



Permission is granted to make copies of this issue for personal use only.

## Table of Contents

Editorial..... 3

“The Screaming Jungle” by Charles Shaver..... 5

*Real Ghost Stories from Readers*..... 12

Reading & Viewing List..... 17

First published October, 2004



Published by Black Swans with Atom Bombs Publishing™ in pdf format October, 2007

If - E - Zine is trademarked and © copyrighted 2003 - 2007 by Charles Shaver. Permission is granted to make copies of this issue for personal use only. For all other uses: No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written prior permission of the author(s) and artist(s). Feel free to contact me at [LordShen@juno.com](mailto:LordShen@juno.com).

## Editorial

What was that sound? A midnight wind? A scurrying animal? A headless stalker? NO! I musn't let my imagination get the better of me. But the sound, it wasn't a single tone... it was more than one, strung together, like a diphthongmatic message, like someone speaking. Did I hear the voices of the disembodied hour? What was it saying?

No! It can't have been these things. It was the wind. Something explainable... just not with my limited knowledge presently. But how do I explain the tone, the pace, the control like that of a person talking, unseen? Am I eavesdropping on the dead? BAH! My imagination, that beast of all beasts, runs away with me! I cannot allow that. But... then again... how do I explain the icy fingers that touch me now as I speak? Surely it's Samhain.

The cycle of Mother Nature, something greater than our selves, of the seasons is complete. Another season, another harvest, another harsh summer, another year has passed its hands over us, working its magics... and now the fingers of Autumn, the dying time, begins to creep over us. It is time to celebrate the beauty of life.

But should I? Afterall, Samhain is pagan. And we, here in America, we are anything but pagan. We have microwaves, cars, cell phones, computers, medicine, the internet... the calling cards of science and civilization. We have leaders that lie to us for comfort (both theirs and ours), wars, violence in the streets, unwanted children dying from lack of love and lack of hope. Surely we are not barbarous pagans. Science tells us that witches, demons, gods and hells do not exist. Maybe we shouldn't celebrate this thing Samhain, this thing Halloween. Besides, God would not allow it. But where is God in our science? Some people have theories... nevertheless, no matter what science says, He is everywhere. And He would not like us to celebrate the old, our common heritage. Surely we are not pagans.

So I refuse Halloween. But, it seems fun. And it is what my grandparents and their grandparents before me did, what they celebrated. But, they were all uneducated. I have a college degree now. I cannot believe in nor celebrate the wickedness of the past. I come from them, yet I am not them. I refuse my heritage!

Science tells us not to celebrate the gods. I have no culture save for that which I buy at the GAP. So I will not celebrate this All Hollow's Eve. Surely, we are not pagans? But... but... but... still... what was that sound?

Alas, I know not what I speak of...

Happy Halloween everyone! And welcome to Issue #5 of If – E – Zine™. My humble thanks to all those of you who have followed me and this little online mag for the last year-plus. My writing, as of late, has switched from concentrating on short stories and working on this e-zine to much larger projects, so I'm a little surprised that this Special Halloween Edition of If – E – Zine™ is seeing the light of day, or the moonlight of night. But, sometimes a bug gets into you, biting you, driving you with obsession to scratch that itch. And I'm very happy for it! I thoroughly enjoyed bringing this issue together for you guys.

That has been the story of this issue.

Halloween can be broken down into two categories for me: 1.) A reason for those who wish to party and let loose to celebrate another year passed, another year survived. 2.) A reason to celebrate our history, our heritage and ourselves as another year has passed, another year is survived. Whatever your reason for celebrating Halloween this year is: be safe, have fun and, well, get off your ass and celebrate!

I look back at the previous four issues and realize that I've already learned quite a bit from publishing on the web. For one thing, not many people want to read a 30+ page short story while sitting in front of a computer monitor at home or work (it seems like a lot of people skipped over "The Sarge" in Issue #3). Because of this, I will be concentration on the EXTREMELY short story, or publishing longer ones as serials, spreading one story out over a few different issues.

Another lesson learned has been that I have little reason to "pretty up" the e-zine in any way with flashy shit. You'll find that in a lot in paper mags, mostly via advertisements. There's no reason for me to do that here. I am certain that solid, quality content will keep your interests piqued. Or, at the very least, entertained and hopefully wanting more.

Halloween, as you may guess, is a special time of year for me. I will refrain from the stereotypical reasons as to my personal affections for this time of year. I am certain that if you are reading this, you have a love for Halloween as well. So you already know my reasons to anticipate this holiday every year! I'll just say this: I love Halloween because it's fun!

As I said above, be safe this year. And have fun! Do something! Read a scary book! Watch a scary movie! Go trick-or-treating (yes, even if you're 30 or 40 or 80!). Visit a local Haunted House! I've even provided a listing of haunted houses being hosted by various organizations below! Look for one near you! Just enjoy the night.

~ Charles

Visit [www.HauntedHouses.us/](http://www.HauntedHouses.us/) to find haunted houses being held in your area.



## "The Screaming Jungle"

©2004-2007 Charles Shaver. All rights reserved.

---

I can't explain much now. I've no time to explain. I have to keep running. Bushes cracking, branches snapping around me. I can only run. I think I've lost my way. The moon. The moon. Where's the moon? I can see nothing of the moon nor of the stars. Wait. A waving of branches high above. The canopy is too thick here. And I've lost my way. But I can't stop. I've got to pick a direction and run. Just keep running.

A massive thud against my chest! And cracking? Was it my ribs? Was it a great claw? But the cracking, more like splintering wood! I slow, but somehow I continue on my run. It was a branch. I'm sure of it. I ran into a branch. But, for a moment, I could have sworn it sounded more like the breaking of bone. The gods know I've heard that enough times. I've heard the bones of animals I've killed crunch as well as my own in accidents I've had while on safari.

This was never meant to be a safari, though.

Stop it! I have to stop and listen. All I can hear now, running like madness maddened, is the cracking and snapping of the jungle as I bullet through it, and I can only hear that over my panting. Shit, I haven't thought of my breathing until now, it's shallow and loud. I've got to stop and gulp the air or else drown myself in my own stupidity.

Pant.

Pant.

Huff.

Cough.

By the gods, I feel as though I've been buried and un-breathing and I've just been unearthed for the first time in centuries.

A snap! But I'm not moving!

Another branch?

Stillness.

Stillness.

Calm.

Calm.

Could it be the beast?

More stillness.

More calm.

Nothing. I hear nothing. Perhaps I heard nothing. My mind is getting away from me. That won't do. We can't have Steven Krieg losing his mind in the jungles of some waste-hole island. That just won't do. Perhaps I should take a few more seconds to rest, to think, to clear my head.

Puff.

A deep breath. Let it out slowly, slowly. Maintain control. You are the master of your own self, Steven. You. No man and no beast has ever been nor ever will be. Just you.

Maybe now's a good time to go over things in my head. Maybe now I can take a few seconds, just a few, to tell you my tale.

Puff.

It started when our plane crashed. I and my assistant, Kebola Maitu Lorenzo, were on a hunting expedition to the Marshall Islands. Needless to say, we didn't tell anyone that. As far as everyone else was concerned we were on a scientific research venture. I've spread many millions of dollars across the board to conservation and scientific, especially zoological, research, so it didn't take much for me to pass myself off as a researcher. Just a few calls, a few photos and doctored documents, and I was off to hunt the mighty sea tortoise. No one in the Marshall Islands had ever heard my name. Armed with our papers, we got through everything and everyone fairly unnoticed.

Kebola, whom I affectionately call Keb-Keb, is a mixed-mutt of a man. He's Filipino, Chinese and Samoan. I found him while hunting wild boar in the Philippines. He was once a savage of a creature, often wearing nothing more than shorts. Not even shoes to protect his feet! Mind you, he is not an exemplary character of the people of the Philippine islands. Most of the people there have long ago adopted the culture, religion (largely Catholic), and drive for money necessary to survive in the modern, westernized world. But he lived in a very tiny rural village that depended, or tried to, on no one but themselves. What caught my attention was his knowledge of the still semi-wild, yet ever-shrinking, areas of the islands. He impressed me so with his quick, almost instinctual actions and keen eye in the hunt that I offered to take him with me as a personal assistant. I needed one anyway. He stammered and stayed his decision for a while. I think he didn't really want to come with me, yet lacked the courtesy to tell me thusly. I even offered him a salary greater than he's really worth, but his hunting instincts are hard to find beyond the board-room of the big cities. I had to have him at my side. Just before I left to return to my home in Ecuador (where there is also some great hunting!), I found him with all his worldly possessions, contained in a small purse of a sack, standing by my airplane the morning I was to leave for home.

He had already known some English, so little was needed in the way of his education in that, though he kept a part of his heavy accent. I did, however, offer to replace his salary with the education of a good flight school. He accepted and became, very quickly, a good pilot. When not at school, he was being taught the nuances of cooking and first aid. I also took a part in his education. I taught him how to properly shoot a gun. Again, he took to the learning very well. And soon I gave him full access to my huge collection of guns. He wanted to shoot an assault rifle? By all means! He wanted to carry a Smith & Wesson .357? He did! He could use them all, and quite well, too. All except, of course, my beloved Martini-Henry. It's not that he didn't have the capacity to shoot it, but because that gun was an antique. A beauty of a gun. It's the gun I carry now even as I speak. It had been in my family at least three known generations already. It had, what the Pacific Islanders might call, my Mana. It had embedded into it a part of my soul, my heritage, my family. And I could tell every time I picked it up. I shot better, farther and with more accuracy when I held that gun in my hands than with any New Age cybernetic military offensive weapon. It made me the hunter I am. It took down my first elephant in India, a tiger in Nepal, the wild goose that strayed from his usual course in Canada, the many, many bears in Alaska. That gun isn't a relic. It's me.

Keb-Keb followed my instructions closely. While he occasionally eyed the Great Gun, he never touched it. He flew me wherever I wanted. He served me dinner and reminded me to hydrate on the hunt when I hadn't had any water for a while. In every

respect he became a better assistant, and far more loyal, than I could have expected. In return, I fed him, clothed him sometimes better than myself, housed him in part of my own home, and even sat and ate my meals with him. That's what makes his treachery all the more puzzling to me.

We were in the Marshall Islands to find he a great sea tortoise. Not just any sea tortoise, but the most ancient one we could find. I now have one of the greatest collections of archaic weaponry in the world. But one thing was missing: a shield made of a giant sea tortoise's shell.

Keb-Keb seemed at first hesitant to go. He had never acted thusly on previous hunts.

“Don't you want to go?” I asked.

“I go,” he said, his head bowed. “I go because you are good to me. But I-”

He stammered a bit until I convinced him to speak his mind.

“The tortoise, she is sacred to islanders. I respect you as a hunter and as a man who takes care of me, but I have to say I do not like this.”

After some convincing conversation over dinner that same night, we were both laughing at his earlier remarks. A part of him, after all that, I realized was still a savage creature.

Keb-Keb flew us to the Marshall Islands. I bagged my tortoise. We were flying home when we hit an up-rush of wind that quickly turned into a storm. It wasn't much more than a heavy rain, but Keb-Keb had decided to climb to a higher altitude over the storm to make our trip all the more smooth and safe. The plane rocked and heaved with every gust, every pocket of air, and eventually started having engine trouble.

I called up to the cockpit via on-board intercom, “What's wrong?”

“I dunno,” Keb-Keb replied over the intercom. “Right engine dying. Maybe it's just gettin' knocked aroun' a bit too much. I check 'em.”

We flew on for a few more minutes. Our altitude did not change and we seemed to be losing speed.

“Keb-Keb?” I called again.

“Engine dead! I cannot start it! We losing speed! Cannot climb! Goin' down!”

And that's how we came to be on this island. I didn't get a chance to look at the landscape on our way down, so I knew nothing of our location. Keb-Keb, to his credit, landed our plane in a tree-filled jungle in a controlled crash. We walked away with not much more than bruises and scrapes, though his head had a nasty gash and welt. I suspected a concussion, and told him so, but he shrugged it off and quietly thanked whoever he worshipped for being alive.

The plane had been made into giant pieces of trash. The wings had been severed and thrown several yards in different directions. One engine was even lodged deep, having sliced like a knife, into the side of a tree. With a little investigation Keb-Keb was able to track down a leaky fuel line.

“We lucky we not dead, exploded.” Keb-Keb remarked. I had to agree. But we weren't dead. We were very much alive and needed to find our way out of the jungle, if there was one.

The jungle's canopy was thick and overpowering. I was surprised we had even been able to break through it to land on the ground. I grabbed my bag and gun, checked both, and we headed out to find our way to a clearing or at the very least a beach. With no

visible sun or stars or anything above us, I checked my compass. It had been shattered in the crash and I had difficulty using it. One minute it pointed north, the next southwest, without us so much as straying or changing our course.

“We’re lost,” I told Keb-Keb.

“I know,” he replied.

So we stayed on our course and hiked the jungle for about almost an hour. I was thinking of taking a break when Keb-Keb grabbed my right elbow.

“Mr. Krieg,” he whispered in my ear.

I turned to look at him. He was listening, not looking at me but peering deep into the jungle. His head moved side-to-side, cocking his ears to listen first this way then that.

“What is it?” I whispered. A predator, maybe. Not much would get Keb-Keb to stop me like this. Maybe the welt on his head was affecting him. But no, he was still listening. He was definitely listening. And I had come to trust his instincts for the hunt and survival on that very first day we met.

“The jungle,” he said. “She’s alive.”

I thought of his comment a moment, then looked out to find the predator he was trying to track. “All jungles are alive,” I said. “The insects alone make enough racket. And I’m sure this island is like no other when it comes to predators and-“

“No,” Keb-Keb, who had not let go of my elbow, tightened his grip on me. “She alive all alone. Not the animals. The jungle.”

I could not believe what he was saying. How could I? The poor bastard had a ghastly bump on his head that looked of pure wickedness!

“Come,” I said, removing his hand from my arm. “We’ll go a little way further and then rest.”

But we never got further. They came upon us, from out of the jungle, like the whispers of shadows. Savages, but not like that of Keb-Keb. More so. Almost stereotypically laughable. Charcoal had been smeared all over the dark skin of their unclothed bodies, outlining and representing their skeletons. Charcoal lines for ribs, femurs, and even skulls. Yes, even their skulls. Their heads had all been shaved cleaned and painted in different, maybe individual, skull-faces. They had nothing with them but long, thin spears that they pointed directly at us.

We were not killed, to my relief, but stripped of our gear and escorted back to a hidden cavern in a small hillside. It was beyond nightfall when we reached the cave where more of them were hiding. All inside were just like those who had captured us. And there wasn’t just a few, but a whole tribe of these great, black savages. I say they were hiding though I did not know immediately that was exactly what they were doing. I say it because they acted that way. When we entered the mouth of the cave that lead to the cavern, it seemed they jumped as one, some gathering up their spears, ready for a kill.

The women stood in corners with children, all naked, and some grabbing up rather wicked looking wood clubs adorned with sharpened rocks (of a kind of rock I could not determine in the darkness of the cavern). The look in their eyes spoke of fear and anger, the kind of which I had seen many times before when I had cornered a wild animal, readying myself to kill it and it readying itself to die fighting.

Several small fires were scattered about the cavern and collections of what I took to be families stood close to each fire.

We were ushered before a small, wiry man. He was the only man with a beard and gnarled hair. I understood him, by the actions of the others, to be the tribes Head Man. Most tribes have a Head Man, kind of like a Mayor, a General of the Army and a Sorcerer all rolled into one person. They spoke some eclectic language I'd never heard before, yet it seemed familiar in its Polynesian accents.

"Dey talkin' 'bout us." Keb-Keb whispered to me.

"You understand them?"

"Yes."

"I didn't know you spoke so many languages."

"Neither did I," Keb-Keb said ominously.

Presently one of our escorts returned and spoke to us as an emissary.

"He ask who we are and why we here," said Keb-Keb.

"Just tell them the truth! And ask them what island this is."

And he did so. The Head Man, squatting by a fire, listened intently. The emissary asked another question.

"They call this island Kanu. The Head Man apologizes for his bringing us here to the cave against our will. They were not huntin' us, but were returnin' from offerin' a sacrifice. They have not had many visitors like us here before, though there are legends of people from other places. It is forbidden for them to leave this island. They want to know when we leavin'," Keb-Keb explained.

It is not unusual to find some tribes still practicing the rituals of sacrificial offer, but the mention of it intrigued me. "Ask about the sacrifice. And tell them we'll leave as soon as we can." He translated my answer.

Some conversation went on between the emissary and the Head Man. Then the emissary spoke to Keb-Keb for a long while.

"The leader says he cannot let us leave. There is a great danger in the jungle," Keb-Keb translated. "A creature. Dey call it the 'Great Darkness'. Dey say it's like a shadow. It is the spirit of the jungle. It comes to life once every, I think, seven or eight years. Then it feeds on three men, one a night for three nights. Always people. It is like a great cat made of shadow. Remember? When I stopped you in the jungle? Dey thought they had seen it, too. Dey were hidin' when dey saw us."

"Long ago, a wise man told them to just offer the creature a sacrifice of three people. It has become a great honor to be sacrificed. But dey have learned respect for the Jungle Spirit. And dey understand that if they are caught outside this cave on a night when it hunts, dey may be taken and eaten by the creature instead of the sacrifice."

"A cat?"

"Yes, Mr. Krieg."

"They are afraid of a jungle cat?"

"Not just a jungle cat, but the jungle itself." Keb-Keb tried hard to stress this point.

"Keep it to yourself," I snapped. "Tell them if I can get my gun back from them and our gear, we can rid them of this creature permanently."

"But--"

"Tell them!" I half-yelled, with a point of the finger for emphasis.

He told them.

"The leader wants to know if you are sure you wish to leave," Keb-Keb said.

“Well, of course! I can rid them of this thing. And, tell them if I do, they’ll help us return home.”

Keb-Keb spoke and the deal was made.

I hadn’t noticed the night had conveniently passed. Keb-Keb helped me to ready the equipment, all in silence. Silence for fear of the death that might be brought by these friendly strangers. Silence for the loss of our plane. Silence for the impending hunt. We were always quiet just before a hunt and all throughout. But I should have seen Keb-Keb’s thoughts in his face.

He handed me some food, some sort of millet or something from the tribesmen, and I ate it quickly. He, too, stopped to eat but took his time. He then handed me my Martini-Henry.

“Are you ready?” I asked. He said something quietly. “What?”

“I said no, sir.”

I couldn’t believe my ears! “What did you say?”

His head lifted, I could see his eyes steel over, placing determination in his words. “Mr. Krieg has been good to me. Very good. But I cannot go with you on this hunt.”

“And just exactly why is that?”

“Mr. Krieg, you are a mighty hunter. A good man. You live for the Mana of a warrior. You are a warrior. And while Mana is always Mana, no difference between Mana in one place or another, people are different. What we do with our Mana can be judged mean or evil or dangerous or good or kind. We bring evil into this world. When we went for that tortoise, you laughed at me. You made me laugh at myself-”

“I can’t believe what I’m hearing!” I cried. The savages around us jumped, watching us, listening to the chant and rhythm of our breath and conversation. “You refuse to go on a hunt with me because I killed a tortoise?”

“In part, yes, Mr. Krieg.” He stood there, with his face like a target before me, scared and willing to fight. I thought then and there perhaps I should just pull my gun up, get a bead on him and put him out of my misery.

“You ungrateful bastard!”

“No, Mr. Krieg. You are wrong. I am very grateful. Do not mistake that,” he spoke calmly and maintained control of himself in the face of my danger. “Do not make things worse for yourself.”

“Worse for myself! How? We’ve crashed on some island we don’t know! I’m trying to get us off this island and you stand there telling me you openly disobey me?” I was screaming now. The tribe gathered round, confused and frightened. Only the Head Man stayed calm, watchful.

“Mr. Krieg, I do not disobey you. You do not own me. You never have. So you cannot control me. And therefore I cannot disobey you,” Keb-Keb said softly.

His disobedience finally got to me. I swung the gun up fast, cocked the trigger and stared down on him like the savage animal he apparently still was. I had picked him up out of the mud practically, given him more than he could have ever asked for! Yet he remained determined to stay a savage!

I looked down the barrel of that gun, The Gun... and saw him staring back. He stared and stared, unblinking. He was willing to die right there if need be. He had truly lost it. He had truly reverted to his animal state of mind.

“Don’t do it, Mr. Krieg. You are in enough trouble.”

“Enough trouble? Is that a threat?”

“No, sir. Just an observation. When you do good with Mana, it returns to you tenfold like water rippling in a pool. And when you do evil,” he paused, then began slowly yet loud enough to ensure I heard his words. “Like when you took that tortoise. When you do evil, it comes back to you tenfold. And I do not want to go with you.”

“Why? Because of more of your superstitious savagery? Your barbarous idiocy?”

“These people have lived here for thousands of years. We have not. Dey know this place, and this jungle spirit, better than you and me. And after all those years, all those attacks of the shadow-cat, dey are still here, alive, well and making a life for demselves like everyone else.

“Mr. Krieg, dey may be savage to you, but to me dey are bright and vibrant and alive!” This was the first time his voice raised with any emotion. “Dey are no more intelligent,” he paused as if to choose his words carefully. “And dey are no more stupid than you and me. You are not smarter. You are not better. Only different. And when the locals tell me not to go, I do not go. There is a reason why dey do what dey do, even if dey look odd to us.

“No, Mr. Krieg,” he sighed, “The only stupid people in dis world will not listen, not willing to learn. I cannot go. And I do not want you to go.”

I did not know what to say to this, of course. But I found myself surrounded by these beasts of men and had to ask: “Are you going to make trouble for me?”

“No, sir.” I couldn’t believe his new calm! “None of us will. The tribe has agreed to let you pass. Dey do not believe you can kill the jungle spirit. Dey are sending you not so you can hunt it. Dey send you to be tonight’s third and last sacrifice.”

“Savages! All of you are heathen savages! To hell with you all!” I cried to every corner of the cavern and ran out with the fury of the Devil.

And that’s how I came to be here.

Snap!

Wait! What was that? The insects! They’ve stopped their singing!

A movement! Where is it? No! No! Nooooo!!!

...and the jungle finally had a voice in the form of a scream.



## Readers' Real Ghost Stories!

*Readers write in to tell their own stories of encounters with the supernatural! Thanks to everyone who submitted!*

---

**H**ey, I actually have one! But I don't know if it is spooky or not.

I was spending a month at my grandparent's house in Florida. I was lying in a very lumpy, squeaky, old bed one night trying to sleep. It was a typical Florida night, hot and sticky with humidity. So, I am sure you can understand why I was having trouble sleeping. I was lying on my stomach, trying to ignore the stench of dust coming from the sheets I was lying in. Behind me I heard the door to the room open quietly. Now my grandmother used to do this every so often to see if I was sleeping soundly, and being a young child, I pretended to be asleep. The room was dead silent, and I was concentrating hard to be convincing in my mock slumber. Suddenly, I felt a single finger poke me in my left buttock. (insert joke here) I jumped, approximately 3 feet off of the bed, and turned in mid-air to ask why she had just poked me in the ass. When I turned around, no one was there and the door to the room was closed. I asked her the following morning if she had come in, but she said that she had not.

Oh oh, I have another one!!!

When I was much younger, my parents were under the impression that I liked clowns. I still do not understand why, I was born flipping off clowns. For whatever reason, they decided to hang these clown dolls over my bed. One morning I woke up, slowly opening my eyes to a beautiful sunlit bedroom. As the room came into focus I happened to glance at the clown doll hanging over my bed. I was shocked to see that the doll hanging above my head was swinging back and forth, in a wide arch. Being as young as I was, the first thing I could think of to protect me was my bed sheets, and I dived underneath (1/2 inch of shielding, with holes). Safely under the covers, I closed my eyes tight, and stayed there for several minutes. When I finally got the courage to open my eyes and venture out from my protective shielding, I again looked at the clown that had sent me scurrying under the sheets. To my horror, it had stopped swinging, **BUT NOW IT HAD IT'S HEAD LEANED FORWARD AND WAS STARING DOWN AT ME!!** I once again retreated to the safety of my "Fortress of Sheetitude." After a significant amount of time, I managed to brave another look. Finally the clown had come to a rest and was in the same state it had been every other morning. Needless to say, the clown dolls came off the walls not long after that. I know these are not the spookiest stories ever written, but hey I at least made a contribution. Let me know if I am worthy or not. I am looking forward to the magazine.

~ Submitted by *Joel Eggleton*

---

**I**t had been a terrible week. Just a few days before we all awoke to the images of planes crashing into the two towers of the World Trade Center. Hundreds of people died that day, and hundreds more were missing. On top of all that, I had been working a regular job and holding yard sales every weekend for several weeks. Needless to say, I was exhausted. The Saturday night after September 11th I was jarred awake with my eyes open wide. I usually wake up to go to the restroom in the middle of the night, but I didn't need to on this particular night and at that very moment I didn't want to. I was the only person in my household that was awake. Usually the television is left on during the night, but for some reason the television was off that night and the only noise in the room was Charles' light snores to my left. We were living in a house that was notoriously haunted, so I wasn't one to stay awake by myself. I had felt the ghosts in this house before, so the feeling that someone or something was watching me was pretty familiar. Something was watching me. It wasn't a particularly cold night but I had a sheet to cover me and I have the habit of sleeping with a pillow over my eyes so I can sleep soundly. A weird feeling came over me and I tugged the sheet up and pulled my pillow on top of my head so I was cocooned. As soon as I adjusted myself, I was suddenly surrounded by the sound of wind. I could hear nothing else but the air swooshing over me. I felt like I was trapped in a wind tunnel, the wind enveloping me. With my eyes shut tight I then felt a rush of cold air pass through my body. Everything inside me turned to ice.

None of the ghosts in the house had ever done anything around me but watch me or make knocking noises in the middle of the night. Other people in the household had also had experiences, including having found emptied linen closets and even a ghost who was sitting on the living room couch, staring at them. The ghost on this night, whoever or whatever it was, did not belong among the ghosts of Acme Place. This ghost felt like it was just passing through and more so like someone who was trying to find the way home. But I didn't really want to think more of that, I was terrified and all I wanted to do was to go to sleep. Realizing that a ghost had just walked through me, I was scared shitless and hoping that I'd fall asleep right away so I could wake up the next day and discover it had just been a creepy dream. I kept my eyes clamped shut and didn't dare move until I slipped into an uneasy sleep. I woke up Sunday morning with my hands and feet freezing cold. The events of a few hours before were real -- a ghost did walk through the house and right through me! It was a warm day and I spent the afternoon trying to shake off the cold, but as the afternoon wore on, the cold still lingered. After much thought about what I had felt and heard, I know I will always remember the night I met one of the wandering souls of September 11th.

~ Submitted by *Johannah Tan*

---

**W**ell, it just wouldn't be fair of me to ask others to submit their own personal ghost stories without me contributing one myself. So, here it goes:

I was working as a film student in Orange County, California. I say 'working' and not 'studying' because film studies don't study, unless they plan on a career as a theorist or critic. Besides, what other branch of learning do you know that requires a couple hundred dollars worth of books, then several thousand dollars worth of equipment, all in

one shot, before they even get started? Sure, maybe doctors and nurses, but not many others can compare. Plus, once class has ended, the filming just begins.

At this particular time, I was in school with about 13 units of credited classes. Twelve is considered a full-time student. Plus I was working on my own films (one short and one a music video). I was also working on several other films, including the position of lighting director on one of my classmates' projects.

It was actually while working on his film that it happened. His project, we'll call him Stefan, dealt with the horrors of alcoholism. The story of the flick followed a young man from a party to, well, the grave after he had drank waaayyy too much. A part of the script called for a few scenes in a morgue. After making some calls, pulling a few strings, and I would venture to guess some pleading Stefan found a county morgue will to help us complete the film. We were allowed access to the autopsy viewing theater and a small area just outside the refrigeration storage room. But we had to meet certain conditions: 1.) we could not wander anywhere besides these two areas and the closest bathroom 2) We only had one night to shoot everything and 3.) We had to be out by 10 PM.

The night of the shoot came. There were four of us total: Ed on sound, Dahlia the cinematographer, Stefan the director and myself overseeing all the lighting. There would also be two actors. When we had all arrived, the head of operations for the morgue reiterated her conditions for our shoot, which were completely reasonable, and took us on a quick tour of the areas we'd be filming.

"And that," said the head of operations while pointing to a massive steel door, "is the refrigeration unit. We absolutely cannot allow you in there. So if I find anyone hear it, the filming is off! You're out in the streets!" His voice was firm and determined. He even waited until each one of had said allowed that we would not go anywhere near the refrigeration unit.

And then he opened it! I wasn't sure at the time why, but hindsight it 20/20. I think he opened that massive steel door for two reason. First, and perhaps foremost, was to show us what it was like inside. We weren't allowed to walk in. We had to stay just outside the door and look in. The three walls visible to us were lined with small, presumably pull-out shelves where bodies were stored and locked away! Having seen inside, I'm sure the head of the morgue thought we'd be less likely to try to sneak a peek if we'd already seen inside.

Secondly, we were shown how the door operates. Because most people are wheeled in on a gurney, sometimes an attendant wouldn't be able to open the door to the unit as they had their hands full just pushing around a new corpse. So the door was fully operated by a motion sensor. It sensed any motion with three feet of it and it opened automatically. We were being warned that if we got too close, the door would slide open on it's own to reveal its contents. That was one Pandora's Box I think we all secretly took a vow never to open.

Then the head of the morgue turned to Stefan, "Remember! You absolutely need to be out by ten o'clock tonight! Not packing up, but out promptly at ten!"

Stefan nodded in agreement and assured he had a good crew with him and that we'd be able to get out on time. I knew different. I think the whole crew, even Stefan himself, knew different. If there's one truth about film: Something is always going to happen on the day of a shoot, no matter how small, that will extend the day into longer hours than originally planned. Plus, it was now 6:30 PM and we had two whole shots to

film! The set up of the lighting alone was going to eat up half that time! Especially since we weren't allowed a day to scout the areas we would be filming in and take notes ahead of time about lighting. I had to test and re-test all the lighting every step of the way! The pressure was on me and I busted my balls to come through for Stefan, to get us out ASAP.

Several little problems came up during the shooting, though, all of which added up to more time. For one, I was misinformed about the capacity of the wall outlet we were using and blew the power for a few minutes after I overloaded a socket (though, because I was misinformed, I was thinking I was playing it very safe). Stefan spoke with the head of the morgue and he alone was allowed to go throw the breaker switch. It worked, we got our lights back, and filming continued.

Then the actors weren't quite nailing their parts the way Stefan was wanting them to.

About every 30 to 45 minutes, the head of the morgue would check in on us. He saw us working hard and I think he started to get into the excitement of having a film being shot so nearby. He really kind of cheered up after a bit.

Nine o'clock rolled around and soon after we wrapped up the first scene. But we still had one more to scene to shoot and less than an hour to do it in! I wasn't too grim, film-making is all about pressure and I'd felt it before.

One of the actors was allowed to go home, she had nothing more to shoot that night. We moved all of our equipment into the second area near the refrigeration unit. The rest took a quick five minute break, but knowing that lighting was going to take up so much time I opted to stop only for a quick drink of water and began immediately on my work.

At about 9:45 the head of the morgue waltzed in and called Stefan over. Ed was standing next to me, lending me a hand. We looked at each other as Stefan walked towards the head of the morgue. Without saying a word, both Ed and I knew the look of desperation and potential despair over what was about to happen. We could hear the conversation between the head of the morgue and Stefan. So we worked and made like we didn't hear a thing.

"Are you sure you can make it out by ten?"

"It'll be a crunch," Stefan admitted, "But I'm responsible for this film and I'll get as many shots as I can and get us out right away. We may be packing up at ten, but not out like you asked. Is that okay?"

Stefan was playing it perfectly. He knew he couldn't bite the hand that was feeding him but he has to ask for as much time as he could.

"Well," said the head of the morgue, who had apparently taken to our cause, "Don't rush too much. Get what you need and get out."

Just then Ed's digital watch started to ring.

"Shit!" I thought to myself. "It's ten now! And this, even if we nail everything in one take, will take at least a half-hour!"

That's when Stefan called us all over to himself and the head of the morgue.

"He's being really very kind," said Stefan in front of the head of the morgue. "He's allowing us to stay." We each gave our thanks aloud, somewhat timidly and courteously. But inside we were all screaming with absolute delight, as if we had just won a major battle! Which, of course, we had.

And then it happened.

We heard a WHOOSH! of air. We all froze. We had heard that sound just once before, earlier that night. Ed and I exchanged glances. We had our backs to the sound. We looked then at Stefan. Stefan to the head of the morgue. the we all followed his eyes. Ed and I turned around just in time to watch the door to the refrigeration closing! And, worst of all, it was at the end of the hall, a good twenty feet from anyone and any motion!

The head of the morgue cleared his throat. He caught our attention and we silently turned to look back at him.

"That's the real reason I wanted you guys out by ten," he said. "They start walking around about this time."

Stefan turned and said, "Well, what the hell are we waiting for? Let's get this done and go home!" We all cracked a smile in agreement, nervous shakes taking over our bodies, and completed the filming for the night.

I set up all the lighting without difficulty, nailing all the measurements just by eyeing the lights, but double-checking with the light meter. Ed worked furiously to make sure the sound was always perfect. Dahlia quickly changed film to make sure we had enough and wouldn't have to still mid-shoot. And the remaining actor nailed every last one of his moments.

We were packed up and out by 10:35.

~ Charles



## Reading & Viewing... & Listening? List

*I've been reading a lot as of late, especially since I've been reading along with a telecourse on the local community college TV station. The class is called 'English 257X: Literature & Technology'. In the spirit of both Halloween and SF, I present this list to you based upon some of my recent readings as well as my favorite Halloween-time readings.*

---

- 1.) **Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus by Mary Shelley** - I actually originally read this when I was about ten years old. To this day I can't believe what a wonderful piece of literature it truly is. I also caught the recent Hallmark Channel version of this book. It is, by far, the closest movie rendition of the story I have ever seen. The original book opens the discussion of not so much playing god, as so many people (mostly Christians) want to argue, but discusses instead that if we and/or scientists start experimenting with nature, they better be willing to take full responsibility for their actions and their science. While the 'playing God' discussion IS present in the book, I felt this discussion was more prominent. The Hallmark Channel flick makes a shift in those discussions. While the movie does hit on the ideas of scientific responsibility, it places more of an emphasis on the discussion of "man shouldn't be playing God' discussion. In any case, read the book and fuck all the movies (even the good ones).
  
- 2) **Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury** - While this isn't exactly a Halloween-themed book, the horrors of social pressures, the need for the flash and bang of violence and easy entertainment and the lack of understanding/love for reading and, dare I say, TRUE THOUGHT conjures up images of a horrific future society clearly depicted in this book. A great read. And it pointed out to me that books, at least older ones, really do have the slightest hint of a cinnamon smell.
  
- 3.) **The Power of Myth by Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers** - This is pretty much just a transcription of the infamous television interviews that Bill Moyers conducted with Joseph Campbell. Reading it should really get you in touch with, well, the power of myth. A great read to get you into a more philosophical, or at least more meaningful, mood for Halloween.
  
- 4) **Unsolved Mysteries: Ghosts** - There are three new sets of DVDs out from the television show Unsolved Mysteries. The one I am recommending here is entitled

'Ghosts.' I have as of yet to see these DVDs, but I've seen a lot of the Unsolved Mysteries ghostly coverings. This should play out as a good mood enhancer.

5) **Scariest Places on Earth** - This is the first time I've made a recommendation for a television show. This show had a small amount of success in about 2001 and then just up and disappeared. Well, Fox Family Channel is promising to re-broadcast some of them for their annual "13 Days of Halloween". I recommend these not so much for their spookiness, which they can occasionally be, but for their pure entertainment value. It's difficult not to laugh at their host as he describes the history of the night's location, surmising "Only a man who cares nothing about his family would allow them to spend the night here! Will you back out? Okay then, have a good night!" Great laughs.

6.) **It's the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown!** - Well I'll be damned. I was wrong! I HAVE suggested TV shows before. What's Halloween without a little of ol' Charlie Brown? Now if only they'd start showing the Garfield Halloween special again, too!

7) **Voodoo Jive: The Best of Screamin' Jay Hawkins** - One of the best southern rockers, and oddest, of the 1960s. He is most famous today for "I Put a Spell On You". Makes for some great Halloween music, but is a standard of blues-influenced rock n' roll!

8.) **The Halloween Tree** - A great animated flick by the great Ray Bradbury. It'll take you on a romp through the history of Halloween and tell you how different cultures treated their dead. Great for kids.

