

CONVERSATIONS WITH GHOSTS

by

Alex Tannous

Introduction

CONVERSATIONS WITH GHOSTS is a collection of documented ghost stories based on the case histories of Alex Tannous, a contemporary Dr. Karlos Osis at the American Institute for the Study of Psychical Research. GHOSTBUSTERS was based on actual casework and investigations by the Tannous-Osis team. Located in a brownstone once owned by William James on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, the ASPR is a comfortable building at ease with other-worldly occurrences. Here Alex and Dr. Osis have worked together for almost fifteen years investigating apparitions, hauntings and out-of-body experiences. During this time, Alex, who also assists in psychic crime detection and government work, has made a name for himself as one of the foremost ghosthunters in the country.

Apparitions are not, as commonly believed, all more or less alike. They vary widely. Some are perceived as an unrecognizable mist, others are so lifelike they are almost mistaken for real persons. Some behave as though they are re-enacting shadows of tragic events from the past, others act only in the here-and-now and relate directly to observers. At times, apparitions are seen by everyone present--even by cats, dogs and other household pets. On other occasions, apparitions are an entirely private experience like ESP, invisible to all but one person. There are apparitions who associate themselves with personal objects and apparitions who recur again and again in so-called haunted houses.

After years of experience, Alex and Dr. Osis have learned to rule out apparitions occurring around certain pre-existing conditions. They steer away from PK phenomenon or investigations in which adolescents are present: often, as any Stephen King reader knows, adolescents will create their own psychokinetic fields and phenomenon. This type of case is disregarded as not representative of true manifestations.

Alex is also reluctant to explore reported cases where emotional strain exists in the family or inhabitants of the house. Overwrought emotional states can contribute to the manifestation of phenomenon with similar effects to those caused by adolescents and PK.

At the ASPR, Dr. Osis will take phone calls pertaining to hauntings or observed apparitions. He collects all the information which will determine whether or not the case merits investigation. At this point, the case is brought to Alex's attention. If Alex feels any interest in the site, he and Dr. Osis will visit the house. On the first visit, family members are sent out of the house, after which Alex walks through the rooms gathering impressions and interacting with Dr. Osis. This conversation is taped. Dr. Osis questions Alex in an attempt to elucidate phenomenon and perhaps give tentative explanations and suggestions. After their discussion, the family is invited back into their home to answer questions which may or may not help explain the events.

When the family is reassembled, Dr. Osis will often break the ice by asking, "Alex, will you tell them what you found?"
What do we have to reconcile here?"

Alex's and Dr. Osis' first visit will generally be followed by a second, which might be as extensive as an all-night vigil, during which Alex and Dr. Osis watch and record the manifestations with various test instruments. Spontaneous phenomenon are difficult to pinpoint and it isn't easy to get the sensing devices right to the spot at the moment the phenomenon is occurring. Dr. Osis' assistant, Donna McCormick, strings sensors all over the house. Typically, an infra-red beam crosses the stairs (often the site of the most ghostly traffic), string-gauges and thermostats are placed in the most "haunted" rooms. TV monitors and chart recorders are installed on stair landings.

The chart recorder is tailormade to help Dr. Osis record several of the physical events often associated with apparitions. For instance, if an apparition is reported to walk up and down a stairway, the stairway is staked out with a recorder. Dr. Osis' equipment can record movements and vibrations via strain-gauge sensors in any location under investigation, just as Alex himself has been monitored in the ASPR during out of body experiments. Strain-gauge sensors detect small movements and register them permanently on strips of paper on the chart recorder. Concurrently, Dr. Osis can tape any walking sounds associated with the apparition. This information is then analyzed with specialized custom-built equipment: the sound is slowed down to approximately one fifth of its original speed so the sound waves can be visually traced, then the various

frequency wavebands of the noise are graphed one by one onto the strip-chart recorder. In addition to the sound equipment, extremely sensitive thermometers register split-second changes in even very slight drops in temperature.

After the data is compiled from sensing devices, as well as from Alex's psychic impressions, the historical records of a house, site or persons represented in the haunting are researched and added to the case study for the ASPR files.

Once all the information is gathered, Alex counsels the ghost. If the ghost wants information given to someone, Alex will see to it. If the dead need to be reconciled in some way, Alex makes sure both parties understand exactly what happened during the event in question. If it is a case of injustice that must be rectified, Alex will see the situation is adjusted to the specifications of the ghost or apparition. Occasionallly, with the help of an object previously owned by the apparition, Alex will solve the case over the phone.

The majority of cases in the ASPR files are closed, but not all of them are easily solved. Sometimes Alex will have to go back and resume his work. When he is finished, if the ghost no longer disturbs the houe or the site, the event which caused teh apparition or persons at discord within the house is then termed to be reconciled.

Alex believes that ghosts exist because they must tell their story to someone who can set their lives and actions into

balance. Alex agrees, however, that it will always be a metaphysical question as to why ghosts appear. If, as some religions promise, existence after death is a happy and fulfilling experience in the vastness of eternity, why would an apparition choose to limit itself to our world? Is the entity progressing towards some sort of consciousness? Are apparitions simply imprinted energy fields rooted to a particularly charged intense emotional incident like the shadowed after-image of an atomic blast?

It is Alex's belief that the entity is, in fact, moving forward in its own consciousness but, at times, has the ability to return for the sole purpose of "balancing unsupportable events or human injustice in experiences where they had lived." At the appropriate time, the entity can create an apparition or phenomenon whose aim it is to restore the universe to harmony, including his or her own individuality within the wholeness of the universe. This can be done in any way the entity sees fit because both the cause and concept of the injustice began with the entity itself. From there, Alex feels it is up to the overriding consciousness of the apparition to decide what it wants to do about a given situation and how it wishes to convey its cry for help and understanding. Sometimes, in begging for help, an entity will cause horrible things to happen.

A common cause of any appearance of an apparition occurs when another person tries to restore or change a setting or house by adding an extra wing to the building, dividers to a room, a wall to demarcate property--anything that represents physical change. In these instances, Alex is convinced that the entity doesn't understand it is now in a different dimension and resents the fact that its world is being altered in an attempt to suit the needs of other people.

Apparitions will often haunt a location where they feel an injustice has been done, in a frail attempt to balance the cosmos and restore harmony to the universe through the attempts of the living to intervene for them and their perceived "cause". Ghosts will also manifest if the situation of the living people in the house or site at all resembles the situation in which the ghost found itself before death. For example, ghosts who had mourned the death of children during life will often attach themselves to living children in the house. In other cases if a promise has been broken, a ghost will manifest in order to remind the living that they have responsibilities to keep their promises, even to people who have long since died.

And there are cases in which a ghost will manifest out of simple love of life. Several years ago at a summer seminar held at a small college in New England, Alex was showing another psychic around a lake on the campus. Both of them saw a little girl playing with two dogs. As they watched, the little girl rushed into the bushes and came out moments later followed by

only the larger dog. After asking around, Alex discovered that the small dog once belonged to a student. The dog had died but came back to the lake because it loved to play.

Most people agree that personality survives death and that we all have certain sensitive and inexplicable powers which alert our subconscious to dangers, allowing us to collect information on a highly subconscious and non-rational level. Alex maintains that everyone has spontaneous psychic powers that come into operation as long as the external consciousness and the medium have an agreement that the entity can and will talk to the medium.

But Alex takes the procedure a step further. If we can assume that there is a consciousness at the site of a disturbing incident, it can reveal itself in ways that are almost like slow-motion replays. In fact, Alex describes his perception of these occurrences as almost like watching a movie of the incident itself. Following that the entity steps in and, through what Alex describes as a one-on-one dialogue, gives the means of reconciliation and settlement of balance to Alex. During this interaction, Alex is not his everyday self. He undergoes a change of consciousness similar to that displayed during an out-of-body experience for which Alex has been studied at the ASPR by Dr. Osis.

Ghostly manifestations are not quite as random as they may appear. Alex is convinced there are no truly evil ghosts; any unpleasant effects of the presence are only the result of an unhappy lingering energy resulting from the act

of injustice or imbalance itself. This event does not influence the individuality of the entity, but it is their individuality and personal choices which result in the decisions made as to how to rectify any deed in a personal way before the entity can move on and detach itself from the binding echo of the event in which it has found itself bonded.

Occasionally, it is even possible for ghosts to be in two places at once. A ghost can appear to a dying relative and haunt a site and be seen by a living person at the same time. Again, this is not so strange when one considers the acceptance and documentation of out-of-body experiences in living human beings.

In answer to the original question of why ghosts persist in this material world when there is a beautiful "after-life" awaiting them, Alex answers that ghosts are still earthbound because the part of them that manifests on the earthly plane is attempting to deal the best way they know how with urgent unfinished business. Alex is convinced that in investigating apparitions, appearances and hauntings, it is his job to act as a ghost psychologist and help the troubled entity to work out its problems on a one-to-one basis in the same way he would go about helping people suffering in everyday life. Alex makes it his job to find out why the apparitions are appearing, what they are unhappy about, and what they feel should be done to rectify the situation. He then proceeds to help them work out their understanding of what to them

are incomprehensible events, and leads them into making
peace with the situation which they cannot seem able to leave.

Chapter Eleven: HOUSES IN WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN
MULTIPLE MANIFESTATIONS

Houses with multiple layers of consciousness are perhaps the most difficult cases for Alex to solve. Very old places or sites often have events attached to them that begin with one key parallel dramatic event which triggers the same type of recurring behavior in subsequent inhabitants of the site. In the Hawk Mountain Case, Alex describes this as a spiralling effect. Spiralling effects occur when multiple manifestations converge on a site, pulling people into the house with similar character weaknesses as the original inhabitants who had begun the cycle with a specific psychic event to which they are eternally attached.

Cedar Rapids

The Cedar Rapids case is a good example of a house with multiple manifestations in which several incidents relating to children had made the house sensitive to preschoolers.

One rainy afternoon in the autumn of 1980, Dr. Osis received a call at the ASPR. In a relatively calm voice, a young woman named Mindy began to relate the occurrences which had recently disturbed her family. She, her husband and their son lived in a beautiful old frame house hidden from the road behind a stand of maples. A well cared for lawn stretched all the way from the house down to the

down to the two-lane highway. It was a peaceful setting, an ideal dream house and a good place to raise children. But the former inhabitants of the house had been far from happy.

For years Mindy and her husband had heard things in the house late at night, but never with any regularity. Most of the noises they managed to ignore. They liked their home and didn't mind the occasional light switches being turned on and off, objects moving around with no explanations, doors slamming, or even the sound of a woman weeping from the upstairs master bedroom. But when their five-year-old son, Stevie, started to have horrible nightmares about people fighting over a child and telling his mother that a little boy had died in his room, Mindy started to worry.

Stevie's nightmares got worse and worse until finally he became terrified of sleeping at all. He complained of being shut up in a small dark room, although his room was really big and airy. At her wit's end, Mindy called the ASPR.

Dr. Osis assured her that he and Alex would work on the case. He discussed the matter with Alex and they agreed to investigate the house from the ASPR: at the time Alex had several important speaking engagements which did not allow him to go to Cedar Rapids.

Thursday night, Alex went into his black box, built for him at the ASPR for the purpose of out-of-body experiments. The black box is a tiny room with a pillow and rug where Alex sits in complete darkness. Alex is hooked up to vital sign

equipment and measurement devices in the next room with which Dr. Osis monitors his contact and communications with a remote speaker system. Many of the men's conversations have been taped for the case files. Later, Alex and Dr. Osis go over the tapes to discuss the case with the person who has asked for help.

After Alex made himself comfortable in the box, he informed Dr. Osis that Mindy's house dated from 1917. Until Mindy's family moved in, the same family lived there until the death of an elderly couple, who were the last residents. When questioned by Dr. Osis, Alex replied that both had died of natural causes, although he seemed less certain about the female. He felt she might have died as a result of over-medication, perhaps intentionally. In any event, her death had not been easy. Neither of them, he understood, had been very happy.

Alex described the woman wearing a long dress that reached below her ankles. She spoke to him, repeating over and over, "I did not mean it this way. I must say, it was not meant this way." Small and plump, the mid-sixties aged woman paced in front of Alex in what he felt was an attempt to settle the scene for the elderly couple and the present inhabitants of the house.

Not longer after that, Alex picked up the collective energy of a scene that had been repeated in an upstairs room of the house. It was the early 1920s. A blond child about five or six was sitting on a black oak floor in his parents' bedroom as a heated argument raged around him.

"Is the argument between the parents, or between them and the child?" Dr. Osis questioned.

Alex commented briefly, "Between them." There was a long silence that left Dr. Osis waiting. Finally Alex continued, "The man appears to be becoming very violent. He is very angry, in fact. The woman is trying to hold on. I see her rushing over to pick up the child, it seems she is convinced that the man is going to attack the child. I see her holding the child. The man tries to take him from her. The woman is screaming and the child is crying and the man keeps saying 'something has to be done, something has to be done.' Now she is running into a small room adjoining their bedroom where the child is placed on the bed."

Dr. Osis asked Alex to describe the room. Alex said that it was very dark. There were no windows. It was a small room, hardly big enough for the child and his mother. Alex continued, "The man is saying, 'It's for the good of us all.' I guess he wants to put the child away and the woman doesn't want to. I have my doubts that the other children are even allowed to see the child. They may not have seen him at all."

After a long silence, Alex commented, "I can see why a child would be frightened staying in such a place. I can hear moaning from the child...I would say this is about six months before the child died." Alex ended the day's session then, expecting the next day to go back to the same scene and resume his investigations with Dr. Osis. But the next afternoon, Alex found himself in an entirely different situation.

Alex settled himself back into the black box and began talking over the intercom with Dr. Osis. "There's some kind of structure. It is a small building...." Alex hesitated. "You know, Dr. Osis, it was the beginning of the same structure that was completed in 1917. There was some kind of structure on that land on which a woman had previously died. There are several cross-sections of things here."

In the adjoining room, Dr. Osis sat forward with interest. He knew now that they were dealing with multiple manifestations. "What does the woman look like?"

"She's about thirty-five. Dark hair. She wears a bonnet. She's very well dressed. The dress goes, Dr. Osis, I would say close to her ankles or just a little above them. So it's not a 1917 scene."

"Can you say more about her?"

"Just...."

"Does she want to tell you something?" Dr. Osis probed.

"At the present time, no. She just seems to be floating." Alex's voice faded and Dr. Osis checked his instruments.

"Does she want to tell you something that happened to her?" Dr. Osis continued. "Did she die a violent death? A natural death? Perhaps accidental?"

There was a long silence before Alex finally spoke.

"Dr. Osis this is crazy. I have never seen this before."

"What is it?" Dr. Osis was staring at the instruments, they were jumping wildly.

"It's like a small tombstone. Perhaps the woman was buried there and moved later. Or else she's still buried there."

Or maybe she's buried nearby and nobody knows anything about it. It's a tombstone with a mound. She's pointing at it. All green grass with a mound like a piece of rock. It's not a regular tombstone, Dr. Osis. She keeps pointing at it but I don't see any name on it. There's something running through my mind, something like Margaret, but I don't know what that means. It's fading. I'm holding her hand. Is anything happening?"

Dr. Osis checked his instruments, the needles were going crazily. "Right now, yes," he told Alex.

"We're talking. She's telling me that there was a dreadful epidemic or disease in which everyone in the village though she was dead. She was buried alive. She's pointing to the grave." Alex stopped abruptly. "Oh, my...." His voice sounded in great pain, "She was married. At the time she was pronounced dead, she was pregnant and buried alive."

"It must have been terrible to awaken in the grave," Dr. Osis said sympathetically, partly for Alex's benefit.

"She is telling me, 'Now I have told you. This completes the event.' She is standing at the foot of her grave talking to me. There's this mound and a slab of rock at the other end. Now she's disappearing, it's as though she's lying down and resting."

The next thing Dr. Osis heard was Alex's normal speaking voice. "I'm back, Dr. Osis. There are tears streaming down my face."

Two days later, Alex and Dr. Osis told Mindy that her house was haunted by two women; a woman with a retarded child who died in the house and the woman who'd died in the smallpox epidemic. On the phone, Mindy confessed that something very odd had happened to her.

She had been sleeping in her room when, all at once, she woke up and looked around. She saw what she described as sparkles in front of her eyes. They shimmered against the wall for several second and then disappeared. In their place was a dark rectangle that looked like a screen. Mindy watched, fascinated, as a person walked through the screen. When she got out of the bed to investigate, the person vanished. Even though Mindy looked around the room, she couldn't find a trace. Her curiosity satisfied, she turned around to get back into bed and saw a pair of bare feet on the quilt. There was a pretty dark-haired woman sitting there weeping. Mindy walked over to the young woman. She didn't touch her, but she consoled her. Eventually, the woman stopped weeping and vanished.

From then on, there were no more incidents in the house. Stevie stopped having nightmares about strange people he'd never seen in strange rooms he'd never been in. Once the two women, grieving over the fates of their children, had been given the chance to communicate their histories, the manifestations ceased. Perhaps the hauntings were activated by the presence of a happy, healthy child in the house.

At the further investigations of Dr. Osis, the family who had previously occupied the house affirmed the story of the retarded child. Dr. Osis discovered from further research that a smallpox epidemic had killed a thousand people in the area during the time Alex described.

As Alex reported, "Dr. Osis says every time I go into a house I quiet things down. Well, it's part of our research."

One of the best examples of a house with multiple manifestations was demonstrated in the Hawk Mountain case. Hawk Mountain's disturbance evolved from one seminal dramatic incident that took on a momentum of its own and produced a "spiralling effect," a process of unleashed psychic energy unique to certain cases. For over a century, Hawk Mountain had been drawing certain types of people, attracting individuals to the house who would repeat in varying degrees the themes inherent in the core disturbance. The young man currently living in the house was involved with many women at once and had the same name, as well as being the same age as one of the original participants. In 1982, a report was phoned in to Dr. Osis from the Audobon Society suggesting he might want to investigate a house in the Poconos that had a long history of supernatural visitations. The house was a study site for the Society, as there are a large number of hawks in the area, and the house had been donated by a woman with an interest in hawks. The old tavern on the property had become a housing facility for the Audobon curators who worked at the sanctuary. The inn was a squat stucco-covered fieldstone dwelling with a slate roof. Low beamed ceilings and wide pine floors were beautifully

kept by Seth, the young assistant curator. Seth claimed to have seen the kitchen light switch go on and off frequently. His girlfriend had heard a young child crying in the night. There were sounds of footsteps and bodies being dragged around the house. For several months, the glass doors in the dining room opened and closed violently. When Seth stuck a tab of cardboard in the doors to make them harder to open, they still flew open--with the tab of cardboard carefully in place.

A friend of the curator, who operated the bird-banding station, was sleeping in the livingroom one night when he was awakened by the sensation of a heavy pressure on his chest. The minute he woke up, the feeling was gone. The odd thing was he found himself standing out on the back porch looking at his watch, realizing that it was three o'clock in the morning and he had no idea about how he got there.

Legend had it that, in the mid-1800s, a particularly unscrupulous German owner made it a habit to get the travelling salesmen drunk at the bar as they came through the pass (formerly an Indian trail) on the highway that the tavern dominated. The salesmen would usually be loaded with goods, and the cruel owner would take advantage of the drunken salesmen by dragging them into the woods and beheading them with an axe. The owner would often be seen hawking the stolen wares, but no charges were ever levelled against him, even though he was said to have murdered twelve men. Soon after he died and was buried, lightning was reported to have struck his grave.

Alex and Dr. Osis arrived at Hawk Mountain on a clear October day. The young curator and his girlfriend had gone away for the weekend in order to enable Alex, Dr. Osis and Dr. Osis' assistant, Donna McCormick, to explore the place without interruption. After Dr. Osis and Donna strung their equipment around the house, Alex began his tour of the house. As usual, Dr. Osis waited for Alex to make his comments and observations, listening calmly and asking for clarification when he needed it. The house had been visited by several psychics before, but nothing had been laid to rest.

Alex was tense and nervous and Dr. Osis knew he had seen something already. They sat in the sparsely furnished diningroom around the table, three cups of coffee and the tape recorder.

When Alex was ready, he leaned forward toward Dr. Osis and the tape recorder. "The energy here is very good," he began tentatively. "But at the same time, inside of that energy there are events which took place that have not been balanced."

"This energy you see is the present occupant?" Dr. Osis asked.

Alex nodded. "The present occupant certainly has something to do with activating that energy at the present time. He is responsible to some degree. There is an indirect relationship to him. I don't quite know how to explain it. It's very new."

"You mean an energy which somebody brings back to life?"
Dr. Osis asked calmly.

"As you bring up one event, one experience, other experiences are connected to it," Alex said vaguely.

"You see many events? Lots of imprints connected to this?"

"That's right. The experiences are connected."

"But a similar type of experience?" Donna asked.

"It's a similar type of experience, but it is not the same person. Let me show you what I see. I keep seeing this man riding a horse. He's galloping. The man is very young. This is what I saw outside."

Dr. Osis nodded and made notes on the pad in front of him in his small precise handwriting. "What did the man look like?"

"The man looked - had a hat on. He's wearing what appears to be a uniform. I see this man stopping in front and coming in here." Alex rubbed his eyes. "I'm not sure if that's the baseline or the original element. How old is the man who lives here?" Alex asked, looking up through his shaggy eyebrows.

"He's young," Dr. Osis said. "How old? I'm not really sure."

"The man I saw on the horse is a very young man."

"Some event in the past?"

"Yes. At least a hundred years. At least."

"Uh-huh. Now," Dr. Osis continued. "The man on the horse. Is he the victim of the dramatic event, or did he cause a dramatic event?"

"He is involved in a dramatic event but just how, I don't know at this time. I would have to relive that. There is something lacking here," Alex said. "Something missing from the original building. Something like a cooking fireplace. Like an open fire. Now, let me get back into the consciousness of this energy. The interesting thing about all of this, Dr. Osis, is that the events that take place here are being attracted by a certain energy."

"HMMMMMM," Dr. Osis muttered.

"Don't get me wrong. It's not a curse, nothing like that. But things happen in this house because of the energy."

"Like disturbances?" Dr. Osis probed.

"Like galloping horses, heavy steps, a cry."

The three of them sat in the silence of the diningroom as the sun went down. Donna started to shiver. After several minutes, Alex began again, "Another scene that comes into focus, Dr. Osis, is a wagon carriage rolling up. Some vehicle with four wheels."

Dr. Osis nodded. "Yes. That's been heard quite a bit. Anything happen with the wagon?"

"Yes. Someone got out of the wagon and died in this place. Apparently, the basis of incidents in this place are related more to a woman than to a man."

Dr. Osis looked doubtful, but didn't say anything.

"You did see a man riding a horse?" Donna asked.

"Yes." Alex thought for a moment. "I doubt if a woman living here alone would be happy in this house."

Dr. Osis thought back on all the former tenants of the building. "They said so," he said.

"They said they were happy?"

"I talked with the one who lived here," Dr. Osis said.

"Was she living alone or married?"

"Married."

"That would probably be different."

Dr. Osis checked his notes. "I suppose I can understand that. Okay. Let's sum up. You see a young man outside riding a horse. You hear heavy steps upstairs, an impression of a woman and before, you said somebody had died. Was it violent or natural?"

"Violent." Alex stood up, put his hands in his pockets and began walking about the room. "I can almost point to the spot just about here."

"We are in the livingroom on the right side of the house," Dr. Osis announced for the benefit of the tape recorder.

Alex scratched his head. "I am willing to say some of the things happened right in here, in this room."

"Now you say somebody was killed," Dr. Osis prompted.

"Did you see the killer or the victim?"

"This is what I'm going to relive, Dr. Osis. It's a member of the family of the owners. That person died violently here. The person who died is about twenty-seven or twenty-eight. I have to say he's the same person I first saw galloping on the horse. I also have to say...now I'm seeing the woman. A carriage and a woman betrothed and she learns

here in this room that the man she was to marry was killed."

"So she drove in here and discovered that?" Dr. Osis asked.

"Yes." For several moments, Alex looked out at the cars and trucks whizzing by on the highway outside the house. The curator's dog began to bark from the backyard. But Alex didn't notice anything, he was back reliving a scene a hundred years ago. "She remains and marries," he guessed before correcting himself. "No, no, that's not it. I'll have to come back to that. I'm trying to balance the energy here now," he explained. "It's something totally different. One of the things I told Dr. Osis is that I want to find the origin of the disturbance so I won't tune into a lot of subsequent things. You know," Alex nodded over at Donna. "You're sitting practically where a lot of these things actually happened. There was an open fireplace right here."

A few minutes later, Alex added, "There's pressure on my chest."

"On your chest?" Dr. Osis asked.

"Yes."

"I've been hurt very badly," Alex continued. "I am lying on the floor. I mean, I'm reliving the character of this person. It is the young man; the young man is blond. He is slim, about five-ten. He has a very light beard. His pants are tight at the

bottom and he's wearing what appears to be a vest and a coat. All matching. And some kind of boot."

"Riding breeches," Donna guessed.

"Any name that comes?" Dr. Osis probed.

"I know that the man's name is a biblical name. In fact, the man carried on his horse one of the few Bibles in the region. I can tell you why the basic disturbance occurred. The person who killed this man was never punished. I mean, nobody ever did anything about it. One died out of suffering, the other out of guilt. The person who died said they would be tied together forever. Unless one was released, the other would never be, either."

Alex walked around the room, concentrating. "May I ask you a question? Did anybody who lived here before have any experiences of something going through the house?"

"Sure."

"There were others?"

"Oh, yes. In what you saw, did you get a glimpse of the killer?" Dr. Osis asked gently.

Alex spoke slowly, "The way the person was killed was with a knife. I can feel now why my chest and stomach were so painful."

"You see a knife or cutting instrument?" Dr. Osis asked.

"A knife. In the chest. The person with the knife appears older than the victim. He's bearded.

Dark. I'd have to say he's much older than the man on the floor. It's crazy, but I would have to say that he's forty or older."

"That's quite a bit older."

"He is a big man, a heavy man. He's very strongly built. He's not skinny. He looks distinguished, but yet..."

"What is that characteristic you were beginning to tell me?" Dr. Osis asked.

"I don't know how to describe it, Dr. Osis. He has a mean eye. I don't know if there's something wrong with the eye, but its something to that effect."

"That would be a good characteristic to note," Dr. Osis told Donna.

Alex was completely caught up in the events he was seeing; it was almost as though Donna and Dr. Osis weren't in the room. "You know something? Why he dilled that person? And I know they didn't punish him. The man is a father of a daughter who claims that this man had an affair with his daughter. True or not, I don't know."

"It was not a robbery?" Dr. Osis prodded.

"No."

Dr Osis began to look through his notes in an attempt to make some kind of sense out of the story Alex was relating. "So what caused the murder was the sexual transgression with the mean-eyed man's daughter. I she the woman who came to look for the man?"

"No, she is not. What I can tell you, Dr. Osis, is that the whole basis of the disturbances started here."

"Real or imaginary?"

"Well, the accusation is real, I don't know if the act actually occurred or not. In any case, the man lying on the floor was killed for this. He was killed out of a Biblical belief that for such a thing, death was called for. There's moaning and breathing. He lived for awhile. I see people trying to take care of him."

"What about the woman who came?" Donna asked.

"Did you get anything about the killer's name?" Dr. Osis repeated.

Alex thought for a few moments. "I'm willing to say that Seth was one of the names."

"Seth? To which man does this name relate?"

"I would say to the man who was killed. And I would also say that the sound of that bird is telling me I'm right,"

Alex grinned as a hawk cried from the blue spruce tree next to the dining room.

"And the killer?"

"The killer? Well, I'd have to go back into his mind. The affair with his daughter, she was only about twelve or thirteen years old."

"So it was a moral offense."

"That's right. I believe that the father's name was something like Isa or Isaiah or Isaac." Alex sat down in the chair nearest to Donna. "You know I don't believe in

curses, Dr. Osis. For instance, I don't believe that one person can put a hex on someone else. ~~But~~ I do believe that something is still very much present and has caused a lot of related incidents."

"But what you said is the crimes spiral. That was the phrase you used, a spiralling effect."

"The spiralling thing here means that other events have taken place."

"Of the same nature?" Dr. Osis asked.

"I'm not sure. Criminal. I'm sure of that."

Dr. Osis nodded thoughtfully. "So this event was the start of it all?"

"Yes, that's right," Alex agreed. "What has happened is that this crime was committed, this murder. Apparently, the man who died was somehow attached to his murderer." Suddenly, Alex became animated. "And I want to tell you something else... oh, boy."

"What happened?"

At that moment, Dr. Osis and Donna stiffened in the chill that swept through the room. Through the window came the scream of a hawk.

"Are you telling me I'm right?" Alex smiled to himself. He jumped out of his chair and headed for the porch where the current caretaker's friend found himself standing in confusion at three o'clock in the morning. "I'll be right back. But I'll tell you what happened to the man who killed him!"

Dr. Osis and Donna followed Alex around the back of the house. They watched as Alex stood by himself,

a little way off from the house looking down the road towards the highway where trucks careened back and forth along the road. Donna shivered. Lex was talking to himself. He turned around. He clasped his hands behind his back and walked to Dr. Osis and Donna, his face sad. The three of them walked back to the living room.

"The killer was riding down the road away from the house on his horse when something came toward them. It scared the horse. The horse threw the man and broke his neck."

"A bird or apparition frightened the horse?" Dr. Osis started the tape recorder.

"It wasn't an apparition, Dr. Osis. It was a great animal cry."

"Horses get frightened," Dr. Osis agreed.

"In other words, Dr. Osis, the killer was fleeing on his horse and his death was punishment. The man he killed had not done anything to his daughter. It appears as though, in the transcendence of his death, the killer discovered he was wrong."

"I see. Now as I remember, the first thing you saw when you came up the stairs was something like an energy spiral, right?"

"Yes."

"There were other incidents that followed, but this was the first."

"Sometimes they say that when a bull smells blood he goes to the next victim too. Something like that?" Dr. Osis asked.

"That's right. Then something or someone came into the house and did something, and for awhile the disturbances stopped. But what I'm getting, Dr. Osis, is that they began again with Seth, the new caretaker who is living here now."

"I see," Dr. Osis commented. "There certainly was a drama here and a very nasty one. But let me understand the spiral. You asked me if I understood what you were trying to explain to me and I didn't. You say that the crime occurred in an atmosphere of revenge and hate and spread somehow to the people in this house who perpetuated crimes again. That's the idea?"

"That's right." Alex paused and added. "I have a feeling that the man who was frightened, who got his neck broken has been seen. I don't know what Seth saw, he must have had some heavy things happening around here."

"You mean," Dr. Osis clarified in an attempt to understand, "there were relationships around here having to do with Seth, the current curator, that brought this all back?"

"That's right."

"Those were the conclusions I had come to myself," Dr. Osis agreed.

"And before that, the original crime worked as a

curse on the family drawing them into this pattern of death and murder."

"And the woman you saw?"

Alex walked around the room. "After the murder, the girl drove up in a carriage. She was very young, maybe seventeen, and she was supposed to marry the man lying dead on the floor. She never recovered from the incident. She remained here, Dr. Osis and became a prostitute. She died here giving birth to a child. I'm heavy with energy, Dr. Osis. There are chills running up and down my spine."

"Certainly," Dr. Osis decided, "if she knew how he was killed and why it would be even more torturing. Certainly a dramatic scene. The disturbances after that depend on the original situation, the one we've been discussing. Am I correct in that assumption?"

That's right, the whole family was caught in this thing."

"So the legends about the murdering innkeeper seem to be definitely off beam. They're not consistent."

Alex smiled. "Everyone likes a legend, Dr. Osis. The legends of people being killed in taverns, you find this all the time. But if we are looking at what I relived for this place, it doesn't mean it couldn't have happened later, after the base-line event."

"You see connecting shadows hovering about a central event such as this and that's what is causing a kinetic...you mentioned a woman?"

"She remained here."

"The attacked woman?"

"She lived someplace else."

"Are you cold?"

"There is a great deal of pressure in this room,"
Alex said.

"That's what people claim."

"I feel cold," Donna said. "But I didn't think it was anything, I thought it was just the altitude."

"No." Dr. Osis corrected.

"I'm really freezing and there is a great deal of pressure. My eyes, my whole body. There's a freezing in my back and pressure in my chest," Alex paused. "Hold on, I'm going to the bathroom for one second."

Ten minutes later, Alex came back to the livingroom. "I don't know what people are feeling, but I'm feeling the pressure to the point that it's really physically affecting me."

"It's an oppressed feeling?"

"Yes. Tired. Sleepy. I feel drawn."

"Your feeling was that the crime somehow holds the victim and the killer in this place. But you said the killer was causing the disturbances?"

"That's right. The killer is the one who believes there is something going on between the killer and the man on the floor. The crime occurred because the killer

was avenging a sexual incident so any sexual thing...."

"Would reactivate new rage," Alex finished.

"You said you heard a woman's voice, or didn't you?"

"Yes, the woman who travelled here. Screams, moaning, a lot of commotion. She travelled a long way to get here. The girl never recovered from the incident and she became a prostitute, as I said before."

"So ver hard," Dr. Osis' voice was soft with empathy.

"Her life was killed, so to speak."

"Yes."

"And you know something else, Dr. Osis, the heaviest thing here besides the killing is sexual energy. What is amazing is that after the death of her father, the girl who accused the young man of rape came out and admitted it wasn't true--that she made the whole thing up."

"And," Dr. Osis volunteered, "this boy named Seth, the curator who had the same name as the boy accused of rape, was having girls over here nad reviving the whole story. He's single, about the same age as the boy who was killed. From the initial event, people in the family got caught up in the spiralling energy."

Alex worked at the house for several weeks reconciling the killer and his victim. As he later told the story (corroborated by newspaper reports of the time), the inn had been owned by a German family who's son had been in love with a seventeen year old girl.

They became lovers and planned to be married but, when the woman drove up in the carriage, she found her betrothed dead on the floor. When she found out why, she was destroyed. The local schoolmaster's daughter had accused the young man of rape. As the girl was only twelve or thirteen at the time, nobody thought of questioning her. She had been lying, nobody thought of questioning her. She had been lying, however, and didn't tell the truth until it was too late. Her father rode off and killed Seth where he was waiting at the bar for his fiances. Seth, in his dying moments, cursed the girl's father, telling the man he had never raped his daughter and that they'd be locked in death for the rest of the time.

Before Seth died, the murderer's horse was spooked by a hawk on the road and the schoolmaster fell off his horse, broke his neck and died. Seth had been right. The two men were united in death. They both haunted the house. Upstairs, the ghost of the young woman disturbed the bedroom where she died in childbirth. Her child had been a deaf and dumb bastard who died at the age of twelve and haunted the house as well. Meanwhile, the entire downstairs was populated by ghosts of the merchants killed by the innkeeper.

When Alex and Dr. Osis finally left Hawk Mountain, the inn was at peace and Seth had only the hawks to contend with. The "spiralling effect" Alex related to Dr. Osis had included, in all, perhaps twenty-eight apparitions.

Chapter Three

LOVE STORIES

Alex has encountered many instances of ghosts who loved each other so completely in life that they promised to meet beyond the grave. Sometimes the lovers died in different times or places in dramatically charged emotional situations. When they were unable to find the person for whom they were waiting, they began to prowl houses or sites in an endless search.

In 1983, Alex went to investigate such a case in a house set in the lush Pennsylvania farm country. The current residents of the house were by nature practical and down-to-earth, hardly the kind of people who would be carried away by their imagination. But they could no longer rationally explain the activity in the farmhouse even though they had tried to ignore it for months. Doors opened and slammed shut, footsteps could be heard on the stairs, inhabitants of the house would suddenly be overcome by cold chills. Furniture moved around in the upstairs bedroom and favorite objects got lost in the livingroom, never to be found again.

During the 1800s, on the site of a stop on the underground railroad where slaves were sheltered on their way North, a young couple in their early twenties lived in the house together. They were very much in love. That was all the family knew about the history of the house.

Alex began by walking slowly through the interior,

starting in the kitchen and moving to the upstairs bedroom. He felt cold chills as he got closer to the bedroom itself but, once he walked into the room, he felt himself in the presence of someone sweet and gentle.

As he walked back downstairs to the livingroom, he began to get a sense of someone else downstairs, waiting impatiently in an atmosphere of overwhelming sadness. Alex returned to the kitchen again and, in a process which he has often described as watching a movie, began to see a beautiful young girl, her hair tied away from her face, her sleeves rolled up and skirts bunched around her waist. The girl was warming a pan of food on the stove and, as Alex watched, helpless to do anything, the grease splattered into the fire and the pan burst into flame. Horrified, the girl turned around and tried to put out the fire but it was no use. Minutes later, her clothes were burning and the young woman was on fire.

By the time her husband came home that evening, there was nothing more to be done. He picked her up and carried her into their bedroom where, two days later, she died. But just before her death she managed to tell him how much she loved him. She promised she'd wait in the house for him until he died.

The young man grew old in the house and never remarried. As she promised, his wife visited him, particularly late at night when he sat in the livingroom reading. To make sure he knew she was there, she believed that if she

moved objects around the room and playfully blew out the candles. He lived alone until his death, helping slaves across the border and keeping later and later hours. After his death, the house became more active than ever, particularly in the livingroom where it seemed some imaginary thing was ransacking the place for something it was determined to find.

Alex discovered the young man's ghost, grown elderly now, waiting for his wife in the livingroom where she had visited him so often during his life. Meanwhile, her ghost was lingering in the master bedroom. They were both, as they had promised each other, waiting in the house. But, because they had died in different times forty years apart, they couldn't find each other. The young woman visited the livingroom searching for her husband but he was no longer there. He was, instead, frantically searching for her in a different time period.

The first thing Alex did was to speak to the woman. He explained that her husband hadn't abandoned her at all. On the contrary, he'd been waiting for her downstairs for many years. Then he brought her into her husband's time so they could be together. Because the family currently living in the house had gotten used to the ghosts, they asked Alex to let them stay and to this day, the ghosts are still there living happily together.

In a haunted house in Lichfield Connecticut, Alex encountered another pair of lovers but, because of

the situation surrounding their deaths, they were more violent in communicating their distress at being separated than the gentle ghosts of the peaceful Pennsylvania countryside.

When asked to the house, Alex found a restored farmhouse decorated in a woodland Indian theme. The refinished upstairs bedrooms were full of war tomahawks, Indian rugs, quill baskets, small drums and strings of beads. For no apparent reason, Indians would drift in and out of the house to visit the family currently living there, bringing gifts.

After showing Alex through the house, Denise, a small dark-haired woman in her late thirties, and Denise's mother and father sat around a sturdy oak table in the kitchen and talked to Alex. As he listened to their description of the events that lead them to call the ASPR, Alex began to get a sense of the house and its surroundings.

Denise was animated and friendly and she tried to make a point of remembering as much as she could for Alex's benefit. "In nineteen sixty-nine, this place came on the market and I immediately snapped it up because I wanted acreage on all four sides of my house. I was tired of being crowded," Denise explained. "The people moved out and I decided to have my brother, who works for a paint company, come down with sprayers and just redo the whole house white. That way I could just come in whenever I wanted on my own time and do my own decorating.

"So he came down with two or three of his friends and the big paint sprayers. One of the guys was upstairs doing the bedroom and the door kept shutting on him. Finally he went downstairs and told my brother that something strange was going on upstairs. Somebody didn't like him painting that room, was how he put it." Denise took a sip of coffee and folded her hands on the table.

"Well, they all went up and told him he'd been drinking too much beer and they helped him finish painting the room. They didn't have any trouble. I moved my stuff in and nothing was going on, and then I took my mother up there." Denise smiled at her mother, who smiled back.

"She walks in and the first thing she said was, "There's someone else in the house." Denise and her mother laughed.

"So, I say, 'Yeah, ma you're going through one of your things again, right? ' See," Denise looked across the table at Alex. "I didn't want to deal with any weird things because I'm this complete sceptic."

"She was friendly," Denise's mother said. "I knew it was a she right off. The cat could see her."

"That's right. Ma had this old siamese cat..."

"It was a friendly feeling," Denise's mother ran her fingers along th surface of the oak table. "I always spoke to her."

Denise waited for her mother to say more but, when she didn't, Denise continued. "So, anyway, my sister Diana, who is younger than me, and her girlfriend and a boy from Nebraska named Carl used to get the

Ouija board out. They could work that Ouija Board like you wouldn't believe. I mean, they'd come out with two or three things every time, right?"

Denise's mother nodded.

"So, they were in here playing with it one night," Denise said, indicating the kitchen, "and I say, okay, you guys are so great, tell me the name of whatever it is that's been wandering around the house." Denise swallowed. "The board told them this girl's name was Beatrice and she died in a fire in the area and she lived out in this maple tree. So, I don't know, I checked with the people who'd lived here before and they said no one had died in the house itself but that the old barn had burnt down and there were charred beams and things up in the attic. Anyway, there was a maple tree way up on the knoll out there that had been struck by lightning a while ago. I don't know why, but my sister kept insisting the fire killed this Beatrice." Denise took a deep breath.

"It went on like that for weeks. They'd talk to her, we'd live our lives and I figured, so Beatrice is around, so what? But then I had this experience with her. I have a long bedroom up in the main section of the house that goes toward the attic and I was fixing the ceiling. We had a darkroom up there. We got a little carried away but, anyway, a piece of the ceiling fell down. I was planning to seal up the ceiling because it was getting to be spider time and I knew I was going

to have spiders in my bedroom if I didn't seal it off. I sealed it off, but ten minutes later, the board was down again. I put it up again. I really nailed it tight. Two days later, it was down again. The third time I put it up there and it came right back down. I stood in the middle of that bedroom and I said, 'Look, Beatrice, do you have a problem, or what? You obviously don't want me to shut off the attic, so I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going out to the main section of the storeroom and I'll open up the back section of the attic so you can get outside, okay? But you should leave my ceiling alone because if I don't seal this off, I'm going to have spiders down in my bedroom and I have this fear of spiders.'

Denise started to giggle. "I couldn't believe I was standing in the middle of an empty room having this conversation. Anyway, I put the board back up on the ceiling and this time it stuck. No problem."

"Sometime later, my mother was sitting down here with me and my older brother. He's even more sceptical about all of this than I am."

Denise's mother agreed.

"He thinks it's all female imagination. Anyway, he was in the bathroom shaving and mother was telling him about the latest episode with Beatrice while he's giving her a lecture about how all of that isn't possible. All of a sudden, this picture hanging on the bathroom wall falls onto the floor and my brother ends up

flying over to the other side of the diningroom and he tells me to go in there. We take a look. The only way that picture could have come off of the wall is if somebody lifted it off and dropped it."

Denise's father chuckled.

"That's another thing, my father could always sense Beatrice when he was sitting over there at the kitchen table."

"She read the paper with me."

"Yeah, he gets the Brunswick paper and he's always reading the obits. Every time he'd get to the obituary section, he'd feel something looking over his shoulder. The Ouija Board told us Beatrice was looking for someone named Gordon."

"After awhile, I stopped reading the paper in the kitchen."

"We couldn't find out who Gordon was. She wouldn't talk about him."

"Could you identify him with the fire?" Alex asked.

"No. She kept calling it The Great Fire. She said he had to save books, something like that. We had years of her pranks. We got used to it. When something happened, we'd turn around and say, 'Well, Beatrice is at it again.' The Ouija Board said there was another person involved in all this named Ajax. Ajax came and told us that there was a bad spirit coming because of Beatrice and that this bad spirit objected to the friendliness she'd developed with us. The

next thing that happened was on my sister-in-law's birthday. In May?" Denise asked her mother.

"April."

"Right. Everybody was over and it was a beautiful day out, not one drop of rain. We were all having a good time when all of a sudden, there was a big crash. We looked out. The maple tree had fallen over. In the last three years, I'd taken all these pictures of the maple tree because it was a fantastic tree. Well, after it was struck by lightning, every picture in the house of that tree disappeared. We have nothing to document the plainest fact that there was even a tree there except the neighbours, who had three cows killed when the tree fell on them." Denise paused and shivered.

"That night nobody wanted to do the Ouija Board. They tried it again a few days later but it was a long time before they could get it to work. They got messages from Ajax and Beatrice, all garbled until Beatrice told them not to try to contact them anymore."

Denise's father leaned forward, cupping his elbows in his hands. "I don't believe in Ouija Boards. I'm a skeptic about communicating with people on the other side, with spirits on the other side. But there is definitely a female presence in this house. She warned me one time."

"Did this warning take place prior to the tree going down or after?" Alex asked.

"After. Just before that article came out in the paper about the house being haunted."

"May I ask you one question?" Alex asked. "The fire

in the barn, what was that all about?"

"One day the neighbours who lived next door before we moved in were burning a section of the old barn and it spread to the house."

"And," Alex wondered, "You said Beatrice said something about going back for books?"

"She said 'I went back' and there were two or three letters no one could make out and ten 'books' came. We just assumed she went back for books."

"So, the last time you really felt Beatrice was a year or two ago?"

Denise's father shook his head. "I sleep downstairs here in the corner so I don't have to climb the stairs. This last winter she hasn't been around much. There isn't a strong feeling of her. But the feeling would be just as strong as the feeling of all you people here. I would know that there was somebody and I was never frightened."

"All right." Alex stood up. "I would like to see the room where she was felt first. Maybe I can pick her up from the stronger areas and we can come back here. What I usually do is the same thing I do from the laboratory," he explained. "I go to the room where the entity or spirit was first felt and, because all entities have energy where they are, we can see if we can pick up on anything. Right now she's here. I don't know whether we can make contact with her personally or not. What I'm going to do now is relive whatever Beatrice wants to tell me."

Alex and Denise walked up to the bedroom where Alex went to the middle of the room. Denise leaned against the door frame, her arms folded across her chest, watching. When Alex started talking again, his voice was calm and slow.

"First of all, the name Beatrice is only because it is an American name given to her. She's an Indian. She was betrothed to an American man named Gordon. He was a preacher. They ran away together and escaped to this area, do you follow what I'm trying to say? Apparently there was an Indian reservation here. They were caught and killed by Indians. Her spirit is very very old, she has been looking for him all of this time. She knew this was the last place she ever saw him. He was tied to a tree and whipped. Perhaps struck by lightning. She watched him being burnt and then she was killed. That's why you have her here looking for Gordon. Gordon had been taken away, but she stayed here. I don't know whether or not she's buried here. This area was covered with a lot of woods." Alex thought for a moment. "There should be a marker somewhere. Have you found daffodils or anything in the field around, an unusual wildflower? Something that grew over and over again every year?"

Denise shrugged. "Not that I know of."

Alex walked around the room. "Now Ajax by the way, let's get back to Ajax. He's the Indian who helped them escape. Beatrice is not the young woman's real name, Gordon gave it to her because her name was an odd long name.

Gordon lived on an Indian reservation and appears to have been teaching something. It's almost like he was a missionary of some kind. He fell in love with this eighteen or nineteen year old Indian girl. He wanted to marry her. The tribe all said no so, with the help of Ajax, Beatrice and Gordon decided to leave. But the family of the girl started to track them down and found them here. Perhaps the reason Beatrice is attached to the maple tree is because that was the tree where they burnt Gordon. Anyway, you have Ajax, Gordon and Beatrice and they were all young people. And you have your younger sister and her best friend and Carl having conversations with the apparitions. And," Alex gestured around the room, 'you have all of the the Indian things: to them it's normal. These relationships are not made under ordinary circumstances. There's an attraction inherent to these things."

Denise looked puzzled. "But why did Ajax tell us there was an evil thing coming because of Beatrice?"

"From what I can gather, Gordon was tied to the tree and burnt at the tree, all right? I don't know the Indian background for burning people but it appears this boy was burnt. Now, whether they believed - if I'm interpreting right - that he was an evil spirit that they had to do away with, well, Ajax would still remember Gordon as an evil spirit. And he's still here, too. I mean, he doesn't leave, either. Remember, the only reason Beatrice is staying here is because she says she's looking for Gordon. But Gordon may not be able to find her. They died

at two different times. Gordon was in ashes before she was killed; she was killed afterwards. The understanding has to be made between the spirit and the soul. Her life is different from her spirit. Her spirit is still tied to the energy of the trauma. You can photograph that with cameras."

Alex paced the room, thinking out loud. "Ajax doesn't know either. He doesn't come through on this at all, only Beatrice and Gordon. She was a very pretty girl, maybe five-seven. Beautiful black hair tied back in pigtails and ribbon patterns down the front. Her dress is made completely out of beads. She was able to walk very softly and lightly. She's buried somewhere around here. Beatrice's energy is held here by that dramatic episode. There's a young man about twenty-nine or thirty, with a book. He's tied to a tree. Can you imagine the force of the emotions? Beatrice was held there, forced to watch him burn. It's no wonder she's still roaming around looking for him. The death was unjust and Beatrice is trying to right the imbalance. That's all."

After Denise and Alex went back to the kitchen, Alex united Beatrice and her lover and the Litchfield Ghost was gently put to rest. Denise admitted later that she missed Beatrice during the long summer nights when Beatrice used to talk to them on the Ouija Board.