JANE GOLDMAN



CREATED BY

CHRIS CARTER

## BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED

VOLUME ONE

# THE X-FILESTM BOOK OF THE UNEXPLAINED

by

#### JANE GOLDMAN

Based on the series created by Chris Carter





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#### Dedication

This book is for Jonathan, Betty and Harvey, with all the love in the world.

#### Acknowledgements

esides my perfect and beloved husband and children, who let me disappear into my study for months on end, there are so many others to whom this book owes its existence and I owe thanks.

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Space does not permit me to individually mention all those who are the flesh and bones of this book, so I hope they will forgive me for making an enormous blanket thank you to all whose names appear in the text, and who gave of their time and wisdom.

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I've no doubt forgotten several very deserving individuals in the above list, and hope that they will accept my sincere apologies and thanks.

#### INTRODUCTION

Don't worry. I'm not about to launch into a long ramble on why I love *The X-Files* (which I do), why it is such a significant and unique TV show (which it is) and why I think it speaks to so many people at different levels (which it does). After all, just about every publication on both sides of the Atlantic has done that already.

In the great sea of *X-Files* related print, the only thing that really bugs me is when I see *The X-Files* described as a show about the paranormal. Strange phenomena is only one element of the glorious *X-Files* equation. It's like calling *Citizen Kane* a film about a sledge. It worries me even more when I run across people who are still labouring under the misapprehension that *The X-Files* is a dramatic representation of real life events. And I want to make it known that this book does not buy into either of those fallacies.

Still, I think it's fair to say that *The X-Files* is responsible for piquing the viewer's interest in the weird, the wonderful and the sinister. And that's where I hope this book will come in handy. The aim of *The X-Files Book of the Unexplained* is to provide further reading on the subjects raised in the episodes and on the inspirations behind them. And occasionally, I have used the episodes as jumping-off points to dive into other pools of mystery and study.

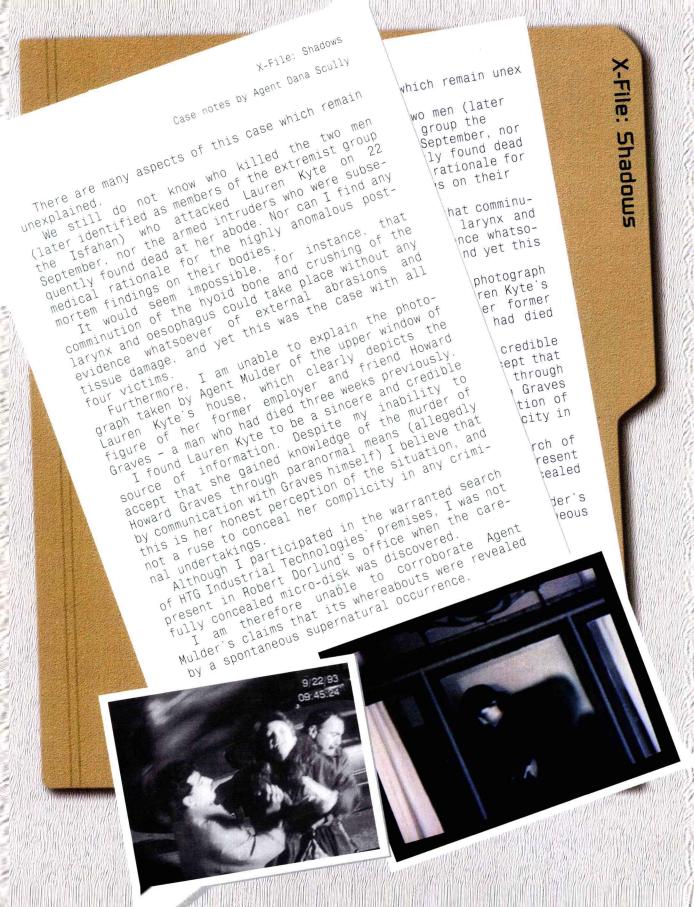
Inside this book you'll find facts, theories, folklore and a lot more besides – but I promise you'll never find one masquerading as another. Whether – like Fox Mulder – you want to believe, or – like Dana Scully – you prefer the comfort and stability of consensus reality, all of us desire the truth.

*X-Files* creator Chris Carter has often said that Mulder and Scully are both parts of him. In a way, I think they are both parts of all of us – we want to believe, but we demand proof. And however we approach the enigmas of the universe, we're all fascinated by what might be out there.

#### JANE GOLDMAN

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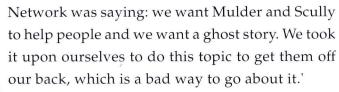
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### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Shadows is *The X-Files* take on the classic camp-fire ghost-story format: a chain of weird events, followed by the revelation of a restless soul with a motive, making everything slip tenebrously into place.

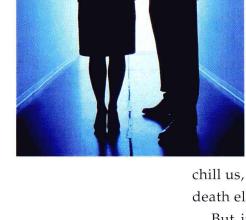
According to co-writer Glen Morgan, who has reservations about the episode, its birth was utilitarian. 'The



Morgan does not believe in ghosts, but finds poltergeist phenomena intriguing. 'That there could somehow be energy in the body that could cause you to throw something across the room without even knowing it, and then it's interpreted as being a ghost. . .' But Morgan resisted the temptation to make the heroine of *Shadows*, Lauren Kyte, responsible for the spooky goingson. 'Romantically, in my mind, it was her boss,' he confirms. And so *Shadows* got its tormented soul: murder victim Howard Graves.

Of course, a ghost story's primary purpose is to chill us, spook us, gross us out, and the horrible-untimely-death element serves that end deliciously.

But it is interesting to consider it as a crossover with another timeless literary theme: triumph over adversity. In ghost stories, the adversity is death, and the triumph is that the wronged person refuses to allow the small matter of being six feet under to get in the way of pursuing their goal



- whether it be attaining justice or just hanging out scaring the pants off people. Even when we throw in lines about being 'condemned to walk this earth for eternity. . .', you can bet that, if only subconsciously, we still figure it as an option that beats oblivion hands down.

So here in *Shadows* we have that element too. Howard Graves is essentially the little guy, the disadvantaged hero (and you can't get much more disadvantaged than being dead) fighting against the towering evil – in this case corporate treachery and violent political terrorism. He watches over his beloved surrogate daughter, taking her tormentors in hand and meting out justice fairly and squarely: the crotchety domineering co-worker gets hot coffee in her lap; the parade of morally bereft hit-men get their larynxes crushed. He makes it known that his suicide was murder, exposes his company's terrorist liaison, and makes damn sure his duplicitous colleague pays. His unfinished business settled, he is, it is hinted, rewarded with eternal peace.





Just as most ghost stories are essentially chronicles of somebody's life after death, most real-life 'ghost' encounters get pegged with the same interpretation.

But, before we can even begin to ask whether the existence of ghosts proves that death is a doorway rather than a brick wall, we have to ask whether ghosts exist.

Henry Habberley Price, a respected Oxford don and former president of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) described the question 'Do you believe in ghosts?' as 'one of the most ambiguous which can be asked'. He felt that one should ask instead, 'Do you believe that people sometimes experience apparitions?' To which his own answer was a resounding affirmative. He asserts: 'No one who examines the evidence can come to any other conclusion. Instead of disputing the facts, we must try to explain them.'

John Spencer, along with his wife Anne Spencer, is one of Britain's leading researchers in this field. Together they work with the SPR and the Association for the Scientific Study of



Anomalous Phenomena (ASSAP), investigating claims, logging data and hoping for the breakthrough that might begin to bring explanations to light.

Spencer feels that, like UFO sightings, a high percentage of 'ghost' phenomena have a logical explanation. 'I think we can be pretty sure that there are some genuine mysteries out there,' he asserts. 'But right now, we have no answers, only questions.'

One major problem is that the data itself suggests many, many different phenomena which may not even be related to one another, and provides little insight into understanding *any* of them, let alone into understanding the mystery of death itself.

Even if we choose to study only the manifestations which seem to suggest a clear connection to the dead – which means leaving out other 'ghost' phenomena such as apparitions of the living, ambiguous 'presences' and poltergeists (unseen forces which appear to manipulate their environment) – we are still left with a truck-load of categories.



#### CRISIS

Scully's experience at the start of the episode the start of the episode the start of the episode the Sea – seeing an image of her father moments before receiving news of his death – is a classic representation of a crisis apparition. The surprise appear-

ance of a loved one or friend which later turns out to have roughly coincided with the moment of their death may well be the most common kind of 'ghost' experience reported. Because these apparitions are usually seen by a single witness, it is impossible to discount the possibility that they are merely subjective experiences, perhaps triggered by some obscure function of the human mind, as opposed to being physically present. However, because these apparitions are so time-specific, it is quite impossible to study them in any kind of scientific way.

# RECORDINGS GHOSTS A ghos

ghost which is repeatedly seen by multiple witnesses in a specific place, and sometimes on specific occasions,

obviously provides much better scope for investigation. It is likely, then, that this phenomenon will be the first to be fully understood.

A typical 'recordings' ghost appears to have no rela-

tionship with its surroundings (it passes through solid matter, sits where there is nothing to sit on etc.). Its behaviour is repetitive and limited, and it appears to have no interest in those who witness it. These forms are generally attached to specific locations, and most 'historical' ghosts fall into this



category. For instance, an apparition of President Lincoln has been seen at The White House on numerous occasions, by the most level-headed of witnesses, including Winston Churchill and John Kennedy.

The degree of perceived 'realness' varies greatly from one apparition to another. Some seem to take an almost translucent form, while others may appear solid, but still have that spectral *je ne sais quois*. As one witness inter-

viewed by Spencer succinctly put it: 'I got the impression it was no more of an intrusion than people on TV. Real, but only to a certain degree.' On the other hand, there are those which appear to be so thoroughly mortal that the witness initially believes that they are looking at a real person. The former leader of the Liberal Party, Jeremy Thorpe, encountered an apparition of this kind while staying with friends in Trethevy, Cornwall. Returning to the dinner table after answering a call of nature, Thorpe looked back down the corridor and saw a monk in a brown habit entering the bathroom. The monk ignored his polite salutation, but Thorpe was still under the impression that he was real, and even asked his hosts who the monk was. It transpired that he was known as 'the Prior' and had been in residence for several centuries.

Sometimes the supernatural nature of an apparently 'real' person can be revealed in a more surprising way. John Spencer recalls an incident in the summer of 1995 which took place during the investigation of an allegedly haunted building and which involved a new and fairly sceptical member of his team. 'He looked up and saw this girl in front of him and just thought she was a member of the team that he hadn't been introduced to. He started to say hello and she just disappeared. . . That shook him up quite badly.' Along similar lines, Spencer chuckles at the memory of a group of witnesses who saw a ghost purported to be that of Lady Jane Grey. 'She was dancing through the corridors, and really happy. Everyone thought she was a genuine little girl, thought it was lovely. . . until she went straight through this iron door.'

Spencer, like most other psychical researchers, leans towards the belief that 'recordings' ghosts are a kind of natural hologram, recorded and played back by mechanisms we don't yet understand. 'I don't think,' he muses,



'that if someone sees Sir Walter Raleigh, it proves that there's life after death. . . I don't think there's anything of his "soul", just a picture, like a video.'

The key to understanding the 'recordings mechanism', if such a thing exists, is in discovering what triggers it. Says Spencer: 'Logic demands that there must be a combination of things, some of which are always there, and some of which are not. For instance, if it was just a matter of a particular combination of geography – a room constructed in a certain shape, say – then everyone who went into the room would be recorded and you wouldn't be able to move in there for ghosts flying all over the place. So it might be the combination of geography and atmospherics - a particular type of location and a particular humidity or temperature - which might embed or play a recording. But again, you might suppose that it would happen more frequently. So you need another rare factor and that's where you bring in the human mind. Perhaps it takes a particular type of mind to embed the recording, and later, to press the replay button. That, I think, has a certain logic to it, because it would explain why not everything gets recorded and not everything gets seen.'

Anne Spencer posits that a recording might not be triggered by the person whose image is recorded, but by someone seeing them. She cites a recent case of a witness who looked out of a window on to a view of a pond and saw someone lying in the water. 'He rushed down to save him, but when he arrived, there was no one there. When he was back at the window again, he saw the same image. It suggests that the image could have been recorded by someone seeing him – and to experience the recording, you need to be in exactly the spot where the original sighter was.'

time-slip is the rather suggestive TIME-SILPS term used to describe another kind of experience we know little about – a sighting not only of an anomalous figure or figures, but of their entire surrounding environment, too. Although less common than simple ghost sightings, these experiences are by no means rare.

The most famous 'time-slip' case concerns two women who, in 1901, visited the Petit Trianon gardens at the palace of Versailles and claimed to have encountered both an altered landscape and people in period dress. George Russel, a friend of the poet W. B. Yeats, had a similar experience in the ruins of a chapel: around him, he suddenly saw the chapel in a state of fine repair, with a small service taking place. And in 1988, John Spencer logged a report from a woman holidaying in Burra, Australia, who returned from dinner to find the lights of her rented cottage on. Peering through the window, the room appeared quite different and a woman was clearly visible sitting on a couch, smiling and talking to someone out of sight. Once inside the cottage, however, everything was back to normal.

Are these experiences a more elaborate recording? A glimpse into another time or dimension? Momentary transportation into the body or mind of someone present at the original scene? A hallucination or some other trick of the brain? The possibilities are endless, the answers – for now anyway – are not forthcoming.

One interesting point raised by this category of experience, however, is the fact that it cannot always support the after-life hypothesis. Sure, time-slips often feature human apparitions, but there are also cases – often referred to as 'Phantom Scenery' cases – where only buildings, trees and other presumably 'soul-less' structures are encountered.

This, along with the numerous reported cases of spectral trains, ships and cars, suggests that whether or not the after-life hypothesis is a sound one, there is undoubtedly something else going on.

#### INTERACTIVE

GHOSTS

pparitions and presences which display cognition and intelligence are in many ways the most intriguing, certainly the most rare and, it must be said, the most suggestive of the idea that the human spirit can, in one way or another, survive death.

Accounts of interactive ghosts often appear to suggest that they have a purpose. Comforting the bereaved seems to be the most typical, but sometimes, as with the presence in *Shadows*, their agenda is far more elaborate. . .



Don Repo, whose spectral life after death was witnessed by many of his colleagues

# 'He's watching over you, isn't he?' Mulder to Lauren Kyte Shadows

he L-1011 passenger plane was due for take-off, and the flight engineer was mid-way through carrying out the routine pre-flight inspection. 'You don't need to worry about the pre-flight, I've already done it,' Second Officer Don Repo told him. Under other circumstances, the engineer might have gratefully received this comment. But Repo was not the appointed second officer on the flight. Nor, for that matter, on any flight. Don Repo was dead.