



The ghosts of Ohio[®] Newsletter

www.ghostsofohio.org

Volume 18 Issue 5

Spread your wings and fly away

On June 15, 2021, my cherry-headed conure, Khashoggi, passed away. For reference, he's the "Queen-loving parrot" I so often refer to in my author bios. He was at least 27 years old.

I say "at least" because I know nothing of his past prior to my rescuing him in 1994 from a Walmart in Marietta, Georgia, where some uncaring a**hole had dumped him. Since that day, Khashoggi and I were inseparable. If there was a single constant in the past 27 years of my life, it was Khashoggi. And his passing has left a huge hole in my black heart that I don't think will ever be filled.

Over the years, I have been asked many times if I believe animals, especially pets, can come back and visit us. And yes, I believe that they can and do. Of course, with Khashoggi's passing, I'm sure many will want to know if I'd like him to come back for a visit. That answer is the same one I give when people ask if I'd like a departed relative or loved one to come back and see me: Absolutely not. But not for the reason you'd think.

You see, I'm not afraid of ghosts. Rather, I'm afraid of what a ghost's appearance represents.

I'm a bit Old School in my belief that there is a greater purpose to life. And that there is more to life than we currently know. Mix that in with my hope that there's so much more yet to come once we shuffle off this mortal coil, and you're left with my overarching belief that no matter where a living creature is in life—or what plane of existence they're on—they are exactly where they need to be...for the most part. When it comes to ghosts, I believe that some of them, for a variety of reasons, don't go where they are supposed to and get "stuck" here. Which is the main reason why I don't actively attempt to contact any of my loved ones. I would hate for them to get summoned away from where they need to be by my



calling out to them. Even worse, what if they somehow managed to get stuck here, all due to my selfishly not wanting to be here without them? I couldn't live with that.

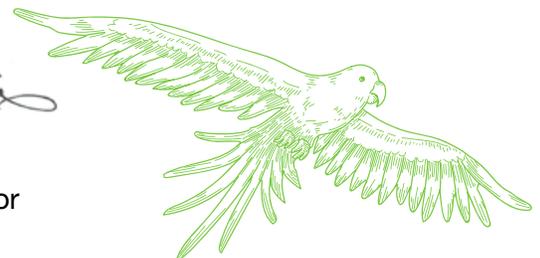
So while I still can't walk by Khashoggi's empty cage without bursting into tears, I don't want him to come visit. Because not hearing from him is all the proof I need that Khashoggi is exactly where he needs to be now.

Even if that means he can't be here with me.

Fly on, 'Shoggi.

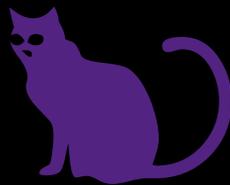
Cheers,

James A. Willis
Founder/Director



A QUICK NOTE ON INVESTIGATIONS & CONSULTATIONS

Now that the Ohio Stay At Home Order has been lifted, The Ghosts Of Ohio is once again able to conduct investigations within private homes and businesses. All members of The Ghosts Of Ohio organization who will be taking part in investigations have been fully vaccinated. Masks will be worn at the request of the home/business owner. Virtual investigations and consultations are also available. More information on scheduling is included at the end of this newsletter, but if you have specific COVID-related questions, feel to contact us at info@ghostsofohio.org or visit our website to fill out an investigation request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.



THIS FALL, THE GHOSTS WILL BE COMING FOR YOU!

Things seem to change on a daily basis, but rest assured that we are doing everything in our power to be able to get out on the road this fall and share some of our spookiest stories with you. We've missed you!

As of this writing, we are inches away from confirming our first October date, so get ready, Middletown, Ohio! While the rest of you are waiting, feel free to stop into your local library/community center/public arts building and say, "I want to see The Ghosts Of Ohio!" and tell them to get in touch with us so we can make it happen!



GOT A SCARY STORY TO TELL?

Have you had a ghostly encounter in Ohio? Want to see it featured in a future issue of The Ghosts of Ohio Newsletter? Then here's all you have to do: Just write down your story and send it to info@ghostsofohio.org with the subject line "Newsletter Ghost Story." Be sure to also include your name as you'd like it to appear with the story. We'll take it from there and send you out an e-mail letting you know which issue it is going to appear in. That way, you can get all your friends to sign up for the newsletter so they can see how famous you are!



LOSING A BET

Josh L., Lorain, OH

I'm writing to you because I lost a bet with my girlfriend. Allow me to explain. A couple of months ago, my girlfriend moved into a new apartment and almost immediately, started telling me it was haunted. She would tell me that she would wake up in the middle of the night and there would be a woman in a long white dress with long black hair covering her face standing in the corner of her bedroom. She would just stand there and then slowly fade away.

I've never seen a ghost and honestly don't believe in them or any of that stuff on TV. My girlfriend, on the other hand, eats that stuff up and believes it all. So naturally, I told her that she'd been watching too much TV and maybe *The Ring* movie. She was like, "No, I know what I saw." We ended up making a friendly bet over it. For the next six months, whenever possible, I would spend the night at her place. If I never saw the ghost during those six months, I won the bet and she'd pay up with two cases of my favorite lager. But if I saw the ghost, I'd lose and I would have to tell everyone I knew that my girlfriend was right and that I saw a ghost. I thought it was easy money (or easy lager), so I took the bet.

I'd say we were 2-3 months' into our bet when we decided for a quiet Saturday night in. We ordered from Grubhub and then watched some stupid shows on TV before going to bed. Nothing unusual at all.

I don't remember what woke me up, but I know that it was 1:53 am because when I opened my eyes, I was looking right at the clock. I sort of rolled onto my side and was getting ready to get up to use the bathroom when I saw her. She was just like my girlfriend described: a woman in a long white dress with dark hair covering her face. She was just standing in the corner of the bedroom.

I have no idea why, but I just sat there in bed looking at her. I don't remember being scared. It was more of the feeling like, "Is this really happening?" But it was. I continued to stare at her until she slowly faded away. When I looked over at the clock, it read 1:55 am, and I was wide awake. I sort of silently nudged my girlfriend, and she said as soon as she looked at me, she knew I had seen the ghost.

I thought I had paid up by telling my friends, but it turns out my girlfriend has been a subscriber to your newsletter for a long time. She told me I had to send my story in so I can tell all your readers the following:

My girlfriend was right.

I saw a ghost.



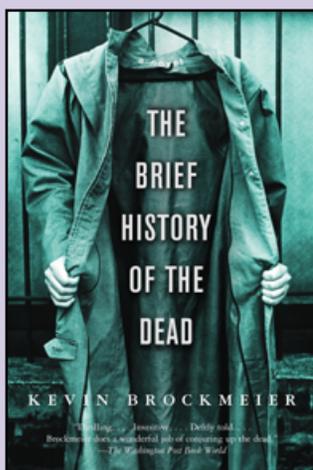
GHOSTLY READS: KEVIN BROCKMEIER



Samantha

If you've been following The Ghosts Of Ohio for a while, you may be familiar with our love of what Jim calls "two-bottle conversations." They largely center around "what if" scenarios, in which we hash out the possibilities, plausibilities, challenges, and complications of a variety of paranormal phenomena. I cherish these debates because, let's face it, the entire field is about "what ifs," and there's nothing more satisfying and invigorating than being in a room with smart people collectively pondering the secrets of post-death.

I'm mentioning this because I recently discovered an incredible author named Kevin Brockmeier who stimulates exactly that sort of conversation in the imagination of readers like me. His stories are fresh, original, insightful takes on the many facets of life and death, all through the viewpoints of relatable, sometimes quirky, characters. Here are two titles to satisfy your paranormal cravings:



The Brief History of the Dead

Laura Byrd is part of a research team stationed in Antarctica when a deadly virus grips the rest of the world and begins wiping out the population. Ignorant to what's going on but unable to communicate with the outside world,

Laura finds herself abandoned and in a struggle to survive. At the same time, the dead (who reside in a place simply called the City) have been hearing about the pandemic from the masses of recently departed. But when great numbers of the City's population begin disappearing, they know there's something even bigger happening. Especially if their guess is true that the dead only exist because there's a living person to remember them.



The Ghost Variations

This book contains 100 original ghost stories, each only two pages long! A man revels in spending his afterlife haunting the living. A ghost waits centuries for the right body to come along that would contain him. A woman stays in the same house her entire life because there was a ghost there that she watched

grow up, only to discover that she was, in fact, the ghost. How about the one about never crossing the borders of a shadow without a body, lest you disappear into it? Could corrective glasses for color blindness allow you to see spirits? Is a woman haunting the same moment in her life over and over because she didn't get it quite right the first time? If aliens visit Earth, could human spirits haunt their ship? If trees have spirits, are those creaks really your house settling? Every story in this volume is a fresh perspective on what it means to be dead, and I highly recommend savoring every bit of it.

After reading these books, I was curious to know about the author's experience with ghosts. It turns out that he has none! He's just very preoccupied with the concept of death and *what ifs*. In a March interview with NPR, he revealed that, "I'm always convinced that I'm just about to die." He says that death is an interesting "landscape" for his writing. He's an agnostic and believes in "the idea of some greater unknown," much like all of us. You can read his NPR interview here:

'The Ghost Variations': A Different Take on What It Means to Be Haunted
NPR Interview – March 9th, 2021

SECRET SYNCHRONICITY

The following is a work of fiction. All characters and incidents are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual people or events is coincidental or fictionalized.



CHAPTER NINE:

“MIRRORS OF THE MIND, PART 1”



Mark

Hundreds of feet above the darkened, sleekly futuristic TANIS control room, the arching concrete vault of Backstage resonated

softly with the haunting melodies of Native American flute music. This first musical selection had something to do with the ancient history of the area. That and an unusual rock that Mark had retrieved from the large but heavily overgrown burial mound just east of the hangar complex. Jim, Darren, and Mark went about their paranormal investigative inquiries, EVP sessions, and meditative “mind-melds” to the great beyond, as Orion catalogued such things. High resolution imagery of the GOO team members transitioned in and out from several hidden camera systems surveilling their every move. Orion watched them with keen interest, in part because he was hoping they might actually succeed.

Nearby, Arcturus remain focused on control parameters that had materialized at his console at the end of the Daedalus device warm-up period. Typing on a back-illuminated keyboard, tracking symbology solidified into the video overlay presented on the 80-inch vibrantly clear display screens tiled before them. On the center display,

translucent counter-rotating green and gold rings appeared around all three GOO members heads. Annotation symbology marked brainwave synchronization tracks, with biometric details revealed for each of the three subjects on the screen.

“It could be a little too risky including Mark in this experiment,” remarked Orion somewhat timidly. “We only have a few points of reference using this acquired technology, and those studies didn’t go entirely as planned.”

Arcturus tilted his head a little while deeply studying the three men talking to one another on the screen before him. “True, though we learned from those attempts. And Subject 107 recovered...more or less.”

“It’s the ‘less’ part of that last outcome that worries me,” Orion cautiously replied to the senior MIB agent. “We need the good Doctor’s brain uncompromised if we are ever going to have a chance at unlocking those secrets.” Orion gestured toward the ethereally glowing spacecraft on the lower level below the control room observation windows. The circular stargate floating in its center shimmered softly through the open hatchway.

“I don’t disagree with you. But having a backup copy of Mark’s mind could be tremendously valuable to this mission,” Arcturus replied as a matter of fact.

“It’s not his invaluable inquisitiveness and deep technical knowledge that I’m concerned about most,” answered Orion. “Let me ask you a question. When you look into a mirror at your own reflection, do you ever wonder if the version of you standing there in the mirror is identical to you in every way? For one thing, of course, the mirror’s image is reversed. Our reflection reverses reality from what other people see. It’s why we always view photos of ourselves a bit suspiciously, because that image is not left-right reversed. It doesn’t match our mirror image view of ourselves.”

On the Backstage audio feed, a new musical selection drifted into the TANIS control room. The era of 1940s Big Band music now jauntily filled the space between them. And the brain scanners remained locked on all three human targets. Folding his arms, Arcturus swiveled the command chair in Orion’s direction, locking eyes with his younger protégé.

“That’s rather deep, my young philosopher. As we understand it, the Daedalus device can map over 100 billion neurons in the cerebral cortex of the mature human brain along with over 100 trillion synapses connecting those neurons and their biometric weighting functions. It’s no wonder it takes the machine 45 minutes to prepare itself for such a dauntingly impressive task. We only barely understand the distributed cortical

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SECRET SYNCHRONICITY *continued*

integration of memory into the brain, and yet this alien artifact appears to accomplish a near-perfect mirror-image copy of the human mind—and place it safely into a neuromorphic, AI-assisted framework before it “wakes up” in an alternate reality we manage and control. Elegant simplicity, really. When it works, of course.”

Orion turned his gaze to the display screen. He watched Mark, Jim, and Darrin discuss something about a disastrous plane crash into the adjacent hangar bay in the mid 1940s, before speaking. “And yet, I have to wonder. Does your reflected image have a soul? Are we not more than the sum of all those impressive parts you wish to map out in such exquisite and precise detail? Not a single, nearly indestructible atom in your body “knows” you exist or is even “alive” by itself. Can you really capture the very essence of someone’s being this way, by copying information and embedding it in one of the most complex neural network structures ever built, one that can only be managed by autonomous AI agents doing who knows what?”

Arcturus turned back to the console, patiently tapping a finger on the keypad as he contemplated. “Tell me, Orion, how would you know the difference, if all your copy ever knew was the mirror image world? If you were already part of the simulation?”

“Am I?” questioned Orion with an honest and sudden smidgeon of self-doubt realization, right eyebrow arched inquiringly.

“That would be telling,” answered Arcturus with a sly grin and rarer half-smile, “though, perhaps you are right about taking an unnecessary risk at this time.”

Arcturus typed a new command into the console and the tracking imagery vanished around Mark’s head. The remaining counter-rotating rings, those circling around the unsuspecting minds of Jim and Darrin, brightened even further and began pulsating rapidly as they began to synchronize with the neuromorphic scanner.

The TANIS computer’s always calm artificial voice announced, “Daedalus neural transfer protocols engaged. Safety interlocks deactivated. Memory buffers cleared and mind-storage reference frames now fully integrated online. Neural scanning phase will initiate in 30 seconds.”

“I hope we have enough hyper-dimensionally threaded memory allocated for two minds,” remarked Orion, looking over the status readouts on the targeting panel.

“We should have enough with the latest upgrades,” noted Arcturus, who then added this voice command: “TANIS Mainframe, commence mirror image copy. Authorization code: Omega 21.”

“Agent Arcturus, voice identification confirmed; prepare to engage the key-turn authorization scanner to your left,” instructed the TANIS computer voice. “Awaiting second required authorization.”

Orion spoke up, “Commence mirror image copy. Authorization code: Epsilon 773.”

“Agent Orion, voice identification confirmed; prepare to engage the key-turn authorization scanner to your right,” instructed the TANIS computer. The MIB governing board had insisted on the installation of this final safeguard to activating the Daedalus device. It required the coordinated action

of two agents to turn it on, the idea being simply that one rogue agent could not activate, or employ, Daedalus on their own.

“I hope Mark’s not standing too close to the others when this thing turns on,” remarked Orion, nervously glancing over at Arcturus. The TANIS mainframe computer began a final countdown instruction with “Activate key-turn authorizations in 3...2...1...0.” Both agents simultaneously touched their respective biometric identifier pads, each surface glowing green a moment later.

“Daedalus Field: ACTIVATED,” chronicled the mainframe computer. The already dimmed lights in the TANIS control room dimmed further as the power flow ramped up exponentially to the brain-mapping scanners concealed high overhead in five 1000-watt Backstage light fixtures in the hangar space above.

Next Issue:



AMITYVILLE HORROR KILLER DIES IN PRISON



James

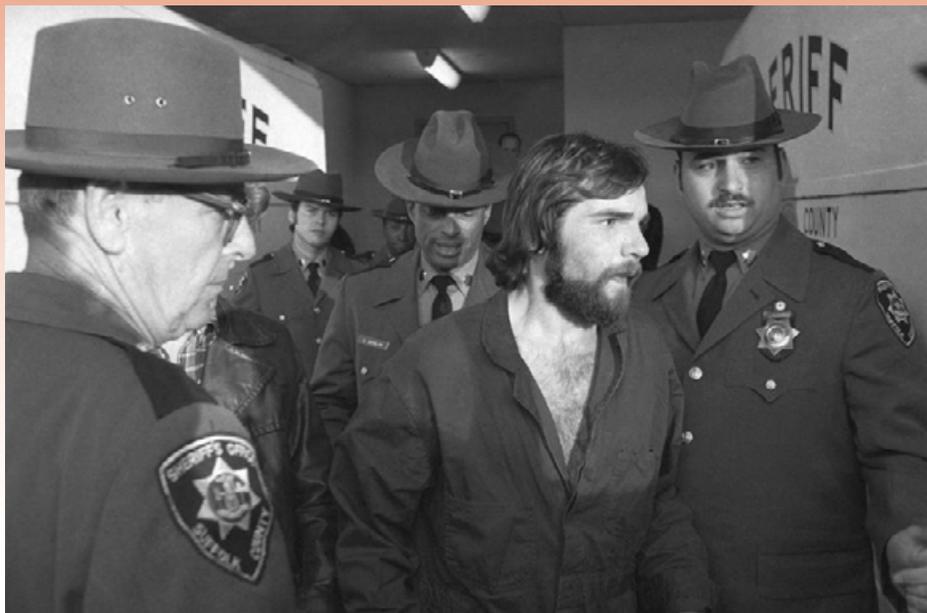
On March 15, 2021, a New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision spokeswoman issued a statement that the previous

Friday, 69-year-old inmate Ronald J. DeFeo, Jr. (“Butch”) had been transferred from the Sullivan Correctional Facility in upstate Fallsburg, New York, to the Albany Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 6:35 p.m. The exact cause of death has yet to be determined.

And with that, hopes of learning exactly what happened “the night The Amityville Horror was born” died as well.

To the uninitiated, Butch DeFeo was the person convicted of murdering 6 members of his family—parents Ronald Sr. (43) and Louise DeFeo (43), sisters

Dawn (18) and Allison (13), and brothers Marc (12) and John (9)—while they slept inside their Amityville, New York, home on the night of November 13, 1974. While he initially told authorities the murders were the result of a “mob hit,” Butch DeFeo would eventually admit to murdering all 6 family members using his own .35 caliber lever action Marlin 336C rifle. A clear motive for the crimes was never established with DeFeo, a

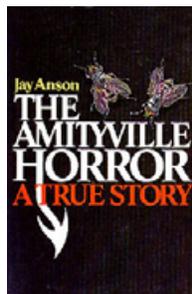


Ronald DeFeo Jr. Under Arrest

Photo credit: Richard Drew/AP

known heavy drug user, simply stating that once the shooting started, he “just couldn’t stop.”

The home on Ocean Avenue where the murders took place stood vacant until the following December, when the Lutz family moved in. Twenty-eight days later, the entire family would flee from the house in terror, never to return, not even to retrieve their personal belongings. Some of the nightmarish events that were alleged to have driven the Lutzes from their new home were chronicled in Jay Anson’s best seller, *The Amityville Horror*—the book that spawned a multi-million-dollar cottage



industry. Tens of thousands of people flocked to Amityville, Long Island, to stand and gawk at a real-life haunted house.

Paranormal experts were called in to investigate, including Hans Holzer and husband-wife team, Ed and Lorraine Warren. It was the Warrens who would declare that there was something evil in the house, with Lorraine claiming that as she stepped inside the Ocean Avenue home, she thought to herself, “I hope this is as close to hell as I’ll ever get.”

The idea that there was something evil (others would go so far as to claim it was demonic) lurking inside what was now unofficially referred to as the Amityville Horror House caused some to begin looking at the house’s history. Had previous owners been affected by this evil? Well, while there had not

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been any public claims of the house being haunted prior to the Lutz family, everyone began to take a closer look at the DeFeo murders. Had Butch somehow fallen under demonic control which caused him to murder his entire family while they slept?

Looking at the murders themselves, everything seemed fairly cut and dry: Butch admitted using his own rifle to kill his family, and all the evidence seemed to support that. There was one troubling fact, though, that even today has yet to be fully explained: All six family members had been shot while sleeping in their beds, with very little evidence to support that any of them had gotten out of bed or attempted to flee. And their bedrooms were on different floors of the house. So how was it that Butch was able to walk throughout the house in the dead of night firing a shotgun, and no one woke up? Toxicology reports confirmed there were no drugs in any of the family's system. Strange. Yet proof of paranormal intervention? Hardly.

As far as Butch's own testimony went, he did make references to "hearing voices" the night of the murder and even a "dark hand" giving him the shot gun. But most of this was chalked up to Butch's drug problem. Enter William Weber.

William Weber was Butch DeFeo's defense attorney. According to Weber, he met with George and Kathy Lutz while they were still living in the Ocean Avenue home and created the framework for a totally fictitious account of ghostly and demonic activity taking place in the house. Weber claimed that the decision was made for all parties to capitalize on the whole demonic craze that was sweeping the nation thanks to recent movies



Murder investigation at Amityville house on Nov. 13, 1974

Photo credit: Richard Drew/AP

like *The Exorcist*. And by claiming that there was always evil inside the house, Weber thought he might be able to get his client, Butch DeFeo, a new trial based on the notion that he was under demonic control the night of the murders. And indeed, it was right around this time that DeFeo began making statements that there was something evil in the house that caused him to murder his family.

If this story is to be believed, Weber claimed that things fell apart when George and Kathy Lutz decided to "go behind his back" and hire Jay Anson to write *The Amityville Horror*, effectively denying Weber any profits from a story he helped create. As proof of this, Weber did in fact file a lawsuit against George and Kathy Lutz, claiming part ownership over the *Amityville Horror* story.

Over the course of the next 40+ years, the battle raged on: People like George and Kathy Lutz and the Warrens on one side, claiming there was something evil inside the Ocean Avenue home, battling William Weber and even former

and current owners of the Ocean Avenue house, emphatically declaring there never was anything paranormal going on. Through it all, Butch DeFeo just kept on changing his story about that night back in November of 1974. And his story varied so widely as to make one's head spin: He acted alone, his sister committed some of the murders, he was completely innocent, there were demons involved, William Weber told him to lie about hearing voices.

One by one, all of the main players in the Amityville Horror saga passed away—George and Kathy Lutz, Ed and Lorraine Warren, William Weber. Until only one remained: Butch DeFeo, the only known individual with first-hand knowledge of the murders of his 6 family members. And on March 12, 2021, while still serving six concurrent sentences of 25 years to life, Ronald J. DeFeo, Jr. passed away, taking with him the secrets of what really happened "the night the Amityville Horror was born."

Investigations & Consultations

The Ghosts Of Ohio continue to schedule investigations for private homes and businesses for 2021, and all members of the organization who would participate in investigations have been fully vaccinated. Additionally, we can also make arrangements to drop off ghost-hunting equipment at your home or business and walk you through how to set it up yourself if you prefer. So if you or someone you know is experiencing something unexplained in a home or place of business, contact us at info@ghostsofohio.org or visit our website to fill out an investigation request. All investigations are offered free of charge, and confidentiality and discretion are assured.

Not sure if you want or need an investigation? The Ghosts Of Ohio also offers consultations. Let us sit down with you to discuss your current situation and what help we may be able to offer. For more information, please visit <http://ghostsofohio.org/services/investigations.html>

Interact with The Ghosts Of Ohio

In addition to our website, here are a couple of places where you can find The Ghosts Of Ohio lurking online:



Administration

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