

“Something Evil Our Way Came?”

A true story recounted by John Victor Ramses

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I've seen some very strange things in my day. Even so, I'm not inclined to readily believe that every unexplained phenomenon is the result of supernatural or extraterrestrial influence. I prefer solid fact before forming an opinion. But facts regarding such instances of phenomena are commonly elusive or at best open to a plethora of interpretations. Sometimes it can only be adduced in hindsight, after the passage of years and observation of other like events. Even then, what often remains is merely a personal, deeply felt 'gut feeling', and little more. That 'gut feeling' is what I am left with to explain how a 'magical' marriage could go so wrong in such a short period of time.

I'm presently writing this from a prison somewhere in Western Australia. How I came to be here might (in hindsight) be the direct result of one such particular *supernatural* event: the night my wife and 3 other people used a Ouija board inside the old Fremantle Prison to conjure the spirit of one of Western Australia's most evil, notorious killers: David Birnie.

To understand why I have come to consider such a notion, a brief back-story is required.

I came from the United States to Western Australia on 2 September 1999 to marry an Aussie woman whom I'd grown to love beyond imagination, the mother of my future daughter. Our love story was well known in the day due to its unusual circumstance, itself founded on a series of profound dreams and strange phenomena. We were married on 11 November at 11:11 PM on Mullaloo Beach among close friends and family with our future daughter growing safely in her mother's womb. Ours was the love to end all yearning for love, and indeed it was for nearly eleven years, just shy of 'fairytale'. Of course it was not without its share of challenges common to any marriage and family, but our love for each other never faltered no matter how strenuous the challenge.

My life-long passion and hobby has been the investigation of mystery and phenomena – from lost treasure to ghosts and aliens to ancient historical enigmas. I love a mystery. I consider myself to be reasonably pragmatic and analytical, bordering on cynical. My wife was a practicing witch who, along with her mother and aunties, alleged to be descendants from a coven from Ireland by the name of Frost. She was far more open-minded than myself, perhaps especially in the area of what I consider 'new age' stuff. We made an excellent team, however, challenging each other, keeping each other in check.

In 2005-2006 I created and produced *Haunted Australia*, *Ghost Radio Network* and *The Underworld Show*, all of which centered on our respective interests. We were becoming quite well known with a broad listener base throughout Australia, USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand and pretty much the world. We had been featured on *ABC Stateline*, *The Couch*, *Take 5 Magazine* (story of the week) and a three-page spread in the *Sunday Times*. We included our kids and family members in our projects and promotions. We were happy, enthused and the future seemed ours for the taking. Then, literally overnight with no concrete cause, everything changed.

Ye Ol' Freo Gaol –

In 2008 Ghost Radio was invited to spend an entire night inside the historic Fremantle Prison, now a tourist attraction. Around 15 or so of our friends were invited along, including a psychic from Bunbury and a former producer of the Animal X series (who had been

responsible for securing permission for the event). It was a rare privilege and I saw it as opportunity to further Ghost Radio's publicity. Spending the night with us was a former prison guard who had once worked at the prison when it had been in operation. He knew the history as well as the prisoners who had been kept there. Semi-retired at the time, he was employed as a tour guide for visitors.

There was an air of excitement as night fell and the heavy doors and gates were locked behind us. We formed a base meeting place, prepared our 'ghost hunting' equipment (cameras, recorders, etc.), then together began exploring the blocks and cells of the ancient structure. The tour guide held a wealth of knowledge about the old place. As he talked, we listened and took photos, hoping to catch an apparition on film.

Summoning David Birnie -

Around 2 AM the psychic announced that he wanted to conduct a séance to see if he could contact any spirits. He had brought a homemade Ouija board and folding card table for the occasion. I was neither here nor there about it, not entirely believing in such things, but as acting cameraman with intent to produce a documentary, I thought a séance would be great publicity. To my knowledge no one had ever conducted a séance in an abandon prison in Australia, at least not in the Fremantle Prison.

The séance was set up on the stage in the old, small multipurpose room, which was once used as a gym, common area and theatre where 16mm flicks were once shown. Apart from the psychic, my wife and two other members from the group put their hand up to participate. After the Ouija board was set up on the card table, the participants took their places and the lights in the room turned off. The room became all but pitch black, save for a dim glow emanating from small light source on the table that the psychic had brought. The silence was astounding.

With myself filming, using night vision technology, and the rest of the group members seated casually about the room in the dark, the séance began. Through the camera lens I could see everyone clearly. With their collective finger tips resting lightly on the pointer in the center of the Ouija board, general questions were spoken aloud, at first with little result. Then at one point they called on the spirit of David Birnie. That's when things got interesting. David Birnie had actually died in Casuarina Prison, not Fremantle Prison, after being transferred to 'Casa' when the 'Freo' prison was finally closed in 1991. Nonetheless, 'something' responded when they called on the name of David Birnie, causing a gasp from the participants. "Is this the spirit of David Birnie?" I recall someone asking. The pointer slid to the 'Yes' position. Then the table itself moved. And moved again.

Being skeptical, I was certain one of the participants was causing both the table to move and the pointer to slide. Viewing it all using night vision, I was the only one who could see everyone and everything with relative clarity. I moved the camera in closer, studying their hands, then around and under the table. The fingertips of both hands of each participant were still resting on the pointer. There was no tablecloth, so I could see their legs, knees and feet clearly, without obstruction. The pointer would slide about in response to questions and the table would bump and move. No one at the table could be seen causing it.

As the séance progressed the air around the table became thicker the closer to it I came. Then I felt something stroke the back of my head near my neck. At that point I nearly panicked, wanting to spin around punch whatever it was, but remained focused on the séance. It was a true test of nerve for a cameraman. By now even I was becoming spooked, and I'm not easily spooked. Though the participants, table and Ouija board were clearly visible to me I couldn't detect the slightest sign of a hoax. And that unnerved me all the more.

Mysterious Souvenir –

After the séance had concluded and the auditorium lights turned back on, we gathered to discuss what had occurred. I told my experience of being touched on the head as well as explaining how, through the night vision lens, I could see everything but detected no hoax. Whatever had occurred appeared to be the real McCoy. While discussions continued, I heard what sounded like a pencil or pen drop on the floor near me. Looking down I saw a small splinter of wood on the floor between I and my wife. I picked it up. It was a piece of Jarrah Wood around 5 to 6 inches long, as wide as a finger on one end and tapered to a sharp, jagged edge on the other. It appeared ancient except for one side which looked as though it had been freshly broken from a rafter or molding above. Jarrah is a hardwood and it would have taken considerable force to snap it off from the source.

I showed it to my wife then tossed it back to the floor. In my view we were guests at the prison and I didn't feel comfortable about taking a souvenir from it, odd as it was. Then, my wife picked it up. Examining it further she then showed it to the psychic and other members of the group who tried to figure out where it had come from. Then she slipped it into her back pocket.

At dawn – the limit of our authorized stay in the prison – we departed for our respective homes, tired, but having had a great time. We had explored most of the prison complex by flashlight, taking countless photos and film footage. We were excited at the prospect of planning our next venture together.

Ghost in the chapel –

Once home we uploaded all the photos from the digital camera to the computer and began the long task of searching each one for something out of the ordinary. On her antique dresser in our bedroom, my wife set the splinter of Jarrah wood in an abalone shell filled with various crystals she used in her 'spells' and 'rituals'. She believed the crystals would cleanse any bad energy from the splinter. By late afternoon we'd finished searching through the photos. Many of them showed 'orbs' (fuzzy balls of light). Most ghost hunters believe these to be spirits. As a photographer I knew them to be tiny particles of dust that were close to the lens when the flash triggered.

But then there was something else. In one photo where I had snapped the shot at the exact moment another member of the group used their flash, an image of an elderly man in a cap appeared to be sitting on a bench with his head bowed. The photo had been taken in the old chapel where prisoners would come for Sunday services. I knew next to nothing about prisons. Even so, I thought it odd that a man would be sitting in the chapel wearing street clothes and a hat. The image was translucent, barely detectable, but there nonetheless. It seemed to have appeared in the green spectrum of the lens flare. When my wife saw it she nearly wet herself with excitement. We emailed a copy to the psychic and other members of the group who eagerly published it to their web sites.

Dark days, troubled nights –

Through the next weeks following that night in the Fremantle Prison, every member of the group experienced a serious run of bad luck. Friendships dissolved and marriages fell apart. In my own home my wife and I seemed to argue about everything. It was unprecedented between us. The atmosphere in the home changed, becoming oppressive at times. Things would disappear and electrical and computer equipment would malfunction. My wife even began talking about quitting her talk show and our beloved Ghost Radio we'd worked so hard to build and promote. Just a few weeks prior, such ideas were unthinkable. It seemed that anything that could go wrong did go wrong. Comments or statements to each other were often misinterpreted leading to further arguments. We also learned that the same

situation was occurring with other members of the group and two couples had already become separated. We managed to keep these matters away from the kids.

Dark Shadows –

Then one evening before bed my 8 year old daughter came to where my wife and I were working at the computers in our home studio. Cheerily, she had begun telling us about her day at school when suddenly she stopped mid-sentence and climbed frantically into my lap, wrapping her arms tightly around me. She was trembling, staring beyond the kitchen into the dimly lit dining room. When I asked her what the matter was she answered with a broken voice, claiming she had just seen a ‘black man’ walk past the dining room.

We had raised our kids to take ‘ghosts’ or ‘aliens’ or ‘UFOs’ lightly, just fun stories. None of them, including my 8 year old daughter, were frightened of such ideas. She could watch any kind of scary flick and not flinch while even pointing out filming flaws. She had learnt from me that in every film there is a plethora of crew members and equipment around the actors. We’d even made home movies using certain software to show how ‘movie magic’ is created. Our children often participated in the production and promotion of Ghost Radio (i.e. my stepdaughter as a ‘spirit’ in a photo taken for the Sunday Times or my young daughter doing voiceovers, etc). I’d also taught them to use the software. Special Effects in photos or film were my specialty and I had often bragged that I could put a ghost or alien into a photo of a family barbeque that would fool even Spielberg. Those comments, however, would later come to bite me in the ass.

My daughter was genuinely terrified. Before she had even finished her words I had lifted her up and set her with her mother then sprung toward the dining room, grabbing a knife off the kitchen counter as I passed through. I didn’t buy into ghosts. There was an intruder in our home. My daughter had seen him. But search the house as I did there was nothing to be found. All the doors were locked. Our eldest daughter was watching TV and our son was in his room playing a video game – both oblivious to anything else. Nonetheless, it had taken some time to calm my young daughter before she would go to bed, still swearing she had seen a ‘black man’ in the dining room.

About a week after that incident I would actually see the ‘black man’ for myself as I sat working at the computer – a dense, dark shadow moving down the hall toward our bedroom. It sent the hair on my neck straight up, but I investigated anyway. My wife was sound asleep, as were the children. It was 10:50 PM when I glanced at the clock. I decided not to mention it to my wife. I didn’t want to promote the idea of a ‘ghost’ in our house. It could also have been my imagination or the result of staring at a computer screen for hours. But a few days later my wife, unprompted, would confide in me that she had seen a dark shadowy figure move through the house on two occasions. Only then did I tell her what I had seen.

Now convinced that ‘something’ was in our house, the next day she took her crystals out into the sunlight to ‘cleanse’ them, according to her pagan-witch beliefs. The odd splinter of Jarrah wood was among them, though now all but forgotten about. After this she then ‘smudged’ the house with sage. Leaving her alone to do her rituals I took the kids to Burger King (mainly due to the lack of oxygen in the house). When we returned, my wife was in a cheerful mood, believing that whatever had been in the house had been removed. She collected her shell of crystals with the wood splinter and returned them to her bedroom dresser. But that night, while making a coffee, I again saw the dark shadow, moving down the hall toward our bedroom. Again, I went after it. It appeared to go through the closed bedroom door. This time I woke my wife and told her of it.

Strange nightmares –

As stated previously, every member of the group who had been at the prison that night experienced some form of rotten luck. Tensions were high. We seldom spoke to one another, but some ranted away on MySpace. One member even chastised the psychic for holding a séance in that “evil prison” at all, much less for “recklessly calling up the spirit of David Birnie”, ending with “Were you all fucking insane????”.

Until then, I hadn’t equated our own bad luck and negative atmosphere with the Séance, Birnie or anything beyond *shit just happens*. As far I know, however, no one had complained of a dark shadow in their house. That seemed to be exclusive to our house. My wife and I seemed on constant edge and any little thing would blow out into a major issue. An unprecedented division between us had been growing almost since the night at the prison, as if something were deliberately causing it. Bad feelings were commonplace with one or the other of us sometimes sleeping on the couch in the lounge room.

I began having waking nightmares of the most terrifying and bizarre nature. So disturbing to me were they I felt compelled to create a video – as close as I could – to what I experienced in order to try to convey it. I published it to my web site and asked if anyone else had ever had such nightmares. None had, as far I knew back then.

In those nightmares, which were always the same, I was wide awake, literally waking up into them, but could only move in slow motion. I was still lying in bed. There was a terrible sound as if a speaker wire had been crossed on a high-power amplifier. That sound was instant and lasted through the duration of the nightmare. I was terrified and would call out to my wife for help, whom I could clearly see sleeping beside me, but she couldn’t hear me. My voice seemed to be slow and distorted as if in another dimension. Though I felt wide awake I also felt that I was just out of phase with everything.

During one of those nightmares I saw the bedroom door open. The hallway beyond was lit up as if the hall light was on, but the glow felt wrong. Then I saw movement as if something was approaching the door. I screamed for my wife to help, my voice slow and distorted in the terrible sound. I remember pushing on her back, desperately hoping to wake her, but to no avail. Then I said to myself something I’d never said before, awake or in dreams: “God help me”. I suddenly awoke, trembling, still in bed. Everything went suddenly back to normal, save that the bedroom door was still slightly open. Whatever had a ‘hold’ of me had let go.

I’m not a religious person but rather spiritual. I’d never felt the least need to ask ‘God’ for anything, much less help. After that particular nightmare I became afraid to fall asleep and would often stay up late working at the computer with the lights on for as long as I could stand it. I explained the nightmares to my wife who felt bad that she hadn’t woke or heard me. She knew, too, that for anything at all to scare me, much less lose sleep over, it had to have been significant. Indeed.

I still remember every detail of those nightmares, which only ever occurred while sleeping in that bedroom. I still remember the terrible sound. I wasn’t prone to nightmares, certainly nothing close to that type. I never had another nightmare after my wife and I separated, after I’d left the house. Not even in prison.

Ghost in the chapel – part 2 –

One night, about two weeks after the prison excursion, I received a phone call from the psychic who had conducted the séance. I was pleased to hear from him, considering that none of us had been talking amidst all our misfortune. But he was not in the least pleased about talking to me. He’d been informed by one of his fans that the ‘old man’ in the photo I had taken while in the prison chapel was actually an exact copy of a famous photo of a man sitting on a bench somewhere in Europe (France?). The psychic accused me of fabricating the photo, ruining his credibility and career and called me every filthy word in the English

language (He pointed out that I had always bragged that I could fake a photo that would ‘fool even Spielberg’). He ended the call after saying he never wanted anything to do with us or Ghost Radio again.

I was stunned, speechless. After his call I went to the computer to look up that ‘famous photo’. It had to be a mistake, or at best a striking coincidence. The photo in question was easy to find, apparently well known. Comparing it to the photo of the ‘ghost’ sitting in the chapel, there was no mistake. The two were, indeed, identical. I had taken the photo myself, yet the image of this man in the famous photo had appeared in my photo. I had only used Photoshop to lighten my photo, not place the image there. Because I had so often bragged of my skill it was assumed I’d faked the photo for publicity. I had no defense. It is still an unsolved mystery; among many curiosities I still ponder to date.

A day or so later, the former Animal X producer called me on the matter, then came out to our house. I was at a complete loss to explain the photo in the chapel, but it didn’t look good for me. She asked if I still had the original image on the camera, hoping to have it analyzed by a professional. Being my wife’s digital pocket camera for everyday use, the software was set to delete all images on the camera automatically after successful transfer to a different storage device (i.e. the computer). Nonetheless, having worked on the Animal X production, and having known my wife and I for some time, she still felt there was something more to it than mere fakery. But in light of all the negative stuff occurring to us the matter was put aside and eventually all but forgotten. Even my wife had accused me of faking the photo but later recanted, having been present when I transferred the images from her camera, and later when the ‘ghost in the chapel’ was discovered.

Black hole –

The distance between my wife and I only increased, as if being caught in a rip tide. In my view her personality had changed markedly in the few weeks since the night of the séance. Unbelievably, she became disenchanted with Ghost Radio she had so loved, and complained of all the things she’d never had in life. More and more she became disenchanted with the marriage, then with me, then with ‘men’ in general.

Over the following months, then year, the strange shadowy figure would occasionally show itself, but only to my wife and I, not the kids. At least, none of the kids ever mentioned it. Also occasionally, I would experience those strange, harrowing nightmares. I searched the Internet for answers. Most sites spoke of ‘sleep paralysis’ caused by ‘aliens’. I couldn’t buy into it, so – like so many other things – it remains a mystery to me today.

Among the things that would go missing was a considerable amount of money in the form of spare change (coins) my wife had been long saving in a large tin can for our future family holiday to the Gold Coast. My wife first accused me, then accused her cousin, then didn’t know who to accuse, then back to me. It was heartbreaking. She had saved her spare change for so long, looking forward to our (first and only ever) real holiday together.

2009 would be our last year together. It had been a tense year with accusations, suspicions and unexplainable events that each contributed to driving a permanent wedge through our once magical marriage and love story. I felt as though my waking life was as outside my control as I felt while locked in one of the nightmares, being pulled into a black hole, its gravity inescapable. I had no control over what was occurring. By now, almost anything we would say to each other would be misconstrued or misinterpreted, always leading to an argument. Still, I never believed that she and I would ever actually divorce. Not us, after all.

The Event Horizon –

Due to our radio program and web sites, both my wife and I would receive numerous emails from listeners from around the world. Many of those emails concerned ‘synchronicity’

and '11:11', which had once played a significant role in how my wife and I had met (hence, being married on the 11th of the 11th at 11:11 PM [See *Take 5 Magazine*, Australia, June 8, 2006, pgs 8-9] '*I'm an Online Ghost Buster*').

On August 28, 2009, I received just such an email from a woman in Finland who had listened to one of our archived radio programs – a special 11:11 anniversary show my wife and I had produced. The woman shared her experiences and commented on some of my theories and a dialogue began. A few days later, on 2 September 2009 (the anniversary of the day I had arrived in Australia in 1999), my wife read through those emails. It had been common for us to check, read and answer emails that might come into each other's inbox. But as with everything else communicated over the past year since the séance, the dialogue between myself and the Finnish woman was misconstrued by my wife. Things had not been peachy between us and she wrongly assumed I was having an affair with intention of taking my daughter and starting a new life. That idea had been born from one single comment I had made to the woman, that 'our daughters would likely get along great'.

That same night my wife confronted me about the 'other' woman. Having already made up her mind that I was planning to leave her, she informed me in no uncertain terms that I was no longer permitted to take my daughter to America on holiday for her birthday in June 2010, which had been long planned. Though in hushed voices so as to not involve the sleeping kids, we engaged in the bitterest argument we'd had to date, with threats of Family Court action as if we were already divorced. I assured my wife I intended to take our daughter to America as planned and that I'd win any court action. She ended the argument with "We'll see about that!", then stormed to the bedroom, locking the door. I could hear her talking low to someone I presumed was her mother or best friend on the phone.

We would never recover from that night. That argument became the 'event horizon', the point of no return. Those dark days and unprecedented events seemed to have a gravity of its own from which not even a love like ours could escape. Whatever the source of that gravity, it hated love, happiness, friendships, contentment and all good things. It hated us.

My wife and I seldom spoke to each other after that night beyond issues involving the kids such as schedules, etc. She withdrew to her family and close friend, whose whispers only added fuel to the fire. 10,000 miles from home and my family I was becoming increasingly more alone. We still kept our personal troubles from the kids, putting on a false happy face when they were around. My wife password-protected her computer and email account for the first time since we'd been together. I struggled to maintain Ghost Radio alone and she hosted her Underworld Show begrudgingly. When she wasn't at work she would sit in silence, a scowl on her face. Or she would be dabbling with her charms and crystals, conducting rituals I never quite understood. She seemed so alone to me. But I was too. So often during that era I wanted to approach her, hold her and apologize for whatever she thought I'd done. But the negative energy seemed to create a barrier around her space that I was not permitted to cross. So, I merely waited, presuming it would all blow over. It only got worse.

Her children from a previous marriage began shunning me and I believed she had been whispering in their ears. I began to feel like a 'ghost' in my own home. The bond between my daughter and I, however, was unbreakable. She was my 'dream' daughter, which had only fueled my wife's jealousies and fear that she would follow me anywhere, to America or even into another relationship. Fear of that bond became a driving obsession to separate me from my daughter.

In early October 2009, a few weeks after the argument, my wife began insisting that I return home to America while we 'sort out' our marital problems. I wasn't in a position to do so with so much work on and I had no desire to leave my daughter under such circumstances. But my wife's unrelenting persistence finally broke me. In November I had agreed to go back to the States for a period of time. I hadn't been home in 10 years and I missed my family and the Rocky Mountains.

My wife wasted no time in purchasing me a one-way ticket to America. She ‘allowed’ me to stay through Christmas for my daughter’s sake under the condition there would be no Christmas music, nothing. As a result I had to remove all Christmas-related songs from the Ghost Radio playlist. My wife’s last *Underworld Show* was December 9, 2009 (an interview with an exorcist). It is still to this day frozen in that moment. It was the end of Ghost Radio Australia and all our hard work. I never had the heart to shut down the web site, however. It symbolized a happier time, brighter tomorrow. It was the radio station that love had built. So I have just left it as it had been on December 9, 2009.

Dead winter –

I left for America on January 18, 2010. My wife simply called a cab to take me to the airport after our amazing 10 years together. I had pleaded with her to let my daughter come to the airport to see her daddy off, but she had adamantly refused. By then she had become someone other than the woman I’d so loved and had once travelled ten thousand miles to marry. As my plane left Perth International Airport, the familiar cityscape and beaches of the Indian Ocean falling away, I still clung to that love, those memories, believing we could work things out.

January in Utah is dead winter, the coldest time of the year, and after being in Perth for a decade I felt the cold to the core of my bone and heart. It held an affinity with the icy atmosphere that had formed between my wife and I. I stayed in America for three months. That was the limit of the time I could be away from both work and my daughter. It was good to see my family again and the snow-covered Rocky Mountains, my childhood playground and sanctuary. Even so, it would appear that the ‘curse’ had followed me even there, causing a breakup in a long-time friendship I had with a Canadian psychic, Robbie Thomas, whom I had promoted through Ghost Radio.

I spoke to my daughter every day via Skype. I missed her terribly, her bubbly personality. On the other hand, my wife and I seldom spoke. When we did it was short and curt. The farther away she pushed us and the marriage the closer I became with the woman in Finland, whom I had remained friends with. By March 2010 I had grown to love her without doubt. Hearts were involved. She, too, was in a complicated relationship (which had just become more complicated) and also had a young daughter. Nonetheless, she became my closest, if only, friend and confidant. When I needed to talk, which was often, she was always there.

Unwelcome –

In April 2010 I returned to Australia, relatively unannounced to anyone but my daughter. My wife was loathe to see me and let me know it. She insisted I sleep in a room other than our bedroom. That was fine by me; there was something not right about that bedroom and I had only ever had those terrifying nightmares while sleeping in there. The atmosphere in the home was stifling. While I had been in America my wife had removed every trace of our life together, except for a promotional poster for my book *Quest for Peralta Gold* (2000), which hung on a wall in the dining room. My step kids hardly gave me the time of day. I felt as an unwelcome guest, save for my daughter, whom I kept close. Moreover, my wife had also informed her first husband that he was no longer permitted to call the house to speak to his children. “I’m closing *all* men out of my life,” she told me as the reason why.

Then on April 27, 2010 – the anniversary of the day we had met in 1998 – my wife officially asked me for a divorce (as a practicing witch, she had always liked doing important things on ‘ritual’ dates). It became apparent to me that she had been planning and preparing to divorce since at least the night of September 2, 2009, after the heated argument over my emails to the Finnish woman. But that argument had been just one more incident of many that

had occurred between us since the night they conjured David Birnie – each incident more troubling than the last. The woman in Finland had innocently become a trigger. But even her coming into my life at that critical moment seemed too planned to be coincidence. Nonetheless, I'm glad she came when she did. I would need her friendship and later, her unconditional support.

My wife and I agreed to break the news of the divorce gently to our daughter, but while I was at work my wife took it upon herself to tell her without me, and it wasn't gently to any degree. When I came home I found my daughter sobbing in her bedroom. "I didn't see any reason to wait. Go cuddle your daughter", she stated to me without emotion. I was furious but kept it to myself, considering the circumstance. The last thing I wanted was an argument when my daughter was hurting. Nonetheless, there was a hatred brewing in me.

I scooped up my daughter into my arms holding her close, her own little arms wrapped around my neck. "Please don't go away, daddy", she sobbed. Her words still echo in my mind today. I promised her I would never leave her and that I would pick her up every day for an outing or for dinner. I explained the best I could that I still loved her mother but we just had some adult issues to work through.

At that moment my wife, who had been listening from the hall just outside the door, marched in, grabbed me by the shirt and all but dragged me into the hall with unnerving strength. She pushed me against the wall and hissed. "Don't ever, ever, tell my daughter you love me again, you piece of shit. Not fucking ever!"

I'd never seen this person before. Now, even her face had changed to me. There was an insidious glare in her eyes and blood veins protruded from her forehead. She was dangerous and any word from me at all could trigger something deadly. For my daughter's sake and my own welfare, I just nodded and returned to my daughter when she finally relaxed her grip. My wife, my love, my friend, was gone for good and with it the love and magic we had not so long ago shared as to make news. Only our daughter remained as a testament that such a love had ever happened at all.

The devil's card –

Having officially moved out of the house, I kept my word to my daughter, seeing her every day, taking her shopping or the beach or out to dinner. I bought her a basic mobile phone and created a preset number to my phone so she could call me any time she felt the need. I further assured her that I would still take her on holiday to America to meet her other family, see where her father came from. However, this only incited further arguments with her mother who imposed tighter and tighter restrictions on how far from our Kingsley house I could take my daughter on outings.

By my daughter's 10th birthday in late June 2010, it had become painfully apparent that Family Court action would be required to resolve the access issues. I informed my wife that on Monday July 5, after our daughter's birthday, I intended to initiate the proceedings. Defiantly, I told her again that I would win, to which she again spewed, "We'll see about that", before marching into the house.

On 30 June 2010 I took my daughter to McDonald's for dinner where I confirmed our plans to go fishing on the weekend with the new poles I'd bought us for her birthday. We were both excited for it. But that weekend would never come for me. That night would be the last night to date I saw my little 'dream' daughter. On July 1, 2010 her mother – in collusion with her eldest daughter and other family members, reported me to police on false allegations of sexual abuse against my stepdaughter – plans that had been in the works since 2 September 2009. Her sole intention was to have me deported but once such an allegation was made to police it became a serious criminal matter. The following day, on July 2, 2010, I was arrested and jailed without any due process or investigation whatsoever. The most sinister card had

been played. But it would only get worse still, nearly ending my life on two occasions. But that is another story (*'Not On My Life'*, the prison years...).

I've been in prison for 6 years as I write this, with 6 months to go before I'm released and deported back to America. My daughter is now 17 this month, 7 years since I saw her beautiful little face or heard her perky little voice. I've grown old and gray beyond my years, a far, far cry from the daddy she had last saw. I was provided no lawyer through the entire proceedings and was forced to stand trial alone in a foreign court for five days; forced to 'cross examine' my former wife who had not long ago been the love of my life. Her words were sinister and I eventually suffered a complete emotional breakdown from shock and fatigue. Of course, in Western Australia, I was convicted in spite of the unlawful, cruel conditions of which I was made to stand trial – seeming a continuation of the 'evil' that had permeated our lives, extending, perhaps, far beyond it.

That nagging 'gut feeling' –

As stated at the beginning, I'm not inclined to believe that ghosts are responsible for episodes of rotten luck. But having had these past seven years in relative isolation to go over and over how a love like ours could end in such a manner, or in such a relative short space of time, the cause can be pinpointed to one single moment: the night my wife conjured the spirit of "David Birnie" and subsequently took home a splinter of Jarrah wood from the very prison that had once housed him. As ludicrous as it might sound to anyone of reasonable intellect (myself included), I find myself wanting for any other explanation. I'm still a believer in *shit just happens*, as well as in that people simply choose to do good or bad things. But in hindsight, considering all, shit just *doesn't* happen in the way it did to us, nor affecting so many other lives as it did. In the end I'm only left with that 'gut feeling' that something terrible and evil might have actually been conjured that night ten years ago, embedding its essence into a splinter of wood to be carried unwittingly to freedom. If so, one might take the view that my wife with 3 accomplices assisted in helping David Birnie escape from whatever unholy prison he'd been sentenced to upon his death, while perhaps also influencing the beginnings of what, in my opinion, would become the most sinister, selfish, corrupt government body to reign in Western Australia to date – the Barnett Liberals.

I now reside in prison, as David Birnie once had. Isn't it ironic? I live in close confines with some of the cruelest human beings of society. We eat together, work, talk and sometimes laugh. In here they appear to be normal everyday guys you might encounter and call friend on the outside. It's hard to believe that some of them have done such unbelievably insidious deeds to other innocent lives as they have. But while we get along out of necessity and survival, I never forget the danger they still may pose. Outside their deeds were done. In here they are like spent shells in storage waiting to be released and then reloaded through the influences of bad friends, unscrupulous family or perhaps, something else altogether. Watching the news these past consecutive years the world itself appears to have been influenced by just such an 'evil presence'.

Some people of this world are incorruptible. Others are not. In my view, if there is any possibility of realism to any of this, my wife had been the perfect conduit, our love the perfect target. Already having practiced the art of witchcraft since youth, having been descended from a long line of self-proclaimed 'witches, having embraced the principles in Anton LeVey's *The Satanic Bible*, which she had also bought for her eldest daughter's 13th birthday, having come down a line of ritual sex abuse and having had instilled in her a subconscious hatred of men as a result, my wife had already been conditioned to play the role of the 'devil's advocate' in this respect. She was perfect for the séance and to carry out the fragment of Jarrah wood – containing, perhaps, something evil.

The film footage of the séance was given to the Bunbury psychic – it was his camera and film. I never saw it again and frankly don't want to.

Whatever became of the splinter of Jarrah wood taken from the Fremantle Prison that night, I cannot say, either. Wherever it is, wherever it might be found, it should (cautiously) be returned to the 'Freo' Prison from whence it came, and with it that dark, shadowy 'black man' that had walked our hall and bedroom and tormented my sleep with horrific otherworldly nightmares.

Should anyone seek to investigate this story, the facts are available. It all happened as I have stated – and more. Should someone seek to find that splinter of Jarrah wood and return it to hell, well, good luck with that. Believe me, you'll need it.

John Victor Ramses
Acacia Prison, Western Australia
30 June 2017 – the 7th anniversary of the last night I saw my daughter.

Sources and research:

1. "I'm an Online Ghost Hunter", Take 5 Magazine (Australia), 8 June 2006, pgs 8-9, as told to Megan Morris by Lia Ramses.
2. Sunday Times Newspaper (Perth, AU), (mid) March 2006 , by Melanie Ambrose.
3. ABC Stateline (Perth, AU), 2006
4. 'The Couch', Access 31 TV, 2006
5. Ghost Radio Network
6. Underworld Show
7. Haunted Australia

Also:

David and Katherine Birnie – Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_and_Catherine_Birnie

Fremantle Prison, Western Australia
<http://fremantleprison.com.au/>

Related books by John Victor Ramses (pending):

11:11 - The Love Story
My Daughter's Country
Not On My Life
Salem's Ghost

Google Relevant keywords related to this article. Some sites, Like Ghost Radio, can still be accessed via archive / cache.