

DARKNESS WALKS

THE SHADOW
PEOPLE
AMONG US

JASON OFFUTT



Darkness Walks

The Shadow People Among Us

Jason Offutt



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Darkness Walks

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FOREWORD

To my recollection Shadow People became a hot topic on the late radio night talk shows about 2002 or so. Suddenly, it seemed that no program could be deemed a success unless it had at least a few callers who spoke of their spooky experiences with these entities who were darker than the darkness. I remember appearing as a guest on *Coast to Coast* at this time and having Art Bell announce that I had been pursuing Shadow People for years, so perhaps I could explain what they were.

Well, I could not.

I responded with a definition about what the Shadow People meant in terms of some Native American tribal folklore, but I explained that the topic of Shadow People was so broad and so dramatically nuanced with individual responses to the phenomenon that a single all-purpose definition was out of the question. To deal with the Shadow People adequately would require a book.

We now have such a book in Jason Offutt's *Darkness Walks*.

Jason admits that he saw Shadow People when he was a child in the 1970s. I saw them when I was a child back in the late 1930s, early 1940s. At first they frightened me, but they appeared almost nightly to my sister and me. They never did any physical harm to us, so we learned not to fear them. When I was a child, they were just "the people who came at night." Later, I concluded that they were ghosts.

Since that time, I have come to believe that Shadow People are not just one "thing," but our name for a great variety of entities. Shadow People is a collective title for many different manifestations of the metaphysical, the mystical, the magical, and the metaphorical.

On occasion, I have thought of the Shadow People in terms of a reflection that Herman Hesse (author of *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf*) shared in his *Autobiographical Writings*: "...I do not know when I saw him for the first time: I think he was always there, that he came into the world with me. The little man was a tiny, gray, shadowy being, a spirit or goblin, angel or demon, who at times walked in front of me in my dreams as well as during my waking hours, and whom I had to obey, more than my father, more than my mother, more than reason, yes, often more than fear."

I am quite convinced that Shadow People have always been with us. As beings from another level of our multidimensional universe, I theorize that they might at times be summoned by human emotions, especially fear and self-doubt. I also believe that very often they are invited into a human personal psychic space by an individual's careless dabbling in the occult. Jason Offutt has a very good chapter dealing with that aspect of the mystery in "Ouija Boards and Other Invitations to Shadows."

As I have stated, the subject of Shadow People defies any single definition. Offutt's excellent study of the phenomenon presents us with the most thorough and complete work yet written regarding the mysterious beings that we have come to call collectively, the Shadow People.

In *Darkness Walks*, Offutt initially presents the night visitors as the mystery that they are, then he works his way through a wide range of manifestations. He covers a great many very eerie, shadowy twists and turns, and he does not neglect examining those arguments which question whether the beings are benign or dangerous. Jason may not have any ultimate answers, but no one has done a better job of defining who or what these shades might be.

– Brad Steiger, author of the *Shadow World* series

INTRODUCTION

The paranormal has always fascinated me. From ghosts, UFOs and Bigfoot to Frankenstein monster, Dracula and the Triffids, my Saturday afternoons were filled with monster movies and my nights were filled with books about flying saucers. To me there was some comfort in the grotesque, the inhuman, the unknown. Maybe it was the fact that there were some things in the universe for which science had no answer. Or maybe, even as a child I realized the more knowledge you possess, the less frightening those things that go bump in the night become ... all except one.

I knew about Shadow People long before they became buzzwords on paranormal talk radio and the internet. In the mid-1970s, Shadow People thrust themselves into my life and, although the visitations were never pleasant, they were never threatening. Decades have past, but my childhood encounters have fueled my curiosity and driven me to discover what these entities are. I make no claims that I know what Shadow People are. I approached this topic as a journalist, allowing others, experts, victims, willing participants – to tell their stories.

In doing so, I hope this book answers some of your questions about the Shadow People, and I hope you find comfort in knowing many others have witnessed these entities as well. You are not alone anymore.

Jason Offutt
Maryville, Missouri
June 29, 2008

CHAPTER ONE

The Mystery of Shadow People

Sunlight drifted through the open window of the girls' bedroom as they played dolls. Kara and Sarah were sitting on their bunk beds when they realized they weren't alone – the Shadow Man was watching them.

“We saw it only once but talked about it often throughout our childhood,” Kara said. “I told my sister to go get (our dolls) that were on the floor near the door.”

Sarah slowly shook her head “no” as she stared apprehensively at the door.

Kara slowly turned to see what kept her sister from moving. “I saw the dark silhouette of a man,” she said. “Just the head and shoulders, leaning into the doorway from outside it as if he was peeking in.”

The mid-afternoon sunlight dressing the room made no harsh shadows, especially not one shaped like a man. “It was broad daylight and the shape was opaque black and seemed to be two-dimensional, just like a shadow,” Kara said. “I really don't remember what we did after that, but I do remember telling our mom about it and she just thought we were being silly. The memory is very real, and I am sure if I asked my sister about it today – 30 years later – she would describe it just as I did.”

As Kara and Sarah discovered, sometimes Shadows do walk. In the gray world of our homes after the sun goes down, we sometimes glimpse the black shapes of people – or animals – moving through our bedrooms, our hallways, our waking nightmares. They walk, they stare, and sometimes ... they talk. They are the Shadow People, and I've found stories about them from across North America, England, Portugal, South Africa, Australia, and other parts of our planet. Out of these stories have emerged eight general categories of Shadow People:

- Benign Shadows,
- Shadows of Terror,
- Red-Eyed Shadows,
- Noisy Shadows,
- Angry Hooded Shadows,
- Shadows that Attack,
- Shadow Cats,
- and The Hat Man.

These categories often overlap. Some terrifying Shadow People have red eyes, some don't. Some Hat Men are ominous, some are not. Some Angry Hooded Shadows seem to paralyze you and sometimes attack, others simply seem to acknowledge your presence before they make their way through your house and disappear through a wall. But what they are is a mystery. Are these Shadow People ghosts? Demons? Reflections from a parallel dimension? Space aliens? Or, as with Ebenezer Scrooge's ghosts, maybe “an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of underdone potato.”

Although experts in the paranormal – and science – offer numerous explanations for the

Shadow People, all, or none, may be valid. Whatever these entities are, the uncountable number of geographically separated people who have encountered these dark beings know they are real because they have reported seeing, hearing, feeling, and fearing these walking Shadows – like Margot Davies of Seattle. Davies moved into a house just east of Seattle in 2002 and, from early on she knew something wasn't quite right about the house.

“The third night in the house, some relatives came to stay the night,” she said. “Later the next morning my aunt took me aside and said she sensed something in the house the previous night.”

Nothing bothered her until she began modeling in 2005 and started seeing a dark figure in her home. “Quite often I began to see a dark shape of person near the door of the den out of the corner of my eye,” she said.

At first she dismissed these sightings as a trick of mind until she was sitting in her hot tub one night in November 2007. “I glanced in the living room window and there was a dark Shadow in front of the lamp staring at me,” she said. “At first I thought someone was in the house, but then how could they be dark in front of a bright lamp?”

As soon as this man-shaped Shadow realized she was looking at it, it quickly moved from the window through the living room wall, remerged in the kitchen then disappeared towards the den.

“I ran inside dripping wet, checked the house and no one was inside,” she said. “I never said anything to anyone.”

A few months later, a cousin stayed the night with her and saw the same thing. “He looked awful in the morning,” Davies said. “I asked why. He told me he was very frightened the previous night. He said he saw a Shadow in the hallway watching him in bed and then it disappeared through the wall.”

Her cousin asked why she didn't warn him her house was haunted. She didn't because she didn't think it was haunted. “I'm not sure it's a ghost, and if it is, I don't think it's a bad one,” Davies said. “I'm not sure what this Shadow Person is or what it wants. I don't feel threatened by it, but I am scared when I see it. Sightings are rare though, so I don't mind putting up with it as an unwelcome houseguest.”

What Are They?

Have you seen these human figures walking through your room at night? Have they been cloaked like the Grim Reaper? Have they glared at you from the darkness with glowing, red eyes? Or, worse, have they touched you? I know you have a story, or you probably wouldn't be reading this book.

Do you know what these Shadow People are? Carl Beckham's father thought he did. Shortly after Beckham's father died in 1992, Beckham discovered something he could never wipe from his mind.

“My brother told me that one night he was bringing my dad home from the doctor's office,” Beckham said. “When they got to the house my dad told him to pull his car so that he could shine the headlights into the back yard because he wanted to see what was out there.”

Beckham's brother saw nothing strange in the backyard, but since their father slept in the back of the house, his room would have overlooked the yard. Beckham wondered what his father was looking for.

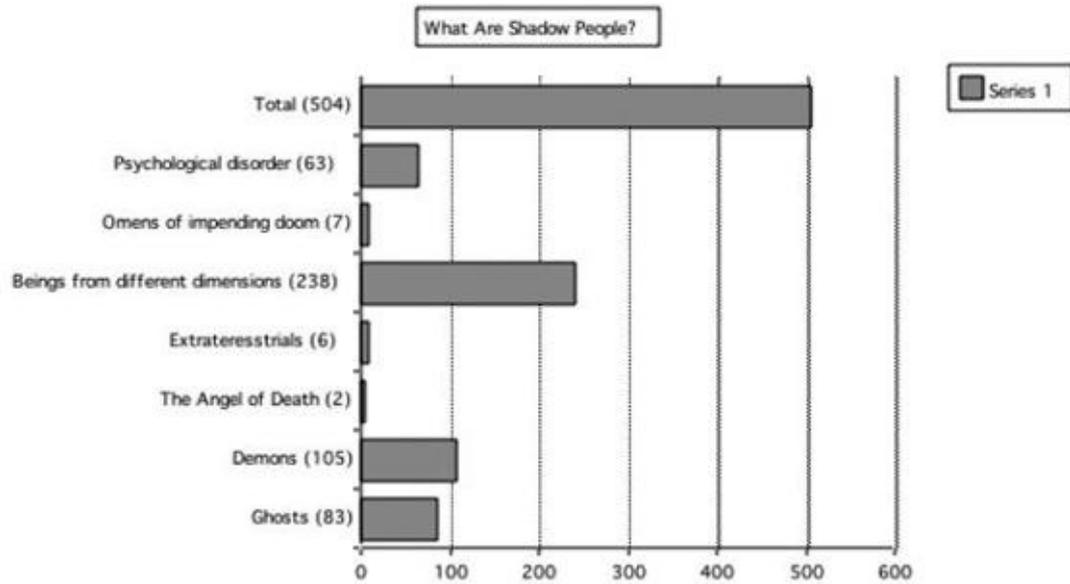
“When I went into his room I was shocked to see that he had placed several homemade locks made of pieces of wood nailed onto the door – like he was trying to keep something out,” Beckham said.

Beckham's father saw blacker-than-night spirits roaming the yard, spirits he was afraid fed on the dying. Although no one else in the family could see these Shadow People, Beckham's father could, and he was terrified of them.

Terror often accompanies these entities; sometimes because of the unknown, but other times just

the presence of a Shadow Man pulls raw fear to the surface of your consciousness. Independence Missouri-based psychic Margie Kay is familiar with Shadow People, and said these entities come from a number of different sources, but that one type of Shadow Person feeds off terror.

“I think that Shadow People are just people that live in a higher dimension than us, and they may look just like us on the Other Side, but we can only see their outline,” Kay said. “Most are probably benign, but others – the ones who actually interact with us – are likely not and may even be some other type of entity who gets their energy from fear.”



In a poll conducted on my blog (from-the-shadows.blogspot.com), respondents overwhelmingly believed Shadow People are beings from different dimensions (47%), over demons (21%), ghosts (16%), psychological disorders (13%), omens of impending doom (1%), extraterrestrials (1%) and the angel of death (0%). But evidence supports Shadow People may be all of these – and more.

A Little History

Shadow entities have been part of our cultural mythos presumably forever. But specific descriptions of Shadow People can be traced back to recent history with an 1887 short story, “L’Horla,” by French author Guy de Maupassant. Details of paranormal activity in Maupassant’s story correspond with many Shadow People reports. Maupassant’s fictional tale, which deals with an aristocrat’s descent into madness, describes a fear of sleep, seeing a dark presence in the periphery and finally feeling the presence become more invasive to the point of attack.

The terror that Maupassant’s character experiences is common in many Shadow People encounters: “Last night I felt that somebody was squatting on me, putting his mouth on mine, drinking my life out through my lips,” the character says. “Yes, I really felt he was sucking my life out through my throat, just like a leech would do.” Maupassant’s character later postulates he is possessed by the entity that has stalked him. This, again, is a behavior reported in some Shadow People encounters.

The term “Shadow People” appeared in popular culture in 1953 in the radio drama “Creatures of the Shadows” (also known by the title “The Shadow People”) that appeared on Chicago’s WGN-AM “Hall of Fantasy.” But the earliest Shadow People report I have been able to uncover occurred in Charles G. Parcels, now of Otto, North Carolina, in 1949.

“My encounter was a long time ago, but I still remember it very well,” Parcels said. “Of course

at the time it occurred I'm sure the term Shadow Man had not yet been coined."

~~Charles was 13 years old and lived with his mother, brother, and grandmother in San Jose, California, when a Shadow Man invaded his life. "It was around 10 at night, with just the faint glow of street lights visible through the windows," he said. "My brother and I were lying in our beds, talking a bit before going to sleep."~~

Diagonally from Charles was an old-fashioned sash window – not curtained or shaded – which looked out over a walkway that ran alongside the house. "All at once, a dark figure dressed in a black cloak and wearing a black hat with a wide brim and a tall crown, appeared in the window," he recalled. "No facial features were discernible on this 'person,' but I took it to be a man."

The Shadow Man stood at the window, reached out both hands, and in complete silence raised the bottom sash. "I thought he was going to climb in," Parcels said. "At that moment I started yelling my head off in total fear. As I did so, the figure reached up and silently closed the window, turned around, and moved out of sight."

His mother burst into the room to see what the yelling was about. "I need not go into that scene," Parcels said, "since my tale was profoundly doubted." But the next day, Charles discovered that the Shadow Man was something more than a flesh-and-blood man.

"The window had been locked from the inside the whole time," he said. "The window, either opening or closing, made an audible raspy, squeaky sound." Outside no footprints dotted the soft earth between the window and the walkway. "But I saw something, so what in the hell was it?"

This book contains hundreds of such first-hand accounts of these Shadow People. Many of the people whose stories appear in this book requested anonymity, and those people I only refer to by first name. As a journalist, I collected stories from face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, email, and comments posted on my blogs (From-the-Shadows.blogspot.com and Shadowpeoplebook.blogspot.com).

But this book isn't just a collection of Shadow People stories; it's an attempt to explain the phenomenon from the viewpoints of physics, psychology, metaphysics, Western religion, and American Indian shamanism. Many people believe Shadow People are beings from different dimensions. Others think these walking Shadows are demons, ghosts, a psychological disorder, extraterrestrials, the Angel of Death, or omens of impending doom. This book also covers how to get rid of the Shadow. I wish I'd had this book when I was a child, watching in horror as these entities walked in fits and jerks through my room.

My quest to find out more about these darker-than-night, two-dimensional, human-shaped beings started many years ago. Between the ages of 8 and 12 years, I saw this walking darkness. Lying in bed at night, after my parents turned off the lights, moonlight pouring through the open windows in our old farm house gave me a clear view of my entire room – the bookshelf, the Farrah Fawcett poster, and the Shadow People. I stared from behind blankets as human shadows walked through my room. I'd cry out, and Mom and Dad rushed to my room, but they never saw the things I saw. I didn't know what the things were, but I knew I saw them. As I grew older, I found more people have seen the Shadow People, and have been just as frightened.

Whatever the explanation – or explanations – for these Shadow Beings, most people who encounter them feel afraid, violated, and helpless. "To a Shadow Person you are nothing, and that's why they will sometimes ignore someone," exorcist James Bucknam said. "If you strike their curiosity, then look out, their presence means bad things are on the way." Shadow People, he said, never operate alone and are very curious. "They investigate everything, and are constantly checking people out," he said. "Be careful with Shadow People. They attract other negative entities as well as the

are floating around out there looking for something to attach to.” Bucknam is convinced Shadow People have never been human, and exist in negative realms – always looking for a way into our world. “Shadow People are part of the world of spirit,” he said. “And they are bad news.”

Gary G. Ford of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, has seen them, too, and challenges those who don't acknowledge Shadow People. “They are enough to scare the works out of most people who want to deny these experiences can happen,” Ford said. “But I’ve experienced them. I know they are real, and that makes the universe more complicated than simple-minded theoreticians wish to entertain.”

So begins our journey through a land where Shadows lurk, Shadows walk, and Shadows dance and we’re just in the way.

CHAPTER 2

The Science of Shadow People

Science rules the universe. If you drop a hammer, it falls. If you drop a hammer and a tennis ball, they fall at the same rate. If you see something that isn't physically there, it may be something biochemical or electrical dancing on your brain. But how do these rules apply in the paranormal universe? In this chapter, I will look into physics, psychology, and neuroscience in an attempt to deconstruct the Shadow People, those creatures that appear to be both solid and vapor, a waking nightmare and a sleep disorder, a real entity looming over you and the product of electric stimulation to the brain.

Basic Physics

Margie Kay of Independence, Missouri, relates a story told by her 11-year-old granddaughter Cynthia about an encounter with a Shadow Person. "She said that one night she woke up in the middle of the night to see an outline of a six-foot-tall person standing in her room, looking away from her the TV set that had come on apparently by itself," Margie said. "The person turned around and looked at her for a few seconds, then just dissolved away. She said it had no features. She did not sleep the rest of the night and wouldn't even get out of bed to turn off the TV until it was daylight."

To Northwest Missouri State University (NWMSU) chemistry and physics professor Rick Toomey, something solid enough to cast a shadow – and hold its shape – can't just dissolve. Matter comes in three forms: gas, liquid and solid, and only gas dissipates into the air. "If it's not solid or liquid it has to be vapor. Gasses don't maintain shape," he said. "And you'd need a pretty high density of gas to prevent the transmission of light."

So for Shadow People to exist according to physics, Toomey said, they have to be pretty dense. "It has to be a physical entity that's solid. It's not liquid. It's not gas," Toomey said. "That's why I have a problem with ghosts opening doors. A gas isn't going to surround a doorknob and apply torque. I can't buy into it."

Toomey's colleague in the NWMSU physics department, Dave Richardson, shares Toomey's concern. Given the many reports of Shadow People walking through someone's bedroom, they have to be solid. "If you just look at what a shadow actually means, when they're produced there must be a blockage of light somehow, or the removal of light in some way," he said. "From a scientist's point of view they have to be opaque. Unless it was incredibly dense, the gas wouldn't do much." For example, smoke casts a shadow, but can't retain a shape and quickly dissipates. For Cynthia's shadow to look like a man and to turn on the television, it has to be something else. "It seems a difficult thing to actually reconcile with what we know about light and shadows," Richardson said.

But what of Shadow People who can exert a physical force? Like the experience of Donny from Montana: "I was sleeping on my side when I was awoken by what felt like someone sitting on my back behind me," he said. "I felt someone sticking their finger to the middle of my back." When he opened his eyes, three Shadow Beings stood around his bed, and he was afraid to look at what might be poking

him from behind. Donny had felt a touch, although the entities slowly dissipated.

~~Those two events don't correspond to known science. "Physically we can't feel the force extended by gas particles," Toomey said. "In order for you to feel pressure, you have to scuba dive or somebody drops a rock on your head. You have to have a mass to exert a physical force."~~

So for Donny to have felt someone sitting on his bed, and a poke in the back, something solid had to be in his room. "To have a physical push, you have to have matter," Toomey said. "What matter do you have? Solid, liquid, gas. From that point you don't have many places to go. If you're feeling a touch, there has to be a push as far as physics is concerned."

Of course, many believe Shadow People aren't science. "People say 'it's not a physical force, it's an ethereal force,'" Toomey said. "Gravity only works in one direction. How many times did lightning knock you down?"

But people don't have to be touched to feel, as Riaan, of Cape Town, South Africa, discovered when he reached into a Shadow Person. "I was lying in bed getting ready to slumber off, when I noticed that in the corner where my bed was placed there seemed to be an exceptionally dark and dense patch," Riaan said. "I told myself that it's nothing but a play of light, shadows created by my curtains."

As Riaan laid there, his imagination running scenarios through his mind – is it a light trick? An intruder? A ghost? – he extended his arm and reached into the void. "I stuck out my hand and slowly moved it so that I can touch the corner of the wall, which was not very visible due to this 'dark patch,'" he said. "As my hand 'touched' this 'patch' I got a sudden sensation that can be equated to having a little shock, similar to static electricity."

Riaan snapped his arm away from the dark patch. His arm "suddenly started to feel very lame with needles and pins crawling all over my skin," he said. "It felt like my skin was contracting and getting very tight and I lost all mobility in my arm."

Although Richardson agrees that something has to be solid to physically touch something else, people can occasionally feel they're being touched without really being touched. "Maybe there was some electrical interaction," he said. "There needs to be something that raises the hair on your arm that would give you the feeling that you're being touched, like static electricity on a hairbrush." Of course, if it's an electrical field that's causing this sensation, you have more immediate problems to deal with than Shadow People. "If you're in a high enough field like that, you don't really have to be that close to it to actually feel it," Richardson said. "If you get too close, you get shocks that do hurt."

Different Dimensions

One common explanation many people give for Shadow People is that they're beings from a different dimension that somehow bleed into ours. Such is the conclusion of a paranormal investigator from California who goes by the online name Froggy. Froggy has seen Shadow People during investigations and in his personal life.

"It's interesting so many people having the same or very similar experiences," he said. "I too have had this phenomenon of being paralyzed, as if something was on top of me. My brothers have also had the 'attack,' and one brother witnessed a Shadow Person way back in the 1980s, before Shadow People was a buzz word."

During a November 2007 trip to the La Purisima Mission, Froggy photographed one. "I believe we live among many different dimensions," Froggy said. "Ghosts live in one dimension, Shadow People in another, and our dimensions can cross making it possible for us to come in contact with each other."

But how does Froggy's belief match up with science?

~~Marie Jones, author of *PSience: How New Discoveries in Quantum Physics and New Science May Explain the Existence of Paranormal Phenomena*~~, agrees other dimensions could be a possible source for Shadow People. "In my research into quantum and theoretical physics, I came across three concepts that really opened up the possibilities to me that entities from somewhere else could be coming here, showing up as either imprinted projections, or actual semi-physical manifestations, such as poltergeists, etc.," Jones said.

One of the three concepts is parallel universes. "Theoretically, if these infinite other universes exist, we really should not physically be able to access them based upon our known laws of physics," Jones said. "Yet even theoretical physicists...entertain the thought that perhaps the laws of physics on the other side allow for some crossover."

Jones' second concept has to do with spatial and temporal alternate dimensions. "We are told that these dimensions could be infinite in size and exist at the tip of our very noses," she said. "Again, our laws of physics do not allow us to cross into them at will... but if there is some sort of resonant synchronization of energy, perhaps a doorway is opened just long enough to allow something to slip on through."

The third possibility, Jones said, is the Zero Point Field, which is an electromagnetic energy field that fills a vacuum. "Within this field lies the landscape of time, past, present and future," she said. "Linear time is only a human illusion ... but in the quantum world there is no linear nature – it all happens at once." In this field, Jones explains, is everyone who has died, is living now and will live again. "That opens the door to the possibility that certain people tap into this field for information such as remote viewing, psychic abilities, and even healing others," she said. "It also presents the possibility that entities may be coming from the field, manifesting in our level of reality, which is really just one among many levels, than vanishing back into the field." This, Jones said, could explain the nature of most ghosts and Shadow People.

Although some physicists entertain the idea of these multiple or parallel universes, Richardson and Toomey aren't among them. Said Richardson: "If [Shadow People] are solid and we kind of ignore the people who say they put their hands through them – I always hate to bring this up in this context – but if there were extra dimensions, there could be the effect of something similar. [Shadow People] might actually be people. I'm skeptical of that, but it's possible. We're just starting to figure out that sort of stuff."

Toomey's not as forgiving of the theory that makes 11 dimensions possible – String Theory, in which there are more than four dimensions, each small and stringlike. "String Theory is math, it's not science," Toomey said. "You can postulate there are 11 dimensions, you can't test it. Until String Theory produces a testable hypothesis, it's not science. It might as well be the paranormal. Interdimensional is about as science fiction as it gets."

Sleep Paralysis

Sardonic Laconic (an online name; he is sardonic, after all) saw the Shadow Man as a child. "Those memories have haunted me ever since," he said. "When I was six, I saw it ... at my dad's new house towering over my bed," he said. "I couldn't move, and I don't remember what happened next. All I remember is trying to scream, but there was this horrible weight on my chest."

This type of encounter is all too common, and psychology has a name for it – sleep paralysis. As an anonymous poster to my paranormal blog put it, "It's a simple physiological phenomenon, similar to sleepwalking. When you go to sleep and dream, your brain shuts down the connection to your body."

so that you don't walk and thrash about in your sleep, just 'cause you're moving in your dream. When this connection fails to shut off, you get sleepwalking. When you wake up before it can reconnect, you're paralyzed until it turns back on. End of story. No aliens, no Shadow People, just science."

April Haberyan, a psychology professor at Northwest Missouri State University, agrees that Shadow People encounters are probably the product of dreams. Haberyan said that when people sleep and enter the REM phase, "it's very common for them to see things."

Online poster Midnight Haze reported an experience somewhat similar to Sardonic Laconic's although during the encounter, Midnight Haze was an adult. "I had lived in a two-bedroom apartment for at least twelve years," he said. "I was sleeping on my side when I was awakened by what felt like someone sitting on my bed behind me. I felt what felt like someone sticking their finger to the middle of my back and I was now paralyzed. I could not move but I could open my eyes." When he opened his eyes, there were three black figures in the corner of the room. "Two were as tall as adults and one was shorter," he said. "Now in both fear of someone behind me and the figures in the corner, I started to pray to God to help me as I closed my eyes. I opened my eyes again and the Shadows were gone and I could move again."

According to Haberyan, this kind of encounter – the fear, the paralysis, the entities – is normal. "There are hormones in REM sleep that paralyze the major muscle groups and it's called paradoxical sleep," she said. "[Although] this happens during REM, these people don't stay asleep and the hormones are still in their bodies. It can last up to eight minutes and they feel pressure on their chest and can see people – even people they know."

According to psychologists, sleep paralysis, which is known as "Old Hag Syndrome" in paranormal circles for feeling someone sitting on your chest, is relatively common. Although Carrie Moller didn't feel the pressure on her chest when she experienced Shadow People, she did, Haberyan said, see people. "Last week [mid-June 2008], I settled myself into bed and began to drift off to sleep," Moller said. "I was dreaming while in that half-asleep stage... In this dream I was actually settled in the exact place I was settled – asleep in my bed, on my stomach, lying on the right side of my face – so in a way one could argue that I wasn't completely asleep." Then she felt something in the room, or someone. "I remember feeling the presence of people at the bottom of my bed, so – in my dream – I turned my head around and saw three or four Shadow entities shaped like people at the bottom of my bed."

Fear gripped the sleeping Moller because this dream was lucid – she knew it was real. "It seemed like they had been waiting for me to fall asleep," she said. "So I called for someone to watch over me while this was happening." She felt her body rising out of the bed and floating toward these Shadow beings. "I had no control over my actions," she said. "As I was floating towards them, they put out their arms in front of me and I immediately was pushed out back into my bed where I woke up and could remember everything vividly."

Was Carrie's encounter a dream, or was she visited by Shadow entities waiting for her to fall to sleep?

Archetypes

The black hooded figure has haunted humans for centuries. It may appear as a Shadow lurking at the periphery of vision, or it may fully reveal itself, as it did to Luke. "I've been visited by what I presume to be the same Shadow three times in my life, and the memories have haunted me ever since," he said. "I first saw it when I was two, in my bedroom at my dad's duplex."

Luke watched the hooded figure walk up the stairs and stand in his doorway before it backed away and disappeared. “When I was six, I saw it again at my dad’s new house, this time towering over my bed,” he said. “I couldn’t move, and I don’t remember what happened next. All I remember trying to scream, but there was this horrible weight on my chest. About two years later, it poked its head into my room at my mom’s house and stared at me for a moment before stepping back into the hall and disappearing.” Although Luke has experienced other Shadows, the Hooded Shadow Man is the only one that frightens him. “It has always seemed very menacing,” he said. “It’s quite different from other Shadow People I’ve seen.”

Reports of Shadow People are worldwide. Why would people from the United States, Europe, South Africa, and Australia see the same entity? Marie Jones is convinced it’s societal. “I have spoken with many folks in the paranormal community, and many have a growing belief that these entities are a sort of archetypal presentation of the collective belief system of the times,” she said. “In other words, as a collective species, we share many beliefs and paradigms, and those often manifest in our ‘mythology’ or how we perceive the unknown around us.”

Throughout the decades, what’s reported in paranormal events seems to evolve over time. For instance, with regard to UFOs, it started in the late 1800s as slow-moving airships, advancing to fighters buzzing planes during WWII, saucers in the 1950s, and finally today’s black triangles – each incarnation keeping one step ahead of our own technology. “So, could these Shadow People in some way be [the latest] collective manifestation of our archetypal fears?” Jones asked. “We are living tense times.”

Wayne A. Chandler, associate professor of English at Northwest Missouri State University, said these ominous dark figures have had centuries to become familiar. “The features, even down to the robe the Grim Reaper wears goes back a long, long time,” he said. “The idea of the Grim Reaper, the cloak and the big scythe, goes back in Europe to the Middle Ages. It’s an agricultural kind of symbol; the scythe is for cutting wheat in the fall. Obviously when you cut wheat down you kill it.”

Spectral figures and other aspects of the supernatural abound in classic literature, but the depiction of the paranormal in literature is quite unlike modern stories where the supernatural entity is the centerpiece of action. “In classic literature, the supernatural doesn’t take action, but prompts people to take action to mess up their lives,” Chandler said. “In *Hamlet*, there’s the ghost of Hamlet’s father who spurs him on to do horrible shit.” And Chandler doesn’t limit a culture’s literature to the written word. Movies often depict the classic Grim Reaper figure (*Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life*, for example), as do television programs, such as the cartoon, *The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy*. “I would give it a really broad definition,” he said. “[Look at] movies, TV, any messages seen from the culture and you’ve got this figure all over the place. Art, literature, even in places the figure is not supposed to be death. In *The Lord of the Rings*, the black riders just had a sword instead of a scythe.”

Tricking the Brain

Some scientific research suggests that Shadow People could be the product of electric stimulation. While studying the effect of electric currents on the brain, Swiss neurologist Olaf Blanke obtained some unexpected results. Low-level electric currents aimed at specific regions caused a test subject – a 22-year-old college student – to physically sense a Shadow Person behind her, according to the Sept. 21, 2006, issue of *Nature*. The student kept turning her head to the right and, when asked what she was doing, she said a Shadow Person was not only standing behind her, she knew it wanted to do her harm. When the current was killed, the Shadow Person was gone. When the current was turned

on again, the Shadow Person was back. Eventually, the woman reported the Shadow Person was sitting behind her trying to take things out of her hand. The fact that the actions of the Shadow Person mirrored the subject's own, led researchers to postulate that the woman's Shadow Person may be due to the electric charge, which was causing the subject to misinterpret her own actions.

A trick of light and shadow may also be to blame for many Shadow People. A team from University College London found dim lighting causes many people to see ghosts – when the context is unfamiliar. If we know what a room looks like in the daylight, we'll be less likely to mistake a coat rack for a moving, sentient entity. The less familiar we are with our surroundings, the more we imagine we see spooks. The researchers related this to seeing faces in clouds and carpets.

Chemist Rick Toomey said anything that throws off the chemical balance of the brain can cause all sorts of problems. "All sensation is in the nervous system and it's all chemistry," he said. "If even one neurotransmitter is chemistry, you can wreak havoc with that."

Sleep paralysis, biochemical imbalances, and inter-dimensional travel are a few of the explanations proffered for some Shadow People encounters. But other encounters, dark and sinister, may have a more terrifying explanation – demons.

The Metaphysics of Shadow People

Metaphysics represents a philosophy that digs beyond the physical world. In the Greek philosopher Aristotle's work, *Metaphysics*, he explored the nature of existence, what sort of things exist, how things can exist when the natural world is constantly changing, and the possibility/impossibility of humans understanding existence. Today, the field of metaphysics deals with exploring that which is not seen, nor recognized by traditional science – namely, phenomena that deal with the mind. Ghosts, ESP and lucid dreaming fall into this realm, thus metaphysical explanations for Shadow People differ widely (even bringing extraterrestrials into the mix, as you will find in Chapter 14).

Sally Rhine Feather, the Director of Development at the Rhine Research Center near the Duke University Hospital in Durham, North Carolina, said there is no metaphysical consensus when it comes to Shadow People. “I don't know if there is any one professional perspective,” she said. “Some phenomena like poltergeists have been thought to be spontaneous PK (psychokinetic energy) unconsciously produced by repressed young people and possibly some haunting phenomena might even be the same thing.”

Mud Shadows

In *The Active Side of Infinity*, anthropologist and author Carlos Castaneda (1925-1998) called these Shadow entities Mud Shadows. Castaneda, who catalogued paranormal discussions with his mentor Don Juan, often saw these Shadows gathering and dancing at the edge of his vision. Metaphysical author Jack Allis is an expert on Castaneda's writings and said the fear people in the presence of Shadow People feel is real – and serves a foul purpose. “These (Mud Shadows) basically feed upon human energy,” Allis said.

According to Castaneda, there are two types of other-dimensional Mud Shadows – the organic entities and the inorganic entities. “The difference between the organic and the inorganic entities is that the inorganic entities were just sort of shapes that could both be up to good and up to no good,” Allis said. Good meaning these entities may barter for your energy; bad meaning they were out to steal it. “Some of them were up to seducing whoever they were close to. There were also the more benevolent [organic] ones.” These “organic” benevolent Shadows do not feed off humans, but won't attempt to stop the “inorganic” Shadows from doing so due to a noninterference morality.

Most of Castaneda's contact with these Mud Shadows came during lucid dreaming, a dream state in which participants know they are dreaming and can, in some way, control the dream. Many people in the paranormal field equate this type of dream with astral travel. “It wasn't dreaming, as in the ordinary way we dream,” Allis said. “It was actually an inter-dimensional journey,” which left Castaneda – and anyone in this state – vulnerable to attack by the inorganic entities. “Some of it was very nasty,” Allis said. “They were trying to capture him. What these entities are after is our energy. Their motive is to steal our energy.”

Gabe, from California, has read Castaneda's work and found these Mud Shadows inserting themselves into his life. "These Shadows," he said, "are our predators. They feed off of our energy and this is why they are often seen hovering over us." As a child in Missouri, he woke to see a woman in a flowing gown hovering over his bed. "When I blinked my eyes, the woman disappeared," he said. Gabe's awareness of the figure frightened her off, but he knew why she was there – she was there to feed.

Spiritual Shadows

Psychologist Stan Gooch of England, author of *Personality and Evolution: The Biology of the Divided Self*, *The Neanderthal Legacy: Reawakening Our Genetic and Cultural Origins*, and *Creatures from Inner Space*, says Shadow People are real, as are so many other paranormal entities. "I believe in all forms of 'spirit visitors'; incubi, succubi, poltergeists, Shadow People, ghosts – they are real," Gooch said. "But I do not think they are discarnate spirits, although I don't absolutely rule out the possibility."

Gooch, who has seen a Neanderthal materialize at a séance and made love with a succubi, situates these experiences in psychology. "They are creations and projections of our 'other mind' and brain," Gooch said. "But they do produce real, independent events in the real world."

As these entities thrust themselves into our lives, two forms emerge – benevolent and malevolent. Jack Allis said malevolent encounters far outweigh the benevolent ones because only one type is playing by the rules. "I definitely believe in a spirit world," Allis said. "What a spirit world is just other dimensions. The reason the benevolent spirits aren't more active, it's an unwritten law of the universe not to interfere in the affairs of the indigenous people on the planet. The benevolent follow this, and the malevolent don't care. They're malevolent." Although Allis is convinced some of these spirit visitors are evil, he won't go so far as to call them demons. "I don't put a whole lot of credence in the traditional Christians," he said. "There's a right way to practice Christianity and a wrong way to practice Christianity. The wrong way...those people tend to see demons anywhere."

D.H. Parsons, president of The Bliss-Parsons Institute of Metaphysics in Columbia, Missouri, investigates hauntings and has encountered Shadow People more than once. "Both I and several of our investigators have seen these beings on investigations," Parsons said. "There are several theories as to what these are," including ghosts and, yes, demons. "In Christian interpretation – according to some paranormal investigators who happen to be Christian – some believe them to be a demon, or some sort of evil entity," Parsons said. "Who knows? My own feeling is that a Shadow Person is another representation of a residual memory of a person who had such a strong personality in life – good or bad – that a bit of their energy remained here in this dimension after their spirit crossed over."

This left over energy, Parsons said, is caught in a "loop" and replays over and over again. And, he added, he hasn't personally had a negative encounter with a Shadow Person. "In all of the investigations I have done I have never had any experience of a bad nature – no physical or spiritual attacks of any kind. Most of the time the spirit beings are either friendly to us, or confused by us, or curious as to why we are there. But they have never done us any harm, not even the Shadows."

Although many more people have encountered the malevolent Shadows (see Chapters 8 and 9), Debbie has encountered a benevolent Shadow Man. In 2000, she was lying awake in bed when pain bit her deeply. "Suddenly my head hurt horribly for no apparent reason," she said. "I was in a state that I cannot describe except to say that I was experiencing de-realization to some degree."

Corresponding with her pain, three balls of light "about the size of a 21-inch television set" appeared in the room. "I 'felt' someone tell me that they were 'his' protection and do not get up," she

said. "I was then prompted to turn my head toward my closet and standing in front of it, as well as at the foot of my bed, was the figure of what appeared to be an older man."

Although she couldn't see features, she knew this darker-than-night Shadow, highlighted by lights that were not from her room, was a man. "Lights were what formed his shape," she said. "As well as the prominent Shadow, the man was nothing more than lights or energy of some kind.

"Again, I felt someone tell me that he was a wise man just visiting to see how I am," she said. "I could move my head and eyes around the room with no disruption as to the location of what I was seeing. I just continued to stare at it for about 15 minutes and never got up because 'another' was keeping me from wanting to do so and so out of respect I just sat there and looked."

Eventually, the Shadow Man and the lights disappeared, and with them went her headache. "Now here's the real eerie part," Debby said. "I was in the coffee aisle of the store and glanced over at a box of green tea and the shape of the man that I had seen was the same shape of the individual on the box whose name is Kang. It was on a Good Earth green tea package. Being one that deals with much synchronicity in their life, I accepted the experience as a change of lifestyle so I put my coffee back and bought tea."

Demons of Christianity

Tonya and her family moved into their new house in 2005. New house, new neighborhood – and new visitors. It was nothing they'd expected. "I have seen a Shadow Person run by me more than once," Tonya said, and she wasn't alone. "My son has seen a black orb with smoke on it in his closet and the dog with him went crazy with fear."

But the thing that appeared to Tonya's daughter was terrifying. "My daughter woke up and there was a thing looking at her," Tonya said. "The Shadow had pointed ears, large eyes with no pupils, the eyes had blood veins running down to where the pupil should have been."

The thing vanished, but the encounter was enough for Tonya's family. "I have had the house blessed and did a ritual cleansing but we still see activity," she said. "We all hear things in the closets and they have sliding doors and sometimes open by themselves."

Bishop James Long, pastor of St. Christopher Old Catholic Church in Louisville, Kentucky, has studied demonology and the paranormal for years, and knows stories like Tonya's are real. "Shadow People must be taken seriously and they can be quite dangerous," he said. "Quite often, when a human spirit tries to manifest itself, its form is black, or otherwise known as Shadow. It is energy trying to manifest itself so that it can appear to have the physical characteristics it had when living on earth."

These entities can move, communicate, and physically attack. "Certainly Shadows that attack are demonic in nature and should be avoided at all times," Long said. "I would strongly encourage anyone who witnesses a dark Shadow to be careful. It could be a human spirit trying to manifest itself, but it could also be demonic in nature."

How, then, can you tell which Shadows are spirits and which are evil?

David grew up in a house in Junction City, Kansas – a house with a dark, dark past. "The only thing I was told about the history was that the former owner's son was into the occult and Satanism," David said. "The walls had to be scrubbed because there were satanic symbols on the walls."

And in this house, David saw Shadow People. "There were a man and a woman on my bedroom wall across from my bed," he said. "They were there almost every night."

The outlines of the couple looked to be dressed in the style of the 1940s. "They looked as if they were conversing," he said, "and would occasionally stop and look over at me while I was falling asleep." These Shadow figures didn't frighten David, but he never knew if the entities were good,

evil.

“There is always a way to find out if you are dealing with an evil entity,” Long said. “Should you see an apparition of what appears to be a human spirit, there will always be some type of defect if it is demonic in nature.” Only true human spirits, he said, can manifest themselves to the exact detail as when they existed on Earth. “Remember, demonic entities will try to trick you and appear as a loved one that passed,” Long said. “But when you view the entity, you will notice that the entity will have a flaw.”

Has there been an resurgence of demonic activity in recent years?

Stephan Jansen of London thinks there has, and it's because of the breakdown of faith in society. “The problem we are facing in the UK at the moment is mainly due to the fact that society does not have faith in any God anymore,” he said. “Money, jobs, etc., have taken over in people's lives, and God does not feature or fit in anymore.”

Jansen feels the Church is largely to blame for this. “The Church in itself is growing weaker by allowing things that the Bible outrightly states is wrong,” he said. “Binge drinking, drug abuse and sexual perversion – to name but a few – are getting worse, and these things take your mind to a different level of consciousness that you cannot control in the state you are in.”

Once this happens, Jansen said, a person's spiritual defenses are gone, “and you are like a big, red tour bus just waiting for demons and evil spirits to board.” These entities, he said, are Shadow People. “My guess is that the so-called Shadow People are nothing but a certain type of demon that finds it easier to cross over into our world. Although some seem to be oblivious of the fact that they are here, they are indicating that a window has somehow mistakenly been opened or left open into their dimension.”

The Jinn of Islam

In the world of Islam, a paranormal entity known as the Jinn, which the Western world has turned into the genie, is at its best indistinguishable from man, and is at its worst our predator. “Jinns are invisible entities believed in by most all Muslims and Middle Eastern folklore,” religion expert Dashti Namaste said. “Jinns get in and out of human spheres regularly, and it is believed that any human is able to make ‘contact’ with a Jinn.”

Taken from the Arabic root-word “Janna,” meaning “to hide,” the Jinn can become invisible, and change its form to appear as anything – man, animal or plant. Allah created the Jinn from “smokeless flame of fire” before creating man and bestowed powers upon the Jinn to test their loyalty to Him. Flying, teleportation, shape shifting, invisibility, and the ability to possess humans are some of those powers. Jinn who are Muslim rarely use their abilities for harm and can even marry and have children with human women.

Jinn who are non-Muslim are considered evil and warriors in the army of Shaytan, the devil. These non-Muslim Jinn are dangerous and considered “wicked.” These Jinn appear as dark figures and often lurk in ruins, cemeteries, market places, and deserts waiting for an unsuspecting human soul to stumble in their midst. The wicked Jinn, much like the demons of the Christian world, are great deceivers and may present themselves as the ghost of a loved one to insert themselves into a human life.

The good news about Jinn is they can be banished through prayer. The bad news – at least for non-Muslims – is a Jinn is attached to every one of us. When a non-Muslim dies, the Jinn will sit on their grave and curse them until Judgment Day.

The Wandering Souls of Hinduism

Although there are many prominent *sampradayas* (denominations) of the Hindu religion of India and a great diversity in belief and practice within these sampradays, the concept of the *Antarloka* – the dimension between worlds where souls wander from incarnation to incarnation or when people are asleep – is held by many Hindus. And, from Antarloka comes a paranormal entity that corresponds to the description of Shadow People.

“In Hindu theology, there are unseen worlds beyond the physical world called the Antarloka and the Sivaloka,” Suhag A. Shukla, interim Managing Director of the Hindu American Foundation said. “The Antarloka, which is closest to our world, is where souls live in between births in their astral bodies. It is possible for some of these souls to appear in our world in this astral form. What is being described here as a ‘Shadow Person’ would, in Hindu thinking, likely be the wandering soul of a person who died an untimely death and is earthbound for a period of time.”

These souls in their astral forms can be simply lost, either wandering about in a daze or agitated. “For a person sensitive to their presence, they would be quite upsetting,” he said. “Possession is possible, if rare, and can be dealt with by a Hindu priest.”

Unseen Realms of Buddhism

In the world of Buddhism – an eastern Asia religion that focuses on peace and an austere way of life – dark Shadows exist just beyond our periphery; entities within our reach we shouldn’t touch.

“There are many living beings existing in realms not seen by the average person,” Rev. Her Yuen of the online journal of Buddhism, *Dharma Bliss*, said. “But it [is] better to spend time studying the Buddha’s teachings than probing into the Dark Shadows.”

Yes, these “Dark Shadows” exist, said Alex Wilding, an Oxford-educated expert in Tibetan Buddhism who runs a Buddhist center in the UK. But they can be dealt with. “Tibetan Buddhism is rich in dark, threatening entities,” he said. “The teaching is that although they really do exist ‘out there,’ they only affect us through the power of our true demons: hatred, stupidity, pride, grasping and envy.” These “personal demons,” however, can be controlled. “They can be defeated by 1) appealing to something better, like the Buddha of compassion 2) fearlessness and 3) abandoning hatred, stupidity, pride, grasping and envy.”

Native American Shamanism

Centuries prior to the expansion of Western culture, indigenous peoples worldwide learned and practiced metaphysics, much of which has been lost, or ignored. Allis feels many of the truths man seeks lie in these cultures. “Native American spirituality – it hasn’t been contaminated,” he said. “All the indigenous cultures from around the planet [knew the nature of life]. Western civilization is built on a mountain of lies.”

And Shadow People? Yes, American Indians knew – and know – what these entities are. Wahde Cherokee, and these Shadow Beings have a long and terrible history with the Cherokee people. “They’re usually larger than an average person,” Wahde said. “They’re humanoid shaped, but not proportionate to a normal person. Their appearance is more monstrous in nature.” Wahde should know, he’s seen them.

According to Cherokee tradition, these Shadow Beings are the product of medicine people going wrong. “There seem to be a classification of spiritual beings that are Shadow for the most part. The things can be manipulated by bad medicine or bad magic,” Wahde said. “They either take that form to attack other people, or they use some other spiritual being as a spiritual attack.”

These medicine people, Wahde said, have perverted the intended uses of their powers because of

their own greed. “All creation is created for good, but with time it has been corrupted,” he said. “~~To call it bad medicine, some even reject those terms. Medicine is used for good.~~”

Medicine men once used their power over spirits or their power to take the form of foxes, wolves, owls, and Shadow People during warfare or to hunt – now they use it against one another, but at great sacrifice. “People who have used medicine that was one time used for good, they start to use the medicine to hurt other people for vengeance, to control,” Wahde said. “At some point they lose the power and are parasitic and feed off others. They cease to be people and become something else.”

The Cherokee refer to these dark medicine people as *sgili* (witch) whom you wouldn’t notice passing on the street. “Yeah, or in Wal-Mart,” Wahde said with a soft laugh. “They’re still alive to some degree, but they’re not necessarily considered human.”

These Shadow People attacks range from physical attacks – which can target a specific body part like the heart or liver – to spiritual attacks. Although Wahde said older Cherokee don’t like to speak about bad medicine, *sgili*, or Shadow People, the spiritual aspects of life aren’t dangerous. “They’re called superstitions, but a lot of people around here have personal experiences with these things and they’re considered practical. For the most part, those spiritual things are not anything to worry about. The people are the problem.”

Phillip Hensley, a Cherokee from Mexico, Missouri, has a more benevolent view of Shadow People than Wahde. “Shadow People are the deceased. They are deceased people,” Hensley said. “They will make a very sudden appearance when you least expect it. I remember one elder telling me about Shadow People. If you ever have that feeling that someone is in the room, that’s also a Shadow Person.” Hensley said Shadow People are part of the belief system of the Anasazi, Hopi, Navajo, Apache and many other Native American cultures.

Hensley has also had his own experience. “It was in October 2003,” he said. “I was at the – of a places – the Natural History Museum in New York City.” He was standing in a section featuring artifacts from ancient Mesoamerican Indian cultures, when he “heard a voice inside of me,” saying “do not take any pictures because you are on sacred ground.”

Hensley looked around for the source of the voice and saw a Shadow Person he knew was an elderly Native American woman. “I approached her and greeted her in Cherokee,” he said. “She would always avert her face from me. She said nothing to me. I didn’t hear it at all. It was like a voice inside of me. That’s in the Apache tradition. That’s how these beings communicate. I just greeted her and she went away.”

Hensley hasn’t told many people about this encounter; he considers it a gift. “I took [this experience] as a meaning that I was on the right path,” he said. “I don’t really talk about it very much. It’s just something I hold very special.”

Ghosts

Pauline Allred, a researcher for the Native American Osage Indian Tribe, was lying quietly, preparing for sleep, when she saw something in the light pouring into the room from the hallway – and the something moved. “I was going to sleep at home on a couch,” she said. “[When] it appeared near the top of my head.”

The black figure she felt to be a man moved slowly as she watched, then she grabbed for it. “I reached to touch what appeared to be a hand reaching for me,” Allred said. “It vanished.” But she knows the dark hand may come back. “They are entities and appear suddenly when you least expect them.”

Carrie Hebert and Pat Murray, co-founders of Paranormal Researchers of Ohio, have investigated

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