



## **Ribeyre Ghosts**

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Beginning and Intro  
Ribeyre Ghosts

By Jeff Barnes

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Dedication

To my students,

May you never find the limits of your own potential and always seek to learn and grow. Challenge yourself; you can achieve anything you put your mind to for the mind truly is the only limiting factor in your life. Each of us has a finite time to spend on this earth. We either spend our time waiting to die or we can go out and live life trying to challenge yourself to achieve and accomplish more. If you try nothing, you gain nothing. Failure is only a stepping stone to success. Celebrate your failures and learn from them for they will be your tour guides to success.

May you have balance,  
Jeff Barnes

## Prologue

Fact: The Tri-State tornado of 1925 is ranked as number one in most tragic tornados in history. The tornado began its path of destruction in Missouri on Wednesday, March 18, 1925. During one of the nations most tragic three and a half hours, over seven-hundred and forty casualties from this tornado or subsequent tornadoes of the day, and resulted in \$1.62 billion in damages in today's standards. The tornado was rated as an F 5 tornado on the Fujita scale.

We begin our paranormal tale here in the town of Griffin on this very tragic day in history. This town was practically obliterated by this tornado.

## Chapter 1

Trying to brighten a seemingly dull and abysmal day of rain and chores, Lisa and Leslie were out in field picking wild flowers. The sun although shining was hid behind dark clouds that seemed to be an endless shimmering quilt stretching out as far as their eyes can see. The cows seemed to mull around in the muck of the field eating bits of grass as the breeze blew in from the West across the field. The girls sunflower print dresses dance playfully about their ankles and short gusts meander through the field.

Leslie the older of the two girls picked up a handsome purple flower and admired their delicate petals. She brushed away from her face the long strands of brown hair that both her and her sister shared. The wind is troublesome when you have long hair for sure. She wished she was like Lisa who had the patience to let mommy put her hair in braids this morning. Then she would not have that problem. She looked up and towards the breeze with her hazel eyes and knew immediately that a storm was coming in quick. Leslie called over to Lisa to head towards the house. Cupping her hands around her lips, she called out to get her sisters attention. The wind was picking up with speed and seemed to be picking up her voice and carrying it away because Lisa never heard a word Leslie was saying. Realizing that calling out to Lisa was fruitless,

Leslie walked up to Lisa who still didn't notice that she was there. Grabbing Lisa's attention, Leslie tapped on Lisa's shoulder as she was hunched over picking yet another yellow flower. As Lisa stood up, Leslie noticed a small dirt smudge on Lisa's cheek. Leslie thought it was funny to see the dirt on Lisa's face. Not because Lisa was all that pristine, but that most of the time, all you would notice were her cute dark freckles that were brandished on each cheek.

Wanting to get out of the wind and after some good time of playing and picking flowers in the field, each girl ran into their small farmhouse with flowers in hand. Somehow some pretty purple flowers had found their way into their hair much like Indians would place feathers. With smiles and giggles they made a pretty arrangement of wildflowers in an empty tin can of beans. Trying to add a subtle decorative touch, they placed their bouquet in the middle of a small wooden table situated with four odd chairs.

One chair with a wicker bottom was in disarray. This was Leslie's chair. She would have to place a pillow along the bottom during each meal to keep her from falling through and to keep the wicker from scratching her bottom. Two other chairs were high backed chairs with cloth seats that have faded. Usually Lisa and mom would occupy those chairs during any given meal. The last chair was an empty chair with the back broken out of it a long time ago. It was more of a four legged stool. This was Daddy's chair. He would sit at the dinner table with a hearty laugh and tell the girls all kinds of fun stories, read his Bible and do his 'figgerin.' Daddy's chair has been empty for over a year. After spending six months in a tuberculosis hospital, Daddy finally succumbed to the sickness. Daddy never came home. Mom didn't talk much about it but Leslie and Lisa knew that mom really missed daddy. They somehow got by in his absence. Mom sold soap and did laundry for folks in town. The girls helped mom mend clothes and do chores around the house while mom was off to town to sell goods and pick up laundry. With the work that mommy did along with the support of family who brought by dry goods from time to time, the girls never seemed to do without. They had pretty hand made dresses, they had shoes, and mommy always seemed to be able to provide food to eat.

Lisa looked down at the floor and said, "Mom is sure going to be mad." She pointed at the floor to direct Leslie's eyes to the mud prints both girls trampled into the house.

Leslie looked down at her shoes and saw the caked mud from the field mixed with tiny blades of grass. Her heart sank and knew that they were

told way too many times to knock the dirt off of their shoes before they got in the house. They were just too excited about the flowers and were a little nervous about the wind and storm that appeared to be brewing on the horizon.

Leslie shrugged, "I'll get the broom while you take your shoes off and set them outside. Would you take my shoes with you? I will start sweeping as best as I can. You know mom will whip us good if we use any clean rag to clean this up. We better hope this mud dries and it gets swept up before she gets home."

Lisa asked, "When is Mommy coming home?"

"I'd spouse' when her work is done. Sooner rather than later I hope," said Leslie as she began to brush the clumps of mud and grass out the front door.

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"Evelyn, the wind is sure picking up. Do you want one of my boys to drop off the goods in the morning?" asked Mr. Raab as he finished bundling the last bag for Evelyn Richardson.

"No Mr. Raab, I need to get these packages home. My girls are expecting dinner tonight and I don't want to disappoint my girls. Heaven knows I am late already"

Evelyn brushed her hair to the side of her face. Strands of gray hair that seemed to have a mind of their own would fly out in her face. Often times, the hair would get caught in her eyelashes interfering with her sight. When this happened, it often made her mad enough to spit. When she was young, she had beautiful brown hair and was often commented upon by the boys as to how beautiful it was. However, she seemed to get her gray hair from her father's side of the family. Everyone seemed to be gray by twenty-five. She was fighting it for sure. Sure, she couldn't hide it but she was going to fight going gray all the way. Even if it were by her will alone.

"Did Mrs. Raab have laundry for me to do today? I already have a bundle from the Rickets. I can have them to you by tomorrow afternoon if the sun decides to come out" said Evelyn.

Mr. Raab looked under the counter where his wife would normally put the bundle of clothes for wash and said, "Doesn't look like it today which is strange. It seems that Ellie didn't get the bundle together in time for the wash. She normally has it ready. Something must have distracted her. I will make sure it will be ready to pick up when you drop the

Rickets bundle off. Just stop by. It will be waiting.”

Evelyn thanked Mr. Raab and was preparing herself to leave.

Evelyn bundled herself and wrapped a scarf over her head. Rain might be coming tonight and she sure didn't want to have to walk in the rain. However she lived over a mile away from town on her small lot of land she and her husband had called home. She lived close to the river. Her meager fields also seemed to produce and she was close enough to the river to get fresh water.

Mr. Raab wiped his brow with the cuff of his long sleeve white shirt.

“Mrs. Richardson, you sure I can't drive you home. I don't feel good about letting you walk home all this way by yourself carrying all those goods.”

Evelyn smiled, “The good Lord gave me feet, and they should do just fine! Thanks Mr. Raab for your offer.”

She reflected on how her husband loved the Wabash River as she picked up her bundles of food, unsold soap, and the Rickets laundry. She thought that even though small, the land they purchased was absolutely perfect. How they both dreamed of a place of their own to settle down and raise a family. A home, a farm and children were all part of that dream that came true.

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About a half mile down the road from the Richardson place was Andrew Barthow James, Jr. People seemed to just call him Junior He always thought that Junior was a funny name since he was seventy-five years old. But the name took nonetheless. His wife called him that for so long that he knew no better. He and his wife Dee lived a quite life. Dee passed some years ago. It was quiet enough it seemed. His father Andrew Sr., helped many was well thought of by folks in the town of Griffin, Indiana when he passed. It was really all that Junior knew since he moved here with his father.

Junior was a farmer. He was taught to farm by his dad who in turned was taught by his dad. Matter of fact, Junior thinks that his whole family has been farmers. He often said, "farmin' is in the blood."

Junior liked to spend his time working the field. He farmed enough to eat, but now in his aging years, he was more prone to napping as he was farming. Napping was as much of his new past time as farming or fishing. Napping was nice under the old Willow trees he planted twenty some odd years ago. Nice shade, and peaceful. To him it was perfect.

Junior would look in on the Richardson family from time to time. He

always brought things that he canned, game he shot, or fish he just caught too much of. He admired Evelyn for her hard work keeping her farm and raising two girls. Now that his boys have grown and moved off to Evansville and Owensboro to seek their own, the Richardson's became his new adoptive family.

Today he planned on bringing some nice squirrels he shot today. He absolutely hated squirrels. 'Tree Rats' is what he would call them. He had a real problem with them. Not only would they ravish is nut trees but often tore holes in his roof to stay warm during the winter or to stay out of the rain. His distaste for squirrels almost went to the point of not eating them except he couldn't give the squirrels that satisfaction. Nope, tonight he was going to dine on squirrel and share in his bounty with the Richardson girls.

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With the ferociousness of the world's most powerful military arsenal, the Tri-State tornado was first sighted at 1:01 PM in Missouri. It was destroying absolutely everything in its path. Uprooting trees, throwing barns as if they were made of matchsticks, the tornado began its path of carnage. Anything in its path would soon meet its own doom. For Men, women and children, nature shows no prejudice. Schools were devastated with children in them. Homes were completely lost. The path of carnage and devastation begins to take root.

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Leslie felt that she would never get all the mud up from the floor. Not only was it wet, but the mud was clumping up in the broom. She might as well have been painting the floor with mud as it streaked in various patterns with each stroke. She had to make several trips out the door to shake the mud from the broom and then to go back sweeping.

With all the work she had to do, she wished she was back in school. At least she only had to worry about one thing there. At home there were mostly chores. Cleaning, cooking and helping momma make soap on top of their school work kept them busy. After some time she got most of mud up from the ground. She would have to wait for some areas to dry up so that she could brush it out the door. Lisa wasn't much help with the job. Lisa being six years old usually made simple tasks such as this very complex and take entirely way too long. If she could wait a few hours, Leslie would let the mud dry because no matter how well you swept, there would be a layer of fine mud stuck to the floor. This

problem was something only patience and a broom could fix. However, she knew that this would probably lead to both her and Lisa getting in trouble because Mommy was due back anytime. Maybe the effort of sweeping it out would save her from the impending butt-whipping she knew she was going to get. Leslie had a lot of responsibilities for a girl the age of nine. Most of the time she tried to keep Lisa out of trouble, keep up with school work and help Mommy with the countless chores around their humble home on the banks of the Wabash.

School let out early that day since Mrs. Reynolds went home ill. Not that the kids minded at all. For them, it was a miracle. They got to go home and do whatever they wanted. Some kids in town had to work like Leslie and Lisa doing something to help the family. Mr. Raab's two boys really didn't do much other than annoy their father and get in his way in his shop. You could usually find them outside of the front porch of the building spitting. I guess that is a thing boys do. There was the occasional marbles championship underway beside the post office where you could find both girls and boys vying for the coveted title which would make the winner the most talked about and popular kid for a day.

Lisa was on day dream duty. She was supposed to be picking things up around the house and then get the supplies out to make soap. With their mother's return they would need to get an early start. Mr. Raab almost sold out of their complete supply of soap last week. That was definitely fine with her since money was often hard to come by in those days, especially hard after Daddy passed on.

Lisa looked up into the sky and saw how the clouds looked like billowing fields of smoke with a tinge of green. It looked like God himself was taking huge puffs off of a cigar and exhaling it on her little farm. She took a deep breath as if to inhale the breath from God and turned to Leslie who was looking over the floor for any trace amounts of mud.

"Where is Mommy? I am getting worried," whined Lisa with an over-tone of almost crying.

"You know Mommy. She is getting business done. She won't be out long, besides its still in the afternoon. We have plenty of chores to keep us busy. Just because we got out of school early doesn't mean we get out of what we need to do around here."

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In very short order, the tornado was crashing through one town after the next leaving a path of sorrow stretched for miles. Cars are found on top

of roofs or scattered about as if they were play things. Homes were literally ripped apart as if they were made of nothing but twigs. Human casualties are equally as high. People fled to cellars or other safe spots. However many didn't have the convenience nor the time to find safety as the speed of the tornado continued to pick up pace. As the tornado crossed over in to Illinois doesn't seem to be letting up. It is making a straight line path as if it were a guided weapon aimed at wiping out all that crossed its path.

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Ducking his head to keep the wind out of his eyes, Junior could finally see the Richardson home from his spot on the hill where he was walking. With a handful of squirrels on his shoulder and his favorite walking stick in his other hand, Junior hummed a hymnal he favored for some time. Leaves seemed to blow every which way as if the wind couldn't decide if were to take them. He knew this was a bad sign. Junior was already close to the Richardson home and it was time to pick up his step a little. He knew if he turned back now to head home, he may be all wet and miserable. It was always better to share a terrible storm like that with company other than facing it alone and he always enjoyed spending time with Evelyn and the girls.

Reaching the door, he saw two pairs of muddy shoes and he giggled thinking about how Evelyn Richardson was always so particular about her home. He recalled her telling the girls over and over, 'that they may be poor but that gives them no excuse to be dirty.' Junior always respected Evelyn for her work ethic and how well mannered the little girls were with company. Matter of fact he was glad that he saw those shoes outside. If he didn't, he might have been inclined to walk in with dirty shoes himself and that wouldn't be a good neighbor at all.

Junior placed the squirrels at the foot of the door and slowly bent over to untie one shoe and then the next. He slowly balanced himself giving him enough support to put one foot behind the other and place the toes on the back heel of his shoes. Using his toes as a wedge, Junior slipped one foot out and had to work a little harder to get the next shoe off.

"Looks like I got my church socks on today" laughed Junior as he could see a big hole on his right sock with his big toe sticking out.

Junior knocked on the door with his walking stick and Lisa let him in. Both the girls greeted him with smiles and hugs. It is always a pleasure to see Junior. He often told stories like their Dad used to. The only difference is that Junior often forgot his place in the story or forget how it ended and would just sit there rubbing his temple as if he were wishing

the memories to come back to him. Junior returned the greetings of smiles and hugs with gentle squeezes and pats on the head. Showing the girls the bounty of tree rats, he asked them to get things ready as he would step out on the porch and make the game ready to eat. Junior proceeded to finish cleaning the squirrels and brought them back in so he could instruct the girls how to cook them. He thought it would be a nice surprise to have dinner waiting for their mom; something that rarely happened unless they were eating bread and butter that night.

"I saw the shoes outside, looks like you-ins had fun," said Junior jokingly.

"We got so caught up with gathering flowers and the weather started to turn so we wanted to get inside. We just didn't think before we acted," explained Leslie.

"Well, if it weren' for your shoes outside, I might-a did the same," Junior said as he placed the last squirrel in the blue and white roast pot that Leslie got down for him.

"That should do nicely, do you have any vegetables?" asked Junior.

Leslie looked into the makeshift cupboard and rattled of a few, "We got beans, greens, peas, one onion, some vinegar and a small sack of potatoes."

After Junior carefully selected the dinner accompaniment, he began to cut the potatoes and onions and add it to the pot.

"That should do nicely," he said.

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Like a train running at full speed, the Tornado hit the Wabash River and crossed over from Illinois on to the banks of Indiana. Its blood-thirsty war on man was not finished.

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Lisa awoke from her daydream again. The smell of dinner cooking and the story Junior was telling her sister Leslie made her mind free to do what it did best. She noticed the clouds again and imagined that she was a leaf on the wind being guided to and fro from place to place. She imagined crossing the river and ending up in a gentle pasture where she heard the frogs and crickets chirping. A sense of peace came across her when the clouds seemed to open up and the sun shined on the little leaf. She smiled showing a gap where one of her front teeth had disappeared.

That smile changed quickly. Junior started shaking her violently to get her attention. Far off in the distance you can hear it. This sound is unmistakable. It is the sound of death calling, the sound of destruction; this sound brought man and beast down in fear.

“Lisa, wake up! A twister is comin’ this way,” yelled Junior. Leslie was at the front door with it open looking out. All kinds of things were flying around and the wind was picking up.

Junior yelled out to both of the girls, “If it is coming straight for us, we need to run to the ditch in the far field. I don’t think this house can stand against the tornado. You girls listen up. Get yourself bundled, don’t take anything with you.”

The tornado appeared behind the tree line that marked the river banks of their homestead. It was the biggest thing Leslie had ever seen. It was a tall dark cone as thick as the Chrysler building and spewing just about anything in its path.

“It sounds like a train,” cried Lisa.

“Get your shoes on and get ready to run girls,” said the elderly Jr. grabbing his cane and throwing his boots on.

As the tornado was now on the Richardson property, it seemed to engulf even the sun. The girls holding each others hand dashed for the far field. Leslie felt that she was almost dragging Lisa with as fast she felt herself run. She never ran so fast and so hard. Lisa while running kept turning to look behind her. The sheer presence and sound of the tornado struck fear right down to her core making her legs stiffen and hard to run.

Junior with cane in hand ran himself. He never thought that he could be this limber again. Something like a tornado can make any man limber if fearful enough. However the tornado was upon him. He couldn’t run fast even in his youth. All he knew was that this was the end.

“Dear Jesus!” That was the last words Junior could get out when the monstrosity was upon him.

He was quickly lifted off the ground as if he weighed nothing and was tossed fifty or sixty feet away. He fell down hard as he was brought up at least fifteen feet in the air. He tried to brace himself for the fall as he landed on the side of his side while his shoulder dug deep into the

ground. He felt the crisp pain as the bones snapped and muscles tore. He continued his flip flop landing for several more feet until he finally rested. He laid there in a limp unconscious state while the tornado had new victims in sight.

Leslie and Lisa reached the ditch in the far field as Junior asked them to do. As they turned to lay down flat as they could in the ditch, they heard the collapse of their home. It seemed to groan as if it could feel itself being ripped apart limb from limb. The roof swayed off up into the tornado and encircled it several times before it found itself landing into a far off field.

The building shattered into a million splintered darts cascading outward that flew without purpose or reason. Debris from their home flew everywhere. The girls tried to lay face down and cover their head. The tornado passed on the far side of the field roughly a few hundred feet from them allowing them to just narrowly escape being sucked up and tossed about in the air. Debris fell about the tornado much like candy being thrown from parades to children. Large chunks of wood, dirt, rubble and small things in their home fell about them.

A large cross beam fell directly on Lisa's hip and lower back crushing it. The pain was excruciating. She wailed loudly and her upper body shuddered with her yell. Tiny bits of wood and rock flew at them stinging them like needles causing cuts to open up on their arms, back and head. The girls cried in agony as each razor bit seemed to cut them. Leslie looked at her hands cut and bloody with chunks of wood piercing her hands in stigmata fashion. She fell unconscious with a soft quite whimper.

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Newspapers began reporting the tragedy to the nation. Over one thousand dead and three thousand hurt. The nation mourned the tragedy of so many lost lives. Griffin Indiana was virtually obliterated. The town looked as if it were a pile of sticks tossed about by children at play. Homes, businesses, everything leveled to sheer rubble. It would take some time for wounds to heal and lives begin again.

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Evelyn picked herself out of the muck that kept her safe from the tornado. She got to the train trestle in the nick of time and ducks under it for safety. She felt the rumble in her chest and throughout her body as

the powerful storm passed by only a few hundred yards away. Her arms and hands were scraped from diving down prostrate in the mud and broken rock which made up the ground under the structure. Placing one hand on the support beam, she slowly lifted her dress that covered down to her ankles. Her shins and knees also suffered some minor scrapes as she fell.

She breathed deeply to gather her wits about her and the thought stunned her as if she were frozen.

“My girls,” she cried out loud with a pain that only a mother can feel. Then all of a sudden, one foot moved in front of another and she found herself moving quickly towards her home which was just over a half mile away. She didn’t feel the pain, the sore joints and scrapes. The fear for her children swept over her mind and giving her a single sense of purpose which was to get to her children.

Looking over the crest of the hill towards her farm, her heart sank. Where once her humble home built by her husband’s hands and warmed by the love from the children was obliterated. All she could see are debris, sticks, small pieces of clothing and a single corner post of the front porch still standing. Her fields bared the scars of the path the horrible tornado took. It was if it singled out her home with a reason and purpose.

Running almost losing her breath, she called out to the girls, “Leslie, Lisa, babies... Can you hear me?”

No answer came. Out of desperation, she called out again and again in hopes to hear a faint voice. Again, no one answered her call. She started frantically pulling boards away trying to make it into her home. She had to get to her babies. They had to be alive and safe. They just had to.

Hours passed and Evelyn worked her way through the rubble of what once was her home. Desperately pulling wood and clothing and other junk away she tried to make her way in and calling out the children’s names.

It began to get dark. She was frantic as she tried to find the girls by clearing through the rubble that was once her home. They were not to be found. She cried out loud and fell to her knees and prayed asking God to answer her as to why it happened and for help finding her little girls.

With one last desperate plea she cried out, “Please, God, please!” With a quite longing cry, she fell to her side grabbing the earth which once was

a place of joy and contentment now a place of sour remorse and anger.

Two beams of light appeared over the horizon. What sounded like an old farm truck was headed towards her. When the truck pulled up to the home, it drove slowly around the rubble. Men could be heard hollering out in the darkness asking "Is there anyone here?"

The driver of the truck was an older gentleman. Something caught his eye which made him stick his head out the window.

He called out, "Let's get her in the back boys and get her to the gym."

Evelyn lifted her head. Her eyes were bloodshot. Two stout men helped her up to the feet.

The younger man asked, "Mrs. Evie, are you all right? Where are the girls?"

Evelyn began to cry again and tried to tell the story but could get the words to make sense that were coming out of her mouth. Out of desperation, she shrugged her shoulders and opened her hands out to her side.

With that, the young gentlemen gently laid her in the back of the truck. The men then began to look about the home for signs of life of anyone else. They got their lanterns out and scanned the ground. Out of the corner of old driver's eye, he saw what appeared to be a stick moving back and forth. With that he moved forward to investigate expecting it to be nothing. The all of a sudden the realization hit him.

He yelled out, "Junior, by God we thought you were dead when we drove by your home. You were there and no signs of you anywhere. Are you all right?"

Junior could only make out a gargle sound with his throat. The old man immediately knew Junior was in really bad shape.

"Hold on Junior, I will bring my truck around," said the old driver to Junior.

The old driver turned and whistled to the boys to bring the truck. With both Evelyn and Junior loaded into the back of the truck, the younger gentleman asked, "What about the girls?"

They men spent the next half hour combing the grounds with their lanterns. The older gentlemen try to walk through the remnants of the home to see if he could see any evidence that the girls might have been in the house at the time the tornado came. When it was apparent they couldn't see much in the dark and that Junior's condition was getting worse, the

older gentlemen relented, "We can't see much in the dark, and these two need immediate attention. We need to get them to the gym they have set up in New Harmony. They are making an emergency hospital there."

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The next morning came, the town of Griffin sadly relocated to New Harmony. The death count kept getting higher and the wounded laying about the gymnasium waiting for treatment.

Evelyn opened her eyes slowly, painfully. They acted as if they were glued shut and probably so with the grit and dirt that was mopped on her face. With a few flutters of the eyes and taking a few deep breathes, she quickly felt the sharp pain of her hands, arms and legs. Looking at them, all she could see were blood soaked bandages on her hands and then a few wraps on her forearm and shins. She was battered and bruised and very sore. Slowly lifting herself off of the cot that she was laying on, she found this task much more difficult than she first estimated. Just the effort to lift her body made her feel that her muscles had forgotten how to work together.

With one leg over and touching the floor, she sat up and turned her body and stood up. There was a lot of commotion around her. Women were sobbing, babies where wailing. Men in coats which must have been doctors were hurriedly moving from one patient to the next. Nurses were mending wounds and dosing out care by holding hands and assuring the patients that everything will be all right.

Looking all around, she also noticed men walking in pairs carrying blanket covered bodies. They were taking them to the basement out of the eyes of the patients who were concentrating on healing or survival. Fear stuck Evelyn like a piano chord. With her eyes widening, she shuffled her feet towards one of the nurses.

"Have you seen my babies, my little girls," cried Evelyn.

"All the children under doctor care are over on that side of the gym. You can find the rest with their families as they are scattered throughout," explained the young nurse.

Evelyn hurried over and started looking over the cots. She was looking for the faces that warmed her heart. Many were sleeping still and trying to recover themselves. She quietly bent over looking at the faces of the children, trying to be ever so delicate as to not wake up the children. Having gone through all the children receiving care, she began to get

worried and anxiety overcame her. Tears overwhelmed her face with the fear of losing her girls.

Evelyn asked another gentleman if he had seen her children. She was careful in describing each girl as accurately as possible down to the last freckle.

"I am truly sorry mam'. I haven't seen any girls like you are describing. Please don't take this the wrong way and I hate to bring it up, but have you checked down in the basement?"

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"Doctor, this man's pulse is dropping," said the nurse. A doctor quickly examined Junior's vitals confirming the drop in pulse.

"There isn't much more that we can do now. It is up to him to make it through. The only thing we can do is make him more comfortable. I just don't have the medical equipment we need under these circumstances," explained the doctor.

In what must have been Junior's last breath, he raised up his arm and still with his eyes closed he muttered, "Help.....Ditch."

Junior passed away at 7:09 AM. After receiving treatment, his body still couldn't keep up with the damage that the tornado put on his body.

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With each step she took, her body began to shake even more tremendously. Somehow Evelyn made it down to the basement. Seeing the bodies rolled up in blankets made her almost drop to her knees. She almost fell over catching herself with her hand on the doorway. She felt the sharp pain in her hand as she did which somehow brought her back to her senses.

"I have to find my babies," Evelyn spoke quietly.

She knew the big bundles couldn't be her girls. They were dainty for their age and wouldn't take as much room as many of these bundles. This quickly diminished the number of bundles down to four. Carefully, Evelyn unbundled the four bodies. The first body was that of a small fragile looking old woman and the second was that of a blonde headed girl around the age of 12. Trembling, she unbundled the last two bodies. Both wanting to find her girls but also not wanted to see her babies in this state, she cried as she looked down upon the remains of two young Raab boys. Overcome with emotions, she broke down again and fell to the ground. She clamored to get herself somewhat upright when right

before her eyes the bundles started moving.

"Aren't you the good mother leaving her daughters all alone to die," said the young voice.

"It's your fault," the voice said again.

As if in unison, the other bodies sat up. Bloody, disfigured, white eyed bodies opened their mouths and began to repeat what the voice was saying.

"It's all your fault. It's all your fault," chanted the bundled dead.

The young blond girl sat up on her knees and looked at the woman with dark eyes and pointed a single finger in Evelyn's direction.

"You are a bad, bad, Mommy. You killed your girls. Where are they? They are dead and you can't find them! It's all your fault," Yelled the little blonde girl.

Evelyn whimpered, "No, it cannot be true. My girls cannot be dead."

"Oh they are dead all right because of you. You are bad, bad, bad! You are a bad Mommy," said the little girl again accusing Evelyn with a piercing tone.

The death chorus chimed in, "You are bad, you are bad, you are bad...."

The little girl giggled and said, "It's all your fault Evelyn, God can't save you because he knows what you did. You are a bad Mommy. You are bad, bad, bad!"

It took all that Evelyn could muster, but she rose up and ran out of the basement. She crashed through a family crying hysterically, and made her way through the double doors going outside. Within a few hours, she made her way back to the remains of her home. She walked all around the property, searching for her two little girls. Feeling the search was fruitless, Evelyn dropped to a clump on the ground. She leaned forward and grabbed handfuls of dirt and squeezed in desperation and anger sobbing as she did. The tears poured down her dirt spotted face blurring her vision. Something seemed to be walking up to her. She couldn't quite make it out. She rubbed her eyes with the back of her hand trying to wipe the tears away. The little blonde headed girl she had seen in the basement appeared in front of her now in raggedy clothes and barefoot. She looked almost blue as her pale face and dark black eyes peered at Evelyn.

The girl had an evil smirk on her face and said, "Wanna' know where you girls are at? Well, they are over there in that ditch, but I have to tell you that you are too late."

When Evelyn heard those words, she yelled 'No' and ran to the ditch.

She stumbled a few times due to the ruts in the ground and large dirt clods and debris cast from the tornado. While she didn't see the blonde little girl, she did know that the girl was still there tormenting her as she scrambled to find her daughters.

The girl kept yelling, "It's all your fault, don't you know you are a bad mommy? You are bad, bad, bad!"

Under a piece of tin roof that was once a part of her home, she saw a small slender foot jutting out from under it. As she raised the roof up and over, she found the two girls. Both girls were faced down in the mud. Their arms, legs, and sections of their dresses were blood laced. Their skin was an ashen grey and blue color. She knew they were dead. Evelyn was all out of tears. The anguish and pain she experienced to get her here had left nothing in reserve. She sat down beside her two beautiful little girls and brushed their hair away from the faces.

"See what happens to bad Mommies? God punishes them. You are a bad Mommy. You killed your little girls. You should have been home sooner. You could have saved them. God took your little girls because you are bad, bad, bad!"

Frigidly and calmly as if something took over Evelyn's body, she walked back to the tree line that marked her property and onward to the road towards Griffin. She found herself overlooking the side of the train trestle that crossed over a stony creek. She stood there for about an hour, without crying, without emotion. There was no more in her for that. There wasn't much of anything inside her anymore.

"Are you going to do it? Come on jump," yelled the little girl.

Evelyn turned and looked at the girl with no emotion at all.

"You should kill yourself. You are a bad Mommy and you are to blame for their deaths. They will never forgive you. God surely hates you now."

Evelyn looked forward again.

The little girl continued, "You girls are in heaven now, but you won't ever get to see them. God doesn't want you. Now everybody, the whole town will know how bad you are. You killed your husband and now your little girls! Who is ever going to want you in their town?"

Evelyn continued to stand motionless looking forward. A small tear crept its way down her left cheek.

"Better kill yourself now, you know you want to do it. You know the town will come after you once they know how bad of a mommy you are," cackled the little girl.

Evelyn turned and placed her hand on the wooden rail. With as much anger as she could muster, "Stop it, I loved my children, I loved my husband. It isn't my fault."

What was supposed to give her support as she turned started to move now was giving way. The wooden railing was rotten. With her weight pushing against it, the railing gave way and broke. Evelyn tried to grasp for something but she was already falling forward. In the very last second she grabbed hold to the metal support beam that she was once standing on. With one hand holding onto the beam, she frantically tried to get a grasp with her other hand.

The pain was tremendous. The pain arched from her hand down to her back. The strain on her hand and fingers was quickly noticeable by the trembling in her forearm and wrist. She swung her legs wildly in hopes of getting her other hand into a position to grab hold. With a few painful kicks she was successful getting her other hand on the trestle support.

Looking down at her, the little girl giggled and said, "See, told ya'. God hates you and now you are going to die. You are a bad Mommy and you know it."

Evelyn bucked her legs in response to the strain of holding her body suspended in air. She tried to pull herself up but she was too weak. She was stuck, weak and tired with nothing left. She attempted to kick her legs again in hopes of swing a leg up high enough to get it on the trestle and thus help pull herself up. After a few sways she kick and missed. With a couple more attempts, the strength seemed to leave her hands. Soon one hand lost its grip, and with a frantic try to recover, the second hand lost its grip on the trestle and Evelyn fell to her death.

## Chapter 2

The streets were cornered off holding the town of New Harmony at bay. Something has happened in the middle of town. It has to be dramatic to cause this much of a commotion. Home owners, businessmen, and the small shop owners alike filled the sidewalks in an overflow reminiscent of July parades.

New Harmony is a small old town clinging to its unique history and town fathers. It's a definitive small town filled with quiet folks, small schools, a few churches and a handful of police. All of which were called out on this day as traffic was stopped to allow the ambulance and other support personnel access to the front of the gym.

Jake Reese has seen death before. Death happens from time to time.

Mostly it was from kids overdosing on drugs, the elderly, or drunken idiots who wrapped their cars around telephone polls.

Jake, a rather tall man in his mid thirties, brandishing his brown sheriff uniform, seemingly disheveled brown hair and a pencil tightly gripped in his teeth bent down on one knee to look at the body.

This was definitely not a normal death. This would be something he hadn't seen before. The body was that of a male and pretty normal looking from outward appearances except for his face. The face is what threw him. The eyes were bulging out from the victims head leaving trails of blood running out of the tears ducts. The mouth which is the most peculiar feature of the victims head was wide open. The lips looked as if they had been curled back exposing the teeth and gums. The mouth gaping wide and open with teeth exposed made the victim looking more predator than prey.

"Has anybody identified the body, checked his wallet or anything" asked Jake to the other sheriff, Bob Wolff.

Bob responded, "Nobody has touched the body Jake. We were waiting for you to arrive before we did anything."

Jake looking over his shoulder, "Do we have pictures of everything?"

"Yeah, they just finished. The ambulance is here to take the body to the examiner's office," Bob said as he pulled off his latex gloves and he grabbed his small notebook that he kept in his chest pocket.

Jake adorning his latex gloves, took special care when he began to feel around the body for some identification. As he brushed over the victim's front pockets, he found what he believed to be normal. He found what felt like some small change and a lighter. As he brushed over the chest pocket he felt a small bag of some type. Gently reaching into the chest pocket with his two fingers, Jake pulled out a small baggy.

"Meth," said Jake immediately.

Bob chuckled, "We should take a picture of this asshole's face and use it as a billboard. This is your face on Meth."

Putting the bag of meth into a plastic evidence bag, Jake continued to feel around. Jake felt for the wallet as he ran his hand along the back of the victim and down to the back pocket.

"Bob, help me roll this guy so I can get the wallet and see his ID," said Jake as he positioned his hands to get leverage.

Jake was able to get the wallet out and flipped it open to find the wallet full of receipts, a few singles, and the victim's license.

"Shit," said Jake as he rested his elbow on his knee.

"What Jake, who is this guy?" Bob said.

"This is Jake Dupree, his mom is Lillian Dupree," Responded Jake.

Jake called into dispatch where they would contact the family and a crisis counselor.

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"I seen it, I tell you! I seen it!" yelled Lloyd Kranz.

Jake had only taken two steps out the doors of the gymnasium before he could smell something part sweat, part urine and deeply drenched in alcohol. This wild man who seemed to be worse for wear staggered his way towards Jake and the other officers. One of the young New Harmony officers saw Lloyd out of the corner of his eye and realized Lloyd had crossed the unmarked police line. The young officer turned and jutted his left hand out toward Lloyd while placing his right hand on his Glock.

"Hold on Mark, he is just drunk," yelled out Bob Wolff.

Jake shouldered past the young officer and cuffed his nose. The smell of Lloyd's body odor was offensive enough. In closer proximity, Lloyd's breath smelled of Hell itself. Jake couldn't think of a time where he smelled something worse. This was even worse than finding that lost camper in the park last year that had gone missing after two weeks. Lloyd's breath smelled like he had eaten the business end of a dead horse.

Jake pulled Lloyd aside still covering his nose as the atrocity of the odor emanating from Lloyd was simply too much.

"Lloyd, here take this before you say one more word." Jake handed Lloyd a piece of gum.

Lloyd's face became child like and his eye's brightened. Lloyd gently unfolded the gum from its silver wrapper and shoveled the gum into his mouth. Jake almost regretted giving Lloyd the gum. The sound of Lloyd openly smacking his mouth as he chewed the gum was almost equally annoying to the stench of the refuse exuding from Lloyd's mouth. Within a few minutes, Lloyd's presence had hit a tolerable state. At least with each nostril full of air wasn't poisoned by Lloyd's breath.

"OK Lloyd what did you see?"

"The ghost killed him," replied Lloyd.

Jake rolled his eyes and took a deep breath and began to turn and walk away.

"It's the truth I tell you. The ghost killed your guy in there. I saw it for myself. You may think I am crazy and most of the time you are correct." Lloyd chuckled at that thought that he was crazy. "Although people think I am crazy, I still see what's real. There is something evil in that old gym. There is something really evil!"

Jake shrugged his shoulders and said, "OK, Lloyd, I am going to take you to the office to get your statement. Is there anywhere you can go to clean up first?"

Lloyd grinned with a scraggly toothed smile, and brushed the oily stringy hair out of his eyes. "What, I don't look presentable to you?"

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Lillian Dupree wiped the corner of her lip with a napkin and stared forward towards the street as two cars pulled up to her home. Lillian was just finishing a cup of coffee and sharing some ideas she had about the labyrinth park renovation project.

"Were you expecting guests Lillian," Asked Marge Wickard, a rather portly old woman in a flowery dress.

Lillian didn't address Marge's question. She simply rose up and put her cup of coffee on the small white whicker table placed between the rocking chairs that Marge and her occupied. Lillian's home was a large two story home built in the late 1800s. It had a large covered front porch and a landscape meticulously manicured that has become jewel of the town and the focus of much frustration of the towns housewives.

Lillian pursed her lips and raised a hand to primp her hair. Walking slowly she met three individuals as they walked up the steps to her home.

"Lillian Dupree," asked the large man in a tan blazer and dark kakis.

Lillian nodded and began saying, "Yess..."

The large man who was red faced at the time introduced himself and his companion.

"Mam, I am Lieutenant Robert Schaffer, this is Sheriff Jake Reese from the Posey County Sheriff's department and we have Trinity Archet, she is a psychologist that assists us with grief counseling."

Lillian gave a stern look at Schaffer, "Grief counseling? Why on earth would I ever need grief counseling?"

"Ma'am, you might want to sit down. We have some bad news," said Jake stepping forward and pointing a guiding hand over to her chair to have a seat.

Lillian turned rather rigidly and looked at Marge whose portly self was

finding it difficult to lift her body out of the chair. After a few hefty breaths and scooting her butt forward in the chair, Marge finally had enough leverage to heave herself up and out of the chair. In the meantime, Lillian had made her way back to her chair.

"Would any of you like a cup of coffee," asked Lillian.

All three of them declined the offer of coffee and each took a position around Mrs. Dupree. Each had a look on their face as if they were prepping themselves to convey the bad news to her. Finally, Trinity uttered, "Mrs. Dupree."

Both Jake and Schaffer looked at each other with both surprise and relief as they heard Trinity Archet began to relay the bad news.

Trinity continued, "Well, Mrs. Dupree I think there is only one way to tell you this, so I am just going to come out and tell you. Your son is dead."

For a second there, Mrs. Dupree just stared forward and then placed her hand on her chest.

"I want to thank all of you for coming and giving me this information. However, you won't get the response you are looking for. Matter of fact, I am glad he is dead."

Trinity looked at the other gentlemen and gave them the look that meant that the others guys should quietly walk away. As they proceeded to leave, Trinity turned and opened her satchel and pulled out a yellow legal notebook and a pen.

Trinity began writing a few things down and then began to speak again, "Mrs. Dupree... "

"Lillian, please... Everyone calls me Lillian," Evelyn interjected.

"OK, Lillian, it is common to feel this way about a wayward son. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?"

Lillian turned and looked at Trinity coldly.

"Ms. Archet, I did not mince my words. I expected something like this to happen with all those hoodlums that he hung out with. That boy was a constant source of pain, struggle, and a huge financial drain to me over the last ten years. He has been on that damn meth for at least the past five years. He got a girl pregnant twice and had no means of supporting any of the kids and now he is with the town floozy. Now I have two bastard grandchildren, and two women calling me incessantly asking for money because my son can't do a damn thing right."

Trinity began to write more and more down on her pad of paper. She wrote down things such as physical traits, key words and emotions that Lillian was sharing with her. She couldn't put her finger on it, but

something seemed to be off. The fact that Lillian didn't share emotion of the loss of her son in front of her was not troublesome. It was a feeling that Lillian knew what Trinity was going to say before she even had the nerve about her to spit it out.

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"Roscoe, Samantha, time to come in," said Deidra Matthews. Two small flat faced Boston Terriers came running from the backyard of the remote Wadesville home. Wadesville, another small community in Posey County was more remote than most. Basically it was a farming community complete with a gas station and two churches. Deidra bought the home five years ago as a fixer upper. She absolutely loved the country and not having neighbors that were too close. Deidra moved from up-state New York to Posey County ten years ago to work for the large plastics plant outside Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon which is the county seat was too big of a town for her. She needed wider spaces and more sky. She found it with the small county home she purchased complete with large four acre lot, small pond, and a deck that surrounded the entire home.

Deidra brought the dogs in and prepared herself to eat dinner. She made herself a large bowl of pasta complete with a parmesan cream sauce. Turning on the television, she saw the local news station tell the story about the contractor found dead at the local gymnasium. As she took a long drink from a glass of Diet Dr. Pepper, she realized that there was something about this story that seemed strange. Something she had read before was connected to that gymnasium. She couldn't put her finger on it just yet, but it looks like she needs to make another visit to the library and Google for it.

However until then, it was time to snuggle up with her dogs and finish her dinner watching her favorite programs that she had recorded on her DVR all week. She loved reality TV. Due to her being so busy with her job and her other interests, she rarely had a chance to watch her programs until the weekends.

The rest of the evening was filled with a couple Lifetime channel programs, a movie complete with popcorn accompaniment, and more late night news. Deidra fell asleep in her comfortable easy chair.

"You're a goodie aren't you," declared a little blonde girl.

Deidra opened her eyes and all around her was a town totally destroyed. She didn't recognize the town at all. It appeared to be an old town. She

couldn't recognize make any distinguishing attributes out about the buildings or the location. She could only determine that the town was destroyed for some reason. When Deidra turned toward the little girl, the girl disappeared and all Deidra heard was a giggle.

Without giving any notice another person appeared in front of Deidra. It was that of a Farmer about thirty or forty yards off. The farmer was pointing up in the air. The sky went dark, and then turned into a red, almost blood color.

Deidra became overwhelmed with emotion at this point. All she felt was dread and remorse. She began to cry out load with a long sobbing that just seem to take her over. In the distance a figure appeared. Its eyes were fixated on Deidra. The figure which appeared to be that of a woman walked purposely towards Deidra. When the figure of the woman was definable, Deidra winced in pain as she looked down at her hands which were now bleeding and looking like hamburger.

The voice of the woman could now be heard.

"What have you done with my children? Where are my babies," asked the womanly figure.

With each step closer, the sobbing and sorrow taking over Deidra appeared to get stronger. The woman getting closer had crazed darkened eyes. Her tears were black and running down her chin. With each step the woman took, Deidra felt a wincing pain in hands.

The woman got within a foot in front of Deidra's face and wailed with an almost inhuman roar asking "What have you done with my children?" At that instant, Deidra woke up in her chair almost gasping. Looking down at her hands, both were cut and bleeding as if something sharp was ripped out of her palms. Deidra winced at the sight. Apparently she had broken the glass with both her hands when she had fallen asleep.

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Ed Boeke awoke from a nice comfortable nap in his easy chair that he kept in the corner of his office. Blinking, he had a blurry vision of his phone on his desk. His cellular phone played the most annoying music that everyone complained about. He often wanted to change the ring tone, but with all the buttons and options that this phone had, he had a hard time figuring it out. The ringing stopped its annoying progression as Ed pushed the lever forward to drop the leg rest on his easy chair and walked over to the desk. It was a call from the Sheriff's office.

"Well, I guess I cannot sleep all day," said Ed as he redialed the missed call.

Within 30 minutes, Ed was met at the county morgue by two sheriff cars

and an ambulance. The EMT personnel moved the body to the examination room while Ed proceeded to get the details from the two sheriffs. Ed was handed a large manila folder filled about a half inch thick.

Ed smirked and said, "You boys have been busy I see. I haven't seen a file this big .... Well, since ever!"

Ed turned from the two officers that came with the ambulance. Ed wasn't a talker. Didn't mind talking to people but people just never seemed to relate to him. As soon as dead bodies come into the conversation, people often found themselves either changing the subject or politely moving away. He always thought it strange the way people react to dead bodies. They treat the dead as if they were a disease and not their loved ones. Rarely did anyone offer to shake Ed's hand.

Ed really didn't mind that. It allowed him to have a pretty quite life since his wife Donna had passed away a few years ago. Both his kids were grown and had families of their own. Both of them decided to move as far as they could from Posey County. His son Jason was an architect in a firm in Chicago who would come and visit on the holidays. Jason is quiet like his father, plays golf and is dating a girl originally from New England. His daughter Julia moved to Bloomington to go to college and met her husband there. She got degrees in both Chemistry and Mathematics and is now one of those militant hippie mothers who breast feeds their children until they are nineteen, boycotts immunizations, and home schools her two girls. Julia couldn't be happier than to stay home and fight the medical establishment who oppresses natural home child births, midwives, and breast-feeding practices.

Once the EMTs had left, Ed put on his smock and gloves and grabbed his examination paperwork. His examination equipment was already laid out for him on a tray next to the body. His assistant who comes by in the early afternoon makes sure that everything is sterilized and put in proper place before she leaves. Rarely is an autopsy done in Posey County, but on the rare occasion the family insists on it being done before burial, Ed provides his service as an elected official of the county. This was the first case in years where the Sheriff requested this of him.

Turning on his digital voice recorder, Ed unzipped the body bag from the head down. The first thing that Ed noticed was the unusual way that the teeth were so exposed, lips rolled and pulled back, and the jaw askew. This was a strange phenomenon. The lips don't usually roll in any fashion because there are muscle structures involved that orchestrate how the lips move. Naturally upon death, the lips and the muscles controlling them will relax until they find a natural resting position. Ed

dictated his observations into the voice recorder and then proceeded to fully unzip the body.

Ed spent the next hour writing his notes down and filling out the examination paperwork. He sketched out the strange face configuration out on his lab sheet and grabbed his digital camera. Ed meticulously captured as much as he could with his camera before he proceeded to draw blood, do a nail scrape, and swab the major orifices of the body and send them off to the lab in Evansville. He needed to do that before he actually cut open the body and started to do the full autopsy.

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Jake sat across the conference room table in the Sheriff's office just staring at Lloyd Kranz. Lloyd was going on and on about the ghosts of the gymnasium. Looking down at his pad, Jake had written only a few things:

- Dupree dead and face all jacked up
- Lloyd Kranz sometimes lives in the basement of the gym
- Lloyd remembers Dupree working that night
- Lloyd is crazy and sees dead people

From Lloyd's perspective it was all clear. The ghost scared the shit out of Dupree, plain and simple. There are several problems with this. Jake could never prove it and it kept Lloyd as a suspect. While not formally charged, Lloyd's story put him at the scene of the crime. Supposedly Lloyd heard Dupree working on the drywall in the building. He remembers it clearly because supposedly Dupree made a few mistakes and broke a couple pieces of drywall and was cussing up a storm. In particular Lloyd noted that Dupree kicked the radio that he had running and broke it. That was when Lloyd heard the giggle of a little girl that he believes haunts the place. And the same spirit who he believes Dupree was calling out to leave him alone and get away from him. Lloyd didn't hear much of else because he said he passed out.

"Lloyd, you are giving me much I can go by. I can't really make a case with this," said Jake.

Lloyd looked at Jake incredulously, "Well, you spend a night there and you'll see.... You'll see!"

At that point, Jake shook his head and turned and looked at the clock. He had two choices to make. Either he locked up Lloyd as a suspect for murder, or he lets him go and keep an eye on him. He chose the latter.

Jake really didn't have anything on Lloyd and with the crazy testimony; the case would probably be thrown out of court. Until they could find evidence, real evidence linking the cause of death to an actual person, this case would continue to grow cold.

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"Well, I'll be," commented Ed as he started to dissect the heart.

What would absolutely sound like science fiction to his colleagues and surely to the Sheriff's department was present before him. Staring back at Ed were large contraction bands on heart.

What Ed was looking at was a certified case of someone being scared to death. Ed remembered reading a scientific article on this very thing. Supposedly when a person is put upon great stress, adrenalin is released by the victim's nervous system to promote the 'fight or flight' emotion. All of this floods into the heart creating a killer cocktail.

Commenting into his digital recorder, "It appears that the subject has had a heart attack. There are large contraction bands on the heart itself. The cause is an overwhelming amount of adrenaline flooding the blood stream and impacting the heart. The contraction bands are caused by the overworking of the heart and the cellular decay due to above average adrenalin amounts in the blood stream. Quite literally, something stressed this subject to the point of cardiac failure."

The next day as Ed was reviewing his notes on the Dupree case, the lab results returned from Donner Hospital in Evansville. Opening the package, Ed found the evidence he was looking for. The results show a very high amount of adrenaline in the blood. The second thing that Ed needed to prove the 'scared to death' theory is that the subject would have normal dopamine levels which he found in the results as well. If the subject was high on crack or cocaine or other related substances, they would have low amounts of dopamine creating a euphoric state. Because the dopamine was at normal levels, this person didn't have the high amount of adrenaline in the body as a result of drug use. The only other conclusion Ed could come back up with is the subject was quite literally overstressed in a fashion that overloaded the heart and caused it to stop.

That afternoon, Jake Reese and Marlin Quinn who is the prosecuting attorney for Posey County met in Ed Boeke's office.

Ed began to describe his findings. "Gentleman, you may want to have a seat."

Both Jake and Marlin looked at each other with a puzzled look on their face. Jake then gripped the arm rests of the chair a little tighter hoping not to hear bad news. Bad news would be that there was no direct cause

to the death of Dupree and that Boeke couldn't find anything linking to murder. That would pretty much make this case the most frigid case in Posey County history.

Ed was a little excited. His speech was a little fast as he began to tell Jake and Marlin his findings.

"What I am about to tell you gentleman is pretty much fringe science but it is the only rational explanation I can come up with to match what I am finding," explained Ed.

Jake closed his eyes waiting for the ball to drop on this case.

Smiling, Ed continued, "The subject... er, Dupree showed contraction lines on the heart itself. That matched with a very high dose of adrenalin in the blood leads me to believe that this is no ordinary death. Matter of fact, it is quite extraordinary!"

Jake had enough, "Ed, can you just spell it out for me here. I am not following you, but I am getting to feel that this case has gone south and I am here left in the cold."

Marlin butted in, "Mr. Boeke, what we need to know is if it was murder or fowl play."

Ed started grinning from ear to ear. His white mustache and black glasses made him look sort of like Groucho Marx. With a calm but excited tone Ed concluded, "Dupree wasn't murder in a fashion that you could prosecute, however I can quite literally tell you that Dupree was scared to death. The amount of adrenalin in his body was a toxic cocktail the ultimately led to his heart stopping. No other evidence suggests fowl play. There were not any abnormal levels of anything else in his system and nothing else showed up on the toxicology report."

Marlin had a quizzical look on his face and asked Ed to explain the scared to death part.

"Well, Marlin, just as I told you. With abnormally high levels of adrenalin in the system, you can overload the heart and cause it to crash. The real question is what overloaded the heart in the first place. The nervous system manages the adrenaline in the body. When the body becomes stressed in such a way, much like the 'fight or flight' syndrome, your body gets flushed with adrenalin as a natural way to heighten awareness and protect yourself. I guess getting right down to the point, something scared that man so bad that caused immense amounts of adrenalin to flow. That kind of stress explains the condition of the eyes and the muscular contraction of the mouth. The contraction of the muscles around the mouth is a very rare, however possible."

"Well, there goes my case" said Jake as he slapped the arm rests of his

chair with his open palms.

Both Jake and Marlin rose up and shook Ed's hand and began to turn to leave. As they walked out the door, Ed continued, "Gentleman, I know I don't have the answers that you wanted to hear, however I have to go with what I am seeing here. If you would like another opinion, I would gladly refer you to a good doctor who can give you an independent examination."

Marlin turned and smiled, "Ed, that won't be necessary. We don't have enough evidence to pin this death to anybody. This will just be another case of an unexplained death here in Posey County. "

Jake chirped in, "If you would, please fill out the death certificate and file it for us and send a copy of your records of this case to my office?"

Ed replied, "Sure thing, I will have that all done and completed by tomorrow morning. "

### Chapter 3

Gabriel Mann sat intently focused on his large flat screen monitor. Drumming his fingers, he squint his eyes and tried to focus in on an object that appeared to float past two people who were centered on the screen.

"Bug" Gabriel explained as he brushed his hand down his face rested his hand under his nose and around his chin. What seemed to be yet another waste of his time, Gabriel angrily spoke out, "I am so tired of these damn orbs! Everybody wants to show me their orbs! Orb photos, orb videos, there are orbs everywhere. Why can't people realize that they are shitty photographers using shitty equipment, and getting shitty results? By God I need a website called I hate orbs dot com!"

Switching to his web browser and opening his MySpace page, he responds to yet another stupid person out in the ether wanting to prove they have a ghost on video.

Dear ghostseeker99,

A strange thing happens when people go out on an investigation with a digital camera. What happens is that people think that all that 'orbs' is paranormal. This honestly isn't the case when it comes to orb phenomenon. Quite frankly, my inbox is full of pictures of what people believe to be 'orb' phenomenon.

I would venture to bet that 99% of all the orbs that you see are actually dust or insects. How can I say this? Well, let's discuss technology and

basic imaging.

Let's take your basic camera or camcorder that people use today. There is a common misconception about orbs that they are actually dust in the camera itself. With today's manufacturing process and the new more sophisticated digital cameras, this just isn't the case. The manufacturing processes in place make that option very unlikely.

The truth about orbs is that they are caused by water droplets, dust, snow, etc. This happens when dust particles in the air are right in front of the camera lens. A lens much like your own eyes has to focus. If you would test this yourself, simply bring your fingertip closer and closer to your eye. There will be a point somewhere between the tip of your nose and the actual pupil where the fingertip will get blurry and you cannot clearly make it out. This is the case with photography. Most orbs are things that cross the path of the camcorder or camera that are inside that focal length (the length between the lens surface and the point that the lens can attain focus).

Careful observation of the video clip leads me to believe that this is just another case of a bug causing the phenomenon by crossing within the focal length of your camcorder. As always, keep seeking! One further recommendation is that when you have the funds; please upgrade your equipment to a more professional grade. We have noticed that digital SLR cameras greatly reduce the amount of orb phenomena.

Your friend,  
Gabriel Mann.

Dreading what would be yet another monotonous day of banging the keys of his keyboard and responding to people's questions about the paranormal, Gabriel decided to get up from his chair and go get a bit of breakfast. In Mt. Vernon, there are quite a few locations to eat breakfast and lunch in the morning. Most restaurants close for dinner leaving you a few fast food joints, two Chinese buffets, and one Mexican establishment on the edge of town. Today, Gabriel would head downtown to a small little joint on Main Street creatively called the Main Street Grill.

The Main Street Grill was the popular hang out for the early risers. This group composed of old farmers and retired gentleman who out of habit throughout their life, got used to getting up early in the morning for work. Gabriel joined the group because he didn't sleep well and usually felt hungry really early in the morning. His unusual sleeping habits coupled with a job that basically allowed him to work from home and running a paranormal research team, Gabriel found himself to be one of

the regulars.

Gabriel was a professional copy editor for a publishing house. His total focus was on the paranormal. So anything dealing with Bigfoot, ghosts, UFO's and weird spirituality, it was Gabriel's job to read and get the book ready for publishing. Gabriel found some of the best advice and some of the most complete wackos imaginable from his interesting job. A job which gave him complete control over his time as long as he was able to meet the publishing company's deadline for review and suggested revisions. It was a job that suited Gabriel's ambitions to research the paranormal.

"Mornin' Floyd, Larry, John .... How you boys doing this morning?" said Gabe as he motioned over to them.

"Doin' fine Gabe, the coffee is pretty weak this morning. Seems they got a new girl working back there and she don't know her ass from a hole in ground," said John as he was taking another hit off of his cigarette.

Floyd tipped the bill of his green Pioneer Seed hat up at Gabe and smiled. "Boy, you look you were on the losing end of an ass kickin' contest. I have seen less baggage at the airport than what you are carryin' under your eyes. What the hell have you been doing?"

Larry just gave Gabriel a nod and Gabriel began to explain, "Well, I had a late night edit to get in this morning for the publisher. It doesn't help putting things off to the last minute. I finished on that about four this morning but couldn't go to sleep. I ended up spending about an hour or two on the Internet and worked up an appetite and I figured you boys would be here."

"You damn kids," interjected John.

Gabriel smiled because he knew that this would be yet another tirade of all the reasons why America was going to hell in a hand basket.

John continued, "You stay up all night, drinking and partying and God knows what else. Kids today all whacked out on drugs, whoring it up with loose women...."

And here it was, the moment Gabriel was intently listening for.

John turned to Floyd and Larry and said, "Doin' things God never intended. Jesus H. Christ, America is going to hell in a hand basket."

The smirk that Gabriel made looked as if his lips kited over to the right side his mouth exposing a few teeth. Gabriel sat down promptly and grabbed John by the shoulder and gave it a squeeze. Rubbing his hands Gabe knew that his next venture was that of coffee and food. He reached over and turned over the coffee cup that was placed neatly on the paper

place mat that was in front of him. A waitress holding two pots filled his cup up as she passed by.

The morning crew as Gabe likes to call his friends at the table all had the same breakfast. They each had a bowl of oatmeal, a cup of coffee and headful of distain for having to eat it. Gabriel enjoyed his little torture he gave the morning crew by ordering cholesterol filled, heart plugging food such as biscuits and gravy, a stack of pancakes with sausage, or grits and hash browns.

A cute little waitress came by. She must have been in her early twenties and way too perky for anyone's good this early in the morning. Gabriel surmised her life was a classic story of falling in love with her High School sweetheart, got pregnant and had a kid, and after a year the boy ran out on his responsibilities. It was a rumored statistic that people floated around girls in Mt. Vernon either ended up as exotic dancers, pregnant, or dropped out of school. Gabriel pretty much figured out where this girl ended up. Not that he minded really. She was young, pretty, and liked she would expose the top of her cleavage by having a rather open blouse. It provided interesting conversation at the table at least.

"Whatcha havin'?" the young waitress smiled. Trying not to look at her breasts he found his eyes focused on the orange and gold name tag on her shirt which bore the name of Erica. God bless Erica Gabe thought as he looked down at the menu.

"I would like the biscuits and gravy with a side of bacon please" Gabriel responded.

John just turned and gave Gabe a cold stair, slapped the table hard making the silverware jump and turned his head. Obviously John has had way too much oatmeal as of late.

Larry and Floyd just looked at each other and grinned from ear to ear.

Larry finally opened his mouth, "Damn she looks good!" Larry's hands then cupped out in front of him as he tried to demonstrate the size of Erica's breasts. He continued, "They sure didn't look like that when I was her age. Shit, I wish I was single and younger."

Floyd jumped in, "Larry don't trouble your self. The only thing that girl would give you is a heart attack."

"But I would die happy," commented Larry as he took another sip of coffee and she kind of fell into his own world as he smiled and stared off into room.

Gabriel couldn't help but laugh. It was a funny sight to see. These men who have wisdom beyond their years, who often go on tirades on the

conservative values and the value of the honest dollar, can turn into dirty little school boys at the sight of a pretty lady. He couldn't blame him. Gabe was struck by her charms as well. She was pretty, quite friendly, and had the looks to make the heart pump a little harder. There is something to appreciate about that.

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Ron Walthen picked up a few files from his desk as he had just approved a few more loans for some commercial development to be done along Highway 64. There seems to be renewed traffic coming from Southern Illinois along that road and a few area businesses decided to work together and make a new truck stop at the Griffin exit. As a commercial lending manager for New National Bank, Ron was pleased to see new development such as this coming to Posey County. New Harmony could really benefit from the dollars being spent here. Due to changes in the economy and new roads being built the small historic community's cottage industry of antique shops and tours was dwindling.

Ron was a self-made millionaire because he got lucky. He bought about 100 acres twenty years ago from a retiring farmer. He was going to profit share the farming with a family that would farm the land and pay a percentage of the profits when the crops were sold. What Ron didn't know at the time was that the land was soaked full of oil. It wasn't till three years after purchasing the property that an oil prospector came by and was asking questions. What they found was that Ron had one of the richest wells of oil on his property. Along with that, his connections with the bank allowed him to get a deal with the oil company to secure millions of dollars to both himself and the farmers along the adjacent properties making Ron one of the wealthiest men in Indiana.

Now Ron spent his time as a board member of the bank and worked there to help area businesses. It was his way for him to pay back all the blessings he had received from his wealth.

Ron got work early every day. It was a ritual for him. He liked getting in before everyone because it gave him an opportunity to think. As Ron was about to walk out the door, the phone began to ring. Stuck between not knowing whether to answer the phone or ignore it and get these files down to be processed, he decided a walk downstairs could wait just a few more minutes. The call was from his wife. She was complaining how yet another independent contractor quit after one day of working at the gymnasium. Both Ron and his wife Sue are on the Ribeyre restoration committee.

The Ribeyre Gymnasium was very important to New Harmony. It began

its journey as a group of buildings turned into a gym to replace the unsafe and poorly ventilated school gym the children were using at the time. Alfred Ribeyre donated the buildings and offered to help pay a portion of the renovation costs to make the buildings into a gymnasium for all the children of New Harmony. Since it's opening in April of 1924, it has seen its fair share in games, dances and other community events.

Along with that history has come with a common strange history of the caretakers of the building. Most caretakers seem to die early and often history has shown that many caretakers of the building are driven to drink. What is even stranger is the story of Walter Robbs who was a strong Christian man with a large family who took up the job of caretaker of the building in 1952 to help support his ever growing family. After three months of service, Walter was admitted to a mental hospital for over six months. Some speculate that it was due to him working at the gym, but others say that he was crazy in the first place for having nine kids.

With the sorted past of caretakers, and now the state of condition the gymnasium is in, Ron helped start the committee to renovate the gymnasium for future use by the community while still keeping touch with its past as it was made famous for both its service as a hospital and having a role in the movie filmed on location called 'A league of their own' starring Madonna.

"I cannot get anyone to work on this building. We are behind schedule," replied Ron. His wife Sue went on about the building's budget and timeline.

"I know Sue, but it has been six months since Dupree's accident and people are still skittish about being there."

Sue finished the discussion for Ron by saying that he didn't find a solution quick, that they would be losing grant dollars supplied by the state to renovate the place. If that happen, it would be a huge blotch to him and Sue for their philanthropic efforts.

Peggy, a fat portly woman who served as Ron's secretary walked into the office to deliver the mail as Ron was finishing his conversation.

"Mr. Walthen, I couldn't help but overhear your conversation with Mrs. Walthen. Do you mind if I offered you a suggestion?"

Ron pulled his head up and turned and looked at Peggy and said, "By all means Peggy. Fire away!"

Peggy eyes brightened. She walked as over to his desk to drop off his mail. She then tuned and found one of those nice high back office chairs with big comfortable seat cushions. As she lowered herself, her short

round little legs shot. She quickly caught herself on the arm rests to adjust herself. She brushed the brown and psychedelic orange skirt down and primped her hair for a second before she began.

With a large smile on her face, Peggy began, "Mr. Walthen, I don't know if you know this, but my family has been in this area for a long time. I have heard stories about that gymnasium. What I have heard is that it is haunted. Just the other day I heard people talking about that gym being haunted when I was getting my hair done."

"I am not following how this helps my situation, Peggy," replied Ron.

Peggy got a sour look on her face as if she was disappointed in the fact that Ron wasn't following her line of thinking.

Peggy replied, "Well, Mr. Walthen, as I was saying, since people believe it is haunted, why not use that to your advantage? It is obvious that people are worried about being there now that somebody has died there. So why not open it as an attraction of some sort. There are all kinds of nut jobs who like to go to haunted houses around here during Halloween. I am sure you can make a lot of money by using it as a haunted house."

Ron just looked at Peggy for a long while. It was a very uncomfortable minute. Ron didn't know how to tell Peggy she was an idiot in a nice way. He liked Peggy, but there was no way he was going to recommend to anyone that they spend millions of tax payer dollars to turn the facility into some carnival side show. He needed a real answer. He needed to find a way to alleviate people's fears and get contractors back into the facilities to do the work.

"Peggy, sorry, I don't think that is an option. I need to find a way to get people willing to work there whether it is haunted or not. I need to get work under way or we are going to lose millions in a state grant as well as my own money to renovate the building. This is serious business."

Peggy got up with a dismayed look on her face. Ron didn't care, it was an idiotic idea. He turned to look at the paperwork he needed to send downstairs for processing. As Peggy hit the doorway she stopped as if frozen for a second and turned back around.

"Mr. Walthen, I know somebody who can help."

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As Gabriel was finished his last bite biscuits and gravy, he heard his cell phone go off. He was surprised because he often didn't receive phone calls. Not many people knew his number except for his boss, his ex, and his investigation team. Looking at the phone, he didn't recognize the number.

"This is Gabe..." replied Gabriel as he answered the call.

"Gabriel, Gabriel Mann?" The voice on the line replied.

"Yes, this is Mann, how can I help?" Gabriel said with a quizzical look on his face.

"I have heard through my office assistant Peggy Byrd, that you research haunted houses. I believe you did an investigation at her home a couple of years ago."

Gabriel took a minute to recall the investigation, "Ah yes, poltergeist phenomenon, that was a doozy. So how can I help? "

## Chapter 4

Gabriel sat in his desk chair. It was a throw back from the seventies. It is an olive green swivel chair made of synthetic leather like material with a strong metal backing. Over the years, Gabriel had gone through many chairs. Being that Gabriel was pushing three hundred pounds; chairs had to do double duty to endure his weight.

At first glance Gabriel wasn't fat; he was genuinely a large man. Playing football in both High School and College, he was able to pack a lot of muscle onto his large frame even though he was only six foot tall. Gabriel preferred to think of himself as athletic however doctors have been telling Gabe that he was fat his entire life and he needed to lose a few pounds. It became a perpetual cross to bear.

Adding to his perfect embodiment of health, Gabe lit a cigarette and propped his New Balance sneakers on his aged wooden desk that had a few piles of papers, his Mac laptop, and an ashtray. Staring off at the ceiling as if he was trying to find the answer to the meaning of life, Gabe would take long draws from the cigarette and think. Gabe liked to think. His ex-wife often accused him of thinking too much and fall into 'analysis paralysis.'

This time Gabe was thinking about the meeting and what he was going to say to the man who was going to be ringing his door in the next few minutes. Gabe had met a lot of people in the book business but never had he had the opportunity to sit across the desk and give advice to a man with as much money as Ron Walthen. This definitely was going to be a unique experience. The door rang a few seconds later. As if literally awakening from a nap, Gabriel hopped to his feet and put out his cigarette.

Gabriel answered the door. Ron Walthen in his well-groomed hair, manicured nails, kakis and sports coat greeted Gabriel and extended a hand.

The two men walked down the hallway to Gabriel's office and exchanged pleasantries. Upon entering the office, Gabriel seemed to relax a bit. Kind of like home field advantage, Gabriel felt at ease with this meeting knowing that the gentleman who sat across from him was seeking him out for advice and help.

Gabriel proceeded to find out more, "So Mr. Walthen, you said you had an issue of high importance that needed to be handled with care. You didn't tell me much over the phone other than to promise to meet you. Of course I believe that this has to do with something of the paranormal because you referenced the Byrd investigation."

Ron nodded his head and then let out a big sigh and began to explain the purpose of their meeting.

"Mr. Mann, the reason I didn't tell you the details over the phone is because I need some assurance of confidentiality. What I am about to tell you is extraordinary. It is so extraordinary in fact that I myself don't believe it. However, my belief is of little circumstance."

Gabriel looked Ron in the eyes for a few seconds. Reaching over to his laptop, Gabriel began typing.

Taking a short glance over the screen, Gabe asked, "Mr. Walthen, so what exactly are you talking about?"

Walthen proceeded to take a deep breath and then continued. "Mr. Mann, to put it simply I need you to come and investigate Ribeyre Gymnasium. I want you to prove or disprove the accounts that this building is haunted."

Gabriel looked over the top of his laptop with a long look and asked, "So, what makes you think that your gym is haunted?"

"Well, to be honest, it doesn't matter what I believe, it is what the public believes and especially the contractors I have tried to hire to do the work on the gym. If I don't get this resolved quickly, we stand to lose millions in state grants due to time set backs."

Still typing all the details on his laptop, Gabe finally broke the keystroke cadence and looked up again.

"So, Mr. Walthen, basically you need us to come investigate the claims of paranormal activity. More importantly, you want us to try to find logical explanations for the paranormal claims and document exactly what we find."

Ron nodded his head and said, "That is correct, Mr. Mann. Along with that, I need you to keep a lid on the results as it were until you have conferred with me your findings. In the event that you find any paranormal events, I will need your help in trying to remove whatever is there."

Gabriel closed the laptop and folded his hands over each other on top of the lid. "I have to tell you Mr. Walthen, that isn't exactly what I do. It is not like the movies where I strap on power packs and run around in jump suits..."

Ron chuckled at the thought while Gabe continued.

"What we do in the case we do find paranormal activity, I recommend the service of two Demonologist that we have on our team. One is a retired pastor and the other well, he is a strange bird indeed but both are highly recommended with great success in cases such as this. We do also have a psychologist to help in the assistance of this case in the event we find that it may be more of a mental issue rather than paranormal."

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Shelley stepped off the flatboat holding a small red haired doll that she had carried since her travels began in Pennsylvania. Her father was hurrying her along as they began to get their belongings off the boat and on to the dock.

The sun was really bright and made each golden curl of her hair glisten in the sun. Raising one hand over her forehead, Shelley was able to see a large garden wall, a church and several large standing buildings. In the early spring of 1826, Shelley's father hoped to start a new life in New Harmony after the passing of her mother a year ago. With the promise of free education and a community built on growing a more perfect society, her father jumped at the new start in life. He took his life savings and bought a plot of land just outside of town. It had a small home built on it that the previous owners had built but moved on to settle out west. Shelley's father didn't know what to think about the communal living and because of the hardship he and Shelley had suffered at the loss of Shelley's mother, he thought it best to be a member of the town but not in so to speak.

Gathering her things, she followed her father to a small horse drawn carriage where they loaded their things and went to find their new home. Shelley was extremely excited about this new move. She would be able to play with a whole new group of children her age. That was going to be a real change for her as she never able to play with children her age at her home in Pennsylvania. She was always helping her mom around the house when she became ill and being that she was an only child; she never really had much interaction outside of the home.

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"Good evening everyone and thanks for coming to meet with such little notice," Began Gabriel addressing a group of individuals gathered

around in folding chairs with eyes intently focused on him.

"First and foremost, I need each of you to sign the following document. This document states that under oath, and risk of being sued, you cannot divulge the information I am about to share with you in any way. This is a serious one folks and the client takes this investigation very seriously and I promise you that this client does have the money to sue you for every dime you may think you have or any dime you think you can make. So please sign this document to make before we begin or you can leave now. I won't think worse of you for leaving."

Gabriel began by passing a clipboard to Trinity Archet. Trinity looked Gabe right in the eye and was trying to figure out why the secret. What investigation was so important and the secret so valuable that would cause Gabe to address the group this way. Knowing that Gabe was absolutely serious by his body language and also verified by the bead of sweat that was gathering along his forehead, Trinity signed the document and passed it along.

Within a few minutes every member in the room stayed and signed the document requested by Gabriel. Once the clipboard was back in his hand, he poised himself and took in a deep breath.

"Well, since all of you have signed this document, I just wanted to say thank you for wanting to be a part of this investigation. This really should be interesting. Our client, Ron Walthen has called us to investigate the Ribeyre gymnasium in New Harmony..."

Loren Stevens interrupted "Wait, Ron Walthen.... Isn't he like the richest guy in Indiana?"

"Yes, the very same," Gabriel answered and continue to explain. "It appears that there have been some strange events there. There is was a death recently."

Trinity remembered the case vividly. However she was bound not to divulge the information that she had, not that grief counseling a strange old woman was a secret worth keeping.

Gabriel started to hand out assignments, "I have scheduled the investigation for the sixteenth. That is about two weeks away. We really need to spend some time researching the history of this place before we go. Loren, Deidra, why don't you hit the local libraries and see what you can dig up. In the meantime, I will be spending some time in New Harmony trying to figure out what I can dig up. Trinity, can you use your connections with the police department to find out what you can about any other events at this place? Let's plan on getting back together next Tuesday night to go over our findings and create our investigation plan."

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Shelley began her day just like everyday. She put her clothes on, made her bed and began her chores of feeding chickens, milking Parsley the cow, and seeing to helping with the things around the home. Being twelve years of age and in a new settlement meant that while young, you had to work and work hard. That seemed to be the mantra of the town and the key to everyone's survival.

Her father was outside as well. He was swinging an axe over and over to create a tremendous pile of wood. It seemed that cutting wood was a never-ending battle for him. It was a chore of necessity. It provided the warmth they needed throughout the winter nights and fuel to cook food. Having enough wood was almost as important as water in her Father's words.

Around sun up, Shelley and her dad would walk to town. She would head off to school in town and her father would go to work at the Mill. After school, Shelley would meet at the Mill and walk home together. Shelley in her bonnet covered hair had a few straggling curls circumventing the nice clean look her bonnet provided. She was wearing her gingham dress that she made herself. She was up late last night putting the final touches to the dress as she messed up a seam and had to redo a portion of it. She had waited for father to go to sleep and then worked on the dress by candlelight.

This morning was absolutely beautiful. The sunrise brought on some neat colors of blue, red and pink into the sky as if God had brought out his paint set and was creating his masterpiece in front of her. It was breath taking to say the least. Her father grabbed her by the shoulder as stood on top of the hill leading into town and they looked at the sunrise together. Her father took a deep breathe in as if he cold literally inhale the sun into his chest. He looked down on Shelley and just smiled and placed his hand on top of her bonnet.

"Come on girl, it is time to get to work!" Father said to Shelley as he began to walk down the hill.

Shelley just giggled and tried to keep up as they walked into town.

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It was Wednesday. Deidra sat in her little red compact car and honked a couple of time for Loren to come out and join her in the car. She had already called once five minutes ago on her cell phone and spoke with Loren who said she would be out in just a minute. Deidra never really understood Loren. She was an attractive girl but a total recluse.

Loren ran out to the car under the mist of rain that began to fall. She

covered her seemingly jet black hair with a pink hood and strapped her backpack over her shoulder as she clumsily ran to the car. Loren had very pale complexion. With the rain running down her face, it made her mascara run down her cheek. She was a sight right out of the movies. For some reason it made Deidra think of the movie *The Crow*.

Deidra handed Loren a few tissues out of the box she had stuffed between the seats in the center console. Pulling the make up mirror down, Loren looked at her face and laughed a little as she wiped the mascara lines that made her gothic look into more of a rocky horror picture show flash back.

After Loren wiped her face, she turned and looked at Deidra, "So, I am so sorry I am late. My boyfriend and I were having a fight."

Deidra frowned, "I am so sorry to hear about that honey. Are you guys going to be all right? You know if you ever need a place to stay you can always stay at my...."

Loren laughed out loud. "No, really ... we really had a fight on *World of Warcraft*. I totally kicked his ass. That is why it took me so long. I thought I could do it faster, but the bastard had a couple tricks up his sleeve. That is why it took so long."

Deidra rolled her eyes and just looked at her. "Here I went and out of the goodness of my heart, extend an offer to help you out and I find out that you were playing video games. You guys are getting weirder and weirder every day. I just don't know what to think."

Loren smiled. It was good to see someone else care about her. She didn't get out much and preferred to stay at home and chat with her online friends than to venture out and hang out at bars. The party scene really bored her. Most of the time it was just a bunch of people either trying to get laid or trying to get drunk. Nobody was ever deep. At least she could be herself or whomever she chose to be online.

Popping the tab on her Red Bull Loren asked, "So what do you think about all the secrecy of this investigation? I mean, kinda weird don't you think?"

After a ten-minute drive to the Library, both Deidra and Loren were eager to find out whatever they could about the old gymnasium. Hopefully there would be some public record of the gymnasium, its activities, and those who used the building. Loren immediately made a bee-lined to the computers with an Internet connection. She was great at researching information. Loren loved computers and the digital life she made for herself. However, there still was information outside the reach of her

computer and keyboard. This library had digitized a lot of the information that they had scanned and made available on their own Intranet, which both frustrated and excited Loren.

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Shelley leaned over her desk table and looked over to a young blue-eyed brunette girl named Mariam. Shelley and Mariam were giggling and talking about the fun they had playing in the yard yesterday. They also talked about Jeremiah, a youthful tall and gorgeous boy in his early teens. He had beautiful long curly blonde hair and quick wit. Even girls at their age swooned over him as if he was the only star in the night. Usually girls in the schoolyard imagined being married to him and the home and children they would have. This was always a source of interesting squabbles among the girls as to who got to marry Jeremiah. Little girls can be full of spit and vinegar when it comes to boys, especially a boy of Jeremiah's quality.

A rather tall, beak nosed woman walked into the schoolroom. This was one of the women she knew from church, Mrs. Gundoff. Mrs. Gundoff peered over the classroom trying to get a look at each child. Her gristle look and scowl made most of the children sheepish and the room got quiet.

"Shelley... Shelley Starnes?" requested Mrs. Gundoff.

Shelley felt her stomach jump up into her throat and a wave of fear came over her. What trouble could she be in? What possibly could she have done to get called out of class?

Shelley scooted out of her chair and stood up. Hanging her head low and folding her hands in front of her, she walked towards Mrs. Gundoff and followed the elderly woman out of the school house. They walked for what seemed like an eternity. She quietly walked behind Mrs. Gundoff knowing not to speak from the expression Gundoff gave her when she tried to ask questions in the schoolhouse. When they finally arrived to what seemed to be their destination, Shelley was more puzzled. They had stopped in to see Dr. Gustav Wolff the town's physician.

"Shelley, you sit right there while I get Dr. Wolff," said Mrs. Gundoff.

Shelley really didn't know what to think. This was strange. She had never been in to see the doctor and she was not sick. Why would they bring her here? She looked across the way and there were several gentlemen covered in flecks of grain and sweat stains much like her Daddy's shirts looked like after a long days work. The gentleman looked at her for brief second and then both lowered their heads and looked at their shoes.

Dr. Wolff was a thin man with feathery grey hair with a small gold

monocle in his right eye. The doctor had a smooth face despite his age. With a rosy cheek smile, he greeted Shelley.

"Hello child," Wolff said warmly, "please come with me back to my office."

Shelley followed Dr. Wolff back to his small quaint little office. The doctor waved a hand at a tall back chair where he wished Shelley to sit. Getting herself situated in the chair took a moment. Trying to sit lady like and attentive, she smoothed the ends of her dress and intently stared at her hands as she did so. She didn't know what trouble she was in, but surely being called to the doctor wasn't a good sign.

Dr. Wolff in his most pleasant voice he could muster with such a harsh German accent began to speak.

"Shelley, I have some sad news to tell you. You see, there was an accident at the Mill today and your father was gravely hurt. He is still alive but barely. You need to go to him now and see him. He has asked for you."

Shelley began to tear up with eyes wide and watery. Overwhelmed at the news she clasped her hands together on her lap, nodded her head forward and began a long almost silent whimper.

Dr. Wolff continued, "Now child, I don't want you crying in front of your father in his delicate position. I need you to be strong for your father and greet him with a smile. He needs you now."

Shelley shucked the tears away with the back of her hands and stood up. She took a few seconds to compose herself. She knew exactly what the doctor was asking her to do. This was the very same speech that she was given when she was told that her mother was nearing death. Everyone expected her to be strong and not cry. Being strong was something almost intolerable to bear. It was something absolutely impossible for a girl her age, however somehow she figured out how to do it. She figured out how to be there for her mother when she passed away. She figured how to veil the tears with a bright smile and words of affirmation. She knew exactly what she needed to do now.

Once Dr. Wolff felt that Shelley was compliant to his wishes and was willing to be strong in the face of her father's demise, He walked Shelley back to his examination room. There was her father on a thin table. He could only move his head and his body remained still and motionless. As Shelley got closer her Daddy tried to look at her. His eyes were bloodshot and teary eyed. Blood mixed with spittle came from his mouth. Shelley could see in her Daddy's eyes how much pain he was in. With each heave of his chest, it seemed to be a painful process of pain

and more pain.

Shelley couldn't hold back any more. Her tears flowed as she reached forward and grabbed her father's arm. Placing her hand in his, she gripped it in hopes that his kind hands would simply squeeze back. Dr. Wolff stepped forward and placed a hand on Shelley's shoulder.

"Child, your father fell today at work. He is hurt badly and he is all broken up inside. It is in God's hands now. Pray child, pray for your Father, it is all we can do now."

Shelley knelt and prayed the most heartfelt and honest prayer she had ever prayed in her whole life. No more wishing for this or that, no more if you give me this and I'll do prayers. This was a prayer earnestly praying for the healing power of God to intervene on her father's behalf.

With Shelley's Amen came a hush over the room. Her father taking his last breathe exhaled and gave the last meaningful message Shelley would hear. His last words were, "Shelley, I love you."

His mouth was the last thing he could manage to move. The rest of his body broken and bleeding internally, was still as if frozen for all time. His mouth, contorted in a strange way over to the side and his lips curled back and quivered in a strange way as he passed.

Shelley's fists balled up with anger. Her tears turned from remorse to outright madness. She screamed and kicked and yelled with all she had trying to will her father back to life. His frail broken body lies still and motionless. Shelley was now alone. Abandoned by parents and by God, she believed God hated her and her parents. She felt deeply portrayed.

She turned to Dr. Wolff. "Why! Why did God allow this to happen? What did my Daddy do? What did I do to deserve this?"

Dr. Wolff reached forth and grabbed her clinched fist and knelt down to look Shelley in the eyes.

"The truth child is that it isn't about whether we are good enough or whether we have done the right things in this life. It isn't God saying he hates us. God took your father to a better place. The truth is child none of us are good in the eyes of God. We all fall short of the glory of God. It is by his grace we are saved by faith."

Shelley got quiet and stood motionless as she tried to contemplate the words Dr. Wolff was trying to tell her. As if the very idea repulsed her, she kicked Dr. Wolff square in the stomach and scratched at his eyes. Luckily she was only able to hit mid cheek leaving a deep bloody gash going down towards his jaw line. She ran from the doctor's office all the way home. When she got there, she curled herself into a ball on her bed and grabbed her doll that her Daddy had given her before they left on

their trip to New Harmony.

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"This is interesting," whispered Loren. She had found Deidra in the historical room at the public library. The historical room was built to keep files on key families and buildings in the community. Posey County was chock full of interesting people and places. This is a very familiar room to Deidra and Loren because often it was their duty to do the historical research about the different investigations they were going on.

"What is interesting?" Asked Deidra inquisitively as she put down the file on the Ribeyre Gymnasium she had began to flip through.

Loren showed Deidra a single sheet she had printed off the Internet. On the web page that she had printed was all of the deaths that happened during the Tri-State Tornado of 1925. Deidra looked over the paper but didn't find anything peculiar. What the page contained was the name of the individual, their age, and the cause of death.

"So, what is so interesting about this? We have seen plenty of documents like this before. What do you see in it I am not seeing?" asked Deidra.

"Check line five," responded Loren emphatically.

Deidra looked closely and read aloud, " Evelyn Richardson, age 37, died of suicide... Wow that does sound out of place doesn't it?"

## Chapter 5

Loren threw her coffin shaped purse she had bought off of Ebay on to her small card table that doubled as mail pile and kitchen table. Lighting a cigarette, she walked over to her stereo and placed her iPod into the cradle and selected her favorite playlist and kicked off her knee high leather and laced boots revealing her black and white candy cane stockings she had been wearing that morning at the library.

Dumping herself into the computer chair, she wiggles the mouse to make her computer come alive. The monitor was the first to show life. Out of darkness became Warcraft. Her character a Night Elf stood motionless with its head hanging low. Several other strange and wonderful creatures found their way around the city passing by her almost unnoticed.

Looking for her love Gwefelderlanzer, also known as Jeremy Biggs, she couldn't find him online. She decided to switch to her Internet browser and see if Jeremy was on MySpace. She looked and found Jeremy online and something new and peculiar on his MySpace page. Her place as number one in the top eight friends on his page had been changed. Since

their online relationship began, she had held the number one spot in Jeremy's heart for over five months. They started chatting over seven months ago and within a few months, they started dating.

Dating was interesting with someone online. They had their scheduled chat times with each other. She would often receive love letters via email and of course real flowers delivered to her door. They both used Internet phones so they would stay up all night whispering their deepest fantasies and exchanging deeply held secrets. They did have a real physical relationship. She would travel to see him every couple of weeks or vice versa. Meeting someone online and then meet them in person was strange at first. You never know if the person you meet in person will be the same they share online. However to Loren, nobody is who they claim to be when they date in the first place.

Sex was always interesting topics with friends. Most people didn't understand her online relationship in the first place and then trying to figure out the physical part was often a fun game shared among Loren's family and friends. The truth was that the sex was mediocre at best. However, the friendship and deeper intimacy of mind and heart that she shared with Jeremy meant more to her. Jeremy liked to have v-sex with her. Loren knew that it was much more satisfying for Jeremy than her. He got off looking at her body and the undressing she would do in front of her web cam. Often times she prayed that he wasn't recording any of this and figured that he would meet a very quick and painful death if it ever ended up available for public eyes. She would often close her eyes and imagine his body holding her and rubbing her breasts and stroking the small of her back. That thought made her very hot to the core. However on the flip side, all she got was Jeremy in his pasty white, hairless, un-muscle tone glory, pleasuring himself. No outfits, no fun strip teases, just him and his manhood.

In her place was a 'Betty.' Another woman was in her spot. This girl was 22, blonde and beautiful who apparently was bisexual and looking to 'hook up.'

"Jeez, is this real? Am I being dumped?"

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Deidra was lying in bed with her books. She had picked up two books while at the library. One book titled, "Poltergeist Phenomenon" and the "Ghost Hunting, A Guidebook for Investigators." She was flipping through the guidebook and reading up on psychic investigators and tests for psychics.

Deidra often thought she was psychic. Often she would get emotional

imprints from people and at times she was able to feel or sense something about to happen before it did. She had her first real psychic experience when she was nine. Her brother's dog had run away and he was very distraught. The family had spent the entire day trying to find the dog and had pulled in the friends and families of the neighborhood to help. Then all of a sudden around five in the evening, she just knew where the dog was. She had a picture of the dog at the local pond sniffing around a tree. It was as clear to her as if she was watching it at the movies. She had given her father the information. He just shrugged off until the sheriff arrived a few hours later saying he found the dog by the pond. From then on, she thought she might have psychic ability, however to what extent she never knew how.

The only other time that her psychic ability seemed to show itself was when she graduated high school. Most of the senior class were going to the lake after the graduation ceremony. Which normally meant, scantily clad teenagers boozing themselves senseless and the other frivolity that ensues when one drinks as much as they were planning that evening. Deidra had joined in on the festivities. She found herself drunk and at times walking around in nothing but her bra and really letting her hair down.

She remembered the next hour very vividly. Somebody had the Eagles jamming really loud and the incense of pot filled the lakeshore. It was then when she looked over at her friends Tammy, Lisa and Randy and saw something very disturbing. Tammy's face was basically ripped off only leaving a bit of her nose and cheek. Tammy didn't seem to notice as she continued her conversation with Deidra. Even without a face or eyes, Tammy was going on about the party and how much fun she was having. Tammy was also upset that she had to go home so early since Randy had to be up in the morning to work.

As Deidra turned towards Randy and Lisa, she found both of their faces interlocked. However, blood seemed to be flowing from wounds on their head. It was probably one of the most disturbing images Deidra had ever witnessed. In the horror of the moment, Deidra cried out and covered her eyes. Some just laughed and accused Deidra from drinking too much.

Deidra hopped up from the sand and began walking away towards the cars. It was there that she saw Randy's white jeep shattered in pieces. She turned toward Randy who was still covered in blood and then glanced back to the jeep. The jeep somehow mysteriously was fixed. As Tammy, Lisa and Randy were walking towards the Jeep, Deidra saw them again

as if nothing had happened. Deidra noticed that their faces were not ripped off and they were not bleeding. They were healthy, a little drunk, and laughing.

Deidra was in a daze. She didn't know what was real or surreal. She simply just looked on dumb founded at what she saw. Her mouth gaped open and couldn't utter a word. She watched as all three of them had driven off into the night. She went back to her car, opened the backseat and passed out. She awoke the next morning to the dreadful news coming from police officers that all three of her friends had died from a terrible accident while on the way back home. It appeared that Randy had swerved around something and ran into a tree. Death was pretty much instantaneous for both Randy and Lisa. They believe that Tammy was thrown from the vehicle and landed face first on the concrete. They believe that she suffered a bit before she died because they found where she was crawling for a bit. She must have passed out and died from the loss of blood.

From that day, she often felt guilty for the loss of her friends. She often wondered what those visions were. She didn't know if it was all in her mind or was it the alcohol. After high school, she went on to college and pushed those memories aside. It wasn't until she moved to Posey County and got involved with the local ghost hunting group that she allowed herself to remember and thus her interest grew again in developing her abilities.

This book was focusing on using items belonging to the owner or to the spirit she was trying to make contact with. With that item, the psychic was able to make a physical-spiritual connection. From that connection the psychic could get imprints from the spirit making the connection. These imprints can then be shared with the loved one or the person seeking answers. The book also talked about protection. How the psychic needed to put up the veil of 'white light' around them to protect themselves from malicious spirits. From that protection the psychic would be guarded and safe.

This night was going to be a special night. She was going to try and channel a spirit tonight. She had found a silver coin last year when building a garden last year. The silver coin was over 100 years old. She wondered if she could channel the owner of that coin and see if she could get any impressions. But first, she needed to take the dogs out and eat dinner. Tonight was going to be an interesting night, indeed.

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Shelley stood still and motionless. The four men with ropes quietly

lowered her father's casket into the ground. Dr. Wolff held his hand on her shoulder and was praying a prayer silently as the pastor was finishing his funeral side sermon. The little girl with hopes and dreams of a new life was empty now. The loss of her father left her not caring and worse, she had lost her will to love. Everything she loved was gone.

Because Shelley didn't have any family back in Pennsylvania, and the land her and her father lived on was going back to the previous owner. The town elders thought it best that Shelley live in the dormitories. She could still get an education, but at the same time she would have to work helping wherever she could. The Goff family who recently moved into the area needed some extra help in their home.

The Goff family was a small family that had a farm outside of town like Shelley and her father had arranged. This family composed of Rhea Goff, a small piney woman with a coughing sickness and an angry streak that made most men shudder. Hubert Goff was a big fellow with a graying beard. He was a quite man and very fond of his pipe. The Goff's also had two boys Rupert and Lohn. Lohn was gentle boy about the age of nine and loved to go to school and loved to listen to stories his father would tell after dinner. Rupert however was a mean spirited teenager. It always seemed that he was in trouble for doing something. Something was usually defined as harassing the neighbor's animals, throwing rocks at kids and beating whoever looked at him wrong that day. It seemed that the only person who could get Rupert under control was his mom.

Within her four foot six structure, Rhea was packed full of vile. If you ever made a mistake, she would never let you forget it. People told stories of being able to hear her over a mile away when she was really worked up in one of her tirades. It was often said at the local pub that she would be the toughest man in town. It didn't matter who you were, if you did wrong, she would be the first to let you know.

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"That fucking bastard," yelled Loren at the top of her lungs. She realized that she had been a fool to ever get into a relationship like this in the first place. Angrily, she picked up her cell phone and looked for Jeremy in her contacts and pressed the send button. The phone rang for a few seconds and Jeremy answered.

"Hey Loren, how is it going?" asked Jeremy in a somewhat leery tone.

Speaking through her teeth, "Who the hell is that bitch on MySpace?"

Jeremy went quiet for a moment. It was an awkward moment where all you could hear is Jeremy wheezing a little as he was trying to come up with an answer.

"Well, Loren, we kind of hooked up."

Loren was incredulous at this point. She slammed her fist down on her desk and screamed. After a few short panting breathes she addressed Jeremy again.

"You fucker, you complete asshole. I give myself to you. I share my deepest thoughts with you and all you do is throw it away on some tramp. Who else have you been fucking? Am I just another one of your bitches?"

Amidst Loren's sobs, Jeremy started to explain. "Loren, well you are so far away. I was at my brother's party last week and we got to drinking. He invited a bunch of girls from his college and things got a little crazy. I was drunk, so was she. We hooked up and afterwards we realized we had more in common and we have been talking ever since."

Loren screeched a harpy whine, "So you just hook up with the first bitch who is drunk enough to sleep with you?"

"Please don't call her that, she is not a bitch," replied Jeremy.

"I fucking hate you. I hate you. I hope you get herpes and your fucking dick falls off. I hope your tiny balls shrivel up to raisins and wither and die. I hope you die of some crazed medical condition where your face is covered in boils and you are in misery until your last breath. You are a fucker Jeremy. Fuck You!" Loren slammed her flip phone shut and threw the phone on the couch. She lit a cigarette and began to cry.

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Closing the door on the kitchen cabinet, Deidra placed a small bowl on the counter and was digging around in the silverware drawer to find a large spoon. Finding her spoon amidst the mix matched silverware she had collected from relatives over the years; she removed the lid of her favorite ice cream, Ben and Jerry's Fish Food. She was only able to find the pint containers at her local IGA so she was determined to keep well stocked. After spooning what was about half the container into the bowl, she closed the lid and put it back in the freezer.

While enjoying her ice cream she glanced over the ghost-hunting book and was getting her thoughts together on the vigil she was going to perform before bed. She knew that she was taking a risk with doing the vigil alone but she really wanted to verify for herself the psychic abilities she believed she had. If she could hone those abilities, she would be a great asset to the paranormal group and finally be able to ward off some of the conjecture by her family that she was a little crazy.

After finishing her ice cream, she placed the bowl in the sink and ran some water into the bowl, which halfway rinsed away the residual of ice

cream. She took the dogs outside to 'go potty' and brought them back in for the evening. From there, she grabbed her things and prepared her kitchen table for the vigil.

She placed a white linen tablecloth on the table and placed a white candle in the middle of the table. Placing the coin on the table in front of the chair, she plopped down and began to focus her mind and clear her thoughts. Grabbing the coin, she placed it in her left hand and clasped over it with her right. Focusing on the candle, she began to concentrate her breath. Taking easy but controlled breaths by breathing in her nose and out her mouth, she was able to get herself in a relaxed setting.

She had read from several books that if you were going to channel a spirit, you better protect yourself. From witchcraft to psychics, each had the same basic idea. If you let a spirit in, it can attach itself to you. If it was a bad spirit, bad things can happen. So the premise was to protect you with white light or the light of the divine. This universal light would sometimes ward off the more malevolent spirits or filter the spirit from doing harm.

Deidra placed that picture in her mind of the divine light surrounding her and her total body. She began to focus her eyes on the candle and let her breathing cadence to pull her into a trance state. The breathing got deeper which allowed Deidra to feel that she was literally taking in the energy of her environment. Her eyes, which were focused on the candle, seemed to get blurry.

An emotion seemed to take over; it was the emotion of joy. Deidra's eyes were a little watery but she couldn't shake the joy she was feeling inside her and she began to smile. As she stared blurry eyed into the candle, she began to see the coin in a vision. She saw the coin being placed in the hand of an individual. She couldn't make out whether it was a male or female. It was simply a hand.

The vision began to blur again leaving only the fluttering candle in front of her again. As if the house was enveloped in a cold storm, Deidra became very cold. The coin in her hand was almost frozen causing Deidra to drop the coin on the table. Surprised, Deidra looked around and began to worry. This was a totally new feeling for her. The candle blew itself out and the house started to rumble. The room went completely dark. A bellowing grown started to fill the room and Deidra had to cover her ears as to the intensity of the sound.

She heard the voice from her dream again asking for her children. The voice got louder and more intense almost causing Deidra to cry in pain. "Stop it," Deidra yelled. "You don't belong here. Be gone. I have not

summoned you. I do not want your presence here.” Deidra proclaimed as she stood up still holding her ears.

As if obeying, the room went quiet and in front of her stood a woman with a gingham apron wrapped over her dress. The woman reached out with her arms and disappeared.

The room went back to normal and the candle seemed to light itself again. Overwhelmed with the emotion of what just happened she stood there for a minute just embracing it all. Finally she recovered and reached over and picking up her notebook and pen, she flipped it open and began to write down what she experienced.

August 12 – 10 PM

I performed my first vigil to test my psychic ability. I started at 9:15 PM tonight and finished just now. I got the picture of a hand being held out and the coin being placed in that hand. The spirit of the woman who lost her children approached me again. It appears that the woman has something to say to me. She wants me to find the children. Time seemed to pass while I experienced this. I must have been dazed for at least twenty-five minutes to get the impression of the coin and the female spirit. She sounds really distraught. I wonder if these visions will come more clearly to me in a shorter time as I continue to practice my vigils.

-Deidra

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Shelley just finished her schoolwork. She had been writing on the small chalkboard that was placed on each child’s seat when they began school there. She had been working on her spelling and finished just before school was to be let out. She was a little nervous. This was the day that she would follow Rupert and Lohn to their home and start working for their mom. She had heard the rumors of her angry nature and was a little worried.

As school was let out, she grabbed her things and looked over to Lohn. He quietly sat at his seat and was finishing his spelling. He looked over at Shelley and smiled. He then wiped the chalkboard with his sleeve and placed the board on the slanted desk in front of him. He stood up and brushed the chalk dust off of his shirt and pants and grabbed his lunch pail. Standing at the door was Rupert with a cock-eyed grin. He looked at Shelley and giggled.

“So, you are coming with us are you?” Rupert asked Shelley.

Shelley looked down at her feet and then back at Rupert and said, “Yes, I am supposed to help your Mom around the house because she is sick

and all.”

Rupert just laughed again, “I feel sorry for you! Come on, let’s go.”

Shelley followed along. The two boys walked ahead of her. Most of the time she walked with her head down. At times however, she would raise her head up to look at the boys or to notice a flower or bird flying by.

After walking for what seemed to be about a half an hour, Shelley saw the Goff homestead. It was a small home with a barn behind it. The yard had pens for a few sheep and pigs the family owned. She heard the cows and chickens off in the distance. The home reminded Shelley of the house her and her father lived in only a week ago. It made her feel good to have this connection to a home again. Living in the dormitories was quite different from what she was used to.

As she approached the threshold of the door, the first thing she heard was Rhea barking at her.

“Listen here child. You better check your shoes before you walk into this home. I don’t need you to bring more filth into this house.”

“Yes, mam,” Shelley replied.

Rhea’s faced turned to scorn. “Well, you aint’ nothing but some river rat. Look at you. You are a filthy, filthy girl. I am surprised anybody would let you go out like that.”

Shelley looked down at her dress and shoes and didn’t find anything out of place or unkempt. She just lowered her head and listened to Rhea Goff go on and on about her.

Rhea continued, “There are a few rules around her child that you will have to remember. For one, never, ever disobey me. What I say goes on around here. You are here to help us while I am recovering from my illness, which means there is a good deal of chores around here that you will be doing. Also remember, failing to do your chores correctly and you will receive a lashing. I don’t want idle hands from you especially since we are going to clothe you and feed you. You are under our care and we expect that you will help us. We were the only family who would take you in. You just remember that! Now move along and put your things over here.”

## Chapter 6

Trinity pushed her black-rimmed glasses up on her nose. She sat in her comfortable chair as her client Reginald Holtz sat across from her on the couch. Trinity busied herself documenting Reginald’s responses. She was often bored by Reginald due to his obsessive nature for attention

seeking and excessive description of the details of his experiences. Trinity has already written him off to have axis two traits. She scribbled something down quickly and looked right at Reginald. He happened to be staring at her crotch. She had been wearing her power suit; a great looking pinstriped top and skirt to match. What she didn't think about was the skirt was a little short. She seemed to be giving Reginald a straight view of her underwear. Embarrassed, she crossed her legs and pulled the front of her skirt down a bit.

Regaining her composure, she pulled a couple of strands of hair back and glared back at Reginald.

"Don't you know it is not polite to stare?" She asked.

Reginald smiled and said, "Hey, I just thought you were giving me a show. You are a fine woman Ms. Trinity."

Trinity grimaced at the thought and quickly changed directions.

"So Reginald, you said that you have changed jobs. Is that true?"

Reginald took a breath and began. "Yes, I am a software engineer for the Posey Broadband. I really hated my old job. My last boss treated me like a child; all the time he was telling me I wasn't doing a good job when I know I was doing exactly what he told me to. Everybody told me I did excellent work but my boss never saw it. This one time I was doing a change to the billing software and I fixed a problem with the bill cycle. Nobody else saw it. I saved the company several thousand dollars a day in lost fees with a change I made."

Trinity butted in, "Reginald, stop it. That isn't what I asked. I asked you about your new job. Remember we talked about your attention getting. You constantly are looking for approval. You were going to be working on that. Simply tell me what you think of your new job."

Reginald pursed his lips, and took another breath. "Well, Trinity, I like my new job. I like the work I am doing. It seems that I am getting along with the new folks."

Trinity smiled and said, "That is good Reginald. You are making progress here. Have you been concentrating on only giving the answers to the questions people ask and not blurting out your entire child life history?"

Trinity listened to his response and began writing down an idea she had to help in his therapy. She thought that it would be good to spend a couple of hours in role-play with Reginald. She would work with him and coach him on how to talk to people since not everyone wanted to know about every single life experience he has ever had. Maybe through this role-playing, he will start to mirror these patterns in his real life.

After the session, Reginald in his normal awkward fashion got up and left. Trinity took a deep breath and relaxed a little. She let her hair down from the bun she was wearing and kicked her shoes off. Reginald had been her last client of the day. She was going to spend the next couple of hours transcribing her notes and planning her calendar. Opening up her laptop, she saw a meeting reminder from Gabriel for tonight at 7PM.

While she listened to the tape recorder of her session with Reginald, she couldn't stop her mind from drifting off. In each of her therapy sessions she has with Reginald, she normally gets the same story over and over again and finally they will make a break through and talk about something new. However, today she didn't really care. Today had been much of the same old thing with Reginald. However he was a good paying client, which is highly beneficial especially in Posey County. It is hard to make a living here in Posey County unless you are working for one of the big industrials that fill the night sky with an eerie glow. There were only a few doctors in the area. She was the only Psychologist.

As her mind drifted off, she couldn't help but think of Gabriel. She met Gabriel during a session with him. He was recently divorced at the time and was dealing with the tragic loss of his son. Gabriel was usually a strong soul but felt the loss of his son not only as grief for the loss of his child but deeply felt that the loss was his responsibility. After many months of therapy, Gabriel emerged a stronger human being and able to deal with the loss one day at a time.

From there, Gabriel and Trinity had built a strong friendship. Gabriel finally found a woman he could trust and Trinity literally found a strong, caring man with the ability to feel and share his feelings with her. Both of them seemed to want more out of the relationship, but because of the way they met, they both were apprehensive as to step the relationship further.

Trinity sometimes felt it difficult to come to the meetings. Here was the man she could easily fall for if he would just allow himself the moment to enable the relationship to flourish. However, Trinity would never throw herself like some floozy at any man. She was too dignified for that. She knew that one-day she would have to address this with Gabriel however now was not the time. Well, maybe it wasn't the time for Gabriel. She might have to do something about that.

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Loren was finishing soldering a lead wire to her new piece of equipment she was working on when the phone rang.

"Hello, this is Loren" she replied on her cell.

On the other side of the phone line was Frank Biddum. "Hello Loren, Frank Biddum with the Posey County Library."

"Hello Frank, thanks for calling, did you find out anything for us?"

"Hold on one-second," Frank Biddum said as he coughed lightly and grabbed his handkerchief from his back pocket and wiped his nose. After another cough, Frank continued. "Yes, young lady I did. I found some very interesting information that you might want to look at. However it is very delicate so I will need you to come in and see it in person."

Loren looked down at her watch and asked, "Would three-thirty be all right with you?"

Frank agreed that he would meet her at three-thirty and hung up the phone. Loren went back and looked at her final touches she had made to her new device she has dubbed the 'dowsing box.'

The dowsing box was a contraption she heard about from some paranormal investigators from Australia. The premise for the box was simply a metal box with two metal tubes to support and hold two dowsing rods. These rods would float naturally in those tubes without human intervention. She also placed to metal leads at the bottom of the dowsing rods that would allow her to place lead wires to them while the rods float naturally. She will then be able to take measurements from the leads to see what the changes in polarity were during their use. This was in hopes to answer questions made by skeptics that dowsing was simply the subconscious moving the rods ever so slightly. Skeptics believed that the person who held the rods was actually causing the rods to move. While maybe not on purpose, they believed that simply the fact that you want them to move will cause the rods to move themselves. Dowsing has been one of the most controversial topics for some times. Even Martin Luther spoke against the use of dowsing rods and works of the devil. However, I guess the devil is in the details because multi-million dollar companies pay dowsers to find everything from water to oil. The belief is that you simply could dowse for anything.

Loren's contraption would simply bring more scientific evidence to the use of dowsing rods. She would be able to record her findings. Even more impressive was that with this new design she has removed the person entirely from holding the rods. Now they could simply set the box out during an investigation and see if anything happens. Following the folks from Australia, they were able to get some very positive results with this configuration. She was just simply taking it one step further so that she could record her findings as better proof.

"All finished," Loren smiled and grabbed her backpack, purse and keys.

Hopping on her Vespa, she started the scooter up and took off for the library.

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Shelley had been sent out to the chicken coop to gather some eggs that the Goff family would use later for selling in town as well as for breakfast the next morning. The coop was really big. The Goff family had the largest number of chickens in area. Shelley absolutely hated the smell of chickens. The chicken poop had this rancid smell that seemed to stick to the inside of your nostrils and never leave.

After gathering the evening's eggs, she walked back to the home. As she came to the door she stomped her feet and checked to see if she had any dirt or chicken poop on them. As Shelley stomped her feet, a brown egg fell from her basket and splattered its contents just inside the door.

As if Rhea knew exactly when it would happen, Rhea stood there in the kitchen with an angry look upon her face. With both of her hands on her hips, she bent forward and yelled at her.

"You stupid little girl, what good are you? Why in heaven's name would you drop an egg in my home? Don't you know how to be careful? Don't you have any common sense?"

Shelley didn't answer. She stood there with an astonished look on her face. The blonde strands of hair cover portions of her eyes and she simply was struck still in fear.

Rhea walked out the door and stepped over the egg mess. She had walked straight out the door and towards the nearest tree. From there she tore switch off that was as thick as her index finger. She walked back over to Shelley and looked at her sternly.

"You seem to keep making messes. You seem to keep causing me trouble. Well, child, I am going to teach you some common sense. You are a bad child. You are bad, bad, bad!" With that, Rhea charged forward with the switch and her first strike landed on Shelley's hind-end. Cowering in fear, Shelley raised her arm up to protect herself. In similar fashion, Rhea kept swatting Shelley as if she were some dumb animal. Welt marks leapt up where Rhea wreaked havoc on Shelley's arms, legs and back. When finished, Shelley was a crumbled mess of sobs, welts and bruises.

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Loren sat waiting in the stacks of the library as Frank was helping somebody else. She pulled her laptop from her backpack and fired it up. She was still stewing over what Jeremy did to her. She opened her email and found the email Gabriel had sent and made a mental note to be at the

meeting at seven. She would have to call Deidra to remind her because she knew that Deidra wouldn't get home until a little after five. Hopefully she would be able to have Deidra pick her up from her apartment so she could show everyone her new dowsing box design.

Paging through the countless junk emails she seemed to be getting, she found a MySpace notification that Jeremy had sent her a message. She clicked on the URL that was in the email where it prompted her to log in. Upon supplying her username and password, there was Jeremy's letter. Supposedly, he was asking for forgiveness and wanted to make amends for his actions.

My Dearest Loren,

Please forgive me for my actions. I was at a time where I was really weak. I was drunk and I was stupid. Please forgive me. I know I don't deserve you and I definitely don't deserve your forgiveness.

As you can see, I dumped her for you. I am totally in love with you and I cannot breathe without you. I will do anything to have you back. Please forgive me.

Can I come see you? Please chat with me tonight or call my cell.

Hugs and kisses (on all your pink parts),

Jeremy.

"That fucker," Loren thought. For a couple seconds she was really angry. She couldn't believe that she actually got an email from him after he told her that he had sex with that girl especially the dishonest way he went about letting her know that he was dumping her and sleeping around.

At the same time, she really did love Jeremy and she wanted to be with him. Somehow, she just didn't know if she could forgive him at all. It would take some time and she would make him grovel for it for sure.

"That fucker will pay," she said out loud.

"Excuse me young lady?" Frank Biddum interjected on that last comment.

Loren's mouth just opened wide as she looked at Frank. Embarrassed, she quickly closed the lid of her laptop and put it away in her backpack.

"Sorry Frank, personal business. What have you got?"

Frank smirked and his whiskers seemed to tilt in fashion, "I would say so," and he handed Loren a folder about an inch thick.

Loren took the folder and began to open it. Frank pointed out that the file contained copies of the death records of those who had died in the Tri-State tornado. He further went into details as to the history of the gymnasium.

Frank began, "This gymnasium was actually three different buildings that were renovated to replace a dilapidated old gym that the New Harmony schools were using for athletics. Donated by the owner, he also provided a large sum of money to help in the renovation. Nearly a year later after it was renovated, it was called to be used as a make shift hospital during the tornado tragedy."

Loren began to say that she already knew most of this information however Frank talked over her and continued.

"What is most interesting is the history from the very beginning. It seems that somebody died on that location even before the buildings were built. From there, it appears that there is a lot of history of strange things happening at the gym."

Loren finally interrupted and wanted to know more about the strange happenings.

"I am glad you asked. Well, in here you will find records of at least one caretaker of the building committing suicide on premise and then another one went crazy. I know you are interested in ghosts and it appears that people claim to see ghosts on location."

Frank helped Loren flip through the paperwork to find the documented account of Jim Poerter, a caretaker of the building in the fifties who hung himself in the gymnasium. People claimed he was depressed at the loss of his wife and he decided to take his own life. Another instance happened in the seventies where another gentleman was checked into a hospital for the mentally insane claiming strange stories of seeing dead children. He was also a drunk and most people wrote off his visions to his alcohol consumption.

"So, where is the account of the person dying on the property before the buildings were built."

Frank grabbed his handkerchief from his back pocket and reached over and wiped his nose again. Then squinting at the pile of paperwork, he flipped through a couple of pages until he could find the paperwork on the property history. Here he scanned the page and found the account.

"Well, it is pretty brief. It says here, accidental death by madness, S. Fuelling 1827." He explained.

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Gabriel lit another cigarette as he was typing away at his desk answering email from his fans. Taking a sip of coffee, he seemed to tire of the entire business of paranormal. It always seems people will hate you for what you do. People will always fall into two categories. You have believers or non-believers. People will always say that they want to believe. Those

people are usually your worse critics. The reason why is that they have already formulated their own positions on the paranormal. Within those simple words of 'want to believe' encapsulates a much defined set of parameters one must meet in order for that person to believe that in things that are paranormal. Worse yet, it is a sliding scale of things that evidence will have to meet in order for someone to believe.

Quite simply for those who fall into those categories, it is always best to smile and just say 'don't we all.' However that never really seems to answer the question. The truth is that nobody will believe in the paranormal unless they experience things that are paranormal. You can show all the evidence in the world. You can show countless hours of footage, and that person will never, ever come to the same conclusion. They will normally say, it was interesting but it wasn't absolute proof.

Most people want to experience for themselves. If they don't have the experience, they will never believe. That is the real truth. Until you can bring forth a ghost and literally wave it in their face, they will not be able to believe it. In truth, that was has Gabriel got involved in the paranormal. He experienced it for himself.

Gabriel and a friend had just left a college party and both were pretty tanked. Gabriel had blacked out on the way home and awoke in the hospital. Both he and his friend shared the same room. Somehow, he blacked out during the entire process of getting into an accident and running off the road into a ditch. Both he and his friend Germane Wheatley had survived the crash with some broken bones and quite a few bruises on their torso and neck.

Gabriel and Germane were both grateful for being alive and spoke about how much trouble they would be in when their parents found out what had happened. Gabriel's parents arrived the very next day to visit. It was a welcoming experience to see his mom cry over him and at the same time scolding him for being so stupid. He was thankful for the scolding. Not that he wanted to be yelled at by his parents, but more that he was actually alive to listen to it.

After listening to what would be about an hour of lecture from both parents, Gabriel stopped his parent's barrage and asked them to say hello to Germane. Both parents got strangely quiet.

Finally Gabriel's father spoke, "Son, what are you talking about?"

Gabriel just laughed, "Mom, Dad, you know Germane, I brought him home many times over the last couple of years. He is right there." He pointed his finger over to the bed next to his. His friend just looked at him and smiled. Germane simply started to dissipate into thin air and

waved at him.

"Did you see that?" asked Gabriel.

"See what son?" His mom replied.

"Germane, he was just there. He has been there the last two days. I have been talking to him. He and I watched the IU game on the television last night. He couldn't believe we lost. He was just right there and now disappeared. Am I going crazy?"

His mom held Gabriel's hand, "Son, we are the only visitors that have been here. I don't guess anybody has told you, but Germane died during the crash. He was thrown from the vehicle. His parents identified the body last night and he is being flown home for burial."

Gabriel looked over at the empty bed across from him. It was perfectly made as if waiting for its next patient. He was tired and confused. More importantly he wanted to know if it really was Germane who visited with him.

Ever since that event, Gabriel has always wanted to know more about the paranormal. His experience with his friend's spirit catapulted him into starting his own investigations and later founding the Posey Paranormal Research Society.

## Chapter 7

Shelley limped home. After the beating she received from Rhea Goff, she really was useless around the house. Her hands hurt and were bruised trying to deflect some of the carnage inflicted by the switch that was striking across her back. It seemed with each time she tried to defend herself, the more blood-thirsty Rhea got. With each small whimper she made it seemed that Rhea feasted upon her pain and ravished her even further.

Behind her followed Lohn. He had a very quiet nature about him. His reserve was comforting to Shelley. He rarely spoke. Shelley believed that this was more for self-defense in his home than anything else. Lohn had brought her comfort that evening by just being there. He showed concern for her and wanted to insure that she got to her dormitory safely. The walk was a little less than a mile would be cumbersome with the beating Shelley received. Maybe, just maybe Lohn knew how that felt.

The town often speculated that the boy was crazy. Not because of the usually stories of doing silly things like acting out on situations. People thought Lohn was crazy because of his quiet stillness. The boy had a calmness about him that was almost awkward. Shelley had seen Lohn

get yelled at by kids in the schoolyard. He simply would remain unemotional. The harder they rode him, the more he would seem to turn inwardly. He simply refused to get emotional at all. Something cold and intimately persuasive kept his emotions at bay. Lohn however did have a sweet side. He never said it much, but Lohn always seemed to be looking out for Shelley. Just like now, with him walking her home, was his way of saying I care. Shelley was probably the only person who understood that.

The antithesis of Lohn is Rupert. Rupert was a heathen the day he was born. Both boys had their share of beatings through childhood. Many delivered by the small but adept hands of Rhea. While one boy turned inwardly, Rupert stood to fight against it. Sure he was afraid of his momma, but at the same time, he learned that a beating would only last a while.

"So what ya doin' Lohnnie?" asked Rupert.

Both Shelley and Lohn turned to see the silhouette against the evening sky. Lohn turned to look at Shelley wide eyed but remained silent.

Shelley angry that she didn't notice Rupert before shrugged her shoulders and exclaimed, "He's following me home. Lohn is being a real gentleman."

That made Lohn smile and he shoved his hands in his pockets and began walking towards the dormitories hoping Shelley would take his lead. Shelley noticed something was bothering Lohn about his brother. She couldn't put her finger on it but it seemed Lohn had distrust for Rupert. She would heed Lohn's warning and follow him.

"Lohn, momma is really mad at you. I told her that I would find you and bring you home. Seems you forgot to do your chores this afternoon. What have you been doing all day? I am sure you have a beating coming your way for sure!"

Shelley had noticed that Lohn wasn't doing much that day about his chores. His job was to help in chopping wood and to feed the chickens and cows every night. He got around to doing a bit of it, but after seeing Shelley's beating she received, it seemed that he thought it would be best to neglect his duties and see Shelley home.

In hearing his brother, Lohn simply hung his head. For a second he lifted it up to look at Shelley, only to hang it again on his chest. Scuffing his feet on the ground for a few seconds, he simply said 'sorry' and turned back towards home. Rupert laughed at it all. He thought it was funny seeing how his brother was going to get a real beating for disobeying mother.

"I will see you home," said Rupert with his long crooked smile he gave to Shelley.

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Shortly after seven that evening, everyone had shown up for the meeting. Gabriel was always good at having a pot of coffee going and this night seemed to be a good one for it. It appears that everyone has done their job and has brought a lot to the table for discussion.

Trinity was dressed a little nicer than her usual short power suit that she like to wear for work. She also smelled really good. Gabriel couldn't help but notice the tinge of vanilla around her. Something in the air around her seemed to make Gabriel melt. As she crossed in front of Gabriel, she turned and smiled at the group and grabbed her cup of coffee from the counter. Instead of sitting, she preferred to lean herself against the counter. Her eyes fixated on Gabriel over her cup of coffee as he began to start the meeting.

"Well, team, the gymnasium investigation is this Saturday at 7 PM. Does anyone have any trouble being there?"

Loren raised her hand, "Gabe, is it all right if you pick me before you go. I will be finishing up on the project and I don't want to drive my little Vespa all the way to New Harmony, let alone be it legal."

Gabriel nodded and then agreed to pick her up before the investigation.

Loren continued, "Before we talk too much about the investigation, I want to show you my new device I have been working on. I call it the Randi Box." Loren unpacked a metal box from a traveling suitcase that she had brought with her this evening. The metal box had two holes at the top and a voltmeter attached to the side. She then pulled out two copper rods from her suitcase that were bent in an 'L' shape which she then subsequently inserted into the two holes in the top of the box.

"So, this is a Randi Box?" asked Gabriel.

"Yes, after my favorite skeptic James Randi. I think that this box, if it works as I believe it should, will win the million dollar prize James Randi has offered."

Gabriel leaned over the table to get a better look. "So, Loren, tell me how this works?"

Loren started to smile. It was quite comical to Gabriel to see Loren smile with her black makeup. When she smiled, it looked like a bat had landed where her lips should be. It kind of looked like a cross between the Joker from batman and Julia Roberts but only with black lipstick.

Loren began, "The original design came from an investigation group

from Australia. I was listening to a podcast about it one day and figured I could make my own. So I began to layout the plans for it and kept thinking about how to make better use of the box. I mean, how we can gather better evidence with the use of this box than just by a visual display of the rods crossing.”

Gabriel still looked perplexed. Loren looking at Gabriel’s face got a little frustrated and tried to clarify.

“Gabe, it simply is automated dowsing rods with a way to meter the output. Most skeptics believed that dowsers are subconsciously causing the dowsing rods to move instead of the dowsing happening naturally by external phenomenon. Well, the idea with this box is to remove the subjectivity of the dowser at all. Most dowsers believe that it isn’t them that are causing the rods to cross. Matter of fact most dowsers believe that they have no psychic or paranormal ability at all. They just learned to dowse and have used it much like we use the technology and instruments we have today. So, this box removes the user completely and takes measurements of the change in polarity that is involved with rods at any given time. Right now I only have an analog meter displaying the change, which we can record on paper. Later I will find a way to record it straight to computer. We should take it one step at a time though.”

Gabe just smiled.

“So can we try it tonight after the meeting?” asked Loren.

Gabe thought about it for a minute and said, “Sure, let’s run it out by the Black Fountain Cemetery tonight and see what happens.”

Trinity butted in at this point and said, “This is very interesting. Because James Randi wrote an article about this extolling the effects of dowsing to be that of the ideomotor effect which is quite common for people to do if given the right responses.”

Deidra looked clueless and asked, “Ok, I’ll bite, what is the idiot meter effect?”

Trinity turned and set her coffee cup on the counter, “The ideomotor effect is the unconscious muscle response that a person makes. It can be like a reflex made to a pain response. It is often used by hypnotists to get people to make something happen they wouldn’t normally do on stage and they wake up not knowing anything they have done.”

Deidra still appeared clueless and a little miffed. “So, if you don’t mind, explain that to me how that relates to using dowsing rods.”

Trinity thought to herself for a second. What she wanted to say was something along the lines of making it easy for a two year old to understand. However, using better judgment she proceeded. “Well, let’s see.

When a person holds the dowsing rods, there is a purpose in their mind. Either they are looking for ghosts, water, and gold, whatever. Well, when tested they found the reliability to dowsing to be only slightly better than chance which means that the effects are circumstantial. More so, the effect of having the dowsing rods cross is really what they are trying to question here. The concept where even if you truly believe that ghosts are causing the rods to cross, subconsciously you are causing small muscle movements leading you to the conclusion of the rods crossing. What Loren has here is ways to remove the human factor from the experiment and allow the evidence speak for itself."

Deidra chuckled a little, "Well, now that makes sense. Basically you are saying that if a person wants something, they have already placed it in their mind that they will find it. So whether knowing or not knowing for sure, they will cause the rods to cross for no apparent reason be it paranormal or not"

"Exactly" agreed Trinity.

"Well, that is stupid. That pretty much is an easy way to hypothetically remove any subjective experience a person claims, or actually anything having to do with anybody" Exasperated Deidra.

"That is exactly my point," Loren chimed in. "I mean if you totally remove all subjectivity of the experiment, what you are left with is almost an unconceivable way of proving that there is a paranormal event. There has to be someone's perspective or analysis to go off of in these cases. Even with my box here, it will take someone's subjective opinion to read the results and make a conclusion as to if the results are abnormal or paranormal."

Gabriel leaned in on the table and whispered, "That is the reason why Randi can put the million dollars on the line. He has made it next to impossible to prove the existence of the paranormal."

With that, the group began to hush themselves and allow the meeting to continue from the small distraction made by the Randi box.

Gabriel continued and directed the group to look at the whiteboard he had put on the meeting room wall. Written in marker were two columns. Gabriel had divided his group into two teams for this investigation. One group labeled 'A' would be responsible for equipment setup and viability. This group will then also responsible to make sure communication equipment, camcorders, surveillance cameras, and digital video recorders were charged and ready to go. Posey County Paranormal Research Society was a well-established group but they were a non-profit group. Most of the hardware that they used was individual procured by its

members and donated to the group. Many members would discard their somewhat obsolete equipment as donations. This of course entitled the donator to buy new and more impressive equipment for personal use due to his philanthropic ideals, or so many claimed to their spouses or significant others.

'PCPRS' or 'PCP' as members jokingly refer the group has been around for several years. Gabriel and his ex-wife originally formed the group. From there the group has taken a life of its own. The group experience some periods of growth of new members followed by long droughts of little interest. With the ever growing popularity of the television programs coming out in the US and UK, many more groups seem to be popping up everywhere. Gabriel preferred to make his own baselines as to what he believed and would accept as paranormal practices. Nowadays anybody with a camcorder or voice recorder is a professional paranormal investigator. Many are now claiming to be experts in this field. This quite honestly is very silly if you think of it.

Now the group comprises of a handful of truly dedicated members. Most go on all the investigations that the group gets invited to go on. Most of the members except Gabriel had 'real' jobs outside of their interest in the paranormal. Gabriel had learned how to scrimp by a living off the checks he made from book sales, conferences he spoke at, and selling paranormal equipment through his website. So every few years, he would spit out another book covering the latest trend in the paranormal community and his publisher loved him for it. There were only two other members who didn't quite fall into the same category and they are Louise and Gerald Schmidt. The Schmidt's were retired from teaching at both the Mount Vernon Junior and Senior High Schools. They did the paranormal research to keep them young they claimed. Louise however didn't do much as part of the investigative team. Her skills were more suited to nagging at Gerald and doing research in the library. While she normally was a constant thorn to Gerald, the thorough research she provided was impeccable.

Gerald coughed and excused himself before he spoke. "I remember this building and its history. I remember hearing about it being used as a hospital. I have never heard of it ever being haunted. So, I will be on the 'A' team this time. Will we be using the surveillance equipment on this one or will we just be using tripods to capture angles?"

"Good question Gerald. We will be using the surveillance equipment in combination with the digital camcorders. We will be feeding the camera feeds straight into the DVR. This is a huge benefit since all of our

camcorders actually have infrared ability. This will allow us to then capture in low light. It will be your job to keep an eye on the video feeds and to note anything strange and communicate that back by radio to the team leads" Explained Gabriel.

Loren butted in, "I will work with you Gerald to make sure all the equipment is ready to go. I will be here early making sure that all equipment is functional and charged. I will also be putting together load lists and boxing the gear so that it is ready for pick up when we head out as a group." The load lists was an idea that Gerald had come up with from his military days. Basically it was a list of equipment to be taken out on an investigation. Early investigations with the group led them to take way too much equipment or worse, they would come grossly under-equipped. The load list allowed the group to put together a list of equipment they will need and then before they left, they simply could do a checklist of all the items to ensure none were missing when they left for the investigation. This list has been the key to saving face on many investigations.

Pointing back at the board, Gabriel continued. "Loren, it is like you said. You will be working as a team with Gerald to setup the equipment for monitoring. Afterward you guys will change roles and have you and Gerald participate in part of the investigation. We will play it by ear, as necessity will dictate what we do. The rest of you will start on team 'B'. Your jobs will be going through the walk through, performing EMF, temperature, and EVP sweeps. You will also be the primary parties doing individual vigils and prescribed hot spot locations within the building. There is a basement; in this building that we will need to spend some extended time in. This may mean we further divide into a third group to cover both the main floor and the basement at the same time. If that happens, I will lead one group as well. Most of the time, I will be doing my normal site coordinator responsibilities and help gather evidence but also ensure site safety. I will at times walk around to ensure the equipment is functioning correctly. Other than that, I trust you guys to do what you do best."

Loren raised a hand and Gabriel nodded at her, "So, what about environmental?"

Gabriel knew what she was talking about and turned to the board. "Good question Loren. We will need to do a full environmental worksheet on this place. It will be interesting since they are doing renovations. But the normal spectrum of checks will need to be done. I am really interested in the air quality checks for such things as radon, CO2, mold and anything else that might be in the air. With a building this old, God

only knows what is being kicked up right now. With a full environmental work-up we can bring into question some of the changes that are going on to the building that could be contributing to the phenomenon. We don't want another Parks situation to happen."

The group all got wide-eyed and nodded. The Parks situation that Gabriel mentions was the home of Roger Parks, a successful businessman in the Mount Vernon community who owned quite a few rental properties. One of his tenants continued to complain of spiritual activity in their basement apartment. What happened on the rainy night they were on investigation, the sewer backed up into the apartment and literally filled the entire home up to two feet of sludge and human waste. The sewer gas and black mold seemed to be the cause of the situation. It was from that investigation that Gabriel insisted on doing an environmental check of the home as part of the investigation. If they spent some time going over the home and looking a little closer to the home and how it was built they could gather some great insight as to what was going on in the home. Just spending some time looking for the common things a home inspector may check for would help paint a picture as to the health of the home. Other environmental things also included taking a look at the furnace, electrical wiring, and performing air quality tests to see if there was anything in the home environment that could explain the circumstances that the client was experiencing.

The hour and a half scheduled for the meeting came and went. The team had their assignments and knew the time they were supposed to meet. A few stayed behind to go with Loren to the cemetery, as they were all interested in seeing how the device would work.

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Shelley, feeling deeply uncomfortable with Rupert's smile, quickly turned and began to walk. She was in tremendous pain. With each step she took it was like a needle was stabbing her side. She definitely could not run from Rupert. She couldn't do much in her condition. She decided to just keep focused on walking and ignoring Rupert as best as she could. He kept calling after her. With each call, he seemed to get a little more upset.

Running up to her, Rupert grabbed Shelley by the arm and whirled her around.

"So, you are sweet on my brother are you?" asked Rupert.

Shelley remained still and motionless and stared at Rupert. Rupert seeing her eyes tear up, lowered his arm down and clasped Shelley's hand. With a sharp tug, he almost pulled Shelley off of her feet and dragged

her to a quiet hidden patch amidst the trees. They walked for what seemed to be ten minutes until Rupert had found the area he was looking for. Throwing her down, Rupert began to laugh out loud and begin to wheeze a bit as his breath became a bit erratic.

Struggling to regain her composure, Shelley choked back the tears. Her dress was covered in a mess of leaves and mud. Her hands were scraped again from her fall as she tried to catch herself and some dirt appeared to have made its way onto her chin. Fear overcame her. Rupert's breathing began to be even more erratic. His wheezing with each breath became more noticeable.

"Rupert, leave me alone!" Shelley cried out.

Rupert only laughed a little more. Her fear seemed to feed whatever desire he had going on his mind. With a quick movement, Rupert fell down to his knees on top of Shelley. He grabbed her hands and placed them over her head as he began to kiss her cheeks and neck.

Her cries for help and freedom were drowned by the murder of crows that filled the trees. Her only witnesses were these birds that fed on the waste of men. They too would feed upon this terrible incident and take it all in.

With her last cry for help, Rupert's anger flurried. He rose up and drove a fist straight down across her nose causing a flash of blood to spurt down her face. She whimpered in pain as Rupert got a little more rough with her as he brought all his weight up on her. Fearing what was going to happen next, Shelley kicked her feet several times finally prying Rupert off of her. With another agile kick her small boot heel found its way to Rupert's mouth knocking him flat on his back.

Rupert lay still for another moment. Shelley seeing her opportunity to get away, picked herself up and ran as hard as she could. She had passed over the ridge where Rupert had dragged her. If she could just make it past the ridge and up over the next hill, she would be back on the trail heading to town. Hopefully, she would find somebody on the trail that could help her.

Shelley continued to run. Her heartbeat was fast both from the tremendous toll she was putting on her body to run from Rupert and also from the tremendous fear that was overtaking her. She could hear Rupert behind her. Obviously she hadn't kicked hard enough because Rupert was gaining on her quickly.

To her surprise, she could hear somebody on the trail. It seemed to be a wagon of some sort moving along. It was one of the townsmen moving

some bags of grain. The wagon had two horses that were working together to pull what seemed to be a rather large load. Shelley cried out to the driver but it appeared that the driver did not notice nor hear her. The horses were moving very steady and it didn't appear that they were going to stop. Shelley made it up the next hill as the team of horses moved past her. She ran out to the middle of the trail waving her arms and crying out. With the bails of grain stacked so high, the driver never noticed her.

With a shot of what seemed like lightning going off in her head, Shelley collapsed face first to the ground. She found herself falling in and out of conscious. The brief moments that she did wake up, she saw Rupert dragging her by her heels back to the small nook in the woods. Unfortunately she would be awake for the next terrible event that was about to take place.

Tired and worn out, Shelley had nothing left. She had fought as hard as she could. She had resisted with all her might. Now tired and totally drained with no fight left in her, Shelley remained motionless and still as Rupert kissed her face and neck. Forcefully shoving his hands under her dress and ripping her undergarments. Shelley, frightened and scared stopped resisting completely. Rupert forcefully raped her several times. Shelley never even whimpered for fear of inciting Rupert even more. She couldn't imagine where his passions would take him next.

When it was about dawn, Rupert pulled himself off of her and left her alone. Shelley pulled herself together. She pulled the ripped undergarments off and wiped up the residue that Rupert had left behind. After cleaning her face and hands in the brook at the bottom of the ridge, Shelley slowly worked her way back to the dormitories. She made sure that she didn't bring any attention to herself and quietly put herself to bed.

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Extinguishing her cigarette, Loren pulled the two cases out of the back of Trinity's car. Deidra and Gabriel just arrived and pulled up behind the Mercedes SUV with its back tailgate open that Trinity was driving. In this light, Loren looked more demonic or zombie-ish than normal. Gabriel got the Rob Zombie song, 'Living Dead Girl' pumping in his brain. There is nothing like Loren to spark an active imagination. She was a walking inspiration into a cacophony of rejection, individualism and dependence.

The fact is that Loren really doesn't care what people think about the way she looks. She had long gotten comfortable in her skin as it were.

She simply liked the way she dressed and looked and didn't care what impression you may have of her. In the early days it made it very difficult to keep a job in the professional world. The girl was a real whiz when it came to computer languages and application design. It was her attitude and her business attire that usually caused the major rifts with her employers. She however did luck out and find a job that enabled her to work from her apartment and be totally isolated from the cubical hell most of her counterparts suffered. Cubicles were simply cells with padded walls inspired to keep employees working fervently for the man. Often supplied with great amounts of free coffee to enhance awareness and encourage longevity at work as well as higher output. At home, she was free to work in an environment that was conducive to her own liking and not fashioned by some political correct cliquish polo wearing sub-culture. Her environment was complete with her ashtrays, tables of computer monitors and Ethernet cables strewn about. That was her life and she was very comfortable with it.

Gabriel hopped out of the car and grabbed Loren's backpack and followed her to the old tree on the edge of the cemetery. Buried in this plot of land were some of the first graves ever dug at Black Fountain Cemetery. It was heard that Deidra had one of her first experiences with the paranormal. It was her second training investigation she was invited to attend with PCP. She was both excited and nervous to be on the investigation. Cemeteries often freaked her out and this one late at night with a full moon overhead cast creepy shadows everywhere.

It just so happened that night they were walking as a group and she was carrying her EMF meter with her. The meter started going off strangely. Being that it was a cemetery; to have any type of electromagnetic activity present was quite strange. But right there in her hand, she noticed the EMF meter spiking unusually. When she called out to the group about the activity, it was then that she felt her entire body getting cold and she began to feel extremely nauseous. Loren who was really going low tech at the time was simply holding a compass in her hand. The compass acted like it switched poles and then suddenly started spinning out of control.

Fear overcame Deidra as well as the nausea. After throwing up, Deidra simply had enough and begged the group to take her home. Many thought she wouldn't come back but Deidra was of the mind to face her fears. Eventually she did come back and now was a strong standing member of the group.

It took Loren a few minutes to set up the gear. She laid the box flat on the

ground and set the rods in place. She put a fresh battery in the voltmeter and then she set up her camera equipment to videotape the results. The group began their vigil in their normal fashion. These kinds of impromptu investigations kept the process of paranormal investigation fun. Too many times you get so caught up in the business end and the formulas for successful group making that it becomes way too tedious and quite often a job. Now they were able to have a little fun and try a couple of experiments. I think that is the key to the group; keeping it fun. They started the vigil and began to call out questions to whoever may be listening in. Audio recorders in hand, they called out their questions and waited for a short time to record any kind of response that may be there. They often capture the voice of a little girl that will share a couple of words with them. 'Yes, help me' was an interesting response they received and documented from this area. Maybe tonight they will see if they could get any kind of results. Loren at least was hoping for it.

After about a half an hour, nothing happened. Nobody was experiencing anything and most were getting the feeling that nothing was going to happen that night. Trinity was complaining of an early session the next morning and was asking politely to try to wrap things up in the next half hour or so.

It was then that Deidra's hands began to shake uncontrollably. That nausea struck her again. Her visitor's presence was being felt again. The EMF meter began to spike over and over. Deidra dropped to one knee to catch herself from what she thought was going to be another embarrassing nauseous moment.

"Can you make the rods move" asked Loren as she began to speak to the presence that was there.

She continued, "We have a device that we have brought for you to manipulate. It contains two rods that you can use to answer yes and no. Can you please try to manipulate the rods for us? Can you please show us a yes response with the rods?"

Slowly the rods began to sway. Trinity and Gabriel both pointed their flashlights at the voltmeter to see if anything had changed. The rods hadn't crossed yet so there wasn't any type of a response. Within a few seconds the rods moved themselves into a crossed position and touching as well as showing a very strong voltage reading of four volts.

"It works, fuckin' A, it works," exclaimed Loren.

Trinity hadn't seen Loren this happy until the day she confided in Trinity that she had a new boyfriend she met on the Internet. This moment for Loren was huge. Not only did she just prove that the rods could cross

minus the human contact, but she also documented this by video and on audio and was able to actually show an electrical change with the rods crossing.

"This is definitely going on my MySpace page," smiled Loren as she crossed her arms triumphantly. To look at her, you would have believed this girl could cure cancer or solved the world's economic problems. In truth, she just took this small little group one step further into knowing the truth behind the paranormal world.

## Chapter 8

Deidra had taken the Thursday off. It was her birthday. She planned on spending the day with Samantha and Roscoe, visit the library and then catch a movie later on that day. She didn't normally take the day off for her birthday but this day was special. She just completed a big project at her job and thought that this would be a small reward to herself especially since she rarely took time off. She had accumulated over three hundred hours of paid time off and rarely used it at all. Having that much PTO kind of came with the territory of enjoying her job.

Deidra did her normal routine of waking up at five-thirty in the morning to feed and let the dogs out. She would then spend the first couple of hours dosing with strong Hawaiian coffee. It was during these times, she would spend vast amounts of energy perusing the Internet for little lost nuggets of information most people found useless. She was often accused by her friends of being the perfect contestant for Jeopardy with the bountiful knowledge of useless information she kept stored away in her brain-pan.

Today she had a purpose to pour her energy into. She was going to find out the details for the suicide that they found on line 5 of the deceased list from the Tornado. For some reason she was drawn to that after seeing it for herself. Something was ultimately speaking to her.

She pulled up several of the obituary records websites as well as an ancestry site. Neither of which provided any good leads. It appeared to Deidra that she was going to have to take another trip to the county library to find the answer.

She sat down in her easy chair. It was an old lazy boy that she has had for over twenty years. It was well worn but very comfortable. She believed the chair was much like her, well worn and traveled but with lots of character. You can't just throw something away with those kinds of qualities. It is like those ugly Boston Terriers she owns with the big eyes.

They are so cute they are absolutely lovely.

Taking another large sip of coffee, she started to think about the event she had the other night with the woman crying out over her children. She couldn't explain why she had been involved in this. What was her connection to this thing altogether? Was it the coin perhaps? Or was it something else? Had she brought something into her home that she didn't know about?

Deidra began to contemplate and her memory began to fill with the handouts and exercises she went to at the local alternative health clinic at the Donner Hospital in Evansville. They provided a monthly dowsing class, which taught the students the basics of dowsing and how to dowse for healing and pretty much anything else under the sun.

She unlatched the locket on her neck. It was a pretty silver locket her father had given her when she was a child. It had a happy picture of her Mom and Dad in each of the heart shaped coves. She always kept it near and dear to her heart and rarely took it off.

Deidra wanted to know why this spirit was reaching out to her. Placing the long chain of the locket in her right hand and placing her left hand under the locket she began to picture in her mind the woman spirit and asked to find the connection in her home to the spirit.

Sitting there in her chair watching the pendant, it gradually began to swing back and forth. The pendulum continued to keep along its swinging path going towards her bedroom and also the dinning room. Choosing to follow the path to the bedroom, Deidra slowly got up and began to move slowly down the hallway. The locket stopped moving in the large swinging motions as if the potential energy driving it was diminishing it. Noticing this, she believed it was a sign that she was going into the wrong direction. She turned back towards the dinning room and started to walk around the table. When she got to the other side of the table, the locket began to spin when she was facing a buffet that was full of trinkets and a wall of pictures. The locket continued to spin in place and really wasn't giving Deidra any good read as to the exact item that the locket was drawn to.

There was obviously too much stuff there and it made it hard for her to distinguish the responses she was getting with all of the items that were on the buffet. She was excited to see that there possibly was a physical connection between her home and this spirit. She just needed to determine what it was. It did take her some time to clear the buffet. She laid all the items neatly on her long kitchen table that she inherited from her grandparents as well as took down all the pictures on the wall that were

by the buffet and placed them on the buffet face up. In this way, she believed that she could easily determine the different responses that the locket was giving her compared to that of everything bunched all together. She inherited the pack rat gene from her mother's side. Her mom's family descended from a long line of pack rats that seemed to never ever throw anything away. When her grandma finally passed away, they found what seemed to be forty years of tires, old furniture, and appliances strewn across the garage in hopes of one day resurrecting their usefulness to somebody.

Slowly she walked from item to item on the table. The pendulum really didn't do much other than swing a little back and forth. In trying this in the past, she believed that the pendulum should swing in an orbital fashion when it came upon the item it was attuned to find. The table revealed very little at all.

Knowing that the table was pretty much a dead end, she moved over to the buffet. Aligned in a row were three pictures that she had acquired over the years. Two came from her mother and one came from an auction of an old antique shop that went out of business in downtown Mt. Vernon. It was a unique shop where the entire family of twelve lived in the upstairs portion of the building while running the antique shop and small diner in the back. Nothing fancy but something definitely different for the area. This picture was nothing fancy at all. It had a small vase with pretty yellow flowers. It was welcoming and lovely. It had a signature on the bottom of an unknown artist. It was dated 1923 with the artist signature of E. Richardson.

Raising the locket up above the picture, Deidra noticed the locket seemed to fixate on the name itself. Spinning in tight circles around the name, the locket seemed to have a mind of its own. It spun quicker and quicker and within an instant, the locket flew out of Deidra's hands and landed on the ground some five feet away.

Surprised, Deidra grabbed her chest and caught her breath. It was definitely not something she was expecting from the locket. Maybe the spirit was trying to get her to notice. Now she was listening.

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Shelley was a prisoner she thought. Sure she had the freedom to go to school, but the nightmare of the Goff's would continue when she got out. The weekends were the worse. She wouldn't get any reprieve from the Goff's on the weekends. Trying to do everything right and stay out of the watchful eye of Rhea was her major concern. Undue attention brought a

hell fire of fury upon her and she just couldn't take another bruise. Winter has set in. The long walks from her dormitory to the Goff farm were quite tenuous. She didn't have enough clothes for this type of weather and found herself using worn out stockings on her hands to keep them from being totally exposed to the elements. She took her blanket with her and wrapped it over her head and body and used it as a barrier between her and the world. At least it kept her warm save a few windy days where the cool air seemed to know just how to torture her by meandering through the folds of the blanket to her face, back and neck.

Shelley began her day as usual. She spent most of her time attending to the chores of the home. Sweeping, washing the floor, mending a few pieces of clothing now and then kept her busy. Shelley enjoyed the days where she was able to come out of the cold and do her work. The downside to being inside is that she is often interrupted by Rhea for not doing something right. It was bearable at least to the point she wasn't freezing to death in the bitter Indiana cold.

There were the few cases where she was sent outside to do a few chores. Rhea often used the outside chores as punishment or to vent. The bitter cold was a comparable bedmate to Rhea's wrath. They intertwined their punishments on Shelley as if both had a purpose to make her life a living hell.

It was getting dark. Shelley had begun to finish the last of the dinner that she prepared for the Goff's. Rhea had made sure to oversee Shelley through the process. The woman was always accusing Shelley of eating her food and thus prompted her ever watchful eye of Shelley. No morsel or scrap was to pass the lips of this young girl until the family has had their fill. Not if Rhea had anything to do with it. However, Lohn would sneak something to Shelley when Rhea wasn't looking. Most of the time it was simply bread, however Shelley was thankful for all of it. Many times she didn't get a chance to eat at the Dormitories and thus depended on the mercy of the Goff's to feed her. Mercy was often on short supply.

Looking through the window, the snow seemed to be coming down in sheets.

"Looks to be a Blizzard mom," explained Mr. Goff as he took a few hits off of his pipe.

Planting his hands in his front pockets, Mr. Goff seemed to lose himself in the distance as the snow blanketed the little farm in a seemingly sheet of white beautiful cotton. Most of the farm was covered heavily.

Looking over to Rhea, "Looks like the girl needs to stay the night, there is no way she is gonna be able to make it home in this weather."

Rhea just scoffed and said, "Well, she isn't stayin' in this home where her stealing fingers can find our precious family stuff. She will stay out in the barn."

Shelley was thankful for not staying in the home. The barn would be nice since she wouldn't have to hear Ms. Goff go on and on how terrible or inadequate she was. In the barn she would be able to cover herself in blankets and sleep comfortably in the hay. It was almost a dream. She hadn't had this much room to herself in a long time.

As evening came and Shelley had finished her supper, Mr. Goff walked Shelley over to the barn and helped her carry blankets and small lantern up to the loft. She gratefully thanked him for the blankets as he left. Laying out her blanket and small things, she kicked her boots off and prepared herself for a restful night sleep.

Around eleven o'clock she heard the chickens stir up for some reason and couldn't understand what the commotion was. She thought maybe it was a fox trying to get in, but the chickens calmed themselves too quickly for that. As she halfway drifted back to sleep, she felt something rub up her leg. It was Rupert. Somehow he had managed to sneak up the loft without her noticing him.

"NO," Shelley whimpered but seeing Rupert's eyes, she knew that only misery comes in fighting him.

Rupert's breath stank of onions and his breath was very sporadic. He slowly ran a hand up her thigh and then up her chest to her neck.

"You say a word and I will kill you now and nobody will ever care," whispered Rupert slowly.

Shelley agreed to be quiet. She tried to hold back the tears but they just came upon her like the snowstorm of the day. The tears ran down her face drenching her hair and blanket.

Rupert was much more forceful this time and rough with her. He grabbed her throat several times and squeezed which caused her face to go red. When she wouldn't cooperate with him by opening her legs, he hit her in the side. After a few wallops, she was ready to heed his wishes. However he was careful to not rip her clothes this time, as she would still have to be presentable tomorrow to work around the house.

Rupert spread her legs apart and approached her. He pulled his pants down and exposed himself and with a diving plunge he entered her forcefully. It hurt Shelley immensely. She grimaced and cried a bit out loud. At this point, Rupert was so engrossed with his own world, he

barely noticed Shelley's cry. With each thrust, the onion smelled overwhelmed her. His sporadic breathing was almost equine like in nature.

In sheer moment of zealous enjoyment, Rupert announced to Shelley, "You know, I think I am going to recommend to momma that you move into the barn permanently."

Shelley's eyes went cold. The emotional picture of this ordeal extending over weeks, months or even years was overwhelming. Rupert was really enjoying himself at this point. His climax was eminent. Shelley noticed that the small lamp was within reach. With a slow and slight movement, she rolled her fingers into the small handled of the lamp and waited. She waited for Rupert's climax.

Thrusting and thrusting over and over, Shelley waited until a moment when Rupert's body seemed to urge forward and pulse. When he did Rupert went rigid and stiff as he finished. With a careful thrust from her right leg, Shelley was able to throw Rupert from being on top of her. He landed on his side and quite surprised that she could do such a thing. He never saw her swing.

The lamp crashed beside the temple cutting his head wide open. The oil spilled over him and on the hay that immediately lit as the glass shattered on impact. Rupert really looked demonic at this point as the flames coming of his body licked at the straw and hay. His fire consumed the area around him. Almost immediately, he began to scream. Shelley had nothing left of the lamp and began to look around for something to finally put an end to him.

There in the hay laid the bail hook. Grabbing it firmly in her right hand she pulled it out of the bail of hay and walked over to the burning Rupert and with another swift blow she lodged the hook right into the back of his skull. His screams ended in a bloody burning heap.

The smoke was strong and the fire was quickly catching everything around her. She quickly got down from the loft and put her clothes back on. She could still smell his breath on her dress and Rupert's essence still clinging to the inside of her leg.

Slowly she walked into the home. She knew that Mr. and Mrs. Goff sleep soundly at night. Mr. Goff's snoring was absolutely horrendous. As she walked into the room, she found Mrs. Goff lying on her side. Her beak nose seemed to come alive in the shadows flickering about the room from the low light coming from the window.

With a swift and decisive stroke, the bailing hook landed mid temple of Mrs. Goff. She made an almost surprised gurgling sound. With another stroke, blood was strewn across the wall and all over Shelley.

Subsequent strikes sounded like hard thuds on walls much like driving wooden dowels.

She quickly went to the other side of the bed and raised her arm to strike at Mr. Goff when the door opened.

With a gasp, Lohn screamed "NO Shelley, stop!"

With a cold look at Lohn, Shelley turned her attention back to Mr. Goff and drove the bailing hook straight dead center of the forehead. With a deadening thud, the blood spilled again and this time covered her face with gore. Mr. Goff never knew what happened.

In a momentary surprised gesture, Lohn dove forward trying to stop Shelley's hand from collapsing down on its arc on Mr. Goff again. After it found its way home on his head, Mr. Goff gave out an awkward 'ACK' sound and bits of bone caved in. She raised it once more to complete her death arc, but this time it found its way home before its intended destination.

Lohn miscalculated his timing just a bit. His hands were raised as he was trying to grab hold of the hook before she completed her final blow. As he missed, the hook found its way lodged in his throat.

Shelley eyes turned from marble stone to that of compassionate wide eyed tears. She saw Lohn there gurgling his last breath with his eyes fixated wide open. His lips moved ever so slightly as if to say something to Shelley. As he fell, Shelley fell with him. Lying down by his side, she cried. She brushed his hair out of his face and watched as he gave his last breath.

In the background the barn really began to burn. The animals in the yard were squealing and raising a racket. It would only be a short time before someone notices the barn going up in flames. Shelley bent over Lohn and gently held his face. She gave him a small kiss on the forehead and picked herself back up.

She left the home barefoot, blood-soaked, and headed towards town.

## Chapter 9

Gerald sat at his computer desk going over a few emails. Being used to getting up so early in the morning in his job as an engineer, he just got into the pattern for so long that he has continued it into retirement. Looking at the clock he noticed it was five thirty in the morning and his cup of coffee was now empty.

After grabbing another cup of coffee, Gerald turned to his workbench that he had illuminated by several desk lamps. Attached to the desk was

a large rounded magnifying lens. Gerald has spent some of his time in the late eighties and early nineties doing clock repair for a local shop. He always enjoyed tinkering with things, especially highly involved pieces which took deep concentration. It was in those long hours of concentration and labor where Gerald really felt accomplished. The process to him was much more fulfilling than the end result. Because there would always be another broken clock waiting for him, it provided him with a steady stream of small projects to keep his mind busy.

Now that Gerald picked up ghost hunting as a hobby and interest after reading several books, he spent his time going over the more technical aspects of the ghost hunting process. He especially liked doing work on radio equipment and devices. He left the more technical computer software and equipment to younger ones in the group. Besides, he wasn't interested in the wham-bam instant gratification that he saw many people getting caught up in these days. The learning process and the mental exercise were far more fruitful to him.

This week, Gerald started a new project to create his own Frank's box which is reported to be a device that acts like a 'telephone to the dead.' He far preferred creating his own equipment to buying from someone. After watching a couple videos on YouTube as well as reading what people speculated about the interesting device, he figured that he would give it a shot.

In front of him laid a digital AM/FM radio he picked up at the local Radio Shack. After opening the device and removing the circuit board from the device, he carefully cut the mute pin on the board. What he read from an online forum is that by removing the mute pin, it will allow the radio to scan all the channels back and forth on either the FM or AM band, which the user selects.

The overall process took him roughly five minutes and twenty-five dollars. When he had finished the modification and put the device together, he installed the batteries and turned on the radio. Just as the write up claimed, the device when turned on would start scanning up and down on the AM or FM frequencies. As the radio would sweep through the channels, you could pick up noise and chatter from the stations as the tuner ran past.

Gerald grabbed an old set of headphones, his digital recorder, and some other gear and placed it into a bag. It was time to go and see his mother. She lived in the local elderly care home and was ninety-two years old. Gerald didn't particularly like to go and see his mother at the nursing home. The reminder of his own mortality along with the guilt of not

having the patience to put up with his mother living with him in his own home, made the weekly visits with his mother painful. When his mother did live with him, his life was miserable. Either his wife or his mother was laying into him for the silliest of things. Misery was an art form brought on by the likes of his mother and wife going at it. With his mother being in a nursing home, life at home was at least manageable.

The key to longevity in marriage is to get over yourself he thought. You can't change your wife, and she definitely can't change you. Love each other, work together, and find your own hobbies and interests. The hobbies and interests get you through the boring parts of your marriage and the hum-drum life you are living. Thanks to ghost hunting, now Gerald found a way to both quench his need to tinker as well as continue to keep his mind working. Plus ghost hunting was surely more fun than sitting around waiting to die. Every time Gerald went to the nursing home, he saw the people there just sitting in chairs and quietly watching each other as if they were birds on a wire waiting for the next bird to 'fall off' and die.

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Shelley took her first step barefoot into the snow. The wet feeling embraced her toes and winter started to gradually nibble at her feet. The sting of snow on her bare skin brought an overwhelming emotion of fear through her. The ashes from the barn were scattering in the air looking like a shower of falling stars that followed along the path to town.

She continued to walk as night set in. With the farm behind her she picked up her pace.

"You are a bad girl!"

Shelley cringed and looked over her shoulder expecting to see Mrs. Goff pointing her needle like finger at her. To her surprise, she saw nothing except the tree branches flexing under the weight of the snowfall.

The image of Lohn's face haunted Shelley. His total look of surprise as the hook found residence in this throat made Shelley nauseous. She took a few more steps and the pain in her stomach and the uneasiness she felt, found its way on the ground in pile of vomit.

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Gerald pulled in to the parking spot at the Posey County Home for the Aged. Putting the car in to park, Gerald grimaced at having to go and visit his mother. Stepping out of the car, he opened the sliding door to back seat of his mini-van, grabbed his gear and headed into what would

seem to be painful hours of listening to his mother complain about her ailments. This of course would be true except for today; he will be able to mix the pain of the visit with the ability to conduct a small experiment using his new trans-communication device.

As he walked into the front door, the smell of stale urine mixed with cleaning chemicals seemed to infiltrate his head and reminded him that when it was his time to go, he would much rather meet his end at the end of a shotgun than find himself withering away and waiting to die in a place like this.

One gentleman looked at him with such a strange face. He had the face of almost of a smile mixed with a blank stare. The elderly gentlemen had very little hair and a macabre translucent skin that showed the dark veins in both his head and hands. The face the gentlemen gave him reminded Gerald of that of his grandchildren. The face of hiding in the corner so they can poop in their pants. By the smell of it, this very well might be the case.

After walking down the hallway and dodging the walking dead with walkers, Gerald finally came to the room of his mother. The room his mother decorated seemed to have a life of its own. The room was painted almost a Pepto Bismal color and every table would be covered in doilies. Along with that, her room was filled with dogs. There were dogs everywhere from pictures, to statues, to cast molds to stuffed animals.

Growing up, Gerald always had dogs in the house. His mother was always finding strays on the road and bringing them home. At any given time, there was a dog in the house. His mother's personal record was to have ten dogs in the house at one time. One thing that happens when your home is filled with dogs, it becomes a mess. The smell of dog permeates your clothes and everything you touch and come in contact with. No amount of odor eliminator, candles, or those floral scent sprays can hide the smell of dog when it comes to those numbers. However his mom treated them with love and care. The good thing his mother always did was tried to find a good home for all of them. The down side was that she treated each of the dogs as if they were her own children often to the dismay of Gerald's older brother and younger sister.

As he entered the room, his mother was kicked back in her lazy boy. It seemed that her 'shows' had already finished and it was time for her nap. On her chest was a large brown pound puppy that she liked to cuddle with when she watched her daily allotment of trash talking television and soaps. Beside her chair was a TV tray covered with the essentials of Ludamen's cough drops, tissues, the TV guide and several old

newspaper sections with the funnies and crossword puzzles.

Deciding to take this opportunity to try his experiment, Gerald walked over to the kitchen table and laid out his gear. Within a few minutes he had assembled his equipment to test his Frank's box. Knowing that his mother was pretty much deaf gave Frank the assurance that asking questions in her room while she slept would not disturb her.

Starting up the portable radio to scan all the radio frequencies, Gerald placed the headphones into his ears. He would be recording the session straight into his digital audio recorder for later review. After starting the digital recorder, Gerald waited a few seconds to begin his vigil.

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Shelley had made her way into town. She could see the dormitories in sight. In just a few minutes, she would be able to be warm and wrapped in blankets on her bed. Maybe she would be able to dream all this away.

"You are bad! Bad! Bad! Ha, ha, ha, ha."

Shelley looked over her shoulder at what she heard. The winded grated her face and the sting she felt made her eyes water.

"You are selfish mean spirited little girl. Nobody wants you. I am surprised I even took you in!"

"I am gonna ask momma for you to move in. Then we can do this every night."

Shelley turned. In front of her was Rupert standing in front of her. His face and hair were black. His clothes were burnt and crimson colored.

"You did this to me!"

Shelley stood there frozen. The image of Rupert standing there in front of her alive overwhelmed her. Rupert came closer and when he did, Shelley could see where she hit Rupert in the head. Parts of his skull were bashed in and bone flake appeared to stick out. The sight was too much to bear.

"I am gonna tell momma what you've done."

Shelley collapsed to her knees. Trying to hide the image of Rupert from her eyes, she covered her head with her hands and gently rocked on her knees as the cold sting of the snow set in. While still not seeing him, she could continually hear Rupert keep asking why she had killed him.

As the voice of Rupert faded off into the distance, Shelley felt a hand on her shoulder. Peeking under hand she saw Lohn looking at her with bright wide eyes. The gash in his throat still present and blood trickling out in a steady stream, Lohn just looked at Shelley. He appeared to take breaths and his chest appeared to try to suck in air to help him breathe

however it seemed to be very laborious to do. With each breath he took, his eyes would widen a little which made his gaze to seem more distant. Then all of a sudden, Lohn's chest stopped moving. Lohn's face turned down toward Shelley until he was looking her straight in the eyes. When their eyes met, Lohn's face changed to that of a very painful squinting and then he collapsed to the ground in front of her. He lay there still and frozen with his hands placed neatly on his chest.

As he lay there, Shelley looked on. With tears running down her chin, she laid next to him. She could feel the warmth leaving him. It appeared with each breathe she took, he got colder. She lay on her side and placed a hand on his chest.

"I love you Lohn."

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Gerald began his vigil by commenting on the time.

"It is 2:33 PM and I am at the Posey County Home for the Aged. I am conducting my first experiment with the RS 12-469 ghost box. Here present is my mother sleeping and myself. This experiment will be conducted in my mother's room at this facility. I will be asking a series of questions in order to communicate with the spirits that may still be residing here. "

With that Gerald set the recorder down and took a deep breath.

"Hello, my name is Gerald and I am here to communicate with you today. Located in front of me is a device that will allow me to listen to you talk with me. If you come close and speak clearly I will be able to hear what you have to say and communicate with you."

With that Gerald turned up the radio on his ghost box and sat and listened to the device scan up and down the radio frequencies. From time to time he could hear different elements coming out of the radio spectrum. Many of them noticeable words spoken by different individuals that was easy to make out. Some of it sound very garbled.

"What is your name?"

As if it were responding directly to Gerald, a voice came across on the device. The voice responded "name.... is Donald."

Gerald wanted to make sure that the voice that he captured wasn't just the normal chatter that you would get off a device such as this and asked the question again.

"What is your name?"

Very faintly, the radio chattered across and then the same voice came across saying "...Don."

Gerald grabbed his pen and began to write down in his small pocket notebook. He scribbled a few notes noting the location, time and then wrote down what he experienced. After he finished writing, he set the book down on the small table and proceeded to ask a few more questions.

“Did you die here at the retirement home?”

Gerald waited for an extended period of time. The radio chatter didn't seem to reflect any noticeable comments coming from the spirit voice he had heard before. He simply heard the gentle hum of the radio scanning up and down the radio frequencies.

“I am here to communicate with you Don, are you still here?”

The radio hum continued and still there wasn't a noticeable voice coming across communicating with Gerald. Then all of a sudden, a faint voice came across that Gerald could distinguish, it sounded like the voice before and it responded with a faint long “Yes.”

Gerald hunched over to listen more closely. Both of his hands cupped over his ears to help him cut out any external noise that may keep him from hearing the spirit communicate with him.

Out of nowhere he received a quick but painful slap to the back of the head which threw one earphone out of his ear. Gerald turned to see the dismayed look on his mother's face.

Jenny, Gerald's mom looked down on him with her horned rimmed glasses and walker and said to him.

“I aint dead yet, and I sure as hell don't plan on dying in this place.”

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About one-thirty in the morning, Jacob and Isaiah Muell stepped out local tavern. Both men had spent the better part of the evening in a drunken stupor. Finally Smitty the barkeep had enough of the loud yelling the brothers often got into when they were in this condition and decided enough was enough and threw them out.

As they made their way down Tavern Street they found themselves at the crossroads of Tavern and Main Street. The night was very cold and the wind was penetrating even through their thick jackets they were wearing this evening.

Isaiah looked over and saw a pair of white barefoot feet lying in the snow in some type of heap.

"Hey there...you, don't you know you will catch your death like that?"

He looked over at his brother Jacob and they both ran to see what the pair of feet was attached to. As they ran upon the heap they saw across the street, it became clear that the feet were attached to the delicate frame of a blonde hair girl. Jacob got down on a knee to feel head and to see if she was still breathing. Her lips were blue and her body seemed to be frozen. It appeared that she was lying on her side as if she intended to fall asleep in the billowy white snow.

"She is dead Isaiah, we need to run and tell somebody."

Jacob nodded in agreement and then said, "There is blood all over her. Take a look at that hook she is carrying."

## Chapter 10

Dr. Wolff rubbed his hands together to remove the chill of the evening from his hands. The stove in his office started to fill the rooms with heat but it seemed to take it forever to get hot enough to do any good. In front of him on his exam table, was the small frail body of a young girl wrapped in blankets. The body with an extended exposure to the elements gave Dr. Wolff the terrible feeling that this young girl may not make it. Her heart was beating fast and her breathing was very shallow. Time will only tell after he can get her body temperature back to norm.

"Shelley, can you here me dear?"

Shelley's body was still very still. She was just brought in from the cold and the only safe way to reanimate her was to simply slowly warm her back up. Dr. Wolff took special care not to touch her to much and continued to try to stoke the fire of his stove to get enough heat to fill the room. It was critical to get her body temperature back to normal. He once read a journal article about a family dog that fell in on a frozen pond and somehow managed to get itself back to shore. However the cold had gotten the better of the dog and it lay on the shore nearly freezing to death. The owner estimated that the dog had been out in the weather over an hour and surely thought the dog was dead when he had found it.

What the medical journal went on to say was that when the owner had brought the dog back home, it was stiff as a board and looked dead from the cold. However the owner laid the dog by the hearth of the fire and within less than an hour, the dog had warmed itself enough to slowly recover. Within a couple of hours, the dog appeared to be normal. There might just be a small chance that this happens for Shelley he thought. He had seen his share of death in his time. He had even seen a person die

due to the exposure to the elements. Only time will tell as to whether he would be able to see if a girl had a dog's chance of survival this night.

The doctor opened the door to the stove and began blowing onto the coals as to billow them red hot. With each exhale the embers glowed hot. After a minute, the fire stoked up hot again and the heat began to fill the room with much greater expediency. All of the blowing however did bring on a great deal of smoke that didn't exhaust itself up and out of the chimney. Instead it filled the room as if it were a fog. Dr. Wolff rose up and began wafting his hands back and forth to try to clear the air. The smoke burned his eyes a little and began to make him cough.

After a loud coughing spasm, Dr. Wolff walked over to the window and opened it. Using an old newspaper, he fanned the smoke out of the room. Within a few minutes, the room was manageable and he closed the window and walked over to Shelley. To his surprise, Shelley began to cough a little. Much like a child coughing in their sleep, Shelley undoubtedly was working her way back to consciousness. Dr. Wolff felt for her hands and squeezed them gently and sat down in his recliner and propped his feet up on his desk. This may be a long night.

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Trinity walked into her bedroom. The day was just like every other day. It was filled listening to lost souls trying to find answers as to why they are miserable. Of course helpful insight into finding answers usually meant drawing out deep emotional pain in hopes that the patient can identify with that pain and move on.

The one catch to all of this is that nobody ever thinks of what the therapist must go through and deal with. They here the dribble that comes from all these lost souls and sometimes it gets to you. You get tired of the whiney men who are complaining about their love life. Women who love their husbands but hate the way their men treat them, are a big drain on time and emotional energy.

This must be why most therapists don't have successful marriages and often find themselves medicated along with the patients they try to help. Trinity was tired. She was tired of not being happy. She was tired of being the hard nosed, hard body bitch that both repelled and attracted the opposite sex. She wanted love, a caress, a kiss. She wanted to know the warmth of a man lying by her side instead of the cold void of the pillow. "Not tonight. I am tired of this" She said out loud apparently to nobody in particular.

Getting undressed from her power suit, she went to her closet and found the skimpiest outfit she could find. It was black one piece dress that

exposed her bosoms nicely and was just short enough to make you want to see more. Walking over to her dresser drawer she pulled out the essentials which encompassed, power push up bra and laced matching panties.

After jumping out the shower and toweling off, she grabbed her cell phone and called Gabriel.

"Hello, Gabe?"

"Hey Trin, what's up?" replied Gabe.

"Gabe, I need to swing by and drop a few things. Will you be there?"

Gabe made a sound as if he was checking his schedule and chuckled a bit, "Yeah, I will be here. Come by whenever."

As Trinity closed her cell phone, she did a little dance around her bedroom as she was trying to pull a stocking up to her thigh. Trying to keep balanced and keep a conversation going was quite difficult. After spending about another half hour getting ready, she applied the final touches to her makeup and grabbed her keys and walked out of her house.

As she pulled up to Gabe's house, she adjusted the rear view mirror and took a final glance at her make up and lipstick. Grabbing her lipstick from her purse she did a final touch up and stepped out the car and walked to the front door.

As she rang the door bell, she adjusted her dress and did a quick lift to her breasts to make sure everything was in its right place. First impressions can kill. That is what she wanted. As Gabriel opened the door, he saw Trinity illuminated by the porch light and saw that she was dressed for something totally different in mind. He thought she was coming over to discuss something PCRS related. He was standing there in his jeans and IU t-shirt holding a beer with a surprised look on his face.

Finally he got his wits about him and said, "Oh My."

Trinity stepped in the door and towered over Gabriel in her stiletto heels. Grabbing him with both hands on sides of his face, she kissed him deeply.

As she kissed him the beer fell out of his hands and hit the ground and busted. Gabriel didn't seem to care now that his hands were free to caress and hold this Amazonian who just enchanted him. He kissed her back and allowed his emotions to take over. In a sense, this felt right. It felt real. Trin moved from his lips and kissed his neck and whispered softly into his ear, "Indeed." Pulling back, she looked him passionately in the eyes and then planted another plump and passionate kiss across his lips.

Gabriel felt that energy, a jolt that seems to frizz through your body and

overwhelms you. He felt warm and deeply comfortable with Trin. He had feelings, but often times he was afraid to let her know because of the possibility of being hurt again. With another kiss, his heart was sealed with his desire. With a kiss, everything seemed to melt away and it was just her in all her beauty, smelling of sweet vanilla. Smoothly and gracefully, Gabriel picked her off of her feet and turned toward the bedroom. With a swift kick of his heel he shut the front door.

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Deidra sat in her lazy boy watching a recorded episode of Lost. She often had to record these shows and watch the shows several times to keep up with all the twists and turns that JJ Abrams puts into this show. She never knows what is real and what is fake. She also wants to know what the black phantom is. Most evenings after watching the show, she gets even more frustrated.

Samantha, a small petite Boston terrier, had seemed to catch some type of strange cough that made her sound hoarse when she coughed. At night, Deidra would administer the medicine the vet gave her for Samantha. The trouble was that Samantha just wouldn't take the medicine at all. Deidra came up with a solution. She hid the medicine within a spoonful of peanut butter. Samantha loved peanut butter and loved to get small finger-fulls of peanut butter from time to time and hiding the medicine in the peanut butter did the trick.

Deidra called out to Samantha to come and sit in her lap. As Samantha came running to her, Deidra leaned over and grabbed the jar of peanut butter she had on the nightstand along with a metal spoon she sat beside it. Getting a spoonful, she slipped the pill inside the peanut butter from a bottle that she had in her shirt pocket. It was cute to see Samantha with her crooked teeth and whipping tongue lick at the spoon trying to get every last spot of peanut butter off of the spoon.

As she sat there looking at the back of the spoon, she could see a distorted reflection of herself. The rhythmic whipping of the dog's tongue caused her image to dance on the back of the spoon and had caught Deidra's eye. In a few short seconds, the room seems to close around her and she was in darkness. She felt as if she had to force her eyes open. As she did, the room was very different.

She found herself in a room with a girl on a table wrapped in blankets while an older gentleman seemed to nod off in his chair. Her arms felt the radiated heat from a small wood stove in the middle of the room. She could also feel the cool air surrounding the window with an outlook of falling snow and snow-covered trees.

Walking closer to the girl wrapped in blankets you reached and tried to pull a fold away so that she could get a closer look at the girl lying there. As she did, she could see the child's golden locks of hair covering her blue eyes. Those eyes stared at her with a cold stillness as if looking into Deidra's soul.

"You all are bad!" Shelley said as her eyes squinted and her eyelashes flickered.

"What?" Said Deidra, surprised that the girl even said a word.

"You all are gonna die" Shelley whispered while chuckling to herself in a hushed breath.

"Why would you say that? Why are you saying that to me? What have I done?" asked Deidra pleading to Shelley for an answer.

Shelley disrobed the blanket that encompassed her and hopped off the table quietly. She tip-toed her way over to the sleeping doctor and crouched by the chair looking up at Dr. Wolff hunched over in the chair uncomfortably. With that, Dr. Wolff made a short snort or half snore and began muttering something unrecognizable in German. This made Shelley laugh and she stood up and hopped a little while clapping her hands quietly together in gleeful and happy zeal.

Shelley's eyes caught glimpse of a satchel that the good doctor took out on home visits. It usually included everything he needed to see to the town folk's ills. Included was small surgical equipment. She saw that when her Daddy died. The doctor had his satchel open when she walked by her Daddy and spoke to her. It was filled with all types of utensils and small vials of medicine.

She walked over to the satchel and opened it. When it opened, some of the utensils clanged together and the noise frightened her a little and she immediately looked over her shoulder to see if the doctor was still asleep. Luckily, the noise was only loud enough to scare her. Of course she didn't want to get caught. She couldn't wait to see the look on the good doctor's face.

She laughed again her quiet, child like laugh. She pawed through the utensils until she found the exact item she was looking for. She found the scalpel and her eyes brightened and she smiled immensely and laughed out loud. Realizing she might have given away her secret she covered her mouth again and looked over to the doctor who was still in a deep slumber.

The doctor adjusted his position in the chair and leaned his head the over to the opposite shoulder. Shelley tiptoed back to the doctor and she placed a hand on his thigh as she knelt. Looking up at the doctor, he

deep clear blue eyes greeted the doctor with warmth and love. The doctor choked for a second as he woke which made him cough and take a deep breath.

Shelley giggled a bit and asked, "Dr. Wolff is you awake?"

The doctor shook his head and he regained his breath. With that he took his glasses off and reached for a handkerchief in his back pocket to clean the lenses.

As he did so the doctor commented, "Well child you gave us all a scare. Praise God that you are all right."

The doctor continued to relate the story of the dog being able to be recovered after long exposure to the cold.

As he spoke, Shelley rose up and looked Deidra coldly in the eyes and said, "He is bad, they are all bad."

"What are you going to do with that scalpel? You are not going to hurt him are you?"

Shelley looked back to the doctor and petted the older gentlemen's hair putting a few straggling white hairs back in place. Looking right at Deidra, Shelley's other hand reached around the throat of the elderly gentleman and sliced quickly across the neck and giggled as she did. The blood splattered everywhere covering Shelley, the walls and floors.

Deidra looked as the blood splattered her way but never seemed to touch her. It just passed though. Looking at her hands they were still clean. Turning the hands looking at the palms and back of the hands, the blood splatters simply passed through.

A groaning animalistic sound emanated from Shelley and the child's face elongated and her eyes became pitched black. Shelley seemed to be out of focus of sort standing there phasing in and out. Then Shelley's eyes fixated on her as she raised the scalpel. Shelley lurched forward, the shriek that Shelley screamed out at the top of her lungs sent chills down Deidra's spine. The blade came to rest on Deidra's throat and Shelley's dark black eyes gazed up and down Deidra's face.

Shelley forced Deidra down to her knees by jabbing the scalpel at her throat with tiny pricks. Once on her knees, Shelley drew close where her cheek rested next to Deidra's. Shelley stayed there with Deidra for a moment. It was if Shelley intended to nuzzle to Deidra affectionately and rubbing her cheek next to hers fondly.

After a few seconds, Shelley began to whisper in a hushed voice, "I am going to kill all of you. You are all bad"

After Shelley spoke those words, she licked Deidra's cheek and laughed with a cackle that you would only hear in cheap horror flicks. Deidra

woke in instant. Samantha was licking her cheek and groaning a little bit. She was acting disturbed and tries to get her master to pay attention to her. Obviously Samantha sensed something wrong.

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Trin woke to the pungent smell of tobacco smoke filling the room. Gabriel lay quietly starrng up at the ceiling seemingly contemplating something of deep importance. Her head had been lying on his chest listening to his breathing and heart beat. The rhythmic pattern had lulled her to sleep after their time of love making.

Biting her lip, she looked up to him trying to get a glimpse of his eyes. She wanted to know what he was thinking. Was she going to regret this? Will everything change now that she had bedded the man who has been the target of her desire for so long?

Gabriel sensing that she was moving extinguished his cigarette and looked down at those powerful gazing eyes. Knowing that there was something much more involved in that look she gave than what the surface was showing. As she lay in the crook of his left arm, Gabriel rolled to his side and with his right hand he cradled the side of her head and neck. Drawing close, he rubbed the tip of his nose crossed hers and then plunged his lips to hers while drawing her close in embrace. Adjusting so that they met eye to eye, he looked into her eyes deeply and passionately. He knew that she couldn't give her anything but one hundred percent assurance to her if he ever thought about having this kind of evening again.

Gabriel paused and spoke, "I have wanted this for a long time. Thanks for understanding that it would take some time for me to have the courage to share this kind of feeling and connection with you."

Trin looked at him and kissed him softly with her eyes closed. She really wanted to make sure it was real before she spoke, "I feel like I am in college again. I mean, I wouldn't normally do this, but I have wanted you for a really long time. I have thought about you for the last couple of months and have tried to leave you hints."

Gabriel smiled and laughed a little bit, "The meeting... the outfit you were wearing and the way you smelled. It was driving me nuts."

"Really? I never saw a response from you. I wondered if you even noticed," Trin said with a smirk.

Gabriel lay back again and pulled Trin tight to his chest, "That is all in the past now. I was really scared to start another relationship. I was afraid to be hurt. Hell, I was afraid that nobody was looking for somebody like me."

Trin smiled and exhaled. With that she kissed his chest and ran her hand across his stomach and slid a leg over him so that she could look him straight in the eye.

"I have fallen for you hard. I mean ..." she waited for a second.

"I love you Gabriel. I have for some time. I have tried to avoid it. I have tried to deny it. But simply I am crazy without you."

## Chapter 11

Gerald woke up as he normally did. He eldest always called it the 'butt-crack of dawn.' Whatever the account, Gerald was up and brewing a fine cup of coffee. Well, for the store bought brand that is. Waiting anxiously for the first cup, he peered at the coffee pot waiting to see the brew cup mark hit just above two cups and pulled the pot from the brewer and poured himself a nice cup of 'sweet morning.' Gerald loved his coffee pot. It was a strange fondness that he really never understood. It was a relationship in a word. He fed it, cleaned it, and it did exactly what he asked of it. There were no complaints, no judgments, just simple efficiency. All of that with a sneak a cup feature that allowed the most anxious of people the opportunity to grab a cup of coffee without the wait. Efficient and effective is sweet musical notes to the ears of an old engineer.

Gerald walked to his small office filled with binders, several computer stations and his affable work bench. This morning, Gerald would take the time to listen to the audio that he captured while visiting his mother. It might be some time before he goes and visits her again. After smacking him on the back of the head several times, his mother went into a tirade and Gerald sat there listening to his mother feeling that he was a child again being scolded. What a strange and terrible feeling you get when your parents still tell you what to do even though you have retired yourself. I guess getting old wasn't good enough. One must suffer the scorn of the mother for all eternity.

Nevertheless, Gerald dumped his audio from his recorder onto his computer and pulled up his audio editing program. Within a few short minutes, he was able to start reviewing roughly an hour's worth of audio that he had captured using his ghost box. Taking a quick sip of coffee, Gerald slid the headphones on and grabbed his notepad and pen.

Immediately as Gerald pressed play he began to hear something strange. He kept hearing a voice as if it were right next to him. It was a male voice that said something like, "Hey ...hey you....." followed by

something incoherent and then a clear, "nurse."

Gerald replayed the clip over and over again and he tried to get a clear clip of the recording but was having some difficulty figuring it out. What he did know was that the recording was definitely not his mother and definitely not something he remembers hearing during the vigil in his mother's room. This very well could be the same voice he heard during the vigil when he turned on the ghost box a few minutes after starting his digital recorder.

Gerald spent the rest of the hour and two more cups of coffee to clip the rest of the audio where Don was trying to communicate with him. Hopefully he would be able to email all of this to Loren so that she could help him clean it up a bit. This would definitely be something to share with the group during his next meeting. At least he had the opportunity to show that his new gadget actually worked.

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Gabriel smiled as he watched Trin suck on her bottom lip and gaze back at him.

With a smile, he kissed her and whispered, "Blueberry pancakes?"

"Only if I can help," she responded.

Gabriel worked his way from the covers and walked into the bathroom. He brushed back his short blonde hair and looked at himself. Looking at his belly and giving it a squeeze made him realize maybe he should take a little more care in what he eats. Too many pizza and beer nights, that along with way too many Chinese buffets.

As he brushed his teeth, Trin stepped behind him. She was wearing one of his white long sleeve shirts that seemed to drape about her. He could still see her nice silhouette figure underneath the comfortable Egyptian cotton. As he finished his morning ritual of brushing his teeth and running the electric razor over the overgrown stubble that represented his face, he walked into the kitchen as Trinity had put the finishing touches to making coffee.

Trin was surprised to see how well Gabriel knew his way around the kitchen. He had surprisingly good taste in cookware. Gabriel dug through one of his overly stuffed cabinets and brought a flat top griddle and a large glass mixing bowl. After placing the items on his countertop, he went to various places including the fridge for the rest of the items to make his prized blue berry pancakes.

Trin put a hand on her hip and just stared at Gabriel.

Catching her staring awkwardly at him he shrugged his shoulders and said, "What?"

Coming to her senses, Trin blinked and laughed a little and said, "I am literally blown away. Is there anything you can't do? I mean you actually cook?"

"What were you looking for, some out of the box recipe?" commented Gabriel.

Nodding her head, Trin said nothing while Gabriel continued, "I get to watch a lot of cooking channels. I got tired of fast food after a year and realized that I really needed to learn to cook for myself. I started watching the channels in my evenings and really started to learn some things. It has been a side hobby of mine for some time."

Trin smirked and then said, "I will have to see this to believe it. Come on, teach me!"

Gabriel sifted out two cups of flour, four table spoons of sugar, three teaspoons of baking powder and a half teaspoon of salt together in the large mixing bowl. He then cracked two eggs and added them to the mix. He later poured in twelve ounces of milk, eight ounces of sour cream, and four ounces of butter into the bowl. After adding in all of the wet ingredients, stirred until they were all combined. The coup de gras of this concoction comes from the final addition of folding in one cup fresh blueberries.

Once the griddle was hot, Gabriel made fast work at making the pancakes. Upon finishing his 'nearly world famous' pancakes, Gabriel grabbed a cutting board and knife. Reaching into a bowl of oranges, he started making fast work of them by slicing them in half. He squeezed them across a hand juicer and made exactly two cups of orange juice for both him and his scantily clad companion.

Grabbing their plates of pancakes, their orange juice, and syrup; Gabriel and Trin walked to the back porch sunroom to greet the day. They sat down in lounge chairs and got comfortable but then Trin had an awkward look on her face.

Gabriel slapped his head and said, "Damn, I forgot the silverware and napkins.

Gabriel quickly returned with two forks and some nice green cloth napkins. Sipping their juice they ate quietly and enjoyed the sun while occasionally stealing glimpses of each other.

"These really are the best pancakes I have ever had," commented Trin.

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Sitting in the corner of the office, Shelley began twirling the shiny big silver coin that she had found on the desk. The coin was big and could almost encompass the entire palm of her hand. Laughter could be heard

outside. Shelley looked out of the corner of the window at the town. It was a little quiet this morning. Town folk seemed to be on their way to the respective destinations. People walked to the market, others to their jobs at the mills and other small businesses.

The sun beaded down thru the doctor's window. A cross-eye pattern of the windowpane projected across Shelley's cheek as she peered out the window to watch the town. She was by the front door and beside her stood a hall tree. She found a long brown leather coat that the good doctor wore from going on long walks and visiting patients in their homes.

She put the coat on. The tails of the coat draped across the floor. She was careful to exchange hands with the scalpel as she slipped her hands through the arms. As the arms draped to her sides, the cuffs of the jacket hid her hands and scalpel from sight.

"Shelley...."

Shelley looked over her left shoulder and through the glass of the front door to see Lohn standing out in the center of the street. She waved at him and smiled. She placed one hand against the glass. Abruptly the door opened in front of her. A large man stepped in almost pushing Shelley back.

The once beautiful smile that once graced Shelley's face had turned to a cold stillness. Just as quickly as the sun warmed her face, her heart grew cold at the site of the large man standing in front of her.

"Hey there darling, is the doc in? I need to see him," asked the big man. Shelley looked up at the big man in a cold blank stare. She leaned her head over to one side and laughed. With a quick flick of the wrist, the scalpel found its way across the throat of the big man. His eyes opened wide and his meaty hand clasped across his throat. With a cough and a throaty gurgle, he fell to his knees. Shelley stood there and watched as the man tried hard to keep the blood from spilling and spurting from his throat. With a last painful attempt to find answers, the large man looked up at Shelley and finally collapsed forward to the floor.

Shelley wiped the blood from her face on the sleeve of the jacket. A woman who looked in through the door of the doctor's office screamed and placed both of her hands on the side of her head. Looking directly at the woman, Shelley dashed out towards her in a crazed fashion, which immediately caused the woman to run. As soon as she had stepped out of the office and off the porch, another man who had heard the screaming was just close enough to grab Shelley by the collar of the jacket.

"Where do you think you are going young lady?" asked the man who

appeared to be on his way to the mill.

Abruptly, Shelley spun around and slashed at the arm that held her. The scalpel rendered the heavy shirt and forearm into a bloody gash which automatically released the grip that he had on her and she ran to the middle of main street. As she got to the center of the street, she stopped. Looking around she tried to find Lohn and where he went.

When all was lost, she dropped down to her knees. She knelt there and stayed still. A small carriage approached her pulling a fat man with rosy cheeks. She could see Lohn now. He stood at the corner with his head looking down at his feet. He was at the corner of Tavern and Main just standing there.

The carriage drew closer. The cold frosty breath left the nostrils of the black horse pulling the carriage. The fat man hadn't noticed her there as the carriage trudged on through the thick of the snow. Lohn looked up at Shelley and reached out his hands to her as if to embrace her.

The horse knocked Shelley back. The scalpel flew out of her hand to be lost in the snow. As she fell back, she found herself under the wheel of the carriage and her small tiny body was crushed by its weight. Her last glimpse, her last breath, was focused on Lohn as she saw him cry.

As she lay in the snow in the middle of the street, many people ran to see the commotion. The strange stillness of the little girl in an oversized coat covered in blood was a frightening sight. Shelley never cried, never motioned in pain. Most people thought death was instant. Two young men picked up the body and carried her to the doctor's office.

The shiny silver coin still in Shelley's hand was given to one of the young men, Jacob Bumpass, as payment from the undertaker for the clean up job he did for the doctor's office. Hopefully, news of this event would soon die off and the town could attract another doctor to replace the gentle spirit of Dr. Wolff.

Some will claim this as the bloodiest period in the town's history, the final story could be told of a little girl and a murderous killing spree. A young girl, with a bright future was soon orphaned and left a ward to the community. Often out of sight, the abuse she endured drove her mad to the point of lashing against those who oversaw her care. The trail of bloodshed extended across the town would leave a lasting imprint on the community; an imprint which history writers and townsfolk alike would work hard to forget this blight on their one harmonious town.

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Gabriel and Trinity seemed to be in a daydream all day; spending equal amounts of time enjoying each other in bed as they were just talking

about nonsensical things.

Trin looked at her watch, "Oh my, look at the time Gabriel. Everybody will be here in an hour."

Gabriel had that 'oh shit' look on his face as he realized that he had a lot to do and very little time to do it.

"I don't even have all my gear together along with my final investigation notes ready," replied Gabe.

"Yeah, and I don't have anything appropriate to wear and we both need a shower," frowned Trin.

Gabe nodded his head and in a moment, the daydream was over. Back to reality however painful was what the day demanded. Gabriel brought Trinity close to him for one last embrace and kissed her softly, "I will see you in an hour."

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Everyone started to arrive for the pre investigation meeting and equipment loading. Gerald was the first of the group to arrive. He brought in his gear in a several well-organized toolboxes as well as a backpack for his laptop. Most of the other members would bring digital cameras, camcorders, digital voice recorders and other small devices like EMF detectors, dowsing rods, and pendulums. The group itself was mostly scientifically minded however it was guided by the concept of creating their own baselines.

One of the founding principles of the group was the 'create your own baseline' concept where they wouldn't rule out any method unless they first had the opportunity to study it and come to their own conclusions. They simply were not going to sit back and listen to what others had to say about the subject. Everything needed to be investigated and proved. This concept was the driving force to the group formation and the clear understanding and support of others of different backgrounds and experiences to approve and support each other in their quest for understanding.

Loren and Deidra showed up together as normal. Riding a scooter into New Harmony that late at night is not safe and Deidra never minded the company. Both of them carried backpacks for the gear and Loren carried her dowsing box and set it on the table.

On the table, Gabriel had placed a cooler for soft drinks and other snack items to take with them for the investigation. It was easy for everyone to load their stuff in the cooler and keep it on place than to have everyone carry their stuff independently. When the group does a full investigation such as Ribeyre, they will bring all of the equipment including a

surveillance system, motion detectors, and wireless recorders.

Gabriel went through his pre load list for all the items to load. This investigation there would be 33 pieces of equipment loaded in different boxes; bags or self contained pieces that include handles or adequate carrier attachments.

Gabriel addressed the group, "Well gang, we got a big one tonight. This is definitely going to be an interesting investigation. Our client has asked to determine the source of what is going on here. Many think that it is a demonic presence causing all the history and deaths associated with this place. The only way we can determine this is to actually do a very thorough investigation. One thing that I really want to make sure everyone knows is that if you feel uncomfortable with anything at this location, you get out or take a break. You don't have to man up for anybody. You simply take a break, clear your mind, whatever. As for smoking, let's try to keep the area by our car as the only place anyone can smoke. Are there any questions?"

As he said this, Trin busted through the door and announced her apology to the group for being late. She was wearing a very sensible workout outfit, new shoes and a large bag for her incidentals. She threw her bag down and took a seat as to not distract Gabriel from closing his group meeting.

Gabe took a deep breath and concluded, "Well, let's get loaded. We will take three vehicles and get out on site. Once there, Loren and Gerald will set up the surveillance system. I will assist in the cable runs and determining best camera setups. Deidra and Trin will go on the walk through with the caretaker who will be meeting us there. Make sure you have a camcorder handy to record the walk through. You never know what we might get. "

## Chapter 12

Ron Walthen met the group at the door. Being much more casual than anyone expected him to be, Ron was wearing a raggedy old black t-shirt with a couple of holes in it along with a couple of paint stains. His pants also had paint splatters across the legs to go with the equally noticeable holes in the knees. This seemed out of sorts a bit while wearing a Rolex.

Gabriel looked at Ron and extended a hand out to him.

"Ron, this is my team. This is Gerald, Trin, Deidra and Loren," as he pointed to them respectively.

Ron greeted everyone with a hearty handshake and was very pleasant to

everyone.

“So, how are you going to do this Gabe?” Ron asked as he ushered everyone into the building.

We plan on setting up where you are going to be installing the kitchen. That will give us cable run access into the basement but also enough room to run all of the cameras to cover the entire Gym. We are going to split up into two teams. Diedra and Trin will follow you on a tour of the complex while Loren, Gerald and I grab the equipment and setup. Diedra and Trin will record the tour on camera along with our digital recorders.

Once we have the base station setup and the gear unpacked we will divide into two teams while one person stays at the base station. From there we will do what we always do which is try to thoroughly investigate as best as possible. We will capture everything we can and document it and later review the evidence. Within a couple of weeks, we will be able to go through everything and get back to you.”

Ron Walthen rose up a finger, “Wait just a minute, I need to finish dust-mopping the floors before we start. I got here early to do a little cleaning since all this construction kind of makes a mess.”

Gabriel interjected, “That will be all right with us. Do you mind if we start bringing in our gear. We will lug it all in while you finish up and then the girls can go with you for the walk through.”

Ron nodded in agreement, “That should be just fine. I have about ten more minutes’ worth of work to do.”

The team lugged in the thirty some-odd number of pieces they had packed with them. When they had brought all the equipment to the kitchen area, Gabriel and Loren got to work setting up the base-station while Gabriel started surveying the gym for proper camera angles and probable locations for the cameras including locating possible power outlets.

As with all investigations, the final location of cameras was done after the walkthrough just to make sure that the ‘hot spots’ for paranormal activity were covered. However Gabriel knew that they will need to have cameras set up in the gym, the girls locker room as well as the basement. He could get the equipment staged and gear ready to go once the walk through was completed.

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It was a cold Monday morning and very few people found themselves motivated to attend the funeral of Shelley Starnes. In attendance was Mr. Owen himself along with several elders of the community. Jacob

Bumpass found himself some work to dig the whole in the cemetery for the body. A few of the elders donated the money necessary to purchase the small pine box and grave marker which would only say 'S. Starnes.' The preacher came to share a few words. As the pastor finished the eulogy, everyone spoke in unison, 'Amen.' In so doing, the small band of elderly folk found their presence dwindling as the sight of death knocking is unnerving. Within five minutes, all that was left was the preacher and Jacob.

Working together, the preacher and Jacob used a set of ropes to slowly lower the small casket into its final resting place. The pastor knelt and placed a hand on top of the casket and said a quiet little prayer and then worked his way out of the hole. Grabbing the pastor's hand, Jacob helped the pastor up and out of the grave.

Jacob made quick work of the filling of the grave. Within a half hour, all the dirt was mounded on top the grave. He and the pastor walked from the cemetery back to the town to return the shovel and to share a hot drink at the tavern.

"So I hear you are planning to leave in the morning," expressed the pastor under a breathy voice from the strain of the long walk.

"Aye, I plan on catching up with my brother. He and his family got a small place piece of land Kentucky. I hope my luck will fair better there," Replied Jacob.

As they reached the town, the wind seemed to pick up. The bitter cold coupled with the wind made the last few meandering steps painful and tiring. As the reached the door and opened it the gentle warmth of a fire burning and the smell of ale were all to welcoming.

"So, Jacob would you mind helping me on something?"

Jacob taking a deep sip of ale, wiped his face and with the sleeve of his shirt and said, "Sure pastor, waddya' need?"

"Well, my boy, I am heading to Evansville for a bit and need some help. I can take you with me on my carriage and you can cross over to Kentucky from there. All I ask is that you help me unload some bundles of goods to some families in need on the way."

Jacob took another swig from the mug and rubbed his chin for a second. After what appeared to be some deep thought, Jacob looked up at the pastor.

"Sir, that sounds like a great idea. I hate this cold weather and really wasn't lookin' forward to walking all that way. Maybe that is the reason why I have been hanging around here for so long. There is a lot of misery in that long walk and the cold."

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"Gabe, I think we have run into a bit of a snag" was the voice coming from Gerald over the walkie-talkie.

Gabe grabbed his radio from his hip and spoke, "I will be right down."

As Gabe walked through the roughed-in kitchen and took the flight of stairs down the steps, he got an uneasy and dizzy feeling. Placing a hand on the wall, he gathered himself and finished the last of the stairs which opened into an equipment room with an open door on the left. Walking through the doorway, he briskly walked through the boiler room which had a large still functional fire door. This room had a set of double doors that led to stairs that would take a person outside. As he continued through the room, he saw the beam of the flashlight that Gerald was using along with the dirt floor basement room that went directly under the gym floor. This room had its own large fire door which was open showing a row of four bulbs mounted to the side wall that illuminated the room.

"What's up?" asked Gabe.

Both Ron and Gerald were looking down at a digital 8 camcorder that they had mounted on a tripod and pointed to the basement floor. They had run a 100 foot coax cable to the camera. It was attached to an RCA to coax adapter to get the video signal sent to the surveillance system.

"The problem is no signal" responded Gerald.

"Could it be a problem with attenuation?" responded Gabe.

"No, at times we get a clear picture but then it goes right out. It seems that it is a problem with our connection here. I have tried several different connectors but I cannot seem to determine what the issue is. We might have to forgo running this to the surveillance system and just run it on tape."

Gabe took a long look at the situation and started looking at the connectors. After a few minutes of inspection, Gabe finally heard Loren at the monitor come across the walkie-talkie saying that they got a picture but it keeps going out. Gabe continued to fiddle with the connectors and heard again across the radio that the picture came across clear. As he was remounting the camera on the tripod, Loren said that he picture was lost. "Damn it," cursed Gabe. "It has to be in the coax. We will need to make another end for this wire."

The three men looked perplexed by the problem. All of them staring down at their wire with confusion as to how to solve the problem. A voice off in the distance said something like, 'I got it' and the next thing

you heard were footsteps walking down the staircase.

Loren appeared. Her black and white striped stockings and ankle-high combat boots made her look like a militant candy striper. In her hand was a multi-purpose tool.

She smiled, "Come on boys; let a girl have a shot at this."

Loren was handed the wire and she made short work at removing the coax cable end from the cable. She then cut back the cable a bit and stripped off another half inch from the black coating. She then pulled back the silver wires and trimmed them with her multi-tool. Finally, she worked the coax end back in place by twisting it back on the wire.

"The issue boys, is there wasn't enough copper at the end to get a good connection. We should be good to go now." As she said that, she plugged the cable connector into the camcorder and the loud tone that the surveillance system generates when it detects a video signal went off. Ron looked down at his watch, "Well, I just came down here to put up the dust mop and some tools. I need to get back up and take the girls through the building. "

"That's the sound I was looking for," explained Loren.

She giggled a little and gave Gerald a pat on the shoulder and worked her way back up to the surveillance system. Gerald turned to the other men and shrugged his shoulders with his hands out to his sides. All of them got a kick out of it and laughed a little as well. As they were turning back to the doorway to head back upstairs, Ron though out an arm preventing the men from going into the boiler room.

"Wait a minute gentleman," Responded Ron.

Both Gabe and Gerald looked at each other and then back at Ron prompting him to explain the interruption in progress.

"Gentlemen, I am in this building all the time. I readily come here to paint or work on something. I always close the door down to this basement room. This door is rather heavy and is pretty difficult to open. Most of the contractors we have come down here from time to time and always have to call me to come and close the door because it seems to be a bit tricky."

Gerald interrupted, "So.... What are you saying Ron, I don't quite follow what you are getting at?"

Ron looked a little frustrated at the interruption and palmed his hair back. "What I am getting at is that this door is never opened. It becomes such an ordeal that I know that nobody comes down here to open the door. So, unless you or one of your team has opened the door, I don't have an explanation as to why this was open."

Gabe grabbed his digital audio recorder and pressed record. He made a few comments about the door and then recorded Ron re-stating his earlier statement just so that there was a record of the event.

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Jacob fell asleep in the back of the small wagon that the preacher used to carry the goods he intended to give to 'those in need.' Most of the goods were dry goods such as flour, corn, oil, candles and the like. Just as he promised, he helped the aging pastor load the goods on the wagon in exchange for a free ride to Evansville.

Jacob dreamed of blood. Dr. Wolff's office was literally coated in blood across several walls. The floors were permanently stained from the pooling of the blood from both the doctor and the large man they found at the doorstep.

He found himself on his knees. With a sponge and a pail of water he tried to mop up the blood that seemed to be caked everywhere. The nauseating smell of iron in the blood filled his nose. He scrubbed at the floor vigorously. It appeared that the water and sponge wasn't having much affect on getting the blood mopped up.

Jacob wringed the sponge out in the water and began to push the sponge across the floor again when he noticed a pair of feet before him. As he looked up, he saw the horrible little girl who seemed to cause all of this carnage. With a smiling face and coal black eyes she looked at him and raised the bail hook high over her right shoulder making it ready.

Jacob dropped the sponge. With his blood caked hands he raised them up to Shelley.

"No, please, please don't kill me," pleaded Jacob for his life.

The long cold stare of Shelley made him both nauseous and cold.

With a strange deep voice her lips moved, "Wake up Jacob!" The hook began its arch towards his temple. He tried to say something, but he simply couldn't get a word out. His eyes were now open and affixed to the wagon canopy and his body was frozen by some unknown force. Panicking, he realized that he could also not breathe. He couldn't move or utter single word. Paralyzed, he searched with his eyes for answers.

"Wake up boy! Something is spooking the horses," yelled the old pastor. Realizing the Jacob wasn't moving; the pastor reached over his left shoulder and swatted Jacob square on the forehead. As if the unseen force that had power over him seemed to melt away by the pastor's touch, Jacob began to feel warmth in his limbs and he gasped as he was now able to breathe.

Jacob worked his way up to the front and sat down beside the pastor. Up

ahead there seemed to be a diminutive figure ahead of the horses. As they came upon the location where they first saw the figure, the horse began to act extremely skittish. The Pastor brought down his whip on the horses to help bring them to order. As the horses began to settle down and return to a steady trot, the figure of a little girl appeared right before the horses causing them to rile up in fear. As they came down, the horses ran off out of control pulling the little wagon.

About one hundred yards down the trail; the wagon hit a bump and became unbalanced. All of the contents of the wagon including the passengers were thrown and scattered about the grounds. The wagon being toppled along with the pull of the horses caused the tongue to snap separating the wagon from the team of horses. The horses didn't miss a beat and continued their frightened run.

Battered and bruised, Jacob picked himself up from the bitter cold of mud and snow he found himself in. Scanning the ground he found the old pastor lying on his side in a lump. Jacob couldn't see any breath from the pastor and all he could see was a small trickle of blood from the pastor's mouth.

"You are bad! You are a good for nothing. You have probably been stealing you whole life."

Jacob looked up. Looking left and right, he couldn't find the source of the voice that was yelling at him.

"Hello?" Jacob replied.

As he did, crows that were resting in the trees took off and squawked as they took flight. The trees started to make a noise as if the limbs themselves were rubbing and clanging against each other.

The winds gusted and blew a cold stinging breeze down upon Jacob, which made him shiver and pull his jacket tightly against his body.

Laughter was heard off in the distance but he couldn't determine where it was coming from. He kept turning and looking around. He felt as if someone was always looking over his shoulder. He could also hear footsteps in the woods that seemed to be circling his him. Sometimes the footsteps would pick up pace and seem to be running, other times they were almost faint as a whisper.

"Who are you? What do you want? The pastor needs help!" Yelled Jacob into the wilderness"

A high pitch squeal emanated from darkness deep in the woods. It had the zeal of rage and madness. The sound permeated the woods making everything go silent. Even the crickets muted in fear.

Fear overcame Jacob. Pulling his palms up to his face he sobbed. A sob of

fear and frustration, a cry of the wrongly done; Jacob knelt in reverence to the fear that has overcome him.

"You thief," Shelley replied as she appeared to Jacob.

Jacob looked up to Shelley and noticed her dark coal black eyes and the bail hook she tapped against her thigh.

"You are a baddie! You are a good for nothing vagrant! You stole! You stole!" cackled Shelley.

"I don't know what you are talking about!" whimpered Jacob in short breathes.

Shelley screamed. Her mouth contorted wide as she did. She brought the hook down across the temple of Jacob's head.

As she did, Jacob felt an intense pain in his chest and his head throbbed. His breathing became very labored and painful until the point that Jacob fell prostrate on the ground and spilled the contents of his pockets including the satchel of coin he had earned this previous week.

The coins rolled out of the satchel and lost amidst the snow and leaves.

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"We are all good," Yelled Loren to the group as each of the four surveillance cameras glowed on her desktop monitor.

As she did so, the lights went out in the gymnasium. The sound of thumping was heard in the upper rafters.

"What the hell?" commented Trinity as she reached for her small pocket flashlight.

Ron Walthen looked just as startled and begged forgiveness as he left Trin and Deidra and headed to the breaker box.

"What's going on," Came across the two way radios as Gabe was trying to find an answer to what was happening.

Loren chattered across the radio commenting that power to the surveillance gear was still up and that all the cameras were still working. Ron worked his way to the breaker boxes to find that all of them had been switched off. Gabe ran up behind Ron to see what the trouble was.

Ron wiped his brow with the back of his hand and commented, "It appears that all of the breakers to the lights have been flipped. Either they had a huge power spike or someone came in and flipped all these breakers."

"Have you finished the walk-through with Trin and Deidra?" asked Gabriel.

"We were on the last part of the tour. I need to take them down here to the basement after finishing with the girls locker room." With that Ron

reset all the breakers for the lights in the gym.

In the gymnasium, whacking sounds were heard in the upper area. This area was one of the oldest and still in tact areas of the gymnasium which includes the original seating that came with the building. What is interesting about these old seats is that they have really stood the test of time. One other interesting feature is that under each chair there is a literal hat rack mounted to the bottom of the seat. The racks were used in a by gone era where hats were as important to a man's wardrobe as his jacket and pants.

What makes them uniquely interesting this night is that the clanging or whacking sound that everyone has heard, can also be seen. The seats to the gym chairs were raising and lowering themselves one by one. The sound was almost deafening due to the acoustics of the room. Over and over and in miscellaneous order, chair seats would raise and slam against the backrest of the chair. Everybody in the gym heard the noise and walked out into the gymnasium floor to see the spectacle.

"Tell me you have got this on video" requested Gabe.

Loren smiled and said, "I got all of it. We have one cam perched on the stage floor pointing at the upper area and the bell tower."

As quickly as the chairs began banging and making a great amount of noise of their own, so did they become quiet. There was an uneasy stillness in the room. The air became almost thick with tension and apprehension. Everyone stood still waiting to see something else happen.

A small voice was heard.

"Hey...he, he, he."

Then the room went completely dark. The large lights hanging from the rafters of the building started shooting sparks as the lights diminished and could no longer illuminate the room. Gabriel turned on his flashlight and got everyone to meet in the middle of the gymnasium floor.

Once everyone was together, Gabriel began, "Well, it seems that this is definitely going to be an interesting investigation. Ron here believes that a spirit that haunts this place is the cause for the deaths that have occurred here. At first, I thought this would be a run of the mill investigation where we would have to spend most of our time reviewing evidence to find anything. However, it is apparent that this isn't going to be the case here."

"Gabe, there are several plausible explanations for this stuff going on here," responded Gerald.

Gabe nodded, " Very true and I am not yet ready to simply jump to those types of conclusions but obviously something is happening. We

can all agree that what just happened is very strange and definitely a new one for me. That is why I am requiring everyone to be in groups. Nobody goes it alone. That even applies to me. I will be at the Command Center to help watch the monitors. Deidra and Trin will be one team. Gerald and Loren, I want you go out as another team. I will be here with Ron at the command station keeping track of things. I may later on go out with one of the groups, however it is a must that there are at least two of you together at all times.”

The group nodded and agreed. After Ron had finished the walkthrough with Deidra and Trin, the group divided just as Gabe had requested. Deidra and Trin made sure that all the hotspots were covered by cameras and communicated a last few thoughts and notes to Gabe before they began their investigation in the girls’ locker room. Loren and Gerald grabbed their gear bags and made their way to the basement.

## Chapter 13

Gabe had a seat at the command center. In front of him were his laptop, two monitors, and an array of surveillance and recording gear. Making sure his two-way radio was turned on; he placed it in front of him so that he wouldn’t miss any communication coming from the team. Eventually, he was able to see all of the team members performing their investigations through the camera surveillance system. As a back up to the digital audio recorders the teams were carrying, each team had a wireless audio transmitter feeding into the laptop on different channels. Sometimes there was a lot of interference and poor audio quality, but this night, audio was coming across very clearly.

Gabe’s job as site coordinator was to man the command station and monitor the teams as they perform their investigations. During the times the teams would do an EVP session, Gabe would put on the headphones and listen in as the session was being done. Sometimes, Gabe could hear responses and at those times, he would simply key the two-way radio twice to let the investigation team know that there was a possibility of an actual EVP heard in real time. It was a nice extra feature that the teams liked to use as a gauge as to how long they should continue their EVP session.

Gabe also monitored the video monitors. Sometimes, at the command center you get a different perspective that the investigators might miss. Your view is somewhat limited, but sometimes looking over an investigator’s shoulder is a good thing because they may have their back turned

when a strange event could occur. More often than not, you simply see orb phenomenon or shadows. When that happens, Gabe would simply get on the radio and communicate what he is seeing. The team can then take measurements such as temperature and EMF readings to help document anything visible on the monitors.

Loren and Gerald were in the camera view. An interesting thing happens when you use Infrared Illumination on your camcorders. If an individual is wearing a black t-shirt, often times, their shirt will come across as grey or white on the monitors. Both Loren and Gerald were wearing black shirts which made them appear a little 'ghostly' on the monitors. Loren had her digital EMF meter in one hand and in the other was a notebook. She also had her digital camera dangling around her neck. Gabe watched as she paced the room and took measurements. She spent the time writing down the time and measurement and where exactly she was located on a hand drawn map of the room. Loren was always good at documenting these things. This kind of documentation is always good to review and come back to. In the event there was spiritual activity down there, they would immediately take some readings. Later on they would compare those readings to what Loren or any other investigator had written down.

It was comforting to know that this group, his core team was well trained and rarely missed things. It was great to see that he didn't have to continually remind his group to tag their audio when they hear events, or document any or everything that may or may not be of relevance. What it comes down to is that you never know what you are going to need until you take it back home and start reviewing the evidence. Only then will you realize that you needed a base reading of temperature or EMF to compare to what you find later.

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Opening the trash can and setting the lid of one of the tall plastic trash cans that sat outside the movie theater, Lloyd pushed the trash around to find something to eat. Tonight was truly something special. There sat in front of him a half eaten bag of popcorn that had the ends rolled up to protect the popcorn from falling out. Beside it was an almost full soft drink with the lid still on along with a half eaten pickle.

It is almost like going to the movies he thought as he stuffed the pickle in his mouth and finished foraging through the trash only to pull out the soft drink and bag of popcorn.

"Too bad they don't serve hooch here," he laughed to himself as he closed the lid.

Lloyd propped himself against the side of the wall and was looking up at the sky. He took a deep swig from the drink between mouthfuls of pickle and popcorn and enjoyed the moment. As he looked up, he saw some flashes of light hitting the windows across the street as if some cat burglar was roaming around inside the gymnasium.

He watched the lights dance across the windows for a bit when he noticed that it was coming from more than one flashlight. Taking the lid off of the cup and finishing off the last of the soft drink, Lloyd threw the cup and the remnants of the popcorn bag back into the trash and proceeded across the street to find out more.

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Loren was looking down on her infrared thermometer gathering temperature readings from the walls and floor.

"68...67...65...67," Loren read off as she was taking measurements on the wall.

Loren did a quick averaging of the numbers and wrote down her temperature on the paper where she had drawn out the room. The basement was a little damp and the odor emanating from deteriorating sewer lines gave the basement room a feeling for its age. Gerald was walking about the room and tracing down a high EMF reading that he was finding near the back wall.

"Do you got anything Gerald?" asked Loren.

Gerald had the digital EMF meter in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. From time to time, Gerald would use the handkerchief to wipe his nose or cover it as necessary. Sometimes the air in these older homes got to him. It was either the dust or something else in the air that seemed to trigger his allergies. Gerald's obnoxious sneezing fits have been source of many jokes at his expense. He liked to keep it at a bare minimum if at all possible.

Loren coughed for a second and then commented, "I got a high EMF reading along this wall but I couldn't find any power source. However what I determined was that I was getting the strange reading off of this water line. It runs straight to the boiler. I bet it still has pressure."

Loren continued to write down on her worksheets commenting on what they were finding down in the basement. Gerald took a last few looks around the basement and snapped a few shots with his digital camera.

Gerald whipped his brow, "Loren, I don't think we got anything unusual down here and..."

"Ssshhh!"

"What?" Asked Gerald

Loren looked over at Gerald and gave a strong look of dismay and put her index finger across her lips.

Off in the distance, what sounded like steps was coming from the boiler room. Loren grabbed her voice recorder to make sure that the recorder was working and turned on. From there she walked quietly as possible to the doorway leading to the boiler room. Pressing her back against the wall she peered around the doorway to see if she could see anything in the next room.

Not noticing anything in the room in low light, she grabbed her handheld lapel camera with IR capability. She quickly moved the handheld camera into view of the room and panned left and right to see if she could capture anything.

After taking another look into the room, she still didn't notice anything and walked in to get a better sense of what is going on. She looked all around the boiler room. The room had a large metal plate that covered a hole in the floor with a large boiler standing upright against the wall. Gas and water lines went along the ceiling that fed into the now defunct boiler.

Loren panned the camera to follow the room to capture anything in hopes to actually experience something paranormal. However, nothing seemed to be happening in the room now. As she walked around the room, she kept the camera extended out at arms length. If she couldn't capture anything on video, there is still the possibility of capturing a disembodied voice.

Seeing her reflection in the glass of the double doors she walked towards the door standing roughly three feet away. She noticed the chain and padlocks along with a long wood board that ran across the door. It was clearly apparent that those in control definitely didn't want anybody to get in our out of this room to the outside steps that led up to the alley behind the gym.

Coming to the conclusion that she probably just heard something, she turned off the hand held video camera and turned towards Gerald. A loud rapping noise came across the windows of the doors behind us.

"Ahhhhhg!" screamed Loren.

Gerald jumped and ran towards the door to see what made the noise that startled them both.

"What the fuck?" yelled Loren as she peered through the window.

There in front of her was a figure of a man standing at the doors looking in.

"Hello" responded the voice through the door.

Gerald rose up his flashlight to get a better look at the man. The man looked rather disheveled and had long stringy hair.

"Who the hell are you?" questioned Loren.

The voice on the other side of the door returned, "I'm Lloyd."

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"Hey Ron, good to see you" said Lloyd as he was let in the gym doors.

Ron nodded his head and pointed a hand in the direction of the gym floor. Ushering him towards gym floor and into the roughed in kitchen where the command center was setup.

Gabe was sitting at the command center looking through the monitors and making notes as to different readings and to log the progress of the investigation. Looking up, he saw Ron and Lloyd. With the appearance of the new man, Gabe stood up and removed the headphones from his head.

"Gabriel, this is Lloyd Kranz. "

Gabriel put a hand out to Lloyd and Lloyd returned a slight bow and then brought a hand up to shake. As the hands grasped, the feel of the hand being grasped by Lloyd could only be described as the same feeling of holding a dead fish. While it has mass and structure however, a dead fish is a dead fish, cold and limp.

"I got a message from Loren over the radio that this guy scared the living shit out of her and Gerald. What the heck was he doing down at the basement doors?"

Lloyd interjected, "You sees, I seen some lights flickerin' the winders while I was over at the movie theater. When I saw the lights, I was sayin' to myself, Lloyd, something funny is happenin' again over at the gym. So I figured I would come and find out the cause."

Ron butted in, "You know I had given him a key to those basement doors a while back before we had the incident with our contractor passing away a few months ago. Well, the directors decided that my graciousness should have a limit and thus the bar and chains on the door to the basement. They were also afraid that something might happen if the public found out. There might be teenagers who would want to scope out the gymnasium and possibly do it harm. I can tell you, Lloyd is harmless. "

Gabriel gave a rather annoyed look to Ron and Lloyd and sat back down at the command center to make sure he wasn't missing anything

"Trin...Loren....." asked Gabe over the two way radio.

"This is Trin, what did you need Gabe?" came Trin's voice on the radio.

Gabe looked at Ron and Lloyd and then turned to his monitors and said,

"I need you guys to come to the command center."

Both Trinity and Deidra came down from the girl's locker room which staircase ran along the framed in kitchen where the command center was setup. Setting down their gear they both looked a little perplexed as to the break in protocol during an investigation.

As Loren came up the stairs that ran to the basement he eyes became set on Lloyd. Dropping her backpack behind her and setting down her notebook, camera and EMF detector, Loren grabbed the large Maglight that lay on the command center table. As if it came out of an action movie sequence, Loren came up upon Lloyd with precision and rested the long aluminum handle against Lloyd's throat.

"This ass-hole scared the living shit out of me. What the hell is he doing here?" Loren asked.

Gabe approached Loren with caution and rested a hand on her shoulder as he grabbed the handle of the flashlight.

"Loren, this is Lloyd and is a friend of Ron's" Gabe said while making emphasis on the names as if he were talking to a five year old.

Loren looked dismayed, "I don't give a damn who he is. He came out of nowhere and scared the shit out us. He was there at the doors down at the basement. I told him to get the fuck out of here."

Gerald nodded his head in agreement, "I am with her Gabe. He did show himself unannounced at the basement doors. He wasn't exactly agreeable himself as he didn't provide us with a lot of information before he walked back up the alleyway stairs and left us alone."

Ron put his hands up in a non-confrontational manner and motioned for everyone to calm down.

Ron looked Trin in the eyes and began, "Lloyd is harmless. I allow Lloyd to sleep here every once in a while. Strangely he has only taken me up on the offer on very few occasions."

Lloyd snickered and brushed back his oily hair, "I have my lady friends to attend to."

Strangely both Ron and Gabe laughed at the thought while the women of the investigation team thought that the idea was nauseating at best.

Gabe trying to get the group back on track took charge and said, "Ok guys, where are you in wrapping up your investigations in your assigned areas?"

Trinity looked over at Deidra and began, "We only need to do an EVP session in our area. Since it is a small area, it doesn't take much time to thoroughly take care of what we need to do."

Gabe looked over at Loren and Gerald, "Where are you guys?"

Loren still fuming over the situation with Lloyd looked at Lloyd and then towards Gerald and spoke, "We have one area left to document which is the basement area that runs under the gym floor. It is mostly dirt and rubble. We need another thirty minutes to cover the area."

Gabe nodded as he heard both of the teams giving their account of what is left to be done and said to both teams, "Ok guys, let's just focus on the investigation and get your pieces done. Let's try to finish everything up in the next thirty minutes. Afterward we will take a break and come back and start the next part of the investigation."

As the teams left to finish their pieces, Gabe turned toward Ron and Lloyd and ushered them to take a seat at the command center. Ron grabbed a chair and opened a water bottle that sat in a cooler next to him and took a sip.

Ron's eyes opened wide and looked at Lloyd, "Where are my manners, I apologize Lloyd, would you like a water?"

Lloyd smiled and said, "Nope, I just had a large coke, don't need any thank you."

Lloyd proceeded then to feel in his pockets until he found just what he was looking for. In his jacket pocket was a small bottle of Maddog 20/20. He pulled the bottle out of his jacket and wiped his lips with his jacket sleeve as he unscrewed the bottle and took a big hit from his drink.

Looking at both Gabe and Ron he offered them a drink. Both of them shook their heads no as politely as possible. With that Lloyd mimed a finger to the temple of his head and then un-tucked his shirt and wiped the mouth of the bottle and motioned the bottle to both Gabe and Ron again.

Gabe politely refused, "Sorry Lloyd, I can't drink while on investigation. We need to have all of our wits about us when we go out on things. People have a hard enough time believing us when we do experience something. It would blow all credibility if we were drinking during an investigation. People would just blow us off as a bunch of drunks."

Ron winced as those last words were spoken.

"Er... Present company excluded of course," Gabe quickly recovered.

Lloyd giggled a bit, "No offense taken, I know who I am and what I am. Call it what you like, but I am what I am."

Ron slapped Lloyd on the back of his shoulder and gave a hearty laugh. Then he proceeded to say, "You are right there Lloyd. Nobody that I know of is more honest of who and what they are than you. I think that is why I think I like you so much. You were always straight with me."

In as a polite manner as possible, Gabe motioned to both Ron and Lloyd

to let them know that he was going to put the headphones on so he can listen in on what his teams were doing.

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“Why in the hell is that guy with us?” asked Loren and she made her way back down the steps following Gerald who seemed to have a quickened pace.

“He is a strange one for sure; I just think we should just put this behind us and move on. Lets get to the last basement area and finish our piece of the investigation down here,” Replied Gerald.

In doing so they went from the equipment room, past the boiler room and into the far room that had a fire door that lead to the dirt basement room under the gym. Strewn about were several liquor bottles and large forty ounce bottles of beer. More than likely either Lloyd or the contractors that they brought in to do some of the renovations to the building brought the bottles down there.

“Are you getting anything Gerald?” asked Loren.

Looking down at his EMF meter, Gerald didn't see the needle move at all on his tri-field EMF meter. Gerald was more 'old school' when it came to equipment. He tended to trust the equipment he could understand how it was built. Much of the new digital equipment was beyond his understanding and thus, if he couldn't understand it he believed he had no business messing with it.

“I say we do something a little non-traditional and I got something right up your alley” replied Gerald.

Swinging the backpack off of his shoulder, Gerald laid the bag on the ground and knelt as he began to unzip it and dig through its contents. What he brought out surprised Loren. It was the ghost box he had made from a Radio Shack digital radio. The ghost box was quickly followed by a set of what appeared to be computer speakers that ran on batteries and another digital voice recorder.

“Is that what I think it is?” asked Loren.

Gerald smirked, “Yeah sometimes you can teach and old dog a trick or two sometimes.”

“Man that is freakin' awesome. I have wanted to make one of them myself except I haven't had the time to go to Evansville and pick one up for myself” blurted out Loren as she walked up to the ghost box to get a better look.

Both Loren and Gerald proceeded to setup the equipment and when everything was in place that laid the equipment down on the ground and turned it on. Loren leaned against the pillar that help support the

floor above while Gerald got down on the ground and sat in Indian position. The device whirred itself to life bring a strange sound as it passed through the channels in a very quick pace. Giving it time to warm up and following the same practices as the other devices, they waited about five minutes before they started to ask questions in hopes that the energy and sound being emitted would draw the spirits to them so they may communicate with them.

As the warm up period passed, Gerald nodded at Loren to go ahead and begin her questions.

Loren took a deep breath and began, "Hello this is Loren. We are a group of investigators trying to communicate with you. We have a device here in front of us. If you want to communicate with us, simple come closer to us and speak to us. If we hear you, we will ask you more questions in order to find out more about you. Whatever you have to say, we are willing to listen. With your permission, we are going to begin..... can you tell us your name?"

The humming coming from the device was rhythmic. The blue light was bright showing the channels passing by quickly as it scanned across trying to get something from any spirit that wished to communicate.

After thirty-seconds of nothing coming across on the radio, Loren continued, "Please don't be afraid of us. We are not here to do harm. We want to know more. Can you tell us something?"

After a few seconds of the humming noise, a faint and young voice blipped across the radio, "....afraid."

Gerald chimed in once he heard the voice, "Hello this is Gerald. I too wish you no harm. Can you tell us what you are afraid of?"

The ghost box blipped several things that were unrecognizable and then went silent again.

Loren yelled out, "Holy shit! I am cold. It feels like something just passed through me. Feel me, I am freakin' cold. Even my chest feels cold and like something is sitting on it."

As if she couldn't control her body, Loren slipped down and plopped her behind onto the dirt floor with her legs spread out in a very un-lady like fashion with the boot tips lying out to their sides. Putting her hand on her chest her eyes went from a general concern to a panic.

"I..... can't ..... breathe" Loren said intermixed with very shallow breathes.

Gerald come close to her and actually could feel the cold air around her. He promptly helped her get off the ground and standing again. Once she was standing and leaning over with her hands resting on her knees, he

grabbed his IR thermometer from its pouch that was attached to his belt. Taking a few readings, he saw that her hands and chest had gone from a normal temperature down to around 50 degrees. Taking a reading of the floor and the pillar, both registered a temperature of 67 degrees.

"Is the feeling still there or are you recovering?" asked Gerald.

Placing a hand across her chest Loren was able to stand up straight and catch her breath.

Loren had that, 'I can't believe this just happened looked' and said, "It is better now. Whatever it is, it has passed."

As the last word passed her lips, the fire door that was wide open quickly slammed closed and then slowly opened itself back in recoil.

"Well, I'll be" remarked Gerald, "We just got that on video."

The ghost box came alive with the garbled talk that they couldn't understand, then that young voice that they heard before came across loud and clear. It was the laughter of a little girl.

"Gabe you are not going to believe this," Loren spoke on the radio.

## Chapter 14

"Stop it right there," Loren pointed toward the screen.

On the monitor for all to see, the fire door that was present on the way to the dirt basement room closed all by itself.

"Shit, that is awesome, we actually captured something from here" Gabe commented after watching the video loop over and over.

Gabe motioned over to Ron who was running a dust mop over the floor again to come and look at the monitors. Ron carried the dust mop towards the old stage and leaned it against the wall and then meandered his way around gear boxes and cables strewn about the floor. As he got closer, Gabe positioned the monitor in such a way that it pointed more towards Ron so that he could get the best view possible.

Ron stepped behind Gabe and rested his hands on his hips. Looking on, he saw on the monitor where the door apparently slammed itself closed and reopen a little in recoil.

"I have never seen anything like that in my day," replied Ron.

Gabe smiled, "What is really interesting is that we all looked that that door earlier today. When we examined that door, we saw how hard it was to move and the fact that it apparently moved so easily really surprised me."

Rubbing his chin, "So, is this proof?"

"This is very believable evidence. Of course I am going to make sure I

get Gerald and Loren to thoroughly document the door to make sure that there isn't anything hokey going on. Since we have had a continuous feed on this we can show any skeptic that the door moved all on its own" replied Gabe.

Gabe and Ron went back and forth speculating and discussing any other plausible explanation as to how the door moved on it own. While both could think of something else, they both were pretty resolved to believe that there was no natural explanation for what happened. After spending a few more minutes documenting on his investigation worksheets, Gabe looked up on the monitors and noticed the tall wooden ladder the at led up to the bell tower on his monitor screen.

Gabe realized that nobody had documented that they got an audio recorder up in the bell tower to record EVPs.

"Ron, I don't have anyone that documented on our equipment placement sheet that they put an audio recorder up in the bell tower. Do you remember whether or not they did so?" asked Gabe.

Hearing Gabe, Ron turned towards him, "Actually that is a funny story. The two girls who are on one team together.... Well, they were going to do just that until they got on that ladder and got scared."

Gabe crossed the gym floor and stood right smack dab in the middle of the gym floor where the logo of NH was neatly painted. Looking over his left shoulder and saw a rack of basketballs in the far corner close to the entrance of the boy's locker room. Walking over the rack, Gabe grabbed a ball a walked it back to the center of the room a placed it promptly on the center line.

"Why did you do that?" asked Ron.

Gabe smiled and then returned an answer "Well, we have had experiences such as Waverly Hills in Louisville where the ghost of a child named Timmy will interact with the ball and push it around. It is quite an interesting phenomenon. Maybe we can see if any entities here would like to interact with the ball tonight."

As he finished he walked across the floor and found the original steps that took guests up to the original seating section of the gym complete with turn of the century wood backed seating. On the left are the bell-tower and the rickety old ladder that led up to it.

As he grabbed the ladder, Gabe looked up at the 20-foot wooden ladder that would carry him up to the bell-tower. Taking a deep breath he slowly began to ascend the rungs of the ladder. The rungs were rounded dowels. It was a ladder of very old design and probably has been around there for almost as long as the building itself. The danger of these types

of ladders is the rounded rungs. Without proper footing, one could fall easily.

"Are you sure you wanna' do this?" asked Ron.

Gabe gave Ron a look over his shoulder. It was more of a smirk with a 'shut the fuck up kind of theme.' As he did so, he ascended the first couple of rungs and with each step he grabbing hold of the rails.

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"Are you getting anything Loren," asked Gerald.

Gerald looked down at his audio recorder as the red light glowed in the background of the black. The dirt floor basement room was a damp and moldy smelling misery. The room was having its way with his sinuses and it seemed that his hand and handkerchief was permanently planted over his nose.

Loren looked up at him and smiled as she saw him rub his sensitive nose with the delicate white rag in his hand.

"I am all done. Have you heard of anti-histamines?" asked Loren.

"Yeah, I have... . They don't seem to do the job for me. It is always something in the air. It is dust or something. Something I don't know what but it sure kills me sometimes," replied Gerald.

They both grabbed their gear and began to walk towards the entrance to the basement room. As they looked up towards the both saw it at the same time. An older man was standing there in the doorway. Complete in overalls, a hat and a flannel shirt.

Both of them stared ahead almost frozen. The fear that captured them caused them to be completely still. The appearance of what was before them was amazing as well as frightening. The man before them was clear as day until you looked at his feet. They were not there. He simply stood there motionless.

"Hell..Hello," replied Loren.

The man continued to stand there and remained motionless.

Gerald grabbed his camera that was dangling on his chest. He dropped his handkerchief and raised the camera so that he could see through the viewfinder. The entity was still there. As almost a relief to see the entity through the glass, with each snapshot he took it was reassurance that Gerald wasn't crazy. He was seeing something and he would have actual proof of it.

"Do you have something to share with us... can you tell us your name?" asked Loren.

The spirit was simply looking onward at them and then raised an arm

and pointed up behind them. Loren turned and looked and really didn't see anything of significance and turned back towards the man standing in the doorway.

As she looked back the spirit that stood in the doorway; the spirit appeared to take one last long look at her and turned and walked towards the boiler room. Loren ran towards the door and as she peeked across the corner, she didn't see anything in the low lights or anything moving in the shadows.

"There is nothing there, he just disappeared," laugh Loren.

With a sudden unexpected gust of air, the door slammed against her head and shoulder causing her body to buckle and then drop. Slumping down, Loren started to rub her head and feel the trickle of blood that was now running down the side of her cheek. Gerald walked up by her and knelt.

"Are you all right...can you walk?" asked Gerald.

In a groggy fashion, Loren shook her head and reached for Gerald's hand. Slowly she was able to raise herself up and stand. Bits of red blotches her knees and shin as the rubble in the ground scratched the surface of her knees and shins also causing them to bleed.

Off in the distance behind them in the far reaches of the basement room, the old dilapidated sewer pipe began to shake. It lifted and shook around as if it had a mind of its own to pull itself away from its restraints. The pipe wobbled and started to spew liquid from the cracks that were now forming around the seals of the pipe as it extended across the floor joists above them.

"We need to move on out of here. Something is happening and I don't know what." Gerald said as he wrapped her arm around his and guided her towards the door that at first had tried to crush her.

"You are a baddy....." said the voice off in the darkness behind them. The voice of a child struck them both cold and made them both slowly turn around. Behind them stood a child in what appeared to be old ragged clothes. Her face was almost angelic and with the pretty smile she was giving them. The only thing that frightened them was her eyes. They were pitch black and dark. The whites of her eyes were filled and complete black.

Gerald raised his hands up in a non-combative fashion and gave her the kindest smile he could muster under the fear and nausea he was experiencing at that very moment.

"Darlin, we are good people and we mean you no harm" muttered Gerald as his voice began to tremble.

The entity moved with lightening speed and came up directly upon them and stared them coldly in their face. As she stared, both Gerald and Loren lost all feeling in their legs and simply collapsed and fell to their knees before her. The little girl looked them coldly in the eyes and slowly turned her head so that she could look back and forth between them.

"Who, who are you?" asked Loren as she tried to work the shiver off by grabbing on to Gerald that much more tightly.

"I'm Shelley," the voiced returned. With that Shelley, turned and skipped away towards the back of the room and disappeared.

As the spirit disappeared, both Gerald and Loren felt the weight that seemed to be pressing on their chests seem to dissipate. Helping each other get back to a standing position, they pushed through the fire door that seemed to resist just a bit and began through the door to the boiler room.

Loren lifted her radio up to her mouth, "Gabe, Gabe... are you there. You are not going to believe this!"

She lifted her hand off the call button waiting to hear from Gabe on the other side of the radio.

"Gabe, are you there?"

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"So, what's going on between you and Gabe, Trin?" pried Deidra as she plopped herself down on an old wooden bench seat.

"What on earth do you mean Deidra?" smiled Trin as she knew that her expression alone had already given away much more than her simple words could ever communicate.

"OK, spill it ... we obviously have a little time on our hands. We know that Loren and Gerald are going to take their time to get whatever they need," smiled Diedra.

Trin sat on the bench beside her and grabbed her backpack that was hanging on her shoulder and pulled it around to sit on her lap. As she unzipped it, she looked over at Deidra and nodded.

Pulling out a water bottle and a package of snack crackers, she laid the backpack down on the ground and began to speak, "Well, it has been quite interesting. I have known Gabe for a while now. After his loss, I helped him through it and he was a patient. Once we had come to a close on the therapy, something happened. It was something like... I don't know maybe a ten or so months later, I ran into him at restaurant. He was sitting at the bar looking up at a television monitor and drinking his beer. I had a date that night that stood me up so I propped myself next to him at the bar and had a beer with him. He told me about the new book

he was writing and that he was using his research in the paranormal to help him put the pieces back into place in his life.”

“So then what?” urged Deidra.

Trin took another drink and she shrugged her shoulders, “Not much after that really..... Well we did see each other for dinner from time to time. He even kissed me once. It was absolutely wonderful and romantic.”

Deidra clapped her hands and then placed them on her lap, “I knew it, I knew it! But there has to be more.... Not with the look you guys were giving each other at his house earlier this evening.”

“Was it that obvious?” asked Trin.

“About as obvious as a kid with his hand stuck in a cookie jar,” laughed Deidra.

“Well... ,” Trin began.

Taking another drink, “This has been an interesting weekend to say the least. Gabe is a remarkable man and very romantic. That big guy definitely knows how to treat a woman.”

“Oh come on, what about the juicy details? You can tell me more than that. Come on, how is he in the sack,” she prodded as she literally poked a finger in Trin’s side and snickered.

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Gabe took another step up the ladder and looked up at the trap door. When he got up to the top he would have to do something rather awkward which was to push up against the trap door to raise it. Then he would have to adjust the door to move to the side so that he could step up into the actual tower itself. There would be another small ladder that you could climb to get yourself up to the top where the now defunct clock was adjusted.

About once a month, somebody would have to climb up the latter and adjust the time on the clock. It seemed to stop for one reason or another. The cost to replace a clock was way to high for the renovation society to bear at this time and would have to put it into a later budget.

As Gabe reached about midway up the stairs he looked down at the Gym floor. As he did a feeling of vertigo gripped him for a moment that literally took his breath away. Gabe laughed to himself at the thought that he had fear of the heights. Here was a large man on a rickety ladder who has spent the better part of the last fifteen years running after ghosts and now he was scared.

A cold chill came about him. The cold was deep and piercing as it

overcame him. His breath shortened and Gabe didn't know if he was having a heart attack, some sort of panic attack, or something paranormal was affecting him. His head got dizzy and he clung to the ladder as if he were clinging to the side of a mountain. A cold sweat came about him and his hands seemed to be filled with perspiration and his brow became damp.

"Are you all right up there?" asked Ron.

"Uhm, yeah ... I think so," replied Gabe as he tried to gather his wits about him.

Ron reached over and grabbed the ladder and yelled up again at Gabe, "Gabe you don't have to do this you know. There are lighter ... uhmmm... maybe I should go up there for you.

"I got it, I got it," yelled Gabe as he collected himself and made his way up to the top of the ladder.

Pushing up against the trap door, the dank smell of mold hit his nose. Using about all the strength he had in one arm while trying to keep his balance clutching to the ladder with his other arm and feet.

As he pulled himself up to the floor of the small room in the bell tower he stood and looked around and took a deep breath. He was careful not to look down the stairs so that he may not face another bout of vertigo. With his newfound wits about him, he looks up to the second wall-mounted ladder and takes a deep breath.

"That one doesn't look too bad," said Gabe.

"You don't belong here," said the voice in the small room.

"Hello? Who said that?" responded Gabe.

Gabe turned around to look all around him. There was no source for the voice that he heard. Reaching over to his back pocket, he pulled out his digital voice recorder. He looked down at it to find the button to turn it on.

As he looked up, a small figure appeared to him in the dark. He could barely make it out. It appeared to be the figure of a small girl. As he lifted up a hand to reach out to whatever is standing in front of him, the figure began to shimmer and glow before him. At an instant the child was now face to face with Gabe staring at him with dark black eyes.

"You don't belong here..," bellowed the voice from the child.

As a wind as powerful as a storm started to blow against him, the child took a step closer to Gabe and smiled.

"Time to leave," said the child.

As those words were spoken, the wind picked up pace. Pushing harder and harder against him until it had pushed him to the edge of the entry

in the floor leading down. Gabe tried to balance himself by lowering and getting down to his knees. Each time he tried, the wind worked against him.

With a sudden change, the wind stopped. Gabe was able to recover and dropped down to his knees. Taking a deep breath, he then turned and looked around to see if the spirit of the child was still there. Seeing nothing, he looked behind him to find the hole in the floor where he could start to make his way down the ladder. As he lowered himself down, he felt relieved. Whatever was there seemed to be gone and he left his voice recorder on the floor just within reach of the opening so that he could retrieve it with ease at the end of the night.

As his hands were out by his side on the base of the floor of the bell tower, he feet searched for firm footing on the rounded ladder rungs. Keeping an eye on the next step, Gabe shifted his weight to one leg as the other felt its way to the next rung.

The child appeared to him. Gabe looked up. The phantom blonde hair bushed against his face giving him a cold stinging sensation all over. Fear struck Gabe all over again. His body was overcome and tingling with the sensation of fear and trembling. All he could do is look up as the cold sweat beaded on his brown and rolled down his cheek.

"Time to leave," said the child.

As if someone had literally picked Gabe up, his hands were lifted and his body was pushed backwards. He slipped and swung one arm out to catch himself, which only gave him enough assistance to keep him from a death plunge headfirst. His body rolled as he fell and landed at the base of the ladder on his side.

Ron hurriedly rushed to his side and knelt beside Gabe. Gabe opened his eyes a bit and uttered the word, "Girl" as he passed out.

"Help! Help!" yelled Ron.

## Chapter 15

"Do you hear that?" asked Loren.

"Yeah it sounds like help.... Is that Ron?" replied Deidra.

Both women grabbed their bags and headed down the stairs. As they came down the staircase, the cries for help got louder. With each cry for help they picked up their pace and made their way down. As they cleared the staircase, they looked in towards the command station that was placed in the roughed-in kitchen. It was clear that the command station was void of anyone at their post.

The sight of the missing man at his post gave Trin a chill. This meant that whatever happened, Gabe was involved. Passing through the doorway of the hall that led you up to the girl's locker room, in front of them was the open floor of the gym floor and Ron apparently kneeling in the upper bleachers by the ladder.

Trin sprinted across the floor. She knew exactly what this meant. Gabe was injured and probably badly. Gabe wasn't one to sit around and let a little scratch bother him. Often times he would cut himself badly or injure himself in way that he would need medical attention. Instead of going to the doctor, he would simply 'man up' as he like to say try to doctor it himself.

That was one quality that Trin hated about Gabe. What was it that men showing a sign of pain or injury as a sign of weakness? One time, Gabe literally fractured his hand doing something silly on a building project. Instead of going to the doctor to put his hand in a cast, he was only worried about doing his job and being able to type. So he forgoes the recommend splint and later cast by the doctor.

He would just laugh and say, "It wasn't broke, it will be fine."

Trin sprinted up the staircase only to find Gabe collapsed on the ground. She knelt down beside him and amidst tears she tried to check to see if he was all right. He was laying there and breathing heavily. A bit of blood trickled down his chin. When he tried to move and get up, he grimaced in pain and gave a breathy yelp.

"Don't move Hun, don't move," whimpered Trin.

Trin reached into her bag and found her cellphone and flipped it open to begin to dial 911. She dialed and the phone acted like it was about to dial the number but then the phone said the call failed. Looking down at the phone, the reception bars were missing. The phone wasn't getting any signal.

"Fuck, I don't have a signal. Deidra, Ron, can you call out?" asked Trin.

Both Deidra and Ron grabbed their phones. To both of their surprise, their phones couldn't get a signal either.

"I will try and step outside and see if I can get something," replied Deidra as she started walking to the front of the building exit.

As Deidra walked to the doors, she began to press against the door to let herself out. The door wouldn't budge. She quickly tried the other exit door next to her. In the same fashion, the door wouldn't open either. Picking up her phone again she tried to see if she could get reception. Looking at the display it went blank.

"What the hell is going on?" Deidra asked to herself.

She tried to cycle the phone back on but the battery acted as if it were dead. She played with the phone for few more seconds only to give up and put the phone back in her pocket. She had to get out and call somebody for help. There was movie theatre across the street as well as a gas station down the street. There has to be a phone somewhere she could use.

Jiggling the doors trying to get one to open, something reached out and touched her shoulder. Coldness came about her that seemed to spike down her spine all the way to her feet.

"My babies, she took my babies," replied the voice.

Deidra turned and before her was the woman she saw in her home before.

"Who are you?" asked Deidra.

The woman looked at her with great remorse and disappeared. Deidra was taken back again by the image of this woman but found herself a deep need to get this door open. If whatever warning this spirit was trying to give, she didn't plan on hanging out here to find out. She tried again with as much strength as she could muster, she pushed against the door and before her the window in the door began to frost as if the window was frozen and someone breathed upon it.

The window quickly became completely frosted. An unseen spirited finger began to write upon the frost. Slowly, Deidra was able to make out what the phantom finger was writing.

"Her Name is Shelley."

The writing ended as suddenly as it began.

"I am locked in!" yelled Deidra.

With that, a flush was heard in men's bathroom next to the entrance of the gym. Lloyd stepped out of the bathroom with both hands affixed to his belt as he was giving them one final adjustment.

Lloyd gave a small smile and asked, "Lady, were you just talking to yourself?"

"I... I believe... I believe I just saw a ghost," replied Deidra.

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Gerald helped Loren limp through the basement. The doors slamming against her definitely did their toll on her. They had made their way into the basement room where Loren begged for a minute of rest. Her head was absolutely killing her.

"I just need a second," Loren said as she motioned with her free hand to let her sit down for a second.

Gerald gracefully allowed her to sit down on the floor as he grabbed for

his hanky to manage another sneezing spasm. As he sneezed, a snapping sound was heard both in front of him and behind him.

"Woh," Gerald commented.

"That was one powerful sneeze," laughed Loren.

The laugh was quickly ended as the sliding fire doors slid their way home. Gerald ran up to the door that blocked his way up to the stairway. Giving it everything he could muster he pushed against the door trying to get it to open.

"It won't budge," Gerald said out of breath.

He subsequently tried the door that blocks their entrance to the basement room and it had the same result.

"Well, it looks like we are stuck here. Need to get on the radio and get a hold of somebody to get down here and let us out."

Loren grabbed her two-way radio and began to speak.

"Hello, this is B-Team. We need some help. We are locked in the basement."

Loren waited for some time. Nothing was being heard.

"This is B-Team, do you copy?" asked Loren across the radio.

"I am going to try Gabe or Trin on their cell," responded Gerald as he flipped open his phone and searched the address book for their numbers. He found Gabe's number and hit dial. The phone was silent and didn't make much noise at all. The message across the phone said 'dialing' but wasn't making a connection. Finally the phone screen showed the message, 'call failed: network unavailable.'

"My phone isn't getting out, what about your phone Loren?" Gerald said looking over his shoulder to Loren.

Loren looked at her phone incredulously, "Its dead! I charged this thing right before I left."

Gerald sat on the ground beside her and took a breath. He didn't say anything but the look on his face gave Loren the response she wasn't exactly looking for.

"So, were stuck" Loren said.

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Deidra was a little nervous in the presence of Lloyd. His gaze on her was a little unnerving. She got her wits about her and walked to the swinging doors she gone through to get to the outer foyer and entrance to the building. The swinging doors wouldn't budge. Turning towards Lloyd to ask for help she found him gazing at her right behind. His breath was felt across her cheek.

"What are you doing Lloyd?" Deidra asked in a hushed voice.

"I think.... I think you are a baddy," Lloyd said with a smile on his lips. As he continued, "You are not going anywhere."

With a quick and skillful movement, his hands were raised up with a belt in his grip. Wrapping the belt around her throat, he planted a knee in her back while push his weight against her so that her body was pressed against the swinging doors that remained frozen in place. Deidra struggled and fought. Her mass was much more than Lloyd's. Even with a knee in her back, she was able to muster enough strength and push her self off against the door and throw her weight backwards. As she did, Lloyd never lost his grip on the belt on her throat. She fell backwards on her back on top of Lloyd.

With a few short breaths and gasps, Deidra became still.

Lloyd got himself and affixed his belt back in place. Wiping the sweat from his brow and pulling his mangy hair back, he pulled open the swinging door and walked into the gymnasium.

"Did you get help?" asked Ron.

"Ah, Miss Deidra's phone went dead, she is going to try across the street. If that doesn't work, she said she was going to walk to the gas station to call somebody," replied Lloyd.

Trin looked down on Gabe as his limp body seemed to be barely breathing as tears ran down her cheeks.

"I hope they come fast," whispered Trin as she rested her cheek against Gabe's.

Ron looked up at Lloyd and asked him, "Lloyd, do you mind going down and calling the other two investigators down there. We have tried to reach them by radio but they are not responding."

Lloyd smiled and did something odd in Ron's opinion. Lloyd grabbed the legs of his pants and pulled them out to the side and did a curtsy. He then turned and walked towards the roughed-in kitchen.

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"Hey... do you hear that? ..... Hey we are in here!" yelled Loren from the boiler room floor.

"I hear ya," said the voice from the other side of the door.

"Can you help us get out?" asked Gerald as he woke up to the door.

What could be heard from inside of the boiler room was sort of a rapping sound on the doors that moved to the wall and then upward and then went silent.

"You are all going to die in there he, he."

A tremendous rumble seemed to be coming from the other room. Loren

and Gerald looked at each other expectantly waiting for some explanation for the sound that was emanating on the other side of the door. The pipes over their heads began to shake and rattle about in their restraints. "I told you that you were going to die," cackled the voice of a small figure that was standing in the corner.

"Who the fuck are you?" Loren asked.

With a freakishly grotesque face, where the skin appeared to be peeling away from her cheeks and forehead, the girl stepped forward revealing her freakish dark black eyes.

"I am Shelley," the girl laughed and continued, "I am about to kill you." Gerald froze still as Shelley approached him. She walked slowly in small half steps with her right hand outstretched towards him. Her head morphed into images of a sweet child smiling as if she were to give Gerald a hug. Reaching up, her hand approached his chest. As she did so, her face turned to the small demonic figure with coal black eyes.

With a cackle, Shelley grasped at Gerald's heart as if she could rip it out with her bare hands. Gerald grabbed at his chest. The immense chest pain dropped him down to his knees. His face became red and his eyes bloodshot. With his last breath, he reached towards Loren for help with an outstretched hand. As his last breath gave out with his heart, he dropped the handkerchief to the floor collapsed to the ground.

Shelley knelt down and brushed at the hair of Gerald as if she was petting him. Rising back up, she turned towards Loren that was sitting there on the floor. Her demonic eyes pierced through Loren overcoming her emotionally.

"I don't fuckin' fear you. You are already dead you bitch!" screamed Loren.

Shelley looked at her with dismay. Almost as if she was upset that Loren wasn't playing into her little game. It was a game that she expected you to play along with her rules. A game that you were expected to lose.

The pipes above her head began to shake more violently. This time, they had made their way loose from their constraints that bound them to the floor joists above her. An old water line cracked spilling its stagnant water across the ground. The stench filled the room and began to splatter on her face and hair.

Another support tie broke from the floor joist. The pipe rattled itself free and cracked open. The smell of gas now filled the air causing Loren to start to worry. She worked herself up by pushing herself up against the wall. As she did so, Shelley looked up and laughed. The gas now filling

the room was starting to have its affect on Loren.

The boiler itself spontaneously fired up with a blazing blue flame from its belly and spurting bits of flame out of its cage. Loren crouched against the fire door.

As the room ignited, Shelley stepped towards Loren and smiled. Shelley's body appeared to catch on fire and ignite. Her skin crackled as the flame engulfed her. Shelley's hair sparked and rose on end. As the hair stood up the flames licked at her hair. In a few short moments, Shelley's skin burst sending chunks of flesh and gore about that looked as if it were to splatter upon Loren but disappeared as soon as it touched her.

The flame silhouetted Shelley's dark shadowy image. The flame billowed and blew past her phantom image catching up with Loren pasted against the wall. Her screams were loud but shortly lived. Within a minute, nothing else was heard.

Lloyd listened in. Once the screaming had stopped, he clapped his hands together in a child like manner and turned towards the stairs that would lead him up to the kitchen.

Walking onto the gym floor, Ron called out to Lloyd, " Did you tell them what happened?"

Lloyd rose up his hands and said, "Yep, told him that Gabe had fell and that we were trying to call for an ambulance. They were in the middle of doing a session with some dooma-hickey and said that they were getting something interesting and will be up very shortly."

With a sudden burst, the swinging doors opened wide. Deidra ran straight towards Lloyd as if she was going to tackle him. As she was in striking distance, Lloyds face and demeanor changed. His eyes were black and his hands stretched out in a claw like fashion revealing some sort of evil hiss.

Deidra plowed through like a modern day linebacker. His body collapsed and crumpled to the ground like a second rate quarter back. As he collapsed, Deidra sprawled on top of him. With as many cuss words that could flow from her lips she unloaded a barrage of fists upon his face.

The demonic face changed shape several times as she did. Once that of a little girl to a more skeletal look and then reverting back to Lloyd's face a few time. With each hit, it seemed to trigger another morphed pace.

"Get out of him Shelley! Shelley you are no longer wanted here! Get Out!" screamed Deidra.

Lloyd's body collapsed and remained motionless.

## Chapter 16

Deidra lay on top of Lloyd panting. The exertion she used to pummel Lloyd zapped about everything she had in her. Lloyd's bludgeoned face already started to bruise as blood trickled from his nose. With a cough, Lloyd came back to consciousness. Spit mixed with blood dripped from his lips.

"Do you mind getting off of me?" Lloyd asked in a raspy voice.

"Not till I am sure that Shelley is gone," Deidra said among panting breaths.

Not too far from them, the basketball placed in the middle of the room appeared to have been kicked. It sailed off and hit the far wall and bounced a few more times until it rolled itself near the stage floor.

Lloyd took another labored breath under the weight Deidra was placing upon him and said, "Does that answer the question for you?"

Deidra rolled off and stood up and dusted herself off.

"What was all that about?" asked Ron.

Deidra turned and looked Ron in the eye and began, "Well Ron, this whole thing with this place being haunted, and well it's all true. You have a pretty evil little shit name Shelley that wants to harm us for some reason. This dimwit friend of yours, well somehow she possessed him or influenced him or something. When I went out to try and make a call, this asshole tried to choke me to death. This little shit is out for blood and it is better we get our crew out of here and be done with this place for all of our sakes."

"Well, if that is true, what can we do about it? How can we get rid of her" asked Ron.

"Quite frankly Ron, this isn't our cup of tea. We normally bring in our priest, Father Dean to do that work. And since we cannot get a call out, it is going to be just us. We don't do that kind of work and I am about effin' done with her," huffed Deidra.

"I never knew that this was going to happen," said Ron remorsefully.

Ron realized that all the work that he has done to renovate the place could be all for naught. Who would want to come here and use this place if everyone is too afraid even to enter? Along with that, how could he ever let anybody come in here knowing that something like this was here?

Deidra continued, "The truth Ron, is that there is something here that the spirit is connecting with. Either the spirit died here or there is something

here on premises that it is connected to. With all the renovations you have made you have stirred up a lot of stuff. This often times disturbs the spirits and they become very active.”

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“This is dispatch, what is the purpose of your call?” asked the officer’s voice.

“My name is Louise Schmidt” she stated.

“Mrs. Schmidt, where are you calling from?” inquired the officer.

“Well, I am calling from my home but that isn’t the reason for my call you see, I am calling about my husband” she responded.

“Go on” asked the officer.

Louise took a deep breath and continued, “My husband is at the Ribeyre Gymnasium doing some research. He was expected to be home some time ago. I have tried to reach him by phone as well as everyone else that he is with. Nobody is answering and nobody is answering the phone at the gym. Can you kindly send a car by to see if they are still there and see what is going on?”

“Mam, this isn’t normally what we do...” replied the officer.

Louise was incredulous, “You listen here young man, and I know the Sheriff and the Police Captain very well. The police captain happens to be my second cousin and the Sheriff has been a family friend for some time. So unless you can help this little old lady put her mind to rest, I will make sure that the one of them gives you an ear full tomorrow!”

The officer quickly responded, “Yes mam, I will send a car right away mam.”

Louise hung up the phone. She sat in her rocker recliner in the living room and waited patiently for any news from the team of investigators.

“That old fool; I told him it is nonsense at his age to go wondering around in peoples homes. Research is one thing, being invasive... well that is a whole ‘nother thing,” she said out loud as if her mind needed convincing.

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Deidra walked up the steps to the seating area where Gabriel lay. Trin still showing signs of concern had a few tears still running down her cheeks. Ron sat in one of the balcony chairs with his head in his hands hunched over as if trapped in his own personal misery.

Ron still slightly sobbing spoke, “We have spent millions you know...millions. It took one point five million dollars just to get the place free of lead base paint, asbestos and other hazardous material just so that we could have a starting point to truly renovate the entire facility. I

personally donated one million of that money needed to get this project off the ground. Now I just think we need to tear it all down and build anew."

Lloyd got up on one knee and found the strength to stand. Moving his jaw back and forth, he spit a tooth into his hand and looked at it. Putting it into his coat pocket, he used the jacket sleeve to wipe the blood from his face and then brushed back his hair trying to regain composure.

"You pack quite a wallop freckles," Lloyd said raising his voice so that Diedra could hear him from the floor.

Deidra pointed a finger back in his direction, "You lucky I didn't kill you, you asshole. It wasn't that I didn't try. Next time you lay a finger on me I guarantee it will be your last."

Trin interjected, "Deidra, if he truly was under the influence of this spirit you called Shelley by possession, or his own delusion, or even schizophrenia, he is out of control of his body. "

Deidra turned to look over her shoulder and vented, "Still, if that is the case, I don't want him fuckin' near me. Because in my delusional state of mind, this fucker tried to kill me and now all I want to do is return the favor. So stick that into your psycho-analytic note book Trin, I am done with this bullshit."

As she turned, the room became cold. Deidra looked over at Ron and he was feeling it too. He raised his hands up across his chest and began rubbing his fore arms to combat the cold that ensued up on him. She also noticed Trin try to bundle up a bit and was placing her hands over chest and stuffing her hands between her breasts and under her arms.

A small tiny luminescent orb appeared at the other end of the room that gave off its own light. It twitched and rolled its way up towards the upper bleachers where everybody was now sitting. In a spectacular fashion, the orb expanded into a gaseous mass in front of them and began to form limbs, a face and torso.

It was forming recognizable features. The figure of the woman in a dress and gingham apron now floated effortlessly in front of them. Something changed however. The woman now wasn't focused on lost children or looked panic stricken. The woman had peace about her giving an air of optimism and caring.

"Tell me I am not nuts," Deidra looked over at Trin.

Trin had her gaze focused on the woman before her. Her mouth opens in awe of what she was seeing. Ron too just looked up wide eyed with an 'I can't believe this is happening' expression on his face.

A voice began to speak that was a little louder than a whisper, "It is not

safe here. Shelley means to do you harm.”

“Is there anyway to get rid of her?” asked Ron.

The spirit looked straight at Deidra and gazed up her. Deidra heard the voice in her head. “You gave us strength. You showed us we could stand up to her. We are free now. She is here because of us. She has kept us here. When we move on, she will have no more power.”

Deidra started to have tears in her eyes, “It is good that you are free Evelyn. But you said, we. Who is the other?”

The spirit turned and looked over her shoulder to see the spirit of Jr. who appeared in the middle of the floor. Jr. stood pointing in the direction of the basement and then looked at Evelyn.

Deidra heard the voice again in her head, “You have to go now. You need to call for help. You are all in danger. Leave now quickly!”

Deidra stood up. Looking about, she didn’t see Lloyd.

Since he was now gone, she turned to Ron and said, “Get up Ron, we need to get out of here. If Shelley is holding us in, we need to break the glass. I don’t care how much it costs; I am breaking through and calling for help.”

Ron didn’t say a word. He simply nodded in agreement and stood up from his chair and brushed off the dust on his pants. The two of them walked down to the gym floor and through the swinging doors that led to the glass front of the gym.

Both Ron and Deidra tried the doors again with no luck. Ron knew that they were unlocked and at any rate the latch should have let them out whatever the reason. It just didn’t make any sense.

“We need to find something to break the glass,” Deidra said turning to Ron for an answer.

Ron’s face was in turmoil. Even though he did agree that they needed to do just that, he really hoped that the doors would just open. To replace the glass was expensive. To leave the gym open like until the glass was replaced was an insurance nightmare.

Walking into the old manager office, he dug through some boxes. Under a bunch of paint cans and dust rags he found a small ball ping hammer. Coming out of the office, Ron looked straight at Deidra when Deidra got that feeling that something terrible was about to happen and turned just in time as the swinging doors behind her burst open.

Trin’s body slid across the gym floor. Her faced already bloody from the abuse she had already taken. Blood spurted from small wounds and a slash she had across her chest. She appeared to be unconscious, as her body lay there limp and supple.

Gabe pushed his large right hand through the doorway. He was carrying a black pocketknife with a long blade. Behind him he dragged Lloyd by a belt that he had wrapped across his face. It was glaringly clear that Lloyd was dead as his head was somewhat unnaturally cocked to one side. Dropping the belt, Gabe used his now free hand and grabbed Deidra by the throat. With some unforeseen strength, Gabe was able to lift Deidra from the ground bringing her up on her toes as he did.

Ron dived forward with the hammer swinging it in a wide arc towards Gabe's head. In a simple fashion, Gabe moved ever so slightly at the last moment and avoided the attack altogether. In a return fashion, Gabe dropped Deidra to the ground and turned to face Ron from the rear. Grabbing Ron's throat, Gabe stabbed the blade in an upward fashion cutting through the organs and finally slicing up towards the lungs. Ron fell to his knees looking forward wide-eyed and mouth open. Staring off in the distance, he moved his mouth in an attempt to cry for help to somebody he couldn't see. He struggled for few more moments to catch his breath until he finally collapsed.

"You are bad, bad, bad," Gabe said as he spit down at the ground.

With renewed vigor, Gabe turned towards Deidra who was just now trying to get back to her feet. He took two long strides towards her and brought the blade up in a downward striking fashion. As he drew close a crash of glass hitting the ground and gunfire could be heard. A bullet seemed to whiz right behind him catching Gabe off guard as he drove the blade down and into Deidra's chest. Gabe pulled the blade out and was about to drive another strike downward when another bullet now true, found its way to Gabe's skull spilling its contents.

Gabe collapsed into a mess. The gore from his head along with streams of blood splattered against the swinging doors. Deidra felt her chest. Blood trickled from the stab wound Gabe had left her. It appeared that the blade had missed its mark and while she would have a nasty scar, she would survive.

"Are you all right mam? Are you hurt?" asked the officer as he dove through the new opening he had made in the glass door.

"I am all right, but they, they were all bad, bad, bad..." Deidra responded as she collapsed to the floor from exhaustion.

Epilogue

Epilogue

Jake Reis sat at his desk under the spotlight of a small desk lamp that illuminated a folder filled with police reports, crime scene photos, and

notes scribbled notes he had made. Beside him lay two DVD's that were transferred from the video cameras that laid strewn about the gymnasium. What one reporter claimed to be the bloodiest murder scene in Posey County history would more than likely plague Jake for years to come.

The official report that was given to the news was that a Gabriel Mann led a group of investigators to come and research the Ribeyre Gymnasium. His plot was to kill every member of the investigative team and then himself. His efforts were derailed by the valiant effort made by Sheriff Hodgkin's who subdued Gabriel by mortally wounding him before he was about to attack again. Supposedly Gabriel Mann was deeply depressed over the past loss of his son and later divorce from his wife. This depression led Mann to a very complicated plot to kill his team members and document his crimes on video. Due to the graphic nature of the videos and the respect for the dead, those videos were not going to be released to the public.

Reading the official copy of the report that was attached to the file; Jake thought, "All of it was a load of horse shit." Flipping to the last page, he found the photo and official statement she made after being able to recover in the hospital for a few days. In her statement, she couldn't say anything about the two bodies that were found in the basement nor could she give any kind of accurate account of how Gabe went from falling off a ladder and knocked out to that of going stark raving mad. There were too many pieces that didn't seem to match well together. The biggest piece that was throwing Jake off was the video. This team and even Gabe were intimately involved in recording and capturing evidence. Why go through all the trouble of this elaborate setup just to kill them. It didn't make sense.

More importantly, the evidence itself that was captured was amazing. Jake along with a few other officers and civic authorities reviewed the tapes that the team captured. On them was one of the most convincing evidence of what appeared to be ghosts that Jake has ever seen. Doors slamming shut on themselves, shadowy figures moving across the screen, and a strange child like laugh were all captured on one or more of the cameras. However the most convincing evidence was that of two apparent ghosts that appeared on the video that was found in the basement. There was about a minute's footage of a translucent male figure that stood still in front of the camera and then dispersed. Then there was the chilling footage what appears to be a misty looking small girl that walks right up on the camera and smiles and disappears.

The renovation society decided that it was in the best interest of the community to halt their efforts in renovating the gym. Ron's wife made a healthy donation of money to have the building leveled to the ground. In a matter of three months, the gym was completely torn down and a park was resurrected in its place. A memorial service was held at Walthen Park remembering Ron and those who died that one fateful night. Many agreed that a beautiful park was an excellent way to recover from the tragic events that happened that night and was best for the community to move on.

Deidra was able to move on as well. After the event, she gained quite a lot of notoriety. The media pushed her as a world renown psychic and she soon found her way to being on the cover of a few magazines and made an appearance on Oprah. Tragedy came about as quickly as her stardom. Roughly a year after the tragic events at the Ribeyre Gymnasium, Deidra was found dead in her own home dead from an apparent heart attack. What bothered Jake most wasn't the fact that she had died, but the look on her face. It was the same that he had seen before on a dead contractor on the bleachers in the Ribeyre Gymnasium.



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