

Griffin and the Night Visitor

Marc Edward DiPaolo (February 20, 2008)



Undergrads often put up with annoying roommates, but Griffin had the strangest bedfellow of all: a ghost.



“Marc, do you believe in ghosts?”

My friend Griffin asked me this question one night after defeating me at a round of Spades, and I must admit it took me by surprise. I’d known him for fourteen years and he had never once expressed any interest whatsoever in anything weird or supernatural. He was a really down-to-earth guy, if a little secretive. In fact, not only was he uninterested in ghosts and monsters, he would sometimes tease me for being interested in such things myself.

(“You like Harry Potter, huh?” he’d ask. “What are you, eight?”

“It’s good. You might like it,” I’d say.

“No, I’m too old for that stuff. I’m nine.”)

So Griffin wasn’t much for horror, science fiction, and fantasy, yet here he was asking me the ultimate nerd question – do ghosts exist?

I knew there must have been some special reason he was bringing it up.

“I don’t know,” I said, honestly.

We were sitting in his living room having a couple of beers. Talk Soup was on TV.

Griffin took a swig of his Sam Adams Cherry Wheat. (By the way, he looks like Kiefer Sutherland.)

“Back when I was in college in Albany, I rented out a room in this old apartment, and it turned out to be haunted.”

Now, Griffin did have an excellent sense of humor, and was very good at regaling me with funny stories about his wild nights out drinking, or his crazy family, but he was never one to put me on. So I took him seriously when he said he saw a ghost back in his college days. But I didn’t know what to think about this sudden revelation.

“Really?” was the best I could manage for a reply.

“Yeah.”

Griffin was quiet for a moment.

I waited for him to continue.

Griffin remained quiet.

“So what was it like?” I asked.

Finally sure that I wasn't going to start making fun of him about this, Griffin began speaking more freely. “Every Tuesday night this thing would come by at around 1:45 and wake me up. I'd go to bed around 12:30 because I had 8 a.m. classes but it would usually take me a while to drop off. And I'd just be getting into a deep sleep when the ghost would show up and wake me up.”

“What did it look like?”

Griffin seemed as if he were trying hard to recall. “I'm ... not ... sure.”



[2]“Was it like in the movies? Kind of transparent and all white or all green?” I suddenly thought of Ghostbusters and remembered how most people think that I look a little bit like the head Ghostbuster, Egon. But I shelved those thoughts and listened for Griffin's answer.

“I don't know what color it was.”

“Was it transparent?”

“I couldn't see all of it. I remember there were arms that put pressure on my chest and held me

down, and I think there was a face.”

“What did the face look like?”

“Well ... I can’t describe it really. I don’t know if I could see it exactly. Maybe there wasn’t a face.”

I was confused now, wondering why he wasn’t sure if it had a face or not. “But you could feel it?”

“Pressing down on me, yeah.”

“Like an attack?”

“No. Not an attack. It just pressed down on me.”

At this point, I couldn’t resist. “Was it a sexy woman ghost?”



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[3]“No ... definitely not.”

“Oh, well.”



"I don't know what sex it was." Griffin got quiet again after saying this.

"Did anyone else see the ghost?" I asked.

"After I moved out, I met someone who had the apartment before me. Before I even said anything to him he asked me if I saw the ghost every Tuesday night."

"He saw the ghost at the same time you did on the same night?"

"Yeah."

"I wonder if that's something like the exact time the ghost died. Did you check any of the local newspapers about the history of the apartment? Maybe somebody died tragically in that room on a Tuesday night at ... what ... 1:45?"

Griffin shook his head.

"Did you find out anything else?"

"Nah. Somebody else moved in after me and I heard that he didn't like the place. He left pretty quickly. But I didn't find for sure out why he ditched out."

At this point, I was wondering how it would be possible for two, maybe three, people to see a ghost every Tuesday night at the same time if ghosts didn't exist. "You felt a pain in your chest, huh? Did the school serve the same bad mac and cheese every Tuesday for dinner and you all kept getting heartburn?"

Griffin was a good sport about this. "No. No mac and cheese."

"I don't suppose there's any chance that there's some kind of weird gas leak or something in the water that might have caused you to hallucinate this?"

"I wasn't hallucinating."

"Did you get somebody from the gas company over or someone to inspect the house to make sure?"

Griffin made some kind of gesture that could either have been "Of course," or "of course not." I wasn't sure how to interpret it and didn't ask again for clarification. Either way, he added, "I wasn't hallucinating."

I decided to choose my next words carefully. "Um ... you were in college at the time. I don't suppose those were nights when you'd gone out to a party?"



“I didn’t drink on Tuesday nights back then. I had an a.m. class the next day. I’d drink a lot on Thursdays and miss a lot of classes on Fridays, but I was stone cold sober when that damn thing would drop down on my chest every Tuesday night.”

“And you stayed in that apartment the whole semester?”

“Yeah. I had wanted my own apartment because I was sick of annoying roommates. I was so excited to have my own place. Privacy. No loud, dirty guys all the time distracting me from school and having their girlfriends over 24/7. Finally, I had my own place. Then, bam! Every Tuesday, that ghost shows up.”

I suddenly realized what was interesting me most about this exchange. It wasn’t that Griffin felt he saw a ghost. It was that he was so kind of ... casual about it. His whole attitude about the experience seemed strange to me. It occurred to me that, if I ever had such an encounter, I’d likely be terrified and run away without looking back, not keep living there until my lease ran out.

“You don’t sound like it scared you at all,” I said. “It wasn’t scary?”

“Not really.”

“Was it exciting seeing proof that ghosts are real?”

“Nah. I wasn’t really excited.”

“So, what was it like?” I asked.

Griffin scowled. “It was annoying. I just wanted to get my sleep. I had an 8 a.m. class the next day and I could never get up in time for it because the ghost kept keeping me up all night. It really pissed me off. Killed my GPA and everything. Stupid ghost. It was great when I moved out of the apartment the next semester so I could finally get some sleep.”

And that was it. That was the whole conversation. And Griffin never spoke about the ghost again, leaving me to wonder what, exactly, our exchange meant. What did it tell me about Griffin? About me? About ghosts? Or was it all too trivial to mean much of anything? It certainly was a strange conversation. And sometimes, now that a few years have passed since that night, I wonder if that conversation even happened at all, or if I had just hallucinated it after having some bad mac and cheese.

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