

## A Ghost Story

After a while, it just got to be too much. The bills, the hours, the relationships ultimately proved to be more than I could handle, so I chose not to. I committed suicide on May 12<sup>th</sup>, a date which has no particular relevance to me. My bills were due and paid by the 2<sup>nd</sup>, it was a light work week, and I had just come back from vacation. Nothing in my office caused my actions. I have reviewed them for years trying to figure out why I chose May 12<sup>th</sup>. But, being caught in an infinite loop, time is irrelevant.

Allow me to let you in on what happens when you die. But wait, that would be telling! All this time, man has been searching for the last, real secret. The answer to everything. Can I, in good faith, ruin the search for enlightenment? Sure, why not! If it removes all meaning from your life, so what? Why should I care? I'm dead!

When you die, you relive your last minutes forever. That sounds creepy, right? You just die and die again until the end of time. No, really! That's just how your brain treats dying. It dilates time towards the infinite and even if the actual passing has occurred over, say, five minutes, your brain sticks you in a loop so you think time has stopped. Real nice, isn't it? You may die in an instant, but your mind convinces you that time is forever and traps you in the final moments. Because you have no framework to measure time, it seems forever. Pretty slick. Like falling into the event horizon of a black hole. For you, time stops. For everyone else, time goes on. No heaven, no hell, just endless time, relatively speaking.

So how am I communicating with you? I'm what the world generally recognizes as a ghost. I'm not the disembodied spirit of an unhappy life. I'm a hard working memory of what was once me. It isn't easy being a ghost. For instance, I have to step outside my death moment and into real time, all the while keeping my death moment going so I don't cease to exist. It's

quite the trick, I assure you. Most ghosts are fakes, of course. Humans tend to be gullible and the nature of the human brain makes confabulation happen every time there is a hole in our understanding. Well, yours, I suppose. I'm not sure I count as human any more. Anyway, there are a few of us which have managed to survive as both dead and as living memories outside of death. It takes a lot of concentration on my part to do this.

There are limitations, of course, to being a ghost. Manifesting an image is really hard. You have to remember what you looked like and construct a mental model. That's why so many ghost reports describe us as floating or faceless. Who wants to put the time into details when just showing up is so damn hard? I can move through walls and up and down stairs. I'm a memory. I don't really have any real form, so I'm just trying to stay in one place, but even a slight breeze causes me to move. What else? Oh yeah, the whole possession thing like in the movie Ghost? It's all bull. We don't have enough energy to power a light bulb, much less overpower a brain. Same goes for moving stuff. All that poltergeist phenomena is just crazy teens moving stuff when nobody is looking. Like I said, some people are gullible.

I can't really talk. The best I can do is electrify some motes of dust and cause them to collide with one another. Some people get all excited and describe this as a moan. It's truly more of an electric crackle on a very small scale. I got this record to work because it's being made on a computer. I can barely zap the switches behind the keys to create these sentences. However, I can only do this because the computer's owner forgot and left it on. A ghost doesn't have enough poop to throw a power switch.

I'm doing the smoke and mirrors so I can tell you a story. This is a tale of a ghost who stayed too long. It's a true story. I knew the guy and it really happened.

Jason died in the sixties. He took too much smack and croaked in the bathroom of the

club he was at. There he was, perpetually trapped in the last of an overdose. He got bored, as the dead are want to do, so he decided to do something. Once he realized he wasn't going to hell, wasn't being reborn as a cockroach, and most certainly was not headed outside the club, he decided to make the best of it. He worked and worked on concentrating as was finally able to manifest himself, somewhat. It wasn't much, just a glowing ball, but it was all he could do. In retrospect, it was pretty good for Jason. He couldn't concentrate worth a piss when he was alive.

Anyway, Jason forms this ball of energy which floats around the john in the club. Every time a customer opens the door, he feels the music and it pushes him into the wall. He stays there until he's got enough energy too move out of the wall again. Then, the next guy comes in and it happens all over again. This goes on all night, pretty much every night.

Now Jason isn't trying to communicate, he's trying to feel the music. He was a true Dead Head and wanted to break the monotony of his death with some Truckin' or Estimated Prophet. Instead, what he gets is the worst disco man has ever imposed upon the dear departed. This depressed him to no end, which is saying a lot, considering he was a dead junkie trapped in a men's room and wasn't depressed about that before.

It wasn't like he was alone. Plenty of people overdosed in that crapper throughout the late sixties and early seventies, including some particularly fine Farrah Fawcett wannabe's. But all Jason wanted was to feel the music of the Dead one more time and, in this run down disco, that was never going to happen.

One day, as opposed to the night when he was usually active, Jason noticed something new. People were there with sledgehammers. This is usually bad news for a ghost, because it separates them too great a distance from their death and they fade away into nothing or they return to their death moment, and frankly, once you go ghost, you don't want to be stuck in your

endless death anymore.

Jason drifted around looking for anything he could hang onto. These guys were not the disco habituates he was used to. They swore with meaning and smoked foul cigars and snuck away to smoke a little dope from time to time. He tried to hang around the dope smoke, but all it did was cling to him statically until he was pushed into another wall.

About a month into the remodel, it finally happened. A construction worker brought in a boom box and put in a Dead cassette. Jason was ecstatic, and also, a little static laced from the dope smoke. He drifted himself towards the boom box so he could really feel the music. It was a tape of a concert. The sort Dead Heads were always making and trading. As he got closer to the boom box, he saw the cassette and decided that he wanted to read the writing on it. He wanted to know which concert this was.

Well, that didn't work. He got caught in the mechanism and transferred to the tape! He couldn't break loose of the magnetic media and finally had to let go of his death moment. Man, it was sad. Without his memory, his death moment disappeared and Jason was no more.

Now wait, I here you say, wasn't he transferred to the tape? Death is no Disney movie. All that wound up on the tape was a little scratching noise. Jason was kaput. But for one glorious second, Jason was one with the music he loved and that's how he died for the final time.

You can take from this tale a lesson or two. Jason could have stayed in his eternal death, overdosing until the end of time, relatively speaking, but he chose the true death he always wanted. Jason died a Dead Head. It's what he wanted most during his life. I, on the other hand, died aimlessly. I only found my passion for writing after I took the dirt bath. I would probably still be alive had I found my passion earlier. And you? Will you join me and my regrets, screwing around haunting, or for one, superb, magnificent moment, will you be a Jason?