (already in use, however, in nineteenth century spiritualism) or in full "The Other Side of Life."

He is also sometimes credited with having coined the term "ghost hunter," which was the title of his first book on the paranormal, published in 1963. I hope many reading this will now comprehend who came first, the chicken or the egg controversy. However, it would be made of soy and tofu.

In 1966, after airing a television special, "Eye on New York," which featured father, CBS TV affectionately became known as "CBSence."

The Holzer Method lives on and the ride has taken off. Keep your hands and feet to the side and do not touch anything you do not recognize. It can get ugly out there but remember and ask yourself, "What is real and what is not real? Because a lot of it is not real. A lot of it is questionable. And we've got to somehow try to separate those things."



About the author:

Neo-Pulp Writer (GHOST GAL: The Wild Hunt), Author (Lady Ambrosia and Growing up Haunted) and Scientific Paranormal Researcher Alexandra Holzer, is no stranger to the world of the supernatural, publishing or art.

Hans Holzer was also an Assistant Professor of Parapsychology at the New York Institute of Technology, Research Director of the New York Committee for the Investigation of Paranormal Occurrences, and a member of the College of Psychic Studies in London, as well as a lecturer at leading colleges.



Is Woodchester Mansion haunted?

by Chris Howley



Woodchester Mansion is well known amongst paranormal enthusiasts as one of the most haunted buildings in the UK and is host to a variety of ghost stories. Some are born out of misconstrued historic facts others are folklore and more recently since the late 90s the accounts are from many groups who have spent hours investigating this foreboding gothic manor. The history of Woodchester Mansion is well known and an internet search will give you all the information you need regarding not only the building but the history of Woodchester Park itself and the previous buildings that have occupied this land. The only thing you won't find is an in-depth answer to the question 'is Woodchester Mansion haunted?'

This is of course the six million dollar question but to answer this properly what is the definition of haunted? If haunted means by the return visitation of people who have died and are returning in spirit to communicate with us then I can only answer no as we cannot prove the existence of an intelligent afterlife. However if haunted means unexplained noises, objects moving apparently on their own, sightings of ghostly figures in period dress then I would answer with a resounding yes as I have personally experienced these types of phenomena.

I have been investigating the mansion since 2004 and am in the enviable position of being in this location most weekends supervising the countless parade of paranormal enthusiasts who come looking for their own experiences here. The most interesting result of this study so far came about during a recent conversation with the respected parapsychologist Steve Parsons where we were comparing figures of our own ghost sightings, mine from Woodchester and his from The Mersey Shipyard. From our conversation and combined total of nights spent at these relevant locations we concluded that in order to see a ghost you need to spend 125 nights at a location.

One of my own sightings at the mansion, and also my most recent, took place in December 2013. I was supervising a commercial group and had left them conducting their vigil in various parts of the building while I sat on my laptop in the drawing room alone with my back to the closed door. Out of the corner of my eye I saw movement and thought that one of the guests had returned so moved to face them and ask if everything was ok. What I saw however was not a guest but a young boy stood in the middle of the room staring into space. He was dressed in a blue/grey flecked suit with matching cap



and had ruddy red cheeks. Over the course of a few seconds he just faded to nothing. Ghost of course is just a label. I am of sound mind I wasn't tired and know that I had experienced this phenomena and this is just one example of many that I have experienced in the building.

The best audible phenomena was experienced by myself and Paul Hobday in October 2013. Following the annual Halloween party we were both in full fancy dress as Zombie paranormal investigators and had decided to use the building to take some promotional photography. At 3.00am the building was completely empty apart from the two of us as we started taking pictures on the 2nd floor corridor.

We were stopped dead by the sound of a cough and footsteps in the library below and descended the stairs expecting to find that somebody had entered the building however everything was normal all locked up and no sight or sound of anybody here. We carried on with our photography on the ground floor and were again stopped by the sound of a bang and running footsteps this time in the chapel corridor. On further investigation again nobody was there.

There are many other examples but to go back

to the question is Woodchester Mansion haunted?

Judging by the reports and my own personal experience in this magnificent Victorian building I would say yes. Haunted by what is another question but for now paranormal phenomena is witnessed at a higher than average number of times throughout the year than most buildings. Paranormal as in not yet explainable. Don't forget I am in this building most weekends overnight throughout the year the phenomena is still rare and the mansion can be as quiet as a normal family modern semi-detached home so nothing is guaranteed. However if you are lucky to be there when the conditions are right then you may be lucky enough to witness some of the activity that has been experienced by many people over the years.

Woodchester Mansion is available for hire at a cost of £780 for commercial events and also for small paranormal teams at a cost of £36 per person the minimum hire cost on this basis is £252 (based on 7 people) for more information please contact Chris via www.chrishowley.com or the Woodchester Mansion Paranormal facebook page.



About the author:

Chris Howley has been investigating the Ghosts of Woodchester Mansion since September 2004. Starting as a sceptic with his own group back then Gloucestershire Paranormal Research Group his beliefs were swayed with several unexplainable occurrences here in the mansion and at other locations across the UK and more recently Europe. Chris has been involved with looking after the mansion since 2006 when he took on the role of our Paranormal Supervisor and has developed a huge network of contacts which resulted in teaming up with Paul Hobday in 2012 founder of the highly acclaimed paranormal research group Team Impact who are now the resident group here at Woodchester Mansion. Chris has been a highly respected paranormal investigator for many years and has appeared on a number of TV shows, including Ghost Hunters International, Great British Ghosts, and The One Show promoting the mansion. He is also a professional musician with an expert understanding of sound, as well as being a professional photographer - two specialisms that are ideal for analysing alleged paranormal evidence. Chris is a member of ASSAP and was one of the first in the UK to be listed on the National Register of Professional Investigators, having passed the exams with distinction. He is well known by many for his long term involvement with and study of Woodchester Mansion in Gloucestershire, having spent literally hundreds of nights there over the last 12 years.



Creating apparitions

There are many different theories on the nature of ghosts. The most well-known is that they are spirits of the dead returned. Others believe that traumatic events somehow record themselves in a place and ghosts are these recordings, replayed by sensitive people. Or perhaps they are emanations from another dimension?

But what happens if you actually go out to create an apparition? What does this say about the nature of ghosts?

I came across a lovely story from Russia recently. A group of aristocrats, known as the Brotherhood of the Rising Sun, had been working with a religious leader from either Tibet or China to learn a technique used by Buddhist monks to create what is known in Buddhism as a tulpa and in the West as a thought form. The guru suggested they start with something simple that was unlikely to cause any bother if it wandered off, so they decided to manifest the fairytale character Puss in Boots. After half an hour or so of serious concentration, a mist appeared and coalesced into the form of a ginger cat. While the face of the cat

was clear to see, its body remained indistinct. The leader of the group suggested this was because they were all concentrating on the image of a cat in musketeer's uniform, including boots, but weren't all picturing the creature in exactly the same clothing. When they simplified the image, visualising a ginger cat wearing only Russian peasant boots, the thought form, or egrigor, was created. When they stopped concentrating, it slowly faded away. I can't help wondering if it was grinning, and if the grin went last!

A famous example of a tulpa was the one created by the explorer Alexandra David-Neel whose time with Buddhist monks is recorded in her 1929 book *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*. Applying the methods she learned, she created a cheery, rotund Buddhist monk. This was a more difficult exercise than the manifestation of Puss, taking David-Neel some months to achieve. The tulpa proved more durable, however. It stayed around the monastery for some time and was sometimes seen without David-Neel being present. It took as long to dismiss as it did to create.

A third thought-form, another cat and much more dangerous than the innocent Puss, was employed in a magical battle between members of the occult group The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Like many secret societies, it was riven with arguments and inclined to factions. Dion Fortune, had joined the group in 1919 but later fell out with another group member, almost certainly Moina Mathers, who employed a thought-form in a psychic attack. In her book *Psychic Self-Defence* (1930)

Fortune describes the episode. First of all, a large number of normal, solid and extremely smelly black tomcats appeared outside her house and swiftly became a nuisance to her and her neighbours. Fortune assumed that there was probably a female cat nearby and didn't give the matter any more consideration until:

Coming upstairs after breakfast one morning, I suddenly saw, coming down the stairs towards me, a gigantic tabby cat, twice the size of a tiger. It appeared absolutely solid and tangible. I stared at it petrified for a second, and then it vanished. I instantly realised that it was a simulacrum, or thought-form that was being projected by someone with occult powers. Not that the realisation was any too comforting, but it was better than an actual tiger. Feeling decidedly uncomfortable, I asked one of my household to join me, and as we sat in my room meditating we heard the cry of a cat from without. It was answered by another, and another, We looked out of the window, and the street as far as we could see was dotted with black cats and they were wailing and howling in broad daylight as they do on the roofs at night. I rose up, gathered together my paraphernalia, and did an exorcism then and there. At the end we looked out of the window again. There was not a cat in sight, and we never saw them again. The visitation was at an end. Only our normal population of local mousers remained to us.

A more recent, and arguably more scientific, example of a thought-form was carried out in 1972 by a Toronto-based group led by the

“A famous example of a tulpa was the one created by the explorer Alexandra David-Neel whose time with Buddhist monks is recorded in her 1929 book *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*. Applying the methods she learned, she created a cheery, rotund Buddhist monk..”

“If the human mind is able to create apparitions and physical effects such rapping on tables, are we more than passive observers? Does an external stimulus trigger a particular, site-specific experience?”

mathematician ARG Owen, who had a long-standing interest in the paranormal. The original aim of the experiment was to create a collective hallucination. They began by detailing the history of a fictional character they had created. His name was Philip Aylesford, he was a wealthy landowner living in England after the Civil War and he was in love with a beautiful gypsy girl who was eventually convicted of witchcraft and burned at the stake. The story contained some actual historical fact, but most of it was a shared fiction made up of

contributions from the group. They spent a great deal of time discussing Philip's life, until he started to feel like a real person to them. They were not, however, able to achieve the objective of actually seeing him in an hallucination.

A change of approach was suggested, and the group tried to reach Philip through a séance, using the traditional method of sitting round a table, holding hands and asking him to appear. Soon both auditory and physical phenomena occurred. The séance table danced about and Philip answered questions either through the “one rap for yes, two raps for no” method or by actually whispering the answers into the ears of the sitters. Details of the experiment can be found in the book *Conjuring up Philip* (1976).

These accounts indicate that it is possible to artificially produce manifestations. But what is actually going on? Were the Russian noblemen, the Toronto scientists and David-Neel and her monks simply participating in shared hallucinations, with auditory and even olfactory elements? Did Fortune's belief in magic lead her to attribute the cat episode to magic when the more prosaic explanation of a female cat in heat was available?

The giant tiger-like tabby could have been a combination of a large flesh and blood moggy and her imagination.

If the human mind is able to create apparitions and physical effects such rapping on tables, are we more than passive observers? Does an external stimulus trigger a particular, site-specific experience? I'd be interested in any research around the interplay between objective and subjective factors in paranormal experiences. If anyone out there is involved in that or can signpost to further reading, please do get in touch via the ASSAP Facebook group.

READER EXPERIENCE:

A birth experience

In the mothers own words:-

After hours of labour they decided to induce me and I was afraid that it would leave me feeling depressed after the birth. However I consented as my waters had broken the previous day, the labour was not progressing, and the baby was becoming stressed.

Labour was long and very painful in the end I had a half dose of pethidine. Whether this influenced what happened I don't know, but the labour continued until at the moment of birth i.e. the final push, a warm lumpy little body slithered out of me.

Almost immediately the room and everyone in it faded and I 'left' my body as if being drawn out of it from its back. What is so amazing is that it felt natural. It was like entering a warm different energy level of existence.

For some moments I was in this quiet place with a soft golden energy around me. It seemed thicker in the front of me and slightly swirling.

I was still me although I did not see myself or anything else. Then, from behind my left shoulder, with a strong impression of 'faster than the speed of light' came a pale misty shimmering, silver-white, fully formed young man,(not a baby) with his head higher than his body and his arms across his chest. This being whooshed past me with a sound of rushing wind and I knew the baby was alive and well.

The room and its occupants now came back into my consciousness almost like a film re-starting. I once more came back into myself, almost instantly with a terrific shock to my heart.

Pain and exhaustion flooded into me. I turned and looked at my husband who was to the right of me with a surgeon's gown over his shirt, and heard the nurses lilting welsh tones continuing what she must have been saying.... "and look what you've got it's a boy".

A beautiful pink baby boy was dangled in front of me, and everything was back to normal.

My son, when eighteen looked exactly like the silvery-white, contoured 'person' that I 'saw' out of time, immediately after I had left my body.

Reflections:-

Much later I realised that there was no 'tunnel' or other usually reported experiences,

If what had happened was a true experience then it was a 'before life' experience i.e. as someone was coming to be born amongst us.

It was 'out of time' and I was still 'me' but without any pain although I didn't see my body only the slightly shimmering gold mist that I was in. (thicker towards the front of me) yet I hadn't changed I was still myself.

Submitted by

Marjorie Allworth



SERIOUSLY Investigated

1st April 2017, University of the West of England, Bristol

A review by Trystan Swale

ASSAP, through events organiser Norrie Miles, always manage to put on excellent conferences at an affordable price, so 1 April's Seriously Investigated, held at the University of the West of England, promised to be a goody-bag of para-investigation themed talks.

The always beautifully spoken Dr Ciaran O'Keefe was a surprisingly large name to kick off proceedings. Rather than concentrating on the well-worn path of his television experiences, he focussed on how technology may help psychologists understand why ghost hunters experience what they do on investigations. This featured discussion of virtual reality simulations and eye-tracking software. Ciaran invited the audience to contact him to use the research facilities he can offer at the Bucks New University where he is head of the Psychology department.

Andy Thomas is something of an esoteric polyglot. He's written on conspiracy theories, the paranormal and is renown as a long standing crop circle researcher. The tone of talk entitled 'Reconsidering Ghosts and Paranormal Experiences' reminded me a lot of the lectures I've seen given by a similar individual, Malcolm Robinson. Both have a considerable amount of great ideas that may lack empirical supporting evidence, but are hugely entertaining and thought provoking.

Next up were Chris Howley and Paul Hobday, paranormal investigators on Insight TV's wretchedly named 'Ghost Hunters' series. Interviewed by Steve Parsons, they discussed the pros and cons of working in front of the cameras as part of an entertainment show. The pair were realistic about the limitations this imposes, although they pointed out the differences between Ghost Chasers and other shows from the same genre.

The final speaker before lunch was Kevin Kerr who runs ParaRationalise, a Website that takes an unsensational approach to paranormal investigation. Kerr passionately spoke on the inherent flaws of what he terms 'evestigations', event type ghost hunts. Judging by what I heard during the interval this wasn't a talk that went down too well in some quarters, but this alone highlights the differences between methodologies employed by various groups. In defence of Kevin, I'll ask a blunt question: What is the better investigation? One which filters out the background 'noise' of mediums and useless battery powered equipment or one which doesn't?

Sadly, I missed Steve Parsons' talk on 'Smarter Ghost Hunting' — not the first presentation of his I've missed through the years. One day our paths will cross. I did, however, catch Joanne Tansey and Angela Williams talk about Chingle Hall. Although it's not a location I've ever visited, I've had a long running interest in the building since investigator David Vee made all sorts of sensational claims about it a decade ago. It seems the promised full apparition of a 'cavalier' has yet to appear for anyone, including Joanne and Angela. Nonetheless, the duo outlined some of the strange events to have occurred in the residence.

My own talk on Gloucestershire's Ancient Ram Inn was delivered as a cautionary tale for anyone thinking of investigating the building. Unsurprisingly, a few people in the audience considered it a little divisive. They're more than entitled to their own opinion, which I take on board, but it must be said the alleged haunting events only seemed to start once the old public house was purchased in 1968 by the Humphries family.

Chris Howley returned to the floor to share his experiences of another Cotswolds building, the isolated, unfinished and daunting Woodchester Mansion. Having known Chris for more than a decade I've been interested to see how his perspective on the supernatural has changed through the years. He's certainly become far more skeptical though some weird things still do, as he admits, happen in the unfinished country house.

At the end of a great day, Seriously Investigated was brought to a close by CJ Romer as he shared some of his favourite ghost hunting anecdotes. The conclusion was straightforward: paranormal investigation has changed very little throughout history. For all of the gadgets and different methods employed by the various investigation teams, spontaneous haunting phenomena appears to remain untestable. All we have are assumptions and opinions on what ghosts are or may be. With this in mind, events such as Seriously Investigated are a fantastic platform for views to be shared.



Trystan Swale is a folklorist and skeptical Fortean. He blogs on the (supposedly) paranormal, ghosts, tombstone tourism, conspiracy theories, local folklore and all kinds of weird and wonderful things at <http://donutindictment.co.uk>

Credible Witness

Paranormal Police Stories

by Andy Gilbert

When Andy first got in touch regarding his new book I was intrigued by the concept of a paranormal book which contained a collection of stories from what I consider to be one of the most reliable forms of evidence – Police Statements.

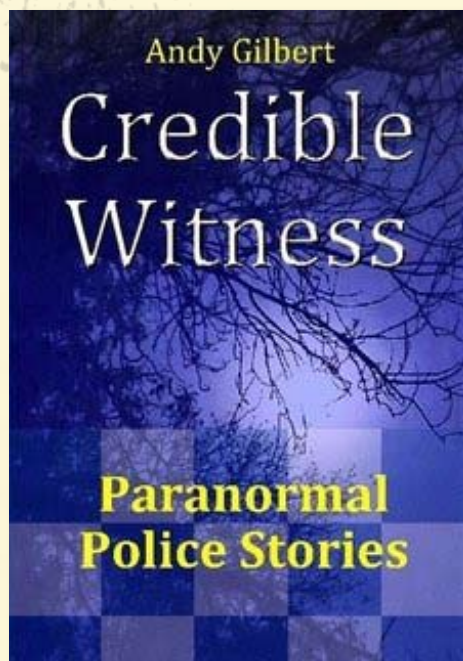
Andy's book is a compilation of accounts from various people within the policing community, a profession considered to be observant, rational, trained to question and be sceptical of unusual situations. As anyone involved in paranormal research and investigation will know, witness statements are the first step in pulling together information and while ghost stories have a habit of changing with each retelling this book feels refreshingly frank and honest in its writing

Andy's wide network has brought in accounts from around the UK (and Western Australia) – broken down into categories including; Foot Patrol, Mobile Patrol, Haunted Stations, Various locations, Incidents Attending, Unidentified Objects and Familiar Strangers. The accounts are fairly short and to the point – leaving the reader to follow up on anything that may be of interest to them.

Andy has included within the categories a good mix of experiences, starting off with the apparition of a young school boy while an officer was out on foot patrol which lead on to the discovery of a young boys remains a couple of days later. Other experiences include poltergeist activity, UFOs, malevolent spirits, orbs and strange noises.

Now I would think that rattling chains and balls wouldn't be out of place in a Police Station but as some of the accounts go on to say, an empty station during night shift can be eerily quiet so when strange noises and footsteps are heard then it would be cause for concern. I particularly liked the account of the ghostly smoking copper and the rational reaction from the witness. Of course, later in the book we do get to an account including rattling chains and screams, possibly from a former prisoner?!

It's interesting that quite a few of the witnesses mention that they don't particularly believe in ghosts, and have kept quiet (sometimes for years) regarding their experiences, but



the questioning nature of their work would lead them to wonder years later if others had shared a similar experience.

It just goes to show that Police Officers are human too and equally prone to strange experiences, just like the rest of us!

Overall, it's a great little book, and an interesting one to have on the coffee table and I'm sure others will enjoy it too.

Credible Witness is available to buy online from various online sites!



Find us on Social Media...

ASSAP has an active Facebook page, and a growing twitter account so you can keep in touch easily and quickly - share your stories and join in the discussions!



Facebook/ASSAP: the Association for the Scientific Study of Anomalous Phenomena

Twitter
@ASSAPParanormal



Want your name in print?

Do you have something you want to share in an upcoming edition of Seriously Strange magazine? We're always looking for interesting contributions. We prioritise articles from our members but also welcome pieces from non-members. If you'd like to write up your research summary, original account or topical thoughts into a short article, please get in touch on publications@assap.ac.uk.

We also welcome proposals for submissions to our annual journal, Anomaly.





HOLD THE DATE

**Seriously Strange
University of Bath
9-10 September 2017
SeriouslyStrange.org.uk**