

## Chapter 13

### Jared and the Others

The doctors were trying a number of prescription drugs to help Jared manage his mental illness. Nonetheless, it seemed to be getting worse. The medication Jared was taking caused him to gain weight and he could not concentrate well enough to remain in his classes at Salt Lake Community College. Worse, he was still hearing voices and hearing them more often.<sup>1</sup> Jared wrote a poem about this inability to concentrate, which ended with these lines:

. . . Infinite mind, so cruel and so kind.

Before the accident Jared was an excellent athlete and gifted student. He had a charming personality and lots of girl friends. Now the girls were simply not interested in him and he realized that nothing would ever be the same.

Jared spent a lot of time with his younger brother, Erik and because of two car accidents, he did not drive. His illness had affected his judgment and he had to be continually monitored. He had slit his wrists on two occasions. Another time he had tried to cut off one of his fingers in an effort to stop smoking.

Sometimes Jared feared he was a son of perdition and would cry about the loss of his immortal soul. (In the Mormon view, there are only a few sons of perdition, these are spirits that are eternally damned because they denied Christ.) Before Steve died he had long talks with Jared on the subject of religion. Steve tried to help him feel hopeful. They shared many common feelings and unusual spiritual experiences.

Jared committed suicide on June 5th, nearly three months after Steve's suicide and two days before the school year ended. Three weeks before his death, Jared had a very sweet spiritual experience. He told his Mother that he saw the Christus, the statue of Christ in the Visitors Center on Temple Square.

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<sup>1</sup>From The Unquiet Dead, p. 162-163: Question: Are schizophrenics really possessed, rather than psychotic?

Answer: I feel that the majority of patients in mental institutions are presenting their symptoms because they are possessed. The voices they hear are real. Some of the visual hallucinations are glimpses of the lower astral plane, a part of the spirit world that is of a very dense vibratory nature. There is still a great deal to learn about these extreme cases of mental derangement. I do not feel that all schizophrenics are psychotic, because of the possibility of possession. I do feel that--in addition to their mental illness--they are undoubtedly possessed. The possession is an extra burden for them. Also:

Berge's Doctoral dissertation. African Shaman were used in New York Mental hospitals during the 1970's to conduct exorcisms. The recovery rate was 80%.

"Mom, Christ smiled at me," Jared told Sharon. "I felt warm all over. Now I know for sure that Christ loves me. I actually felt his love envelop my entire body."

This was a wonderful experience for a young man who heard voices and sometimes feared that he was evil. The Friday night before Jared died he went camping with several of his friends. Jared went to gather wood and was gone for a very long time. When he returned his face was glowing. "I'm going on a mission he told his friends."

The boys knew that because of his mental problem Jared would probably never go on a mission but they listened to him and supported him knowing how much he wanted to have that experience. Ben Ellison spent a lot of time with Jared. He was with him the night before he died. Jared told Ben he wanted to go home early that Sunday evening. They arrived at the Groberg home shortly before midnight. Jared went to his mother's bedroom to tell her that he had returned home and to say "Goodnight."

Often, Sharon went to Jared's room after he had gone to bed. She would rub the side of his face and talk to him as he fell asleep. This seemed to calm him. She knew that the worst times for him was just before he fell asleep and when he awoke in the morning. That night she did not go to his room. She lay awake for a long time, sleep would not come. She felt uneasy but did not know why. Finally she got up to check on Jared. He was not in his room. She went immediately to the shed outside where Jared practiced his drums. She found him there, he had hung himself.

Sharon contacted Jared's three brothers and two sisters. It was especially difficult for his sister, Tonya, because she had a close friend at B.Y.U., a fellow cheerleader, who had committed suicide because he was from a family who suffered from mental illness and believed that he had the mental disorder. Tonya's worst fear was that Jared would kill himself. Erik, the younger brother who had spent the most time with Jared, had gone to Lake Mead with friends.

As Erik drove home that day, he heard Jared say, "It's all right, don't be sad. I'm doing really well. Just watch over Mom."

A few days later, Erik dreamed that he was with friends at the church, the young adult ward was having a dance. Erik was surprised when Jared came through the door. He looked and acted as he did before the accident, before he became mentally ill. Erik put his arms around Jared and said,

"Jared, I miss you so much."

Jared did not answer, he started to cry. He was really sorry everyone was so sad. Finally Jared told Erik that he missed his friends and family but did not want to return. He just wanted to be well.

In another dream, Erik saw Jared again, Jared came back to life as he had left it. He still had the mental illness. Everyone else was very happy but Jared was completely miserable.

Diane was devastated that Monday night when Sharon called to tell her of Jared's death. She had felt very sad all day. She had attended two funerals of nineteen-year-old suicide victims in May. She understood Jared had attempted suicide on other occasions and was at risk. It may have been unrealistic, but she really believed Steve could and would prevent Jared from taking his own life. Diane believed this because parents of some of Steve's friends had reported that their sons had been so affected by Steve's death that they were beginning to make positive changes in their own lives. Cee Cee Casper Baker said that she thought about Steve every day. Thinking about him helped her in her commitment to live a better life. Others had made similar statements.

After hearing of Jared's death Diane began to doubt her spiritual impressions. Was the information she had received at Steve's funeral accurate? Perhaps she had been in shock. Were the impressions she received as she worked on Steve's biography real? Possibly she only imagined that Steve's spirit was communicating with her. Perhaps delusions are simply the denial part of the grieving process.

Tom, Neil, David and Diane went to Jared's viewing on Thursday evening. Diane was heartbroken for Sharon and the other members of Jared's family. Jared's mother had told her that she had been physically ill and could not get out of bed for two days after Jared died. As the Stokoes left the funeral home, Diane began to pray for the feeling of comfort and love that she had experienced throughout March, April and into May. This was the only time she had ever asked for her "Steven feeling" to return.

Within minutes, it was there. Once again her heart swelled with love. This lasted for over an hour but Diane continued to worry about Sharon "If I could give this wonderful feeling to Jared's mom, I would be willing to give it up,." Diane thought. Slowly the sensation gradually melted away. Diane was left with the impression that Jared was fine and his mother had been comforted.

The next day after the funeral, Diane asked Sharon if she had felt wonderful at 9:30 the previous evening. "Yes I did," she replied. She distinctly remembered what was going on at that moment. Dr. Lane Smith, a psychiatrist who lived in her neighborhood, was one of the last people to talk with Sharon at the viewing. At 9:30 they were having a conversation. Dr. Smith was explaining to Sharon that Jared's death may have been a blessing. Often people who had schizophrenia as severely as Jared are never able to recover. Ultimately their lives come to an end in an insane asylum.

Jared was buried the next day. He was laid to rest a few feet away from Steve's grave at Mountain View Memorial Estates on Bengle Boulevard above Brighton High

School. Jared and Steve were two of seven nineteen-year-old youth, living in the Sandy-West Jordan area, who committed suicide between March 1st and July 19, 1995.

Diane attended all of the funerals except that of Chris Burt, a boy who died two weeks before Steve. She attended not because she knew the other boys, but because she was doing research on teen suicide. She went because she wanted to know if there was some commonality or connection that would help her better understand Steve's death. Why were there so many deaths among nineteen year old Mormon youth? Diane wanted to understand what was happening in her community. The funerals gave her perspective. And she went because she wanted to feel close to Steve again and experience what she had felt as she walked into the chapel behind Steve's casket the day of his funeral. That feeling did not surface again at any of the other funerals.

At Joshua Blake Hill's funeral President Turner said, "Some of you may ask how to prevent this kind of tragedy? My advice is to keep doing what you are doing now. Live the gospel and continue to teach your children to do what is right. It does not matter, nor does it help to ask why. Do what you have been taught. Keep doing the best you can."

Damon Dal Jorgenson was not a member of the Mormon church. He left a note expressing love for his family and friends. It concluded with this statement, "I have been gone a long time. Please let me go. Go on with your lives." His girl friend Sarah F. explained, "He had an illness. He is gone but his memory will live in our hearts forever."

At Mike Ayers funeral family and friends were reminded that people pass in and out of our lives. "You can build or destroy with your choice of words. Choice is such a precious gift that even the Lord will not take it from us." We need to learn to say, "I love you" and mean it. We can make a difference if we understand that we are all connected. We need to reach out. Our earthly relationships are what brings true joy. Mike's brother, Neil, said: "Toward the end Mike shut a lot of people out."

Skip C. advised moaners to avoid negative habits of thinking. "We need to find the positive. We can make a difference in our own lives and the lives of others by being positive. Our circle of influence is larger than we realize. We need to reach out and help people. If we are depressed we should seek medical help. Mike had told others that he had "a very old soul."

At Shawn Coulter's funeral the family were encouraged to plant a tree and watch it grow. (Steve's friends at Matrixx planted a tree in his name in the Stokoe's back yard.) Shawn's bishop, Michael M. asked, "What will you buy with your grief? How will you spend your sorrow?"

Sharon and Diane talked about this. They both felt it was an interesting

concept. Sharon said she would buy understanding. She is a member of a mental illness support group dedicated to educating others about mental illnesses. She feels that people should be taught to recognize the signs of depression. She thinks people need to be very supportive of those who suffer from mental illnesses. Diane said she would spend my sorrow on knowledge. Knowledge is power. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Diane believed that if a person could really understand something he or she would be free for worry, guilt or deception.

In comparing the young men from the Sandy-West Jordan area who died over this five month period Diane made these observations; Steve was a sensitive you man who liked to draw and write poetry; and he liked doing physical things--working out and playing football. He loved animals and nature and he had a "Polynesian heart."

Damon was "an avid nature lover," and he too played football. Damon may have struggled with learning disabilities as he did not graduate from high school. Obviously, he had been deeply depressed for a long time before his death.

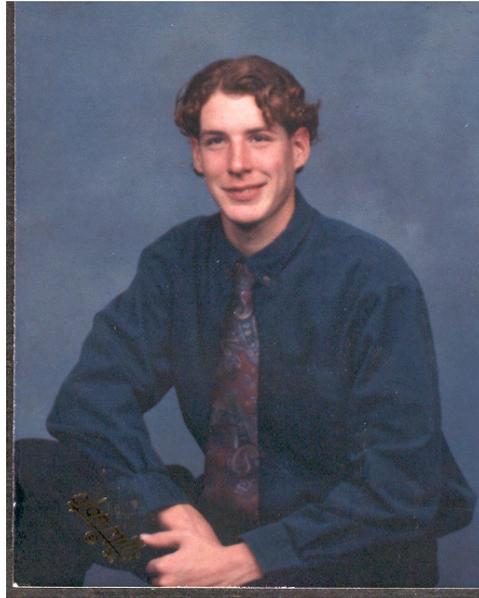
Joshua Blake "enjoyed the out of doors and had a great love for animals." He also played football. He had graduated from Bingham High and had attended Snow College for 1 ½ years so it appears he may have been academically gifted. He was an Eagle Scout and planned to serve a mission

Jared was an "excellent sprinter and artist and he loved to play football while growing up." He was a gifted drummer, who wrote poetry, and did very well in school. "He was loved by all who knew him and loved all." The trait all these young men seems to have held in common was their deep sensitivity. Several had a great love for animals and the out-of-doors. Several were artistic, some had musical talent.

Student body officers at Kearns High School have a sign posted in student officer's room "Due to budget restraints, the light at the end of the tunnel will be turned off until further notice." Evidently an increasing number of Utah teens feel there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Some have given up believing that things will ever change or that their lives will ever improve. "One study showed that people attempting suicide, compared with other groups, experienced as many as four times the number of negative events in the six months preceding their suicide attempt."

Consider the last six months of Steve's life. He ran into problems with neighbors, parents and friends who victimized him. He dealt with legal problems including traffic tickets, heavy fines and forty-five days in Oxbow Jail including ten days in solitary confinement. He struggled with employment problems including finding a job, training, believing he had been terminated, finding another job, getting fired, and then getting reinstated. He worried about whether or not he was doing a good job, making enough money to pay his tickets and the possibility of going back to jail if he was unable to do so.

Steve struggled with the loss of a close friend, the loss of his car, the loss of the girl he admired and the loss of his reputation. He was torn between good friends and bad friends, wanting to belong and wanting to change. He struggled with addictions, learning disabilities, impaired judgment, and evil spirits. No wonder he was so depressed.



**Steve at 19, March 1994**

The following page includes obituaries appearing between March 6<sup>th</sup> through July 19<sup>th</sup> of 1995 in the Salt Lake Tribune. It is interesting to note the similarities in the lives of these suicide victims in these published notices.

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD SUICIDE VICTIMS FROM THE SANDY WEST JORDAN AREAS

Died between March 6<sup>th</sup> and July 19, 1995

**Stephen A. Stokoe**

Stephen A. Stokoe, age 19, died March 6, 1995 in Sandy, Utah.

Born October 21, 1975 in Murray, Utah to Thomas A. and Diane Johnson Stokoe. He attended Skyline and Granite high schools, played football and graduated from Granite in 1994. He worked for Matrx Tele-marketing.



Survived by parents; brothers, Brian, Dean, and Matt (Belov), David and Neil (Stokoe); the Makaiau cousins, Kahuku, Hawaii; the Kent cousins, Sandy; the Young cousins, Orem; uncles, aunts, and grandmother, Bella Stokoe, Kahuku, Hawaii. Preceded in death by grandparents, Dean and Jessie Johnson, Lake View, and Tom Stokoe, Sr., Hawaii. Friend and family may call at Mountain View Memorial Estates Mortuary, 3115 East 7800 South, SLC, Friday, March 10, 1995, from 6-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 11, 1995, at 12 noon, in the Willow Creek 3rd Ward chapel, 2400 East Alta Canyon Drive (8600 South), Sandy, where friends may call one hour prior to services. Interment, Mountain View Memorial Estates.

Oct. 21, 1975-March 6, 1995

**Damon Dal Jorgenson**

Damon Dal Jorgenson, age 19, recently passed away in Lehi, Utah.

Born November 13, 1975, to Alan Dal Jorgenson and Randa C. Briggs in Jerome, Idaho. Our beloved son and brother is now in peace.



He was an avid nature lover and found tranquility within it. He shined no matter whose company he was in, his exuberant smile and hugs lit up the lives of all those he came in contact with. He is a great man who had a passion for classic cars and classic Hendrix. He will be dearly missed by all. Survived by his parents; sister, Jolie Janin; brother, Randy Devries; and dear friend, Sarah Fauchaux. Funeral services will be held Tuesday, May 16, 1995, at 2 p.m. at Redwood Memorial Estates, 6500 South Redwood Road, where family and friends may call one and one-half hours prior to services. Interment will immediately follow services at the same location under the direction of Memorial Estates. T 5/15

Nov. 13, 1975-May 12, 1995

**Joshua Blake Hill**

RIVERTON—Joshua Blake Hill, 19 years old, our beloved son, brother, grandson and friend died Sunday, May 21, 1995 surrounded by his family.



He was born October 28, 1975 in Ogden, Utah. He is survived by his parents, M. Richard and Charlotte Marie Hill; three brothers, Jason, Courtney, Deniz; his three sisters, Natalie, Charlotte Kay and Katrina; grandparents, Ray B. and Charlotte Humphries; Lucelle Hill. Joshua was an all giving, fun loving, spirited young man. He enjoyed the outdoors and had a great love for animals. He graduated from Bingham High School and attended Snow College for 1 1/2 years. He was an Eagle Scout and was a member of the Summerhill Ward. His mission will continue in a greater place. He will be missed and loved forever. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, May 24, 1995, 12 noon, Riverton Utah Summerhill Stake Center, 12120 South 1300 West, where friends may call Tuesday 6 to 8 p.m. and Wednesday one hour prior to services. Interment: Valley View Cemetery. Funeral directors: Memorial Estates Mortuary. N 5/22

Oct. 28, 1975-May 21, 1995

**Jared Nelson Groberg**

Beloved son, brother and friend, Jared Nelson Groberg, 19, passed away into the loving arms of our Savior June 5, 1995.

Born March 28, 1976, Salt Lake City, Utah to Delbert H. and Sharon N. Groberg. Jared was a happy person with a great imagination. He graduated from Brigham High School in 1994. He loved to play the drums. He was an excellent sprinter and artist, and he loved to play football growing up. He was a member of the LDS Church. Jared was loved by all who knew him and loved all. He will be greatly missed. Into God's hands we give him, knowing he has found peace.



Survived by parents, brothers and sisters: Del J. Groberg, Angela Groberg, Tanya (Eric) Beard, Geoffrey N. Groberg, Erik N. Groberg; grandparents, Delbert V. and Jennie Groberg and many cousins, aunts and uncles. Preceded in death by an older sister, Kar Lynn Groberg and grandparents, James D. and Lois Nelson. Special thanks to the workers at Valley Mental Health, Dr. Kevin Lambert, and Jared's many friends who were a support to him. Funeral services will be held Thursday, June 8, 1995, 12 noon, at the Willowcreek 7th Ward, 2110 E. Creek Road (8200 So.). Friends may call at the Cannon Mortuary, 2460 E. Bengal Blvd (7600 So.) Wednesday, June 7, 1995 from 6-8 p.m. and at the church one hour prior to the service. Interment will be at Mountain View Memorial Estates, 3115 E. Bengal Blvd. (7600 So.).

March 28, 1976-June 5, 1995

**Shawn Coulter**

May 25, 1976-July 3, 1995

Shawn will be ever missed by his brothers, Nathan, Brett, David, John, his sister, Krista and her husband, David Dayton, and by his parents, Nathan and Carol Coulter. Shawn will be remembered by his family, his friends and special friend, Lisa, for his fun-loving personality, his smile, and his gentle heart. May his tender spirit ever enlighten his way home to his Heavenly Father. We Love You, Shawn.



Funeral services will be Saturday, July 8th, 11 a.m. in the Granite View Ward, 2675 East Mt. Jordan Road (off 9600 South), where friends may visit from 9:45-10:45 a.m. under direction of Larkin Sunset Gardens Mortuary. Interment, Larkin Sunset Gardens. T 7/6

May 25, 1976-July 3, 1995

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**Michael W. Ayers**

Michael Wade Ayers moved on to a higher life July 19, 1995.

Michael was born August 5, 1976 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Michael was a graduate of Cottonwood High School and lettered in football, track, and wrestling. Michael lived for football, playing it, watching it, eating it, breathing it. His idol was Walter Payton and he was an avid always and forever Chicago Bears fan. Michael enjoyed hunting, fishing, and was especially proud of his "new" Jeep Comanche.



Michael is survived by his mother, Tawny Knuteson; his brother, Neil Ayers; his father, Scott Ayers; grandparents, Betty Knuteson, Wayne and Marion Knuteson, and Evelyn Ayers; great-grandmothers, Nettie Knuteson and Alicia Ayers; numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends. He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Robert N. Ayers, his great-grandparents, George and Jane Tidwell, whom Michael loved dearly, and his great-grandfather, Albert Knuteson. Michael will be greatly missed by all those who knew and loved him. We'll miss those beautiful baby blues and the gorgeous smile and his infectious laughter. We will always love you, baby, in lieu of flowers the family suggests donations be made to Cottonwood High School's Football Field-Lights Fund. Funeral services will be Tuesday, July 25, 1995 at 2 p.m. in the Larkin Sunset Gardens Mortuary Chapel, 10600 South 1700 East, where friends may call Monday 7-9 p.m. and Tuesday one hour prior to the service. Interment Larkin Sunset Gardens. T 7/23

August 5, 1976-July 19, 1995

## Chapter 14

### Demons--Real and Imagined

An article condensed from the Congressional Quarterly, "Teenage Suicide," states: Disappointment in love--the so-called "Romeo and Juliet" Syndrome--is often cited as a factor. But many excerpts regard this as an unsatisfactory explanation. . . [the difficulty obviously runs much deeper and probably many more factors are involved.] When asked to list characteristics of youth who are at risk for suicide, experts included: drug or alcohol abusers. Although their drug abuse may not have been the chief cause of death, the same inner anguish that led the youngsters to drugs or alcohol in the first place probably influenced their decision to kill themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Sexual issues may also have played a role in youth suicides. . . other factors often cited include depression, low self-esteem, difficulty in controlling impulses, inadequate coping skills, inability to communicate, lack of hope for the future, desire for instant gratification and unrealistic perceptions. . . Such traits are often found among low achievers. (Although high achievers are also at risk). . . In an undetermined number of cases, the root cause. . . may be biological or genetic. . . Suicidal teenagers are markedly different brain chemistry. . . Researches have related serotonin deficiencies to people with aggressive or impulsive behavior."

It is impossible to say what triggered the suicide of the other young men in Diane's study but we do know things about Jared and Steve. Jared had a mental illness that was getting worse. He heard voices that told him he was evil. Perhaps they told him to kill himself. Jared's medication was not helping and he was losing hope that he would ever recover and be able to live a normal life. Steve had a history of over reacting, inappropriate responses, and an inability to process information accurately. He often run from stressful situations. He needed other people to help him figure things out but found it difficult to talk to them or ask for help.

At one time or another during the two and a half years before his death, Steve struggled with every one of the factors identified as leading causes for suicide among youth. Yet Steve always accepted responsibility for his actions and willingly made restitution. His deep Mormon faith compounded his guilt as he struggled with drugs and nicotine addiction. These habits alienated him from his family and Mormon community. Bad habits undermined his self esteem and destroyed his confidence. All things considered, it is amazing that Steve did so well as he did.

Statistically, Utah teens are more at risk for suicide than their counterparts in other states. Diane's small five month study represented only the tip of the iceberg as

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<sup>2</sup>Congressional Quarterly, Inc., downloaded from SIRS C.D. Rom, "Teenage Suicide, c. 1995.

the actual number of attempted suicide can only be estimate--some believe it is anywhere from 25 to 100 for every completed suicide. Diane discovered that the week Steve died, the nineteen-year-old son of another Granite High teacher failed in his suicide attempt. The day Jared died, the nineteen-year-old A.D.D. son of one of her closest friends was hospitalized as a result of a failed suicide attempt. Mark M. told his mother that he often heard voices telling him to kill himself.

According to an article in the Salt Lake Tribune, the teen suicide rate in Utah is sixth highest in the nation and climbing. It is 40 percent higher than the national average. The Utah rate in 1994 averages 16 deaths per 100,000 compared to 11.3 nationally. The highest incident of death seems to be among white nineteen-year-old males who use guns to kill themselves. In 1992, six nineteen-year-old youths died as a result of suicide in the Beehive state. By 1995, seven nineteen-year old men died in the Sandy-West Jordan area alone between March 1st and July 19<sup>th</sup>. A public health official confided to Diane that there were many other teen suicides along the Wasatch front during that some period. Often, they were not publicized because of insurance issues. Some were reported as accidents.

The very real possibility that Steve had intentionally committed suicide never embarrassed Steve's mother. She understood his problems and believed he did the best he could with what he had. Tom felt his severe reprimand four days before Steve died probably triggered his son's death. He believed Steve committed suicide because he did not want to cause the family any more pain.

What is the official position of the L.D.S. church on the issue of suicide? Steve's bishop, Randy Luke, addressed the subject at his funeral:

"I feel that there are even some here that have thought about it or attempted it or may be considering it. As a new bishop, I found myself involved with this subject more than I had ever imagined. It is real. It is out there. May I use as my text and my references a talk give a few years ago by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the quorum of the twelve apostles. These is what an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ says on this subject:

We have been taught that it is wrong. President Kimball says, and I quote, "It is wrong for a person to go out and shorten his life by suicide." The prophet Joseph Smith taught the same thing as have all the prophets.

But listen to the words of Bruce R. McConkie, formerly of the quorum of the twelve. 'Persons subject to great stress may lose control of themselves or become mentally clouded to the point that they are no longer accountable for their actions. Such are not to be condemned for taking their own lives. Such are not to be condemned.' It should be remembered that judgment is the Lord's. He knows the thoughts, the intent and the abilities of man. He in his infinite wisdom will make all

things right in due course."<sup>3</sup>

Did Steve lose control? Was he mentally clouded at the time of his death? In December, 1995, Diane visited a clairvoyant consultant to inquire about a different problem she was dealing with. . .<sup>4</sup> Pat correctly assessed the situation that Diane had come to ask about and made some recommendations. Next she accurately read Tom and Diane's energy fields describing their employment and other issues. Finally she asked the Stokoes if they had any questions. "What do you feel about Steve?" Diane replied, not knowing what to expect.

Pat wanted to know his age and whether he was in school or working. "He is dead," his father answered.

"He will not feel that way to me," Pat replied. "He will feel completely alive. Death does not feel like anything to me. I have never been able to figure that out. Steve will come in just as if he was right here." Pat paused as she focused her attention on the blank wall between Tom and Diane and concentrated deeply.

"Did he ever have spots where he would get real highly annoyed and verbally express himself in ways that sounded rather confused?"

"Yes"

"He has a mind set a little like a schizophrenic. In looking at your family genetics, Diane do you have a lot of high strung temperamental people in your line?"

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<sup>3</sup>Dr. Erith Fiore, author of *The Unquiet Dead* states: From the work I've done, I find that some remain in the physical world as discarnates, carrying all the heavy feelings they experienced moments before their deaths. As long as they are earthbound, they feel exactly as they did prior to the suicide.

Others who kill themselves go directly into the Light and the spirit world. The moment they float up from their lifeless bodies, they feel free and relieved of their depression, anguish or anger.

Those who go into the Light immediately and those who remain in the physical world ultimately have to face the same test situation: the choice of killing themselves or not. Like an exam, they either fail it again, in another life, or pass it by not destroying themselves. There is no punishment, only education and other chances for spiritual growth. (p. 162-163)

<sup>4</sup>The Unexplained (A&E) "Psychic Detectives," A look at how law enforcement agencies use psychics to help solve puzzling cases. 8:00 p.m., January, 9, 1997. Also, "The CIA employs clairvoyants for espionage and the training of special agents." A psychic unit is set up and operates throughout the 80's. They had good success in locating bombing targets during the Gulf War. Agents were selected who have had near death experiences as they tended to be more sensitive than others. Clairvoyants could go places and access information that was not unexcessable through usual channels. (DISNEY), 8:00 p.m., January, 4, 1997.

"Yes, my mother and her father."<sup>5</sup>

"My guess is that if you dig up some family histories you are going to find mild manic depressive behavior patterns running through the generations on your side of the family. There is a little thread of some kind of genetic mental disorder. Steve's behavior is mildly schizophrenic. I think there were times when he actually lost his sense of where he was in the real world. I think he actually even heard voices.

The energy that comes from Steve is that every once in a while, he feels like he has a bunch of demons running around in his head driving him crazy and that is not something that either one of you could have fixed or done anything about by loving him more. I think the combination of personalities you have has had an affect on Steve but what happened did not occur because you are bad parents or did anything seriously wrong in raising this son.

Steve feels pressured to be more normal and do things more right and he can't. I am not convinced he ever really felt he could do anything up to par. The interesting thing about Steve is that, had he continued living and gotten through this tough stage and lived into his late twenties or early thirties, you would have discovered his IQ went from about average to way up into the hundreds.

Steve has an intelligence that is beyond average but it is one that is hard to access because it does not care about the ABC's of life. It cares about the esoteric nature of the universe. My guess in that this kid had an incredible understanding and empathy for people who were in trouble and people who had psychological issues. His mind thought very abstractly but did not get a bang out of the ABC's or 123's of life. . .

"Was he A.D.D." Diane asked.

"I would not call him A.D.D. I think it was more serious than that. He is either slightly manic depressive or mildly schizophrenic. There is no way to ever know this but I am not completely convinced that he was anywhere in his right mind at the time he died. I would be willing to bet he was hearing voices or feeling very pressured from some source inside to end his life.

There is something about Steve that does not strike me as being the type of personality that would commit suicide. It is like he was not in the room with himself at the time of his death. It is almost like there was someone else inside his body. (She asked if he had left a suicide note and if the note had rambled. It did.) What might have happened is. . ."

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<sup>5</sup>Diane wrote about these ancestors in her master's thesis entitled "the Mormon Waldensians." She discovered that many Waldensians decedents including her mother and grandfather also had prophetic dreams.

As Pat began talking about evil spirits the lights went out and the tape recorder clicked off. The lights had dimmed twice as Pat began to read Stephen. Tom and Diane felt Pat was correct in her assessment of Steve. *He was slightly manic depressive* as was one of Diane's sister's children and Steve did *have empathy and concern for other people and their problems*. The information that surprised both Steve's parents was Pat's revelation about Steve's I.Q. being "in the hundreds had he been able to continue living into his late twenties or early thirties." Steve did care deeply about spiritual things. Tom felt that the most significant thing that happened was the electricity cutting out. The fact that Pat could accurately access Steve's energy fields and could read other people's thoughts, bothered neither of Steve's parents. The Bible talks about gifts.<sup>6</sup>

The following summer, Diane told Jared's mother about her experience with Pat M. Sharon decided she too would like to visit her so the two mothers agreed to split the cost of a counseling session. Pat was rather dismayed when she read Sharon for she discovered that she was still very distressed over Jared's death. Sharon admitted this was so and explained that her family were worried about her.

"You need to let go. You need to heal," she advised. Pat gave Sharon some specific instructions on how to move through her grief. In the course of reading Jared Pat described an activity that took place shortly before Jared's death. "It's like a picnic," she said, referring to the camping trip on the Saturday night before Jared died.

Pat had a dreamy, far away look on her face as she smiled and said: "That young man went off by himself and made a pact with God. He pleaded with God to let him come explaining that it was impossible for him to serve a mission on earth. Jared promised God that if he would allow him to come home he would help other young men who struggled with addictions. This may have been why Jared committed suicide. However Jared had been diagnosed as schizophrenic. He often heard voices. Could Jared have been possessed?"

As Diane searched for the one link that would tie the suicide cases that occurred in the five month period in 1995 together the word "sensitivity" came to mind.. Virtually all of these young men enjoyed animals and loved nature. They all seemed to have had a gentle nature. At least five of the seven appeared to suffer from severe depression or some emotional problems. Four of the six Mormon youth were trying to qualify for or were preparing to serve missions. Diane began to wonder if any of the other young men in her study might have been possessed.

### Is Spirit Possession Real?

In the course of her research on spirit possession Diane discovered that highly

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<sup>19</sup> James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights. . .

sensitive people, like Steve, are particularly prone to spirit possession."<sup>7</sup> In addition, those who experimented with drugs and alcohol invite possession. Dr. Edith Fiore, a respected Florida psychologist and author, who has over the years treated hundreds of cases of spirit possession, explains :

"Even innocent experimentation with recreational drugs has resulted in years of possession. Every one of the hundreds of patients I have treated who had abused drugs and alcohol were possessed. In all cases there were many entities, most former drug users themselves, who continued their habits through their victims, continually wakening them for further possession. One recovered alcoholic patient I treated still had eighteen alcoholic spirits with her, despite having been dry for four years!"<sup>8</sup>

Dr William J. Baldwin, a prominent Los Angeles therapist, agreed with Fiore: "Excessive negative emotions like anger, depression and grief all lower the frequency of the aura and diminish it's protection temporarily." Dr. Baldwin explains that possession can easily occur when spirits are invited (as in the case of Steve's Uncle Leo); when hallucinogens are ingested (as in Steve's acid poisoning); as well as through the use of strong analgesics and anesthetic drugs which are used in operations. Berge, another prominent therapist and writer believes that between 70% and 100% of the population are influenced by one or more discarnate spirit entities at some time in their lives<sup>9</sup>

Stanislav Grof, M.D., world renown for his psychotherapy with LSD and Holotropic Breathwork, records this account of spirit possession which occurred at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Center. Flora, a 28-year-old single patient had been hospitalized for more than eight months when Grof began LSD psychotherapy: Two hours into the session Flora began to complain about painful cramps in her face, Groft records: "Before our eyes, the facial spasms were grotesquely accentuated and her face froze into what can best be described as a mask of evil. She started talking in a deep, male voice and everything about her was so different that I could not see any connection between her present appearance and her former self. Her eyes had an expression of indescribable malice and her hands were spastic and looked like claws.

The alien energy that took control over her body and voice introduced itself as the devil. "He" turned directly to me, ordering me to stay away from Flora and give up any attempts to help her. She belonged to him and he would punish anybody who

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<sup>7</sup>Baldwin, Spirit Releasement Therapy, A Technique Manual, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (San Francisco, Human Potential Foundation Press, 1991.

<sup>8</sup>Dr. Edith Fiore, The Unquiet Dead, A Psychologist Treats Spirit Possession--Detecting and Removing Earthbound Spirits.(New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc, c. 1987.

<sup>9</sup>Baldwin, Spirit Releasement Therapy, p. 12. He sites two different studies in coming up with this information: Berg, 1984, p. 50, and Edith Fiore, 1987.

dared to invade his territory. What followed was explicit black mail, a series of dismal descriptions of what would happen to me, my colleagues, and the program if I would not obey. It is difficult to describe the uncanny atmosphere which this scene evoked; one could almost feel the intangible presence of something alien in the room. The power of the blackmail was further increased by the fact that it involved certain concrete information to which the patient in her everyday life could not have access.

I found myself under considerable emotional stress which had metaphysical dimensions. . . It was difficult for me to control my fear and a tendency to enter into what I felt would be an active combat with the presence. . . I decided to put myself into a meditative mode, while I held Flora's cramped hand and tried to relate to her in the form in which I had known her before. I tried to visualize a capsule of light enveloping us both, which intuitively seemed to be the best approach. The situation lasted over two hours clock time. . . To my surprise, this session resulted in an astounding therapeutic breakthrough. Flora lost her suicidal tendencies and developed new appreciation for life. She gave up alcohol, heroin and barbiturates and started zealously attending the meetings of a small religious group in Catonsville.<sup>10</sup> . .

Dr. Peck, a well known author and medical doctor, described his work with two patients afflicted with the demonic. He explains that while both patients demonstrated blatantly evil as secondary personalities, they were not evil people. The core personality of each seemed healthy, even unusually good and potentially saintly. He admired both a great deal because each had struggled valiantly against their possession for years. Dr. Peck was a member of a team assembled to rid these people of their tormentors. He published this account:

"The exorcism progresses as the exorcist addresses either the healthy core personality or the demonic, but refuses to speak to some unclear mixture of the two. The demon itself seemed to have a marked ability to draw the exorcism team into confusing conversations that went nowhere. . . gradually both patients began to alternate between a progressively more healthy appearing core personality and a progressively more ugly secondary personality. Until suddenly the secondary personality took on inhuman features and the pretense was broken.

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<sup>10</sup>Groft, Stanislav, M.D. LSD Psychotherapy, (Alameda, Calif, Hunter House Inc., 1994,) p. 293-295. Groft began his LSD Psychotherapy as a young medical student in several research facilities in Prague, Czechoslovakia. During the 1950's he found LSD useful in the treatment of the mentally ill. On p. 13 Groft writes: "I have developed great awe and respect for these substances and their enormous positive, as well as negative potential. They are powerful tools and like any tool they can be used skillfully (or) ineptly, and destructively. The question whether LSD is a phenomenal medicine or a devil's drug makes as little sense as a similar question asked about the positive or negative potential of a knife. . . Similarly, the image of LSD will vary whether we focus on the results of responsible clinical or spiritual use, naive and careless mass self-experimentation of the young generation, or deliberately destructive experiments of the army or the CIA." Groft stopped using LSD in psychotherapy in the 1960's when he discovered healing nonordinary states of consciousness could be induced just as easily through the use of a deep breathing technique he calls "Holotropic Breathwork."

The final stripping away of the pretense brought the team face to face with the demonic. As a hard headed scientist which I assume myself to be, I can explain 95% of what went on in these two cases by traditional psychiatric dynamics but I am left with a critical five percent I cannot explain in such ways. I am left with the supernatural, or better yet, the subnatural. I am left with a presence.

When the demonic finally spoke clearly in one case, an expression appeared on the patient's face that could only be described as Satanic. It was an incredible contemptuous grin of utter hostile malevolence. . . I have seen this expression only one other time in my life. For a few fleeting seconds on the face of the other patient. When the demonic finally reveal itself in the exorcism it was with a still more ghastly expression.

The patient suddenly resembled a writhing snake of great strength viciously attempting to bite the team members. More frightening than the writhing body however, was the face. The eyes were hooded with lazy reptilian torpor. Except when the reptile darted out in attack. At which moment the eyes would open wide with blazing hatred. Despite these frequent darting moments what upset me the most was the extraordinary sense of a 50 million year old heaviness. It caused me to despair of the success of the exorcism.

Dr. Peck went on to describe how the exorcism was accomplished. In the end he admitted that it was God that did the exorcizing. Human free will was basic. It takes precedence over healing. Even God cannot heal a person who does not want to be healed. In the case of both his patients possession ended when they chose to cast their lots with God. Ultimately the patient healed himself.

Satan does not easily let go, Dr. Peck concludes. After its expulsion it seems to hang around desperately trying to get back in. In fact in both cases it appeared for a short while as if the exorcism had failed. The patients returned to their pre-exorcism condition. Nonetheless, within a few hours, it was possible to discern subtle but discernable changes. The complexes were back in place but it was as if the energy had gone out of them. The patient could listen and what they heard could now have an effect. In one case psychotherapy became possible for the first time. In the other, more was accomplished in fifty hours than in five hundred hours preceding it. These patients moved extraordinarily fast. It was as if they were catching up for all those lost years.

One patient said: Before it was like I was a little Embryo totally surrounded and hidden by them so that I could not be me. Now I am me and while I still hear the voices, they are coming from outside of me." The other said, "Before the voices were in control of me. Now, I am in control of them." The voices only gradually faded away from these patients. What was not gradual was their improvement. Given the severity of their psycho pathology before their exorcisms, the rapidity of their progress and return to health is not explainable in terms of what we know about the ordinary

therapeutic process. Dr. Peck credited God with the successful return of his patients to full health.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Edith Fiore concludes her book with this statement: "Is spirit possession a fantasy? Or is it the prevalent and potentially disastrous condition that has been described in The Unquiet Dead?"

After all the years I've worked with spirits often "wrestling" with ones who are stubborn, confused, hostile and terrified, I'm still not one hundred percent convinced that they are not figments of the imagination. As a therapist, the question is moot--the therapy works. . . The conviction that spirits possess living people is based on the premise that life does continue after death. . . Possession shows us that only the physical body dies and that personality survives--that we are immortal beings.

When Diane asked Jackie S., a grief counselor from a local chain of cemeteries, why she thought there were so many suicides in communities along the Wasatch Front, Jackie replied "the dark forces were are running rampant--destroying individuals and decimating families." Jackie explained that when she began her work in Salt Lake nine years ago, she had one or two suicides a quarter. Now she has one or two a week. This information confirmed what most Mormons believe, we are now in the last stages of a great struggle between good and evil. Diane believes that accurate information is critical. We need to understand what is really happening and why. We need to know the enemy , understand how he operates, and realize that through understanding we have control.

In order to conclude Steve's story, Diane felt impressed to contact a certain author she had never met before. As this man was nationally known, she was uncomfortable asking for help but her "Stephen feeling" assured her that placing Steve's manuscript in his hands was the right thing to do. He listened and agreed to read the manuscript. Several weeks later Diane received an eighteen page response., She received it on what would have been Steve's twenty-first birthday. The letter contained an excellent discussion on spirit possession. With the author's permission, the letter was scanned and appears as the epilogue. Diane's friend explained that he had participated in one exorcism, which initially, went badly. He rebuked the spirit at least seven times but it stubbornly refused to leave. Praying to know why, this man learned that one cannot command an unclean spirit as he might a demonic spirit. Unclean spirits are the spirits of men and women who have lived in mortality and departed in an impure or unclean (unrepentant) state. These spirits will only respond when they are "released." He is not named as he wished to remain anonymous.

This supports what medical doctors William Baldwin and Stanislav Grof discovered. Psychologist Edith Fiore uses hypnotism to release discarnate spirits.

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<sup>11</sup>M. Scott Peck, M.D. People of the Lie (New York; A touchstone Book, c. 1983)

Mormons use priesthood blessing. What about other churches? Baldwin reports that exorcism is still a viable procedure in the Catholic Church, though not publicized or widely known. "Basically, the interaction between the possessing entity and the priest exorcist is adversarial; the demon is forced out in the name of Jesus Christ."

Baldwin feels this procedure offers no love, no compassion, no concern whatsoever for the entity which creates confusion for the discarnate being who then seeks another host. He feels spirit releasement is much more humane practice.<sup>12</sup> L. King creates a channel of light which allows the spirit to find it's way to the light. Today health professionals in many different fields use spirit releasement to deal with those suffering from drug addiction and other illnesses.

Steve's mother finished her research and completed Steve's biography in January of 1997. As she concluded her work, she felt a like Zeke Johnson, a native pioneer in San Juan County, must have felt as he plowed the mesa and accidentally dug up the bones of a Lamanite child. <sup>13</sup> Like Zeke, Diane had not asked for such

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<sup>12</sup>Baldwin, Spirit Releasement Therapy. P. 323.

<sup>13</sup>Transcribed and edited from a typescript by Zeke Johnson, Son of Joel Hills Johnson in Diane's collection of pioneer stories.

. . . As I was plowing I noticed my plow had turned out the skeleton of a small child, the skull and the backbone. Most of the bones were decayed and gone. I stopped and looked back. . . all of a sudden to my surprise I saw the bones begin to wiggle and they began to change position and to take on different color and within a minute there lay a beautiful little skeleton. It was perfect. . . Then I saw the inner parts of the natural body coming in. I saw the flesh coming on and I saw the skin come on the body when the inner parts of the body was complete. A beautiful head of hair adorned the top of the head and in about a half a minute it had a beautiful crystal decoration in the hair. It was combed beautifully and parted on one side. In about a half a minute the child raised up on her feet. She was lying a little on her left side. . .but as she raised up a beautiful robe came down over her left shoulder and I saw it must be a girl about five or seven years old, I'd say. She looked at me and I looked at her for a quarter of a minute. . . Then in my ambition to get hold of her, I says "oh you beautiful child," and I reached as if I would embrace her and she disappeared.

I couldn't tell that story to anyone until finally one day I met a dear friend, Stake Patriarch, Wayne H. Redd of Blanding. He stopped me on the street and said, "Zeke, you have had an experience on this mesa you won't tell. I want you to tell it to me." Well, I told it to him and then he had me tell it to others. . .

I wondered and it worried me for years as to why I was allowed to see it, a common man like me--uneducated. Why was I just a common man, allowed to see such a marvelous manifestation of God's power?

One day as I was walking alone with my hoe on my shoulder going to hoe some corn, something said, "stop under the shade of that tree and rest." The answer to my prayer came. When the child was buried it was either in time of war with the different tribes or it was winter time when the ground was frozen and they had no tools to dig deep graves. They just planted that little body as deep as they could. . . When it was done the sorrowing mother knew that it was such a little shallow grave, and in her sorrow she cried out to the little group that was present, "That little shallow grave, the first beast that comes along will smell her body and will dig her up and scatter her to the four winds. Her bones will be scattered all over

unusual experiences nor did she ever expect to be writing about demonic possession. Circumstances led her into these realms. Was it by accident or grand design? She will never know.

An astrologer she consulted indicated that Steve's life represented an "expanded opportunity"<sup>14</sup> and in the end, it seemed to be just that. For many months Diane found this material very difficult to share. Some found it objectionable. So she simply moved on trusting that what she wrote would eventually serve a righteous purpose. Time after time, her spiritual impressions were validated as the path opened before her. Both David and Neil found the biography healing. While David was serving a mission in England, he shared Steve's story with a woman who lost her brother through suicide. The woman called Diane from Leeds to tell her what a comfort the biography was to her.

Diane often wondered why the Lord would bless her with this experience and the confirmation that things were as they should be. Finally she concluded, as did Zeke Johnson, that the Lord is very good to mothers. He keeps the promises. This experience confirmed Georges I. Gurdjieff statement: "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but spiritual beings having a human one."

What will you buy with your grief? How will you spend your sorrow? Diane's answer to this question often asked suicide survivors was to write Steve's story. Others may chose a different path. Whatever path chosen is exactly right provided it brings closure and understanding. Perhaps reading this account will help.

**For those who would like to learn more about Steve's experience, the eighteen page letter, written in response to this manuscript, appears as the "Epilogue."**

**See also Diane's "Subtle Energy" web page.**

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these flats." There happened to be a man present holding the priesthood. This man said, "Sister, calm your fears. Whenever that little body is disturbed or uncovered, the Lord will call her up and she will live."

<sup>14</sup>Information for Astrological readings on August 16, 1995 was drawn from birth dates of Tom, Diane and Steve, exact times and locations of each birth. Pat R. had never met the Stokoes before their readings. Diane was surprised to discover that many things mentioned in her reading paralleled her patriarchal blessings (she had two.) "Child #4 is protective of you. (This was true.) He represents an expanded opportunity. . ."