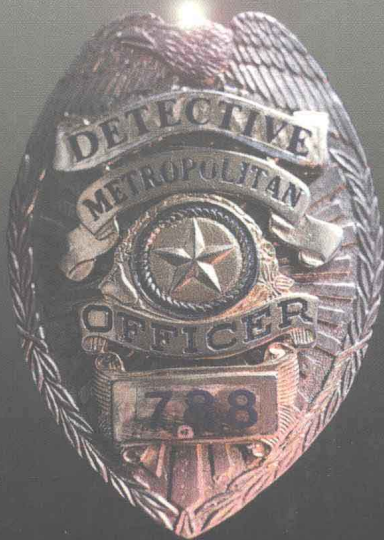


HIDDEN FILES

LAW ENFORCEMENT'S TRUE CASE
STORIES OF THE UNEXPLAINED
AND PARANORMAL



- UFO Encounters • Ghosts, Poltergeists, and Other Apparitions
- Voodoo Rituals • Mysterious Creatures • Crime-Solving ESP
- Unexplained Graveyard Exhumations • Occult Sacrifices

SUE KOVACH

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INTRODUCTION

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS sometimes encounter exceptional situations, marked by strange or unexplainable circumstances: a brush with the occult, perhaps; an encounter with psychic phenomena; an outré sighting; or mysterious events that simply can't be explained by any laws of science we know. Whether these encounters with the unknown occur on or off the job, they leave unanswered questions that may linger for years.

Hidden Files is a collection of true stories of the unexplained from law enforcement officers across the United States and Canada, stories that range from the baffling to the truly bizarre. Most incidents involve actual police cases and occurred while the officer was on duty; a few entail personal experiences. But all are thought-provoking and provide a look at unexplained phenomena from a decidedly different perspective.

Why talk to police about the unexplained? It's not that cops get called out to investigate a haunted house every day, but once in a while it happens. In recent years, police are more likely to encounter psychic phenomena, as more law enforcement departments are accepting assistance from psychics in their investigation of high-profile cases. This is particularly true of missing persons cases, which can have circumstances as eerie as any paranormal occurrence. According to experts, cult and occult activities are on the rise, and police are right

in the middle of it all. I personally wanted to hear the first-hand experiences of police officers who have encountered such phenomena because, for one thing, cops are regarded as highly credible witnesses.

For example, the U.S. government considers police officers to be among the most believable witnesses to UFO events; as trained observers, cops notice events going on around them in great detail. They are also trained to be analytical thinkers and puzzle solvers who work daily with hard facts, whose job it is to solve mysteries by considering everything and anything, no matter how improbable the “clues” may be. For those of us who have a fascination with the unexplained—and especially for those who continually question such phenomena—these eyewitness accounts offer a higher-than-average amount of credibility.

Paradoxically (but perhaps understandably), police officers rarely discuss their own encounters with “civilians,” or even members of their own profession, for fear of their professional credibility coming into question; therefore, I expected that my search for cops who were willing to talk about their paranormal experiences for this book would be a difficult one. But generally I found that wasn’t the case. I was amazed at how many remarkable stories police officers had to tell and surprised at how candid they were willing to be. Once I had gained their trust, most spoke openly, no matter how fantastic the subject was. But a few did need some persuasion, and there were some that no amount of persuasion would convince, who for different reasons did not want to talk about their experiences.

The blunt truth is that for cops there’s little to gain and possibly much to lose from talking openly about their encounters with the paranormal. Even though the incidents were very real, some officers didn’t want to open themselves to ridicule—or worse. And their fears aren’t unfounded. One officer believes his openness about a UFO encounter cost him his job; another remained quiet for 20 years about his encounter with

an unknown creature because of the derision he suffered from talking about it at the time. Another officer who had had a similar experience wrestled with the idea of telling me about it, but finally confided to a close friend that he just wanted to put the 15-year-old event behind him. Obviously, he still hadn't accomplished that goal.

Cops are often placed in positions where they may be likely to encounter a lot of weird things. Chief Douglas Glamann of the Horicon Police Department in Wisconsin related how, as a young patrol officer sitting in a squad car on the graveyard shift, he and his partner would sometimes see mysterious, unexplained lights "bouncing across the sky." On one such night, as the pair watched the weird lights, they kept glancing nervously at the radio mike hanging on the console between them. Their conversation went something like this:

"You call it in."

"Uh-uh . . . *you* call it in."

"*I'm* not gonna call it in. *You* call it in!"

It's no surprise that it never got called in. But today, Chief Glamann is more willing to discuss such strange events because of a bizarre case of poltergeist activity that occurred in his town in 1988. The case threw both him and his community into the media spotlight, forcing him to take a stand on the issue in full public view. Glamann addresses the case later in this book.

Despite the increased popularity of the study of paranormal phenomena, there is still a paranoia associated with discussing them. I think it's unnecessary. What appears to be magic, supernatural, or out of this world could have rational, even scientific explanations we have yet to discover. *Paranormal* literally means "beyond normal"—but normal is relative. In ancient times, people thought an eclipse of the sun was caused by a huge cosmic animal taking a bite out of it. They greatly feared the event and believed the end of the world was upon them. They tried to explain an eclipse in terms of what they knew, and at that time they knew of little beyond their

own small plots of land. The answer was there, but they weren't capable of finding it nor comprehending it.

We know today what an eclipse is, of course, but we may not be advanced enough to understand what we now call paranormal. Someday, after further study and research, we may also have solid explanations for these phenomena. For that reason, I think *unexplained* is a better word to use than *paranormal*, because it just means that all the facts aren't in. Kevin Humphreys, a forensic investigator for a police agency in Oregon, agrees that we need to get the facts and believes that scientific study will eventually explain the unexplained.

"You can't have a closed mind. A closed mind can close out the truth, and today's fictions may be tomorrow's truths," says Humphreys. "We need scientific explanations for these things. I say let's research them and discover the explanations. Right now all we can do is put together as many pieces of the puzzle as we can. Based on that work, we can make determinations with a certain scientific degree of certainty about what is most likely going on."

But no one can be completely certain about unexplained phenomena if little or no physical evidence exists. Until such evidence is found, we must rely on eyewitness accounts to determine for ourselves what to believe. After hearing some of the police officers' stories contained in this book, my own thinking about certain phenomena changed considerably.

The purpose of *Hidden Files* is to present law enforcement officers' encounters with the unexplained for the reader's consideration. Each incident is told in story format, based on extensive interviews with the police officers involved and on information obtained from public records. No attempt is made to prove or disprove the events. Each chapter covers a specific topic, with background material and discussion from experts to help shed some light on the officers' experiences. This information is something to keep in mind as you explore each story and try to draw conclusions of your own.

All the police officers interviewed for this book spoke on

the record for the express purpose of having their stories included. In some cases, I used fictitious names for witnesses or participants other than police officers. For example, certain psychics who work with police did not want publicity. In other cases, the circumstances surrounding certain events dictated the use of fictitious names. These names are indicated with an asterisk (*) at first use.

One constant theme throughout the book is the remarkable open-mindedness of the officers involved. No matter how unusual, frightening, or wonderful their experiences, each officer was willing to consider the possibility that, for some things, there are no pat answers. I'm sure that readers who are fascinated with tales of the unexplained will find their own beliefs and ideas challenged by these stories as much as I did.

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1

GHOSTS

PEOPLE BELIEVE IN GHOSTS. Really, they do. Just watch the look on their faces anytime someone suggests a ghost might be present. Their eyes get wide, they glance quickly over each shoulder, and then they laugh and say, “Yeah, sure.” But remember, their first reaction is the authentic one.

Perhaps people aren’t certain *what* they think about ghosts and spirits. Even if you believe in the concept of life after death, it can be difficult to accept the idea of disembodied beings unless you’ve seen or experienced one. It appears, however, that many people have. Stories abound throughout history of ghosts that have appeared to haunt the living; of spirits who intervene in worldly events to prevent harm to people; of those who simply wander the Earth with no clear purpose or intent. Some are even said to be malevolent, though most parapsychologists believe ghosts are more often benign and even helpful. One thing is certain: Ghost stories are enduring and can be found as far back as the beginning of recorded history.

What exactly are ghosts and spirits? According to Loyd Auerbach, director of the Office of Paranormal Investigations (OPI) in Orinda, California, and author of the book *ESP, Hauntings and Poltergeists*, two different experiences make up the phenomenon: apparitions and hauntings.

“An apparition is everyone’s traditional idea of a ghost. A person’s consciousness or personality somehow manages to

survive the death of the body, and that spirit can remain in a specific location,” says Auerbach. “It shows intelligence and consciousness, and it often interacts with people on a recurring basis.”

It’s possible to experience a ghost without even realizing it, because sometimes a spirit will manifest as a rush of air or simply a strong presence. Interaction can occur in several different ways, including sight, sound, touch, and even smell. Some of the best ghost stories of the American South involve the sweet aroma of magnolia blossoms.

A haunting, however, is a noninteractive encounter. According to Auerbach, most reported cases of ghostly activities tend to be hauntings unless they happen within 48 hours of the spirit’s worldly death. Hauntings occur in a specific location, can last for centuries, and are not believed to involve ghosts in the traditional sense. They are more of an imprint on the environment, the mark of a person or event that happened as little as five years ago or as far back as 500 years ago. Under certain conditions, the imprint can be detected by the living.

“Whenever you have figures or sounds locked in a pattern that repeats over and over again, that’s a haunting,” Auerbach says. “It’s actually fairly common.”

Most people would have little trouble noticing a haunting, which can manifest as rattling windows, slamming doors, and other physical episodes. But even the nonphysical aspects of a haunting—such as the strong sense of a presence nearby—might be felt because we all have the ability to pick up these environmental impressions. We do it on a daily basis.

“Walk into a place you’ve never been before, and you’ll notice that it either feels good or it feels bad—and generally, your feelings prove out,” Auerbach says. “Visit some friends and see what you feel. If it’s negative, did the couple have a fight the night before? You’re probably picking that up.” People tend, however, to discount such feelings, or we’re so used to them that we don’t think about what the feelings actually mean.

Still, not everyone can see ghosts even if they want to. Auer-

bach investigates ghosts all the time, but he has yet to actually see one, and he must communicate with ghosts through a person who can see them. Certainly he believes in ghosts, but he says belief has little or nothing to do with being able to see them. Auerbach regards ghosts as a mental phenomenon, not a physically visual one. He believes that what people see is literally a hallucination—but one with an outside cause.

“One part of perception is eyes and ears, and the second part is mental processing,” he says. “What your eyes see is not the whole picture. The brain interprets visual information and will add to or subtract from it depending on what’s going on.”

Could this explain why people usually see ghosts wearing clothing? We can assume no department stores exist in ghostly dimensions. Because clothing itself wasn’t alive at one time, as the spectre inhabiting the clothes was, where does the image of it come from? Auerbach once asked a spirit to explain.

“The ghost said that she’s actually a ball of energy, but she still thought of herself the way she looked when she was alive,” he says. “People who were sensitive enough to see her picked up her self-image, and she saw herself wearing clothing. If she had always worn a favorite perfume while alive, they might have actually smelled it.”

Proving that ghosts exist is even more difficult if ghosts can be seen only by some people and not others. Physically it’s an impossibility, and for a very good reason. By definition, a ghost is a disembodied consciousness or mind. As yet we have no physical evidence for the existence of the human mind or consciousness *in* the body, let alone *out* of it. Rather, we infer it by observation. With ghosts, we can come closest to proving their existence by gathering anecdotal information from witnesses and obtaining specific details about the ghost’s life when he or she was alive. This information can then be researched. If the characteristics the spirit displays can be matched to those of the ghost when he or she was alive, and if information the spirit has relayed can be verified (particularly if the information is specific and not likely to be known

by others), the existence of the apparition can be proved, to a greater or lesser degree.

"We'd have less trouble proving in court that ghosts exist than we would in a scientific arena," says Auerbach. "Witnesses who say ghosts don't exist didn't see anything; witnesses who say they *do* exist *did* see something. If the information they got from the ghost jibes with what can be proven about the ghost before it died—and if there was no other way to have known that information beforehand—a court would likely rule that the ghost exists."

So if conscious minds do indeed wander around after the body dies, why do they do it? Because they don't know they're dead, says Auerbach. They continue to act like living beings because they are denying their own death.

Auerbach has investigated a case involving a ghost who actually argued about its state of being with the people living in its former residence.

"Get out of my house!" said the ghost.

"It's not your house anymore. You're dead," the family replied.

"No, I'm *not*! Get out of my house!"

Based on years of research, Auerbach is convinced that another reason ghosts linger is because they want company. Therefore, the last place you should ever expect to find one is in a cemetery. Why would they want to hang around in a place where there are no living people?

"The ghost's behavior is much the same as when it was alive, and people tend to want to be around people," he says. "That's why places like restaurants often have ghosts—they simply go back to their old hangouts."

People who do encounter ghosts and want to know more about them sometimes contact the Office of Paranormal Investigations for information or suggestions on how to deal with a ghostly situation. On occasion, the calls come from police officers.

Cops and Ghosts

Although it's rare for OPI to hear from law enforcement about apparitions, they do get a few calls a year, says Auerbach. Situations where police need information in this area may not happen that often—or perhaps the cops just don't ask. Most often, a police officer will call because he or she was sent on a case where a citizen had ghostly activity in the home and the officer was personally interested in investigating the situation more closely. But officially police don't bother with ghost cases unless a crime may be involved.

One example is in the town of Greenburg, New York. Every year, particularly around Halloween, police get reports that people have seen the ghost of the Headless Horseman at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Auerbach says in 1978 there were reports of people who vanished in that area. But he doesn't know just how seriously police took the reports. "That is Washington Irving territory, and it has a lot of mystique around it. His house is supposedly haunted."

Another example is in a suburb of Dallas, Texas, where police have checked on possible break-ins at a popular restaurant that is alleged to be haunted. Locals say figures could be seen moving around inside the building after closing time. When police looked through the windows, they reportedly saw a woman in flowing white attire who vanished right before their eyes.

If police do want to know how they should go about investigating a ghost report, Auerbach explains to them how he conducts his own investigations. He tells police not to automatically assume that anyone making a report is crazy just because the person says he or she is seeing a ghost. It could be a pillar of the community having the experience, and the person may be mistaking a normal occurrence for something paranormal. So police should look for worldly explanations first.

"I ask lots of questions and see how the story holds together," he says. "I'll ask what makes the people think there's